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## Assassination of Umar (644 CE)

### Haji Phiroz

*Fariborz Rahnmoon*

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**Abu Lu Lu Ah' was the name given to Phiroz Nahavandi a Persian slave who had been taken prisoner in Byzantine and sold in Medina to an Arab by the name of Al Mughirh. Phiroz was witness to the atrocities committed against Persian women and children who were taken prisoner and sold in the slave markets of Mecca and Madina. When the city of Nahavand was captured in the seventh year of Umar's rule (640 CE) the women and children of Nahavand were sold in Madian, Phiroze's heart ached to see their suffering and humiliation.**

“When the prisoners that were taken at Nihawand were brought to Medina, a servant of al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah, Abu Lu'lu'ah Fayruz, could not meet any young captive without caressing his head and bursting into tears, wailing, "Umar has consumed my liver!"<sup>1</sup>

**Phiroz was a capable artisan and although a slave was allowed to work but had to pay his master part of his earnings. He had some savings and was able to rescue a small Persian girl by buying her in the slave market and adopting her as his daughter. One day Phiroz meets Umar in the market and pleads with him for justice.**

“Umar went out one day to wander around the market. He was met by Abu Lu'lu'ah, a young Persian slave of al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah, who said, "Help me, Commander of the Faithful, against al-Mughirah b. Shu 'bah, for I pay a great deal of tax." "How much?" enquired ('Umar). "Two dirhams a day," was the reply. "What is your trade?" asked ('Umar). "[I am] a carpenter, stonemason, and smith," he replied. "I do not think your tax is a lot given the work you do," ('Umar) said. "I have heard that you claim you could make a mill that will grind by wind power if you wished." He replied that he could. ('Umar) asked him to make him a mill. (Abu Lu'lu'ah) replied, "If you survive, I shall certainly make you a mill that will be the talk of everyone in both East and West!" Then (Abu Lulu ah) left ('Umar), who said [to himself], "That slave has just threatened me!" Then he went off home.<sup>2</sup>

**Phiroz was friends with two other slaves, Hurmuzan and a Christian Byzantinian by the name of Jufaynah. Slaves were not allowed to own or carry any weapon but Phiroz with the help of his friends and his skills as a blacksmith managed to make a two-sided dagger<sup>3</sup> with its handle in the middle.**

“That morning 'Umar went out to prayers; he used to assign certain men to see to the lines (of those praying) and when they were straight, he would come and proclaim "God is great!" Abu Lu'lu'ah slipped in among the people, carrying in his hand a dagger with two blades and its shaft in the middle. He struck 'Umar six blows, one of which was below his navel, and this was the one which killed him. (Abu Lulu'ah) also killed Kulayb b. Abi al-Bukayr al-Laythi, who was behind ('Umar). When ('Umar) felt the heat of the weapon, he fell and said, "Is 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf among the crowd?" They said, "Yes, Commander

of the Faithful, he is here." ('Umar) said [to 'Abd al-Rahman], "Come forward and lead the people in prayer." So 'Abd al-Rahman led the people in prayer, while 'Umar lay prostrate. Then he was carried away and brought into his house.<sup>4</sup>

"He died later that day. They took him out early the following day and he was buried in 'A'ishah's house along with the Prophet and Abu Bakr."<sup>5</sup>

"On the morning when 'Umar was stabbed 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr said, "Last evening I passed by Abu Lu'lu'ah, as he was meeting in secret with Jufaynah and al-Hurmuzan. When I came upon them, they sprang up and a dagger with two blades and its handle in the middle fell out into their midst. Consider (the instrument) with which ('Umar) was killed!" (Abu Lu'lu'ah) had already slipped through the crowd attending the mosque. A Tamimi went off in search of him and returned to them, having kept after Abu Lu lu ah as he left Umar, caught him, and killed him. (The Tamimi) brought the dagger that 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr had described."<sup>6</sup>

### **Umar's son Ubaydallah who hears this goes on a killing spree and kills Hurmuzan, Jufaynah and the daughter of Phiroz Nahavandi.**

"Ubaydallah b. Umar heard about this but held back until Umar died. Then he wrapped his garments around his sword, came to al-Hurmuzan, and killed him. When the sword was wounding him, he called out, "There is no god but God." Then (Ubaydallah b. 'Umar) passed on to Jufaynah, a Christian from al-Hirah, foster son of Sad b. Malik and whom he had brought to Medina as a result of the peace between himself and (the inhabitants) and to teach him writing. As he held the sword over him, (Ubaydallah) (struck Jufaynah with it), making the sign of the cross between his eyes.<sup>7</sup>

