

## ‘Uthmans reign

The virtuous powers received the reign of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan with very much anxiety, grief, and disorder. They considered the success of ‘Uthman in coming to power to have been a triumph for the Umayyad family whose members did not spare a single effort in antagonizing Islam, fighting against it, and plotting against Muslims.

Muslims feared the Umayyads and anticipated that they would ruin the faith. Not long, the Umayyads controlled all the systems of ‘Uthman’s government and utilized the economy for their personal interests, spreading poverty and chaos all over the territories of the Islamic State.

Once ‘Uthman was paid homage by Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf as the next caliph, the Umayyads and their allies from the worthless tribes of Quraysh surrounded him and carried him to the Prophet’s Mosque like a bride carried to her new house. Openly, they declared their full support of ‘Uthman’s government and hailed him.

When he ascended the minbar, ‘Uthman sat in the very place where the Holy Prophet (S), neither Abu-Bakr nor ‘Umar, used to sit. This aroused the suspicions of some attendants who thus said to themselves, ‘Today, evil has been born.’<sup>1</sup>

People gathered to listen to what ‘Uthman would say in his first speech to open his political program. Because of the crowds, ‘Uthman stammered and did not know what to say. After big efforts, he could come out with these interrupted and disordered words:

‘To begin with, the first ride is always difficult. I have never been a good speaker before. Allah will know that. Surely, a man between whom and Adam is only a dead father is in need for preaching!’

He then descended the minbar fearful.

It is obvious that these words are incoherent; therefore, the attendants began to ridicule and mock at ‘Uthman. That was one of the bad consequences of the shura system, which was a hard trial for Muslims. See how the commander of eloquence and the pioneer of wisdom and justice in Islam (i.e.

Imam Ali) was eliminated from this position; while 'Uthman was imposed on Muslims as their ruler.

Historicists unanimously agree that 'Uthman was weak-willed, ill-determined, and incapable of overcoming the events. The tyrants from the Banu-Umayyah clan laid hold of him and put him under their disposition. All over his reign, 'Uthman could not adopt a single positive situation against the desires and tendencies of the Umayyads.

Depicting 'Uthman's situation, a modern writer says, 'He was just like a dead body before its washer; he had neither might nor power.'

The one in charge of the affairs of 'Uthman's government was Marwan ibn Al-Hakam who ruled all the details of this government.

To Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, the actual ruler in 'Uthman's government was Marwan, while 'Uthman was no more than a name for caliphate.

Seeking to defend 'Uthman, some historicists described him as extremely compassionate, lenient, soft, and kind.

In fact, 'Uthman used these descriptions with his relatives and family members only. On the other hand, he was extremely rude and coarse with those who opposed his policy. For instance, 'Uthman banished Abu-Dharr, the great reformist, to Syria and then to a village called Al-Rabadhah, placing him under house arrest there.

As a result, Abu-Dharr died there hungry and strange, while 'Uthman possessed the gold of the earth, which he spent so extravagantly on the members of the Umayyah and the Abi-Ma'it families.

He also persecuted 'Ammar ibn Yasir physically until he was affected with hernia. Then, the constables of 'Uthman threw 'Ammar in the street while he was fainted.

The whips of 'Uthman's constabulary burnt the body of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud who was then deprived of the allowances.

Thus was the policy of 'Uthman with those who opposed him.

'Uthman was well-known for his great love for and loyalty to his family members. Once, he declared that he wished he had the key to Paradise in his hand so that he would certainly give it to the Umayyads.

When he came to power, 'Uthman gave his family members the fortunes of the state exclusively, gifted them millions, and appointed them as the governors of the territories and regions of the Islamic State.

Although he used to receive information about their deviation from the truth, spread of corruption and mischief in the lands, and inclination to worldly pleasures, 'Uthman did not expose them to the least amount of investigation or interrogation. This was one of the major reasons that made people revolt

against him and then assassinate him.

‘Uthman was extremely inclined to luxury and lavishness. He built many palaces and enriched himself profligately from the public treasury.

‘Uthman used to flatter the chiefs of tribes and the celebrated persons at the expense of the religious laws. When Abu-Lu’lu’ah assassinated ‘Umar, ‘Ubaydullah the son of ‘Umar killed Al-Hurmuzan, Abu-Lu’lu’ah’s friend and then killed Jufaynah, Abu-Lu’lu’ah’s daughter.

Of course, this was an inexcusable murder whose penalty is reTalibation (i.e. an eye for an eye) unless the heir of the victim forgives or accepts a financial compensation. Nevertheless, ‘Uthman closed this file and released ‘Ubaydullah as a sort of favoritism to the family of ‘Umar.

When Imam Ali (‘a) demanded ‘Uthman to follow the penal procedures in such cases, ‘Uthman paid no attention at all. Instead, he ordered ‘Ubaydullah to leave to Al-Kufah where he gave him a very spacious land.

