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The Great Companion of the Prophet (s): Abu Dharr (ra)

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About Ourselves

An alert mind today notices a change in the intellectual life of man. Science and technology with their wondrous achievements seem to have reached their zenith. Material needs together with the passion for authority and supremacy, have led man towards an apparent bankruptcy of the moral values. In this desperate situation one is forced to pause and reassess the potential dangers threatening mankind as a whole. Man, has once again set his eyes on Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful as he has now realized that the solution to his problems and his ultimate salvation lies in following the Divine commandments.

This shift from the material to the spiritual thinking is fully in keeping with the aims and objects of the Islamic Seminary. Religious precepts, abreast with the developments of our time, provide the much-needed sanctuary for the troubled and anxious mind. It is a result of increasing awareness, that it is being realized that the secret of living a virtuous life in this world leads to the eternal bliss of life in the Hereafter. This is the universal message of Islam.

The Islamic Seminary seeks to hold aloft the torch of spiritual guidance and to help in all earnest to promote mankind's spiritual heritage. It presents Qur'anic way of life in its pristine glory. It presents only that which is authoritative and authentic. Its publications are designed to meet the spiritual need of our times. It will serve as a perennial spring to those who are thirsty of knowledge.

The Islamic Seminary is a world organization endeavouring for Islamic fraternity. It enjoys the contributions of the best brains, in addition to having an international support for the fulfilment of its great objective. It has centres in Asia, Africa, Europe, America, Canada and Far East.

A list of addresses appears in the closing pages of this book. Readers can write to any of these centres for our publications.

Islamic Seminary Publications

This book is all Islamic Seminary publication. Its publications are designed to cater for the spiritual needs of the age with a particular emphasis on grooming Muslim mind and thinking; Utmost efforts have been made by the Seminary to put forth in its publications what is really authoritative and authentic in Islam.

You are requested to kindly go through this book in the spirit in which it is intended. You are also requested to communicate to us your free comments on our publication, which will be highly appreciated.

Propagating the message of Islam is a task which calls for the co-operation of all. The Seminary invites you to join it in this task complying cordially with the verse of the holy Qur'an:

“Say: I give you but one admonition, that you stand for Allah's sake jointly and singly”. (34:46)

May Allah bless you!

Yours in Islam,

Publication Secretary.

Preface

When, after thirteen years of continuous suffering and struggle, the Prophet of Islam left Mecca for Medina, he felt that the period of the violability of Islam and its being practised secretly had come to an end and with the assistance of his faithful and brave companions he should build the grand edifice of Islamic polity and lay the foundation of his political regime in the manner desired by Allah.

Immediately after his arrival in Medina the Holy Prophet built a masjid there. He built for himself a house adjacent to it, and made its door open into the masjid. There was no change in his life from the beginning to the end. His behaviour, manners, and conduct remained the same even after the establishment of the Islamic Government throughout Arabia.

A new regime and a new State came into existence in the midst of the two great super powers of that time. In this Islamic State there was no ruler and subject, no officer and subordinate, and no master and slave. All were equal before Allah.

The founder of this regime breathed his last and with the deprivation of Ali and the formation of political factions. The first deviation which rocked the Islamic foundation took place in the matter of Caliphate.

One of the most sincere and brave companions of the Holy Prophet (s) was Abu Dharr. He was the fifth person to embrace Islam and his sword had been very effective for the advancement of the Islamic movement. He now saw all these deviations. Ali, who was the embodiment of virtue and truth, had to go into seclusion and the enemies of Islam had penetrated into the organization of the Caliphate and were destroying Islam like termite.

Abu Dharr was immensely disturbed and alarmed and saw that the future of Islam was dark and dreadful. However, he also saw that in any case the caravan of Islam was proceeding on its path and, although a great right had been violated, the Islamic system had not completely broken down. Hence, though he was extremely grieved and agitated, yet he remained silent.

When Uthman's regime acquired mastery of Islam the rights of workers and the helpless Muslims were violated by the usurers, the dealers in slaves, the rich and the aristocrats, who frequented the courts of Uthman and Mu'awiyah. Class distinctions and hoarding of wealth were revived and Islam was threatened by a great danger.

The ways and manners of the Holy Prophet were abandoned. Thousands of dinars were spent on the construction of the Green Palace of the Islamic Ruler (Mu'awiyah) and an organization like the imperial courts was set up. Umar led his life like an ordinary man and Abu Bakr, in order to earn his livelihood, used to milk the she-goats of a Jew, whereas the necklace of the wife of Uthman, the third Caliph, cost as much as one third of the revenue received from Africa.

Taking undue advantage of the position of his father, the son of one of the highest officers of Umar took the horse of a man by force and Umar prosecuted both the father and the son. On the other hand Uthman appointed Marwan bin Hakam as his adviser, the man who had been exiled by the Holy Prophet and gifted him the estate of Khayber as well as the revenue received from Africa!

When Abu Dharr observed these shameful activities he could no longer tolerate all this, he rose against that tyrannical regime. It was a courageous and bold rising which made all the Islamic territories revolt against Uthman; its roaring waves can still be seen in the human societies.

Abu Dharr was anxious to establish the abandoned Islamic values, whereas Uthman's administration was violating it by reviving aristocracy. Abu Dharr considered Islam to be the refuge of those, who were helpless, oppressed and deprived, and Uthman had made it the means of support for the aristocrats and the usurers.

This rift between Abu Dharr and Uthman continued, and eventually Abu Dharr lost his life on this account.

Abu Dharr recognized the Almighty Allah; hence he never became lax in His path even for a moment. He turned up to be a 'perfect man' in the school of Islam and this very thing should be sufficient to show his greatness.

Abu Dharr is one of those leaders and saviours of freedom whom humanity needs today. Especially since the time machinery has created a serious crisis in the world of economy, and the economic problems have been treated to be the most basic problems of life, his views have gained greater importance.

The same situation, which he created in Syria and Medina by collecting the needy and helpless persons around him and instigating them to rise against the usurers and the hoarders of wealth, has also been created in these days.

The Muslims of the world recall his fascinating words, correct views and fiery speeches. It may be said that they can see in the remote parts of history that he has collected the oppressed and the helpless in the masjid and is stirring their feelings against the inmates of Green Palaces and the dirty organization of Uthman and announcing in public.

Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it for the cause of Allah, should know that their recompense will be a painful torment. (Surah al-Tawbah, 9: 34)

“O Mu 'awiyah! If you are constructing this palace with your own money it is extravagance, and, if you are constructing it with the public funds, it is misappropriation”.

“O Uthman! The poor have been made poorer by you and the rich have been made richer by you”.

Publishers

Chapter 1

Abu Dharr was one of those companions of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s), who were pious and freedom-loving and possessed a lofty character, and according to the remark of the Holy Prophet (s), ardently desired by Heaven and the residents of Heaven. He was benefited by the company of the Prophet in the real sense of the word.

Abu Dharr himself says, “My real name is Jundab bin Junadah, but after my embracing Islam the Prophet (s) gave me the name “Abdullah” and this is the name I like most”.

Abu Dharr was his kuniyyah (patronymic appellation) after his eldest son Dharr.

Scholars agree that Abu Dharr was the son of Junadah bin Qays bin Saghir bin Hazam bin Ghifar and his mother was Ramlah daughter of Waqi'ah Ghifariah. He was an Arab by race and belonged to the tribe of Ghifar. That is why the word “Ghifari” is written with his name.

Abdullah al-Subaiti writes, “When we look at Abu Dharr's biography it seems that he was a light personified. He was the embodiment of qualities of a great man. He had a rare distinction of being endowed with intelligence, understanding, sagacity and wit”. In the words of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a): “He was always immersed in thought and his prayers were based on his reflections about God”.¹

The famous Egyptian author Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sahar, in his book “Al-Ishtiraki az-Zahid”, writes. “Once there occurred a severe famine. The chiefs of Ghifar tribe assembled for consultation as to what they should do, because it had not rained since long, Hence, it was a time of great suffering. The animals had become lean and thin and the stores and stocks were all exhausted.”

They said to each other, “We do not know why our god (Idol Manat) got offended with us, although we prayed for rain, sacrificed camels in offering and did everything possible to win its favour. The rainy season has now come to a close. There is not a trace of cloud in the sky. There has been no thunder and no shower this time, not even a drop of rain or a drizzle. What do you think? Have we turned perverts that the wrath of our god has befallen us? Why should it feel offended with us when we have made so many sacrifices for its pleasure”?

People began to ponder over the matter and exchanged views. They thought to themselves: “Man cannot interfere with heavenly arrangement. No one can bring clouds and rains from the sky.

This can only be done by “Manat”. Hence we do not have any other alternative except that we, men and women, come out for pilgrimage, wailing and praying and beg Manat's forgiveness. It may, perhaps, forgive us and pour down rain to make the earth green after barrenness, so that our poverty is changed to prosperity, pain to pleasure and hardship to ease and comfort”.

The whole tribe, therefore, started making preparations for a journey to reach Manat. Those who were sleeping got up, and began to put litters on their camels. Unais (Abu Dharr's brother) also rode his camel and drove her, in order to join the caravan, towards the sea coast, the Mushalsal and Qadid

which lie between Mecca and Medina, and where Manat is set up. Unais looked around but could not see his brother. He made the camel sit, ran towards the house. He entered the house calling “Jundab”! “Jundab”! When he saw that Jundab was lying in his bed comfortably, he said;

Unais: Did you not hear the “call” to come out for the journey?

Abu Dharr: Yes, I did. But what should I do when I feel weary, and also I do not want to go on a pilgrimage to Manat either.

Unais: Shut up! Ask the god for mercy. Do you not fear lest the god should hear you and send torment on you?

Jundab: Are you convinced that (Manat) hears our voice and sees us?

Unais: What has happened to you today? Has any genie overpowered you, or have you contracted a disease? Come, feel sorry. It may, perhaps, accept your remorse.

When Abu Dharr started rolling in his bed, his brother said, “Rise! The caravan has moved, and off goes the tribe”.

The brothers were busy talking when their mother dropped in and they kept quiet.

Mother: My sons! What is your opinion?

Unais: About what, mother?

Mother: About the rain.

Unais: We agree to your proposal.

Mother: I propose to go to your maternal uncle who is a rich man.

Unais: All right! As you please. May god improve our condition.

Abu Dharr and Unais along with their mother came to their uncle's house. Their uncle entertained them with great hospitality. They stayed there for a long time. Their hardship had now changed to comfort and their pain to pleasure.

When their tribesmen saw that their uncle was very kind to Abu Dharr and Unais and loved them like his own children, they felt jealous of them and started to think out plans by which he may despise them. They kept on thinking and consulting one another, till at last, they decided upon a device and selected a man for their conspiracy.

That man came to the uncle of Abu Dharr and sat down, quiet and downcast. Abu Dharr's uncle asked him, “Yes, how do you do?” That man assumed a sorrowful look and said, “I have come to you for an important business! Had it not been for my affection towards you or out of respect for you, I would not have told you anything. But my loyalty has forced me to do so. I want to unfold what is hidden to you, so that you may see what is happening because I see that favour is rewarded with ingratitude”.

Abu Dharr's uncle felt that there was something definitely amiss. He felt much aggrieved and said, “Speak out frankly”. The man said, “How should I tell you that when you go out Unais, your nephew sits with your wife and talks to her secretly. I do not know what he talks about”.

Unais's uncle said, “This is a false accusation against him, and I cannot believe it in any case”. He replied, “We also wished it to be false and a calumny. But I regret to say that it is a fact”.

He asked him for a proof of it. The man replied, “The whole tribe can bear witness to it. All have seen him and have the same feeling. If you so desire I can produce countless witnesses from my tribe”.

Hearing this, the poor fellow began to think of his honour and prestige. He felt his self-respect injured. That man went out of the house after having bitten him like a serpent. Unais's uncle felt convinced about it. He made constant efforts to regain his peace of mind, but he could not do so. He was very sad and felt anguish and agony day and night. Whenever his nephews happened to come before him he turned his face away. Stillness pervaded the whole house.

When Abu Dharr saw signs of grief on the face of his uncle he asked, “Dear uncle! What has happened to you? I have been observing your changed state for some days. You talk to us very little unusually and remain very thoughtful and depressed”.

The uncle answered, “There is nothing unusual”.

Abu Dharr said, “No, there is certainly some reason behind it. Please tell me. Perhaps, I may relieve you of your worries or I may share some of your troubles”.

He said, “I cannot describe what my tribesmen have told me”.

Abu Dharr said, “Please let me know. What have the tribesmen told you?”

His uncle replied. “They say that Unais goes to my wife when I am away from home”.

Hearing this Abu Dharr flushed crimson with anger and said, “You have spoiled the favours that you have done us. Now we leave, and will not see you again”.

At last they set off from there and took their dwelling at “Batn Marv” which was situated near Mecca. Here, Abu Dharr came to know that a prophet had appeared at Mecca. He became anxious to know about it. He, at once, called his brother Unais and asked him to go to Mecca and find out the particulars of the Prophet.

Unais had not yet set out for Mecca when a man was seen coming from there and he went straight away to join the company at Abu Dharr's house. Abu Dharr asked him, “Where are you coming from?” He answered, “I am coming from Mecca”.

Abu Dharr asked, “What is the situation over there? He replied: “A man says that he is a prophet and he gets revelation from the heavens”.

Abu Dharr said: “What did the Meccans do with him?” The man said: “They falsified him, tortured him, and prevented the people from going to him. They frighten and threaten everyone who goes to him”.

Abu Dharr asked: “Why do the people not believe him?” “How can they believe him”, he said, “who vilifies their gods, calls them foolish and their forefathers perverts”.

Abu Dharr said: “Does he really say so?”

“Yes, he says that God is one. Just see! What a strange thing it is!” said he.

Abu Dharr started thinking about the man who said that God is One. He kept on thinking quietly for quite some time. The new comer looked at him and found him thoughtful. He begged leave of him and departed.

After his departure Abu Dharr addressing his brother Unais, said, “Just go to Mecca and find out who this man is. He says that he receives revelation from the heavens. What is the mode of his conversation? See if there is any sincerity in his talk or not”.

Unais set off on the journey. After crossing different stations he reached Mecca and went to Ka 'bah for circumambulation. When he came out from there, he saw a crowd of people. He asked a man who was coming towards him, “What is going on here?” He replied, “An apostate is inviting the people to a new faith”.

As soon as Unais heard it, he ran to that place. On reaching there he saw that a man was saying, “Praise belongs to Allah. I praise Him and seek help from Him. I believe in Him, depend on Him and testify that there is no God except He and He has no partner”.

To quote Subaiti, Unais heard that man proclaiming, “O people! I have brought for you the blessings of the world and the hereafter. Say that there is no god except Allah, so that you may get deliverance. I am a messenger of Allah and have come to you. I warn you of the punishment of the Day of Judgment.

Remember that nobody will get deliverance except the one who comes to the presence of Allah with a humble heart. Neither the riches will be of any use to you, nor will your children help you. Fear Allah, Allah will be kind to you. O people! Listen to me! I say clearly that your forefathers had deviated from the right path in worshipping these idols and you are also following in their footsteps. Remember that these idols can neither harm you, nor can they benefit you. They can neither stop you, nor guide you”.

When Unais listened to this eloquent address he got astonished. But in his astonishment he saw that people were talking different things against him.

Hearing this, the Prophet said, “Prophets do not tell lies. I swear by Allah other than whom there is no god that I have been sent to you as a messenger. By Allah you will die as you sleep and will rise as you wake up. You will be called to account for your deeds. Then you will get eternal Heaven or Hell”.

On saying this people asked the Prophet, how they would rise after becoming dust. At that time Allah revealed the following verses:

“Muhammad, say: Yes, even if you become rocks, iron or anything that you think is harder to be brought to life. They will soon ask: Who will bring us back to life? Say: The One who created you for the first time: They will shake their heads and say: When will He bring us back to life? Say: Perhaps very soon”. (Surah Isra, 17:50- 51)

As soon as the Prophet finished his speech people got up. While they were dispersing from there, one of them said, “He is a soothsayer”. Another said, “No, he is a poet”. The third one remarked, “He is a magician”.

Unais listened to the Prophet and the people. He kept his head down for some time and murmured; “By Allah, his words are sweet. What he has said is true and those people are undoubtedly foolish”.

Then he rode his camel and set off. He kept on thinking about Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, throughout the journey, and was wondering at his talk, till he joined Abu Dharr.

As soon as Abu Dharr looked at Unais, he asked him eagerly, “What is the news? What did you see at Mecca?”

Unais; I am coming after seeing a man who says that God is One. I saw that he orders the people to do good and refrain from evil.

Abu Dharr: What do people say about him?

Unais: They say that he is a poet, a magician and a soothsayer. But when I examined his talk from the point of view of poetry I found that it is not poetry. He is neither a magician because I have seen magicians, nor is he a soothsayer as I have met many soothsayers, and his talk is not like that of the soothsayers.

Abu Dharr: What does he do and what does he say?

Unais: He says wonderful things.

Abu Dharr: Can you not recall anything which he talked of?

Unais: By Allah! His speech was very sweet, but I do not remember anything more than that which I told you, but I have seen him offering prayers near the Ka'bah, and have also seen a handsome boy who is of a preadolescent age, offering prayers beside him. People say that he is his cousin Ali. I also saw a woman offering prayers behind him. People told me that she is his wife, Khadijah.

Note

1. Sahih Muslim

Chapter 2

After listening to his brother Abu Dharr said, “I am not satisfied with your report. I shall go there myself, see him and listen to him personally”.

Abu Dharr reached Mecca, entered the vicinity of Ka'bah and started looking for the Prophet, but neither he found him there, nor did he hear any mention of him. He stayed there till sunset. Ali came and passed by Abu Dharr, who was sitting. Ali asked him, “You look to be a traveller. Isn't it?”

Abu Dharr: Yes!

Ali: Come on with me. Ali took him to his house. Both of them were going silently. Abu Dharr did not ask him anything till they reached the house. Ali made arrangements for his stay and Abu Dharr went to sleep. Next morning he again went to Ka'bah in search of the Prophet. Neither he asked anybody of him, nor did anybody tell him anything. He kept waiting anxiously till the day came to an end. Ali came round again as usual and passed in front of him. As soon as he saw Abu Dharr, he asked, “Could you not go back home up till now?”

Abu Dharr: No!

Ali: All right! Then, come along with me. Both of them were going silently when Ali asked, “Why! What is the reason of your coming over here?”

Abu Dharr: I can tell you the reason if you do not disclose it.

Ali: “Speak out frankly whatever you want to say. I will not tell it to anybody”.

Abu Dharr: I have come to know that a man has appeared and he calls himself a prophet. I had sent my brother to talk to him. He returned and could not give me any satisfactory information. Now, I am determined to see him myself.

Ali: You have come upto the right man. I am going towards him. Just follow me. Enter wherever I enter. If I feel any danger I shall be setting my shoe right, standing near a wall, and when I start doing so you should go back.

Abu Dharr says, “Ali took me into a house. I saw that a light personified was manifest there. As soon as I saw him I was attracted towards him and felt like kissing his feet. Hence I saluted him saying Assalamu Alaykum”. (He was the first man who saluted the Prophet of Islam in an Islamic way, before embracing Islam).

Returning the salute he said, wa Alaykum as Salam wa rahmatullahe wa barakatoh. “Yes, what do you want?”

I replied, “I have come to you in a spirit of faith”. He instructed me about necessary matters and asked me to recite the Kalimah (La ilaha illallah Muhammadun Rasulullah) I recited it to him and thus entered the fold of Islam.

Thereafter he took leave of the Prophet and started for the Ka'bah. Upon reaching there, when he saw a big gathering of Qurayshite infidels, he shouted in a loud voice, “Hear O Quraysh, I stand witness that Allah is One and Muhammad is His Prophet”.

This voice frightened the audition of Quraysh and demolished the image of their Laat and Uzza. The feeling of the Quraysh that the dignity of their idols had been pulled down made them extremely perturbed.

At last people in unison encircled Abu Dharr. They started beating him so severely that he fainted. He would have nearly died but for the sudden arrival of Abbas bin Abd al-Muttalib. When he saw that the devotee of Muhammad was about to die, he could not help laying himself down on Abu Dharr.

He said, "O people! What has happened to you? You are killing a great man of Bani Ghifar. Why have you forgotten that you carry on trade with Bani Ghifar and visit them off and on. Don't you fear his tribe at all". At this those people left Abu Dharr and went away.

After they had left, Abu Dharr who was bleeding, got up from there and went to the well of Zamzam.

He felt extremely thirsty on account of severe wounds and profuse bleeding. Hence he drank water first and then cleansed his body. After that he came groaning to the Holy Prophet. As soon as the Prophet saw him in this condition he felt very sorry for him and said, Abu Dharr! Have you eaten or drunk something?"

