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Abdullah Ibn Saba Part 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَاٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Agitation Against Uthman

Sayf alleged that the main reason behind the agitation against Uthman was Abdullah Ibn Saba. He provoked Muslims of different towns and provinces such as Basra, Kufa, Syria, and Egypt, to rush to Medina and to kill Uthman since he believed Uthman had occupied the seat of 'Ali. Sayf also alleged that the companions inside Medina such as Talha and Zubair did not oppose Uthman.

Similar to his other allegations, this allegation of Sayf Ibn Umar about Abdullah Ibn Saba has NOT been reported by any other reporters. No trace of Ibn Saba can be found on the issue of agitation against Uthman, except through Sayf. In fact, other authorities have a totally the opposite story.

Should a reader of Islamic history be liberated from his emotion toward or against the third Caliph, he can be assured that the call for a revolt against Uthman did not start in Basra, Kufa, Syria, or Egypt. The weakness of Uthman in handing the affairs of the State caused many companions to oppose him.

This naturally resulted in a power struggle among the influential companions in Medina. Sunni historians such as al-Tabari, Ibn Athir, and al-Baladhuri and many others provide traditions (reported by other than Sayf) which confirm that the agitation against the Caliph started right inside Medina by some influential individuals among the companions. These companions were the first who asked the other companions, resided in other cities, to join them in revolt against Uthman. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari reported:

When the people saw what Uthman was doing, the companions of the Prophet in Medina wrote to other companions who were scattered throughout the frontier provinces: "You have gone forth but to struggle in the path of Almighty God, for the sake of Muhammad's religion. In your absence the religion of Muhammad has been corrupted and forsaken. So come back to reestablish Muhammad's religion."Thus, they came from every direction until they killed the Caliph (Uthman).

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p184

In fact al-Tabari quoted the above paragraph form Muhammad Ibn Is'haq Ibn Yasar al-Madani who is the most celebrated Sunni Historian and the author of "Sirah Rasool-Allah".

History (reported by other than Sayf) testifies that those influential people who were the key element in agitation against Uthman include Talha, Zubair, Aisha (the mother of believers), Abdurrahman Ibn Ouf, and Amr Ibn al-Aas.

a) Talha

Talha Ibn Ubaydillah was one of the biggest agitator against Uthman and was the one who plotted his murder. He then used that incident for revenge against 'Ali by starting the first civil war in the history of Islam (i.e., the battle of Camel). I just give few paragraphs from both of al–Tabari and Ibn Athir to prove my point. Here is the first one which is narrated by Ibn Abbas (in some manuscripts it is Ibn Ayyash):

I entered Uthman's presence (During the agitation against Uthman) and talked with him for an hour. He said: "Come Ibn Abbas/Ayyash," and he took me by the hand and had me listen to what the people were saying at his door. We heard some say, "what are you waiting for," while others were saying, "wait, perhaps he will repent."

While the two of us were standing there (behind the door and listening), Talha Ibn Ubaydillah passed by and said: "Where is Ibn Udays?"He was told, "He is over there."Ibn Udays came to (Talha) and whispered something with him, and then went back to his associates and said: "Do not let anyone go in (to the house of Uthman) to see this man or leave his house."

Uthman said to me: "These are the orders of Talha."He continued, "O God! Protect me from Talha for he has provoked all these people against me. By God, I hope nothing will come of it, and that his own blood will be shed. Talha has abused me unlawfully. I heard the Messenger of God said: 'The blood of a Muslim is lawful in three cases: apostasy, adultery, and the one who kills except in legitimate retaliation for another.' So why should I be killed?"Ibn Abbas/Ayyash continued: I wanted to leave (the house), but they blocked my path until Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr who was passing by requested them to let me go, and they did so.

