

Khalifa Umar bin al-Khattab - Inter-Personal Relations and Interactions

Umar Flogs His Son To Death

Abu Shahma was a son of Umar. He fought in the battles in Egypt. After the conquest of Egypt he built a house for himself in Fustat.

One day in the company of a friend he inadvertently drank wine and became unconscious. The following day he went with his friend to Amr bin Al Aas, confessed their guilt, and wanted to be punished. Amr bin Al Aas said that as they had drunk the wine inadvertently, and were feeling repentant, that was enough and no further punishment was called for.

Abu Shahma did not wish to avail of the benefit of inadvertence. He insisted that he should be punished according to law, failing which he would bring the matter to the notice of the Caliph. Thereupon Amr bin Al Aas inflicted the usual punishment of lashes in the compound of his house. Abu Shahma's head was also shaved off in the house of the Governor.

The Reporter reported the matter to Umar, and Umar addressed a letter to Amr b. Al Aas in strong terms as follows:

"O Amr bin Al Aas it has come to my notice that you have been derelict in the performance of your duty. You have shown undue favour to Abu Shahma by awarding him punishment in your house rather than at a public place. You were apparently moved by the consideration that he is my son. You should know that in such matters I cannot tolerate any concession to a person on the ground that he is related to me. As soon as you get this letter send Abu Shahma to Medina on a naked camel."

Amr bin Al Aas complied with the instructions and despatched Abu Shahma to Madina. In the way Abu Shahma fell sick and when he reached Madina he could hardly walk.

Umar was furious, and he ordered that Abu Shahma should be lashed in the public. Abdul Rahman b. Auf pleaded that the boy had already been lashed in Egypt and no further punishment was called for. Abu Shahma said that he was suffering, and the punishment should be deferred till he was recovered.

Umar brushed aside these pleadings Abu Shahma was flogged publicly. Abu Shahma could not withstand the ordeal. He fell senseless after a few stripes had been inflicted. He remained in a state of agony for a few days and then died a martyr to the highly developed sense of justice of his father.

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Source : *Alim.org-Umar bin al-Khattab History*