## Governmental offices in ‘Uthman’s reign

‘Uthman entrusted all the governmental offices to his family members and his relatives the Umayyads and the members of the Abi-Ma’it family although none of these was qualified enough to occupy such positions. Besides, they had no acquaintance with the laws of Islam; rather, they did not hesitate to violate any religious law when it contradicted their personal interests.

For instance, ‘Uthman’s first deputy governor of Al-Basrah district; namely, Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari, allowed one of his officials to trade in the sustenance of people.[2](#)

When ‘Uthman removed Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari from the deputy governorship of Al-Basrah, he appointed Abdullah ibn ‘Amir ibn Kurayz, his maternal cousin, instead. This man was known for extravagance and reckless spending.[3](#)

Having been fed up with the behaviors of their governor Abdullah, the people of Al-Basrah sent ‘Amir ibn Abdullah as their delegate to ‘Uthman to demand him with accepted behaviors. When he met the caliph, ‘Amir said, ‘Some Muslims met to assess your deeds. They concluded that you have committed grand sins. So, I advise you to fear Allah, repent to him, and retreat from these sins.’

Despising the man, ‘Uthman said to those who were present at him, ‘Look at this man! People claim that he is a good reciter of the Quran. How can he be so while he has come to me to discuss insignificant matters with me? By Allah, this man does not know where Allah is.’

‘Amir replied, ‘Do you claim that I do not know where Allah is?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ ‘Uthman answered.

‘Amir said, ‘I know for sure that Allah is as a guardian on a watch-tower.’[4](#)

This word angered 'Uthman very much that he held a conference with his consultants and discussed with them the question of the objections to his policy. His cousin Abdullah ibn 'Amir suggested that he should take strict procedures against them. 'Uthman accepted this suggestion although others suggested other more reasonable solutions.

However, Abdullah ibn 'Amir kept this office to the last of 'Uthman's reign. When 'Uthman was assassinated, Abdullah robbed the public treasury and left to Makkah, where he joined the gang of Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and 'A'ishah and advised them to march toward Al-Basrah.[5](#)

Another example of 'Uthman's officials is Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah. 'Uthman dismissed Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas from the deputy governorship of Al-Kufah and appointed Al-Walid in his place. This man was one of the most corrupt and the most impudent personalities of the family of Umayyah.

The Holy Prophet (S) predicted that this man would be sent to Hellfire.[6](#) His father, 'Uqbah, was one of the most annoying enemies of the Holy Prophet (S), since he used to pollute the door of the Prophet's house with dung.[7](#) In the Battle of Badr, this man was taken as prisoner. Once the Holy Prophet (S) saw him, he ordered Imam Ali ('a) to behead him.[8](#)

Hence, Al-Walid bore indescribable rancor against the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a).

Explaining this holy verse:

***'Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal (32: 18),'***

exegetes of the Holy Quran report that the reason for the revelation of this holy Quranic verse was that a heated argument took place between Imam Ali ('a) and Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah during which the latter said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Silence! You are a body while I am an old man. By Allah, I am more eloquent than you are, better than you are in battlefields, more courageous than you are, and more effective in wars than you are.'

Answering him, Imam Ali ('a) said, '*You are no more than a transgressor.*'

Hence, Almighty Allah revealed the involved verse, describing the manners of the two in a comparative way.

When Al-Walid became the governor of Al-Kufah, he used to drink intoxicants openly. He used to spend the whole night in consuming wine with singers. He gave his drinking companion, Abu-Zayd Al-ta'i the Christian, a house he owned at the door of the mosque. This man used to walk through the lines of the performers of prayer in the mosque to reach Al-Walid.

One day, Al-Walid was heavily drunk when he led the congregational Dawn Prayer. He thus offered four units instead of two! In the genuflection and prostration of the prayer, he repeated, 'Drink and serve me with wine,' instead of the ritual statements. He then vomited wine in the niche of the mosque and sealed

the prayer. Turning his face toward those who followed him in prayer, he asked, 'May I add more units?'

A group of the virtuous personalities of Al-Kufah hurried to 'Uthman to complain about the impudent behaviors of his representative. They also brought with them the sealing ring of Al-Walid which they took from his finger while he was drunk. When they met 'Uthman, he, defending Al-Walid, asked them reproachfully, 'How you have come to be sure that he was drunk?'

They said, 'We know the wine that we used to drink before Islam.'

To confirm their testimonies, they gave 'Uthman the sealing ring of Al-Walid. Nevertheless, 'Uthman pushed them heavily and used a very obscene and rude language with them. Extremely enraged, they left 'Uthman and went toward Imam Ali's house to inform him about the incident.

Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) went to 'Uthman and said, '*You have refuted the witnesses and suspended the religious penal laws.*'

'Uthman, anticipating unwelcome consequences, asked, 'What is your opinion?'