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 199-200

The Sayf's claim is shattered into pieces when its is compared with any other reports similar to above. The above report gives evidence to the fact that Uthman himself knew companions like Talha were doing all this to him, and not the personage of Abdullah Ibn Saba. Do these mercenaries claim that they understand the situation better than the Caliph Uthman while they were born centuries after the incident? The following report also supports that the murder of Uthman was led by Talha, and the killers came out to inform their leader that they took care of Uthman:

Abzay said: I witnessed the day they went in against Uthman. They entered the house through an opening in the residence of Amr Ibn Hazm. There was a skirmishing and they got in. By God, I have not forgotten that Sudan Ibn Humran came out and I heard him say: "Where is Talha Ibn Ubaydillah? We have killed Ibn Affan!"

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p200

Uthman was besieged in Medina while Imam 'Ali (as) was in Khaibar. The Imam (as) came to Medina and found people gathering at the residence of Talha.

Then Imam 'Ali (as) went to met Uthman. Ibn Athir wrote:

Uthman said to 'Ali: "You owe me my Islamic right and the right of brotherhood and relationship. If I have non of these rights and if I were in pre-Islamic era, it would be still shame for a descendants of Abd Munaf (of whom both 'Ali and Uthman are descendants) to let a man of Tyme (Talha) rob us of our authority." 'Ali said to Uthman: "You shall be informed of what I do." Then 'Ali went to Talha's house. There were a lot of people there. 'Ali spoke to Talha saying: "Talha, what is this condition in which you have fallen?" Talha replied: "O' Abul Hasan! it is to late!"

Sunni reference: al-Kamil, by Ibn Athir, v3, p84

Tabari also reports the following conversation between Imam 'Ali and Talha during the siege over Uthman:

'Ali said to Talha: "I ask you by Allah to send people away from (attacking) Uthman." Talha replied: "No, by God, not until the Umayad voluntarily submit to what is right." (Uthman was the head of Umayad).

Reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p235

Talha even deprived Uthman of water:

Abdurrahman Ibn al-Aswad said: "I constantly saw 'Ali avoiding (Uthman) and not acting as he formerly had. However, I know that he spoke with Talha when Uthman was under siege, to the effect that water skins should be taken to him. 'Ali was extremely upset (from Talha) about that until finally water skins were allowed to reach Uthman."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 180-181

To know why Imam 'Ali (as) deserted Uthman, see the traditions close to the end of this article.

Furthermore, the historians confirm that those who plotted his killing, did not let the body of Uthman be buried in a Muslim Cemetery, and that he was finally buried in a Jew Cemetery called "Hashsh Kawkab", without washing and without a shroud. (See History of al–Tabari, English version, v15, pp 246–250). If Jews were doing all that, they wouldn't permit to bury him in their own Cemetery!!! After Muawiyah came

to power, he joint that Jew Cemetery to al-Baqi including the land between them. (See History of Tabari, English version, v15, pp 246-250).

b) Aisha

Talha was not the only collaborator against Uthman. Sunni history tells us that his cousin, Aisha (the mother of believers), was collaborating and campaigning against Uthman as well. The following paragraph also from the History of al–Tabari shows the cooperation of Aisha with Talha in overthrowing Uthman:

While Ibn Abbas was setting out for Mecca, he found Aisha in al-Sulsul (seven miles south of Medina). Aisha said: "O' Ibn Abbas, I appeal to you by God, to abandon this man (Uthman) and sow doubt about him among the people, for you have been given a sharp tongue. (By the current siege over Uthman) people have shown their understanding, and light is raised to guide them. I have seen Talha has taken the possession of the keys to the public treasuries and storehouses. If he becomes Caliph (after Uthman), he will follow the path of his parental cousin Abu–Bakr. "Ibn Abbas said: "O' Mother (of believers), if something happens to that man (i.e., Uthman), people would seek asylum only with our companion (namely, 'Ali). "Aisha replied: "Be quiet! I have no desire to defy or quarrel with you."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 238-239

Many Sunni historian reported that Once Aisha went to Uthman and asked for her share of inheritance of Prophet (after so many years passed from the death of Prophet). Uthman refrained to give Aisha any money by reminding her that she was one those who testified and encouraged Abu–Bakr to refrain to pay the share of inheritance of Fatimah (sa). So if Fatimah does not have any share of inheritance, then why should she? Aisha became extremely angry at Uthman, and came out saying:

"Kill this old fool (Na'thal), for he is unbeliever."

