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Edition 2012, version 1

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رضي الله عنه

The Forth Issue

Uthman ibn Affan

(May Allah be pleased with him)

The Series of: Men and Women Around Muhammad
(prayers and peace of Allah be upon him)

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The return of the nation as it was to the leadership of mankind rests on following the teachings of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Besides, awareness of caliphate era and the prophet-hood method are required steps to attain the goals pursued by the nation to be achieve in this life. As Prophet Mohammad (prayers and peace be upon him) said : "Do follow my Method (Sunnah) and the Method of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me ".

The history of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs is full of lessons and examples which are scattered in books, sources, and references. If this history is well presented, it will feeds the soul, enlightens hearts, builds minds, sharpens resolve, offers lessons, mature ideas, demonstrates the features and qualities of its leaders, system of government, morals of the generation, prosperity factors, and the reasons for its demise. One can make use of that in the preparation of a Muslim generation who grow up on the method of prophecy and the jurisprudence of caliphate, and to identify the era which God said about it:

[And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Immigrants and Supporters, and also those who followed them exactly (in faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success]
(Al-Tawbah: 100).

The Companions have applied the provisions of Islam and made it known in the East and West of the world. Their era is the best, and their history is a treasure that saved the nation's savings in thought, culture, science and the movement of the Jihad (sacred fight) and conquests, and dealing with the people and nations.

In this booklet we present a biography of the third caliph Uthman ibn Affan Thu-Nourain , to extract lessons and examples from the sides of this unique character.

Uthman ibn Affan: Ancestry and Attributes

Uthman ibn Affan bin Al-Aas bin Umayyah bin Abdul Shams bin Abd Manaf. He was born in the sixth year of the Year of the Elephant. He became Muslim early and participated in the two Migrations: first to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and the second to Madinah.

He married Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), and she died on the night of Badr. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) then married her sister Umm Kulthum, to him.

The scholars say: "No one is known to have married two daughters of a Prophet except him." For this reason, he was nicknamed 'Dhun-Nurain' (bearer of two lights). He was one of the ten given the tiding of Paradise and one of the Companions who compiled the Qur'an.

He had a long beard and was good looking. It is said that he was the most handsome of the people.

Uthman ibn Affan in the Pre-Islamic Society

In the pre-Islamic society, Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was among the best of his people. He was of high status, very wealthy, extremely modest, and eloquent in speech. His people loved him dearly and respected him. He never prostrated to any idol during the Jahiliyyah and he never committed any immoral action. He did not drink alcohol before Islam.

He was well versed in the knowledge that was available to the Arabs during the pre-Islamic era, including lineages, proverbs, and the history of important-events. He travelled to Syria and Ethiopia, and mixed with non-Arab people, learning things about their lives and customs that no one else knew. He took care of the business that he had inherited from his father, and his wealth grew. He was regarded as one of the men of Banu Umayyah who were held in high esteem by all of Quraysh. Thus, Uthman was regarded as being of high status among his people, and he was loved dearly.

His Acceptance of Islam

Uthman was thirty four years old when Abu Bakr al-Siddiq called him to Islam, and he did not hesitate at all, rather he responded immediately to the call of Abu Bakr. Thus he was one of the earliest Muslims. The first person to become Muslim after Abu Bakr, 'Ali and Zayd ibn Harithah was Uthman. Thus, he was the fourth man to embrace Islam.

His coming to Islam so early was, perhaps, the result of what happened to him when he was returning from Syria. He told the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) about that when he entered upon him along with Talhah ibn 'Ubayd-Allah and he presented Islam to them and recited Qur'an to them, and told them of the duties of Islam and promised them that they would be honored by Allah. They believed him, and Uthman said: O Messenger of Allah, I have come recently from Syria, and when we were between Ma'an and al-Zarqa', I was about to sleep when I heard a voice calling: O sleepers, get up, for Ahmad has emerged in Makkah. Then we came here and heard about you.

