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Administration of Justice during the Khilafah of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (radi Allahu ‘anhu) (24-36 A.H. / 644-656 A. D.) and refutation of some of the allegations against him.

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Abstract

Justice is the cardinal principle of Islamic thought and practice. History is witness to the fact that these principles were strictly adhered to by the al-Khulafa’ al-Rashidun (four rightly guided caliphs) in letter and spirit after Rasullullah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) himself set the perfect practical example for the ummah. During the periods of Abu Bakr (radi Allahu ‘anhu) and ‘Umar (radi Allahu ‘anhu), the first and the second Khalifah respectively, the world witnessed the highest possible degree of perfection in governance as for as the ideals of justice and peace were concerned. However, voices were and are being raised that these principles could not be practiced up to the standard by ‘Uthman (radi Allahu ‘anhu) the third Khalifa. Although historical facts put big question mark to this misconception that was made to creep into the minds of people for reasons known to every serious student of the political history of the Muslims, yet, on the other hand, the Khalifah’s sobriety and graciousness for all could not find favourable atmosphere to come to the fore because of the unfavourable situation he was caught in during his Khilafah.

Notwithstanding the political turmoil and ungratefulness of some sections of the society, the Khalifah's benevolence towards his kith and kin for which he had obvious reasons in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, there are some who argue that there occurred some degradation in the standard of justice during his Khilafah as compared to the periods of his predecessors. He is charged with nepotism and favoritism. This paper attempts to refute these allegations, besides highlighting the magnanimous approach of the Khalifah during his period of Khilafah and nobility of his character and his political acumen.

Criticism of Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu) and its causes

Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu) is perhaps the most misunderstood and the most misrepresented among the four *Khulafa' al-Rashidun* (the first four rightly guided caliphs—Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali, radi Allahu 'anhum) of Islam.

In fact, the degeneration in people's religiosity had already begun in the early years of 'Uthman's (radi Allahu 'anhu) *Khilafah*. The disease of believing rumours and accepting anything true or false was common, and the social fabric was such that false news would spread instantly. So the atmosphere was favourable for mischief mongers who, pretending to be commanding good and forbidding wrong, got easy opportunity to criticize and malign their leaders. In this way these people succeeded, in their evil designs, to get large number of public rally around them. Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu) was no exception to be the victim of this malicious propaganda. The allegations that were framed against him were pertaining to his:

- i) Personal life and character before becoming the *khalifah*, like his absence from some *ghazwat*.
- ii) Economic policy, like distribution of gifts and the issue of pastures.
- iii) 'Ineffective' (?) administrative policy, like the way of appointment of governors and granting special privilege to his relations by appointing them on high positions.
- iv) Certain *ijtihadic* matters like, offering full *salah* in Mina, compilation of the holy Qur'an and extension *al-Masjid al-Nabawiyy*.

- v) Grudge (?) between certain *sahaba* (*radi Allahu 'anhum*) like 'Ammar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), Abu Dhar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Ibn Mas'ud (*radi Allahu 'anhu*).¹

The allegations against Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) are based on exaggerations and false propaganda. Those allegations that were levied on him during his life and he gave their answer himself or those that were levied on him after his martyrdom were all baseless.² Most of such narrations quoted in Tabri's *Tarikh al-Rususl wa al-Muluk*, ibn Athir's *Tarikh al-Kamil* and other works are related by the enemies of Banu Umayyah and the agents of the Jews whose enmity against the *sahaba* has always been well known.³

Unfortunately enough, attempts to malign the companions of the holy Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) of Allah, have always been done in the past and are being done in the present also with the intention to misinterpret events so that the true history, especially of the first three *Khulafa'* remains doubtful. This has been done especially, with the periods of turmoil in the history of the third and the fourth *Khalifah*. Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) has unfortunately, been made victim of this distortion and spreading of lie by his opponents the most. They poisoned people's minds by distorting facts and spreading transparent lie.⁴ Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) had a good understanding of the situation, so he wrote to his governors:

The public has set foot on the road of disintegration and they are inclined towards evil. Three things are responsible for this: they have started giving priority to the worldly life, are becoming slaves of lust and harbour jealousy in their hearts.⁵

In our times, many scholars like Taha Husain, in his *al-Fitnah al-Kubra*, the most problematic work which has tried to malign and demonise the *sahaba* to such an extent that whoever reads this book can never think about them with good intention. The author has truly followed the methodology of the orientalist's and has done great disservice to Islam, Radi Abd al-Rahim, in his *al-Nizam al-Idary wa al-Harby*, Sabhi Salih, in his *al-Nazm al-Islamiyyah*, Sabhi Mahmasani, in his

¹ Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, Dar al-Salam, Saudi Arabia, 1431A. H., p.611 quoted from *Dirasat fi 'ahd al-Nabuwwah wa al-khilafah al-rashidah* by Dr. Abd al-Rahman al-Shuja', p.394

² *Ibid.*, p.612 quoted from Dr. Abd al-Rahman al-Shuja', *op.cit.*, p.400.

³ The reader is requested to refer to *Athar al-Tashayyu' 'al al-Riwayat al-Tarikhyyah* by Abul Aziz Muhammad Nur Wali, n.p., 1415 A.H. p. 37-199, 229-290 and 319-336. Also Abdul Aziz Muhammad Nur Wali, *Athar al-Tashayyu' Ala al-Riwayat al-Tarikhyyah*, 1415 H, Pp. 319-38 for a detailed account on this subject where in status of a large number of such dubious narrators has been given with a good account of the position of each of them in the presence of the *muhaddithin*.

⁴ See al-Salabi, *loc.cit.* where it is quoted from *al-Tamhid wa al-Bayan* by Muhammad b. Yahya al-Andalusi, p.64.

⁵ *Idem.*

Turath al-Khulafa' al-Rashidin fi al-fiqhi wa al-qada', Tawfiq Yuzbaki, in his *Dirasat fi al-Nazm al-Arabiyyah wa al-Islamiyyah*, Muhammad Mulhim, in his *Tarikh al-Bahrayn fi al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijri*, Badwi Abd al-Latif, in his *al-Ahzab al-Siyasiyah fi Fajr al-Islam*, Anwar Rifa'i, in his *al-Nazm al-Islamiyyah*, Mawlana Mawdudi, in his *Khilafat wa Mulukiyat*, Amir Ali, in *The Spirit of Islam*, Sayyid Qutb, in his *al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah* and many others have, expressed utterly misleading opinions about Uthman (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). These scholars have, in their analyses, failed to make conclusions in consonance with the teachings of the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the belief of the *ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* regarding the position and status of the companions of *Rasullullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)* especially *Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu)*, one of the *Khulafa' al-Rashidun*, perhaps not because they were enemies of Islam, but because they did not, to a great extent try to scrutinize the historical reports they quoted from classical sources nor did they try to see through the veil of enmity and hatred that was harboured about the leaders of the Banu Umayyah in general. They called it genuine research, done sincerely in order to present the truth as it was. However, it needed serious, sincere and deep perusal of the historical sources to reach the truth which every serious researcher finds mingled with questionable records in the sources.