Imam Ali ('a) said, '*My opinion is that you should summon your acquaintance (Al-Walid). If they establish testimony against him and he is unable to defend himself by providing evidence, then you must sentence him to the punishment prescribed by the religious law.*'

'Uthman had no other way but to comply with Imam Ali's opinion; he therefore wrote a letter to Al-Walid, ordering him to come to the capital. Once he received the letter, he came to Al-Madinah. Before 'Uthman, the witnesses were present. When they said their testimony, Al-Walid had no way to prove its falsity; as a result, he had to undergo the punishment of drinking wine.

Because of their fear of 'Uthman, none had the audacity to execute the punishment. Imam Ali ('a) stood up and came near Al-Walid, who reviled at the Imam ('a) and said, 'You are imperfect and unjust!' 'Aqil, the Imam's brother, stood up and answered back these insulting words.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) knocked Al-Walid down and whipped him. While 'Uthman flared up with rage, he shouted at the Imam ('a), 'You do not have the right to do this to the man.' In the logic of the religious law, Imam Ali ('a) answered, '*Yes, I do. I even have the right to do more, once this man is proven as transgressor and he has refrained from being subjected to the law of Allah.*'<sup>9</sup>

Another example of 'Uthman's officials was Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi-Sarh, 'Uthman's foster brother. Historicists agree unanimously that this man was one of the most vehement enemies of the Holy Prophet (S). He used to mock at the Holy Prophet (S) who, as a result, declared him as wanted and ordered to be killed wherever he would be found, even if he hung to the curtains of the Holy Ka'bah.

After the conquest of Makkah, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ran away and took refuge with 'Uthman who hid him for a considerable time. After the political settlement in Makkah, 'Uthman brought this man to the Holy

Prophet (S) who kept silent for a long time. Finally, the Holy Prophet (S) pardoned him. When 'Uthman left, the Holy Prophet (S) said to his companions, 'I kept silent for such a considerable time only because I wanted one of you to face this man and behead him.'

When 'Uthman appointed Abdullah ibn Sa'd as the governor of Egypt and entrusted with him the missions of leading the congregational prayers and the collection of taxes, this man used a very violent policy with the people of Egypt and showed arrogance and haughtiness. Having been extremely impatient with their ruler, the people of Egypt sent their virtuous persons as delegates to 'Uthman, complaining about him.

'Uthman, responding to them, sent a letter to Abdullah condemning his policies in Egypt. Nevertheless, the man did not respond to 'Uthman; rather, he persisted in persecution and confiscation of their properties. Then, a seven hundred-person delegation from Egypt came to 'Uthman. When they entered the capital, they resided in the Prophet's Mosque and their chief went to some Companions, complaining about 'Uthman.

Imam Ali ('a) went to 'Uthman to solve this problem. He said, 'These people are only asking you to replace Abdullah ibn Sa'd with another man. They have claimed that he had shed inviolable blood there. So, you must dismiss him and judge between them. If he is then proved guilty, you must give them back their right.'

Finally, 'Uthman had to comply with Imam Ali's request. When 'Uthman asked the Egyptian delegation to choose a man as their governor, they chose Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. So, 'Uthman had to write an official letter in this respect and sent a group of the Muhajirun and the Ansar to judge between the people of Egypt and Abdullah ibn Sa'd.

However, once the Egyptian delegation left Al-Madinah to Egypt, they, at a place known as Hams, found that 'Uthman had sent his slave Warash behind them to Egypt. When they searched the slave, they found him carrying a letter from 'Uthman to Abdullah ibn Sa'd with the handwriting of Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, asking him to persecute the people of Egypt more intensely. They therefore went back to Al-Madinah, the capital, and decided to kill 'Uthman or depose him.

Another bad example of 'Uthman's officials was Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan. This archenemy of Islam had been the ruler of Syria since the reign of 'Umar. 'Uthman fixed him in this position and paved the way to the Umayyads to come to power. Besides Syria, 'Uthman appointed Mu'awiyah as the governor of Palestine and Hims (or Homs), a district western Syria, and appointed him as the commander-in-chief of the Muslim armies.

He also allowed him to do in Syria whatever he wished. Hence, when people revolted against 'Uthman and killed him, Mu'awiyah was the strongest and the most effective of all other deputy governors. In conclusion, 'Uthman helped the Umayyads come to power more than 'Umar did.

Another example of 'Uthman's officials was Sa'id ibn Al-'As. 'Uthman appointed him as the governor of Al-Kufah after he had dismissed Al-Walid. This man was so impetuous that he did not refrain from committing any sin. He used to despise all principles and values of the religion and the society.

Before the masses, Sa'id once declared that Al-Kufah is no more than a garden owned by the people of Quraysh. This irresponsible declaration embittered the people of Al-Kufah so much that their chiefs, like Malik Al-Ashtar, condemned Sa'id, saying, 'Do you make the centers of our lances and the gifts of God to us a garden for you and your people? By Allah, if one of you tries to seize it, we will beat him so bitterly.'