Undoubtedly this incident had a positive effect on Uthman and he could not forget it when he could see all the facts before him with his own eyes. He thought about this new call calmly, as was his way in all things, and he found that it was a call to virtue, a call to shun immorality, a call to worship one God (Allah) and a warning against polytheism, a call to worship Allah and a warning against heedlessness, a call to good morals and a warning against bad morals. So he became Muslim in respond to the call of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, and he persisted in his faith, calling others to Islam in a friendly and patient manner; he was content, forgiving, kind, charitable, compassionate and generous, helping the weak and oppressed until Islam became strong.

His Persecution and Migration to Ethiopia

Allah's decree that all are to be tested is applied constantly to individuals, communities, peoples and nations. This applied to the Companions too, and they underwent trials and tribulations that would shake the foundation of lofty mountains. They spent their wealth and shed their blood for the sake of Allah, and this suffering became as severe as Allah willed that it should. The prominent Muslims were not spared these trials. Uthman was persecuted and tortured for the sake of Allah at the hands of his paternal uncle al-Hakam ibn Abi'l-'Aas.

The persecution intensified and affected all the Muslims, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was deeply grieved, and wondered where could the Muslims go? Then the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) thought of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and said to the Muslims: "Why don't you go to Abyssinia, for in (that land) there is a righteous king in whose land no one is wronged." Among those who migrated during the first and second migration to Abyssinia was Uthman ibn Affan, and on both occasions he was accompanied by his wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him). They arrived in Abyssinia in Rajab in the fifth year after the Prophet's mission began, and they found safety, security and freedom of worship.

The Qur'an speaks of the migration of the early Muslims to Abyssinia, as Allah says:

"And as for those who emigrated for the Cause of Allah, after they had been wronged, We shall certainly give them goodly residence in this world, but indeed the reward of the Hereafter will be greater; if they but knew!"(Al-Nahl 16:41).

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted Qatadah as saying: What is referred to here is the Companions of Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him), who were oppressed by the nonbelievers in Makkah and expelled, until a group of them migrated to Abyssinia, then Allah granted them a place to which to migrate (i.e. Madinah) and granted them supporters from among the believers.

Uthman and the Holy Qur'an

The method by means of which Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) and all the noble Companions were educated was the Holy Qur'an which was revealed from the Lord of the Worlds. It was the only source of guidance to be accepted. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was keen to ensure that the Muslims acquired their concepts from one source only. The Holy Qur'an alone was to be the methodology and focal point on which the Muslim individual, family and society were to be raised. The verses which Uthman heard directly from the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him), played a role in the formation of his Islamic personality. They purified his heart and soul and influenced him, and he became a new man, with new values, emotions, aims, behavior and aspirations.

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was deeply attached to the Holy Qur'an. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami narrated how he learned it from the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) and his words indicate how greatly he loved to live with the Book of Allah.

It was narrated that ‘Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami said: Those who taught the Qur’an – such as Uthman ibn Affan, Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood and others – told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) they would not go beyond them until they had learned the knowledge contained in them and how to apply it in deed. They said: So we learned the Qur’an and knowledge and its application together. Hence they would spend a while to memorize a soorah.

History has recorded for us some of the things that ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said about the Holy Qur’an. He said:

“If our hearts were pure, we would never have our fill of the words of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.”

“I would not like the day to come when I do not look in the Covenant of Allah (i.e. the Mushaf).”

“There are four things which are outwardly virtues, but in reality are obligations: mixing with righteous people is a virtue, and following their example is a duty; reading Qur’an is a virtue and acting upon it is a duty; visiting the graves is a virtue and preparing for death is a duty; and visiting the sick person is a virtue and asking him to make a will is a duty.”