Ameer Ali, for instance, writes:

The character of the deluded Pontiff has been portrayed...”, then he speaks through the mouth of Dozy, “The personality of Osman did not justify his election to the Caliphate. ... He was, however, not a man of spirit, and was greatly enfeebled by old age. His timidity was such that when placed of the pulpit he knew not how to commence his sermon.⁶ Unhappily for this old man, he possessed an inordinate fondness for his kinsmen, who formed the Meccan aristocracy, and who, for twenty years, had insulted, persecuted, and fought against Mohammad. Soon they dominated over him completely.⁷

⁶ Tabari, in his *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, Egypt, Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd edition, n.d., vol.4, p. 243. says that when Hadhrat Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was paid allegiance, he ascended the pulpit he, after praising Allah saying durud on the holy Prophet, addressed the people thus: “You are in a world bound to perish so do right deeds for your end as much as you can. Lo! The worldly life deceives so let you not be deceived by life and let not deception overpower you with regard to Allah. There is admonition for you in those who passed away. So strive and don't forget and sit idle for if you forget still you will not be forgotten and spared. Alas! Where are the sons of the world and their brothers who preferred this world and inhabited this (as if they were to be here forever)? They were allowed to enjoy for long. Alas! Did not they remember: “throw the world where Allah has thrown it and seek the *Akhirah* for Allah has given for it an example (in the Qur'an): “Propound thou to them the similitude of life of this world. It is as water which we send down from the heaven, then there mingles with it the vegetation of the earth, and lo! It becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter. And Allah is Potent over everything.” (Al-Kahf 18:45) The reader fails to agree with Dozi's assertions which Ameer Ali takes as witness as if the former was very sincerely saying the truth as it had been. Dozi and all other orientalis's bias and prejudice is not something which is not known to common student of orientalism. He has also narrated a few of his public addresses which are full of love of the *Akhirah*, wisdom and eloquence, *op.cit*, p.422. See also Ibn Khaldun, *Tarikh*, Karachi, Nafis Academy, vol.4, p.356.

⁷ Syed Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, Kutub Khana Ishayat (sic)-ul-Islam, Delhi, n.d., p.294

Mawlana Maududi's slander of nepotism on Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) in his highly controversial book *Khilafat wa-Mulukiyyat* is based upon the charge that Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed his relatives on important government posts, which is generally dubbed as the policy of nepotism or favoritism. He maintains that the winds of change from *Khilafat* into *Mulukiyyat* began to take shape in the early years of the third *Khalifah*.⁸ He, in clear cut terms, says that in many cases Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was categorically wrong and "a wrong action is a wrong action", says the Mawlana, "no matter whosoever does it."⁹

Syed Qutb stands by the same accusations against the *Khalifah Rashid* and says that it was actually Marwan who dominated over the *Khalifah* and run the government virtually himself. He maintains that it was too late for the *Khalifah* to assume the office. He was too old to shoulder the responsibilities as a result of which the Umayyads gained much of power during his reign which enabled them to establish their feet in Syria and other lands.¹⁰ Other authors have adopted the same line.

In the following pages we shall try our level to see the reality of these allegations.

Role of the Umayyad Administrators during the period of *al-Khilafah al-Rashidah*

The historian's criticism of Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) is based upon the assumption that he gave undue importance to the persons, especially Mu 'awiyah b. Abi Sufya (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), Marwan b. Hakam and Walid b. Uqbah (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), of this own family unlike his predecessors, Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*).¹¹ But, in light of what Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and later Ali (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) did, this allegation carries no weight.

The Umayyads were assigned important responsibilities by Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself after the liberation of Makkah. Some of them were appointed on high positions during the periods of Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*).¹² But they were

⁸ Mawlana Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *Khilafat-wa-Mulukiyyat*, Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2013, p.88-89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁰ Syed Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (Urdu), Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1981, p.354-5.

¹¹ Dr. Hamdi Shahin, *al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftara 'alayha*, Qairo, Dar al-Qahirah li al-Kitab, 2001, p.11.

¹² Dr. Muhammad Amahzun, *Tahqiq Mawaqif al-Sahaba fi al-Fitnah*, Riyad, Maktabah al-Kawthar, 1993, vol.1, p.417.

given more importance during the period of the third *Khalifa*, Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) who belonged to the same family.

As for the allegation that Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed his close relatives as governors and other officials, history is the best answer. 'Ali (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed 'Abdullah b. Abbas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) as governor for Basrah, Ubaydullah b. Abbas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) Yamen, Qutham b. Abbas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) for Makkah and Ta'if, Muhammad b. Abi Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), his step son, for Egypt and Thamamah b. Abbas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) for Madina.¹³ They all were his close relatives.

Some scholars accept that the persons whom Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed were competent and did great things for the cause of the Muslims but it was wrong on part of the *Khalifah* to consider them in presence of those who were far better than the *Khalifah's* Ummayyad governors.¹⁴ This allegation is however, based upon the misconception that appointing an inferior person on high position is wrong when there are people superior to him present.

Bukhari narrates a *hadith* that Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) appointed 'Amr b. al-As (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) commander of the army in battle of *Dhat al-Salasil* in which there were present Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). Then 'Amr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) asked him: Who among people is the dearest to you? He (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: 'A'isha. 'Amr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) asked: Then? Her father, replied Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). 'Amr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) again asked, then? Umar b. al-Khattab, replied Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Then he (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) mentioned many persons. 'Amr b. al-'As (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) says that he then remained quite fearing lest he (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) should mention him at last.¹⁵

Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) did not appoint Abu Dhar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) on any administrative position although the latter had great knowledge (and high status among the *sahaba*) and was far better than many who were appointed as governors because he (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) knew that Abu Dhar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) could not shoulder the responsibilities

¹³ *Idem*.

¹⁴ Mawlana Mawdudi, *op.cit.*, p. 97

¹⁵ *Sahih Bukhar*, Kitab al-Maghazi, H. No. 4100.

of the state which needs great administrative acumen. He said to him: “O Abu Dhar! You are weak; I like for you what I like for myself; don’t be the head of two persons or the custodian of the property of orphan.”¹⁶

Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) declined to depose Khalid b. Walid (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) even though Umar strongly pleaded for that. But Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) replied: “I will not sheathe the sword which Allah has unsheathed over the polytheists”¹⁷ although he knew that there were such *sahaba* who were superior to Khalid (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) however, they did not have as great military genius as did Khalid (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) have.¹⁸

Similarly Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) would appoint many persons among the *sahaba* on high positions, ignoring those who were higher in terms of their virtue and seniority in Islam, taking into consideration their ability, insight, farsightedness and political acumen. When asked as to why he did not give such positions to great *sahaba*, he replied, “It is difficult for me to use a person against whom I have a more powerful one available.”¹⁹

Uthman (radi Allahu ‘anhu) followed the same wisdom. So, when it has been the wisdom of Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and his two predecessors, which the *ummah* takes as to be the strongest politics, then why should *Uthman (radi Allahu ‘anhu)* be blamed for it?²⁰

“If this is the situation”, says Ibn Taymiyyah, “then what *Uthman (radi Allahu ‘anhu)* did is clearly justified. So he would say: the Banu Umayyah are such that Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) utilized their services and after him those who were not blamed for their steps—Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)—also enjoyed their services. We do not know that Rasulullh (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) appointed as many of his governors from any tribe of the Quraysh as he did from the Banu ‘abd al-Shams—Banu Umayyah—for they were greater in number and had good qualities. So Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), for the interest of Islam appointed ‘Attab b. Usayd b. Abu al-‘As (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), when he was only twenty years old, for Makkah—the noblest place on earth—after its liberation, Abu Sufyan b. Harb b. Umayyah for

¹⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Imarah, H.No.1826.