In addition to Malik, the other personalities and scholars of this city revolted against Sa'id. When the police officer retorted, they beat him so heavily that he fell in a faint. They then began to spread the offenses of the people of Quraysh and the crimes of the Umayyads and 'Uthman.

Immediately, Sa'id informed 'Uthman of this revolt, and 'Uthman answered back that they should be banished to Syria. Receiving them in Syria, Mu'awiyah detained them in a church, gave them some gifts, debated with them, and recommended them to close their eyes against the misdeeds of the ruling authorities. Nevertheless, they refused to respond to him and insisted on their situation.

Having despaired of convincing them to stop criticizing the ruling authorities, Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to 'Uthman asking him to send these people back to their home town; lest, they would change the minds of the people of Syria. 'Uthman agreed and ordered them to be sent back to Al-Kufah. They did not stop exposing the misdeeds of 'Uthman and Sa'id who, as a result, asked 'Uthman to banish them to another place.

He thus ordered Sa'id to banish them to Hims whose governor treated them so violently that they had to pretend that they would obey the ruling authorities. Hence, 'Uthman ordered the deputy governor of Hims to send them back to their home town.

On their way to Al-Kufah, they turned to the capital to meet 'Uthman personally and complain to him about the physical and mental persecutions they had to suffer in Hims. When they presented themselves before 'Uthman, Sa'id surprised them there. Hence, when they complained to 'Uthman about Sa'id's misdeeds and asked him to depose him, 'Uthman refused their request and ordered them to obey Sa'id.

They then went back to Al-Kufah and decided not to let Sa'id enter their city ever again. They occupied the building of governorship and armed themselves under the command of Malik Al-Ashtar. When Sa'id came, they faced him violently and prevented him from entering the city. As a result, Sa'id went back to the capital and 'Uthman had to depose him. [10](#)

## Economical policies of ‘Uthman

In the field of economical policy, ‘Uthman followed the policy of flattering the famous personalities and giving them precedence to all others. Of course, this policy is in clear violation of the economical system of Islam, which is based on using the public treasury and allowances for meeting the financial needs of the poor and spreading luxury among all Muslims equally.

Applying this policy in his reign, Imam Ali (‘a), in an epistle to Qutham ibn Al-‘Abbas, said, *See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons with families, the distressed, the starving and the naked, at your end. Then, send the remaining to us for distribution to those who are on this side.*<sup>11</sup>

‘Uthman granted huge sums of money and abundant fortunes of the public treasury to the members of the Banu-Umayyah family, such as Al-Harith ibn Al-Hakam, <sup>12</sup> Abu-Sufyan, <sup>13</sup>Sa’id ibn Al-‘As, <sup>14</sup> Abdullah ibn Khalid, <sup>15</sup> Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah, <sup>16</sup>

Al-Hakam ibn Al-‘As whom the Holy Prophet (S) had banished to Al-ta’if because of his vehement animosity and Abu-Bakr and ‘Umar refused to allow him back in Makkah, but ‘Uthman did <sup>17</sup> and granted him huge sums of money, <sup>18</sup> and Marwan ibn Al-Hakam. <sup>19</sup>Besides, ‘Uthman granted such huge sums of money to other persons like Talhah ibn ‘Ubaydullah, <sup>20</sup> Al-Zubayr ibn Al-‘Awwam, <sup>21</sup> and Zayd ibn Thabit.<sup>22</sup>

‘Uthman also granted as fiefs huge lands to those who supported his policy. Historicists also confirm that ‘Uthman took whatever he liked from the public treasury for his family members and himself. For instance, it is said that the public treasury had contained invaluable precious stones, which ‘Uthman took for his daughters and women.<sup>23</sup> After ‘Uthman’s assassination, his treasurer had thirty million silver units and one hundred and fifty thousand gold ones.<sup>24</sup>

## Opposition to ‘Uthman

Because of this exorbitant corruption in ‘Uthman’s policies, it was natural for the virtuous Muslims to oppose and criticize him. In fact, there were two oppositionist powers against ‘Uthman; the motive of the virtuous power was ‘Uthman’s violation of the laws and spirit of Islam, while the motive of the other power, represented by ‘A’ishah, Al-Zubayr, and Talhah, was their fear for their personal interests.

The virtuous power that criticized ‘Uthman contained such righteous Companions like ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari, Abdullah ibn Mas’ud and their likes. When these persons saw ‘Uthman ruining the Prophetic practices, creating innovations in the religion, telling lies, and preferring some people over others unrightfully, they opposed him, demanding with a changeover of his policies, because they cared for nothing but serving Islam and saving Muslims from the danger of such policies.

Facing these persons, ‘Uthman exposed them to the cruelest persecutions. When ‘Uthman appropriated the precious stones of the public treasury and gave them to his daughters and women, Imam Ali (‘a) disapproved of his act and blamed him violently. ‘Ammar ibn Yasir supported Imam Ali (‘a) and rebuked ‘Uthman as well. ‘Uthman used bad language with ‘Ammar and ordered his constables to arrest and beat him so heavily that he lost consciousness and missed the MIDDAY and Afternoon Prayers.

Upon this situation, all Muslims revolted against ‘Uthman, including ‘A’ishah who took out a few hairs of the Holy Prophet (S), one of his dresses, his sandal, and declared, ‘How swift have you abandoned the practice of your Prophet, while these hairs, dress, and sandals of him have not yet been ragged!’[25](#)

When ‘Uthman banished Abu–Dharr to Al–Rabadhah (a village in current Lebanon) because of his ceaseless revolution against his policies and he died there alone, persecuted, and wronged, all Muslims felt sorry for that.

However, ‘Uthman said in the presence of a group of the Companions, ‘Well, may Allah have mercy upon him!’ Here, ‘Ammar cast some words of blame at ‘Uthman who answered ‘Ammar with the most obscene language, [26](#) expressing that he never regretted banishing Abu–Dharr. Moreover, ‘Uthman ordered his slaves to hit ‘Ammar and then to banish him to Al–Rabadhah where Abu–Dharr had departed life.

When ‘Ammar prepared himself to leave the capital to his exile, the tribe of Makhzum, the allies of ‘Ammar, came to Imam Ali (‘a) and asked him to intercede for ‘Ammar and ask ‘Uthman to cancel his decision. Imam Ali (‘a) thus said to ‘Uthman, *‘Fear Allah! You had already banished a righteous Muslim individual and he died there because of your decision of banishment. Now, do you want to banish his match?’*

These words enraged ‘Uthman who cried at the Imam (‘a), saying, ‘In fact, you are the one who must be banished!’

The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘Dare you do it?’*

Here, the Muhajirun interfered and blamed ‘Uthman for these words. Hence, he responded to them and pardoned ‘Ammar.[27](#)

Abu–Dharr–the prominent companion of the Holy Prophet (S), one of the first men who accepted Islam, one of the closest persons to the Holy Prophet (S) who used to confide his secrets to him exclusively,[28](#) one of the four persons whom Almighty Allah loved and ordered His Prophet to love,[29](#) and one of the three persons for whom Paradise longs [30](#)–did not stop criticizing ‘Uthman for the corruptive system of rule that he led, although ‘Uthman warned him against so more than once.

However, Abu–Dharr believed that it was his duty to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. He used to stop before those whom ‘Uthman granted huge fortunes from the public treasury and recite this holy

verse:

***They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom. (9:34)***

‘Uthman therefore decided to banish Abu–Dharr to Syria, which was governed by Mu’awiyah. Once Abu–Dharr saw the terrible violations of Islam committed by Mu’awiyah, he could not keep silent; rather, he revolted and criticized Mu’awiyah on many occasions.

Besides, Abu–Dharr started an enlightenment campaign in Syria through which he exposed the misdeeds of Mu’awiyah and ‘Uthman. As a result, Mu’awiyah complained about him to ‘Uthman who summoned him. Along the way to the capital, Abu–Dharr was deliberately exposed to various sorts of physical and mental persecutions.

When he was present before ‘Uthman, Abu– Dharr declared that the one and only reason for his campaigns against Mu’awiyah was that he wanted to carry out the religious duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. When ‘Uthman could not overcome this man, he turned to the attendants and said, ‘Advise me about this aged liar! Shall I beat, detain, or kill him? He has dispersed disunity among the community of the Muslims. Or should I banish him out of the Muslim lands?’

Revolting at this humiliating style, Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘O ‘Uthman! I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ‘The green skies have never shaded and the dusty lands have never carried one more truthful than Abu–Dharr.’*

However, Imam Ali’s intimation did not find any reception in the mind of ‘Uthman.

Inattentive to ‘Uthman, Abu–Dharr did not stop his campaigns against the Umayyads; therefore, ‘Uthman decided to banish him to a derelict land, and he banned bidding farewell to him. Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet’s family did not pay attention to this ban; rather, they, accompanied by ‘Ammar, saw Abu–Dharr off.

When Marwan saw them, he said to Imam Al–Hasan (‘a), ‘O Hasan! Have you not known that ‘Uthman banned bidding farewell to this man and talking to him? If you have not known, then you must now know.’

Imam Al–Hasan (‘a) despised the man and did not answer him.

Then, Imam Ali (‘a) attacked Marwan, beat the ears of his riding animal, and shouted at him, saying, *‘Make way! May Allah make way to you to Hellfire!’*

Thus, Marwan ran away for fear of Imam Ali (‘a) and informed ‘Uthman that the Holy Prophet’s Household had violated his ban.

