

Causes of the Assassination of Uthman

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Uthman succeeded to the position of the third *khalifa* after Umar's assassination, and he lasted in that position for twelve years.

The power and management structure which he had inherited from Umar worked relatively well for the first few years of his reign. There was peace in the Muslim community. But soon after the early years, discontent began to build up against Uthman, and it went on building up until it reached the flash point in 656 AD/35 AH when an enraged and outraged mob lynched him in his own palace in Medina.

The people had genuine causes for their discontent. They knew that unlimited quantities of gold and silver were coming into the treasury from the provinces but they did not see any of it. All of it disappeared into the private coffers of the members of the ruling class.

This is not to justify the brutal killing of Uthman. Imam Ali (pbuh) had commented in later times that the killing of Uthman was a thing of the period of *Jahiliyyah*.

The ruling class was made up exclusively of the members of the clan of Banu Umayya – the clan to which Uthman himself belonged. The Umayyads, under Uthman, reached undreamed of affluence and the ultimate arrogance of power. General, larger Muslim populace resented their arrogance, ostentation and hauteur, and the vulgar and inflammatory display by them of their riches and power.

Uthman dismissed all the governors and commanders who had been appointed by Abu Bakr and Umar, one after the other, and in their stead, he appointed those men whose only qualifications were that they were Umayyads. The people in the provinces groaned under the oppressive policies of these new governors and commanders. Drunk with power as they were,