“Ten things are the greatest waste of time: a scholar whom no one asks about; knowledge that is not acted upon; sound advice that is not accepted; a weapon that is not used; a Mosque that is not prayed in; a Mus-haf (Qur'an) that is not read from; wealth from which nothing is spent (in charity); a horse that is not ridden; knowledge of asceticism in the heart of one who is seeking worldly gain; and a long life in which no preparation is made for the journey (into the Hereafter).”

His Staying Close to the Prophet in Madinah

(prayers and peace be upon him)

The strongest factor that shaped Uthman's Character, brought out his talents and potentials and purified his soul was keeping company with the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) and seeking knowledge from him. Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) stayed close to the Messenger (prayers and peace be upon him) in Makkah after he became Muslim, and he stayed close to him in Madinah after he migrated there. Uthman devoted himself to studying various branches of knowledge at the hands of the teacher and guide of mankind who had been taught by his Lord in the best manner. He was eager to learn the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah from the leader of all of mankind.

Uthman tells us how he stayed close to the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him), as he said: "Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, sent Muhammad with the truth and revealed the Book to him, and I was one of those who responded to Allah and His Messenger and believed. I made the two early migrations and I became the son in-law of the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) and I received guidance directly from him".

Bay'at al-Radwan

When the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) halted at al-Hudaybiyah, he deemed it essential to send a representative to Quraysh, to tell them of his peaceful intentions and that he had no desire to fight, and he wanted to respect the holy places; he wanted to perform Umrah and then return to Madinah.

The man chosen to be the representative of the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) was Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). But 'Umar apologized to the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) and said that he preferred not to go, and he suggested to the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) that he send 'Uthman instead of him. He clearly explained the reason for that, which is that it is essential for anyone who mixes with the enemy to have protection. As no such protection was available to Umar, he suggested to the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) that he send Uthman, because he had a tribe who could protect him from the harm of the nonbelievers until he had conveyed the message of the Messenger of Allah. Umar said: "I fear for myself with regard to Quraysh, for they know how hostile I am towards them, and there is no one there from my tribe Banu Udayy who could protect me. But if you want, O Messenger of Allah, I will go and meet them."

The Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) did not say anything, and Umar said: "But I shall tell you, O Messenger of Allah, of a man who is held in high esteem in Makkah and who has more relatives and is better protected: Uthman ibn Affan." The Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) called Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and said: "Go to Quraysh and tell them that we have not come to fight, rather we have only come as visitors to this House, respecting its sanctity. We have our sacrificial animals with us; we will slaughter them and depart." Uthman set out and came to Makkah, he met Aban ibn Sa'eed ibn Al-'Aas, who stood up and welcomed him and offered him protection and said: I think you will get what you want.

Uthman entered Makkah and went to each leader in turn: Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, and others. After receiving the message, they suggested to Uthman that he perform tawaf around the Ka'bah but he refused, until the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) will do.

There were rumors among the Muslims that Uthman had been killed, then the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) called his companions to swear allegiance to him, pledging to fight the nonbelievers. The Companions responded, swearing loyalty unto death.

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said of his right hand, "This is the hand of Uthman", and he put it on his other hand. The number of Companions from whom the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) accepted the oath of allegiance beneath the tree was one thousand and four hundred.

His Economic Contribution to the Establishment of the State

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the richest of those on whom Allah had bestowed wealth. He engaged in trade and was very wealthy, but he used this wealth in obedience to Allah, seeking His pleasure and that which is with Him. Thus, he was always first to do good and spend, and he did not fear poverty. Among the many examples of his spending are the following:

The Well of Roomah

When the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) came to Madinah he found that there was very little fresh water there and there was no source of fresh water in Madinah except the well of Bi'r Roomah. The Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "Who will buy Bi'r Roomah and share it with the Muslims in return for reward in Paradise?" And he said: "Who will dig the well of Bi'r Roomah and Paradise will be his?"