Abu Dharr: My master! I have felt some relief after drinking the water of Zamzam.

Prophet: No doubt it gives relief.

After that he consoled Abu Dharr and provided him with food.

Though Abu Dharr had suffered much because of his speech, yet his religious fervour did not allow him to return to his country calmly. His firm belief demanded to make Quraysh believe that human intelligence despises the superstition of idolatry.

He took leave of the Prophet and came to the precincts of Ka'bah again. He stood upon a raised spot and called out with a firm determination. "O people of Quraysh! Listen to me. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

Hearing this, those perverts who saw the foundations of their gods being shaken and who had been so much agitated by his earlier speech were once again startled and in a state of confusion turned towards his voice and hurriedly gathered around him. They were shouting. "Kill this Ghifari as soon as possible as he is bent upon insulting our gods".

The whole assembly cried with one voice "Kill Abu Dharr". Consequently they beat Abu Dharr so severely that he fainted.

Seeing this Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib came forward and laid himself down on him as he did the day before, and said, "O Quraysh! What has happened to you that you are killing a Ghifari although you have good relations with his tribe and your trade is flourishing with the help of his tribe. Get aside. Do not beat him any more".

Upon hearing this all of them went away leaving Abu Dharr in a state of unconsciousness. When Abu Dharr came to his senses, he went to the well of Zamzam and after drinking its water cleaned his body of blood.

Abdullah Subaiti writes that though Abu Dharr had suffered wounds yet he forced the Quraysh to form an opinion through his speeches that Islam had spread around the people and they had been deeply impressed by it.

In short Abu Dharr got up from the well of Zamzam and reached the Holy Prophet. When the Prophet saw Abu Dharr in this condition he said, “O Abu Dharr! Where have you been and why are you in this condition?” Abu Dharr replied, “I had gone to Ka'bah again. I delivered a speech there and took a blood bath. Now I have come to you after cleaning my body with the water of Zamzam.”

The Prophet said, “O Abu Dharr! Now I order you to go back to your country at once. Listen! When you reach your home, your uncle will have died. Since he has no heir but you, you will be his sole successor and owner of his property. Go and spend the property for the propagation of Islam. I shall shortly migrate from Mecca to the town of date-palms. You should continue working there till I migrate”. Abu Dharr said, “Yes! My master it is all the good. I shall leave very soon and keep on propagating Islam”.¹

Note

- 1.Sahih Bukhari vol. p. 47 chapter Islam and Abu Dharr, printed in Egypt, 1312 Hijra

Chapter 3

After embracing Islam, Abu Dharr left Mecca for his country. Abdullah Subaiti writes what when Abu Dharr took leave of the Prophet he was brimful of complete faith, and Islam had pervaded his personality. He started from there with great joy. He was very happy that Allah had guided him to a faith which is accepted by pure bondmen and conscience is satisfied with it and reason whole-heartedly welcomes it.

He went on and reached his country. The first man to greet him was his brother Unais, and he was also the first to get the flash of his faith. Unais came forward to kiss his brother's feet and said, "O brother! You have spent so many days in Mecca. Now tell me what you have made out".

Abu Dharr said:

"Unais! I have arrived at a conclusion which is welcomed by sound reason. I concluded after a lot of thinking that I should accept the faith of Muhammad. O Unais! I cannot tell you that when I met Muhammad and looked at his face, I felt as if my chest was expanding. My heart was filled with pleasure and the mind was intoxicated with faith. I, at once, recited the formula of faith (Kalimah) and acknowledging his Prophethood requested him to teach me the articles of faith. So he explained to me the principles of Islam. O Unais! I ask you honestly with the sincerity of intention to bow your head humbly before Allah and leave the worship of these men made gods of stone".

Hearing this, Unais sat down with his head bowed and started thinking. He got in such a state as if intoxicated. Unais recalled all those things which he himself had seen in Mecca. He spoke after a while, "O brother! My mind confirms your truthfulness and my sound reason asks me not to disobey you. Hence listen! I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

Abu Dharr became very happy on Unais's accepting the faith. He said to him: "Now let us go to our mother". Both of them then went to their mother.

Greeting his mother Abu Dharr said, "Dear mother! I beg your pardon! I have been away from you for a very long time. But, I have brought a treasure which nobody possesses here".

His mother asked, "What is that treasure which distinguishes you?" Abu Dharr said, it is the treasure of faith, mother. I met a person in Mecca whose face gleamed with nobleness. He is peerless in good manners and magnanimity. He speaks what is true. He says what is right. He does what is just. There is wisdom in his words. Mother! His enemies also call him truthful and trustworthy. He invites people towards Allah who is the creator of heaven and the earth and is the organizer of the existence of this universe. I have acknowledged faith in him having been influenced by his bearing, statements and sayings, and Unais has also become a Muslim. We have accepted the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (s).

Abu Dharr's mother said: "My son, if it is so I also bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and testifies that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

Abu Dharr was encouraged when his brother and mother also embraced Islam and now he began thinking how to influence his tribesmen and persuade them towards the right path.

After great deliberation Abu Dharr came out of his house. His mother and brother were also with him. After travelling a little distance they pitched their tent near their tribe's tents.

The night had fallen. These tired travellers were lying in their tents to sleep when they felt that many tribesmen who were present at that place were telling stories among themselves and narrating different events. They were busy in continuous conversation.

When Abu Dharr tried to overhear them he heard that they were talking about him.

After that the people got up from their place and reached near the tent of Abu Dharr. Abu Dharr said to his brother, Unais, "The tribesmen have come close to our tent. Go out and see them".

Unais went out at once. He saw that some young men of the tribe had come. They had come to know that Unais and Abu Dharr were there. They saluted him. Unais, after saluting them in return, asked the reason for their visit. They said, "We have come simply to see you and Abu Dharr".

Unais went in to Abu Dharr and said, "The youths of our tribe have come to know the conditions of journey".

Abu Dharr said, "Call them in. I shall talk to them. May be I make them the worshippers of Allah, the One".

Unais came out and said, "Come in as brother Abu Dharr is calling you".

All of them went to Abu Dharr. One of them said, "O Abu Dharr! We have not seen you since long as a result of which we have become very sad".

Abu Dharr said, "My dear young men! I have great love and sympathy for you in my heart".

One man: "Abu Dharr! Where have you been so long? We have not been able to see you for quite some time".

Abu Dharr: "I had gone to Mecca. I came back a few days ago".

Second man: "We are happy that you have been to Mecca".

Abu Dharr: "I had, of course, gone to Mecca, but I did not offer any sacrifice to Hubal nor did I prostrate before Laat and Uzza. My young men! Why should have I done all this when I know that these idols have neither life, nor can they harm or benefit anybody? They can neither see nor hear, nor can they ward off a calamity which may befall them.

Listen! I resort to Allah in all my actions and matters. He is certainly single without peer or partner, and I testify to Allah who alone is to be worshipped. He is the Creator of everything and Nourisher of every creature.

I ask you to join me in our plan of action and testify to the Oneness of Allah like us".

Hearing this all the people began to tremble. One of them said in amazement, "O Abu Dharr! What are you saying?"

Abu Dharr: "Listen to what I say. Though I cannot see Allah with my eyes, yet I see Him with the internal eye; and listen! He is seen in everything of the world. Think for a while! How can anything be worthy of human worship when it is made by human hands? It is not wise to worship idols made of stone and wood, and pray to them to satisfy our needs. My tribesmen! You know that these idols do not have any power. They can neither ward off evil, nor do they have the strength to acquire benefit".

Hearing this exhortation of Abu Dharr's people started whispering to one another.

One of them said, "I have told you already that a man has appeared in Mecca, he calls himself a prophet and invites people to worship One Allah. Abu Dharr has met him and has been moved by his preaching, so much so that whatever ideas he puts forth belong to that man".

The other man said, "Conditions are very grave. We are exposed to danger by Abu Dharr's personality and his preaching. We feel that if he goes on preaching like these differences will crop up within our tribe and our lives will be ruined. Better it is that we go to Khafaf, the chief of our tribe, explain to him all the dangers involved, and insist upon him to give full attention to counteract them."

The youngmen of Ghifar took leave of Abu Dharr and went to see Khafaf. On the way they exchanged views with one another.

One of them said, "Abu Dharr has raised a great disturbance".

The other said, "It will be very shameful for us to ignore this great sin of Abu Dharr. He openly outrages our religion and ridicules our gods".

The third one said, "It is obligatory on us to turn him out of our tribe without the least delay, because if we delay his excommunication little; he will overpower our young men, women and slaves and instil his corrupt ideas in their minds. In case it so happened, we shall suffer a great loss".

The fourth one said, "Your viewpoint is correct. But who will bell the cat? He is not a man of an ordinary stature. He is a great man of the tribe, and an elder of the family. I also see that Unais holds the same views, and he is also a man of repute".

The fifth one said, "There is no cause for alarm. Come and let us put the case before Khafaf. We are sure that Khafaf, and other nobles of the tribe will themselves expel him from the tribe".

The sixth one said, "I am pondering over their ideas. I am not sure they will be able to change them. It is possible that they may of themselves come to the right path. We should not be perturbed but should reflect on their religion. Listen to me! I am noticing reality in their faith, Anyway, we are about to reach Khafaf. After our talk with him we expect to arrive at some definite conclusion".

In short, conversing together, these people reached the chief of Ghifar tribe and said to him, "We are coming from Abu Dharr to you".

Khafaf: "Has Abu Dharr come back from the journey to Mecca?"

A man said, "Sir, Abu Dharr has turned a pervert. He ridicules our gods. He says that a man has been appointed as a prophet. His duty is to invite people to the worship of One God and also to teach good things. Abu Dharr is not content with acknowledging his prophethood and keeping it to

himself, but he is constantly preaching in the masses and is inviting all others to that prophet and his God.”

When Khafaf heard it, he said, “It is a pity that Abu Dharr, leaving all gods, propagates the worship of a Single God. It is a great evil and very repugnant. I foresee that it will stir up a serious commotion in our tribe, which will be destroyed in consequence. O my young men! Do not make haste but give me some time to think over the case of Abu Dharr”.

After the young men went back, Khafaf, the chief of the tribe, began to think why all of them were speaking against Abu Dharr. He kept on pondering over the matter the whole night in his bed. He was extremely bewildered and could not form a definite opinion. But his mind had the deep impression of the hearsay expressed by Abu Dharr. He passed sleepless hours and was simply closing and opening his eyes.

He also recalled an address of the Arab philosopher, Qays bin Sa'idah, in the market-place; He had said that the Creator of the universe is undoubtedly One and only He is worthy of worship. He had completely endorsed Abu Dharr's views in his remarkable address, and had also mentioned that the ideas of Warqa bin Naufil, Zayd bin Amr, Uthman bin Hoverath and Abdullah bin Hajash had changed, and all of them were inclined towards the faith of Abu Dharr .

He was in this puzzling situation when his reason guided him and he said to himself, “Indeed! Abu Dharr is right because Qays bin Sa'ida has supported him and I am sure that Qays will not misunderstand, nor will he accept any false belief. Undoubtedly, there must be a reformer for this world, and there must exist a Being who may run the system of the universe, and it is quite obvious that our gods of stone and wood are far from such capabilities. O God of Abu Dharr! Guide us and delivering us from this perversion put us on the right path”.

While Khafaf was busy making his important decision, the day dawned till the sun appeared in the sky and with the spread of sunlight the news also gained currency that Abu Dharr, his brother and his mother have all come back from Mecca and worship only One God.

With the spreading of this news there stirred an agitation. People started reviling Abu Dharr and said, “He has gone mad and has seen incapacitated to understand that these very idols of ours heal us, give us food and protect us. Abu Dharr is a strange man who invites us to an Invisible God. It appears to us that Abu Dharr wants to create disturbance and trouble among our young people and mislead our children and women. Surely he is a liar and what he claims is wrong. He should be expelled from the tribe”.

One of them said, “Why! How could you express the idea of his expulsion? How can it be done? No, never! It can not happen. He is the bravest man of our tribe”.

After these conversations those people decided to draw the attention of their elders to this point. Accordingly they asked their elders to deliberate on this matter. The elders of the tribe decided to take the case of Abu Dharr to the chief. Consequently all of them went to Khafaf.

The chief of the tribe sent his slave immediately to call Abu Dharr to him. The slave on reaching him said, “Abu Dharr! you and Unais have been called on by the chief”.

Abu Dharr said that he was just coming. After the slave had left, Abu Dharr held his sword in the belt and said to his brother Unais, “Come on; let us go to Khafaf”.

Unais: “O brother! I hear bad things about you from the people. I am afraid this meeting of ours may not prove useful; something unexpected may come out, instead”.

Abu Dharr: “No, it is not so. I know Khafaf very well. He is a wise man. Allah has blessed him with wisdom. He is the most intelligent man of our tribe”.

The two brothers were going on talking together till they reached Khafaf. There they saw that the nobles of the tribe were sitting in a circle around him.

Addressing them all Abu Dharr said, “Salamun Alaykum” (Peace be upon you).

Hearing Abu Dharr's salutation in the Islamic way the nobles of the tribe got enraged and spoke in a furious manner. “What is this wishing which we have never heard before”.

Then one of them said, “It is a pity. We do not know which side Abu Dharr goes”.

Another man said, “Just look at him. He is sitting with his sword, and has no respect for the chief”.

The third man said, “You are right. But he is a horse rider of the tribe and brave people are always armed”.

Abu Dharr spoke, “Listen! I respect you because you are the nobles of the tribe, worthy of our pride and esteem. The salute I have offered to you is the Islamic salute”.

After this Abu Dharr and Unais took their seats face to face with the chief of the tribe, Khafaf.

Khafaf spoke in a kind but sharp tone, “O Abu Dharr! I am informed that you have been inclined to the worship of Allah Who is Invisible. The nobles of the tribe are offended with this attitude of yours. They say that Abu Dharr insults their gods and calls them devoid of all wisdom”.

“O Abu Dharr! We do respect you but it does not mean that we are willing to tolerate the insult of our gods. I ask you to give up your present ideas and come back to your ancestral faith, or else explain your faith to me so that I may be able to understand the reality of your faith. Also, I assure you that I shall think to accept it if you prove that your faith is reasonably better than ours”.

At this Abu Dharr replied, “O chief of the tribe! We respect you and honour whatever you say. But, at the same time, we want to explain that Allah, the One, Whom we have decided to worship and in Whom we believe, is the same Who has created the earth and the sky, Who gives sustenance to all creatures, Who has a control over the life of every animate object and Whose power knows no bounds”.

The idols whom we have been worshipping up till now, have been made by our own hands and have been cut with our own chisels and hammers. Can reason believe that he who is our handmade should be our creator, our sustainer and the listener of our prayers?"

"Man is the noblest of the creation. How can it be worthy of his dignity to bow his head before a stone? My chief! Please think dispassionately what I say. They have no power even to repel their enemy from themselves".

Listen to me, O chief! Once I went to Manat and offered a cup of milk to him. I was still there when a fox came, drank up the cupful of milk and urinated on Manat. This incident had a great effect on me and I thought how a god could be so helpless!"

"This thing made it clear to me that it cannot be god. I am sure and every reasonable man will believe that the Creator of the heavens is better than the heavens and the Maker of the earth is better than the earth. According to this rule of reason the idols cannot be better than us and when they are not superior to us it is meaningless for us to worship them".

"O my chief! I have come to the truth that Allah is one Who is the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe, and Muhammad Mustafa who had been sent in Mecca is His Messenger".

"He possesses such good qualities that he has no match in the world. The Quraysh who are his bitter enemies admit his truthfulness and capability. Even knowing well that Muhammad is against their gods and religion, they have given him the title of Sadiq and Amin, as I have come to know quite lately. Listen! Light reflects from his face and wisdom flows from his words".

As soon as Abu Dharr finished his speech there arose a great noise all round, "How sweetly Abu Dharr talks! So, our gods are deaf and dumb! Abu Dharr has humiliated our faith and has insulted our gods". A group of them also said, "My friends! Do not talk nonsense. We sincerely say that whatever Abu Dharr has said appears to be right, and reason demands that we should accept the truth. We are sure that we cannot get better guidance than whatever Abu Dharr has brought for us".

Another voice arose: "Arabia needs a reformer and there does not appear to be a better reformer than the one introduced by Abu Dharr". Then another voice was raised, "Abu Dharr's speech is very reasonable". After this a very loud voice rose; it pierced the ear drums, "O Abu Dharr! I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His Messenger".

Seeing this, Khafaf, the chief of the tribe, after intense thinking raised up his head and said to his people: "My dear tribesmen! Listen attentively. You have heard whatever Abu Dharr said. It is our duty to think over his speech very carefully and intensively and find out how much truth it contains. Hastiness is not advisable. It does not carry sense to dismiss somebody's suggestion without examining it.

My friends! You are aware how much confusion prevails among us and how excessive are the crimes in which we are involved. The rich squeeze the poor, and there is no limit to sins and evils. I have come to the conclusion that I should accept and endorse what Abu Dharr says. Now it is up to you

to form an opinion for yourselves. Listen you all: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger”

As soon as Khafaf recited the Kalimah (La ila ha illal lah Muhammadun Rasulullah) there was an outburst of noise in the tribe, “Khafaf became a Muslim. Khafaf embraced Islam”.

No sooner had Khafaf become a Muslim than the condition of the tribe completely changed. Most of them accepted Islam then and there, while others waited to acknowledge Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet at the time of his arrival at Medina.

In short, with the great efforts of Abu Dharr the majority of the tribesmen of Ghifar embraced Islam, and there arose the cries of “God is the Greatest”, and “God is praise worthy”, and the name of the Holy Prophet began to be proclaimed day and night.

After infusing the spirit of Islam in the tribe of Ghifar and converting the people to Islam Abu Dharr turned his attention to Asfan. Reaching there he preached Islam among the people. As this place lay on the high way frequented by the Quraysh, and he had developed a feeling against them which was due to the tortures he had suffered at their hands he exercised a little strictness in making them Muslims. When a group of the Quraysh came over there, he presented Islam to them, and consequently a large number of the Quraysh embraced Islam.

Chapter 4

Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sahar of Egypt writes, “Islam spread in Medina like wild fire”. The tribe of Ghifar became overjoyed at it. Muslims congratulated one another that the two tribes of Aus and Khazraj, who were most eloquent, best swordsmen, and best sympathizers, turned Muslims, and also because Allah had willed to raise up His religion, and was determined to help the Holy Prophet and fulfil His promise.

Unais came to his brother Abu Dharr with the happy news and said, “Islam has spread in Medina and Aus and Khazraj have embraced Islam”.

Abu Dharr said, “The Messenger of Allah will go to them and migrate to their city very shortly”.

Unais looked surprisingly at his brother and said, “Have you received any such information?”

Abu Dharr: “No, neither I have any information about it, nor did I know of the people of Yathrib becoming believers”.

Unais: “How, then, did you know that the Messenger of Allah will migrate to Yathrib?”

Abu Dharr: “He had told me the very day I saw him, that he will go to a town of date palms and I think that place is Yathrib. The Messenger had spoken the truth”.

Unais: “Is it possible that his tribe lets him go out of that place along with Muslims, so that after making thorough preparation he may attack them?”

Abu Dharr: “They may let him or not, but he will shortly migrate to that place. Of course, only Allah knows how and when it will happen”.

Abu Dharr converted his tribe to Islam after he had become a believer. Then he turned his attention to Medina. Since his return from Mecca, till the migration of the Holy Prophet, Abu Dharr remained busy with the preaching of Islam and continued making efforts to take the Divine religion to the masses.

The Holy Prophet kept on doing his duty to preach Islam, and the Quraysh continued to perform their duty of torturing the Prophet. They gave him so much torture that no alternative was left for him except to leave his home. In short, by the command of Allah, Jibrail asked him to leave Mecca after making Ali sleep in his (Prophet's) bed.

He did likewise. He made Ali sleep in his bed and then left, so that the Quraysh might not know that he was not in his bed. After staying for three days in the cave of Hira he set off for Medina.

Abu Dharr was anxiously waiting for the migration. His tribesmen were also in waiting and used to enquire about the Holy Prophet from everybody who happened to come from his side.

Starting from Mecca and after staying for a few days in cave the Prophet left for Medina. When the tribe of Ghifar came to know that he was between Mecca and Medina they became very happy. Abu Dharr felt a wave of blessing coming. He joined the waiting tribe. People gathered round him and inquired of him about the Prophet of Allah, his temperament, and his face and form.

He replied, “You will see him very soon. He is the best of all and excels everyone in merits”. When the people waited long Abu Dharr kept an eye on the way, so that he might be the first to inform the people of the Prophet's arrival and give relief to the eager hearts and remove the fear that had overcome them for their waiting for him for such a long time.