¹⁷ Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, No. 2343. See also *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Tirmidhi* No.29.no.as quoted by Amahzun, *op.cit*, 415. This author tried to see this hadith in *Trmidhi* but could not find it.

¹⁸ Dr. Amahzun, *op.cit.*, p.415.

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.416

Najran, Khalid b. Sa'id b. al-'As for Banu Mudhhiij and San'a, Yeman....then came *Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu)* and he said: I did not appoint but only those whom Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and after him Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*); I chose them from the same tribe and family from which they chose them. Thus abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed Yazid b. Abi Sufyan b.Harb—who had got *suhbah* (companionship of Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) —in the wars against Syria and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) continued with him.²¹

In fact, Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself and the his *khulafa'* were first to follow the principle: in case of a righteous but weak *khalifah*, righteousness is for himself but his weakness will tell upon his (competence) as *khalifah*, whereas in case of a bad but strong *khalifah*, badness is for himself but his strength is for the Muslims.²²

Those persons whom *Uthman (radi Allahu 'anhu)* appointed on high administrative positions among his relatives includ Mu'awiyah (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), Abdullah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), Walid b. Uqba (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), Sa'id b. al-'As (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Abdullah b. 'Amir b. Kurayz (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). All these five were companions of Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

1. Amir Mu'awiyah (*radi Allahu 'anhu*)

He was one of the great companions of Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) whose virtues are countless in light of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.²³ Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) had supplicated in his favour: "O Allah! Make Mu'awiyah a guide and a guided one and show people the way of truth through him."²⁴

²¹ See *Minhaj al-Sunna*, vol.3, p.175-6 cited in Amahzun, *op.cit.*, p.417

²² *Idem*, vide *al-siyasah al-shar'iyah*, by IbnTaymiyyah, p. 18-24.

²³ For a detailed account on this subject see *Al-Asas fi al-Sunnah*, by Dr. Sa'id, vol.4, p.1675, Marwiyyat *Khilafah Mu'awiyah*, by Khalid Ghayth, p.23 and many other books on hadith (*chapter Virtues of the sahaba*) where those ahadith which are witness to righteousness and sublimity of Amir Mu'awiya. Cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, by Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, Dar al-Salam, Saudi Arabia, 1431 H., p. 499-505.

²⁴ *Tirmidhi*, Kitab Fada'il Sahabah, Hadith no. 3931.

Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, while praising Amir Mu‘awiyah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), says, “He defended the country of the Muslims, guarded the borders, reformed the army and subdued the enemy. He made plans and organized affairs for the people”.²⁵

Justifying the genuineness of his governorship, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts, “It is proved with *tawatur* (continuity) that Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) himself appointed him as *amir* as he did with various *sahaba* while appointing them as governors. He participated in *jihad* along with Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). He was trustworthy and reliable in the presence of Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). Besides, he was a scribe of the holy Qur’an. Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) never questioned his integrity in writing down the revelation. ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), who knew people’s conditions more than anyone else and Allah had made truth flow from his heart and tongue, appointed him as governor. He too never found anything wrong in him during his governorship.”²⁶

Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi maintains: “First Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) appointed him (Amir M‘awiyah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)) as governor of Syria when he appointed Yazid, his brother, as governor of Syria and appointed him (Amir Mu‘awiyah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)) his deputy. Then ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) followed his predecessor’s move. After that Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) continued with him as governor of Syria in sincere loyalty to the actions of his two predecessors. So O shortsighted critic! See how strong this chain is!”²⁷

Amir Mu‘awiyah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) consolidated the Islamic state and proved his worth and credibility....later on when Hasan (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) reconciled with him and accepted him as *Khalifah*, the opponent’s mouth was shut for all times.²⁸

Abu Bakr b. ‘Iyash says, “We never saw after Mu‘awiyah anyone like him (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)”.²⁹

²⁵ Qadi Abu Bakr ibn Al-Arabi, *Al-‘Awasim min al-Qawasim*, cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, p.502

²⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatawa*, vol. 4, p.472, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol.8, p.122, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’*, vol.3, p.129 cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, p.503.

²⁷ *Al-‘Awasim wa al-Qawasim*, p.82.

²⁸ Muhammad Hasan Sharrab, *Al-Madina al-Munawwarah*, vol. 2, p.216 cited in Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*,

²⁹ Allama Dhabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala*, Cairo, Dar al-Hadith, 2006, vol.5, vol.4, p.275.

2. **Abdullah b. Sa‘d b. Abi Sarh** (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)

He was Uthman’s foster brother. Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) appointed him as the governor of Egypt. Critics of Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) raise hue and cry on this appointment dubbing it as an act of favouritism. But history in strong terms negates this allegation. The fact is that Abdullah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) had a very good knowledge and experience about the situation of Egypt and its neighbouring lands because he had accompanied ‘Amr b. al-‘As (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) in the liberation of Egypt. Also during the *Khilafah* of ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), he had remained administrator of some areas in the surrounding lands of Egypt. He had also been the *amir* of Egyptian desert, the position he assumed till the beginning of Uthman’s (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) *Khilafah*. So, therefore it was not out of place to appoint him the governor of Egypt as he had all the required qualities and a great experience which is a prerequisite for a successful administrator.³⁰ He led many wars wherein many great *sahaba* including ‘Abdullah b. Zabayr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) etc. fought under him. Imam Dhahabi, a great *muhaddith* (traditionist), says that never did he do any blameful act. He was a man of wisdom and spiritual insight and was very generous.³¹

In the beginning the government of Egypt was peaceful and strong. Then mischief mongers like Abdullah b. Saba came there. These people, who were the main culprits behind the martyrdom of Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), after establishing their position, provoked people to rise against the state. They succeeded in creating chaos and disturbing law and order, and in spreading false allegations and rumours against Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).³²

After the martyrdom of Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), Abdullah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) divorced the affairs of the government and lived in ‘Asqalan or Ramalah in Palestine. Imam Baghwi narrates from Yazid b. Habib through an authentic chain that Abdullah b. Abi Sarh (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) went to the Palestinian city of Ramlah. When the time for the morning *salah* commenced he invoked Allah

³⁰ Dr. Abdul Aziz al-‘Umri, *Al-Wilayah ‘ala al-Buladan*, vol.1, p.180, cited in al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.529.

³¹ Allama Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.204-5.

