

## Caliph Uthman

### **Describe the achievements of Uthman as Caliph.**

Caliph Uthman was the son of the father Affan and the mother Arwa. He was born in Macca in the 6th year of elephant and he was **5 years younger than the Holy Prophet** (s.a.w). They were related through the common ancestor Abd Manaf. As from his formal education, he was able to read and write Arabic language. He was much learned, intelligent, wise (wisdom) and studious. In addition, he was a successful trader and was always polite with his customers and business partners. Well before his conversion to Islam, he was a pious man. He never indulged in polytheism and idol worshipping. He was among the Hanif.

He embraced Islam at the demand of Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra). He was a very tender hearted person. He would cater for the needy, destitute, low class and the poor. He would always come to the help of the persecuted. After the death of Umar, he became caliph and his reign lasted for 12 years (645-656 CE) and his empire greatly enlarged in the initial five or six years of rule. He enlarged both mosques in the cities of Mecca and Medina to suit the needs of the growing number of Muslims.

**Secondly**, he embarked on the digging of wells for the convenience of both the people of Hijaz and the travellers. He also improved existing water courses to prevent flood.

**Next**, he built large naval fleet and consolidated his army and through years he conquered places like Crete, Cyprus and Rhodes. He also sent his army to Egypt against Romans 646.

**Moreover**, he sent Mu'awiyah as the governor of Syria into Asia Minor and Khurasan to conquer and consolidate the countries and the state of the Islamic religion and creed.

**Fifthly** there were many military expeditions to North Africa and Tripoli was conquered. There were also quelled revolts in Armenia and Azerbaijan where the Muslim armies crushed all revolts.

**A six point is that**, the caliph engaged in the standardisation of the Qur'an which was already compiled, but differences in recitation of Qur'an were noticed in far areas. Uthman was told about the situation and he took the mushaf from Hafsah (the Prophet's wife).

**Another point** is to ensure the authenticity of the Qur'an, he instructed Zaid bin Thabit as the head of the project. Zaid made a public announcement that anyone having any verse should come forward to participate in this endeavour.

**Another point is** that compilation was also checked from the memories of other companions who were huffaz of the Qur'an. After this step Zaid was instructed to make new copies of Qur'an and other new copies were made and sent to all corners of Muslim empire.

**Ninthly** in order to ensure that the old copies would not be in circulation, Uthman ordered his men to collect and burn all the old circulating copies of the whole Islamic empire. As such the old copies were destroyed.

**Tenthly** the move of Uthman to standardise the Qur'an was to ensure that today we have the real and authentic Qur'an sent by Allah upon the prophet (s.a.w) of Islam. The Qur'an we read now is the same one from the time of Uthman.

### **Why do you think problems arose during his Caliphate?**

There were many problems during the time of Uthman due to specific reasons. When he came to power, he wanted to make some changes in the posts of his government. He wanted to place his trusted men for a

better control and to crush all problems. He did never want to give any favour to any member of his family, but instead, he was accused of appointing inefficient relatives as governors and he was so weak at commanding his people. He was also accused of his wrong and bad administrative measures of replacing already existing governors and that he did not check his newly appointed officers. He was charged of all the problems emerging in his dominion. He was accused of being too tender hearted towards those breaching the Shari'ah. He took lesser decisions against them. The greatest accusation was that he burned down the words and message of Allah – the Qur'an. Some of the rebellious persons accused him of corruption and upsurging the right of his people and money from the Bait-ul-Maal. All these accusations came from the Khawarij.

As such, **firstly**, Uthman's mild disposition was in severe contrast to Umar's reputation of being strong and the defeated Persians and Romans presumed that Uthman was not be able to hold empire together and that resulted in revolts in outlying areas.

**Secondly**, due to large empire and the passing of time there was only few alive as role models who remembered the Prophet (s.a.w) personally and the high ideals of Islam. Many Muslims converts had lived with other values (not as honest and generous) which were difficult to change. They were led by their own customs. Uthman was unable to take strong decisions against all these kinds of corruptions.

**Thirdly**, there was the question of the position of governors given to family members by Uthman (Umayyads). That situation revived the old rivalry between the Ummayad and the Hashimites again. That renewed the already existing enemies especially when more wealth was coming in from conquered territories. There was an urge to take over power.

**Fourthly**, Uthman himself was too gentle towards his men, governors and people. Some advisors took advantage of his age and weakness. In this Abdullah bin Saba was the main ring leader of dissenting voices leading to exploiting the situation.

**Fifthly**, there were many critics about him concerning the burning of the copies of the Qur'an after new compilations and standardisations of the Qur'an left to Hafsa were made. Uthman felt that differing versions of the Qur'an would cause conflict in his community and for later nations in later centuries.