

On the Companions Who Murdered Uthman

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A Wahhabi mentioned:

Amirul Mu'mineen Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan Radiya Allahu 'anhu Siffin

Muawiya felt that the killers of Amirul Mumineen Uthmaan RA (the fathers of Shiasm) should not be allowed to continue their evil against Islaam. He did not fight for personal power.

'Ali did not hand over these assassins to Muawiya due to some sound and concrete proof that he possessed. Thus the people of Shaam joined forces with Muawiya against 'Ali."

It is not surprising that this Wahhabi has overlooked what the Messenger of Allah (S) said about the fate of those who will fight Imam 'Ali (as) which are recorded in what they call Sahih books, and stick to what is fabricated by the Leader of the Hypocrites (Amir al-Munafiqeen) Muawiyah (LA) himself. After all, I should not expect from their Wahhabi mentors to do better than that for bread and butter.

The claim that Muawiyah raised against the legitimate Caliph of his time and killed thousands of Muslims to take revenge from the murderers of Uthman is a flat-out lie! Had Muawiyah this in mind, he should first kill the commander of his army and many of his assistants for the Sunni history testifies that those who killed Uthman were the companions who were on the side of Muawiyah (as well as other opponents of Imam 'Ali).

The fact is that any deceitful power-hungry leader needs to provide an excuse for his horrible acts, and this was not unique to Muawiyah. As we can see in the following Sunni references, those who agitated against Uthman were ones who came first to revenge for his blood with one aim in their mind, that was destroying the rule of Imam 'Ali (as).

Sunni historians confirm that the agitation against the Caliph started by some influential individuals among the companions. 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 which confirm that 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 from Muhammad Ibn Is'haq Ibn Yasar al-Madani who is the most celebrated Sunni Historian and the author of "Sirah Rasool-Allah".

History 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 (the army commander of Muawiyah).

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 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 meet Uthman. Ibn Athir wrote:

Uthman said to 'Ali: "You owe me my Islamic right and the right of brotherhood and relationship. If I have none of these rights and if I were in pre-Islamic era, it would be still shame for a descendant 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 too 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 Umayyad voluntarily submit to what is right." (Uthman was the head of Umayyad).

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

Now let us take a look at a report from the battle of Camel which has been mentioned in numerous Sunni books of History and Hadith. The following report proves that even the Umayyad leaders such as Marwan who (along side with Talha) was fighting against Imam 'Ali, knew that Talha and Zubair were the killers of Uthman. Sunni scholars recorded that Yahya Ibn Sa'id narrated:

Marwan Ibn al-Hakam who was in the ranks of Talha, saw Talha is retreating (when his army was being defeated in the battlefield). Since he and all Umayyad recognized him and al-Zubair as the murderers of Uthman, he shot an arrow at him and severely wounded him. He then said to Aban, the son of Uthman, that: "I have spared you from one of your father's murderers." Talha was taken to a ruined house in Basra where he died.

Sunni references:

- Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'ad, v3, part 1, p159
- al-Isabah, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, pp 532-533
- History of Ibn al-Athir, v3, p244
- Usdul Ghabah, v3, pp 87-88
- al-Isti'ab, Ibn Abd al-Barr, v2, p766
- History of Ibn al-Kathir, v7, p248
- A similar report is given in al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, pp 169,371

B) Al-Zubair

al-Zuhri, another important Sunni narrator who is famous for his dislike of Ahlul-Bayt, reported the following dialogue of Imam 'Ali with Zubair and Talha before the start of battle of Camel:

"'Ali said: 'Zubair, do you fight me for the blood of Uthman after you killed him? May God give the most hostile to Uthman among us the consequence which that very person dislikes.' He said to Talha:

'Talha, you have brought the wife of the Messenger of God (Aisha) to use her for war and hid your wife at your house (in Medina)! Did you not give me your allegiance?' Talha said: 'I gave you the allegiance while the sword was on my neck.'

(At this point, 'Ali tried to invite them to peace, leaving them no excuse.) 'Ali addressed his own army saying: 'Who among you will display this Qur'an and what is in it to the opposing army with the understanding that if he loses one of his hand he will hold the Qur'an with his other hand...?' A youth from Kufa said: 'I will take the mission.' 'Ali went through his army offering them the mission. Only that youth accepted it. Then 'Ali said to him: 'Exhibit this Qur'an and say to them: It is between you and us from its beginning to its end.

Remember God, and spare your blood and our blood.' As the youth called upon them to resort to the Qur'an and surrender to its judgment, the Basrites army attacked and killed him. At this time, 'Ali said to

his army: 'Now the fight has become legal.' The battle then started.

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, Arabic version, Events of year 36 AH v4, p905

As we see in the above tradition, Imam 'Ali clearly stated that Zubair was among those who killed Uthman. Had the revolted elected Talha or Zubair instead of Imam 'Ali (as) as Caliph, they would have given the killers of Uthman the biggest prize. Certainly the leaders did not seek revenge for the blood of Uthman, for they themselves were behind the plot. They only pretended to do that as a means of destroying the Imam's caliphate.

C) Aisha

Talha and Zubair were not the only collaborators against Uthman. Sunni history tells us that Talha's cousin, Aisha, 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-Iqd al-Farid, v4, p290
- Sharh Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v16, pp 220-223

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 throw him into the sea."

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

D) Amr Ibn Al-Aas

Amr Ibn al-Aas (the number 2 person in the government of Muawiyah) was one of the most dangerous agitators against Uthman and he had all the reasons to conspire against him. 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 influential companions in Medina, such as Aisha, Talha, Zubair, Aburrahman Ibn Ouf, and Amr Ibn al-Aas. 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 Umayyad, such as

Muawiyah and Marwan, who thoroughly took advantage of Uthman's life as well as his death.

Imam 'Ali said in the battle of Camel:

"Truth and falsehood can not be identified by the virtue of people. First understand the truth, you will then realize who is adhering to it."(Nahjul Balaghah, by Imam 'Ali)

إِنَّ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ لَا يَعْرِفَانِ بِأَقْدَارِ الرِّجَالِ. إِعْرِفِ الْحَقَّ تَعْرِفِ أَهْلَهُ.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia/companions-who-murdered-uthman#comment-0>