³² Abdul Aziz al-Umri, *op.cit.*, p.186

in these words: “O Allah! May my last deed be the *salah*”. Then he performed the *wudu* (ablution) and stood for offering the *salah*. The moment he completed his prayer, he passed away.³³

3. **Walid b. Uqbah** (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)

He was Uthman’s step brother. He had earlier been a responsible personality during the times of Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*). There is no least doubt that one of the foremost reasons for the spread of Islam to distant lands during the *Khilafah* of Abu Bakr was that he always appointed only able and competent persons on high posts. Walid (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was very close and reliable to both the righteously guided *Khulafa’*. They made him responsible in important matters only after finding him truthful and capable for such positions.³⁴

When Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) intended to liberate Syria, he appointed ‘Amr b. ‘As (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and Walid b. Uqbah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) as commanders of his military expeditions. This implies that the status of ‘Uqbah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) to Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was same as that of ‘Amr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*). While ‘Amr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) led the *mujahidin* to Palestine, Walid (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was commanding the army to East Jordan.³⁵ He was appointed as *amir* of the country of Banu Taghlib and the Arabian Peninsula.³⁶ During this period he rendered great services in the fields of *jihad*. On the basis of such status, sacrifices and administrative acumen, Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) appointed him as the governor of Kufa.³⁷ He was a very popular administrator and nobody charged him of any kind of wrongdoings. Peace and order during his period was such that in his five years governorship he did not keep any gatekeeper.³⁸

Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), while justifying his appointment as governor, said that he did not appoint him because of being his brother but because of being the son of Rasullullah’s (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) paternal aunt. He also said that appointing or deposing anybody is a matter of *ijtihad* as was done by Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) when he replaced Sa’d b. Abi

³³ Allama Dhahabi, *loc.cit.*

³⁴ A-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.531 where he quotes it from *Fasl al-Khitab fi Mawaqif al-Ashab*, p.78 by Muhammad Salih al-Gharsi,

³⁵ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.512 where he quotes it from *Fasl al-Khitab*, p.78.

³⁶ Tabari, *op.cit.*, vol.4, p.271.

³⁷ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.513 quoted from *Fasl al-Khitab*, *loc.cit.*

³⁸ Tabari, *loc.cit.*

Waqqaṣ (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) by a person who was inferior to him, (thinking that the latter’s appointment was better for the larger interest of the state and general public).³⁹

4. Sa‘id b. al-‘As (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)

He became governor of Kufa after Walid b. Uqba (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*). He is the person who was nominated by Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) as scribe of the holy Qur’an along with other great *sahaba* including Zayd b. Thabit (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).⁴⁰ He was very peace loving and fond of unity among the Muslims. He would always flee from mischief and disunity. During his governorship in Kufa, he once went to Madina. When he came back to Kufa, some mischief mongers, including those who were responsible for Uthman’s (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) martyrdom, stopped him from entering the city. He returned to Madina and stayed over there. He remained neutral during the battles of the Camel and Siffin. In fact he advised the group of the Camel to desist from war.⁴¹ Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) appointed him as the governor of Kufa and he run the affairs of the state with justice and equity.

The critics (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) maintain that appointment of Sa‘id (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was not a good move from Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) as the former was incapable for such post. His inability, they say, came to fore clearly when the people of Kufa expelled him out.⁴² But a study of the nature and behavior of the people of Kufa may reveal that such allegations carry no weight for a serious student of history. In fact the people of Kufa had always been problematic for not only Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) but also for Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*). They used to complain against their administrators every now and then so much so that Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), having got fed up with their machinations, volatile nature and fickle behaviour, once said, “The people of Kufa have bothered me and rendered me helpless. They are never pleased with any *amir* nor is anybody ready to become their *amir*. They don’t care for their reformation. Nobody remains suitable for them.”⁴³ At another occasion he said, “The people of Kufa have put me in troubled. If I appoint any kindhearted governor for them, they go out of his control; if I appoint any hard governor for them, they complain against him every other day.”⁴⁴ Getting very much annoyed with their rude behaviour, he once supplicated in

³⁹ Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, *op.cit.*, p. 88

⁴⁰ Bukhari, No.4699.

⁴¹ Ibn Sa‘id, *Tabaqat*, vol.5, p.34 cited in Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.522.

⁴² Al-salabi, *op.cit.*, p.526

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.525-27 where it is quoted from *al-Ma‘rifah wa al-Tarikh*, vol.5, p.279 by Fusawi.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.527.

these words, “O Allah! These people have put me in difficulty, may you put them in tribulation.”⁴⁵

Sa‘id b. al-‘As (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was very generous and famous for his sublime behaviour with the people. If anybody came to him asking for something and he did not have anything to give him at that time, he would give him a written assurance to come later when that thing becomes available and get that according to the assurance.⁴⁶

5. **Abdullah b. ‘Amir b. Kurayz** (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)

He was born in 4 A.H. when Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) performed the *Umrah al-Qada*, he was brought into his blessed presence. “When he (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) saw him”, says Ibn Hajr, “he (Abdullah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)) smiled and yawned. Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) put his blessed saliva into his mouth and said: is he the son of Sulamiyyah? They replied in affirmative. Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: he resembles us more. Then he (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) kept on putting his saliva into his mouth while he went on swallowing it. Rasulullah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “he is thirsty or there is water accumulated in his stomach.” Then ibn ‘Amir grew up and wherever he attempted to extract water, it would gush forth.”⁴⁷

Abdullah b. ‘Amr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was appointed as governor of Basrah when he was only twenty four or twenty five. He continued on this high position till the martyrdom of Uthman (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).⁴⁸ Abdullah b. Sa‘d praises him in these words: “He was very respectable, embodiment of generosity, wealthy, having a good number of sons and loved Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) very much.”⁴⁹ Hafiz ibn Hajar says: “He was extremely generous, broad-minded, harmless, reliable and brave.”⁵⁰ His contribution in making canals and markets was great so much so that he used to say, “If I would get more time, I would make Basrah such that a woman would ride her animal for fulfilling her need and would see along her way only water and market until she would reach Makkah.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ *Idem.*, vide *Minhaj al-Sunnah*, by Ibn Taymiyyah, vol.3, p.188.

⁴⁶ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.522 vide *al-Isabah*, vol.3, p.108

⁴⁷ See *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’*, vol.3, p.19. See also *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, vol.5, p.273 and *Usd al-Ghabbah*, vol.3, p.293 vide Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 506

⁴⁸ See *Majallah al-Mu‘arrikh al-Arabi*, no.21, p.128. vide Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 507.

⁴⁹ See *Majallah al-Mu‘arrikh al-Arabi*, no.21, p.129 cited in Al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*

⁵⁰ See *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, vol.5, p.272, cited in Al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*

⁵¹ Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Ma‘arif*, p.321 cited in Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.510.

The above mentioned five governors were among the twenty six governors of Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) with the rest belonging to other families. When it is a fact that all of them were *sahaba*, then they are all above any kind of criticism, a belief generally held by the Muslims about each and every *sahabi*.

In light of this simple fact should any one assert that the *Khalifah* appointed his governors mostly from his relations and that too when Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself appointed on official positions people mostly from the Banu Umayyah? It is also a historical fact these people did not assume their positions as governors at the same time. He appointed Walid b. Uqba (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) as governor, then deposed him and appointed Sa'id b. al-'As (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) at his place. After some time he deposed Sa'id b. al-'As (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) also.

Dr. Muhammad Amahzun says: "Really the governors appointed by Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) were all competent and each one of them was highly capable for his post. Allah Ta'ala conquered many lands through them. They did justice to their people."⁵²

When Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was martyred there were only three Umayyad personalities who assumed the office of governorship. They were Amir Mu'awiyah (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), 'Abdullah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and 'Abdullah b. 'Amir b. Kurayz (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). It is pertinent to note that he deposed Walid b. Uqba (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Sa'id b. 'As from no place as fickle as Kufa wherefrom 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) had deposed the great general Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). Deposing the governors was therefore, not any blameful act but in fact it was a serious reprimand for the people of Kufa who never expressed their pleasure with any of the governors and always asked the central administration for change.