Time passed on. Bani Ghifar were very eager to receive the Prophet. When Abu Dharr cast a glance he saw a camel coming. All began to look towards Abu Dharr's eyes. After a short while Abu Dharr exclaimed, “By Allah, the Prophet has arrived. Allamah Subaiti writes, “The Holy Prophet's face was shedding a light. In short, all followed Abu Dharr, in shouting with one voice, ‘The Prophet of Allah has come’. ‘The Prophet of Allah has come’. Abu Dharr rushed forward in haste and caught hold of the rein of his camel”.

People started shouting “Allaho Akbar” (Allah is the Greatest) round the Prophet with enthusiasm. All women, old and young, boys and girls were shouting with great joy. ‘The Prophet of Allah has come’. ‘The Prophet of Allah has come’.

The Holy Prophet got down from the camel and began reciting the Holy Qur'an. His voice entered the people's hearts. Then he began preaching. People came forward in groups to swear allegiance to him. Abu Dharr was standing proudly near the Holy Prophet overjoyed.

The Ghifar tribe came forward and said, “O Prophet of Allah! Abu Dharr taught us whatever you had told him. We became Muslims and we testified that you are the Prophet of Allah”.

After that the people of the tribe of Aslam said, “We have also embraced Islam in the same way as our brethren (Ghifar) have done”. The Prophet of Allah became happy and raising his hands towards the sky prayed, “O Lord of the world! Pardon the tribe of Ghifar and keep the tribe of Aslam safe”.

People were very happy and were looking at the Prophet's face again and again. Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sahar writes, “People began to look at his (Prophet's) face intently. They saw that he was a man of a shining face, smiling lips and sweet morals. He was neither lean and thin, nor fat. His features were beautiful.

He possessed big and black eyes, long eye lashes, arch like black brows, black hair, a long neck and a thick beard. He was dignified when silent and awe-inspiring when he spoke. His talks were sweet. He was neither taciturn, nor was he a talkative person speaking with a loud voice. He looked most handsome from a distance, and most sweet from near. He was middle sized, neither so tall as to be unpleasant to look at, nor so short as to be considered lowly by the people. After that the Holy Prophet set off for Medina and Abu Dharr stayed back in his tribe”.

From there the Holy Prophet left for Medina. When he reached Medina people gave him a very warm welcome. Soon after his arrival he started preaching the message of Islam. Abu Dharr who could not accompany the Holy Prophet to Medina stayed so long in his home that the three great Islamic wars (Ghazawat) -Badr in 2nd Hijra, Uhud in 3rd Hijra and Ahzab in 5th Hijra had been fought to a finish.

After the Battle of Ahzab, a verse of the Holy Qur'an forced Abu Dharr to leave for Medina. One day he was busy in his post-prayer recitals after offering his evening prayers in the masjid of his home town, when he heard a man reciting the verse:

“O believers! Should I show you a bargain which can save you from a painful punishment”. (Surah al-Saf, 61:10)

After a reflection on the meaning of this verse he became anxious for Jihad and said to Unais, “I will leave for Yathrib tomorrow”.

Unais: All right! Go. May Allah take you there safely! But tell me, when will you come back?

Abu Dharr: I will not come back. I will spend the rest of my life in the service of the Holy Prophet.

Unais: O Brother! You have become a true believer and the faith has penetrated in your heart and soul. Your tribe and your people here need you very much. There will be a great loss if you go away from here. I think you should give up the idea of leaving for Medina and spend the rest of your life here.

Abu Dharr: The Holy Prophet is better than these people. Whatever has been lapsed is quite enough. The Holy Prophet fought in Badr and I could not join him. He fought in Uhud and I could not join him. He fought in Ahzab and I could not join him. How long should I serve my tribe and be deprived of the blessing of martyrdom. Whatever has happened up till now is enough. Now, I will not for a moment give up the idea of leaving for Yathrib.

Unais: My proposal is that you should stay in your home as usual. The Holy Prophet will himself call you whenever he needs you. Just see! There were many people who were in their home towns and left for Medina at the call of the Holy Prophet.

Abu Dharr: The period of waiting has passed. If the Prophet has not called me, I have also an obligation. I will not be waiting now but will go uninvited.

Unais: All right! But do not make haste. Take some necessary provisions for the journey.

Abu Dharr: I need no provisions. Some dried bits of bread are enough for me. Abu Dharr left his hearth and home for Medina. Reaching there he got the honour of meeting the Prophet and stayed in his company.

He used to live in the Prophet's masjid the whole night, and met people throughout the day. He used to take food with the Prophet and adorn his material life with piety and virtuousness. He fully concentrated on learning the hadith (tradition of the Holy Prophet) by heart. After his arrival in Medina, Abu Dharr fell ill on account of the change of climate. The Prophet got the news of his ailment. He came to see Abu Dharr and said to him, “Abu Dharr! You should stay for some days at the place outside Medina where the camels, sheep and goats of the public property graze, and take note that you should not eat anything as food except their milk during your stay there”.

As soon as he received the command of the Prophet Abu Dharr left for the appointed place with his wife. The illness was severe for some days but

gradually he regained his health after which he performed the sexual obligation with his wife. Now there was the difficulty of getting water for the obligatory bath as a pre-requisite for offering prayers. Till then he did not know the method of “Tayammum” (prescribed rubbing of hands and forehead with clay). So he was in a fix for some time as to what he should do. At last his reason guided him and he went to the Prophet on the back of a very fast camel.

As soon as the Prophet caught sight of Abu Dharr he smiled and spoke before Abu Dharr opened his lips, “Abu Dharr! Do not worry. Water is arranged for you here and now. So a slave girl brought water and he took the bath. After that he came to the Holy Prophet and he taught him the method of Tayammum”.¹

Abu Dharr was passing his life-time when the Battle of Tabuk came by in the 9th year of Hijra. Historians say that the Prophet came to know that the Christians of Syria had made a firm resolve to attack Medina with forty thousand troops from Hercules, the Roman King: Hence the Prophet, as a precautionary measure, intended to leave for Syria with thirty to forty thousand troops. He appointed Ali as his viceroy at Medina. After arraying his army he left Medina.

After his departure the hypocrites started taunting Ali that the Messenger of Allah had left him behind to lighten his own burden. In order to prove the hypocrites liars he decided to go to the Prophet. Accordingly he left Medina and joined the Prophet at Jaraf and informed him of the hypocrites' taunting.

The Prophet said, “The hypocrites are liars. I have come here after having made you my deputy. O Ali! Are you not happy with your rank made higher? You have with me the same relation as Harun had with Musa with the only difference that there will be no prophet after me.”²

By this he meant that when Musa went to the Mount Tur he appointed Harun as his deputy and he (the Holy Prophet) had also conducted himself in the same way”.³

Having heard this Ali returned to Medina, and the Prophet made for Tabuk which was situated on the border of the then Roman Empire at a distance of ten stages from Medina and Damascus both. Having arrived at Tabuk he stayed there for twenty days. During his stay there he sent sariyas (army of Islam under the command of somebody other than the Prophet) all round, and laid emphasis on invitation to Islam.

No army came to fight from Rome. Hence he had to return from there. During his return one night when he was passing through the valley of Aqaba zi Fatq the hypocrites wanted to kill him in the same valley by frightening his camel, which might throw him down, but Huzayfah bin Yaman and Ammar bin Yasir saved him. After the Holy Prophet had crossed the valley, told Huzayfah b. Yaman the names of those hypocrites who wanted to kill him in the darkness of night, and commanded him to keep the names secret. Notable companions were included in this list.⁴

According to Tahzibut Tahzib those people tried to get their names from Huzayfah but he did not disclose. At last, a companion himself admitted, “Whether you tell me or not, by Allah I was one of those hypocrites”, In short, the Prophet returned to Medina during the month of Ramadhan.

At the time of his departure from Medina for the Battle of Tabuk Abu Dharr was also with him. But his camel being very weak and thin could not keep pace with the caravan .He, however, remained behind the caravan at a distance of three days journey. He tried his best to be with him but could not succeed. He became extremely distressed when he saw that it was impossible for him to catch up with the caravan.

According to another version when he was left behind, some people said to the Prophet that it was very difficult for Abu Dharr to keep up with him. Upon this he said, “Leave him to himself. He will come up if Allah wills”. So the caravan proceeded further and Abu Dharr was left behind in perplexity and anxiety.

Sometimes he thought to go back to Medina and at sometime he intended to reach Tabuk at any cost because lagging behind the Prophet was tormenting him badly. He drove his camel in a fit of excitement but he could not move quickly on account of his weakness. Seeing this he got down from the camel and taking all his luggage from its back loaded it upon his own back and started on foot. It was a very hot season. Hence it is not unknown to the travellers what the intensity of his thirst would have been.

He was going with the luggage on his back when thirst almost overpowered him. He was already fatigued and now the thirst made his condition all the worse. Abu Dharr being in intense thirst moved about in search of water till he saw some rain water collected in a pit. He reached the pit while he was extremely thirsty, and wanted to drink a handful of water from it, when, all of a sudden, he thought that the water was very cold and it was unfair on his part to drink it before the Holy Prophet did it. So, as this idea occurred to him he threw away the water from the hand and filled container with it.

Abu Dharr was going alone in his extreme thirst with the water-skin till he reached the borders of Tabuk.

As soon as he reached the borders of Tabuk the Muslims saw him and informed the Prophet of the arrival of a distressed traveller. At once, he said, “He is my companion, Abu Dharr. Run on, O my companions, and bring him to me. Hearing this, the companions rushed to Abu Dharr and returned with him to the Prophet. The Prophet after enquiring about his health said, “O Abu Dharr, you have water with you. Why, then, are you so thirsty?”

Abu Dharr: My master! Water is, of course, there, but I cannot drink it.

The Prophet: What is the reason for that?

Abu Dharr: My Lord! On my way here I found cold water at the foot of a hill, but my conscience did not allow me to use it in advance of you. Hence I have brought that water with me for you. I shall taste it after you drink it.

Hearing this, the Prophet said, “O Abu Dharr! Allah will have His mercy on you. You will live alone and will go away from this world alone. You will rise alone on the Day of Judgment. You will enter Heaven alone and a group of Iraqis will get bliss on your account, that is, they will give you a bath, shroud you, and offer prayers for you”.

This incident not only shows Abu Dharr's unparalleled love for the Holy Prophet, but through it the Holy Prophet clearly foretold the troubles and calamities which were to befall Abu Dharr. It becomes clear from the

statement of the renowned Shi'ah scholar, Allamah Majlisi that the Prophet had thrown light on different occasions, on the coming events which Abu Dharr had to face.

He quotes an incident on authority of Ibn Babwayh from Abdullah bin Abbas that one day the Holy Prophet was sitting in Masjid of Quba and many of his companions were around him. He said, "The man who is first to enter the gate this masjid, will be from the people of the Heaven". At a while Abu Dharr entered the gate. He was the first who came from outside all alone.

The Holy Prophet, there up said, "O Abu Dharr! You are from the people of the Heaven. He continued to say, "You will be banished from me, on account of your love for the people of my House. You will live in foreign land and will die in loneliness. A group of the people of Iraq will be blessed for giving you funeral bath and shrouding your dead body, and will be with me in the Heaven".

Notes

1. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal
2. Sahih Bukhari.
3. Fatahul Bari vol. 3, page 387
4. Madarijun Nubuwwah page 302

Chapter 5

History bears witness that Abu Dharr was so much enlightened after embracing Islam that he became without a parallel. He achieved such perfection in purity of faith and sincerity of heart that he proved to be a beacon light for the people of insight. He enriched the people's mind with his counsels, after the appearance of Islam, taught them the lesson of equality and love, and showed them the way of obedience to Allah and the Holy Prophet.

His Islamic life had been so dignified that it had no parallel. Abdullah Subaiti writes that Abu Dharr was distinguished among those companions who excelled in piety, abstemiousness, worship of Allah, truthfulness, firmness in faith and peerless in resignation to the Will of Allah. His daily diet was, during the life time of the Holy Prophet, three kilo of dates and he maintained it throughout the rest of his life.

He further writes that he was so elevated in morality and virtue that the Holy Prophet had to include him, like Salman Farsi, in Ahlul Bayt (People of his House). Hafiz Abu Na'im says that Abu Dharr was a devout worshipper, a man of piety and had a highly contented heart. He was the fourth person to have embraced Islam. He had given up all evils even before the enforcement of Islamic law. It was his cherished goal not to bow down his head before the tyrant rulers. He stood firm in bearing pains and sorrows. He won distinction in learning by heart the traditions and exhortations of the Holy Prophet.

Abu Na'im writes that Abu Dharr did great service to the Holy Prophet and acquired the knowledge of the articles of faith and articles of the practice in his company, and abstained from evils. One speciality of his was that he used to ask questions from the Holy Prophet. He learnt by heart the meanings and interpretations given by him and was very greedy in this respect. In short, as far as possible, he not only satisfied himself with his questioning but gathered a vast treasure of Islamic knowledge for the followers of Islam.

Another notable deed of his life was that he treaded on the same path which the Holy Prophet meant and approved of, and for which he had commanded. He attached himself with Imam Ali after the Holy Prophet and did not forsake him at any moment. He followed him, and received benefit from his vast knowledge. He imbibed his knowledge, asceticism worship, benevolence, moral virtues and habits. That is why the Holy Prophet said; "Abu Dharr is the most truthful of this nation". He said at another place, "Abu Dharr is like Prophet Isa (Jesus) in asceticism". According to a tradition he said, "One who wants to see the austerity and modesty of Isa should look at Abu Dharr".

It is obvious that the worship of a divine like Abu Dharr was not limited to ritual prayers only. He had practical proficiency in all the forms of worship. It is undeniable that to think over the existence of Allah and His creations is also a great worship. Abu Dharr was accomplished in this worship too.

Historians and traditionalists are unanimous that Abu Dharr had attained to the great degree of knowledge and it was because he acquired knowledge

very sincerely in the company of the Holy Prophet. He put questions to the Prophet all the time and learnt his answers by heart. He had become well-versed in knowledge in his company.

The author of “Kitabud Darajatur Rafi'ah” says that Abu Dharr was reckoned in the rank of great scholars and austeres and held a distinctive rank in scholarship. He was a senior companion of the Prophet, was one of those great persons who fulfilled their covenant with Allah, viz. who kept their promise which they had made to Him about their following the complete faith, and was one of those four personalities whose love has been made obligatory on all.

Allamah Manazir Ahsan Gilani throwing light on the lofty scholarship of Abu Dharr writes: “Read the testimony of Ali, the best judge out of the companions, and the Gate of Knowledge and conclude yourself that he is right when he says, “Abu Dharr was very greedy and avaricious”.

Is this testimony of Imam Ali does not justify Abu Dharr's claim? Sometimes Abu Dharr himself said enthusiastically, “We have separated from the Holy Prophet at a time when there has not been left a single bird flying with flapping wings in the sky, about which we have not come to know some special thing”.¹

Allamah Gilani writes about the knowledge of Abu Dharr, “Somebody asked Imam Ali, how he considered Abu Dharr”. He replied that ‘wa'aa 'ilman 'ajaza fihe,’ viz. “He (Abu Dharr) preserved knowledge which overpowered him”.

You have read how sensitive he was to accept impression, and can yourself surmise from the events. That is why he was always ready to act according as he heard from the Holy Prophet. Just as he tried to hear from the Holy Prophet he wanted to put it into action without the least hesitation. It was his earnest desire to see that his action completely conformed to knowledge.

Abu Dharr was so determined and firm about it that he never cared for the biggest power on earth if it came in his way. Sermons and exhortations could not shake him from the stand that he had taken. Taking pride in this distinction he sometimes said, “O people! On the Day of Judgment I shall remain nearest to the Holy Prophet's assembly, because I have heard him saying that the nearest to him on the Day of Judgment will be the man who departs from the world in the same condition in which he has left him. I swear by Allah that now nobody is left among you except I who am in my original state and have not been contaminated with anything new”.²

This was not his assertion only but the leader of the world and last of the Prophets had also certified it. It is written in the Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd that one day the Holy Prophet said, “Who amongst you will come to see me (at Kauthar) in the same condition in which I leave him”. Abu Dharr said, “I”. The Prophet said in reply to it, “You are true”, i.e. you will die in the same state of faith in which I leave you.

Imam Ali also used to say, “Now there is nobody left who does not fear the taunt and sarcasm of the reproacher in matters of Allah, except Abu Dharr”.

Hence 'ajaza fihe clearly means that Abu Dharr had been overpowered by his knowledge and information. He did not have control over doing against what he knew.

In other words, Abu Dharr acquired knowledge, knew its reality and basis and propagated it well. He never cared about anybody's reproach in communicating to the people the learnings which he had gathered from the Prophet. He was never cowed by any government. He was not moved by the politics of Mu'awiyah, nor was he overawed by the wealth of Uthman; but he called right, what the Prophet had called right, till he breathed last. He acted upon the principles and learnings as explained by the Holy Prophet and also repeated them verbally till he was exiled and died in a remotest place.

It is quoted from, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, in the book "al-Isti'ab" that Abu Dharr knew some of those secrets of knowledge which other people were unable to bear, and confined them to himself only.

Hafiz Basri writes in "Al-Mashariq" that faith has ten stages. One who has attained to the first stage, does not know the limits of the faith of the person who is in the second stage, and the one in the second stage is ignorant of the person in the third stage, and the same is the condition of all of the ten stages. Salman Farsi was at the acme of esoteric knowledge. Abu Dharr held the same position in relation to Salman as Moses had in relation to Khizr.

Kharajaski has written in "Kanz" that Salman while addressing Imam Ali used to say, "Be abi anta wa ummi ya qatila Kufah ", (O' the martyr of Kufah! May my parents be sacrificed for you). He further said, "If I disclose those facts which I know of your (Imam Ali's) real insight an excitement will be stirred up within the people".

Allamah Majlisi has quoted a hadith of the same type about Salman and Miqdad in "Sharhu Usulil Kafi".

It means that when a companion cannot gauge the extent of the learning of another companion how can the common people bear the learnings of a firm believer like Abu Dharr.

Ali's above quoted remark "Knowledge overpowered Abu Dharr" can also be seen in Tabaqatul Kubra, vol. 5, Usudul Ghabah, vol. 5, and Sunan Abu Daud.

Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sahar in his book "Al-Ishtiraki az-Zahid" writes: "Allah wanted to do good to him so he gave him the capacity and eagerness to learn, bestowed on him conviction and truthfulness and also discerning eyes and attentive ears. Hence he memorized whatever he heard from the Prophet of Islam. He got the tradition and narrated it. He was reckoned among the great traditionalists."

Abdul Hamid writes on page 14 of the same book, "Abu Dharr was a muhaddith (narrator of hadith) of the first order, and spoke very fluent and eloquent Arabic. He was a model of a pious Muslim. Hence he became the most respectable of all the people. One day he was sitting in the masjid and was narrating, as usual, the traditions of the Prophet when a man expressed his wish to have seen the Prophet. Abu Dharr quoted the Prophet of Allah as having said that those people of his nation would love him most, who

would come after him and would wish to see him even at the cost of their children and wealth”.

Morality means good habits and the knowledge of morals or ethics is a kind of practical philosophy. Abu Dharr had attained to the highest degree of morality. Good habits of the Holy Prophet reflected in his personality. There is nothing in his character which can be criticized by a just man. Whatever he did in his lifetime was an unparalleled example of morality, and whatever he said was according to the exigencies of society. This is something different if some ignorant people regard his good habits as impolite.

Allamah Subaiti says that the examples of morality set by Abu Dharr deserve commendation. The narrator says, “Seeing Abu Dharr wrapped in a black blanket in a corner of the masjid I asked him why he was sitting there alone. He said that he had heard the Holy Prophet saying: “It is better to sit in a lonely corner than to sit amidst the bad company and it is better to sit in the company of moralists than to sit in a lonely corner. To observe silence is better than telling a bad thing and to say a good thing is better than keeping quiet”.

Abu Dharr said that the Holy Prophet has told many things regarding the instruction in good morals. Here are seven of them:

1. Have friendship with poor people and try to keep them near yourself.
2. In order to improve your own condition have a look at the people of lesser means and do not compare yourself with the people of better means.
3. Do not beg of anybody for material help and make contentment your habit.
4. Have sympathy with your relatives and help them in their hour of need.
5. Do not hesitate to tell the truth even if the whole world turns against you.
6. Do not mind the reproaches of a blasphemous person about Allah.
7. Always keep saying, “La hawala wa la quwwata ilia billah”, (There is no power except Allah). In other words Allah is the Super Power. .

Abu Dharr says, “Having said these things the Prophet touching my chest with his hand said, “O Abu Dharr! No wisdom is better than good planning, no piety is better than self-control, and no beauty is better than good morals”.

