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The Biography of
'Uthmân Ibn 'Affân رضى الله عنه
Dhun-Noorayn

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|| Contents ||

Chapter 1

'Uthmân Ibn 'Affân ؓ Dhun-Noorayn Between Makkah And Madinah ..	11
1. His name, lineage, <i>kunyah</i> , nicknames, physical Attributes and family, and his status during the <i>Jâhiliyyah</i>	11
2. His name, lineage, <i>kunyah</i> and nicknames	11
3. His Family	13
4. His status during the <i>Jâhiliyyah</i>	17
5. His coming to Islam	18
6. His marriage to Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ	20
7. His persecution and migration to Abyssinia	21
8. 'Uthmân ؓ and the Holy Qur'ân	27
9. His staying close to the Prophet ﷺ in Madînah	37
10. 'Uthmân and <i>jihâd</i> with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ	39
11. His social life in Madînah	53
12. His economic contribution to the establishment of the state	57
13. <i>Ahâdeeth</i> of the Messenger ﷺ about 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân	61
14. What was narrated about his virtues alongside others	61
15. <i>Ahâdeeth</i> from the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ about the turmoil (<i>Fitnah</i>) during which 'Uthmân would be killed	65
16. 'Uthmân at the time of Abu Bakr and 'Umar	73
17. At the time of Abu Bakr ؓ	73
18. At the time of 'Umar ؓ	77

Chapter 2

'Uthmân's appointment as caliph, his approach to ruling and the main features of his character	81
1. 'Uthmân's appointment as caliph	81
2. 'Umar's deep insight when appointing his successor	81
3. 'Umar's advice to the caliph who would come after him	88
4. How 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn 'Awf conducted the shoora process	94
5. False reports inserted by the Râfidis into the story of the shoora	99

Contents

6. 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ﷺ was more qualified to become the caliph	103
7. Consensus concerning the caliphate of 'Uthmân	109
8. Ruling on preferring 'Ali over 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	115
9. 'Uthmân's method of ruling	117
10. 'Uthmân's letters to his agents, governors and commanders, and to the people at large	118
11. The highest authority in the state	123
12. The ummah's right to call the caliph to account	125
13. Shoora	126
14. Justice and equality	128
15. Freedoms	129
16. Inspection (Hisbah)	129
17. His main characteristics	137
18. Knowledge and teaching skills	137
19. Forbearance	145
20. Easygoing nature	146
21. Gentleness	146
22. Forgiveness	147
23. Humility	148
24. Modesty and chastity	149
25. Generosity	150
26. Courage	151
27. Resolve	153
28. Patience	154
29. Justice	156
30. Worship	156
31. Fear of Allâh, weeping and taking stock of himself	157
32. Asceticism	159
33. Gratitude	160
34. Checking on people	161
35. Defining the specialities of workers	161
36. Benefitting from qualified people	162

Chapter 3

Financial and Judiciary Institutions at the time of 'Uthmân ﷺ	165
1. Financial institutions	165
2. Financial policy announced by 'Uthmân when he became caliph	165
3. 'Uthmân's guidelines explaining the basic principles of zakâh to the people	177
4. The <i>khums</i> (one-fifth) of the war booty	181

Contents

5. Public income from the <i>jizyah</i> at the time of 'Uthmân	187
6. Public income from the <i>kharâj</i> and 'ushoor at the time of 'Uthmân	192
7. The policy of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân in allocating land	193
8. 'Uthmân's policy in allocating land for grazing	196
9. Types of public expenditure at the time of 'Uthmân	197
10. Continuation of the stipend system at the time of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân	202
11. Effect of increased abundance of wealth on social and economic life	203
12. 'Uthmân and his relatives, and stipends from the <i>bayt al-mâl</i>	204
13. Judicial institutions and some <i>fiqhi ijthâds</i>	211
14. <i>Qisâs</i> , <i>hudood</i> punishments and <i>ta'zeer</i> punishments	215
15. Acts of worship and transactions between people	224

