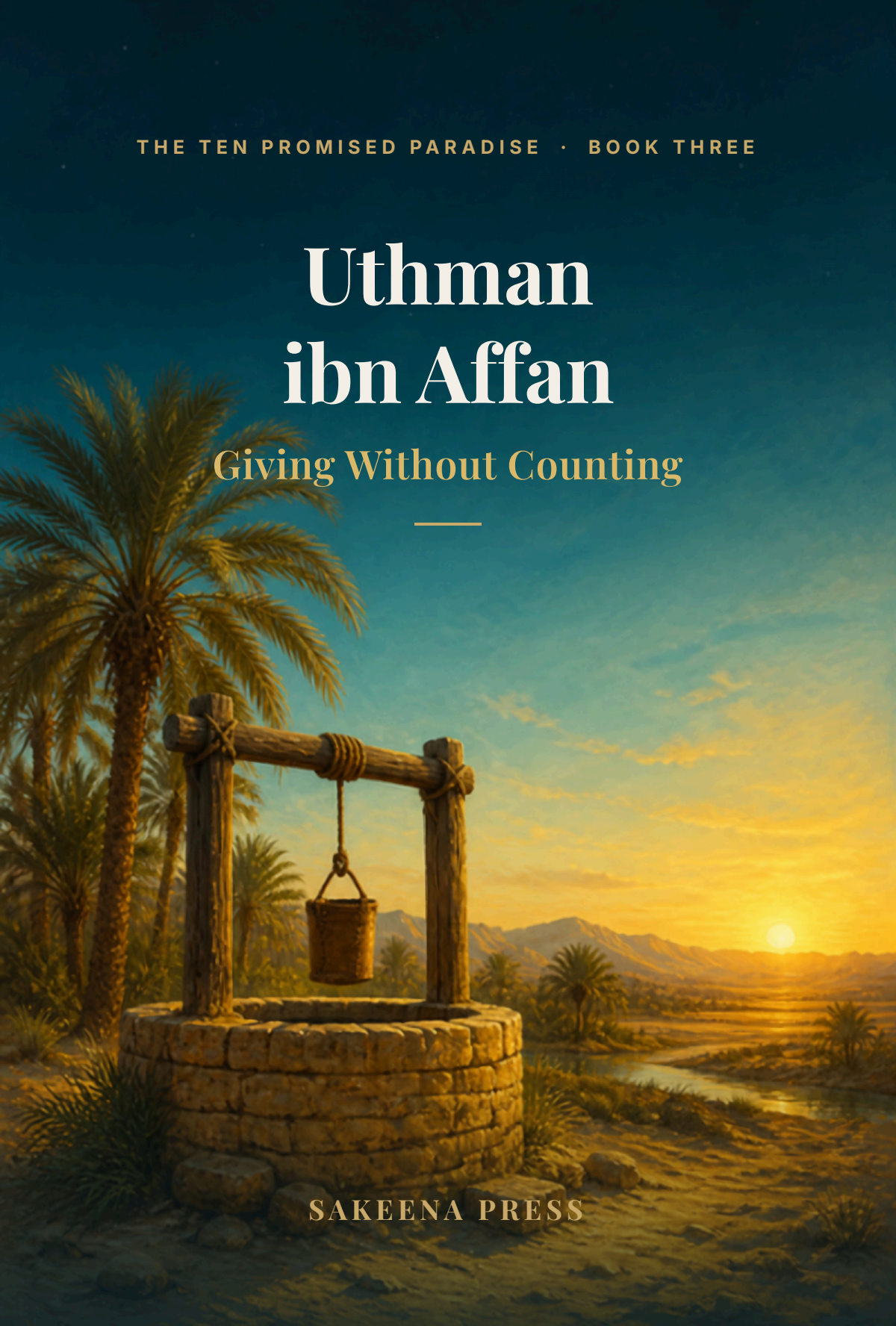
THE TEN PROMISED PARADISE · BOOK THREE

Uthman ibn Affan

Giving Without Counting



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What the Man of Two Lights Teaches the Mind, the Heart and the Life of the One Who Walks After Him

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Uthman ibn Affan: Giving Without Counting
What the Man of Two Lights Teaches the Mind, the Heart and the Life of the One Who Walks After Him

The Ten Promised Paradise, Book Three

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First published in 2026 by Sakeena Press.
Sakeena Education Ltd, United Kingdom
Sakeena for Publishing and Training FZE LLC, United Arab Emirates
www.sakeenainstitute.com · admin@sakeenainstitute.com

ISBN 978-1-911998-27-3 (paperback)
ISBN 978-1-911998-26-6 (PDF edition)

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This book is for education and reflection. It is not a complete biography, and it does not replace the study of the books of sirah and hadith from which it draws.