Sunni references:

- History of Ibn Athir, v3, p206
- Lisan al-Arab, v14, p141
- al-lqd al-Farid, v4, p290
- Sharh al-Nahj, by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v16, pp 220-223

As we can see, the main figures in plotting against Uthman are some highly influential individuals, like Talha and Aisha. These Sunni reports are in clear contradiction with the reports related to Abdullah Ibn Saba, which were made up to cover up for those individuals centuries after the incident.

Another Sunni historian, al-Baladhuri, in his history (Ansab al-Ashraf) said that when the situation became extremely grave, Uthman ordered Marwan Ibn al-Hakam and Abdurrahman Ibn Attab Ibn Usayd

to try to persuade Aisha to stop campaigning against him. They went to her while she was preparing to leave for pilgrimage, and they told her:

"We pray that you stay in Medina, and that Allah may save this man (Uthman) through you." Aisha said: "I have prepared my means of transportation and vowed to perform the pilgrimage. By God, I shall not honor your request... I wish he (Uthman) was in one of my sacks so that I could carry him. I would then through him into the sea."

Sunni reference: Ansab al-Ashraf, by al-Baladhuri, part 1, v4, p75

Certainly the revolution against Uthman "started "in Medina, and not in Basra, Kufa, and Egypt. The prominent people of Medina are the ones who first wrote to those outside Medina and instigated them against Uthman. To say that a Jew, named Ibn Saba, is the one who inspired people to revolt against the Caliph is not logical unless we accept that he was the one who also inspired Aisha, Talha, and Zubair to revolt. But those who speak of Ibn Saba and his role, do not include Aisha and people of her position as the followers of Ibn Saba.

The alleged role of Ibn Saba, in the revolt against Uthman, would also be credible if we were to say that Ibn Saba was the one who persuaded the Caliph to follow a path contrary to the first two Caliphs, and that he was the one who advised Uthman to give Islamic funds to his relatives and appoint them governors of Islamic provinces.

The manner in which Uthman conducted the affairs of the Islamic states gave Aisha, Talha, and Zubair and others, a reason to provoke Muslims against Uthman. However those who attribute the revolution against Uthman to Ibn Saba, do not accept that Ibn Saba was the one who advised Uthman to follow that wrong policy.

They are right, because that alleged Jew with such achievements never existed except in the imagination of Sayf Ibn Umar al–Tamimi and those who quoted from him. A few (less than 15) traditions (which are not even in any authentic Sunni books nor in any reliable Shi'a books) related to Abdullah Ibn Saba narrated by people other than Sayf give a totally different story in compare with Sayf's heavy documentation which is being distributed everywhere. These traditions do not mention the presence of Ibn Saba in the revolt against Uthman.

c) Amr Ibn al-Aas

It is amazing that such an important role in the revolution against Uthman is attributed to a Jew for whose existence neither Shi'a nor Sunni have any strong evidence. Yet historians forget the important role which was played by a person well known in Islamic history, namely Amr Ibn al–Aas. He was more intelligent and more clever than any Jew ever existed in that era.

Amr had all the reasons to conspire against the Caliph, and he had all the abilities to instigate most of

the people of Medina against him. Amr Ibn al-Aas was one of the most dangerous agitators against Uthman. He was the governor of Egypt during the reign of the second Caliph.

However, the third Caliph dismissed him and replaced him with his foster brother, Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sharh. As a result of this, Amr became extremely hostile towards Uthman. He returned to Medina and started a malicious campaign against Uthman, accusing him of many wrong doings.