Before the arrival of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), no one could drink from Bi'r Roomah except in return for payment. When the Immigrants came to Madinah, they did not like the water:

A man from Banu Ghifar had a well called Roomah and he used to sell water from it by the bucketful. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "Will you sell it in return for a spring in Paradise?" He said: O Messenger of Allah, my family and I do not have anything else. News of that reached Uthman and he bought it for thirty-five thousand dirhams, then he came to the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and he said: Will you promise me in return for it the same as you promised him? He said: "Yes." He said: Then I give it to the Muslims.

Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque

After the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) built his mosque in Madinah, the Muslims would gather there to offer the five daily prayers and to listen to the speeches of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) in which he would issue commands and prohibitions, and they learned about their religion in the mosque. Hence the mosque became too small for the people, and the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) asked some of the Companions to buy the land next to the mosque so that the mosque could be expanded and made big enough to accommodate all the people. He said: "Who will buy the land of So and so add it to the mosque in return for something good for him in Paradise?"

Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) bought it with his own money for twenty-five thousand dirhams, or for twenty thousand, then it was added to the mosque, which then became large enough to accommodate the Muslims.

Tabook and the Generosity of 'Uthman

When the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) wanted to set out on the campaign to Tabook, he urged the wealthy Companions to spend on equipping the army that the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) was mobilizing to fight the Byzantines. The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) spent whatever they could afford. No sooner had Uthman heard this call of the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him), but he hastened to seek the forgiveness and pleasure of Allah, and thus this pressing need was met by the generosity of

Uthman. He supplied the army's every need, down to the last rope and bridle.

Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri said: Uthman supplied the army of Tabook with nine hundred and forty camels, and sixty horses to bring the number to one thousand. Uthman brought ten thousand dinars to equip the army and placed the money before the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him) and the Messenger (prayers and peace be upon him) began turning it over with his hand saying, "No deed can harm Uthman after today" twice.

Election of Uthman

Umar ibn Al-Kattab (may Allah be pleased with him) on his death bed formed a committee of six people to choose the next Caliph from amongst themselves. This committee was: Ali bin Abi Talib, Uthman ibn Affan , Abdur Rahman bin Awf , Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, Al-Zubayr and Talhah. Umar asked that, after his death, the committee reach a final decision within three days, and the next Caliph should take the oath of office on the fourth day. If Talhah joined the committee within this period, he was to take part in the deliberations, but if he did not return to Medina within this period, the other members of the committee could proceed with the decision. Abdur Rahman bin Awf withdrew his eligibility to be appointed as Caliph in order to act as a moderator and began his task by interviewing every member of the committee separately. He asked them for whom they would cast their vote.

He arrived at the conclusion that the majority of the people favored the election of Uthman. On the fourth day after the death of Umar, 23 AH, Uthman was elected as the third Caliph, with the *title* "Amir al-Mu'minin", (The Prince of the Believers).

Uthman's Method of Ruling

When the oath of allegiance was sworn to Uthman as caliph, he stood before the people and declared his approach to ruling, explaining that he would follow the guidelines of the Qur'an and Sunnah and follow in the footsteps of the two Caliphs (i.e., Abu Bakr and Umar). He also stated in his speech that he was going to run the people's affairs with forbearance and wisdom, but he would accept no compromise with regard to punishments that must be carried out. Then, he warned them against feeling content with worldly things and being tempted by worldly trivia, lest that lead them to compete with one another and stir up grudges and resentment among them, which would in turn lead to division and disunity.

He said:

"I have been given a responsibility and I have accepted it. Verily I am a follower (of the Sunnah) and not an innovator. I promise you that in addition to following the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), I will do three other things:

following the examples of those who came before me with regard to what you have agreed upon and decided, and what is decided by good people openly, and not interfering with you except when a punishment is required. This world is tempting and it makes itself attractive to people, so that many people are inclined towards it. Do not be content with this world and so not put your trust in it, for it is not trustworthy. Understand that these worldly temptations will not go away unless you ignore them."