Allamah Gilani quoting Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal mentions only two precepts out of the above mentioned seven, which pertain to the friendship with the poor and to look at the people of lesser means, and then writes:

“In fact, this is the best remedy of the ailment of the love for riches and love for the world. Suppose there is a man who has a shirt of Muslin and a trouser of long-cloth to wear, wheat bread and mutton to eat, and a neat and clean clay house to live in. Now, if this man compares himself with a man who has nothing except a coarse dress, a bread of barley and a cottage of straw, he will thank Allah for his better condition and will be free from the mental tortures with which he would have suffered had he compared himself to a wealthier man with costlier dresses and more delicious food. This is the best way to get worldly satisfaction and other worldly benefits.

But how many of us are acting upon it today? I even say that a man will not suffer any trouble if he acts upon this principle.”

This is the only golden rule for this world and for the Hereafter, which is explained in the following sentence of Shaykh Sa'di, the celebrated poet of Iran:

“I wept for a pair of shoes unless I saw a man who had no feet”.

After love for riches another part of the love for world is the love for status and power. This is even more dangerous and a cause for the corruption of the system of the world. The mischiefs perpetrated in the world by the slaves of wealth are much less than those caused by the over-ambitious for status and power.

The real cause of this disease is that when a man feels his own perfection in some field, he forgets the power of that Being who bestows this perfection on him, and considers himself of some consequence. Then he tries to make others, who are around him, realize his importance which he has attributed to himself.

With this end in view, he prepares plans according to the power of his thinking. It is seldom seen that a slave of greed and avarice leaves any stone unturned to achieve this end. He fills his mind with hypocrisy and remains busy all the time with making the world conscious of his existence through fair and foul means.

The perfection that Abu Dharr had achieved or was about to achieve, was that of piety. It was feared that it might produce in him pride and conceit, after which the ambition of status and honour sweeps away the peace of the world and the Hereafter. Hence the Prophet prevented it before hand and addressing Abu Dharr, one day, said to him in clear words:

“Allah said: O my bondmen! You are all sinners except those whom I keep safe. So all of you must be praying to me regularly for your forgiveness. I will forgive you. I forgave the sins of the person who considers Me powerful enough to redeem the sins and that I redeem them, and of the person who prayed for the forgiveness of his sins through My power”.

“O my slaves! All of you are deviators except those whom I show the right path. Hence you should pray to Me for guidance. All of you are poor and needy except those whom I make affluent. Pray to Me for your livelihood and remember that if all of your alive and dead, old and young, vicious and virtuous, become united to practice abstinence there will not be the least addition to My existing realm, and if all of you dead and alive, old and young, vicious and virtuous gather together and request Me to fulfil their needs and I satisfy their requirements there will not be any deficiency in My dominion not even equal to the quantity of water taken out with the needle when somebody dips it into the ocean. This is because I am the Bountiful, Forgiver, Great, Exalted and Dominant over all ends”.

Can anybody take pride in his existence or achievements and accomplishments after believing in the truthfulness of the Divine Glory and Majesty which you behold in this version? Can anybody take airs even for a moment after this? Can any believer in Allah excite sedition on the face of

the earth for the sake of his station in life, honour, show and perpetuity after this? Who is crazy to be proud of his piety when everyone of us is a sinner?

When all the wealth of the rich people is under the control and authority of Allah; is not he a fool who shows vanity over the purses of money? If it is correct that our great and small cannot even untidily add a jot to the grandeur of the Divine dominion, what does a man who is only a handful of dust boast of? When this is the state of his freedom from want that even in matters of guidance and mental maturity he considers His favour and power to be the real agents, on what basis does a clergyman or a reformer consider his efforts worth appreciating?

Alas! When everything belongs to Him and we are simply poor and needy why, then, is this self-conceit and why this presumption and arrogance?

These were the commands and sermons which instilled the austerity of Prophet Isa in the spirit of Abu Dharr. Anyway, this was the case and even more than that the Prophet used to stir up the ascetic nature of Abu Dharr. But we should take special view of that side of his teachings and exhortations wherein Islam stands out distinguished from all other religions.

You must be feeling tempted to think that if this was the teaching of the Holy Prophet why did Islam oppose the monastic life and consider it one of the innovations of monks and clergymen?

I want to draw your attention to the reply of this question. Generally abstinence and piety mean to leave the cities for mountains and forests to worship Allah in seclusion. Abu Dharr narrates as under:

“The Holy Prophet told me that it is also a good turn to pick up stones from the path, to help the weak is also a charity and even the sexual intercourse with the wife is a charitable act”.³

I asked the Holy Prophet in astonishment, “Is it also a charity to cohabit with ones wife, although he satisfies his urge by this act? If a man satisfies his urge, will he also get a recompense for it? The Prophet said, “Well, tell me, would it not been a sin if you had satisfied this urge through some unlawful and forbidden means?” I replied, “Certainly”. He said, “You people think of the sin but not of the good. Usually those leading the life of austerity give up their practice of earning and craftsmanship and afterwards when their worldly needs press them hard they are willy-nilly driven in to begging”.

The Prophet one day called me and said, “Would you like to swear allegiance on the point that after it there will be only Heaven for you”. I replied, “Yes”. And then I stretched out my hand. The Holy Prophet said, “I want to take word from you that you will not beg anything of anybody”. I replied, “All right”. He said, “Not even that whip which falls down from your horse. You should rather, get down and pick it up yourself”.

Abu Dharr says that the Holy Prophet told him, “Do not think any kindness and favour to be trivial and insignificant. If you have nothing to give to a Muslim brother, you should at least meet him with a smiling face”.

Abu Dharr says, “My beloved (the Prophet) has made a will to me that I should keep on showing kindness to my relatives, even if I am unable to do it

completely;⁴ because it is very difficult”. Anyway, one should do good to all as far as possible.

Abu Dharr's character becomes apparent when we find that he is always seen in the company of indigent and the needy and holds the poor dear. He had a deep impression of Prophet's teachings and was not among the stone-hearted companions who could not be moved by the morals of the Prophet. He was such a staunch supporter of Imam Ali that he had fully absorbed the lofty character and the good habits of the Prophet.

The order of the Prophet was: “Give your slaves and maids (subordinates) what you eat, and give them to wear what you wear”.⁵ And the same was the routine of Abu Dharr .He always fed his slaves and slave-girls with what he ate and gave them to wear what he himself wore.

In view of the tradition of the Holy Prophet Abu Dharr considered marriage essential. He was married but to him marriage never meant joy and happiness. He thought that marriage was the name of following the tradition of the Holy Prophet. It is learnt about him that his wife accompanied him wherever he went.

Since his wife belonged to Africa, people sometimes said, “Do you keep a black woman? He used to answer, “I consider it better to have a black and ugly wife than to have a beautiful wife and be mentioned by people simply because of my wife's beauty”. Abu Dharr had great regard for his wife.

Hospitality is not only one of the best attributes, but it is the essence of humanism. The more aware one is of the principles of Islam the more imbued will he be with the spirit of hospitality.

Na'im bin Qa'nat Riyahi says, “One day I went to see Abu Dharr and said that I loved him as well as despised him at the same time”. Abu Dharr said, “How could these two states come together?” I said, “I have been killing my children. Now I have become aware that this has been a wrong practice. So whenever I think that I should come to you to ask about its redemption and forgiveness both the emotions rise at a time. When I thought that it would be better if you told me its solution the emotion of love rose high, but when I thought that it would be painful for me forever if you declared it as irremediable hatred against you swelled up. Now I have come to you for the solution of this problem”.

Abu Dharr said, “All right! Tell me if you have done all this during the days of ignorance or after accepting Islam?”

I said, “In the days of ignorance”.

Abu Dharr said, “Your sin has been forgiven. Islam is the remedy for all such pollutions and sins”.

On hearing it I became satisfied. After it I wanted to beg leave of him when he said, “Wait!” And I stopped at his instruction.

After this he asked his wife in gestures to bring some food for the guest. At this his wife went inside and came out after a while with food.

Abu Dharr said, “Na 'im, Bismillah” (which means begin eating in the name of Allah)

Before I started I requested him also to join me. He said, “I am fasting”. Saying this he started his prayers. I started eating and when I was about to finish meals he finished his prayers and started eating.

I said, “To tell a lie is a great sin in Islam and even if I presume somebody a liar it is possible that he may be a liar, but I wonder what opinion I should form of you”.

Abu Dharr said, “You have been sitting for such a long time with me. In which thing did you find me a liar?”

I said, “A little before you told me that you were fasting and now you are eating with me”.

He told me, and “I have not told a lie. I am fasting as well as eating with you”.

I asked him, “How?”

He said, “The Holy Prophet has said that whoever observes fast on the 13th, 14th and 15th day of this month of Sha'ban, in a way observes fast for the whole month. In other words, he will get the recompense of ten fasts for each fast. As I have observed fast during these dates I have right to think from the point of view of recompense that I am fasting the whole month”.⁶

Allamah Bayhaqi has also narrated an event of the same kind. Its summary is as follows:

One day Abu Dharr and Abdullah bin Shafiq Uqaili went to somebody as guests. Abu Dharr had already said that he was fasting and when food was brought he started eating. Abdullah hinted, “You are fasting”. Abu Dharr said, “I remember my fast. I have not forgotten it. I always observe fast strictly on those three days of every month which are called Ayyam-al-Beez and according to the tradition of the Holy Prophet regard myself fasting.”⁷

Notes

1. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd vol. 4, p.10
2. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd and Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal
3. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal
4. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal
5. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal
6. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal and Hayat ul-Qulub, Allamah Majlisi
7. Sunan Bayhaqi.

Chapter 6

Shaheed Thalith Allamah Nurullah Shustari writes: “He was one of the greatest companions and is reckoned among the foremost of the companions who embraced Islam. In embracing Islam his number was third, that is, he embraced Islam after Mother of the Faithful Khadijahtul Kubra and Commander of the Faithful Ali. According to the author of “Isti'ab” he was distinguished in knowledge, austerity, piety and truthfulness, among all the companions. Ali has said that Abu Dharr achieved that position in the acquisition and comprehension of religious learnings which nobody else could reach. The Holy Prophet used to say, “Abu Dharr is like Prophet Isa in my ummah. Abu Dharr possesses the same austerity as Prophet Isa had”.

According to a tradition one who wants to see the modesty of Prophet Isa should see Abu Dharr. Shaykh Saduq in his book “Uyunul Akhbar ar-Ridha” writes that Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a) has said from the authority of his forefathers that according to the hadith of the Holy Prophet, “Abu Dharr is the truthful person of this ummah”.

Ali says that Abu Dharr is the only person who will never care for any reproaches about Allah and His orders and commands, that is, he will say whatever is right and will act upon it, and will neither care for any threats in this connection, nor will he be over-awed by the power of the government.

Scholars have written that Abu Dharr had sworn allegiance to the Prophet (s) with the promise that in the faith of Allah he would not care for any reproacher and that he would speak out the truth howmuchsoever bitter it might be.

Truthfulness and courage is a quality which even the greatest personalities do not hold fast. The Holy Prophet (s) has prophesied this quality of Abu Dharr and said that Abu Dharr would perform a great role in this matter and will remain steadfast even in the face of severe persecution which he had to bear.

The Prophet said: “There is nobody more truthful than Abu Dharr between the canopy of the sky and the carpet of the earth”.¹

In the elucidation of this hadith Allamah Subaiti writes: “The Holy Prophet addressing his companions said, “O my companions! Who is one out of you who will meet me on the Day of Reckoning in the same condition in which I leave him in the world?” On hearing this everyone kept quiet, except Abu Dharr who spoke that it was he. The Holy Prophet said, “No doubt! You are true”. After that he added, “O my companions! Remember what I am telling you. There is no man between the earth and the sky more truthful than Abu Dharr”.²

Allamah Majlisi has written some narratives after having quoted the above mentioned tradition in his book Hayat ul-Qulub.

Ibn Babwayh has narrated on reliable authority that somebody asked Imam al-Sadiq if Abu Dharr was better than the Ahlul Bayt of the Holy Prophet or otherwise. The Imam said, “How many months are there in a year?” He answered, “Twelve”. The Imam said, “How many of these months are respectable and sanctified?”

He said, “Four months? The Imam asked, “Is Ramadhan also included in those four months?” He said “No”. The Imam asked “Is Ramzan better

or those four months?” He answered, “The month of Ramzan is better”. The Imam said, “The same is the case with us, the Ahlul Bayt. You cannot compare anybody with us”.

One day Abu Dharr was sitting in the company of people who were describing the virtues of this nation. Abu Dharr said, “Ali is best of all in this nation, and he is the apportioner of Heaven and Hell, the Siddiq and Farooq of the ummah and, the divine proof for this nation”.

Hearing it from him those hypocrites turned their faces from him and refuting his statement called him a liar. At once Abu Amamah rose from there, went to the Holy Prophet and told him what Abu Dharr had said, and how that group had refused to accept it. The Holy Prophet (s) said, “There is no man between the earth and the sky more truthful than Abu Dharr”.

The same book has narrated on another authority that somebody asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) if that was an authentic hadith wherein the Holy Prophet (s) has declared like this. The Imam said, “Yes”. He said, “Then what positions do the Holy Prophet, Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn hold?” The Imam replied, “We are like the month of Ramadhan which contains one such night the worship of which is equal to that of one thousand months while the rest of the companions are like the respected month in relation to other months, and nobody can be compared with us, the Ahlul Bayt”.

It becomes as clear as day light from the above mentioned hadith of the Holy Prophet that Abu Dharr was second to none in truthfulness. The commentary and the elucidation of the same hadith as made by Subaiti, describes that Abu Dharr will leave the world in the same condition, in which the Prophet had left him, and will see him in the same condition in the Hereafter.

If it is looked into deeply, Abu Dharr's firm stand on the path which had been strengthened by the Holy Prophet (s) reveals his important virtue. Scholars agree on the point that Abu Dharr did not swerve an inch from the path of the Holy Prophet. After the Prophet even a companion like Salman was forced to swear allegiance and was so much beaten in the masjid one day that his neck became swollen. But Abu Dharr was never found silent.

Allamah Subaiti writes: “Abu Dharr was one of those followers of the Holy Prophet (s) who stuck to their path and stood firm on the covenant which they had made with Allah. He obeyed the Holy Prophet faithfully, followed in his footsteps and imitated his conduct. He did not leave Imam Ali (a) even for a moment, followed him to the end and received the benefits of the light of his knowledge.

Allamah Majlisi writes: Ibn Babwayh narrates on reliable authority from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) that one day Abu Dharr happened to pass by the Prophet (s) while Jibrail was talking to him in privacy in the form of “Dahyah Kalbi”. Abu Dharr went back presuming that Dahyah Kalbi was talking to the Prophet in private. After his return Jibrail said to the Prophet “O Muhammad! Abu Dharr came just now and went back without wishing me. Believe me if he had wished me I would have certainly wished him back. O Muhammad! Abu Dharr has an invocation with him which is well known

among the Heavenly people. Look! When I go up to the heavens ask him of that". He said, "All right".

When Jibrail had left, and Abu Dharr came to the Prophet he said, "O Abu Dharr! Why did you not greet us when you came here a little before?" Abu Dharr replied, "When I came Dahyah Kalbi was sitting with you and you were busy in conversation with him. I thought you were talking about some secret things and did not consider it proper to intrude upon you. Therefore I went back". The Holy Prophet said, "He was not Dahyah Kalbi but Jibrail who had come to me in the form of Dahyah Kalbi. O Abu Dharr! He was telling me that if you had wished him he would have wished you back. He was also telling me that you possess an invocation which is famous among the celestial people". Abu Dharr felt very much ashamed and expressed his regret..

Then the Holy Prophet said, "O Abu Dharr! Just let me know the prayer which you read and which is talked of in the heavens". Abu Dharr then told him the following prayer:

"Allahumma Inni Asalukal amna wal eimana bika wat tasdiqa bi nabiyika wal afiyata min jami'il blaa'e wa shukra 'alal afiyate wal ghina 'an shirarin naase".³

We find countless traditions of both Shi'ahs and Sunnis in which special orders have been given for the love of four companions. Scholars say that those four companions are Ali, Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Salman. Umar Kashi, writes in his Rijal, Abu Ja'far Qummi in Khasa'il, Abdullah Humayri in Qurbul Asnad, Shaykh Mufid in Ikhtisas, Ayashi in his commentary, Saduq in Uyun Akhbar ar-Ridha, Abdul Barr in Isti'ab, Ibn Sa'd in Tabaqat and the author of Usudul Ghabah in his book: "The Holy Prophet (s) says that Allah has commanded me to keep my four companions my friends and love them, and I have also been told that He (Allah) too holds them as friends. Here are the names of those four companions: 1. Ali bin Abi Talib. 2. Abu Dharr Ghifari 3. Miqdad bin Aswad 4. Salman Farsi." ⁴

A tradition says that by four companions are meant Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Ammar. Scholars are of the opinion that these are the companions whom the Heaven and the dwellers of Heaven are fond of. It is narrated in a tradition that when a proclaimer will proclaim on the Day of Judgment, "Where are those companions of Muhammad bin Abdullah who did not break their promise of love for Ahlul Bayt al-Risalah, but remained steadfast to it?" Salman, Miqdad and Abu Dharr will stand up.

Allamah Nuri writes quoting Rauzatul Wai'zin of Shaykh Shahid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ali bin Fital Nishapuri that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a) has said, "There are ten degrees of faith. Miqdad has attained to eight degrees, Abu Dharr to nine and Salman to all the ten of them."

Bond of brotherhood refers to that historical event in which the Holy Prophet had established brotherhood in the pairs of his companions before and after his migration.

Before the migration he established the bond of brotherhood between two companions so that they may remain sympathetic to each other. In this brotherhood he had in consideration the agreement of the temperaments of the pair. He made those two companions brother to each other as they had

the similarity of nature and consonance of temperament. In this way he declared brotherhood between Abu Bakr and Umar, Talhah and Zubayr, Uthman and Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Hamza and Zayd bin Harithah, Salman and Abu Dharr and between Ali and himself.

Then five or eight months after the migration the Holy Prophet again established the bond of brotherhood in the same way. It was necessary to establish brotherhood between the immigrants and the supporters in order to create sympathy between them. In this connection he established brotherhood among fifty companions.

Allamah Shibli No'mani writes: "Islam has in its domain the best morals and perfect virtues. It was kept in view that the companions between whom the relationship of brotherhood was established had the similarity of taste. This unity of taste between the teacher and the student is necessary for the assimilation of knowledge. On inquiry and examination it is learnt that this unity of taste of those two who were made brothers was taken into consideration, and when we see that it is nearly impossible to judge completely and correctly the temperaments and tastes of hundreds of people in such a short time, it will have to be acknowledged that the Holy Prophet's judgment was an example of specific attribute of Prophethood".⁵

Besides, this is also worthy of note that the Prophet got nobody possessing the taste of Ali either among the "Muhajirin" (immigrants) or the "Ansar" (supporters). Ali said, "O Messenger of Allah! With whom have you united me as brother? He replied, "You are my brother in this world as well as in the Hereafter". That is why Ali announced again and again from the pulpit of the Masjid of Kufa, "I am the slave of Allah and brother of the Prophet of Allah".⁶ The Holy Prophet also said about Salman, "Salman is one of our Ahlul Bayt (People of the House)".

In my opinion this is also one of the superior merits of Abu Dharr that a person of mature judgment like the Holy Prophet (s) declared him the brother of Salman. Allamah Subaiti quotes the statement of Saleh al-Ahwal who had heard Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) saying that the Holy Prophet established the bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abu Dharr and asked Abu Dharr not to oppose Salman.⁷

The status of Abu Dharr is so high that the verses of the Holy Qur'an have been revealed in his praise. Here is one of them:

"The righteous striving believers will have the gardens of Paradise as their dwelling place and therein they will live forever".⁸

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) says that this verse has been revealed about Abu Dharr, Miqdad, Ammar and Salman. According to a tradition, the Prophet said that Allah had commanded him to love Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Ammar, and he further added that he himself held them friends. According to another tradition the Prophet said, "Paradise is eager for these people".⁹

Allamah Gilani writes that Abu Dharr's honour and prestige were increasing day by day in the circle of the Prophet, so much so, that when the Holy Prophet went for the Battle of Zaat al-Ruqa¹⁰ he made him the chief of Medina, and not he alone was appointed a chief but for his sake sometimes other Ghifaris also got this rank. For example, the Holy Prophet

appointed Saya' bin Urfah al-Ghifari as the chief of Medina on the occasion of the Battle of Daumatul Jandal.¹¹

It was a common practice in Arabia that whenever somebody rode a camel he made his special man his "file". When the file sat behind, he used to hold the rider by the waist. According to this general tradition the Holy Prophet also made somebody his file. During the last pilgrimage his file was Fazl bin Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib.