Uthman blamed Amr and spoke to him harshly. This made Amr even more bitter. He used to meet Zubair and Talha and conspire against Uthman. He used to meet pilgrims and inform them of the numerous deviations of Uthman. According to Tabari, when Uthman was besieged, Amr settled in the palace of al-Ajlan and used to ask from people about the situation of Uthman:

...Amr had not left his seat before a second rider passed by. Amr called him out: "How is Uthman doing?"The man replied: "He has been killed."Amr then said: "I am Abu Abdillah. When I scratch an ulcer, I cut it off. (i.e., when I desire an object, I attain it). I have been provoking (people) against him, even the shepherd on the top of mountains with his flock."Then Salamah Ibn Rawh said to him: "You, the Quraishites, have broken a strong tie between yourselves and the Arabs. Why did you do that?"Amr replied: "We wanted to draw the truth out of the pit of falsehood, and to have people be on an equal footing as regards the truth."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 171-172

The divider of Muslims ignored what is well known in the history of Islam which was reported by important Sunni reporters. The revolt against Uthman was as a result of the efforts of prominent personalities in Medina, such as Aisha, Talha, Zubair, Aburrahman Ibn Ouf, and Amr Ibn al-Aas. Instead of attributing the revolution to real people who rebelled against Uthman, the dividers of Muslims refuse to accept the truth or to mention it. They attribute the revolution to a fictitious Jew, relying on the reports of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi, a man who was accused by prominent Sunni scholars to be a man of lies and innovations. They chose to accept Sayf's report in order to cover up for the Caliph, Aisha, Talha, and Zubair. It is even more amazing that Aisha, Talha, and Zubair, and Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan fought Imam 'Ali in two wars, unprecedented in the history of Islam, yet non of them accused the followers of Imam 'Ali to be students of Ibn Saba.

Sunni history books and Sunni collections of traditions clearly state that Muawiyah commanded all the Imams of the mosques throughout the Muslim world to curse Imam 'Ali in every Friday prayer. If the fictitious Jew, Ibn Saba, had any small role in the revolt against Uthman, Muawiyah would have made it the main topic of his defamation campaign against the Imam and his supporters.

He would have publicized throughout the world that those who killed Uthman were the student of Abdullah Ibn Saba, and that they were ones who brought 'Ali to power. However neither Muawiyah nor Aisha took this route, because such stories attributed to Ibn Saba was invented by Sayf Ibn Umar who lived in the second century after Hijrah, long after their death.

The murder of Uthman provided a nice scapegoat for those who were fighting over more power, while serving under the government of Uthman. They were mainly his relatives, the Umayads such as Muawiyah and Marwan, who thoroughly took advantage of Uthman's life as well as his death. The story of Ibn Saba in this regard has served to cover the face of those powerhungry individuals, and yet another way to attack Imam 'Ali and his true followers.

Few Reasons Behind The Revolt Against Uthman

The Third Caliph, Uthman, was given the allegiance of the people with the stipulation that he would manage the affairs of the nation according to the book of God and the teachings of the Prophet (S). He was to follow the method of Abu Bakr and Umar, if there was no instruction from the Qur'an or the Prophet.

It is well–known that the first two caliphs lived simple lives. They did not give members of their clans a preference over other people, nor did they appoint any of their relatives to prominent positions in the State. Uthman, on the other hand, had his own opinions. He allowed himself to live luxuriously. He put members of his clan (Umayad) in prominent and strong positions in the State, preferring them over other Muslims, without monitoring their affairs. However, his relatives were not righteous.

Perhaps Uthman thought that his preference towards them was in accordance with the Book of God because Qur'an urges people to be kind to their relatives! This method of handing the affairs of the State did not please many companions. They found it extravagant and extreme.