Imam Ali (‘a) then said a word to Abu–Dharr, expressing his sorrow and shedding light on Abu–Dharr’s exceptional personality and efforts in exposing the Umayyad regime under the leadership of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, saying,

*O Abu–Dharr! You showed anger in the name of Allah therefore have hope in Him for whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (pleasure of this) world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about.*

*How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who the winner is tomorrow (on the Judgment Day) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah would open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions, they would have loved you and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum. [31](#)*

Imam Al–Hasan, Imam Al–Husayn, and ‘Ammar also said similar words to Abu–Dharr who said in reply, May Allah have mercy upon you, O the Ahl Al–Bayt! Whenever I see you, I remember the Messenger of Allah (‘a). I have neither entertainment nor company in Al–Madinah except you. I have become a source of harm for ‘Uthman in Al–Hijaz in the same way I was for Mu’awiyah in Syria.

So, he detested that I should be in the neighborhood of his brother and his maternal cousin in the two other regions (i.e. Al–Kufah and Al–Basrah); lest, I would fire up the people against them. He therefore banished me to a region where there is neither supporter nor defender to me except Allah. By Allah, I want no acquaintance save Allah with Whom I fear no loneliness at all.

On his way back from bidding farewell to Abu–Dharr, Imam Ali (‘a) was received by a group of people who notified him about ‘Uthman’s anger with him, because he had violated the ban. Carelessly, Imam Ali (‘a) replied, *‘Worthless is his anger with me.’*

‘Uthman came and shouted at the Imam (‘a), ‘What for did you dismiss my messenger?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered, *‘Marwan received me to make me go back; so I made him go back. However, I did not break your order.’*

‘Uthman asked, ‘Have you not been informed that I warned people against seeing Abu–Dharr off?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered, *‘Should we carry out any order of you, especially when obedience to Allah and following of the truth are found in breaking that order?’*

‘Uthman then requested Imam Ali (‘a) to compensate Marwan. Imam Ali (‘a) asked, *‘What for should I pay him off?’*

'Uthman said, 'You beat the ears of his riding animal.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered, *'My riding animal is nearby; if he wants to beat it in the same way as I beat his riding animal, he may do it. As for me, I swear by Allah, if he swears at me, I will definitely swear at you likewise. If I do, I will not tell a lie; rather, I will say only the truth.'*

'Uthman replied, 'Why will he refrain from swearing at you if you swear at him? By Allah, in my view, you are not better than he is!'

These words injured Imam Ali ('a), because 'Uthman put the Imam ('a) at the same level of Marwan whom the Holy Prophet (S) had described as lizard and son of a lizard, while Imam Ali ('a) occupied in the view of the Holy Prophet (S) the same standing that Prophet Aaron occupied with his brother Prophet Moses. Besides, 'Uthman forgot Imam Ali's efforts in establishing Islam and struggling for its sake.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) replied 'Uthman violently, saying, *'Do you address such words to me? Do you equate me to Marwan? By Allah, I am most surely better than you are, my father better than your father, and my mother better than your mother. These are my arrows prepared for shooting.'* [32](#)

These words silenced 'Uthman although he was extremely infuriated.

'Uthman punished not only 'Ammar and Abu-Dharr, but also other major Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. When Al-Walid borrowed much money from the public treasury, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud demanded him to give back these sums, but Al-Walid refused and wrote a letter to 'Uthman informing him about Abdullah's problem with him.

'Uthman, as usual, stood with Al-Walid and reproached Abdullah in a letter in which he said to him, 'You are but our storekeeper!' This word infuriated Abdullah so much that he threw the keys of the house of the public treasury and went back to Al-Madinah. 'Uthman was delivering a sermon when he saw Abdullah ibn Mas'ud coming towards him. He thus said, 'Here comes a worthless and evil creeping animal that vomits and excretes on his own food!'

Abdullah answered, 'I am not such; rather, I am the companion of Allah's Messenger and I participated in the Battle of Badr and paid allegiance to the Holy Prophet under that tree' etc.'

'A'ishah rushed towards 'Uthman, saying, 'Uthman! Do you say such a thing about the companion of Allah's Messenger?'

'Uthman then ordered his constables to throw Abdullah out of the mosque violently. Carrying out 'Uthman's orders, they knocked Abdullah down, causing some of his ribs to be broken.

Upon this situation, Imam Ali ('a) was so agitated that he said to 'Uthman violently, *'Do you do such a thing with the companion of Allah's Messenger for nothing than a word said by Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah?'*

‘Uthman answered, ‘No! It is not for this reason; rather, I sent Zubayd to Al- Kufah where Abdullah ibn Mas’ud said to him, ‘It is lawful to shed the blood of ‘Uthman!’”

Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘So, you have believed Zubayd’s words although he is untrustworthy.’*[33](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) then carried Abdullah ibn Mas’ud to his house and looked after him until he was restored to health.