The companions considered it a great honour to be a file. The file of the Prophet was called "Radifun Nabi". The scholars say that the Prophet bestowed this honour mostly upon Abu Dharr. The Prophet used to ride not only the camels but also other smaller animals. Asses have also been often seen for his riding. He used to seat Abu Dharr behind him and rode talking to him.¹²

Shah Walyullah Dehlavi, while describing the disturbances in Islam writes about the event of Harrah: Abu Dawud quotes Abu Dharr who said, "One day I was riding behind the Holy Prophet on an ass. When we had gone out of the populated area of Medina he asked me as to what my condition would be when hunger overtakes Medina, and I would hardly bear it before I could reach the masjid from my bed. I said, "Allah and His Messenger know it best", He said, "O Abu Dharr! Do not go for begging at that time", Then he said, "What would be your condition when the price of a grave is equal to that of a slave due to high death rate?" I said, "Allah and His Messenger know it best", He said, "O Abu Dharr! Practise patience then".

Again he asked, "O Abu Dharr! What will be your condition when there is such a general massacre in Medina that the stones and the sand will be soaked in blood?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know well" He said, "You should, then, confine yourself to your house" I asked, "Should I take the sword in hand at that time?" He replied, "If you do so you will be considered their partner", I then asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What should I do then?" He said, "Even if you fear that the flash of the sword would dazzle your eyes, you should only cover your face with the cloth of your dress, and do not fight but be silent".

It is given on page 176 in vol. 5 of Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal (printed in Egypt) that the Holy Prophet (s) used to confide in Abu Dharr his secrets and said that he trusted him fully well. Abu Dharr, too, was very keen to guard his secrets. Whenever he was asked about a tradition he said, "Except those things which the Holy Prophet (s) has told me to keep secret I am willing to tell you everything. You may ask me whatever you want to".

Notes

1. Mustadrak Hakim p. 342, Isabah ibn Hajar 'Asqalani, vol. 2 p. 622, Fehrist-i Tusi, p. 70
2. Tarikhul A'immah p. 251.
3. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2 p. 455, Mustatraf, vol. 1, p. 166 ; Rabi'ul Abrar, chapter 23, hand written, Mamba'us Sadiqin.
4. Mishkat Sharif p. 572
5. Siratun Nabi vol.1, p.112.
6. Tarikh Abul Fida, vol. 1, p.127.
7. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari p.86 as quoted by Usulul Kafi.
8. Surah al-Kahf, 18: 107
9. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2.
10. This battle was called Zaat al-Ruqa' (the battle of Patches of Cloth) because the path was stony and rugged, on account of which the feet of the people were rent and they had tied them with patches of cloth. (Zaadul Ma'ad).
11. Zaadul Ma'ad
12. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd

Chapter 7

There are countless exhortations which the Prophet made to Abu Dharr. We here throw light on a few of them. Muhammad Harun Zangipuri writes on the authority of “Amali” of Shaykh Tusi that the Prophet said to Abu Dharr:

“O Abu Dharr! Worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, or He is seeing you and even if you are not seeing him”.

Know that His foremost worship is His cognition i.e. to understand that He is the First before whom there was none. He is One without a partner. He is Eternal having no end. He is the Creator of all things between the earth and the heavens. He is Pure and Omniscient. He is Free from every blemish, and is the Creator of all things.

After understanding the Oneness of Allah it is necessary to acknowledge my Prophethood and to believe that Allah has sent me as a messenger of good news; a warner, and a shining lamp of guidance to invite people to Allah.

After the acknowledgement of my Prophethood it is compulsory and essential to have love for my Ahlul Bayt whom Allah has purified from all sorts of pollution.

Take special note of two important blessings: Sound health and opportunity for worship.

Value five things before five things: Value youth before old age, sound health before sickness, wealth before want, leisure before occupation, and life before death.

Live in the world like a stranger or pass your days as a traveller goes along the path.

When you get up in the morning do not hope for the evening, and after spending the day do not expect the morning. Take advantage of your sound health (for worship) before sickness and spend your life (for the sake of Allah) before death, because we do not know what people will call us tomorrow living or dead; that is we are not aware whether we shall remain alive tomorrow or not.

Be more parsimonious about your life than about your money. In other words, just as you spend your money stingily and try not to spend anything unreasonably, in the same way, you should be miserly about your life and try not to waste it in evil deeds.

On the Day of Reckoning Allah will cast the most disapproving look at those “ulema” (scholars) whose knowledge has not benefited the people, or, who have acquired knowledge simply to gain worldly honour without benefiting anyone else. Such “ulema” will never smell the scent of Paradise.

Whenever you are asked about a thing which you do not know, express your ignorance plainly. Look! Never give judgment in a matter about which you do not know fully well.

A day will come when some Heaven-dwellers will tell some Hell-dwellers, “What is the reason that we have entered the Heaven on account of your teachings and exhortations, but you have gone to Hell?” In response

to it they will say, “We ordered others to do good but did not do that ourselves”.

Allah has many rights on you. In order to acquit yourself of them you should ask for His forgiveness at bed time as well as when you get up in the morning.

Death is after you and it may come any time. Hence, you should do good deeds and do them with hastiness, and listen! As one sows so one reaps. Wheat is grown of wheat and barley of barley. Forget not the retribution for your actions.

Abstemious people are commanders and the jurists are leaders. There is a limitless benefit in their company.

A believer considers a sin a huge burden like a mountain. He feels as if he is being pressed by a mountain. But the unbeliever regards a sin as a fly on the nose.

Do not look at the smallness of a sin but see against whom you are committing the sin.

The self of the believer is more restless in this world than the bird caught in your net. He wants to get out of it as quickly as possible.

It is not advisable to interfere in every matter and you should control your tongue in the same way as you protect your food.

Allah has made prayers the coolness for my eyes. O Abu Dharr! The hungry eats food to his fill and the thirsty drinks water to satiety, but I am not satiated with prayers.

As long as you are offering prayers you are, as if, knocking the door of an Absolute Monarch. You should know that, by knocking constantly, the door opens at last.

Do not make your house a grave. The house, in which prayers are not offered, is dark like a grave. You should make an arrangement for a light in your grave by offering prayers in your house as the prayers in the house become a light for the grave.

Prayer is a pillar of faith, and charity redeems the sin, but to have control over your tongue is more necessary than both.

A hard-hearted man cannot go near Allah. Hence, you should make your heart tender.

Remember Allah in the state of Khumul (obscurity). I asked him, “O the Messenger of Allah! What is Khumul?” He replied, “It means to remember Allah in secrecy”.

Allah says, “My slave is one who fears Me. I will make one fearless on the Day of Judgement, if one fears me. He will not be perturbed by the dread of Resurrection and will remain in peace instead”.

Intelligent is he who regards his self humble and acts for the Hereafter; and helpless and foolish is he who follows his carnal desires and is negligent of the Hereafter.

The world and the people of the world are accursed only those things which have been spent in the way of Allah can benefit the people of the world.

Allah revealed to my brother, Prophet Isa, “O Isa! Do not love the world because I do not love it. O Isa! I love the Hereafter because it is the place of

return. Everybody has to return to it and will be called to account there. The recompense for good deeds will be good and for bad deeds will be bad.

Allah will fill the heart of that man, who practises austerity, with wisdom. He will give correct speaking power to his tongue, will show him the vices of the world and their treatment, and will lift him from the world in such a way that he will reach “Darus Salam” (the house of peace) in the proper way.

Allah never commanded to accumulate wealth. Instead He has ordered for His worship. So you should become a worshipper, prostrate before Him and go on worshipping Him till you die.

I wear ordinary clothes, sit on the ground and ride an unsaddled ass. Listen! You should be my file and follow my tradition. One who turns ones back to my tradition will not be reckoned among my people.

Congratulations to austeres who are careless about the world and are inclined to the Hereafter; who sit on the ground, and consider its earth their carpet and regard its water good; who have the Divine Book, the Holy Qur'an as their standard and invocations their honour, and keep away from the world.

The produce of the world is children and riches and the produce for the Hereafter is good deeds.

Fear Allah and do not care for the people. People will also respect you if you fear Allah.

Keep quiet when a dead body is being carried, or when you are with a dead body. Also keep silent when fighting is in progress and also remain silent when the Holy Qur'an is being recited.

Salt ¹saves everything from rotting, but there is no remedy when the salt goes bad. (This tradition relates to the scholars and means that faith gets corrupt when the scholars become corrupt).

Two short prayers offered with sincerity and meditation is better than the prayers of full one night offered without sincerity.

Call your self to account before the Day of Reckoning so that it may help you at the reckoning on the Day of Judgment.

To pray without good deeds is to shoot an arrow without target.

When somebody offers his prayers in a jungle Allah commands the angels to offer prayers in a file behind him and say Amin after his prayer, provided that “azan “ (call to prayer) and “iqamat” (call to stand up for prayers) have been said before those prayers. If the prayers are offered without these two calls, only two angels are made to attend it.

To remember Allah in the midst of the negligent people is like fighting in the battlefield.

To be in the good company is better than seclusion, and seclusion is better than the company of the bad people.

Always have friendship with the believers, and eat and drink with the abstemious.

Allah is always close to the tongue of every speaker. Therefore think of Allah while speaking.

For lying it is sufficient that one tells whatever one hears.

It is essential to keep the tongue under complete control.

Respect for knowledge, scholars, elderly Muslims, followers of the Holy Qur'an and a just ruler, is liked by Allah.

Guard and follow the commandments of Allah. He will guard you and you will find Him before you. Remember Him in your happiness and he will remember you in your hardship and will deliver you from it. If you need something, beg from Him only. Nobody can harm you even if the entire world becomes your enemy, provided that Allah is not against you. You cannot be benefited even if all the people want unitedly to benefit you unless Allah wills so Allah helps you in patience. It is He who removes your pain. There is always comfort after every hardship.

Allah does not look at your faces or riches; He only watches your intentions and actions.

A believer's attributes are to be peaceful, to show courtesy and to remember Allah under all circumstances.

Accursed is he who tells lies in a company only to make people laugh.

Abstain from backbiting because it is worse than adultery. I asked, "How is it, O! the Messenger of Allah?"

The Prophet replied, "When the adulterer is repentant Allah accepts his repentance but the sin of backbiting is not forgiven until and unless the man, against whom backbiting has been done, forgives it".

He who abuses a believer is a sinner and he who fights against him is an unbeliever; by backbiting, he is the eater of his flesh and a great sinner; and the protection of his property is equal to the protection of his life. I said, "O, the Messenger of Allah! What is backbiting?" He said, "To remember your brother with things with which he does not like to be remembered". I said, "Even if he has those attributes?" He said, "That is backbiting, in fact; but, if you mention those things which he does not possess, it will be a calumny for which there is a separate punishment".

Allah will reward a man with Paradise if he removes the hardship of his brother in faith.

"Qatat" will not enter Paradise". I asked, "Who are Qatat" He replied. "Backbiters".

A backbiter will not be able to escape the punishment of Allah in the Hereafter.

A double crosser will go to Hell. To disclose a friend's secret is treachery. If a man dies before feeling repentant having shown vainglory even once, he will not smell the scent of Paradise.

He who possesses two shirts should use one for himself and give the other to his needy brother. He who gives up wearing costly dresses, in spite of his wealth, only for the sake of Allah, will get robes in Heaven from Allah.

Before the advent of Mahdi (a)² there will be some people who will wear woolen clothes in summer and winter both, to show their superiority over others. Allah will curse them.

This world is a prison for the believer and Paradise for the unbeliever.

Your intention in all circumstances must be honest. Even your eating and sleeping must be done with the honesty of purpose.

According to Hafiz Abu Na'im, as explained in his book 'Hulyatul Awliya', Abu Dharr says: One day I went to the Holy Prophet when he was sitting in the masjid. I had hardly taken my seat respectfully before him when he said to me, "You have not paid respect to the mosque". I asked, "What is that a master!" He replied, "Two rak'at (units) of prayers. O Abu Dharr! When you enter the masjid you should immediately perform two rak'at of prayers". According to his command I, at once, offered two rak'at of prayers.

Then I asked, "What is the basis and theme of the prayer?" He replied, "The best of worship".

Then I asked, "Which is the best deed?" He replied, "Belief in Allah and fighting in the way of Allah are the best deeds?" I asked, "O master! Who are those believers whose faith is considered perfect?" He replied, "Those whose deeds and manners are good". I asked, "Which of the believers are true Muslims?" He said, "Those from whose tongues and hands other Muslims are safe". I asked "Which things are best to avoid". He replied, "To abstain and keep away from sins". I asked, "Which prayers are considered the best?" He replied, "In which long Qunut (prayer) is recited". I asked, "O master! What is a fast?" He answered, "It is an obligatory worship which carries immense reward". I asked, "Which is the best jihad?" He answered, "In which the feet of the riding animal are cut and the rider is slain". I asked, "Which is the best charity?"

He answered, "That charity which is given out of the wages earned from hard labour is best". I asked, "O master! which verses out of those revealed by Allah are superior to others?" He replied, "Ayat al-Kursi the verses of the throne³ I said, "O master! Give me a piece of advice". He said:

I advise you to fear Allah because it is the foundation of all good deeds.

Recite the Holy Qur'an which is the cause of light for you on earth, and of your favourable mention in the heavens.

Do not laugh much, by it the heart dies and the face loses its brightness.

Remain silent mostly, for it will save you from many troubles.

Be friendly with destitutes and keep company with them.

Look at those who are financially lower and do not compare yourself with those who are higher economically.

Treat your relatives well, even if they despise you.

Do not care for any censure if your action is for the sake of Allah.

Speak the truth even, it be bitter.

As the Holy Prophet was prescient, he mentioned again and again to Abu Dharr the future events and troubles befalling him.

It is written in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal that one day Abu Dharr, being tired of the preaching work, went to the masjid and fell asleep there. The Prophet went in the masjid to express sympathy for him and saw that he was sleeping. The Prophet woke him with the sign of his thumb and said: "O Abu Dharr! What will you do when you are turned out of this masjid?" Abu Dharr said, "O master! If it comes to that I will unsheath my sword and will chop off his head". The Prophet said, "O Abu Dharr! Do not do that but be patient at that time; go to wherever you are sent, and move on to the place you are driven to".

Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi writes that someday the Prophet said to Abu Dharr “O Abu Dharr! You will lead your life alone, and will die alone. You will rise on the Day of Resurrection alone. You will die alone in a strange place. Some people of Iraq will wash you, shroud you, and bury you”⁴.

He also writes that one day Uthman and Abu Dharr entered the masjid of the Prophet talking together. There they saw that the Prophet was sitting leaning on a pillow. Both of them went to him. After a short while Uthman left the place. After that the Prophet said, “O Abu Dharr! What were you talking to Uthman?” Abu Dharr said, “We were having a discussion on a verse of the Holy Qur'an”. The Prophet said, “O Abu Dharr! The day is not far off when there will arise a serious difference between you and Uthman and both of you will be sworn enemies of each other. At that time one of you will be an oppressed and the other an oppressor. Abu Dharr! You should not refrain from telling the truth, whatever the tyranny may befall you.”⁵

It is most probable that the verse mentioned in the above passage related to the question of Zakat because Allamah Subaiti, hinting at it in his book, has written that there had arisen a discussion between Uthman and Abu Dharr about the question of Zakat, which was settled by the Holy Prophet⁶.

Historians and traditionalists agree that Abu Dharr was at the acme of his piety. He passed his life in preaching, and the reason is that he had sworn allegiance to the Holy Prophet on this very point. He had said that he would not care for any reproacher with regard to the commandments of Allah. His sermons are innumerable some of them are mentioned hereunder:

According to the statement of Allamah Turayhi, Abu Dharr has often said in his preachings, “O people! Even if your backs get bent and your limbs cease functioning on account of your excessive prayers and other divine services, they will not benefit you unless you have love for the Ahlul Bayt (Household of the Prophet) in your hearts. Hence, you should first of all, create love for Household of Muhammad in your hearts”^{7, 8}.

Allamah Subaiti writes that one day Abu Dharr called loudly at the door of the Ka'bah, “O my brothers! Come nearer and listen to me carefully”. At this people gathered round him. Abu Dharr said, “Every one of you collects provisions for his journey and sets upon the journey after the provisions have been collected. There will be hardly anybody who will start on a journey without provisions. O my brothers! Your journey to the Day of Resurrection is ahead. Therefore it is essential for you to provide provision for the way”.

People said, “O brother! there is no doubt about the journey to Resurrection, but we do not know what provision we should carry with us”. Abu Dharr said, “The provision for this journey is “Hajj” to Ka'bah. Its provision is fasting during the hottest days and to offer two rak'at of prayers in order to be free from the horror of the grave in the dark night. O my brothers! Do good deeds. Guard your tongue against bad utterances. Spend your wealth in charity. Pass your days in pursuit of the Hereafter, and search for the lawful means. If you get two dirhams spend one on your kith and kin and give the other in charity for the welfare of the Hereafter.

“Now Listen! Your life is divided into two stages. One of them has passed away and the other is to follow. Do good deeds and save yourself from sins in the present time for the coming stage. Listen! If you do not act upon these counsels you will certainly be ruined and you will be damned in the Hereafter”.

A man asked him: “Well! Let us know why do we not like death?” He said, “You have ruined your afterlife on account of love for the world. You know that you did not do anything for the Hereafter and you will have trouble there. Therefore, how can a man like to go to a place, about which he knows that it will be bad for him”.

Then he asked as to how we shall be presented before Allah. Abu Dharr answered, “Those who have done good deeds will go to Him as a traveller returns to his home, and those who are sinners will reach there as an absconder is brought arrested”.

He, then, asked, “What will be our condition before Allah?”, Abu Dharr replied, “You can judge it for yourself. Judge your actions in the light of the Divine Book. Allah says: The virtuous will go to Heaven and the evil-doers to Hell”. He asked, “If it is so, how will His mercy help us?” Abu Dharr said, “Allah has already told that His mercy is for the virtuous”.

A man wrote to Abu Dharr, “Write to me some things of knowledge”. He replied, “The things of knowledge are not limited. How far can I write to you about them? Only take care not to do ill to your friend”, He then wrote, “Is there anybody who does ill to his friend?” Abu Dharr wrote, “You love yourself the most and you do not have anybody more friendly than it. Under the circumstances, if you commit a sin against Allah it will certainly be a bad treatment with yourself”.

At one place he has also said, “O people! Allah has created you as man. Do not make yourself an animal and a beast of prey by sinning against Him”.

Allamah Shaykh Mufid writes: One day Abu Dharr said in a sermon: “You will be recompensed as you do. You will reap as you sow, viz. you will get the reward commensurate with your deeds. If you do good deeds in the world you will get good reward in the Hereafter, and if you do evil deeds you will get the retribution accordingly. This tongue of yours is a key to good and evil both. You should seal your heart as you seal your purse. That is, as you guard your wealth, so should you guard your heart and try not to let any wrong thing enter it. The ideas which gather there must be pure”⁹.

Allamah Majlisi writes: Abu Dharr used to say in his lectures and sermons. “O the seeker of knowledge! All things of the world are not free from either of the two conditions. Their good benefits you or their evil harms you. You should desire a thing which has a prospect of benefit. O the seeker of knowledge! It is feared lest your family and riches should make you careless of your life, because one day you shall surely part with your family and property, and when you will be about to leave you will be like a guest who stays with a group of people overnight and departs from them in the morning. Listen! The distance between death and Resurrection is like the state of a dream from which we wake up so soon”.

“O the seeker of knowledge! Despatch your good deeds in advance for the day when you will be made to stand before Allah for accountability and interrogation. On that day you will get the reward of your good deeds and will be recompensed for whatever good you will have done”¹⁰.

Notes

1. Salt is a very useful thing created by Allah. Countless benefits can be derived from it. It is narrated in hadith that a man will be saved from many diseases including leucoderma leprosy, etc. if he tastes salt before and after meals.
2. see: ISP 1979, The Awaited Saviour
3. Surah al-Baqarah 2:255 -257
4. AnwarulQulub
5. Hayat ul-Qulub vol. 2.
6. Hayat ul-Qulub vol. 2.
7. For details regarding “Love of Kinship”, see: Master and Mastership, ISP, 1979
8. Majma'ul Bahrain p.356
9. Amali, Shaykh Mufid
10. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2

Chapter 8

Narration of traditions (ahadith) is a thing of paramount importance. Neither every Tom, Dick and Harry are allowed to narrate, nor their narrations can be listened to. The knowledge of narrators is a touchstone for it. Abu Dharr is one of those trustworthy, reliable and authentic narrators whose narrations cannot be doubted or rejected. He has remained in the company of the Holy Prophet most of the time. Hence his narrations are too many; out of them a few are given here:

About the verses of the Holy Qur'an 'O believers! Obey Allah, His Messenger and the "Ulil amr-i minkum", Imam Fakhrudin Razi has explained in Tafsirul Kabir that it refers to the infallibles and Saiyid Ali Hamadani has mentioned it in "Mawaddatul Kurba", and referred to the twelve infallibles. But it needs confirmation by some dignified companion of the Prophet that the Prophet (s) himself has told it. Abu Dharr narrates from the Prophet that when the above mentioned verse was revealed he requested the Holy Prophet to tell him the names of the Ulil Amr (in charge of affairs). He mentioned the twelve Imams. After specifying the names Abu Dharr summarizes it that the first appointee is Ali and the last is Imam Mahdi¹.

