

Chapter – 05

Hazrat 'Ali Murtaza

(598 - 661 AD)

'Ali is the cousin of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH). His mother, Fatima bint Asad, previously named him Haider. But later, the Noble Prophet suggested his name as 'Ali. His father is 'Abd Manaf but he became more famous with his family name Abu Talib. Abu Talib was a prominent figure in Quraish tribe. The Noble Prophet had more closeness with 'Ali's father than his any other uncle. Abu Talib was also a custodian of the Ka'bah. 'Ali grew up in the lap of the Noble Prophet, hence his personality remained free from all the pollution of ignorance. The result of this training was that when he was first invited to Islam, 'Ali was the first to welcome on it. He was only 10 years old at that time. As 'Ali grew up under the supervision of the Noble Prophet, the consciousness that he got to understand the facts of life and to recognize the truth or distinguish falsehood did not come to anyone else. The Prophet gave a famous phrase for him, he said, "*I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is the gateway to it*".

'Ali's color was wheat like, height was small, his eyes were wide, and his face was bright and beautiful. There were dense hairs on the chest. He was energetic, agile and curvilinear. The arms and legs were fleshy. He didn't have hair on his head. He was a man of very good character, and of a

cheerful nature. The case of his clemency was that he could forgive the greatest wrongdoers. He had the distinction of having knowledge of various sciences and arts that include Tajweed, interpretation of Quranic Verses, mysticism, scholarly literature, syntax, calligraphy and poetry. He was a great speaker as well.

From the beginning to the end he remained a helping hand of the Noble Prophet, so much so that he was always prepared to spare his life too. The night of Prophet's departure when he was migrating to Madinah, it was ordered that he should lie down on his bed as if he was present, and he did it with delight. At this juncture, death stood over his head but he didn't care for anything. When he got up in the morning, the enemy wondered what had happened. They also got very angry at 'Ali but they thought that the Prophet had already left and it is useless to punish 'Ali, so he was relieved. On the third day after the departure of the Noble Prophet 'Ali himself left for Madinah. In these three days he returned all the trusts given by the Prophet to the concerned persons as per his instructions.

After coming to Madinah, in the year 2AH/624AD, the Noble Prophet gave the honor to 'Ali to become his son-in-law. One day 'Ali differed with his wife Fatima on any point so he went out of his house and lied down on the ground. Incidentally, the Noble Prophet passed by. Looking at the dust on his back, he said, "*O Abu Turab! get up.*" From that day his family name became "Abu Turab" (*father of the dust*). When the chain of brotherhood and faction was established in Madinah, 'Ali was not paired with anyone. When he asked its reason with Prophet, the Noble Prophet said, "*O 'Ali! you are my brother, both in this world and Hereafter.*"

'Ali showed his bravery in Badr, Uhad, Khandaq and Hunain battles. Several small clashes were made under his

subordination, which he successfully carried out. The victory of Khyber in the year 7AH/629AD was an important event. For this, 'Ali's personality attained mainly a famous status. When Jews, despite claiming to be Muslim allies, met the infidels in the battle of Ahzab and fought against the Muslims. Consequently, Muslims also rebelled against them and attacked at Khyber under the leadership of the Noble Prophet himself. This battle or siege lasted for three to four days. Eventually, Allah's Prophet gave flag to 'Ali "*the Lion of God*", and sent him to Khyber. 'Ali shook the door of the fort from his force so profoundly that its bolts were broken and the door opened. Then the gate was laid down on the trench as bridge and over which the people passed by and entered the Fort of Khyber. People say that the door was so strong that many people could not even lift it together.

After the departure of the Noble Prophet, 'Ali was perceptibly expecting to be the Successor of the Prophet. So, in the beginning, he was not happy with the selection of Abu Bakr, but later he took this matter positively. However, 'Ali remained a member of the Shura (*Advisory Committee*) in the periods of the two Caliphs. 'Umar had a great deal of trust in his useful suggestions. His advice also largely benefited the Caliphate of Islam. He supported 'Uthman in his tenure as long as he could.

After the martyrdom of 'Uthman, the Caliphate remained vacant for three days. In Madinah, rebels on everywhere had set up a catastrophic situation. But the establishment of the Caliphate was essential. So Talha and Zubair initiated a move for the Pledge allegiance at the hands of 'Ali. Thus, on the 22nd of Zul Hajja, 35AH/656AD, 'Ali stepped on the Muslim Caliphate.

'Ali was unhappy with most of the 'Uthman's officials, especially he strongly opposed to Amir Mu'awiya. So as soon as he stepped on the throne, he ousted him. Amir Mu'awiya had been as Governor in Sham for twenty-two years, so he had a big influence there. The great Companions of that time were affected by the painful martyrdom of 'Usman. They were demanding to find the murderers and get them killed. So Amir Mu'awiya took advantage of it and demanded 'Uthman's bloody clothes from Madinah along with the cut fingers of his wife, Naila, and hanged them into the mosque in Damascus. This provoked the feelings of the Syrian Muslims. Later, 'Ali also started preparing to retaliate with Amir Mu'awiya. Many Companions were not willing to raise their swords against the Muslims. On this occasion Talha and Zubair took permission and left for Makkah.

'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, was living in Makkah at the time of the death of 'Uthman. Ever since she was wiling for the Qisas of this murder. When she came to know from Talha and Zubair about the latest situation in Madinah, she became even more upset. As a result of this, and at the invitation of 'Aisha for Qisas, a number of Muslims were agreed to fight. This problem became even more critical than the war with Mu'awiya. Because, on one hand there was Um-ul-Mu'minin, and on the other hand the Caliph of that time was there. As a result of this vulnerability, efforts to handle the situation began to work. Qa'qa bin 'Amr succeeded to a great extent in resolving the matter. He thought that first there should be reconciliation between 'Ali and 'Aisha, so that the situation could be settled, then the case of the Qisas would be settled somehow. But as the reconciliation progressed, the hypocrites especially the Saba groups started making conspiracies against it. However, at last reconciliation between 'Ali and 'Talha and Zubair was finalized

and the parties went to their respective camps, rejoicing over this reconciliation.

This peace process was felt very much hard to the people of Saba. They thought that if this night had passed well, a general declaration of peace would be made in the morning, and people would take their path in peace, but this peace could become intricate for them later. So in the darkness of the night the Saba group attacked inside both the armies by themselves. By this both of them were terrified, and as a result a regular bloody war broke out between the two troops. During this battle, Zubair and Talha were martyred. 'Aisha was encouraging the men, while sitting on her camel in the middle of her fighters. 'Ali felt that as long as 'Aisha's camel is in its place, this war would continue, so by his orders the camel's leg was attacked, injured and dropped. After that the battle's situation was changed and the courage of Aisha's army was busted. In Arabic, camel is called 'Jamal', so in history this fight is called "War of Jamal". The important thing is that both 'Aisha and 'Ali immediately considered themselves that why the war had taken place when there was a reconciliation between the two, and ultimately they realized that this was merely a misunderstanding. In this way, this war started with the mischief of the Saba group but it ended on the cleansing of hearts of both sides.

At the end of the battle of Jamal, 'Ali returned to Iraq in 36AH/657AD and declared Kufa as the capital of the Khilafat, rather than Madinah. The main reason for this change was that during the martyrdom of 'Uthman, the Prophet's Mosque was disgraced, so for the sake of the future, he decided to remove political activities from here to keep this holy place from being subjected to chaos. With this move, Madinah was protected to some extent but the political importance of this city also

declined. 'Ali himself turned away from his original center, the results of which in future did not prove useful.

After this change of headquarters, Ali's attention was again gone on Amir Mu'awiya. He wrote and insisted on his allegiance to him. Amir Mu'awiya consulted with 'Amr bin al-A'as on this issue. It was decided between them that allegiance would not be made with 'Ali, and the two also made a pledge that Syria is mine and Egypt is yours. As a result, 'Ali decided to fight them. Amir Mu'awiya also set out to compete and brought their forces on the bank of the Euphrates to the field of 'Siffin'. Regular fighting between the troops began in Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 37H/658AD, which continued for several months. Both suffered heavy losses. On one occasion, Amir Mu'awiya made the Qur'an a mediator to end the fighting. 'Ali had no other option but to end the fighting and enter into an arbitration. As a result, 'Ali selected Abu Musa Ash'ari, and Amir Mu'awiya had chosen 'Amr bin al-A'as to negotiate. To start with Abu Musa Ash'ari announced the removal of both 'Ali and Amir Mu'awiya from their present status and to select of new Caliph through the Shura. But at the eleventh hour 'Amr bin al-A'as changed his mind and said that I maintain the decision of Ali's dismissal, but I do not accept Amir Mu'awiya's ouster. Thus, an unjust verdict was made. Following this decision, supporters of Amir Mu'awiya immediately recognized him as a formal Caliph.

One group of Ali's supporters rejected the whole process of mediation. They said that in the matters of religion, to make judge to a human being is Kufr. Then they became so harsh that they even rejected those who accepted the decision, saying that jihad has become essential against them. The same group later became known as 'Khawarij'. They also compelled 'Ali to abstain from this whole process. But 'Ali did not ready to reject

his promise. As a result, these Khawarij also became an opposite party to 'Ali. Finally, he had to have another bloody war.

Until 38AH/659AD, Mu'awiya not only had complete hold in Syria, but he succeeded in occupying Egypt as well. According to his promise, he made 'Amr bin al-A'as as Egyptian governor. Then, shortly afterwards, he began to move towards the east and south, which was ruled by 'Ali. Even on the occasion of Hajj, in the year 39AH/660AD, one of his men was made Amir al-Hajj and left for Makkah and entrusted him with the task of expelling Ali's Governor from Makkah and persuading the people there on their allegiance. Since the people on both sides were not supportive of disrupting the peace of the Haram, Amir Mu'awiya could not succeed.

In this way, the entire reign of 'Ali passed through the civil war and internal conflicts. Even for a day he did not have the opportunity to focus on the establishment of domestic management. So in terms of constructive works, he failed to compete with his predecessors. The main reason for this failure was that, by his time many Companions who were prime members of the Caliphate had left this world, replacing them with new generation. They had neither the sincerity of their elders nor the true zeal and willingness for the religion. Rather, they had very different aims.

Among those who thwarted 'Ali were those new non Arab Muslims who sought revenge for their national ruin against the Muslims under the plea of the Ahl Bayt (*belonging to the family of the Prophet*). What to say about their love with 'Ali, they had no sympathy even with Islam. These people ruined the unity of the Muslims by raising the question of the Ahl Bayt and non-Ah-Bayt.

In 40AH/661AD, the Martyrdom of 'Ali occurred. The details are that Khawarij were severely damaged in the battle of Nahruwan. So three men from this party (*Khawarij*) consulted and decided that none of 'Ali, Mu'awiya and 'Amr bin al-A'as were capable of ruling. The people became in trouble because of their civil wars. Therefore peace cannot be restored without eliminating them. So one of them came forward to the martyrdom of 'Ali, the other to Amir Mu'awiya, and the third to the martyrdom of 'Amr bin al-A'as. These three men set off on the same day to attack these three leaders in the Fajr prayer. Coincidentally, instead of 'Amr bin al-A'as someone else was leading the prayer that day, so that person was killed in his place. The attack on Amir Mu'awiya was very weak, so he escaped to die through immediate treatment. When 'Ali was attacked, there were two person, instead of one. And he was attacked by poisonous dagger which quickly spread in his body. On the third day of his injuries, 'Ali passed away at the age of 63. It was 21 Ramazan, 40AH/661AD.

However, one of the great honors of 'Ali Murtaza is that he was the caretaker of Ummah. Bravery was his special attribute. His bravery is definitely a golden part in history. He was highly courageous and very strong. He used to make fair decisions.

As regards his knowledge the following sayings of the Noble Prophet is on top for all Muslims:

"I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is the gateway to it."