The Companions criticized the Caliph for the following issues:

1. He brought his uncle, al-Hakam Ibn Abi al-Aas (son of Umayyah, son of Abd Shams), to Medina after the Prophet had exiled him from Medina. It was reported that al-Hakam used to hide and listen to the words of the Prophet as he spoke secretly to prominent companions, and then circulated what he heard. He used to imitate and ridicule the Prophet in the way he walked. The Prophet one time looked at him while he was being imitated and said: "This way you will be."al-Hakam immediately started shaking and continued that way until he died. It is also reported that:

One day, while sitting with some of his companions, the Messenger of God said, "A cursed man will enter the room." Shortly thereafter, al-Hakam entered. (He was the cursed man.)

Sunni reference: al-Isti'aab, by Yusuf Ibn Abd al-Barr, v1, pp 359-360

- 2. After bringing him to Medina, Uthman gave his uncle al-Hakam 300,000 Dirhams.
- 3. He made Marwan, son of al-Hakam, his highest assistant and top advisor, giving him influence equal to his own. Marwan bought a fifth of the revenues of the North Africa for 500,000 Dinars!!! However, he did not pay this amount. The Caliph allowed him to keep the money. This amount was equal to ten

million dollars!!!

Imam 'Ali (as) frequently reminded Uthman about the danger of Marwan, but in vain. The following conversation between Imam 'Ali and Uthman testifies this fact. It happened when Uthman was being attacked, and thus he asked 'Ali for help. Uthman said to Imam 'Ali:

"You see the trouble caused by this band of dissidents when they came to me today. I know that you enjoy prestige among people and that they will listen to you. I want you to go to them and send them away from me. I do not wish them to come before me, for that would be an insulting act toward me on their part. Let others hear this as well." 'Ali said: "On what grounds shall I send them away?"

Uthman replied: "On the grounds that I shall carry out what you have counseled me to do and you thought right, and I will not deviate from you direction." Then 'Ali said: "In fact I have spoken to you time after time, and you and I discussed such matters at length.

All this is the doing of Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, Saeed Ibn al-Aas, Ibn Amir, and Muawiyah. You have listened to them and defied me. "Uthman said: "then I shall defy them and listen to you."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p173

Then Imam 'Ali spoke to people and asked them to go away from Uthman, and thus many of them retreated. Then Imam came to Uthman and informed him that people are gone, and said:

"Make a statement which the people will testify that they have heard from you, and God will be witness as to whether or not you desire to repent in your heart."

Thus, Uthman went out and preached the sermon in which he laid before the people his heartfelt desire to repent, and said: "By God, O people, if any one of you has blamed (me), he has not done anything that is unknown to me. I have done nothing unknowingly. But my soul has raised vain hopes within me and lied to me, and my virtue has slipped away from me. ...I ask God's forgiveness for what I have done and I turn to him. A man like me yearns to repent."

Then people had pity on him, and some among them wept. Saeed Ibn Zayd stood up before him (Uthman) and said: "O commander of faithful, (from now on) no one comes to you who does not support you. Fear God, in your soul fear God, and fulfill what you have said!"

When Uthman descended (from the pulpit), he found Marwan Ibn al-Hakam and Seed Ibn al-Aas, and a few other Umayad at his house. Marwan said: "Should I speak (to people) or remain silent?"Uthman's wife said: "Nay! Be silent, for they will kill him of sin. He has made a public statement from which he can not rightfully withdraw."Marwan said: "What does this have to do with you?"

Then Marwan said to Uthman: "To persist in an error for which you must seek God's forgiveness is better that to repent because you are afraid. If you so will, you may seek repentance without acknowledging error." Uthman said: "Go out and speak to them, for I am ashamed to do so."

So Marwan went (to people) and said: "Why have you gathered here like looters? ... You have come to snatch our power (Mulk; kingship) from us. Go! By God, if you mean us (any harm), you will encounter something distasteful from us, and you will not praise the result of your opinions. Return to your homes, for by God we are not men to be robbed of our possessions."

People informed 'Ali of the news. Then 'Ali came to Uthman and said: "Surely you have satisfied Marwan (again), but he is satisfied with you only if you deviate from your religion and reason, like a camel carrying a litter that is led around at will. By God, Marwan is devoid of sense in regard to his religion and his soul. I swear by God, I think he will bring you in and then not send you out again.

After this visit, I will not come again to chide you. You have destroyed your own honor and you have been robbed of your authority."When 'Ali departed, Uthman's wife told him: "I have heard that 'Ali said to you that he will never return to you, and that you have obeyed Marwan (again), who leads you wherever he wishes."

Uthman said: "What shall I do?" She responded: "You should fear God alone, who has no partner, and you should adhere to the practice of your two predecessors (Abu Bakr and Umar). For if you obey Marwan, he will kill you. Marwan enjoys no prestige among the people, and inspires neither awe nor love. People have only abandoned you due to Marwan's position (in your councils). Send to 'Ali, then, and trust in his honesty and uprightness. He is related to you and he is not a man whom people disobey. "So Uthman sent to 'Ali, but he refused to come, saying: "I told him I would not return."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 176-179

On the death of Uthman, Imam 'Ali (as) said: By God! I have persisted in defending him (Uthman) until I was filled with shame. But Marwan, Muawiyah, Abdullah Ibn Amir, and Sa'd Ibn al-Aas have dealt with him as you witnessed. When I gave him sincere counsel and directed him to send them away, he became suspicious of me, until what you now see has happened.

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p198

Marwan and his descendants were the basis for some of the most serious charges of corruption and nepotism levied against Uthman. Marwan, of course, ultimately seized the Caliphate and ascended the throne in year 64/684, and was the lineal ancestor of all succeeding Umayad kings in Damascus as well as the Amirs of Cordoba till after 756 AD.

4. The Caliph appointed his foster brother, Abdullah Ibn Sa'd, as the governor of Egypt. At that time, Egypt was the largest province in the Muslim State. Ibn Sa'd had declared his Islam and moved from Mecca to Medina. The Prophet listed him as a recorder of the revelation. However, Ibn Sa'd then deserted the faith and returned to Mecca. He used to say: "I shall reveal equal to what God revealed to Muhammad."

When Mecca was conquered, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to kill Ibn Sa'd. He was to be killed even if he was found tying himself to the cloth of the Ka'aba. Ibn Sa'd hid himself at the house of Uthman. When the situation calmed down, Uthman brought Ibn Sa'd to the Prophet and informed him that he had put Ibn Sa'd under his protection. The Prophet remained silent for a long while, hoping that one of those who were present, would kill Ibn Sa'd before he honors Uthman's request. The companions, however, did not understand what the Prophet meant by his long silence. Since no one moved to kill Ibn Sa'd, the Prophet approved the protection of Uthman.

5. The Caliph Uthman appointed Walid Ibn Aqabah (one of his Umayad relatives) as the governor of Kufa after dismissing the previous governor, the famous companion of Prophet, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas. Sa'd was a famous marksman known for combating the enemies of Islam in the Battle of Uhud.

On the other hand, the behavior of Walid during the time of the Prophet was not honorable. Qur'an discredited him and called him a transgressor. For instance, the Messenger sent him to Bani al–Mustalaq to collect their Zakat. Walid witnessed from a distance that Mustalaqites coming toward him on their horses.

He became frightened due to a previous hostility between the Mustalaqites and him. He returned to the Messenger of God and informed him that the Mustalaqites wanted to kill him. This was not true. However, Walid's information infuriated the Muslims of Medina, and they wanted to attack the Mustalaqites. At this time, the following revelation came down:

"O you who believe, if a transgressor comes to you with news, try to verify it, lest you inflict damage on people unwittingly; then you may consequently regret your hasty action."

Walid continued in his non–Islamic way for the rest of his life. He used to drink wine and several witnesses testified to the Caliph that they had witnessed Walid drunk while leading a congregational prayer!!! Upon the testimony of good witnesses, Walid was lashed eighty times and was dismissed by the Caliph. The Caliph was expected to replace this transgressor with a good companion of the Prophet but, instead, he replaced Walid with Saeed Ibn al–Aas, another member of his Umayad relatives!