Chapter 4

Conquests at the time of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ﷺ	241
1. Introduction	241
2. 'Uthmân's conquests in the East	243
3. Conquests of the people of Kufah: Azerbaijan, 24 AH	243
4. Participation of the people of Kufah in sabotaging Byzantine movements	244
5. The campaign of Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas to Tabaristan in 30 AH	246
6. The flight of the Persian king Yazdagird to Khorasan	246
7. The death of Yazdagird the Persian king in 31 AH	247
8. The Christians expressed their sorrow on the death of Yazdagird	249
9. The conquests of 'Abd-Allâh ibn 'Aamir, 31 AH	250
10. The campaign of al-Bâb and Balanjar in 32 AH	252
11. The first dispute between the people of Kufah and the people of Syria, 32 AH	255
12. The conquests of Ibn 'Aamir, 32 AH	255
13. Fighting between the army of al-Ahnaf and the people of Takhâristan, al-Jawzajân, al-Tâliqân and al-Fariyâb	257
14. Al-Ahnaf's treaty with the people of Balkh, 32 AH	259
15. 'I shall give my thanks to Allâh by entering <i>ihrâm</i> from the point from which I set out for 'umrah'	260
16. The defeat of Qârin in Khorasan	260
17. One of the leaders of the conquests in the east at the time of 'Uthmân: al-Ahnaf ibn Qays	262
18. Conquests in Syria	271
19. The conquests of Habeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri	271
20. The first one to allow the Muslims to campaign by sea was 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân	272
21. The campaign to Cyprus	273
22. Surrender and request for a peace treaty	276
23. 'Abd-Allâh ibn Qays, commander of the Muslim navy in Syria	277

Contents

24. The Cypriots break the treaty	279
25. How insignificant are the people to Allâh if they disobey Him	280
26. 'Ubâdah ibn al-Sâmit dividing the spoils of Cyprus	282
27. Conquests on the Egyptian front	283
28. Suppression of the rebels in Alexandria	283
29. The conquest of Nubia	287
30. The conquest of North Africa	287
31. The heroism of 'Abd-Allâh ibn az-Zubayr in the conquest of North Africa	292
32. The battle of Dhât al-Sawâri	294
33. Where did the battle take place?	296
34. Events of the battle	298
35. The outcome of Dhât al-Sawâri	300
36. The most important lessons learned from the conquests of 'Uthmân	302
37. The greatest achievement of 'Uthmân was uniting the <i>ummah</i> with a single <i>Mus-haf</i>	319
38. Stages in the writing down of the Holy Qur'ân	319
39. Consulting the <i>Sahâbah</i> with regard to the compilation of 'Uthmân	328
40. The difference between the compilation of Abu Bakr and the compilation of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	329
41. Did the 'Uthmâni manuscripts contain all seven recitations?	331
42. The number of <i>Mus-hafs</i> that 'Uthmân sent to the regions	333
43. The attitude of 'Abd-Allâh ibn Mas'ood towards the <i>Mus-haf</i> of 'Uthmân	334
44. The <i>Sahâbah</i> 's understanding of the verses which forbid dissent	336

Chapter 5

Governors at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	343
1. Regions of the Islamic state at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and his policy with regard to governors	343
2. Makkah al-Mukarramah	343
3. al-Madînah al-Munawwarah	344
4. al-Bahrain and al-Yamâmah	345
5. Yemen and Hadramawt	346
6. The province of Syria	347
7. Armenia	348
8. The province of Egypt	350
9. The province of Basra	351
10. The province of Kufah	355
11. 'Uthmân's policies with his governors and their rights and duties	363
12. 'Uthmân's policies with his governors	363
13. How 'Uthmân kept watch on his governors and checked on them frequently	365

Contents

14. The rights of governors	368
15. Duties of governors	372
16. Who were the governors of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)?	381
17. Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân ibn Harb al-Umawi	384
18. 'Abd-Allâh ibn 'Aamir ibn Kurayz	390
19. His economic developments in Basra	392
20. al-Waleed ibn 'Uqbah	395
21. Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas	402
22. 'Abd-Allâh ibn Sa'd ibn Abi'l-Sarh	408
23. Marwân ibn al-Hakam and his father	410
24. Did 'Uthmân show favouritism to any of his relatives at the expense of the Muslims?	414
25. The true nature of the relationship between Abu Dharr al-Ghifârî and 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ)	417
26. Summary of the story	417
27. Proving false the report that Ibn Saba' influenced Abu Dharr (ﷺ)	427
28. The death of Abu Dharr (ﷺ) and 'Uthmân's adding his family to his own	430