After that, ‘Uthman parted company with Abdullah, dissociated himself from him, placed him under house arrest, and cut off his share of the allowances.

However, in Abdullah’s final ailment, ‘Uthman visited him, but could not gain his pleasure with him. In his last will, Abdullah instructed that ‘Uthman should never perform the ritual funeral prayer for his body; rather, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir should. Hence, when Abdullah departed life, his funeral processions were made by the Companions without letting ‘Uthman know about it.[34](#)

After all that, it was natural that a popular revolution would be set up against ‘Uthman. The Muhajirun and the virtuous Companions wrote a letter to the people of Egypt, appealing for their help to change the ruling regime.

In this letter, they informed the people of Egypt that ‘Uthman had distorted the Book of Allah, cancelled out the religious laws, contradicted the Quranic rules, deformed the Prophetic practices, violated the laws of Abu-Bakr and ‘Umar, misappropriated the public property, and changed the Islamic caliphate into mordacious royalty.[35](#)

They then sent another letter to the guards of the borders, informing them that they were more required to amend the religion of Prophet Muhammad (S) after it had been breached by ‘Uthman than guarding the borders.[36](#)

Other similar letters were sent to the other regions of the Muslim State. In response to the Companions’ appeal, the chiefs in the other regions sent delegations to study the situation. Hence, Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr and Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Udays Al-Balawi headed the Egyptian delegation, Malik Al- Ashtar headed the delegation of Al-Kufah, and Hakim ibn Jabalah headed the delegation of Al-Basrah.

The delegation of Egypt presented a memorandum to ‘Uthman, advising him to fear Allah, feel contrition for his fault, and try to make a new beginning based on justice and fair ruling.[37](#)

When all doors were blocked in the face of ‘Uthman, he did not find any means to save him from this ordeal but to take refuge with Imam Ali (‘a), who responded to ‘Uthman after he had made a condition on ‘Uthman that he would commit himself to the laws of the Book of Allah and the practices of the Holy Prophet (S). ‘Uthman agreed, and Imam Ali (‘a) went to the rebels carrying with him ‘Uthman’s warranty and commitment to whatever they wanted.

However, when they saw Imam Ali (‘a), they first asked him not to interfere, but the Imam (‘a) said, ‘All your requests will be guaranteed. You will be given what the Book of Allah decides, and all the matters that you have refused will be amended completely that you will no longer need to blame ‘Uthman.’

They asked, ‘Do you guarantee this for us?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ answered Imam Ali (‘a). ‘Now, we accept,’ answered they. Thus, the chiefs of the delegations, along with Imam Ali (‘a), came to ‘Uthman and asked him to change his policy into one founded on pure justice and genuine truth. ‘Uthman gave them his word.

He then signed a document guaranteeing all their demands by the assurance of Imam Ali (‘a). On this document, which was signed in the year AH 35, many prominent persons put their signatures as witnesses.

After they had received copies of this document, the delegations left to their people. Imam Ali (‘a) then asked ‘Uthman to go out and declare that he would implement whatever they wanted. ‘Uthman did and swore to Almighty Allah that he would govern them according to the laws of Allah’s Book and the practices of Allah’s Messenger. He also pledged that he would distribute the allowances fairly among them without preferring certain people to others.

Unfortunately, ‘Uthman broke his word and breached his promises. Historicists say that the reason behind this breach was that Marwan ibn Al- Hakam, after that incident, blamed ‘Uthman for giving his word to the Egyptians and asked him to declare the breach of that pledge. ‘Uthman first refused Marwan’s request, but the latter insisted so tirelessly that he convinced ‘Uthman to respond to him.

Thus, ‘Uthman gathered the people, ascended the minbar, and said, ‘These Egyptians had revolted according to a false piece of news that they had received about their leader. When they became sure that the news was false, they returned home’

‘Amr ibn Al-’As interrupted ‘Uthman and said, ‘Fear Allah, O ‘Uthman! You are bringing about perditions to yourself and to ours. Repent before Allah so that we will repent with you!’

Nevertheless, ‘Uthman swore at ‘Amr heavily and refused his advice. From all sides of the mosque where ‘Uthman delivered these words, people cried out, ‘Fear Allah, O ‘Uthman.’[38](#)

In the face of these huge condemnations, ‘Uthman collapsed and could not say any further word. He then had to declare repentance once again for he regretted what he had done.

However, ‘Uthman did not quit his corruptive policies; therefore, the rebels once more surrounded him and demanded him to quit his position. Yet, he refused and thought of seeking the help of Mu’awiyah. He therefore sent him a letter, asking for a military power to protect him from the rebels.[39](#)

Musawwar ibn Makhramah, who took the letter to Mu’awiyah, said, ‘Uthman is about to be assassinated. Look carefully into what he is asking you for in this letter.’