Conquests During the reign of Uthman

The most important works of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) are the conquest of Murrow, Turkey and the expansion of the Islamic State. In addition to the conquest of Alexandria and then Armenia, Caucasus, Khorasan, Kerman, Sajistan, Africa, and Cyprus. Uthman expanded the Prophet's Mosque in AH 2930, and has established the first Islamic fleet to protect the Muslim beaches from the attacks of Byzantines. One of the most important achievements of Uthman is the compilation of the Holy Qur'an, which was started in the era of Caliph Abu Bakr Al Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

The Compliation of the Qur'an

It was narrated from Anas ibn Maalik that Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan came to Uthman when he was on campaign with the people of Syria and the people of Iraq in the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hudhayfah was very alarmed by the differences in their recitation, so Hudhayfah said to Uthman: O Prince of Believers, save this nation before they differ concerning the Book (Qur'an) as the Jews and the Christians did. Uthman set word to Hafsah saying: "Send us the manuscript so that we may make copies of it, then we will return it to you". So Hafsah sent it to Uthman, and he ordered four of the Companions to make copies of it. They did that, until they had made many copies, then Uthman returned the manuscript to Hafsah, and he sent a copied Book (Mus-haf) to every reign and ordered that all other Qur'nic material, whether it was manuscripts or entire copies, be burnt.

Sedition

At the end of his reign, and due to the expansion of Islamic conquests and the presence of recent Muslims who did not absorb the spirit of order and obedience, enemies of Islam led by Jews started to foment civil strife to undermine the unity of Muslims and their state. They raise suspicions about the policy of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and incited the people in Egypt, Kufa, and Basra to revolt. They deceived their followers to implement their plan, and met the caliph and asked him to give up. Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) called them to the meeting in the mosque with senior Companions and other people of the city, and he refuted their unreliable gossips, and he answered their questions and pardoned them. Thus, they returned to their country but they concealed malevolence and promised to come back to the city to carry out their plots, which were embellished by the Jew Abdullah bin Saba, who pretended Islam.

The Martyrdom of Uthman

(may Allah be pleased with him)

In Shawwal 35H of the Prophet's Migration, the turmoil occurred, and the wrong-doers besieged Uthman in his home (forty days) and prevented him from praying in the mosque and even from water. But when he saw some of the Companions that had prepared to fight them he prevented that fight as he did not want to drop the blood of a Muslim for his own sake. Then the conspirators broke into his house from the back (from the house of Abu Hazm Al Ansari) and attacked him as he was reading the Holy Qur'an. His wife Naila attempted to protect him, but they beat her with the sword, cutting off her fingers. The rebels killed him (may Allah be pleased with him) and his blood spelled onto the Qur'an. He was martyred on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah 35AH, and he was buried at Al-Baqi' in Madinah.

May Allah have mercy on Uthman ibn Affan and be pleased with him and assembles us among his company.

Uthman Ibn Affan in Brief:

He is Uthman ibn Affan bin Al-Aas. He was born in the sixth year of the Year of the Elephant. He became a Muslim early and participated in the two Migrations: first to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and the second to Madinah.

He married Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), and she died on the night of Badr. Then the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) married her sister Umm Kulthum, to him. For this reason, he was nicknamed 'Dhun-Nurain' (bearer of two lights). He was the third Rightly Guided Caliph, one of the ten given the tiding of Paradise, and one of the Companions who compiled the Qur'an.

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the richest of those on whom Allah had bestowed wealth. He engaged in trade and was very wealthy, but he used this wealth in obedience to Allah and seeking His pleasure. Some of his economic contributions are; the well of Roomah, expansion of the Prophet's mosque, and the campaign to Tabook.

He was assigned as a Caliph in 23AH, and his era witnessed a wide Islamic conquests. His most important contribution was the compilation of the Holy Qur'an in one version. But a turmoil emerged during his era, aroused by the Jew ibn Saba', which led to the murder of Uthman. He was martyred on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah 35AH, and he was buried at Al-Baqi' in Madinah.

May Allah have mercy on Uthman and be pleased with him.

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