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

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Chapter 1

'Uthmân Ibn 'Affân ؓ 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 Fâkhilah 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 al-Tabari*, 5/440

[6] *Sifat al-Safwâh*, 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 Fâkhithah 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 Rabe'e'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 Bi'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 ۝ سَبَصَلَىٰ 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)