Ridiculing him, Mu'awiyah said, 'I avow that 'Uthman, first, acted upon what Allah and His Messenger likes and please, but he then changed; therefore, Allah changed His situation towards him. Can I now stand against what Allah has decided?'[40](#)

Thus, Mu'awiyah renounced 'Uthman and refused to respond to him in the very time of his need.

'Uthman sent similar letters to the peoples of the Muslim regions, but none of them came to help him.

The rebels then imposed siege on and surrounded 'Uthman's house, shouting him down and demanding him to resign. In the midst of this ordeal, Marwan went out and cried out at the rebels with these words: 'What do you want? It seems that you have come to usurp something. May your faces be deformed! You only want to divest us of our sovereignty. Leave us!'

These reckless words inflamed the wick of war against 'Uthman. When Marwan's words were conveyed to Imam Ali ('a), he hastened to 'Uthman and said to him,

*You have not been pleased with Marwan and he has not been pleased with you only because you deviated from your religion and your intellect, just like the riding camel, which is driven to whence its driver wants. By Allah, Marwan is not a man of (an apposite) opinion with regard to neither his religion nor his personal affairs. By Allah, I do not see but that he will involve you (in troubles) but he will help you withdraw (from them). After this situation of mine, I will never come back to blame you. You have wasted your honor and you have been betrayed.*

Then, Imam ('a) left 'Uthman while the rebels had already surrounded him. Na'ilah, 'Uthman's wife, addressed Marwan and the members of the Umayyad family, saying, 'By Allah, you will most certainly kill 'Uthman and orphan his children.'

The fires of revolution flared up after the rebels' patience had run out and 'Uthman had not resigned. The rebels surrounded 'Uthman's house unsheathing their swords. Marwan came out of the house to defend 'Uthman, but 'Urwah ibn Shaym Al-Laythi faced him and stroke him with his sword on his back and he fell to the ground.

The rebels then climbed the wall into 'Uthman's house and faced some of the Umayyads who had prepared themselves for defending him. A violent conflict took place between the two parties and Khalid ibn 'Uqbah ran away. Few others from 'Uthman's party were killed. Then, the relatives of 'Uthman ran away and left 'Uthman alone. A group of Muslims, headed by Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, advanced to kill 'Uthman.

They stabbed him several times and sat on his chest to behead him. However, 'Uthman's wife threw herself on her husband's body; therefore, the rebels left him stained with his blood. The rebels then threw 'Uthman's body on a dunghill for three days. Some of 'Uthman's relatives asked Imam Ali ('a) to interfere so that 'Uthman's dead body would be buried. Imam Ali ('a) did, and the rebels agreed.

Thus, 'Uthman's dead body was buried in the darkness of night and in a cemetery of the Jews, because the Ansar did not allow his dead body to be buried in a cemetery of Muslims.

In fact, the biggest winner of 'Uthman's assassination was the Umayyads who, as well as other opportunist people like Al-Zubayr, Talhah, and 'A'ishah, then raised 'Uthman's shirt as slogan, claiming that they were demanding with reTalibation.

1. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2: 140; Ibn Kathir: Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah 7: 148.
2. Tarikh At-Tabari 4:262.
3. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:38.
4. This is an indication of the following holy Quranic verses: 'Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with 'Ad; the people of Iram, possessors of lofty buildings the like of which were not created in the other cities; and with (the people of) Thamud, who hewed out the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, the lord of hosts who committed inordinacy in the cities; so, they made great mischief therein? Therefore, your Lord let down upon them a portion of the chastisement. Most surely, your Lord is as a guardian on a watch-tower. (89/6-14)'
5. Ibn Hajar, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah 3:192.
6. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:223
7. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 1:186.
8. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 8:273.
9. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:225.
10. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:85; Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1:68.
11. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 67.
12. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:52.
13. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:67.
14. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:28.
15. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2: 145.
16. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:30.
17. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:41.
18. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:28.
19. Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1: 168; Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyah 2:87.
20. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5: 139.
21. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:79.
22. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 1:334.
23. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:36.
24. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:53.
25. History of Islam has recorded 'A'ishah's famous saying about 'Uthman: 'Kill Na'thal, for he had abandoned faith.' [Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyah 3:356.]
26. It is ironic that this caliph pronounces words that are too abusive to be quoted, while he is claimed that the angels feel shy of him!
27. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2: 150; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:54.
28. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 8: 15.
29. Sunan Ibn Majah 1:53.
30. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:330.
31. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 129.
32. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 8:297.
33. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:36.
34. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 7: 163; Ibn Hajar, Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah 3: 13.

- [35.](#) Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:35.
- [36.](#) Tarikh At-Tabari 5:115; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 5:70.
- [37.](#) Tarikh At-Tabari 5:111; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:65.
- [38.](#) Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:110; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:74.
- [39.](#) Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 5:67; Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:150.
- [40.](#) Al-Buladhari, Futuh Al-Buldan, 2:218.

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