Now the question arises: were all these people whom Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed as governors as good in the time of Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) as they had earlier been in terms of their competence and goodness? In response to this question, every serious student needs to understand that Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was one of the *Khulafa' al-Rashidun*. His decisions are also guidance for the *ummah* as the decisions of Abu Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) are. Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) thought it appropriate for himself not to appoint any

⁵² *Mawaqif al-Sahaba min al-fitnah*, vol.1, p.417

of his relatives on high positions. That becomes the *sunnah* for the *ummah*. Contrarily, Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) thought it appropriate that if the relatives of the *Khalifah* are capable and have all the qualities necessary for a competent administrator, there is nothing wrong in appointing them for the interest of the state and the people. Therefore, whoever looks into the efficiency and competence of Uthman's (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) governors with an unbiased mind, he will find that each one of them was fit for his job. And what he was criticised for was permissible for him.⁵³

Marwan b. al-Hakam

One more allegation against Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) is that he gave very much undue importance to Marwan. Let's try to find out the status of this allegation.

Marwan was born in Makkah four months after Abdullah b. Zabayr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was born. He has not related from Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) but has seen him. Imam Dhahabi says that he was eight years old when Rasulullah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) passed away. In his foreword to *Fath al-Bari*, the famous commentary of *Sahih Bukhari*, Ibn Hajar says about him that he was reportedly a *sahabi* and if that is proved then his opponents have no right to criticise him.⁵⁴

Imam Bukhari, in his *Sahih*, has narrated a *mursal hadith*⁵⁵ pertaining to the event of Hodaybiyah on his authority. Many *Tabi'un* have also narrated on his authority.⁵⁶ He was the person known for his knowledge, jurisprudence, understanding and justice. He was *sayyid* (noble) from among the *sadat* (plur. of *sayyid*) youth of the Quraysh.⁵⁷ Ali (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) called him a *sayyid* among the *sadat* youth of the Quraysh.⁵⁸ Later, Amir Mu'a'wiyah (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was asked: "After you, who have you left to shoulder the responsibility of *khilafah*?" He in reply mentioned senior personalities of Banu Umayyah and then said: "As for he who has expertise in the recitation of the Qur'an, has deep understanding of Islam, is very hard in the matters of *shar'ah*, that is Marwan

⁵³ Dr.Sa'id, *al-Asas fi al-sunnah*, vol.4, p.1675, cited in al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 499

⁵⁴ Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, Muqaddimah, vol.1, p.

⁵⁵ A *mursal hadith* is that kind of *hadith* in which the chain of narrators ends on a *sahabi*.

⁵⁶ Imam al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafayat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam*, Berut, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2003, vol.2, p.707.

⁵⁷ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, Berut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992, vol.1, p.75

⁵⁸ Imam al-Dhahabi, *loc.cit.* See also Hamdi Shahin, *op.cit.*, p.191 vide Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol.8, p.257

b. Hakam.”⁵⁹ Imam Malik has accepted him as a great jurist and has narrated from him at many places in his *Muwatta*.⁶⁰ Imam Ahmad says: “It is said that (he) Marwan used to give judgments; he would follow the judgments of Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).⁶¹ He knew the recitation of the holy Qur’an the most and read it the most.⁶² He was very eager to search for the *sunnah* and acted on it sincerely.⁶³ He once attended a *janazah* (funeral prayer). After the prayer, he went away. Abu Hurayrah (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), on seeing this said: he has got the reward of a *qirat*⁶⁴ and has lost the reward of a *qirat*.⁶⁵ When Marwan was informed about this, he ran so fast that his knees got naked and sat until he was permitted.⁶⁶

Marwan was very famous for his knowledge, jurisprudence and worship. He was one of the four great *fuqaha*’ (jurists) of Madina—Sa’id b. al-Musayyib, ‘Urwah b. Zubayr, Qubaysah b. Dhu’ab. Abdullah b. Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) would say: “I have seen Madina and those who dwell there but I have not seen anyone knowing *fiqh* and *qira’at* (recitation of the holy Qur’an) more than Abdul Malik b. Marwa.”⁶⁷

When he was the governor of Madina, his brother, Abd al-Rahman, slapped a merchant. The later complained to Marwan. He called his brother and brought him in front of the merchant. He said to the merchant let him take revenge. The merchant declined and said that he was only intending to make Abd al-Rahman understand that there was someone above him who could help him. Marwan demanded of him that he must take revenge but he again declined and said that he gave authority to Marwan himself to take revenge. Marwan swore by Allah that he was not going to accept that and the merchant must act himself. However, he gave him choice to either forgive his brother or leave the matter to Allah to deal with him. He said that he left the matter to Allah. This prompted Abd al-Rahman to write satire against Marwan.⁶⁸

⁵⁹ Imam al-Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.708

⁶⁰ *Idem*.

⁶¹ *Idem*, vide Ibn Kathir, *loc. cit.*,

⁶² Hamdi Shahin, *loc.cit.*

⁶³ *Idem*.

⁶⁴ A *qirat* means very huge reward equivalent to the mount of Uhud.

⁶⁵ It is in the *hadith* tht when a Muslim attends the *janazah* of another Muslim he gets on *qirat* and if he remains there until the corpse is buried, he gets two *qirats*. (see *Muslim*, Kitab al-Janaiz).

⁶⁶ Hamdi Shahin, *op.cit.*, p.200

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 201

⁶⁸ Hamdi Shahin, *op. cit.*, p.200

However, Marwan's character and behavior became questionable and dubious later. He was the most problematic person who always loved mischief. His machinations played a very infamous role in creating the confusion and disorder during the period of Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). It is he who killed Talha (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) in the battle of the Camel. It is he who misused his powers to give Uthman's (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) enemies chance to kill him.⁶⁹ But that was, as do some people say, after he assumed the throne.⁷⁰ He became ruler in 64 A.H. and ruled for ten years. This implies that when Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed him, there was no serious charge against him that would necessarily disqualify. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, nothing questionable about him was seen before the *fitnah*.⁷¹ Therefore, if 'Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) appointed him as his secretary, it was not wrong because many personalities who were far better than him had got involved in the *fitnah*.⁷²

'Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) became *Khalifa* in 24 H. the time when 'Umar's (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) governors were still in service at many places of the Islamic world. 'Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) continued with them for one year. Thereafter he replaced them with new governors keeping in view the interests of the people and the state. In this respect he perhaps acted upon the will of 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) had willed that his successor should not continue with the governors he had appointed himself for more than a year except Abu Musa Ash'ari (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) who must be continued for four years.⁷³ In this regard 'Uthmān (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) would always consult the *sahaba* whenever he needed to replace any governor.

In view of the interests of general public he merged many provinces with other states and defined the governors' limitations. For example, he combined Bahrayn with Basrah. Similarly many states of Syria were combined together after the death or resignation of some of his governors.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ahmad Rada Bijnory, *Awar al-Bari*, Delhi, 2006, vol.7, p.150-152.

⁷⁰ Mufti Taqi Uthmani, *In 'am al-Bukhari*, Deoband, India, aktabah Thanwi, 2006, vol.1, p. 109

⁷¹ The developments which resulted in the martyrdom of Uthman (*radi allahu 'anhu*) and there aftermath marks the beginning of the *fitnah*.