Chapter 6

Reasons for the <i>fitnah</i> that led to the murder of 'Uthmân	433
1. The importance of studying the turmoil that led up to the murder of 'Uthmân, and its consequences, and the Prophet's wisdom...	433
2. The wisdom of the Prophet (ﷺ) in telling 'Uthmân of what would happen	441
3. Reasons for the turmoil that led to the killing of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	447
4. Prosperity and its effect on society	453
5. The nature of social change at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	457
6. 'Uthmân's coming after 'Umar (ﷺ)	469
7. Departure of the senior <i>Sahâbah</i> from Madînah	470
8. <i>Jâhili</i> tribalism	471
9. The cessation of conquest	472
10. Mistaken concept of piety	473
11. Ambitions of ambitious people	473
12. The conspiracy of the haters	474
13. Plans to stir up trouble against 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	475
14. Using means to stir up the people	477
15. Influence of the Saba'is (followers of 'Abd-Allâh ibn Saba') on the <i>fitnah</i>	478

Chapter 7

The Murder of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ)	489
1. The spread of <i>fitnah</i> (turmoil)	489

Contents

2. The followers of whims and desires were upset with the reforms	491
3. The Jew 'Abd-Allâh ibn Saba' was the head of the gang	492
4. Mischief-makers causing trouble in the <i>majlis</i> of Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas	494
5. The exiles from Kufah with Mu'âwiyah	496
6. Mu'âwiyah's letter to 'Uthmân about the troublemakers in Kufah	503
7. E. Return of the troublemakers to Kufah followed by their expulsion to al-Jazeerah	504
8. 'Uthmân's policy in dealing with the turmoil (<i>fitnah</i>)	515
9. Some of the <i>Sahâbah</i> thought that 'Uthmân should send committees to investigate the matter	515
10. He wrote a letter to all the provinces that was a general announcement to all Muslims	517
11. 'Uthmân's advice to the governors of the provinces	518
12. Establishing proof against the rebels	523
13. Responding to some of their requests	527
14. 'Uthmân's guidelines for dealing with turmoil	528
15. The rebels' occupation of Madînah	531
16. Arrival of the rebels from the regions	531
17. The beginning of the siege, and 'Uthmân's opinion on praying behind the leaders of the troublemakers	538
18. Negotiations between 'Uthmân and the besiegers	539
19. The <i>Sahâbah</i> 's offer to defend 'Uthmân and his rejection thereof	547
20. The attitude of the Mothers of the Believers and some of the female <i>Sahâbah</i>	554
21. Who led the people in <i>Hajj</i> that year? Did 'Uthmân ask the governors for help?	559
22. The martyrdom of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	571
23. The date of his murder, his age when he was martyred, his funeral and burial	579
24. Attitude of the <i>Sahâbah</i> towards the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)	585
25. Praise of <i>Ahl al-Bayt</i> for 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and their innocence of shedding his blood	587
26. The attitude of 'Ammaar ibn Yaasir (ﷺ)	597
27. 'Amr's innocence of the murder of 'Uthmân	602
28. Comments of the <i>Sahâbah</i> about the <i>fitnah</i>	604
29. The effect of 'Uthmân's murder in creating further turmoil and division	607
30. Wronging and transgressing against others are causes of doom in this world and in the Hereafter	608
31. The Muslims' sorrow at the murder of 'Uthman	609
Conclusion	611

Chapter 1

'Uthmân Ibn 'Affân ﷺ Dhun-Noorayn Between Makkah And Madînah

His name, lineage, *kunyah*, nicknames, physical attributes and family, and his status during the *Jâhiliyyah*

His name, lineage, *kunyah* and nicknames

- 1 - He was 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ibn Abi'l-'Aas ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilâb.^[1] His lineage coincides with that of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ in 'Abd Manâf. His mother was Arwa bint Kurayz ibn Rabee'ah ibn Habeeb ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf ibn Qusayy.^[2] Her mother was Umm Hakeem al-Bayda' bint 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was the full sister of 'Abd-Allâh, the

^[1] *At-Tabaqât* by Ibn Sa'd, 3/53; *Al-Isâbah*. 4/377, no. 5463.