First edition. Printed on demand.

For everyone who has something to give
and is still counting it.

Contents

A Word Before You Begin 10

PART ONE

The Ten, and the Third of Them 13

1 Ten Names, One Promise 14

2 Who He Was Before 18

3 Brought by a Friend 21

PART TWO

He Was Modest 25

4 The Man the Angels Were Shy Of 26

5 Modesty Is Part of Faith 30

6 The Man of Two Lights 33

PART THREE

He Gave 37

7 The Well of Rumah 38

8 The Army of Hardship 42

9 The Caravan in the Year of Hunger 46

10 Giving Without Reminding 49

PART FOUR

He Was Trusted 53

11 The Hand of Uthman 54

12 The Defence of Ibn Umar 59

13 Glad Tidings, With an Affliction 63

14 Be Still, Mountain 67

PART FIVE

He Guarded the Book 71

15 The Third Caliph 72

16 One Book for One Community 76

17 Learn It and Teach It 80

18 A House for Allah 83

PART SIX

He Returned 87

19 The Shirt He Would Not Take Off 88

20 The Siege 92

21 What Those Who Knew Him Said 96

PART SEVEN

Walking With Him 101

22 The Words He Carried to Us 102

23 Seven Habits of the Man of Two Lights 107

24 A Forty-Day Companionship 110

The One Who Gave Without Counting 113

Sources 114

Index of Verses and Hadith 117

Your Forty Days 121

PREFACE

A Word Before You Begin

There are ten men whom the Prophet ﷺ named in a single breath and promised Paradise. The first book in this series walked with Abu Bakr, who said yes without delay. The second walked with Umar, who said the true thing without fear. This book walks with the third.

Uthman ibn Affan was not loud like Umar, and he was not the first like Abu Bakr. He was the quiet one: a wealthy man so modest that the Prophet ﷺ said the angels were shy of him, and so generous that the Prophet ﷺ said nothing he did after one particular day could harm him. He bought a well and gave it away. He equipped an army out of his own wealth. He married two daughters of the Prophet ﷺ, one after the other, and was called the Man of Two Lights. He gathered the Muslims on one written copy of the Quran, the copy every mushaf in the world descends from. And when rebels surrounded his house, he refused to let anyone shed blood for his sake, and died reading the Book he had gathered.

He is the companion for everyone who has been given something, money, time, skill or a quiet strength, and is still deciding how much of it to keep. He is the proof that modesty is not weakness, that wealth can be a road to Paradise, and that patience under injustice is a form of courage the world rarely recognises.

For every claim in this book there is evidence: a verse of the Quran, a hadith with its reference, or a report from the early historians, named as such. Where a report is outside the two Sahihs we say so and give its grading where one exists. We

have tried not to decorate this man. He was too modest to have wanted it.

Read it slowly. Then go and do one thing he did.

How this book is arranged

Part One introduces the ten again, explains why the third book is about Uthman, and describes the man he was before the message came and the friend who brought him to it.

Parts Two to Six each take one thing he was or did: he was modest, he gave, he was trusted, he guarded the Book, and he returned to his Lord. Each claim comes with its evidence.

Part Seven shows how to walk with him: the words he carried to us, seven habits drawn from his life, and a forty-day plan for making them your own.

Verses are given in Arabic with their meaning in English and their reference. Hadith are given with the numbers of the standard printed editions as used on sunnah.com, and gradings are noted where a narration is outside Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim.

Reports from the books of history and sirah appear in boxes marked From the Sources. They are the accounts of Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, al-Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Kathir, and they are offered as the historians recorded them, not as hadith.