**There are conflicting reports of whether Phiroz was killed or he fled and went to Iran. In Kashan there is a Mausoleum of Shoja ol Din Abu lu lu Firoz. Which has become a shrine and people pray in his memory.**



**Since the Slaves had a master they demanded blood money for their slaves who were killed. Uthman who was hoping to be the next Khalifa took upon himself to pay their blood money to their owners out of his own funds.**

"Then 'Uthman sat at the side of the mosque and called for Ubaydallah b. 'Umar, who was confined in the house of Sa'd b. Abi Waggas. He is the one from whose hand the sword had been snatched after he had

killed Jufaynah, al-Hurmuzan, and the daughter of Abu Lu'lu'ah, saying that he was going to kill some of those who were involved in shedding his father's blood, alluding to both the Emigrants and the Helpers. Sa'd had jumped up against him, snatched the sword from his hand and tugged at his hair until he had him on the ground. He held him a prisoner in his own house until 'Uthman brought him out." <sup>8</sup>

'Uthman said, "I am now their master. I have decided that blood money should be paid in this case, and I shall bear the cost from my own money." <sup>9</sup>

## **REACTION TO THE NEWS OF OMAR'S DEATH IN IRAN <sup>10</sup>**

News of the murder of Khalifeh Omar by Phiroz reached Iran in late winter and spread everywhere and caused great joy before the Nowruz of the year 24 of the Hijri Solar calendar. It was the only good news after eight years of the oppression cruelty and crime of the Arabs in Iran.

But there was a big problem for the national happiness of the Iranian people. If the people were openly happy about Omar's death, they would definitely be killed by the Arab rulers

So, they had to hide their happiness in some way.

Combining the joy of the people from the murder of Omar by Phiroz and the need to hide this joy, the interesting character of Haji Phiroz was created by the Iranians.

The title of Haji, given to Phiroz clearly indicates his presence in Arabia. (because people called those who went to Arabia, Haji)

The red colour of Haji Phiroz's clothes and the black colour of his face represent War and Resistance.

In ancient Iran, the colours red and black represented war and the resistance movement.

(Pay attention to two of the greatest Iranian commanders, Babak Khorramdin, who was the leader of the Red Jamegan, and Abu Muslim Khorasani, who was the leader of the Black Jamegan. In ancient Iran, the colour of death and mourning was not black, but white, like the Indians)

Haji Phiroz's dance shows the joy and happiness of the people from the death of Omar.

And even the famous song that Haji Phiroz sings:

"My lord, the goat, the sugar goat."      ارباب خودم بز بز قندی

My lord, why don't you laugh? "      ارباب خودم چرا نمی خندی

Is in fact, mocking the Arab lords of that time, and especially the greatest Arabs, Omar.

The sugar goat is a clear reference to the face of the Arabs who, according to tradition, grew a beard and shaved their moustaches and looked like a goat with a beard and no moustache. On the other hand, Phiroz struck and killed the greatest lord of the Arabs, Omar, and mockingly said to his lord, Omar, "Now, why don't you laugh ??"

And of course, when the ruling Arabs looked at Haji Phiroz's character, they did not notice the story behind Haji Phiroz, and the Iranians safely celebrated the death of their Caliph Omar, in front of the Arabs and danced and laughed at the beards of the Arabs.

With the great popularity of Haji Phiroz's character in all parts of Iran, which has survived to this day, it becomes clear how popular Phiroz Nahavandi was among the Iranians for killing Omar in his time, and how much he made the hearts of the Iranians happy.

Finally, it should be said that Phiroz Nahavandi is one of the greatest national heroes of Iran, and if in the distant past our ancestors were forced to turn the serious character of Phiroz Nahavandi into a comedian and clown for fear of the invading Arabs, now it is our national duty to return, after 1400 years, this national character and the great hero of our country out of the state of humour and clown and make him a great national hero.

Translated from the book "Two Centuries of Silence" By Dr Zarrin Koob



The Mausoleum of Shoja ol Din Abu lu lu Firoz in Iran.

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<sup>1</sup> History of Tabari 2632

<sup>2</sup> History of Tabari 2722



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<sup>4</sup> History of Tabari 2723

<sup>5</sup> History of Tabari 2726

<sup>6</sup> History of Tabari 2797

<sup>7</sup> History of Tabari 2797

<sup>8</sup> History of Tabari 2796

<sup>9</sup> History of Tabari 2796

<sup>10</sup> Translated from the book "Two Centuries of Silence" By Dr Zarrin Koob

<sup>11</sup> The Mausoleum of Shoja o Din Abu lu lu Firoz