⁷² *Mihaj al-sunnah*, vol.3, p.169 vide al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.533

⁷³ *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* vol.2, p.391, vide *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, *op.cit.*, p.475

⁷⁴ *Tabari*, vol.5, p.244 cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, *loc.cit.*

During the first ten years of his twelve years long *Khilafah* ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) strictly followed the policies of his predecessors Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*)⁷⁵. However, in the later period he had to face trouble and turmoil created by the enemies of Islam.

Now, let’s look at some of his orders he wrote to his subordinates:

The *farāmīn* (Sing: *farmān*) he wrote to civil administrators, military commanders, tax collectors and general public point towards his government’s just attitude. The civil administrators he addressed thus:

Allāh has commanded the rulers that they should protect their subjects, look after the *Ummah* honestly, not acting as mere revenue collectors for if you do that then modesty, trust and loyalty will vanish from you. Give to the Muslims their due which you owe to them and take from them that they owe to you. Further, you must give the *dhimmīs* their rights. And fulfill your treaties you have made with your enemies.⁷⁶

To the military commanders he wrote:

You are the helpers and protectors of the Muslims. We are well aware about the guidelines ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) had sent to you. He had consulted me at that time. So you should never show any irresponsible approach regarding those guidelines otherwise Allāh will replace you with others who will be better than you. Do always keep your deeds in your sight and take stock of them. I am doing my own job which Allāh has entrusted me.⁷⁷

His first correspondence with the collectors of *kharāj* was in these terms:

Allāh has created the creation with justice. He likes nothing other than justice. Therefore, with justice take and with justice give. Always be trustworthy and honest. It should not be that you are the first committers of dishonesty for in that way you will open the door of dishonesty for others and hence will become their partners in sin. Be on the path of loyalty. Do not treat the orphan and those with whom you have made treaty with injustice. Allāh is the enemy of those who do injustice to such people.⁷⁸

He admonished the people of various provinces through the following written guidelines which their respective officials read out to them in public:

⁷⁵ Bashīr Sājīd, *Asharah Mubashsharah*, Delhi, Madīnah Pub. Centre, 1993, p. 468.

⁷⁶ Tabari, *op.cit*, p. 244-5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 245.

⁷⁸ *Idem*.

You have attained this high position through submission to Allāh's commandments. Behold! Let the love of this world not make you neglect your duties. There are three things when they combine within you, the Muslim community will become victim of deviations: (i) wealth (ii) birth of children of the wombs of concubines (iii) difference of the *qira't* (recitation) of the holy Qur'ān between an Arab Bedouin and a non-Arab. Rasūlullāh (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has said that in '*ajamiyyat* are the germs of disbelief. When they will fail to understand a particular commandment of the *Sharī'ah*, they will make strange conclusions and in this way the Muslims will be overcome by deviations. So beware!"⁷⁹

As it has been mentioned earlier that 'Uthmān (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) followed the administrative system of 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*). Earlier on the occasion of his nomination, he took oath not to deviate even a little bit from the path of Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) and 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) after his firm commitment to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*.

He directed his governors that they should prefer older persons among them in terms of their having accepted Islam over others who came into the fold of Islam through the former except if the elders turned idle. He also exhorted them that they should take care of everyone's position and status and must hold to justice while they gave gifts. He advised them that they should know peoples' standard and status for that is very helpful in dispensing justice.

While following 'Umar's (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) system of governance very honestly, he however, made certain changes according to the changing situations and needs. For example, he introduced a new post for the military officer in the provinces while this responsibility was earlier being shared by the provincial governor. It was done for the convenience of the governors who were now, having to shoulder greater responsibilities.⁸⁰ In his treatment of the non-Muslims he always tried to abide by the treaties of 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) had made with them. Imām Abū Yūsuf, in his *kitāb al-Kharāj*, writes that once the Christians of Najrān complained to 'Uthmān (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) against the injustice committed by the Muslims against them. They showed him a document through which 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*), during his *khilāfah*, had granted them special rights. He, at once, wrote to Walīd b. 'Utbah, the governor of Najrān, to lessen thirty pairs from their *jizyah*, forgive them in the cause of Allāh and give them the whole land 'Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) had earlier given to them as *sadaqah* (charity). He also advised Walid to treat them with kindness as they were under the Muslims' protection and also because he had good relations with them. He ordered

⁷⁹ Tabari, *op.cit*, p. 245.

⁸⁰ Today also the post of the governor is separate from that of the army chief. See '*Asharah Mubashsharah*, p. 483. See also Sabāh al-Dīn 'Abdul Rahmān, *Islām mayn Madhhabī Rawadāri*, p. 111.

him to be careful and then follow strictly the document of ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).⁸¹ ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), in accordance with the teachings of the holy Qur’ān and the *sunnah* and also with the pattern laid by Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), showed great toleration towards the non-Muslims. The “best testimony”, in the words of Ameer Ali, of this toleration of the *khalīfah* (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) is furnished by the Christians themselves.

The Christian Patriarch of Marw addressed the Bishop of Fars, named Simeon, in these words:

“The Arabs who have been given by God the kingdom (of the earth) do not attack the Christian faith; on the contrary they help us in our religion; they respect our God and our Saints, and bestow gifts on our churches and monasteries.”⁸²

The *khalīfah* had a prosperous and successful reign in the first few year of his *khilāfah*. But in the later part of his *khilāfah* he was charged with nepotism and favoritism. His governors were charged with inefficiency, oppression and misappropriation of the property of the *Bayt al-Māl*. It was also alleged that the *khalīfah* helped his relations from the public treasury. His reply to such charges was: since Allāh commands in His Book to give the relations their due, while Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) used to take care of the needs of their relations, I take care of *silah rahm* (i.e., strengthening relationship with kith and kin through every lawful way including spending of money on them).⁸³ In fact, he did not take any allowance from the *Bayt al-Māl* (state treasury). The title ‘Uthman *Ghani*’ (Uthman the rich), as he is commonly known as, signifies that he had a big property of his own. He was among the few *sahaba* who were millionaires. Before he became *Khalīfah*, he was the biggest owner of goats and camels in Arabia. The amount he used to give as *zakāh* was forty thousand *dīnārs* per annum. This amount is 2.5th part of the total *danānir* (plural of *dinar*) he possessed. But in spite of this, he, at times had to face hunger because he frequently used to spend his wealth in helping the poor and the needy.⁸⁴ He dedicated a property of two lakh *danānir* for public welfare. During the *Khilāfah* of Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) he gave one thousand camels loaded with grain to the people as charity in the time of famine.⁸⁵ So whatever he gave to his relatives was out of his own property.

⁸¹ Sabāh al-Dīn, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

⁸² Syed Amir Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

⁸³ Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*. Karachi, 1980, vol. 3, p. 163-64.

⁸⁴ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Dar Hijr, Markz al-Bahuth wa al-Dirasat al-Arabia wa al-Islamiyyah, n.d., vol.10, p. 329.

⁸⁵ ‘Asharah *Mubashsharah*, p. 605-9.