The following dialog between Imam 'Ali (as) and Uthman, is also written in the History of al-Tabari which gives more insight to the situation of Uthman long before his murder:

People gathered and talked to 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Thus 'Ali went to Uthman and said:

People came to me, and they have spoken to me about you. ... Remember God! You will be not awarded your sight after you become blind, by God!, nor you are being instructed after you were in ignorance. Verily the Path is manifest and clear, and the signs of true religion are standing upright.

Know, Uthman, that the best servant in the eyes of God, is a just Imam (leader), one who has been guided to the way, and who himself gives the right guidance (to people), for he upholds the true Sunnah and destroys rejected innovations. By God, every thing is clear. Sound and true Sunnah stands clearly, as do blameworthy innovations.

The worst Imam in the eyes of God, is a tyrannical leader, the one who has gone astray himself, and by whom others are led astray, for he destroys a true Sunnah and revives a rejected innovation.

Verily I heard the messenger of Allah saying: 'In The Day of Resurrection, the tyrannical leader will be brought while he will have no helper and no advocate, so that he will be cast to the Hell, and he will be turning about in Hell as the mill turns, and he then will plunge into the fiery flood of Hell.'

I tell you (Uthman), to be aware of God and His sudden assault and His retaliation, for His punishment is harsh and painful indeed. I tell you to beware lest you be the murdered leader of this community. Indeed it is said that a leader will be killed in this community, and its bloody strife will be loosed upon it until the day of rising (of Imam Mahdi), and its affairs will become hopelessly entangled. It will leave people as sects, and they will not see the truth due to the great height of falsehood. They will toss therein like waves and wander in confusion.

Then Uthman replied:

By God, I knew that (people) would be saying what you have said. But by God, if you were in my place, I would not have blame you nor left you in the lurch nor shamed you nor behaved unfairly. If I have favored my relatives, and appointed them as governors, some of them are those whom Umar used to appoint. I appeal you by God, O 'Ali, do you know that al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah is not there? 'Ali said: Yes.

Then Uthman said: Do you know that Umar made him a governor? 'Ali said: Yes. Then Uthman said: So why do you blame me for having appointed him Amir, simply because he is my relative?

Then 'Ali said:

I would tell you that every one appointed by Umar, was kept under close inspection by him, and Umar would trample on his ear. If Umar would hear a single word concerning him, he would flog him and punish him with the utmost severity. But you do not do that. You have been weak and easygoing with your relatives. Uthman said: They are your relatives as well. 'Ali replied: By my life, they are closely related to me, but merit is found in other people.

Then Uthman said:

Do you know that Umar was the one who kept Muawiyah in the office throughout his entire reign, and I have only done the same.

Then 'Ali said:

I ask you by Allah, do you know that Muawiyah was more afraid of Umar than was Umar's own slave, Yarfa? Uthman said: Yes. 'Ali continued: Now it has been reached to the point that Muawiyah makes decisions on the issues without consulting you, and you know it.

Muawiyah says to people "This is Uthman's command", and you hear of this, but you do not denounce him.

Then 'Ali left Uthman, and Uthman went out on his heels. Then Uthman ascended the pulpit and said:

By God, you have surely blamed me for things like those you accepted from Umar. But he trampled you underfoot, smote you with his hand, and subdued you by his tongue, and thus you submitted to him whether you liked it or not. But I have been lenient with you. I let you step on my shoulders while I restrained my hand and tongue, and therefore you have been rude toward me. By God, I am stronger in the number of relatives, and have allies closer at hand, and possess more supporters.

I have appointed your peers over you. But you have attributed to me a nature that I do not possess. Restrain your tongue from slandering your rulers... By God! I have achieved no less than my predecessors or those about whom you have not disagreed. There is a surplus wealth, so why should I not do as I wish with the surplus?

Otherwise why did I become leader?

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 141-144

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