I

PART ONE

The Ten, and the Third of Them

Who the ten were, why the third book is about Uthman, who he was before the message came, and the friend who brought him.

1 Ten Names, One Promise

2 Who He Was Before

3 Brought by a Friend

01

CHAPTER ONE

Ten Names, One Promise

Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, who was himself one of them, reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said ten names and after each name said the same thing: in Paradise. He did not say they would be judged kindly, or that there was hope for them. He said where they would be, as a man describes a place he has seen.

HADITH

أَبُو بَكْرٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَعُمَرُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَعُثْمَانُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَعَلِيٌّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَطَلْحَةُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَالزُّبَيْرُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَسَعْدٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَسَعِيدٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

“Abu Bakr is in Paradise, Umar is in Paradise, Uthman is in Paradise, Ali is in Paradise, Talhah is in Paradise, al-Zubayr is in Paradise, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf is in Paradise, Sa'd is in Paradise, Sa'id is in Paradise, and Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah is in Paradise.”

JAMI' AT-TIRMIDHI 3747; ALSO SUNAN ABI DAWUD 4649 FROM SA'ID IBN ZAYD. GRADED SAHIH BY AL-ALBANI.

The third name

Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman. The Prophet ﷺ said the names in that order, and the Companions ranked one another in the same order while he was still among them to hear it. Abdullah ibn Umar said so plainly.

HADITH

كُنَّا فِي زَمَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ لَا نَعْدِلُ بِأَبِي بَكْرٍ أَحَدًا، ثُمَّ عُمَرَ، ثُمَّ عُثْمَانَ

Ibn Umar said: “In the time of the Prophet ﷺ we did not consider anyone equal to Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman.”

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 3655.

Three men, and the third of them is the one this book is about. When Umar died, the six men he had appointed to choose his successor chose Uthman, and the community pledged to him, and he ruled for twelve years. The order of the list and the order of history were the same.

The Quran describes the first believers without naming them.

وَٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ٱلْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ وَٱلْأَنصَارِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَٰنٍ رَّضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى تَحْتَهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ

"And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment."

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:100

The first forerunners, from the emigrants and the helpers. Uthman was among the first of the emigrants twice over: he left Makkah for Abyssinia in the fifth year of the message, with his wife Ruqayyah the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and later he left Makkah for Madinah. He would say himself, at the end of his life, that he had made both emigrations. Allah is pleased with them, the verse says, and they are pleased with Him.

Why a series

A promise of Paradise from the mouth of the Prophet ﷺ is the highest thing that can be said about a human being, and it was said about these ten. Yet most of us know them as a list. A list cannot be followed. A man can. So this series takes them one

at a time, short enough to be read in a few sittings and built so that it ause a companion is someone you walk beside for a while, until some of his way of walking becomes yours.

Why Uthman third

Because the Prophet ﷺ named him third, and because he is the companion the first two books could not give you. Abu Bakr teaches the yes. Umar teaches the true word spoken without fear. Uthman teaches what to do with what you have been given. Most of us are not called to stand in front of armies. Most of us are called, every week, to decide what to do with money, time and a measure of comfort that Allah has put in our hands. Uthman had more of all three than almost anyone in Madinah, and he became one of the ten by giving it away. That is why he is third, and why he is next.

◆

Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman. The order of the list was the order of history, and the third name belongs to the man who gave.

02

CHAPTER TWO

Who He Was Before

Uthman ibn Affan ibn Abi al-As was born in the sixth year after the Year of the Elephant, which makes him about six years younger than the Prophet ﷺ. He belonged to the clan of Umayyah, one of the great houses of Quraysh, and through his mother, Arwa bint Kurayz, he was a cousin of the Prophet's ﷺ family: her mother was Umm Hakim al-Bayda, a daughter of Abd al-Muttalib and the full sister of the Prophet's ﷺ father Abdullah.

A trader who was trusted

He was a merchant, and a successful one, in a city that lived by trade. The caravans of Makkah went north to Syria in summer and south to Yemen in winter, and Uthman's goods went with them and came back as profit. By the time the message came he was among the wealthiest young men of Quraysh.