

THE GREATNESS OF ALI (A.S) **IN THE EYES OF CHRISTIANS**

By: Ahmed H. Sheriff (Adapted and translated from Urdu Razakar of Jan-1974)

The greatness of any personality lies in his noble character, high aims of life and fairness and justice to one and all. His noble qualities should be such as to cast impact on outsiders and charm even those of different caste, creed and faith. To what extent the greatness of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), the son-in-law and cousin of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.) and the hero of Islam has made an impact on the people of the world, is difficult to describe.

A Christian author of Lebanon, Mr. George Jordac has published five volumes in Arabic on the biography of Hazrat Ali (a.s). The name of the book is "AL IMAM ALI - SAUTUL ADALAT-EL-INSANIYYA" meaning "THE GREAT LEADER ALI- THE VOICE OF JUSTICE FOR MANKIND" .When he completed the first volume, he approached Muslim publishers in Lebanon but none could be convinced to undertake the publication of the book.

One day while sitting in a church in a state of deep frustration, the attention of the Bishop there was attracted towards him. Coming to him, the Bishop asked the cause of the frustration, George Jordac replied that it was because no one was willing to publish his work and he himself did not have sufficient funds to finance the cost of printing the book. The Bishop inquired as to how much he needed for that and he gave an estimate. He told him to wait, immediately went to his room, opened his safe and came out with the required amount of money and gave him saying: "Take this money and arrange for the publication of your book". George Jordac was delighted but rather astonished at this gesture.

In short, the book was published and sold like hot cake. He collected all the proceeds of the book including a profit and presented to the Bishop who retained the original sum loaned by him but returned the profit to him saying: "Arrange immediately for printing the second edition of the book". Jordac was rather astonished at this suggestion and he said, "I fail to understand why should a Christian Bishop undertake to do this job which in fact deserves to be done by Muslims?" The Bishop replied " We Christians are under great obligation of Ali (a.s). When the Muslim masses compelled him to become a Caliph, a delegation of Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians paid him a visit to find out what would their position be in the Islamic state under his rule. Ali (a.s.) assured them that they were free to live in accordance with their religious practices. He fully abided by his this statement and when he died, it was the Christians, the Jews and the Zoroastrians of his kingdom that lamented and mourned his death more than the Muslims. Oh Jordac! preserve the life history of Ali (a.s.) as this is but only a modest appreciation of the great service he rendered to the Christians."

The author has eulogized Ali (a.s.) in these terms:

"Ali Ibne Abi Taleb (a.s.), the elder of the elders, was such an exceptional personality that no equal to him was born and shall be born, in the East nor in the West, neither before nor in future."

After praising the supreme qualities of faithfulness, respect for human freedom and fulfilment of commitments in Ali (a.s.), the author writes:

"Have you known such an administrator of a state, who always refrained himself from having full meals because most of his masses did not have sufficient to eat? Who himself did not put on fine clothes because his people could only afford rough and simple clothes? Who did not accumulate wealth because there were plenty of needy in the country? Who exhorted his kith and kin to follow his footsteps? Who refused to give from the state treasury even to his brother one Dinar extra than was equitably due to him and who warned one of his governors in these terms:

"By God, if you misappropriate any state funds, I shall take such drastic steps as to set example for others."

To a bribe taking officer, he wrote:

"Fear God and return the money to the people you have taken from, otherwise I shall take such steps that which is my duty to do"

"Have you seen such a King who with his own hands did the grinding of flour and prepare such a dry loaf of bread which could only be broken with the help of his knees, who mended his shoes with his own hands and whose mouth would utter these words 'Am I to be contented that people call me "AMEER-EL-MUMINEEN" - The Commander of the Faithful, and I do not share with them in their hardships of the time?"

The fact is that the true greatness of Ali (a.s.) lies not in his relationship to the Prophet of Islam nor in the post of Caliphate but in the noble and virtuous manner he lived, he guided others to live, he administered the Islamic state and in his great sacrifices for upholding human dignity.