

Khalifa Uthman bin Affan - Early Life

Early life of Uthman

No account has been preserved about the early life of Uthman. Only a few stray facts can be gleaned from here and there and on the basis of this meager information, we can have some glimpses of the early life of Uthman.

Uthman was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. His father Affan was a merchant and was counted as one of the richest men among the Quraish. Uthman was one of the few young men in Makkah who could read and write. This shows that as a child, Uthman received formal education.

Uthman spent the days of his childhood like other Arab children. One of the games played by the Arab children was to uncover themselves and carry stones in their shirts. One day when as a child Uthman had uncovered himself he heard a voice "Cover yourself". Uthman hastened to cover himself. Thereafter he never uncovered himself. Thus at an early age, Uthman developed the habit of modesty, and that remained his lifelong attribute.

It is related that while young, Uthman once traveled with his father to Yemen. They were accompanied by Abdul Rahman b Auf and his father. When they returned they carried the money of a man of B. Jadhima Amir who had died in Yemen, to his heirs. One man Khalid b Hisham met them in the Jadhima territory before they could get to the family of the dead man who demanded the money. They refused to pay the money to Khalid b Hisham. That led to fighting in which Auf the father of Abdul Rahman, and al Fakih b al Mughira were killed. Uthman and his father succeeded in escaping from the Banu Jadhima territory. The Quraish of Makkah thereupon planned to attack the Banu Jadhima, but the Banu Jadhima paid the compensation and the blood money, and the dispute was settled.

Affan the father of Uthman died young when travelling abroad. Uthman was hardly twenty years old at the time of the death of his father. His father, however, left much wealth for him to inherit. Uthman followed the same profession as his father. His business flourished, and after a few years he became a millionaire, one of the richest men among the Quraish. For his wealth, Uthman came to be called "Uthman Ghani".

After the death of Affan, Urwa the mother of Uthman married Uqba bin Maheet. From the accounts that have come down to us it appears that Urwa had only two children from Affan, namely: Uthman and his sister Amna. She bore Uqba three sons and one daughter, namely: Walid; Khalid; 'Amr and Umm Kulthum.

It appears that during the age of ignorance, Uthman had two wives, namely Umm'Amr bint Jandab, and Fatimah bint Al Walid. Bint 'Amr was the mother of 'Amr, Khalid; Aban; Umar; and Maryam. Fatimah was the mother of Walid; Said; and Umm Said.

'Amr, was the eldest son of Uthman, and during the pre-Islamic period, Uthman was known by the surname of Abu'Amr.

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