^[2] *At-Tamheed wal-Bayân fi Maqtal al-Shaheed 'Uthmân*, by Muhammad Yahya al-Andalusi, p. 19

father of the Prophet ﷺ, and it was said that they were twins (this was narrated by al-Zubayr ibn Bakkâr). So he was the son of the cousin (daughter of paternal aunt) of the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prophet ﷺ was the cousin (son of maternal uncle) of his mother. The mother of 'Uthmân became Muslim and died during the caliphate of her son 'Uthmân, and he was among those who carried her to her grave.^[1] 'Uthmân's father died during the *Jâhiliyyah*.

- 2 - His *kunyah* during the *Jâhiliyyah* was Abu 'Amr. When Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ bore him a son, he named him 'Abd-Allâh and took his *kunyah* from him, so the Muslims called him by the *kunyah* of Abu 'Abd-Allâh.^[2]
- 3 - 'Uthmân ؓ was known by the nickname of Dhun-Noorayn (the one with the two lights). Badr al-Deen al-'Ayni said in his commentary on *Saheeh al-Bukhâri* that it was said to al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah^[3]: Why was 'Uthmân called Dhu'n-Noorayn? He said: Because we did not know anyone who married two daughters of a Prophet except him.^[4] 'Abd-Allâh ibn 'Umar ibn Abân al-Ju'fi said: My maternal uncle Husayn al-Ju'fi said to me: O my son, do you know why 'Uthmân was called Dhu'n-Noorayn? I said: I do not know. He said: No one else was ever married to two daughters of a Prophet, from the time Allâh created Adam until the Hour will begin, except 'Uthmân. Hence he was

[1] *al-Khilâfah al-Râshidah wa'l-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah*, by Dr. Yahya al-Yahya, p. 388

[2] *al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayân fi Maqatal al-Shaheed 'Uthmân*, p. 19

[3] He was al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah al-Azdi al-'Aqali, one of the great commanders. al-Muhallab invaded India during the caliphate of Mu'âwiyah, and he was a governor for Ibn al-Zubayr. He fought the Khawârij during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwân, then he became governor of Khorasan in 79 AH. He is famous for having fought the Khawârij. He died in 83 AH. See *Wafiyât al-A'yân*, 5/350; *Siyar A'lâm An-Nubalâ'*, 4/383

[4] *'Umdat al-Qâri Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhâri*, 16/201

called Dhu'n-Noorayn.^[1] And it was said that he was called Dhu'n-Noorayn because he used to recite a great deal of Qur'ân in his prayer every night, and the Qur'ân is light and praying *qiyâm al-layl* is light.^[2]

- 4 - His birth. He was born in Makkah six years after the Year of the Elephant, according to the correct view.^[3] And it was said that he was born in al-Tâ'if. He was about five years younger than the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ.^[4]
- 5 - His physical attributes: he was neither short nor tall, soft skinned, with a huge thick beard, big-boned, broad-shouldered, with thick hair on his head, and he used to dye his beard with saffron. Az-Zuhri said: 'Uthmân was a man of average height, with handsome hair and face and a bald spot; he was bow-legged^[5], with a hooked nose, big calves, and long arms that were covered with hair. He had the most handsome mouth of all people, his hair came down below his ears, and he had a handsome face. It is most likely that he was white-skinned, and it was said that he was dark skinned.^[6]

His Family

'Uthmân ؓ married eight wives in all, all of them after Islam. They were: Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, who bore him 'Abd-Allâh ibn 'Uthmân. Then he married Umm Kulthoom the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, after Ruqayyah died. He also married Fâkhitah bint Ghazwân, who was the sister of the governor 'Utbah ibn Ghazwân, and she bore 'Uthmân 'Abd-Allâh the younger; Umm 'Amr bint Jundub al-

[1] *Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, 7/73. Dr. 'Aatif Lamâdah said: a hasan report.

[2] *'Uthmân ibn 'Affân Dhu'l-Noorayn*, by 'Abbâs al-'Aqqâd, p. 79

[3] *al-Isâbah*, 4/377, no. 5465

[4] *'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*, by Sâdiq 'Arjoon, p. 45

[5] *Târeekh at-Tabari*, 5/440

[6] *Sifat al-Safvâh*, 1/295; *Saheeh al-Tawtheeq fi Seerat wa Hayât Dhi'l-Noorayn*, p. 15

Azdiyyah, who bore 'Uthmân 'Amr, Khâlid, Abân, 'Umar and Maryam. And he married Fâtimah bint al-Waleed ibn 'Abd Shams ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomiyyah, who bore him al-Waleed, Sa'eed and Umm Sa'd. And he married Umm al-Baneen bint 'Uyaynah ibn Husn al-Fizâriyyah, who bore him 'Abd-Allâh. And he married Ramlah bint Shaybah ibn Rabee'ah al-Umawiyah, who bore him 'Aa'ishah, Umm Abân and Umm 'Amr. Ramlah became Muslim and swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. And he married Nâ'ilah bint al-Farâfisah al-Kalbiyyah, who was a Christian, then she became Muslim before he consummated the marriage with her and she became a good Muslim.^[1]

He had nine sons from five wives. They were: 'Abd-Allâh, whose mother was Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. He was born two years before the Hijrah and his mother took him with her when she migrated with her husband 'Uthmân to Madînah. During his first days in Madînah a rooster pecked him on the face, near his eye, and the (infection) spread until it covered his whole face. He died in 4 AH when he was six years old.^[2]

His other sons were:

'Abd-Allâh the younger, whose mother was Fâkhitah bint Ghazwân; 'Amr, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub; he narrated hadeeth from his father and from Usâmah ibn Zayd, and 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab and Abu'l-Zinnâd narrated from him, but he narrated only a few hadeeth. He married Ramlah bint Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân, and died in 80 AH.

Khâlid, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub.

Abân, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub. He was a

^[1] *Tareekh at-Tabari*, 5/441; *al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayân fi Maqatal al-Shaheed 'Uthmân*, p. 19; *al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn*, by Mahmoud Shâkir, p. 364

^[2] *al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn*, by Mahmoud Shâkir, p. 365; *al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayân fi Maqatal al-Shaheed 'Uthmân*, p. 19

leading scholar of fiqh, and was known by the *kunya* of Abu Sa'eed. He was governor of Madînah for seven years during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwân. He narrated a few ahâdeeth, including the hadeeth that he narrated from 'Uthmân:

«مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَقُولُ فِي صَبَاحِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَمَسَاءِ كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ - ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ - لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ شَيْءٌ».

'Whoever says at the beginning of each day and night: 'In the name of Allâh with Whose name nothing can cause harm on earth or in heaven, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing,' nothing will harm him that day or that night.'

When Abân became paralyzed on one side, he said: By Allâh, I forgot this du'â' so the decree of Allâh befell me.^[1]

He was regarded as one of the fuqaha' of Madînah of his time. He died in 105 AH.^[2]

'Umar, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub.

Al-Waleed, whose mother was Fâtimah bint al-Waleed ibn 'Abd Shams ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomiyyah.

Sa'eed, whose mother was Fâtimah bint al-Waleed al-Makhzoomiyyah. He became governor of Khorasan in 56 AH at the time of Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân.

'Abd al-Malik, whose mother was Umm al-Baneen bint 'Uyaynah ibn Husn. He died in childhood.

And it was said that Nâ'ilah bint al-Farâfisah bore 'Uthman a son who was named 'Anbasah.^[3]

He had seven daughters from five wives, including: Maryam, whose mother was Umm 'Amr bint Jundub; Umm Sa'eed, whose

^[1] *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, *Kitâbal-Da'wât*, no. 3388. A saheeh hadeeth.

^[2] *Siyar A'lâm an-Nubala'* (4/253); *Tareekh al-Qadâ'i*, p. 308.

^[3] *Al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn* by Mahmoud Shâkir, p. 369

mother was Fâtimah bint al-Waleed ibn 'Abd Shams al-Makhzoomiyyah; 'Aa'ishah, whose mother was Ramlah bint Shaybah ibn Rabee'ah; Maryam bint 'Uthmân, whose mother was Nâ'ilah bint al-Farâfisah; and Umm al-Baneen, whose mother was a concubine (*umm walad*).^[1]

The full sister of 'Uthmân was Aaminah bint 'Affân, who worked as a hairdresser during the Jâhiliyyah, then she married al-Hakam ibn Kaysân, the freed slave of Hishâm ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomi. An expedition led by 'Abd-Allâh ibn Jahsh captured al-Hakam ibn Kaysân, and in Madînah he embraced Islam and became a good Muslim. He stayed with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ until he was killed as a martyr in the battle of Bî'r Ma'oonah, at the beginning of the fourth year after the Hijrah. Aaminah bint 'Affân stayed in Makkah and remained a mushrik until the Conquest, then she became Muslim along with her mother and the rest of her sisters, and she swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ along with Hind bint 'Uqbah, the wife of Abu Sufyân, pledging not to associate anything with Allâh, steal or commit zina.^[2]

'Uthmân had three brothers through his mother. They were:

al-Waleed ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'et, whose father was killed on the day of Badr when he was a prisoner, and he was a kâfir. Al-Waleed went out with his brother 'Amârah after al-Hudaybiyah to bring back their sister Umm Kulthoom, who had become Muslim and migrated, but the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ refused to give her back. He became Muslim on the day of the Conquest of Makkah.

'Amârah ibn 'Uqbah, who was late in coming to Islam.

Khâlid ibn 'Uqbah.

'Uthmân's sisters through his mother were:

Umm Kulthoom bint 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'et, who became

^[1] *al-Tamheed wa'l-Bayân fi Maqtal al-Shaheed 'Uthmân*, p. 20.

^[2] *Al-Ameen Dhu'l-Noorayn* by Mahmoud Shâkir, p. 346

Muslim in Makkah and migrated and swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. She was the first woman to migrate after the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ came back to Madînah after the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah.

Other sisters through his mother were: Umm Hakeem bint 'Uqbah and Hind bint 'Uqbah.

His status during the Jâhiliyyah

During the Jâhiliyyah, 'Uthmân ❁ 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 Jâhiliyyah and he never committed any immoral action. He did not drink alcohol before Islam and he used to say: It (alcohol) destroys reason and reason is the most sublime thing that Allâh has given to man, and man should elevate himself by means of reason, not try to destroy it. Similarly, during the Jâhiliyyah he was not attracted to songs or entertainment. 'Uthmân also used to refrain from looking at any 'awrah.^[1] May Allâh have mercy on 'Uthmân ❁, for he made it easy for us to get to know him, when he said: "I had no interest in songs, I never committed any immoral deed, and my right hand never touched my private part since I swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. I did not drink alcohol during the Jâhiliyyah or in Islam, and I did not commit zina during the Jâhiliyyah or in Islam."^[2] He was well versed in the knowledge that was available to the Arabs during the Jâhiliyyah, including lineages, proverbs, and the history of important events. He travelled to Syria and Abyssinia, and mixed with non-Arab peoples, learning things about their lives and customs that no one else knew.^[3] 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

^[1] *Mawsoo'at al-Tareekh al-Islami*, by Ahmad Shalaby, 1/618

^[2] *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, 1/60, 61. This report is saheeh.

^[3] *'Aqbariyyat 'Uthmân* by al-'Aqqâd, p. 72

high esteem by all of Quraysh. In the *Jâhili* society of Makkah in which 'Uthmân lived, men were respected for their wealth and for the number of children and brothers they had, then for the tribe and people to which they belonged. 'Uthmân was regarded as being of high status among his people, and he was loved dearly.

Among the evidence which points to the people's love for 'Uthmân because of this combination of good qualities is the report which says that at that time, an Arab woman would sing to her child a song which speaks of the people's respect and love for him:

"By the most Merciful, I love you as much as Quraysh love 'Uthmân."^[1]

His coming to Islam

'Uthmân was thirty-four years old when Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq 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, of whom Ibn Ishâq said: The first person to become Muslim after Abu Bakr, 'Ali and Zayd ibn Hârithah was 'Uthmân.^[2] 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 Allâh ﷺ about that when he entered upon him along with Talhah ibn 'Ubayd-Allâh and he presented Islam to them and recited Qur'ân to them, and told them of the duties of Islam and promised them that they would be honoured by Allâh. They believed him, and 'Uthmân said: O Messenger of Allâh, I have come recently from Syria, and when we were between Ma'ân 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.^[3]

^[1] *Mawsoo'at al-Tareekh al-Islami*, 1/618

^[2] *al-Seerah al-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hishâm, 1/287-289

^[3] *at-Tabaqât* by Ibn Sa'd, 3/55

Undoubtedly this incident had a positive effect on 'Uthmân and he could not forget it when he could see all the facts before him with his own eyes. How could anyone who heard of the emergence of a Prophet before reaching the city in which he lived, and found upon his arrival that what he had heard was true, then hesitate to respond to the call? No matter how arrogant a man may be, he cannot fail to submit to the truth; if he tries to ignore it his conscience will continue to trouble him until he either believes in it or dies, thus saving himself from the stirrings of his conscience. 'Uthmân's quick response was not based on foolishness or rashness, rather it was based on certainty and firm belief that left no room for doubt.^[1] 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 Tawheed and a warning against shirk, a call to worship Allâh and a warning against heedlessness, a call to good morals and a warning against bad morals. Then he looked at his people and saw them worshipping idols, eating dead meat, mistreating their neighbours and regarding as permissible forbidden things such as the shedding of blood, etc.^[2] But the Prophet Muhammad ibn 'Abd-ullâh ﷺ was sincere and trustworthy; he knew nothing but good about him and he had heard nothing bad about him. He was never known to tell a lie or commit any act of treachery. He was calling for the worship of Allâh alone with no partner or associate, and for the upholding of family ties, kind treatment of neighbours, prayer and fasting, and not worshipping anything other than Allâh.^[3] So he became Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, 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.^[4]

^[1] *Jawlah Tareekhiyyah fi 'Asr al-Khulafa' al-Râshideen*, p. 302

^[2] See: *Marwiyât al-'Ahd al-Makki*, by 'Aadil 'Abd al-Ghafoor, 2/805

^[3] *Fitnah Maqal 'Uthmân*, by Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-Allâh al-Ghabân, 1/37

^[4] *'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*, by Sâdiq 'Arjoon, p. 53

His marriage to Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ

The Muslims rejoiced greatly when 'Uthmân became Muslim, and the bonds of love and brotherhood between him and them were strengthened when Allâh honoured him with marriage to the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, Ruqayyah. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ had given her in marriage to 'Utbah ibn Abi Lahab, and he had given her sister Umm Kulthoom in marriage to 'Utaybah ibn Abi Lahab, but when *Sûrat al-Masad* was revealed -

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ﴾

"Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab (an uncle of the Prophet) and perish he! His wealth and his children will not benefit him! He will be burnt in a Fire of blazing flames! And his wife, too, who carries wood (thorns of Sa'dân which she used to put on the way of the Prophet ﷺ or use to slander him). In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad (palm fiber)" (Al-Masad 111:1-5)

Abu Lahab and their mother Umm Jameel bint Harb ibn Umayyah - the "carrier of wood" - told them to leave the daughters of Muhammad, so they separated from them before they had consummated the marriage with them, as an honour to them from Allâh and as a humiliation to the sons of Abu Lahab.^[1] No sooner did 'Uthmân hear the news of the divorce of Ruqayyah but he was filled with joy and he hastened to propose marriage to her through the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ gave her in marriage to him, and the Mother of the Believers Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid prepared her

[1] *Dhu'n-Noorayn 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*, by Muhammad Rasheed Rida, p. 12

and presented her to him. 'Uthmân was one of the most handsome men of Quraysh and she competed with him in beauty and gracefulness. It was said to her when she was presented to him:

The best looking couple anyone has ever seen, is Ruqayyah and her husband 'Uthmân.^[1]

It was narrated from 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn 'Uthmân al-Qurashi that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ entered upon his daughter when she was washing the head of 'Uthmân and he said:

«يَا بِنْتِي! أَحْسِنِي إِلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّهُ أَشْبَهُ أَصْحَابِي بِي خُلُقًا»

"O my daughter, take good care of Abu 'Abdullâh, for he is the closest of my companions to me in attitude."^[2]

Umm Jameel bint Harb and her husband Abu Lahab thought that by divorcing Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoom that they would deal a harsh blow to the family of Muhammad ﷺ or at least weaken them, but Allâh chose good for Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoom, which caused a great deal of frustration and anger for Umm Jameel and Abu Lahab, and they did not achieve anything. Thus Allâh sufficed the household of the Prophet ﷺ against their evil.

And the Command of Allâh is a decree determined.

His persecution and migration to Abyssinia

Allâh's decree that all are to be tested is applied constantly to individuals, communities, peoples and nations. This applied to the Sahâbah too, and they underwent trials and tribulations that would shake the foundations of lofty mountains. They spent their wealth and shed their blood for the sake of Allâh, and this suffering became as severe as Allâh willed that it should. The

[1] *Ansâb al-Ashraf*, p. 89

[2] Narrated by at-Tabarâni and the men of its isnâd are thiqât (trustworthy), as stated by al-Haythami. *Al-Majma'* no. 14500 (9/81)