Tabarī quotes him say:

“At the time of my accession to the *khilāfah* I was the biggest owner of goats and camels in Arabia. Today I possess neither a goat nor a camel, save the two I use in Hajj.... It is alleged that I favour my relations and give them riches. But I give them out of my own property. As regards the public property, I consider it lawful neither for myself nor for anyone else. Even during the times of Rasūlullāh (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), I used to give large sums of my earnings. This I did when I was a mere young man and had my own needs to fulfill. Now when I have reached normal limit of my age and my days are coming to end and I have given all of my possessions to my relatives, the misguided people say such things of me.”⁸⁶

The *Khālīfah* was so kind-hearted that the seditionists plotting against him were encouraged in their misdoings. When complaints against the oppression and embezzlement of the governors reached him, he called all the governors and asked the complainants to come with their grievances. But nobody came to get his/her grievance recorded nor could the people nominate any representative. For this reason and because of his being very tender hearted, he did not find strong obligation to take any action against the mischief mongers.

The fact is that *khalīfah* ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) did not commit any slightest injustice but since his predecessors Abū Bakr (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) and ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) had set a strict standard, not doing even that which was permissible for them in light of the Qur’ān and the *sunnah*, the people, seeing a marked difference, took his generous and otherwise lawful acts as against the attitude of a just administration. As regards his being an *‘adil khalīfah* the words of Ibn ‘Abbās (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) carry great weight. He says that the person who commands with justice as mentioned in the Qur’ānic *ayah*:

“*Is such a man equal to one who commands justice, and is himself on the straight path.*”⁸⁷ refers to ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*).⁸⁸ And the fact that once ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was asked who would be *khalīfah* after him, he said ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), brings forth clearly that in the sight of ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*), ‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was the fittest person for the *khilāfah*.⁸⁹

‘Uthmān (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) was so serious about justice that he once told his servant to pull his ear in retaliation as he had earlier pulled his (servants’) ear. He did it because he did not want

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⁸⁷ (Al-Qur’an al-Nahl 16:76)

⁸⁸ Ibn Sa’d, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, p. 161.

⁸⁹ Muttaqī, ‘Alā al-Dīn, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, Pakistan, n.d., vol. 5, p. 736.

to go in the court of Allāh (*subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) on the Day of Judgment having done injustice to his slave.⁹⁰

Although the later period of his *khilāfah* remained full of troubles and crises, he, being lenient and tender-hearted, did not try to curb the mischief-mongers with severe punishments but always tried to pacify the rebellions with wisdom and advice. His attitude was, in fact, the combination of two Qur'anic principles: *'adl and rahmah* (justice and mercy). His just approach never allowed him to do any least injustice while on the other hand his merciful approach would not allow him to crush his enemies or the wrong doers with a stern hand.

He deputed eminent *Sahābah* (*radi Allahu 'anhum*) to the liberated lands to send him information about the conditions of the people. One Friday, he ascended the pulpit and asked about the happenings in the far-flung areas. He had made general announcement that whoever had any complaint against any officer, let him come and inform the *Khalīfah* during Hajj time. On that occasion he used to call all the administrators also so that investigations could be made easily.⁹¹

Tail piece

Uthman (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) was a *mujtahid* and it is stated in *hadith* that a *mujtahid* gets reward even if he is wrong in his decision. Of course, he was not any prophet to be innocent to commit any sin. But his intention was all good and sincere. Whatever he did was, by his good intention done for the interest of Islam, the state and the *ummah* in general. Appointing or deposing anybody is a matter of *ijtihad* as was done by Umar (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) when he replaced Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) by a person who was inferior to him, (thinking that the latter's appointment was better for the larger interests of Islam, the state and general public).⁹²

Notes and Referances

¹ Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, Dar al-Salam, Saudi Arabia, 1431A. H., p.611 quoted from *Dirasat fi 'ahd al-Nabuwwah wa al-khilafah al-rashidah* by Dr. Abd al-Rahman al-Shuja', p.394

² *Ibid.*, p.612 quoted from Dr. Abd al-Rahman al-Shuja', *op.cit.*, p.400.

³ The reader is requested to refer to *Athar al-Tashayyu' 'al-Riwayat al-Tarikhyyah* by Abul Aziz Muhammad Nur Wali, n.p., 1415 A.H. p. 37-199, 229-290 and 319-336. Also Abdul Aziz Muhammad Nur Wali, *Athar al-Tashayyu' Ala al-Riwayat al-Tarikhyyah*, 1415 H, Pp. 319-38 for a detailed account on this subject where in status of a large number of such dubious narrators has been given with a good account of the position of each of them in the presence of the *muhaddithin*.

⁴ See al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*, where it is quoted from *al-Tamhid wa al-Bayan* by Muhammad b. Yahya al-Andalusi, p.64.

⁹⁰ Kāndhlawī, Mawlānā M. Yūsuf. *Hayāt al-Sahābah*, Delhi, n.d., vol. 2, p 145.

⁹¹ Sabāh al-Dīn, *loc. cit.*

⁹² Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, *op.cit.*, p. 88

⁵ *Idem.*

⁶ Tabari, in his *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, Egypt, Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd edition, n.d., vol.4, p. 243. says that when Hadhrat Uthman (*radiallahu 'anhu*) was paid allegiance, he ascended the pulpit he, after praising Allah saying durud on the holy Prophet, addressed the people thus: "You are in a world bound to perish so do right deeds for your end as much as you can. Lo! The worldly life deceives so let you not be deceived by life and let not deception overpower you with regard to Allah. There is admonition for you in those who passed away. So strive and don't forget and sit idle for if you forget still you will not be forgotten and spared. Alas! Where are the sons of the world and their brothers who preferred this world and inhabited this (as if they were to be here forever)? They were allowed to enjoy for long. Alas! Did not they remember: "throw the world where Allah has thrown it and seek the *Akhirah* for Allah has given for it an example (in the Qur'an): "Propound thou to them the similitude of life of this world. It is as water which we send down from the heaven, then there mingles with it the vegetation of the earth, and lo! It becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter. And Allah is Potent over everything." (Al-Kahf 18:45) The reader fails to agree with Dozi's assertions which Ameer Ali takes as witness as if the former was very sincerely saying the truth as it had been. Dozi and all other orientalis's bias and prejudice is not something which is not known to common student of orientalism. He has also narrated a few of his public addresses which are full of love of the *Akhirah*, wisdom and eloquence, *op.cit.*, p.422. See also Ibn Khaldun, *Tarikh*, Karachi, Nafis Academy, vol.4, p.356.

⁷ Syed Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, Kutub Khana Ishayat (sic)-ul-Islam, Delhi, n.d., p.294

⁸ Mawlana Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *Khilafat-wa-Mulukiya*, Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2013, p.88-89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁰ Syed Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (Urdu), Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1981, p.354-5.

¹¹ Dr. Hamdi Shahin, *al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftara 'alayha*, Qairo, Dar al-Qahirah li al-Kitab, 2001, p.11.

¹² Dr. Muhammad Amahzun, *Tahqiq Mawaqif al-Sahaba fi al-Fitnah*, Riyad, Maktabah al-Kawthar, 1993, vol.1, p.417.

¹³ *Idem.*

¹⁴ Mawlana Mawdudi, *op.cit.*, p. 97

¹⁵ *Sahih Bukhar*, Kitab al-Maghazi, H. No. 4100.

¹⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Imarah, H.No.1826.

¹⁷ Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, No. 2343. See also *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Tirmidhi* No.29.no.as quoted by Amahzun, *op.cit.*, 415. This author tried to see this hadith in *Tirmidhi* but could not find it.

¹⁸ Dr. Amahzun, *op.cit.*, p.415.

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.416

²¹ See *Minhaj al-Sunna*, vol.3, p.175-6 cited in Amahzun, *op.cit.*, p.417

²² *Idem*, vide *al-siyasah al-shar'iyah*, by Ibn Taymiyyah, p. 18-24.

²³ For a detailed account on this subject see *Al-Asas fi al-Sunnah*, by Dr. Sa'id, vol.4, p.1675, Marwiyyat *Khilafah Mu'awiyah*, by Khalid Ghayth, p.23 and many other books on hadith (*chapter Virtues of the sahaba*) where those ahadith which are witness to righteousness and sublimity of Amir Mu'awiyah. Cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, by Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, Dar al-Salam, Saudi Arabia, 1431 H., p. 499-505.

²⁴ *Tirmidhi*, Kitab Fada'il Sahabah, Hadith no. 3931.

²⁵ Qadi Abu Bakr ibn Al-Arabi, *Al-Awasim min al-Qawasim*, cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, p.502

²⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatawa*, vol. 4, p.472, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol.8, p.122, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, vol.3, p.129 cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, p.503.

²⁷ *Al-Awasim wa al-Qawasim*, p.82.

²⁸ Muhammad Hasan Sharrab, *Al-Madina al-Munawwarah*, vol. 2, p.216 cited in Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*,

²⁹ Allama Dhabhi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, Cairo, Dar al-Hadith, 2006, vol.5, vol.4, p.275.

³⁰ Dr. Abdul Aziz al-Umri, *Al-Wilayah 'ala al-Buladan*, vol.1, p.180, cited in al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.529.

³¹ Allama Dhabhi, *op.cit.*, p.204-5.

³² Abdul Aziz al-Umri, *op.cit.*, p.186

³³ Allama Dhahabi, *loc.cit.*

³⁴ A-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.531 where he quotes it from *Fasl al-Khitab fi Mawaqif al-Ashab*, p.78 by Muhammad Salih al-Gharsi,

³⁵ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.512 where he quotes it from *Fasl al-Khitab*, p.78.

³⁶ Tabari, *op.cit.*, vol.4, p.271.

³⁷ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.513 quoted from *Fasl al-Khitab*, *loc.cit.*

³⁸ Tabari, *loc.cit.*

³⁹ Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, *op.cit.*, p. 88

⁴⁰ *Bukhari*, No.4699.

⁴¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol.5, p.34 cited in Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.522.

⁴² Al-salabi, *op.cit.*, p.526

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.525-27 where it is quoted from *al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tarikh*, vol.5, p.279 by Fusawi.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.527.

⁴⁵ *Idem.*, vide *Minhaj al-Sunnah*, by Ibn Taymiyyah, vol.3, p.188.

⁴⁶ Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.522 vide *al-Isabah*, vol.3, p.108

- ⁴⁷ See *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala*, vol.3, p.19. See also *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, vol.5, p.273 and *Usd al-Ghabbah*, vol.3, p.293 vide Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 506
- ⁴⁸ See *Majallah al-Mu'arrikh al-Arabi*, no.21, p.128. vide Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 507.
- ⁴⁹ See *Majallah al-Mu'arrikh al-Arabi*, no.21, p.129 cited in Al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*
- ⁵⁰ See *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, vol.5, p.272, cited in Al-Salabi, *loc.cit.*
- ⁵¹ Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Ma'arif*, p.321 cited in Al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.510.
- ⁵² *Mawaqif al-Sahaba min al-fitnah*, vol.1, p.417
- ⁵³ Dr.Sa'id, *al-Asas fi al-sunnah*, vol.4, p.1675, cited in al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, 499
- ⁵⁴ Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, Muqaddimah, vol.1, p.
- ⁵⁵ A *mursal hadith* is that kind of *hadith* in which the chain of narrators ends on a *sahabi*.
- ⁵⁶ Imam al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafayat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam*, Beirut, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2003, vol.2, p.707.
- ⁵⁷ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992, vol.1, p.75
- ⁵⁸ Imam al-Dhahabi, *loc.cit.* See also Hamdi Shahin, *op.cit.*, p.191 vide Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol.8, p.257
- ⁵⁹ Imam al-Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.708
- ⁶⁰ *Idem*.
- ⁶¹ *Idem*, vide Ibn Kathir, *loc.cit.*,
- ⁶² Hamdi Shahin, *loc.cit.*
- ⁶³ *Idem*.
- ⁶⁴ A *qirat* means very huge reward equivalent to the mount of Uhud.
- ⁶⁵ It is in the *hadith* tht when a Muslim attends the *janazah* of another Muslim he gets on *qirat* and if he remains there until the corpse is buried, he gets two *qirats*. (see *Muslim*, Kitab al-Janaiz).
- ⁶⁶ Hamdi Shahin, *op.cit.*, p.200
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 201
- ⁶⁸ Hamdi Shahin, *op.cit.*, p.200
- ⁶⁹ Ahmad Rada Bijnory, *Awar al-Bari*, Delhi,2006, vol.7, p.150-152.
- ⁷⁰ Mufti Taqi Uthmani, *In'am al-Bukhari*, Deoband, India, aktabah Thanwi, 2006, vol.1, p. 109
- ⁷¹ The developments which resulted in the martyrdom of Uthman (*radi allahu 'anhu*) and there aftermath marks the beginning of the fitnah.
- ⁷² *Mihaj al-sunnah*, vol.3, p.169 vide al-Salabi, *op.cit.*, p.533
- ⁷³ *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* vol.2,p.391, vide *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, *op.cit.* p.475
- ⁷⁴ *Tabari*, vol.5, p.244 cited in *Sirat-i-Uthman Dhu al-Nurayn*, *loc.cit.*
- ⁷⁵ Bashir Sajid, *Asharah Mubashsharah*, Delhi, Madinah Pub. Centre, 1993, p. 468.
- ⁷⁶ *Tabari*, *op.cit.*, p. 244-5.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 245.
- ⁷⁸ *Idem*.
- ⁷⁹ *Tabari*, *op.cit.*, p. 245.
- ⁸⁰ Today also the post of the governor is separate from that of the army chief. See *Asharah Mubashsharah*, p. 483. See also Sabah al-Din 'Abdul Rahmān, *Islām mayn Madhhabī Rawadāri*, p. 111.
- ⁸¹ Sabah al-Din, *op.cit.*, p. 112.
- ⁸² Syed Amir Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 225.
- ⁸³ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*. Karachi, 1980, vol. 3, p. 163-64.
- ⁸⁴ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Dar Hijr, Markz al-Bahuth wa al-Dirasat al-Arabia wa al-Islamiyyah, n.d., vol.10, p. 329.
- ⁸⁵ *Asharah Mubashsharah*, p. 605-9.
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- ⁸⁷ (Al-Qur'an al-Nahl 16:76)
- ⁸⁸ Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, p. 161.
- ⁸⁹ Muttaqi, 'Alā al-Dīn, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, Pakistan, n.d.,vol. 5, p. 736.
- ⁹⁰ Kāndhlawī, Mawlānā M. Yūsuf.*Hayāt al-Sahābah*, Delhi, n.d.,vol. 2, p 145.
- ⁹¹ Sabah al-Din, *loc.cit.*
- ⁹² Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, *op.cit.*, p. 88