Abu Ishaq Tha'labi writes in his commentary: One day Ibn Abbas was narrating the traditions of the Holy Prophet while sitting near the well of Zamzam when a man with a veiled face came by Ibn Abbas paused in his narration. That person started narrating the hadith of the Prophet.

Ibn Abbas said, "O man! I ask you in the name of Allah to tell me truly who you are". He unveiled his face and said, "O people! He who knows me, knows me, but he who does not know me, should recognize me that I am Abu Dharr Ghifari. I have heard from the Holy Prophet with these two ears which may become deaf if I am wrong, and I have seen with these two eyes which may become blind, if I tell a lie that the Prophet said about Ali that he is the leader of the righteous people and a killer of evil doers. He who helped him became victorious and he who forsook him was forsaken".

According to the narration of Abu Dharr Ghifari the Prophet of Allah said: "Ali is the gate of my knowledge and a guide to my followers of the purpose for which I have been sent. Love for him is faith and enmity with him is hypocrisy and friendship with him is worship."²

According to the narration of Abu Dharr the Prophet (s) said, "He who obeyed me, obeyed Allah. He who disobeyed me disobeyed Allah. He, who obeyed Ali, obeyed me and he who disobeyed him disobeyed me"³.

Abu Dharr says, "We used to recognize the hypocrites by three things: Firstly by his denying Allah and His Prophet, secondly by his abstaining from prayers, and thirdly by his spite against Ali."⁴

There is a tradition narrated by Abu Dharr Ghifari, that the Prophet said, "Ali is the gate of my knowledge. He is the narrator after me of those things for which I have been appointed. Love for him is faith and spite against him is hypocrisy, and to have a look at him is worship". Ibn Abd al-Barr writes in Isti'ab that many companions have narrated the hadith of the Prophet: "O Ali! None will be your friend except a believer, and none will be your enemy except a hypocrite"⁵.

Abu Dharr quotes Umm Salamah to have said that she heard the Holy Prophet (s) saying: “Ali is with truth and truth is with Ali, and both of them will not be separated till they arrive at the Cistern of Kauthar”⁶.

Allamah Subaiti writes: Abu Dharr says that the Prophet (s), told him, “He who acknowledges the faith sincerely keeps his heart pure for the sake of Allah, speaks the truth, keeps his self composed, is of good habits, uses his ears to listen to good things, and makes his eyes see the right things, will get deliverance”.

Abu Dharr says that the Prophet has said, “My followers will not be blessed so long as they make haste in breaking the fast, and delay in eating before dawn (the beginning time of the obligatory fast during the month of Ramadhan)”.

Abu Dharr says that the Prophet said, “My happiness lies in distributing the gold in charity even if it be equal to the Mount Uhud”⁷.

Abu Dharr says that the Holy Prophet (s) has said, “O Ali! Allah has made me and you from the same tree. I am its root and you are its branch. Allah will throw a man into Hell by his face, if he cuts its branch”. He further said, “Ali is the leader of Muslims and Imam of the pious. He will kill the breakers of allegiance (People of Jamal), outcasts (Kharijites) and deniers”⁸.

Abu Dharr says that the Holy Prophet (s) has said, “Ali is to me what Harun was to Musa with the only difference that no prophet will come after me”.

This tradition has been quoted by many other companions out of whom worthy of mention are Umar bin Khattab, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Jabir bin Abdullah, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'id Khudari, Jabir bin Samrah, Milik bin Havirath, Bara' bin 'Azib, Zayd bin Arqam, Ans bin Malik, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Aqil ibn Abi Talib etc.⁹

Allamah Abdul Mo'min Shablanji Shafi'i writes in his book Nurul Absar that Abu Dharr, quotes from the Holy Prophet who said: “The best act in the cause of Allah is to love Him and not to do anything against His Will”.

Abu Dharr quotes the Holy Prophet (s) as saying, “When you have friendship with somebody for Allah's sake, reveal it to him”.

Abu Dharr narrates that the Holy Prophet (s) says, “When a person becomes angry he should sit down if he is standing and if the anger does not subside by sitting he should lie down”¹⁰.

Abu Dharr quotes a tradition of the Prophet (s) that Allah loves the man who shows forbearance against the bad treatment of a neighbour.¹¹

Abu Dharr says that the Holy Prophet (s) has ordered for piety and abstemiousness and asked us to guard the trust, not to go begging before anybody, not to break the relationship of love between two people, to do good to the man who does wrong to you, and to fear Allah always in every open and secret matter.¹²

Abu Dharr narrates the tradition of the Prophet (s) thus: “Allah likened my Ahlul Bayt to the Noah's Ark (Safinatu Nuh) for my followers. Whoever got aboard it was saved from the Deluge and whoever avoided it, was drowned, that is, went astray. Also my Ahlul Bayt are for my followers like the door of Hittah (repentance) for the Children of Israel about whom Allah

had told the Israel that one who entered through that door, would be saved from the tortures of the world and the Hereafter. Similarly, whosoever from my followers follows the path of my Ahlul Bayt and remains steadfast in following them, will get deliverance on the Day of Reckoning”. (Ainul Hayat)

Ali bin Shahab Hamadani quotes Abu Dharr who says that he had heard the Holy Prophet saying, “O Abu Dharr! Ali is he who is going to bifurcate Heaven and Hell. O Abu Dharr! Not even an angel could get the honour of dividing Heaven from Hell. Look! Heaven has been reserved for his supporters and he has been granted a brother like me while no brother of anybody is like me”.

Abu Dharr quotes the Holy Prophet as saying: “Allah has strengthened Islam through Ali. Ali is from me and I am from Ali, and this verse “Should they be compared with those whose Lord has given them guidance which is testified by a witness”,¹³ has been revealed about him. I am the possessor of proof in this verse and Ali is a witness to me”.¹⁴

According to Abu Dharr the Prophet (s) told Ali, “O Ali! One who obeyed me, obeyed Allah and one who obeyed you, obeyed me, and one who disobeyed me disobeyed Allah and one who disobeyed you, disobeyed me”.¹⁵

Abu Dharr says that one day he was present in Baqi' Graveyard (Medina) with the Holy Prophet (s), when he said, “I swear by Allah who has control over my life that there is a person among you who will fight for the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an, in the same way, as I fought against the polytheists at the time of revelation of the Qur'an, although they will be reciting the formula of faith (There is no god but Allah). When he (Ali) will fight against them, people will regard it improper and pass remark against the friend of Allah (viz. Ali) and will be offended with him on account of this (war) as Prophet Musa was offended with Khizr for breaking the boat, killing the child and constructing the wall, although the breaking of the boat, killing of the child and the construction of the wall were carried out according to the will and command of Allah”¹⁶.

Muhammad bin Yusuf Kanji Shafi'i quotes Abu Dharr as saying that the Prophet (s) said, “The banner of Ali bin Abi Talib, the leader of the believers, the pontiff of the bright faced and my successor will reach me at the Cistern of Kauthar”¹⁷

Abu Dharr says that he asked the Prophet, “Which is the first masjid constructed on the face of the earth?” He said, “Masjid al-Haram” (Ka'bah). He said, “And after that?” He replied, “The masjid of Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem)”. Then he asked, “How much was the interval between the two?” The Prophet answered, “Of forty years”¹⁸.

Imam Bukhari quotes Abu Dharr as saying that the Holy Prophet said, “If somebody intentionally relates himself to someone else other than his own father, he is an unbeliever; and the man, who shows himself belonging to a race in which he does not have parentage, must prepare his abode in Hell”¹⁹.

Notes

1. Yanabi'ul Mawaddah, Shaykh Sulayman Qandozy al-Hanafi and Rauzatul Ahbab.
2. Arjahul Matalib p. 604 on the authority of Dailami.
3. Arjahul Matalib p. 606, on the authority of Hakim.
4. Arjahul Matalib p. 608 on the authority of Ibn Shazan.
5. Arjahul Matalib p. 609 on the authority of Dailami.
6. (Arjahul Matalib p. 699, on the authority of Ibn Marduyah.
7. Tafsir Ibn Kathir, p.61
8. Tafsir Ibn Kathir p.61
9. Arjahul Matalib
10. Nurul Absar, p. 29
11. Nurul Absar, p. 32
12. Nurul Absar, p.33
13. Surah Hud, 11:17
14. Mawaddatul Qurba p.78
15. Mawaddatul Qurba p. 78 and Yanabiul Mawaddah, Shaykh Sulayman Qandozy
16. Arjahul Matalib p. 31
17. Kifay tut Talib
18. Tajrid Bukhari
19. Tajrid Bukhari

Chapter 9

Historians and traditionists of both the sects (Shi'ah and Sunni) agree that when the Holy Prophet was to start for the last pilgrimage, he proclaimed far and wide that all the companions should accompany him for pilgrimage. After this proclamation the companions of the Prophet started reaching Medina from all quarters. He had also made it known to the people that those who could not come to Medina, should reach Mecca directly and perform the rites of the pilgrimage with him.

The Prophet left Medina on 25th of Ziq'adah 10th A.H.¹ Innumerable companions started with him from Medina, including Salman, Miqdad, Abu Dharr and Ammar.

On reaching Mecca he performed the ceremonies of the pilgrimage. All his Ahlul Bayt, wives and companions joined him in the pilgrimage. He delivered a sermon also at the time of Hajj in which he enumerated the bright points of the well-being of his followers and explained the means through which the ummah could get salvation.

Having finished pilgrimage he left Mecca for Medina. At that time with him were (according to Muhaddis Dehlavi) 1, 25,000 or (according to Khawand Shah) 1, 24,000 companions².

When he reached a place called Ghadir Khum with his companions Jibrail brought the Divine message to him:

“O My Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not do it, then you have not delivered His message, (convey my message without fear), and Allah will save you from the mischief of the people”. (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:67)³

After this clear command there was no alternative left for him except to convey the message to the people. Accordingly he ordered a pulpit to be raised with the pack-saddles of the camel. After that he said to Bilal of Africa, “O Bilal! Call the people and tell my companions that those who have gone forward should come back and those who have lagged behind must hasten to come forward”. Bilal called out, Hayya 'ala Khairil 'amal “Rush for the virtuous act”.

The crowd gathered round the pulpit of the Prophet. He climbed to the pulpit and after a very long and eloquent sermon called Ali to himself. Then holding the two hands of Ali in his own hands raised him so high that the whiteness of his armpit became completely visible. Then he said, “Whoever considers me to be his master and patron he should consider Ali also to be his master and patron. O Allah! Be the friend of him who is the friend of Ali and be the enemy of him who is the enemy of Ali”.

As soon as the people heard it, they raised their supporting voices. The Holy Prophet (s) came down from the pulpit and ordered Ali to accept the congratulations of the companions in a green tent. Accordingly, Ali received the congratulations for the succession of the Holy Prophet (s) and thanked the people for the same. It is written in Ma'arijun Nubuwwah that besides the companions the wives of the Prophet (s) also congratulated Ali for becoming the master and guardian of the Muslim ummah.

According to Tarikh ibn Khalqan the Prophet in his address of Ghadir threw light on the pre-eminence and status of Ali and said that Ali had the

same relationship with him as Harun had with Musa. According to Mustadrak, al-Hakim he said, "I leave behind two valuable things amongst you, the Book of Allah and my Ahlul Bayt. You will never go astray if you hold them fast". The same is written in Khasa 'es an-Nisai.

According to Rauzatul Ahabab the Holy Prophet also said, "O Allah! Be a friend of one who is a friend of Ali and be an enemy of one who is an enemy of Ali and also turn the truth to the direction which Ali turns his face". It is given in Asbab al-Nuzul, Tafsir Durrul Manthur, Tafsir Fatahul Bayan by Siddiq Hasan, that this verse "Balligh" has been revealed only about Ali. It is written in Sharh Bukhari Aini, Tafsir Ghara'ibul Qur'an of Naishapuri, Tarikh ibnul Wazih, Kanzul 'ummal etc., that the verse "Balligh" has been revealed about the dignity and superiority of Ali.

It is given in Tarikh Abul Fida that after his return from Ghadir al-Khum, the Holy Prophet (s) fell ill in the last days of Safar, 11 A.H. According to Mishkat Sharif the cause of his illness was the same poison which was given to him in Khaybar and which showed its effect at times. It is given in Tarikh ibn Alwardi that he asked all the companions to go with the army of Usamah bin Zayd and said that he had appointed Usamah the commander of the army.

Muhaddith Dehlavi writes in Madarij that the next day the Holy Prophet in the severity of his illness handed to Usamah a flag of war and asked him to leave and fight the unbelievers for the sake of Allah. Usamah gave that flag to Buraydah ibn Khazib outside the city, and appointed him the standard-bearer of the army. Then starting from Medina he halted at "Jaraf" which is close to Medina till the army gathered. The Prophet (s) had also ordered that except Ali all the "Muhajirin" and "Ansar" must join the army of Usamah and go with him.

Some companions became critical that the Holy Prophet had appointed a slave over the high ranking "Muhajirin and Ansar". So they indulged in open criticism about it. When this information reached the Holy Prophet (s) he felt greatly hurt, and in spite of fever came out of the house in a state of extreme displeasure and went upto the pulpit. There he addressed the people, "O people! What are these talks that you are indulged in at Usamah's appointment as the commander of the army, just as you had done at the time of the Battle of Motah when Usamah's father was appointed the army commander. By Allah Usamah deserves command just as his father deserved to be the army commander".

It is in al-Milal wan Nahl by Shahrastani and Hujajul Karamah by Siddiq Hasan that the Holy Prophet (s) asked the companions to make immediate preparations for the army of Usamah. Cursed be the man who opposes Usamah's army! According to Madarijun Nubuwwah Abu Bakr and Umar remained behind in Medina and Usamah despatched the army.

When he was about to move, his mother informed him that the condition of the Prophet was not satisfactory. She advised him to come back and so he did. According to Tarikhut Tabari in that condition the Prophet called for Ali. 'Ayesha suggested him to call her father (Abu Bakr) instead, and Hafsa suggested the name of her father (Umar) in place of Ali. In the meantime these people gathered there. But the Prophet said, "You should go back. I

will call you myself if I need you at all”, Hearing this, those people went away.

In Sahih Muslim it is reported from Ibn Abbas that when the Holy Prophet was about to die on his death bed Umar ibn Khattab and other companions were present in the house of the Prophet. The Holy Prophet said, “Bring me a piece of paper and pen so that I may write something (as my will) for you lest you should be misled after me”. Umar said, “The Prophet (s) is saying so because of delirium, we have the Holy Qur'an and that is sufficient for us”. At this there arose an altercation among those present there. Some said, “It is obligatory on us to obey his orders so that he may write whatever he likes for us”. Some sided with Umar. When there, arose a great noise over this matter, the Prophet said, “Be off from me”. It was for this reason that Ibn Abbas used to say, “It was a great tragedy and disaster that the Prophet could not write anything because of the noise and dissension among the people”.

Abdullah ibn Abbas is quoted as saying through the narration of Sa'id bin Jubayr related in Sahih Bukhari, “What a calamitous day was the day of Thursday!” After having said this he wept and then said, “When, on Thursday, the illness of the Prophet (s) grew serious he said, bring me the articles of writing so that I may write for you something by way of my will by which you will not be misled after me”, At this people started arguing and disputing. The Prophet said; “It is not proper to quarrel before the Prophet”, People said, “The Prophet is speaking in delirium”. He said, “Get away from me. I am all right in whatever condition I am. It is wrong whatever you say. Leave me alone. Get away from me”. After that the Holy Prophet made his three wills, firstly to turn out all the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula and secondly to entertain the deputations which came from far off places. The narrator did not narrate the third one or he forgot it”.

It is narrated from Sa'id bin Jubayr in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal and Sahib Muslim that Abdullah ibn Abbas having said, “What a day it was of Thursday; wept so much that tears rolled down his cheeks like the pearl strings. After that he explained that Thursday was the day when the Holy Prophet said, “Give me the writing articles so that I may write something for you (by way of my will) in order that you may never go astray after me”, But, alas! The people said, “He is speaking in delirium”.

Shahabuddin Khafaji writes in Nasimur-Riyaz Sharah Shafa Qazi 'Ayaz that according to some versions of this hadith Umar said, “The Prophet is speaking in delirium”, Shahrستاني writes in his book al-Milal wan Nahl that the first dispute and difference that arose during the illness of the Prophet was one which Muhammad Ismail Bukhari has narrated from Abdullah ibn Abbas with his own authorities in his book Sahih Bukhari that when the death disease of the Prophet worsened he said, “Give me the inkpot and paper so that I may write for you a document (by way of testimony) lest you should go astray after me”.

Hearing this Umar said, “The Prophet is saying so on account of the severity of illness. The Divine Book will do for us”. So when there arose a squabble at it the Prophet said, “Get away from me and do not dispute and

argue before me”. That was the reason why Abdullah ibn Abbas used to say afterwards, “What a great calamity that dispute was! It came in between ourselves and the writing of the Prophet and kept him from writing”.

Allamah Shibli No'mani writes, “There is a word of Hajr in the tradition which means delirium. Umar had interpreted the speech of the Holy Prophet as delirium”. (Al-Faruq, p.61) In the dictionary the meaning of Hizyan is given as nonsensical talk⁴.

Nazir Ahmad Dehlavi writes, “Those who were cherishing the hope of Caliphate in their minds turned off the plan through scuffling and justified their opposition by saying that Qur'an was sufficient for them and as the Prophet (s) was not in his senses there was no need to bring the paper and inkpot or else he would dictate irrelevant matters”⁵.

Imam Ghizali writes that before his death the Prophet of Allah asked his companions to bring for him pen, paper and ink so that he might write as to who deserved to be their Imam and Caliph. But at that time Umar asked people to leave that man as he was talking nonsense⁶.

In short, when the Prophet was not given pen and ink there arose a row among those who were present there. My historical inference says that at that time Abu Dharr, Salman, Miqdad and Ibn Abbas etc. opposed the refusal and the ladies admonished them from behind the curtain, “What has happened to you? Why don't you listen to what the Holy Prophet says? For Allah's sake give him what he wants”. Hearing this Umar said “Keep quiet! You are like the ladies of Yusuf. You weep during the Prophet's illness and get on his nerves when he is healthy”. When his voice reached the ears of the Prophet he said, “Do not scold them as they are better than you”. (Tabrani)

According to Rauzatul Ahabab the Prophet at the time of his death asked his daughter Fatimah Zahra to call her sons. She brought them to him. The two grandsons after paying respect to the grandfather set by his side and finding him in the agony of the illness wept so bitterly that those who saw them also began weeping. Hasan put his face on the face of the Prophet and Husayn put his head upon his chest. He opened his eyes and looking at them affectionately caressed them with love, and expressed his wish to the people to respect and reverence them.

There is also a tradition that hearing Hasnain weep, all those present there started crying and hearing them the Prophet also began weeping. Then he sent for his dear brother, Ali came and took his seat towards the head of the Prophet. When he raised his head, Ali, coming to his side, placed the Prophet's head up on his arm. The Prophet said, “Ali! I have borrowed this much loan from a certain Jew for the equipment of the army of Usamah. Pay him back the same. O Ali! You will be the first to come to me at the Cistern of Kauthar, and you will suffer great troubles after me. Face them with patience and when you see that the people have chosen the world you should care for the hereafter”⁷

It is also recorded in Madarijun Nubuwwah that Fatimah Zahra was extremely shocked at the death of the Prophet and wept bitterly and excessively with painful cries. Muhaddith Dehlavi writes in the book “Mathabata bis Sunnah” that many tragic events happened to her after the

death of the Prophet. She has mentioned them in a couplet saying that if the hardships which she had to face, had befallen the day, it would have turned into dark night. The writer of *Rauzatul Ahabab* says that after the demise of the Prophet nobody saw her laughing.

Tabaqat ibn Sa'd writes that the Prophet's head was in Ali's lap at the time of his death. Hakim says in *Mustadrak* that the Prophet before breathing his last passed on secrets to Ali and solved mysteries for him.

Abdul Barr in his book *Isti'ab* quotes Abdullah ibn Abbas as saying, "Ali possesses four such distinctions as none of us has. Firstly, Ali was the first person to have earned the honour of offering prayers with the Holy Prophet. Secondly, he was the only standard bearer of the Prophet in every battle. Thirdly, when in the holy wars people fled away leaving the Prophet behind, Ali remained steadfast in the company of the Prophet. Fourthly, Ali is that person who gave funeral bath to the Prophet and laid him into the grave".

According to Shi 'ah Muslim belief, the Holy Prophet died on Monday, the 28th of Safar, 11 A.H.⁸ Following his death there were lamentations and wailings among the members of his household and his revered companions. Abu Dharr, Salman, Miqdad, Ammar, and other sincere companions were crying their hearts out. In short he was like a sincere friend beside himself with sorrow. History shows that Abu Dharr Ghifari had a lasting impression of this tragedy. Manazir Ahsan Gilani writes, "In most descriptions of Abu Dharr's life, though clear signs are found of that pain without which a believer is not a believer, yet there are some inspiring events which present a beautiful portrait of the mutual relationship of the lover and the beloved before our mind's eye"⁹

At the time of the death of the Holy Prophet Abu Bakr was at his home at Sakh, at a distance of one mile from Medina. Umar prevented the death news from being publicized and when Abu Bakr arrived both of them went to Saqifah Bani Sa'dah which was at a distance of three miles from Medina, and with them went Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah as well who was a washer by profession. Anyhow, the chief companions of the Prophet went to join the dispute of Caliphate leaving his dead body behind, and Ali arranged and managed the affairs of the Prophet's bath and burial. Ali did the washing, Fazl ibn Abbas kept his skirt raised, Abbas and Qathm turned his sides and Usamah and Shaqran poured water. After washing he was enshrouded. Abu Talha dug the grave. Ali led the funeral prayer and it was he who got down into the grave and lowered the corpse in it. After that he covered the grave with earth with great lamentation. Abu Bakr and Umar etc. could not join the washing, enshrouding and the funeral prayer of the Holy Prophet; because when they came back from Saqifah the Prophet had already been buried¹⁰. The Holy Prophet was 63 at the time of his death¹¹.

Notes

1. Tarikh ibn Alwardi
2. Izalatul Khulfa, vol. 1, p. 514 and Rauzatus Safa, vol. 2, p. 215
3. Izalatul Khulfa, vol. 1, p. 514 and Rauzatus Safa, vol. 2, p. 215
4. Sirat, vol. 2, p. 522
5. Ummahatul ummah, p. 92
6. SIRRUL 'ALAMIN, Sharah Muslim, Navai, vol. 2
7. Madarijun Nubuwwah, vol. 2, and Tarikhul Baghdad, vol. 11
8. Ma waddatul Qurba, p. 49 printed Bombay 1310 A.H
9. Al-Ishteraki az-Zahid p. 90
10. Kanzul Ummal, vol. 3 p. 140 Arjahul Matalib, p. 670, Fatahul Bari, vol. 6, p. 4
11. Abul Fida, vol. 1 p. 152

Chapter 10

After the death of the Prophet those companions who were critical of his action at Ghadir al-Khum and who opposed Ali, immediately got together at “Saqifah Bani Sa'dah” which was specially made for vain consultations (Ghayathul Lughaat) and a few individuals, whose number might have been about 200 and in whom both agreeing and disagreeing immigrants and supporters were included, laid the foundation of a personal government. When they returned to Medina from Saqifah, after the burial of the Prophet, they started demanding allegiance from people in order to give that personal government a collective and democratic form. To achieve this end they behaved not only with the dignified companions but also with the Ahlul Bayt in such a manner that humanity shudders even to mention it.

The gist of the painful story of this period is that Ali was compelled to swear allegiance (Rauzatul Ahbab) and on his refusal the army of the caliph took him to the court with his neck tied with a rope. (Ibn Abil Hadid Mo'tazali). Fatimah's house was set on fire. (Tarikh Tabari, Tarikh al-Imamah wa as-Siyasah, Mir'atul Uqul).

The door of the house was dropped on Fatimah resulting in the miscarriage of her male child. (al-Milal wan Nahl of Shahristani). Allamah Mullah Mu 'in Kashifi writes that Fatimah fell ill on account of this shock, which caused her death ¹. Then those who had refused fealty to Abu Bakr were forced with an iron hand to show allegiance, and some were badly beaten. Salman Farsi whom the Prophet had included in his Ahlul Bayt was also one of the victims of their tyranny. He was so severely beaten that his neck became tilted and the tilt lasted till his death.

The names of those who were in Medina and who refused allegiance to Abu Bakr are given below:

Imam Ali, Abu Dharr, Salman Farsi, Ammar bin al-Yasir , Miqdad bin al-Aswad, Khalid bin Sa'id, Burayda Aslami, Ubay bin Ka'b, Huzayma bin Thabit, Suhayl bin Hanif, Uthman bin Hanif, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Huzayfa bin al-Yamani, Sa'd bin Ubaydah, Qays bin Sa'd, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, Abdul Haytham bin Tayhan, Jabir bin Abdullah, Abdullah bin Thamit, Ubaydah bin Thamit, Abu Sa 'id Khudari, ²

It is written on page 43 of the same book (Tabsaratul- Awam) that after a few days Sa'd bin Ubaydah was killed with arrows on account of his refusal to pay allegiance.

Anyway, this political hooliganism continued after the death of the Holy Prophet. Historians write that the land of Fadak, the property of Ahlul Bayt was confiscated only on account of this refusal of allegiance. These people said that Caliphate was Ali's inalienable right and he should get it. The details of this claim are still available in Ali's sermon of Shiqshiqiyah recorded in Nahjul Balaghah. He has stated in clear terms that Caliphate was his right which was snatched away from him. He has also mentioned his attempt for the establishment of his claim as is seen on page 231 of the book an-Nihayah of Ibn Athir. Now we quote from Tarikh-i Ahmadi this great tragedy and catastrophic event which happened to the Ahlul Bayt and the sincere companions after the death of the Holy Prophet, so that the reader may know after all what happened to the progeny of the Prophet and his

sincere companions only two weeks after the Prophet's death, and what role Abu Dharr played at that juncture.

According to Tarikh Ibn Jarir, Umar was present at the time of the Holy Prophet's death but Abu Bakr was not there. He was in the village Sakh. When the Prophet died Umar said, "According to the presumption of hypocrites the Prophet is dead, but I swear by Allah that he is alive".

According to al-Milal wan Nahl of Shahrastani Umar threatened to kill the man with his sword if he said that the Prophet was dead. This incident is also recorded in other books such as, (Tarikh Abul Fida vol. 1, p. 164, Tabaqatul Kubra vol. 2, p. 271, Sunan Ibn Maja vol. 1, p. 571, Hadith 1618, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal vol. 1.)

According to Rauzatul Ahabab the people started doubting the death of the Prophet when they heard this threat of Umar At that time Abu Bakr was in his house at Sakh. When he was informed of the death of the Prophet he immediately rode to Medina and on reaching Masjid an-Nabi saw that the people were in a melee.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida when Abu Bakr witnessed this condition of people he recited the verse meaning: "Muhammad is but a Messenger of Allah and before him also many messengers (like him) have passed away. Should Muhammad die or be slain, would you then turn back to your pre-Islamic behaviour?"³ Hearing this people became convinced of the demise of the Holy Prophet. After that, all of them hastened to Saqifah Bani Sa'da.

According to Tarikh Ibn Khaldun Abu Bakr on reaching Saqifah said, "We are the companions and kinsmen of the Prophet and hence have a better claim to the Caliphate of the Prophet than anybody else".

According to Tarikh Tabari of Ibn Jarir Umar said to Abu Bakr: "Hold out your hand so that I may swear allegiance to you". Abu Bakr said, "No; you should hold out your hand because you are in every way more powerful than I". This tussle continued for sometime. At last Umar stretched the hand of Abu Bakr and promised loyalty to him and also said, "You should count my strength also combined with yours".

According to Tarikh Kamil of Ibn Athir, Umar and others promised loyalty to Abu Bakr, but all or some of the Ansar said, "We will not swear allegiance to anybody except Ali". According to Tarikh Khamis when Abu Bakr got relief from the work of allegiance he returned from Saqifah to Masjidun Nabi and took his seat on the pulpit. Here, too, he took allegiance till the day came to an end and the people failed to attend the burial of the Holy Prophet. It was Tuesday night.

According to Kanzul 'Ummal it is narrated by Urwa that Abu Bakr and Umar were not present at the burial of the Holy Prophet, but were present in the crowd of the "Ansar" (at Saqifa Bani Sa'dah) and the Prophet had been buried before they returned from there.

According to Nihayah of Ibn Athir Jazari, Majma' al-Bihar of Mulla Tahir Qutni and al-Milal wan Nahl of Shahrastani, Umar said afterwards that the allegiance of Abu Bakr was an expected event but Allah saved us from its evil.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida a group of Hashimites and also Zubayr bin al-'Awam, Miqdad bin 'Amr, Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr, Ammar al-Yasir,

Bara' bin Azib etc. siding with Ali kept away from swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr.

It is written in Isti'ab of Abdul Barr that when loyalty was promised to Abu Bakr, Ali did not promise loyalty to him and stayed at home.

According to Muruj uz-Zahab of Mas'udi, when on the day of Saqifah allegiance was promised to Abu Bakr, Ali said to Abu Bakr, "You ruined our affairs, did not consult us and did not regard our right". Abu Bakr said, "Your complaint is justified but I have done so for fear of revolt".

According to Rauzatul Ahabab when Abu Bakr became free from the work of seeking allegiance he called Ali through some Muhajir and Ansar. Ali came and asked, "Why have I been called?" Umar said, "You have been called to promise loyalty as others have done". Ali said, "I put before you the same argument, which you have presented before the Ansar to acquire the Caliphate. Tell me honestly the man nearest to the Prophet". Umar said, "We will not leave you unless you promise allegiance". Ali said, "Answer my question first and than ask me for allegiance". Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah said, "O Abul Hasan! Only you deserve the Caliphate and administration on account of your priority in Islam and your nearness to the Prophet, but as the companions have agreed on Abu Bakr, it is better that you also join them. Ali said, "O Abu Ubaydah! You want to transfer to other place the great blessing which Allah has bestowed upon the Family of the Prophet. Look! We are the place of descent of revelation, the place of arrival of commands and prohibitions, source of virtue and learning, and mine of reason and forbearance". Hearing this Bashir bin Sa'id said, "O Abul Hasan! We presumed by your staying at home that you like to withdraw from the Caliphate". Ali said, "Do you people deem it proper that leaving the dead body of the Prophet (s) unwashed, unshrouded and unburied, I should have involved myself in the dispute and hospitality to seek the Caliphate?"

It is recorded in Usud ul-Ghabah that Ali quoted the Holy Prophet (s) as saying, "O Ali! You are like Ka'bah to which everybody goes, whereas it does not go to anybody. So, if the people of your group come to you to swear allegiance to you, accept it. Do not go to them till they themselves come to you".

According the Rauzatul Ahabab when Abu Bakr heard these things and saw that every reason and argument of Ali was as indisputable, solid and irrefutable as one thousand arguments, he said politely, "O Abul Hasan! I had presumed that you would not refuse allegiance to me. Had I known that you would withhold your allegiance to me I would not have accepted it. Now, as people have sworn allegiance to me I think you should also join them, if you like. But, in case, you have any hesitation in this connection I do not blame you". At this Ali rose from there and came back home.

According to 'Iqdul Farid by Shahabuddin ibn Abd Rabbihi Undlusi, the people who refused allegiance to Abu Bakr were Ali, Abbas, Zubayr and S'ad bin Ubadah. Of them Ali, Abbas and Zubayr stayed in the house of Lady Fatimah till Abu Bakr sent Umar to turn out of the house those who were staying there and to use sword if they refused to go out. Hence Umar reached there with some fire in order to ignite the house. When Fatimah

came to know of it she said, “O the son of Khattab! Have you come to burn my house?” Umar said, “of course, I have come with the same intention, or else, those who are in this house should come out to promise allegiance to Abu Bakr”.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida Umar came with some fire with the intention of burning the house of Fatimah. When she came to know of it, she said, “O the son of Khattab! Have you come to burn my house?” Umar replied, “Yes, otherwise the people who are inside the house should swear allegiance to Abu Bakr”.

According to the Tarikhut Tabari of Ibn Jarir, Umar went to the house of Murtaza (Imam Ali) in which there were Talha, Zubayr and some immigrants and said, “By Allah! I will burn the house otherwise you should come out for allegiance”.

It is written in “Al-Imamah wa as-Siyasah” of Ibn Qutaybah Dinuri that when Abu Bakr did not see in his company when allegiance to him was being faced, those who were with Ali, he sent Umar to call them to him. Those people were inside the house of Ali. They refused to come out. Umar sent for faggots and said, “Come out or by Allah I will bum those people who are inside the house by setting the house on fire”. People said, “Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet is also in this house”, Umar replied, “It does not matter”, Hearing this all those people who were inside the house came out except Ali who addressing the people who had come to call him said: “O the group of immigrants! I have a better right to Caliphate than you in every respect. I will not swear allegiance to you. Rather, you should swear allegiance to me. Look! You got the Caliphate by putting forth the argument before the Ansar that you are related to the Prophet and (surprisingly enough) now you are trying to snatch away the Caliphate from the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet. Do you not base your claim of superiority over the Ansar on the plea that the Prophet belonged to your tribe? Now I put against you the same argument which you had put against the Ansar that is, our relationship with the Prophet is, in every way, superior to and nearer than yours during his lifetime as well as after his death. Now be just and fair if you believe in Allah and fear Him. O the group of immigrants! Remember Allah and do not take the Prophet's leadership from his house to your houses”. After that Fatimah said at her doorstep, “O people! Leaving the dead body of the Prophet to us you settled the matter of Caliphate in your favour and ignored our right”.

According to Tarikh Ibn Qutaybah when Umar went to Abu Bakr he said, “Why do you not arrest Ali when he is opposing your allegiance?” Abu Bakr again sent his slave Qanfaz to call Ali to him. Qanfaz said to Ali, “The Caliph of the Prophet of Allah is calling you”. Ali said, “So soon you people have slandered the Prophet”. Qanfaz went back and he repeated to Abu Bakr what Ali had said to him. After hearing it Abu Bakr kept on weeping for some time. Umar said to Abu Bakr, the second time, “Do not give time to Ali who is withholding allegiance to you”. Abu Bakr again ordered Qanfaz to go to Ali and say, “The Commander of the Faithful is calling you for allegiance. Qanfaz conveyed the message of Abu Bakr to Ali. Ali said loudly, “Allah be praised! Your master has claimed that

relationship with which he has no connection”. Qanfaz went back to Abu Bakr and repeated Ali's words. On hearing this Abu Bakr started weeping again. Then Umar rose and with a group of people went to Fatimah's house and knocked at the door. Hearing the shouts of people Fatimah began to weep and cry loudly, “O my father! O the Prophet of Allah! What a severe trouble has been inflicted on us by the son of Khattab and the son of Abu Quhafah! “When the people heard the wailings of Fatimah most of them went back weeping and only a few persons stayed behind with Umar. Then Ali came out of the house and went with them to Abu Bakr. There he was asked to swear fealty to him. He said, “If I do not swear allegiance then?” He said, “If you do not swear allegiance, by Allah, we will kill you”.

Ali said, “Will you kill a man who is a slave of Allah and brother of the Messenger of Allah?” Umar said, “We admit that you are a slave of Allah but we do not acknowledge that you are also the brother of the Prophet”. Abu Bakr was absolutely quiet at that time. Umar said to him, “Why do you not order and sit quietly?” Abu Bakr said, “I will not force Ali in the life time of Fatimah”. Then Ali rose from there and went to the grave of the Prophet and there he cried bitterly saying: “O brother! The people of the tribe have insulted me so much and were about to kill me”.

Abu Dharr was seeing these things with his own eyes. He had in his mind what he had seen at Ghadir al-Khum. He was wonder-struck to see what was happening. In this state of wonder his faith suddenly stirred his sentiment and he ran up to Masjidun Nabi. His mind was agitated and perturbed and his blood was ebullient in enthusiasm. He was waiting for an opportunity to give vent to his feelings. When he reached the masjid he found a gathering of companions there with Abu Bakr and Umar also in their midst. His manly courage got excited and he started to deliver a speech standing on a raised spot.

He said: “O the people of Quraysh! What has happened to you? How careless are you! You have completely ignored the kinship of the Holy Prophet! By Allah a group of Arabs have turned apostates, and have created breaches of doubts in the faith. Listen to me! Caliphate is the right of Ahlul Bayt. This violence and brawl is uncalled-for. What has happened to you? You call the capable incapable and praise the incapable. By Allah all of you know that the Prophet has declared again and again “After me the Caliphate and leadership is for Ali, then for Hasan, then for Husayn and then my infallible progeny will hold this Office”. You ignored the word of the Prophet and the command of Allah! You forgot that covenant and command which was made binding on you. You have done obeisance to the perishing world and have sold the hereafter which is everlasting, and in which the young will not grow old, and the blessings will not diminish, and the dwellers will not feel sorrowful or depressed and to which angel of death will have no access. You sold away such a valuable thing for a paltry price. You have done the same thing which the people of the Prophets of the past had done. They had broken the allegiance and gave up their faith when their Prophet died. They annulled the covenants, changed the commands and metamorphosed the faith. You have proved yourselves on a par with them. O group of Quraysh! Very soon you will get the recompense for your

misdeeds and the punishment for your evil doing. That which you have sent through your conduct will come before you. Remember! Whatever will happen will be just, because Allah does not do injustice to His slaves ⁴.

The manly courage of Abu Dharr may be judged by this eloquent speech. It is obvious that he had a very sensitive heart and was endowed with boldness and courage.

Abu Dharr delivered this speech at a time when nobody could even utter a word. The army of the Caliph was bent upon strangling the companions of the Holy Prophet. Whoever hinted at the refusal of allegiance was beheaded. He who hesitated to swear allegiance was strangled. A brave man like Ali was tied by the neck with a rope, and a companion like Salman was strangulated and was beaten so much that he felt its torment till he breathed his last.

Shaykh Abbas Qummi writes that when Fatimah the daughter of the Prophet, being hurt from falling of the door, remained ill for some time and then expired. Ali did not, according to her will, give the news of her death to those who were planners in giving her trouble. Having finished with the bathing of her dead body Ali sent Imam Hasan to call Abu Dharr in order to help him in her burial, and he came along⁵.

Hafiz Muhammad bin Ali bin Shahr Ashob (died 588 A.H.) writes that the funeral prayers of Fatimah was offered by Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Aqil, Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, Ammar and Buraydah. Another narration includes the names of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, Fazal, Huzayfah and Ibn Mas'ud also ⁶.

Notes

1. . Ma'arij un-Nabuwwah Rukn 4, chapter 3 p. 42
2. Tabsaratul Awam p. 24, Ainul Hayat p.5
3. Surah Ale Imran, 3: 144
4. Al-Ishtiraki az-Zahid p. 113
5. Safinatul Bihar, of Shaykh Abbas Qummi, vol. 1, p. 483
6. Manaqib Ibn Shahr Ashob, vol. 2, p. 65 printed in Multan

Chapter 11

Abu Dharr, by virtue of his nature, temperament, habit and the command of the Prophet, was unable to hold his tongue from telling the truth and lead a silent life. His main occupation besides the worship of Allah was his stay close to the Holy Shrine of the Prophet and the praise of Ale Muhammad (the progeny of the Prophet). It appears from some books of history that Ali had advised him to adopt a lenient policy¹.

Days and nights passed on till the year 13 A.H. came and Abu Bakr passed away. According to Tarikh Tabari and Mu'jam Kabir Tabarani, Abu Bakr said with utter regrets and sorrow, "Would that I had not opened the house of Fatimah even if it was closed with an intention to fight, and would that I had not accepted the Office of Caliphate, but that I had put the chain of Caliphate round the neck of Umar or Abu Ubaydah".

It is written in Tarikh Ibn al-Wardi that after that he nominated Umar as his successor. According to al-Milal wan Nahl of Shahrastani, when Abu Bakr nominated Umar as Caliph at the time of his death people cried out, "You have appointed a bad tempered and a hard-hearted man as our ruler".

According to Tarikh Abul Fida Abu Bakr died on Jumadiul Ukhra 22, 13 A.H., between Maghrib (evening) and Isha (night) and the same day allegiance was promised to Umar. Abu Dharr did not join the funeral prayers or burial ceremonies of Abu Bakr because no book of history mentions his name on this occasion.

A storm of conquests rose after the death of Abu Bakr. Under the prevailing conditions Abu Dharr decided to leave Medina for Syria and stay and spend the rest of his life there. Musnad of Ahmad says that he preferred Syria because of a will of the Prophet which runs as follows: "O Abu Dharr! Leave Medina for Syria when the population of the city grows and extends to Mount Sala".

Anyway,² Abu Dharr, according to the Prophet's will left for Syria with his wife and daughter. Shah Walyullah Dehlavi writes that Abu Dharr left for Syria after the death of Abu Bakr and settled there .

Abu Dharr was very strict in the matter of truth. In this respect he never cared for anybody's hot temper, nor feared anybody's government or mightiness.

After Abu Dharr had left for Syria, Umar happened to go there on some purpose when he met Abu Dharr who narrated to him a tradition of the Prophet. Abu Dharr said, "I bear witness to the fact that the Prophet of Allah said: "He who is made somebody's master or guardian, will be made to stop on the bridge of Hell. He will get salvation if he is virtuous, but if he is wicked, the bridge will crack and fall and that man will fall into Hell.

Abu Dharr had extreme love for the Prophet. This love increased more after the death of the Prophet and he used to weep bitterly. During his stay in Syria, people pressed Bilal for the prayer call. Bilal said, "I have given up calling to prayer after the Prophet. Neither I can recite "azan" (prayer call) now, nor can I tolerate it". Bilal was however, prevailed upon and with great difficulty he was made to agree to it. Bilal stood for the prayer call and started reciting the "azan" with his strong and loud voice which once

resounded in the streets of Medina during the days of the Prophet. Abu Dharr inclined his head forward. Tears started rolling down his cheeks. His imagination took him back to Medina and he saw the Prophet with his inward eyes, surrounded by his companions. He recalled the past and started crying loudly with tears flowing from his eyes”³.

Abu Dharr lived for about ten years outside Medina (in Syria) and returned to Medina after he got the information that Umar had been assassinated. Abul Fida writes in his history that a man named Abu Lulu attacked Umar on Zil Hijjah 24, 23 A.H. Tarikh Kamil ibn Athir gives out that when Umar was wounded a physician of the tribe of Bani Harith was sent for. He gave date-wine to Umar. It passed out unchanged. Then he was given milk to drink, it also passed out similarly. Seeing this, the physician said, “O Commander of the Faithful! Make whatever will you like to”.

It is narrated from Abu Majliz in Kanzul Ummal that Umar asked the people, “Whom do you want to make your caliph after me?” One of them said, “Zubayr bin al-'Awam”. Umar said, “Will you make that man your caliph who is miser and discourteous?” Another man said, “We will make Talha our Caliph”. Umar said, “Would you like to have that man your Caliph who mortgaged with a Jewess the land granted by the Messenger of Allah?” Hearing this yet another man said, “We will make Ali our Caliph”. Umar said, “By my life! You will not make Ali your caliph and if by Allah, you make Ali your caliph he will not refrain from keeping you on the right path even if you are unhappy”. When Walid bin Uqbah heard it he said, “I know who will be the caliph after you”. Umar got up and asked him, “Who?” Walid said, “Uthman”. Huzayfa bin al-Yaman narrates that Umar was asked, when he was in perfect health, as to who would be the caliph after him. He answered, “Uthman bin Affan”.

Mulk Ali Qari writes in “Sharah Fiqh Akbar” that when the time of the death of Umar approached he confined the rank of Caliphate to Uthman, Ali, Talha, Zubayr, Abdul Rahman bin Auf and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, and said that caliphate should not go beyond these six people.

It is in Tarikh Kamil that after that Umar asked Suhayb “Lead the people in prayers for three days, shut these six men among whom the caliphate has been confined in a house, and watch them. If five of these people agree to one man and one man opposes, he should be killed; if four men agree and two disagree the opposing two should be beheaded and if three men agree and three others disagree Abdullah bin Umar should be appointed as judge to decide, and in case these people do not accept Abdullah bin Umar as judge, the group in which Abdul Rahman is included should prevail and the other group of people should be killed”.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida Umar died on Saturday, the 30th of Zil Hajjah: According to “Sharah Fiqh Akbar” when, after the death of Umar, and according to his instructions, a meeting of the advisory body was held in the house of Fatimah, sister of Ash'ath bin Qays. ⁴ members gave Abdul Rahman bin Auf, the right to select the caliph. Abdul Rahman holding Ali's hand asked three times, “If we appoint you Walyul Amr and Imam are you willing to act according to the Divine Book, the tradition of the Prophet and the traditions of Shaykhain?” (Abu Bakr and Umar) Ali replied, “I will, of

course, act upon the Holy Qur'an and the tradition of the Holy Prophet but (instead of the traditions of Shaykhain) I will pass religious commands according to my knowledge. After hearing this Abdul Rahman asked Uthman three times, "Will you act according to the Divine Book, the tradition of the Prophet and the traditions of Abu Bakr and Umar, if we make you Imam? Uthman said, "Yes, of course, I will". Then Abdul Rahman swore allegiance to him and others followed.

It is stated in Tarikh Kamil and Tarikh Abul Fida that (when allegiance was promised to Uthman) Ali seeing the manoeuvrings in matter of allegiance said, "Today is not the first day that you have got the upper hand through conspiracy. Well! It is better for me to be patient. O Abdul Rahman! By Allah! You have taken the oath of allegiance to Uthman so that caliphate turned towards you". Abdul Rahman said, "O Ali! Do not mind it". Then Ali came out of the house saying, "That was to be". Miqdad said, "O Abdul Rahman! You left Ali although, by Allah, he is one of those who are with truth and give just judgements".

Tarikh Kamil and Tarikh Tabari say that Miqdad further said, "I did not see such a spiteful treatment meted out to the members of the Prophet's Family after his death. I am astonished to see that the Quraysh forsook a person whom I consider the best scholar (Alim-i Rabbani) and the best judge ('Adil). By Allah, if I had got a supporter and a helper!" Miqdad had only said this much when Abdul Rahman interrupted, "O Miqdad! Fear Allah. I am afraid lest some trouble should befall you".

It is recorded in Murujuz Zahab of Mas'udi that Ammar al-Yasir stood up in the Masjidun Nabi and said "O the group of Quraysh! When you snatched away the Caliphate from the Ahl al-Bayt of your Prophet and moved it sometimes here and sometimes there, we should also expect that Allah will take it from you and give it to somebody else as you have taken it from the deserving and given it to the one who does not deserve it". Then Miqdad stood up and said, "I have never seen the kind of torture and torment inflicted upon the Ahlul Bayt after the death of the Prophet". Abdul Rahman said, "O Miqdad! What are you doing?" Miqdad said, "Why should I not say? I am a friend of the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet simply because of the love for the Prophet and surely truth is with them and in them alone. O Abdul Rahman! I wonder at Quraysh whom you try to help gain predominance and who have conspired to snatch away the love and greatness of the Prophet from his Ahlul Bayt after him. Of Abdul Rahman! Know! By Allah! If I had got supporters and friends, I would have fought against the Quraysh as I have done in the Battle of Badr".

According to Tarikh Tabari, Ammar al-Yasir said, "O people! Allah honoured us with His faith and gave us greatness on account of the Holy Prophet. Where are you taking away the Caliphate from the Ahlul Bayt of your Prophet?"

According to Rauzatul Ahabab when Abdul Rahman bin Auf swore fealty to Uthman and those present in the meeting also followed suit, Ali said after a pause, "O people! I ask you to tell me on oath if there is even a single person except me among the companions of the Prophet whom the Prophet had on the occasion of announcing "brotherhood", after having declared

him his brother, that he was his brother in this world as well as in the Hereafter”, The audience replied, “None”, Ali said, “Is there anybody among you except me whom the Prophet might have appointed to convey the Surah Bara 'at (Surah IX of the Holy Qur'an) with the declaration that the duty of the Messengerhood of Allah cannot be performed by anybody except by him or by one of his Ahlul Bayt?”, All said, “None”. Ali said, “You know that the leader of the mankind and the interceder of the Day of Judgment sent me as the commander of all the Muhajirs and Ansar in most of the Sariyas (battles in which the Prophet did not participate in person) and ordered them to obey me and never appointed anyone as a commander over me”. The people said, “Yes, of course, it is true”, Ali said, “You know the Holy Prophet has proclaimed my knowledge by saying: “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate”. All of them admitted, “Yes we know”. Ali said, “The companions have often fled from the battlefield leaving the Prophet in the lurch amidst the enemies but I never forsook him in any dangerous war and remained present to sacrifice my life for the dear life of the Prophet”. All of them said, “Yes, indeed”. Ali said, “You know that I was the first to have accepted Islam”. People said, “Yes, we know”.

Then Ali asked, “Which one of us is nearer to the Prophet by virtue of kinship?” All of them unanimously said, “There is no doubt that your kinship with the Holy Prophet is very well proved, established, and confirmed by all means”. When Ali was talking thus Abdul Rahman bin Auf said, “O Abul Hasan! Nobody can deny the virtues you have recounted and described. But, as now most of the people have sworn allegiance to Uthman, I expect you, too, to join them”, Ali answered, “By Allah you very well know who deserved the Caliphate, but it is a pity that you forsake him deliberately”.

According to Tarikh Tabari, Ali then recited this verse from the Holy Qur'an:

“Have fear of Allah in whose name you plead one another and (be mindful of) kinship. Allah is ever watching over you”. (Surah al-Nisa, 4:1)

The discussion on the event of Uthman's election is also recorded in Iqdul Farid, vol. 3, p. 75, printed in Egypt and Sharah Maqasid Taftazani, p. 296.

The historian Muhammad bin Ali ibn A'tham Kufi writes in his book (204 A.H.) that Ali bin Abi Talib further said, “O people! You know that we are Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet and a means of protection of the ummah against every calamity and distress. If you do not deliver our right to us, it will automatically reach its axis, and if you do not give us our right, we will go to wherever we think proper on our camel backs, not minding what time it takes; and when the appointed hour comes, we will come back. I swear by the glory of Allah that if Muhammad had not taken the pledge from us, and had not informed us of this, I would not have renounced my right, nor let anybody take it. I would have tried so hard in getting my right that I would not have hesitated to achieve my goal even at the cost of my life.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida the allegiance to the Caliphate of Uthman was sworn on Muharram 3, 24 A.H.

After his selection to Caliphate, Uthman went on the right path of rulership for sometime. But, with the passage of time, he deviated from justice and took the wrong path, with the result that there stirred a commotion among the companions of the Holy Prophet.

Muhammad bin Ali bin A'tham Kufi, the historian of Islam of the 3rd century A.H. states that whatever the people said about Uthman, and whatever of his words and deeds they tolerated, were reported from authentic narrators in different words and styles, but as their gist is the same, he has condensed those passages with differing words into one passage. The narrators say that Uthman after becoming Caliph retained the functionaries of Umar in their offices for a few days, after which he dismissed them from their posts and gave all the regions to Bani Umayyah who were his cousins and kinsmen. He appointed Abdullah bin Amir Kurbuz in Basrah.

Walid bin Atbah bin Abi Mu'it in Kufah, retained Mu 'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan as the Governor of Syria, appointed Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Saran in Egypt, and Umar bin' Aas in Palestine. A huge quantity of booty went to the Caliph after the conquest of Khurasan, Sijistan, Pars, Kerman, Egypt, Syria and the Islands of Iraq. Caliph Uthman also behaved well so far, and had in view the dispensation of justice. But when huge riches and booty came to him, his habits changed. He put the whole dominion under the control of Bani Umayyah, and gave over all the cities to his kinsmen. He freely granted them huge sums of money from the State treasury .He gave away 100,000 dinars to Abdullah bin Khalid bin Asad bin Aas bin Umayyah as soon as he reported himself present, although he was not included in the list, gave 100,000 dinars to Hakam bin' Aas, and the same amount to his son Harith bin Hakam. People did not approve of this grant, complained to Abdul Rahman bin Auf and said, "You will be responsible for its consequences. We are suffering these losses because of you. On the day you made him Caliph we had not promised allegiance or any loyalty to him for these wrong doings and evil practices. Now let us know what we should do". On the day you made him Caliph we had not promised allegiance and loyalty to him for these wrong doings and evil practices. Now let us know what we should do". Abdul Rahman said, "I am not yet informed of what you are talking". The following day Ali met Abdul Rahman and asked him if he approved of such acts. Abdul Rahman said, "I do not know. If these things are true and Uthman's conduct has changed like this, draw your sword and I also unsheath mine". People also conveyed this news to Uthman who got enraged and said, "Abdul Rahman is a hypocrite and to besmear his hands with my blood is not a difficult task for him". Abdul Rahman also heard these words, got angry and said, "I could never even imagine that Uthman would ever call me a hypocrite". Then he swore not to talk to Uthman till death. Now these things became known and everybody became critical of Uthman.

News used to reach Uthman also. One day he ordered all the Muslims to gather in the masjid. When all had gathered there, Uthman went up the pulpit, praised Allah and recited "Salawat and Salam" (blessings) upon the Holy Prophet. After that he said:

“O people! Keep thanking Allah for His bounties so that your blessings and riches may increase. Remember Him all the time, take His name, and have regard for His rights, you are Muslims and have with you the Divine Book in which everything is recorded”.

“Know that it is the Command of Allah that you must obey the ruler. Have fear of Allah. Carry out His orders. Give up your connections and contacts with opposition and sins”.

“You should know that to get the seat of the Messenger of Allah and to administer the Caliphate is a very hard job. Also the rank of Caliphate is beyond your comprehension. Allah has granted the rulership to Walys and Amirs so that they decide the disputes between the weak and the strong and keep the strong from oppressing the weak”.

“There are many among you who have seen the days of the Holy Prophet, have heard his sacred talks, and have witnessed his ways. Besides, the Book of Allah is in your hands. You must have read in it all the commands and prohibitions and the lawful and the unlawful acts. Allah has given you His final notice. He has promised to enhance the blessings of those who will offer thanks to Him for the blessings. There is a reward for the virtuous and punishment for the wicked. You have already heard about the pomp and show and the glory and might of the kings and monarchs. They were more powerful than we and had a much bigger army. They had vast cities and were living in comforts and luxuries. But, since they did not carry out Allah's orders, preferred the world to the hereafter, became prone to disputes and disturbances, and renounced thankfulness for His blessings. He put them to decadence, bestowed on you all their cities, houses and pastures, and gave all their cities, houses and pastures, and gave all their blessings to you. The blessings will remain with you if you keep on thanking Allah for them, or else they will be diminished on account of your sins and disobedience, and will ultimately perish”.

Allah has granted me the Caliphate of the Prophet. I am capable of it today. I have taken up this office in my hand and I am performing this important and onerous duty. The same Allah who has granted me the Caliphate, gives me the capability in consonance with His will, and I also realized the secret of the sentence: “All of you are watchmen and all of you will be called to account for the subjects”, and I have understood the bare fact that the person who has been made the commander, has been entrusted with a very heavy responsibility. The guardian of the people will be called to explain every deed of his subjects and to account for every particle and atom. People have told me that some of you object to the money spent by me and say to one another that it would have been better if Uthman had given this money to the soldiers and their children. This would have been expedient of course, and acceptable to Allah. I admit it, and I will do so henceforward. I will send trustworthy persons to every city to disburse among the army men and their children as much money as they collect and to lay by whatever is left over to be useful at the hour of need”.

“If Allah wills, I will be paying the rights of the old men, poors, orphans and widows, will consult you in my spare time, on matters that come up for consideration and will act according to your counsel. Come to me off and

on, discuss with me problems and expediencies and explain to me whatever you deem fit. I will accomplish the work with your consent and according to the exigency of the time. I do not have any guard at my door to check you. Anybody may come at anytime and tell me whatever he likes. Peace be on you!”

Having heard Uthman all the Muslims became happy and went back home praising him and praying for him: Uthman followed path of justice, observed equality between the army men and the civilian people, treated all with kindness and looked after the poor and the orphans. One year passed in this manner.

Again his habits changed and he adopted those measures which were contrary to the norms of tradition and virtue. The companions of the Prophet got very much offended. They held a meeting and decided to see the Caliph and present to him in writing a list of those things which are repugnant to Islam and which had happened till then since his adoption of office, because it was possible that in verbal talk they might forget some important matters and, even if they remembered some, they might not be able to spell them out frankly. Thus it was deemed advisable to put those matters down in writing. After that they wrote down all three irreligious things which took place from the beginning of the Uthman's Caliphate till that time, and wanted to go together to hand over that document to the Caliph.

Then these people met Ammar bin Yasir, told him what they had written and desired him to take the document to Uthman. Ammar replied that he was ready to hand it over to him. Then he went to Uthman with that document. The Caliph was coming out of his house at that time. When he saw Ammar at his door with the document he asked him, “O Abul Yaqzan! Do you want me?” Ammar answered, “I have no personal business with you but the companions of the Prophet have collectively prepared a list of your actions which you have taken contrary to the religious law, so that you may clarify your position.”

Uthman took the documents in anger, read a few lines and then threw it away. Ammar said, “Do not throw it away as this paper has been written by the companions of the Holy Prophet. Instead, read it carefully and act accordingly. I am telling you these things in your own interest”. Uthman said, “O the son of Sumayyah! You are telling lies”. He replied, “Undoubtedly I am the son of Sumayyah and Yasir”.

The Caliph became furious. He ordered his slaves to beat Ammar, the companion of the Prophet. He was so much beaten that he fell down unconscious. Then he himself came forward and gave him several kicks at his stomach and testicles. Ammar again fainted. He got ruptured and developed hernia. When the people of Bani Makhzum who were Ammar's relatives and cousins, got this information, they came with Hashim bin Walid bin Mughirah, took him home and laid him in his bed Ammar was still unconscious when all the people swore an oath that if Ammar died of that torture they would put Uthman to death During his faintness Ammar's prayers of late afternoon and evening lapsed. When he regained consciousness during the night he got up, performed ablution and offered his lapsed prayers

This case of Ammar is also one of those misdeeds of Uthman on account of which the companions of the Holy Prophet angrily refused allegiance to him.⁵ This is only one of the many events recorded in the books of history. We cite below a few examples from some authentic and standard books of history, so that it may be known what kind of deeds he performed during the period of his Caliphate and what treatment he gave to the public as well as to the companions of the Holy Prophet.

It is recorded in “Tarikhul Khulafa” of Suyuti that Uthman was the first man who introduced the first “Azan” before the Friday prayers. According to “al-Wasai'l Fi Ma'rifatul Awai'l” Uthman was the first to make the address precede the Eid prayer. It was never done during the days of the Prophet (s) and during the days of the first and second Caliphs. According to Murujuz Zahab of Mas'udi when Uthman became Caliph his uncle, Hakam bin al-'Aas, Marwan bin Hakam and others from Bani Umayyah (who had been banished from Medina under the orders of the Prophet) gathered round Uthman. Marwan was the same outcast who was turned out of Medina by the Prophet and was prohibited from coming in the vicinity of Medina. Also the governors who were appointed by Uthman included his maternal brother, Walid bin Uqbah about whom the Prophet had informed that he would go to Hell. Walid bin Uqbah used to keep himself busy the whole night in drinking wine with his friends, musicians and prostitutes, and when the mu'azzin (one who calls people to prayer) woke him up for the prayer, he (in the state of intoxication) went to the masjid and led the morning prayers, and after offering four rak'ats instead of two rak'ats of prayers showed his willingness to conduct more rak'ats if people so desired. It is also said that when Walid bowed down in prostration he delayed for long and said, “Drink and make me drink”. So once one of those who were in the first row behind him said, “We do not wonder at you but we wonder at one who has sent you here as our commander”.

When the news of Walid's debauchery and his drinking wine became known to all, a group of Muslims, including Abu Jundab and Abu Zaynab, mobbed Walid in the masjid. They saw him lying unconscious. People tried to wake him up, but when he could not come to his senses they took off the seal-ring from his finger and immediately coming to Medina reported the wine drinking of Walid to Uthman. Uthman asked Abu Jundab and Abu Zaynab how they came to know that Walid had drunk wine. Presenting his ring in testimony to his drunkenness they said, “He drank the same wine which we used to drink during the days of our ignorance (before Islam). Uthman instead of listening to the rest of their talk rebuked them and pushing against their chests said, “Be off from here”. Hearing this both of them came back hastily.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida Uthman dismissed, Amr bin al-' Aas from the Governorship of Egypt and appointed in his place his foster brother Sa'd bin Ali Sarh and he is the same man whose killing had been made permissible by the Prophet on the day of the conquest of Mecca. According to Tarikh Kamil, Uthman performed Hajj with the people in 26 A.H. Marwan bin Hakam narrates in “Musnad Abu Daud Tialisi: “I saw Uthman and Ali at the time of Hajj. Uthman was forbidding people from Mut'atul

Hajj (performance of Hajj and Umrah with the same Ehram). When Ali saw this he recited the Tahlil (Lailaha illallah) of Hajj and Umrah together and said, “I am present here for Hajj and Umrah together”. Uthman said, O Ali! You do the same thing which I forbid the people to do”. Ali replied, “I will not abandon the tradition, of the Prophet at anybody's instance”. (This tradition may be seen in Sahih Bukhari also).

Notes

1. Nasikhul Tawarikh, vol. 2, p. 803
2. Izalatul Khifa vol. 1, p. 282
3. Al- Ishtiraki az-Zahid
4. According to Tarikh A'atham, p. 112
5. