

Part 5: The Unjust Group (Qasiteen)

The Prophet said: “I feel pity for you, O Ammar! A group of traitors will kill you. You will invite them to Allah and they would try to pull you to hell.”

“The people brought down my honor to an extent that they used to say: “Ali and Muawiyah’.” (Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib)

We reviewed the activities of allegiance-breakers in the previous part and there is no doubt that this group had sown the seeds of betrayal and fraud in the Muslim world. The result of these activities came to light in the form of a battle between right and wrong.

The spirits of Muawiyah and his followers were boosted due to the Battle of Jamal and they dared to launch an armed attack on the Islamic government. Muawiyah had got enough time to gather mischievous and evil powers because of the Battle of Jamal and he unfurled the flag of betrayal against the immaculate religion. All those who feared that Imam ‘Ali (a) would try them legally gathered under Muawiyah’s banner, the best example being Ubaidullah ibn Umar ibn Khattab.

When Abu Lulu attacked Umar fatally, his (Umar’s) son Ubaidullah ibn Umar took up the sword and killed Abu Lulu and also killed a Persian named Mazan and an apostate called Jufaina.

As soon as Uthman was appointed as Caliph, Imam ‘Ali (a) told him that Ubaidullah had broken the rule of the Prophet’s Shariah and that he should be punished for it. But Uthman did not pay any heed and said: “His father was just killed yesterday. Do you want me to kill him today?”

Uthman gave full immunity to the criminal and did not interrogate him. As soon as Imam ‘Ali (a) came to power, Ubaidullah feared for his life and he ran away from the justice of Imam ‘Ali (a) arriving in Syria to a warm welcome by Muawiyah. [1](#)

Similarly, Musqala ibn Hubaira Shibani had bought five hundred survivors of war from Khirriyat ibn Rashid Usami Kharji and freed them. When Ubaidullah ibn Abbas asked for the payment, he said: “If I had asked for this amount from Uthman, he would have granted it without any hesitation.” He went to Muawiyah in Syria instead of paying the amount and Muawiyah made him the governor of Tabristan.

Later on, he advised his brother Naeem ibn Hubaira also to come to Muawiyah.[2](#)

The son of the liver-eater mother had become a shelter for the rivals of Imam 'Ali (a) and those who wanted to seek protection against his justice. He sowed the seeds of violence in the Muslim community. He left the commandments of religion and boosted the spirits of people against Islam. The effects of Muawiyah's character were not limited to his life; the Muslim Ummah is still suffering from its ill-effects.

Muawiyah rejected the necessary things of religion on pretext of avenging Uthman's murder. The greatest catastrophe on the honor of humanity is that Muawiyah was considered better than Imam 'Ali (a), whose father was Abu Talib, the guardian of the Prophet and the father of Muawiyah was Abu Sufyan who always waged war against Islam and the Messenger of Islam.

'Ali's mother was Fatima bint Asad who is considered as a mother by the Prophet whereas Muawiyah's mother was Hind, who had chewed a human-liver.

Maisoona, Muawiyah's wife was the daughter of a Christian whereas the wife of 'Ali was Lady Fatima Zahra, the beloved daughter of the Prophet. The Prophet used to stand up in her respect and used to remember her with the title of the chief of the women of the worlds.

The result of the teachings of Muawiyah and Maisoona was Yazid, the accursed. The children born and brought up under the care of Imam 'Ali (a) and Zahra were Hasan and Husain, chiefs of the youth of Paradise. Abu Sufyan, Muawiyah's father and Hind, his mother had accepted Islam after the conquest of Mecca because they had no other option to save their lives and wealth.

If Muawiyah had a pure intention to avenge the death of Uthman he should have paid allegiance to Imam 'Ali (a), then he should have taken Uthman's son along with him, filed a case and waited for justice.

However, it is a fact that Muawiyah had only intended to seek his vested interests. He had no interest in avenging Uthman's murder. The historical proof of this is the fact that Muawiyah took no interest in avenging Uthman's murder even after coming to power and did not interrogate any murderer of Uthman.

Muawiyah sought wealth and was successful in forming a party of enemies of Imam 'Ali (a) on pretext of avenging Uthman's murder. Eventually Muawiyah got everything except the revenge of Uthman's murder.

It is a fact that Muawiyah had always thought that Uthman should be killed in one way or the other so that he could succeed him. Uthman remained besieged in his house for a long period, during which period Muawiyah could have saved him by sending an army but he purposely kept quiet so that the circumstances result as expected and after that Muawiyah can become the hero of Bani Umayyah.

Muawiyah had once lectured Abu al-Tufayl and said: "I feel pity for you that you did not help Uthman."

Abu al-Tufayl said: “At that time, I remained quiet like other Emigrants and Helpers but you had a province like Syria. Why didn’t you help him in spite of it?”

Muawiyah replied: “I am helping him by raising the slogan of the revenge of his death.” Upon this, Abu al-Tufayl laughed and said: “Your case can be compared to the couplet which says:

I see you crying for me after my death while you did not help me in any way when I was alive.”

Muawiyah had appointed the opponents of Uthman to key posts.

We have already discussed in previous pages that Uthman had dismissed Amr ibn al-Aas, so after that Amr instigated people against Uthman, and said that if he met even a shepherd, he used to incite him against Uthman. After Uthman was killed, he addressed his son, Abdullah: “O Abdullah! I am your father. You should draw blood from the wound I have scratched till date.”³

This enemy of Uthman was befriended by Muawiyah and he became Muawiyah’s chief advisor. Appointing such a great enemy of Uthman to this important post is a clear proof that Muawiyah had no interest in avenging Uthman’s death. He only desired to come to power and he made Uthman’s murder a pretext to fulfill his ambition. Ibn Hajar Asqalani narrates the stand of Imam ‘Ali (a) in his own words thus:

“First of all, Muawiyah and his followers should leave the wrong path and pay allegiance to me. After that, the heir of Uthman ibn Affan should file a case in my court. Then I will proceed with legal rulings and give a proper judgment.”⁴

A letter sent by Imam ‘Ali (a) to the people of various provinces, giving them the causes of the Battle of Siffeen said:

“It began in this way: We and the Syrians faced each other, while we had common faith in one Allah, in the same Prophet (S) and on the same principles and canons of religion. So far as faith in Allah and the Prophet (S) was concerned we never wanted them (the Syrians) to believe in anything over and above or other than what they believed in, and they did not want us to change our faith. Both of us were united on these principles. The point of contention between us was the question of Uthman’s murder and it had created the split. They wanted to lay the murder at my door while I am actually innocent of it.

I advised them that this problem cannot be solved by excitement. Let the excitement subside, let us cool down; let us do away with sedition and revolt; let the country settle down into a peaceful atmosphere and when once a stable regime is formed and the right authority is accepted, then let this question be dealt with on principles of equity and justice because only then will the authority have enough power to find the criminals and bring them to justice. They refused to accept my advice and said that they wanted to decide the issue on the point of the sword.”⁵

This venture of Muawiyah is denotative of the hereditary enmity of his tribe with Bani Hashim. Bani

Umayyah and Bani Hashim were perpetual enemies of each other even before the advent of Islam.

There was a Jew slave of Abdul Muttalib who was engaged in trade, and this could not be tolerated by Muawiyah's grandfather. Therefore Harb ibn Umayyah instigated a few youths of Quraish to kill that slave and rob his goods. People like Aamir ibn Abde Manaf, Sakhar ibn Harb ibn Amr ibn Kaab al-Tamimi, grandfather of Abu Bakr complied with Harb's orders and killed that slave and robbed his goods.⁶

Battle of Siffeen

Imam 'Ali (a) came to Kufa after the Battle of Jamal and sent Jurair ibn Abdullah Bajali as his messenger to Muawiyah with a message inviting him to accept his Caliphate.

Jurair went to Muawiyah with Imam 'Ali's message but Muawiyah did not meet him for many days. He asked Amr ibn al-Aas to give him the best suggestion in this matter.

Amr ibn al-Aas advised him to gather a large number of Syrians and accuse 'Ali of Uthman's murder and then present a circular with regard to revenge of his blood. During this time, Noman ibn Bashir reached Damascus from Medina with a blood stained shirt of Uthman.

Muawiyah displayed that shirt from the pulpit and delivered an emotional speech. The people promised Muawiyah that they would not go near their wives or sleep on a soft bed until they avenge Uthman's death. Jurair returned from Damascus and narrated the story of the betrayal of Syrians and their preparations for battle.

Imam 'Ali (a) also embarked with his army and halted at a place called Nukhaila. He made Malik Ashtar the commander of the vanguard battalion and sent him with the advice:

“Don't begin hostilities and do not go so near to the enemy that he may think you are going to attack him. Also do not remain so far that they think that you have accepted defeat and ran away from them. You must wait for my arrival and do not fight till I come.”

Muawiyah's army captured the route to river Euphrates and cut off Imam 'Ali's access to water. When Imam 'Ali (a) arrived at the spot, he was informed of thirst by the army. Imam 'Ali (a) sent Sasaa ibn Sauhan to Muawiyah who said to Muawiyah: “We don't want to fight with you without any reason but you have cut off the water supply and we are forced to fight you. Every living being has right to get water. Please order your army to vacate the path so that all of us can have access to water.

Muawiyah did not agree and Imam 'Ali (a) ordered his army to throw away the enemies from there. The Imam's army attacked Muawiyah and pushed them far away and captured the route. Although the soldiers of the Imam suggested cutting off water supply to Muawiyah, Imam 'Ali (a) was so kind-hearted that he ordered his army: “No one should be stopped from water. If Muawiyah does not allow others to

take water and 'Ali does the same, what will be the difference between them?"

Imam 'Ali (a) called Abu Amr, Bashir ibn Mohsin al-Ansari, Saeed ibn Qais al-Hamadani and Shabth ibn Rabi al-Tamimi and told them: "Go to Muawiyah and invite him to my obedience."

These persons went to Muawiyah. Bashir ibn Mohsin al-Ansari said: "O Muawiyah! For God's sake, keep away from betrayal and desist from deviating from the path of Islam." Muawiyah said: "Should we desist from avenging the death of Uthman? By God, I would never let this happen."

Shabth ibn Rabi al-Tamimi said: "O Muawiyah! We are well-aware of your intentions. You raised the slogan that you are avenging the murder only to mislead people and call them to you so that you can establish your power.

We know it very well that you did not help Uthman and you delayed in helping him on purpose. You actually wanted him to be killed, so that you could use his murder for political gain.

O Muawiyah! Fear Allah and obey the Caliph of the Muslims."

Muawiyah told them: "Go away from here, only the sword will decide the rightful one among us."

Towards the end of 36 A.H., the Syrian army started the skirmishes and in the beginning of 37 A.H., a temporary battle took place between Imam 'Ali (a) and Muawiyah. Then they came to an agreement that they would keep away from war to preserve the sanctity of the month of Mohurrum.

Muawiyah benefited from this temporary war and began to expand his army. During this time, Imam 'Ali (a) sent a number of letters to Muawiyah advising him to desist from war. However Muawiyah rejected all of them and as a result of it the battle started. Imam 'Ali (a) delivered the following sermon to his army before the battle:

"Do not initiate hostilities as you are on proof and argument and not initiating war is another proof for you. After the enemy is defeated, do not chase anyone who flees. You should neither kill any injured person nor destroy the bodies of the dead. Do not unveil anyone and do not enter the house of anyone. Do not touch any woman even if she abuses you or your government."

Following conclusions can be derived from the above mentioned incidents:

1. The Imam invited Muawiyah to unite with him and the central government in all possible ways.
2. He tried all means to keep Muawiyah away from misguiding the Muslims.
3. He advised Uthman's heirs to file a petition of his murder in Islamic court and assured that the convicts would get severe punishment.
4. Muawiyah displayed Uthman's blood-stained shirt and betrayed the government.

5. He instigated the Syrian army against the central government.
6. They captured the path to the river and cut off Imam's water supply, which is indicative of the inhuman behavior of Muawiyah.
7. The Imam's army recaptured the path and the kind nature of Imam 'Ali (a) was obvious when he did not stop anyone from using the water.
8. The cutting off of the water supply in Kerbala was continuity of Muawiyah's character.
9. Imam 'Ali (a) did not give up advising Muawiyah in spite of his hopelessness and continued to send representatives asking him to desist from war.
10. Muawiyah rekindled the enmity of the days of ignorance between two representatives of Imam 'Ali (a) viz. Saeed and Shabth.
11. Darkness suffered defeat at the hands of light in the Battle of Siffeen between the right and the wrong. When Muawiyah saw death approaching, he ordered pages of Quran to be lifted on points of spears and asked the people of Iraq to stop fighting. He said that they would decide right and wrong according to holy Quran.
12. This deceit of Muawiyah proved successful and the Imam's army got divided. Khawarij came into being and the holy Imam was martyred later on.

Keeping the above points in mind, we again say that the war between Imam 'Ali (a) and Muawiyah was between two persons who were exactly opposites of each other.

Muawiyah's nature was that he did not care about lawful and unlawful in fulfilling his ambition and tried all ways in this pursuit. He killed his opponents by poison and broke all types of promises. An illegitimate person was made the son of Abu Sufyan. He martyred great Companions like Ammar ibn Yasir, Owais Qarni, Khuzayma ibn Thabit Dhul Shahadatain, Hujr ibn Adi and their friends. Muawiyah had no respect for a good character.

He had the weapon of temptation while Imam 'Ali (a) had the weapon of Islamic power. Muawiyah had a long and clear way for his mission because he did not care about lawful and unlawful. He cared for nothing except his mission. The way was not as smooth for Imam 'Ali (a) as he had to work within the limits of Islam.

There was a lot of difference between persons joining Muawiyah and those joining 'Ali (a).

The result of befriending Muawiyah was to receive enormous wealth and the result of joining Imam 'Ali (a) was to follow the teachings of Islam.

Muawiyah's friends included persons like Amr ibn al-Aas and Busr ibn Artat. The Companions of Imam

‘Ali (a) included Ammar ibn Yasir, Owais Qarni and Hujr ibn Adi who used to pray all night and fast during the day.

There was difference between their followers also. Muawiyah’s followers included those who could not distinguish between a male and a female camel. On the other hand, most followers of Imam ‘Ali (a) were jurists and narrators of traditions.

However, Muawiyah had one advantage and it was that his men obeyed him blindly, whereas the army of Imam ‘Ali (a) had a number of people having unwanted inquisitiveness.

The followers of Muawiyah followed him so blindly that once he led Friday prayer congregation on a Wednesday and no one objected to it.⁷ Muawiyah had spread ignorance among his subjects and the Syrians were kept illiterate for a long period of time.

Masoodi has quoted an interesting incident: A scholar told me that a group of scholars were discussing about Abu Bakr, Umar, ‘Ali and Muawiyah. An intelligent and foresighted person said: “Why are you comparing ‘Ali and Muawiyah?”

A scholar asked him: “Do you know ‘Ali?”

The Syrian replied: “Why not? ‘Ali was martyred with the Prophet in the Battle of Hunain.”

Here is another example of the ignorance of Syrian people: Abdullah ibn ‘Ali came to Damascus along with his army in search of Marwan al-Himar. He sent a few senior persons from Damascus to Abul Abbas Saffah who swore before him and said: “They (Bani Umayyah) had completely assured us that only they were the relatives of the Prophet till you came here.”⁸

Muawiyah spread ignorance among the people in order to remain in power. He resorted to fabrication of traditions as a weapon to develop narrow-mindedness in Muslim Ummah. Thousands of traditions praising the three caliphs were innovated on his order. Abu Huraira and persons like him worked day and night fabricating new traditions and this emerged as a new industry and thousands of people washed their hands in this flowing river.

Muawiyah liked to kill his opponents through poisoning. He poisoned Malik Ashtar, Imam ‘Ali’s (a) governor of Egypt, through a landlord. He promised the landlord to exempt him from payment of tributes and he was instigated by his words. He mixed poison in honey and administered it to Malik Ashtar.

After that, Muawiyah and Amr ibn al-Aas used to laugh and say: “Allah has an army of honey.”

He poisoned Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba through Judah bint Ashath, the wife of Imam Hasan.

At times, Muawiyah used to handle his enemies through flattering and pleasing them. At other times, he attacked them openly with his army.

Once Muawiyah sent his close companion, Busr ibn Artat with a huge army and advised him to cause havoc in the area under the rule of Imam 'Ali (a).

Busr demolished the area very badly and plundered the goods of Muslims. He terrorized the people of Medina and forced them to pay allegiance to Muawiyah. Then that malicious person went to Yemen and the governor of Yemen fled on hearing the news of his arrival. As a result, Busr killed people openly and the Yemenis also paid allegiance to Muawiyah.

He martyred two young sons of Ubaidullah ibn Abbas. When Imam 'Ali (a) got the news of these incidents, he appointed Jariya ibn Quddam to fight Busr. When that accursed one got the news that Imam 'Ali (a) has sent an army, he fled to Syria.

Jariya invited the Yemenis to pay allegiance to Imam 'Ali (a) and they accepted it whole heartedly. When Jariya returned, he got the news that the protector of Islam, Imam 'Ali (a) was martyred.[9](#)

The above mentioned conditions prove that Muawiyah had more beastly instincts than human nature. His beastliness changed with conditions. He used to tear apart weak people like a wolf and used to flatter the powerful ones.

Conversely, the life of Imam 'Ali (a) included fear of Allah, love for humans and following the commandments of religion. Imam 'Ali (a) liked justice and brotherhood.

To sum up, their lives can be described in the following words:

Imam 'Ali (a) had as many virtues as Muawiyah had flaws. Imam 'Ali (a) had as much justice as Muawiyah had injustice. Imam 'Ali (a) knew it well that Bani Umayyah would become the masters of Islamic government. He had predicted this in the following words:

“I swear by the Lord under Whose control is my life, these people want to conquer you. They would not conquer you because they are on the right path. They would conquer you because they are consistent in following evil. You are very lazy in spite of being on the right path.

Normally subjects are afraid of their ruler but today I am afraid of my subjects.

I praise Allah for whatever He ordained and whatever He destined and for my trial with you, O group of people who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call you. If you are at ease, you engage in (conceited) conversation, but if you are faced with battle, you show weakness. If people agree on one Imam, you taunt each other.

If you are faced with an arduous matter you turn away from it. May others have no father (woe to your enemy!) what are you waiting for in the matter of your assistance and for fighting for your rights? For you, there is either death or disgrace. By Allah, if my day (of death) comes. And it is sure to come; it will cause separation between me and you although I am sick of your company and feel lonely with you.

May Allah deal with you! Is there no religion which may unite you or sense of shamefulness that may sharpen you? Is it not strange that Muawiyah calls out to some rude low people and they follow him without any support or grant, but when I call you, although you are successors of Islam and the (worthy) survivors of people, with support and distributed grants, you scatter away from me and oppose me?

Truly, there is nothing between me and you, which I like and you also like it, or with which I am angry and you may also unite against it. What I love most is death. I have taught you the Quran, clarified to you arguments, apprised you of what you were ignorant of and made you swallow what you were spitting out. Even a blind man would have been able to see, and he who was sleeping would have been awakened. How ignorant of Allah is the community whose leader is Muawiyah!”

On another occasion, he said:

“You have not paid allegiance to me suddenly. Relationship between us is not same. I love you for the sake of Allah and you love me for the sake of yourselves.

O people! Help me even if it is against your wish. By Allah, I would give justice to the oppressed ones and drag the oppressor holding his locks to the valley of truth even if he dislikes it.”

- [1.](#) Masoodi, Murujuz Zahab, Vol. 2, Pg. 261
- [2.](#) Dr. Taha Husayn, Al-Fitnah al-Kubra “Ali wa Banuh, Pg. 127
- [3.](#) Dr. Taha Husayn, Al-Fitnah al-Kubra Uthman bin Affan
- [4.](#) Al-Isabah fi Tamiz al-Sahaba, Vol. 2, Pg. 501-502
- [5.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Letter no. 58, Vol. 2
- [6.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 9
- [7.](#) Masoodi, Murujuz Zahab, Vol. 2, Pg. 334
- [8.](#) Masoodi, Murujuz Zahab, Vol. 2, Pg. 51
- [9.](#) Dr. Taha Husayn, Al-Fitnah al-Kubra “Ali wa Banuh, Pg. 150

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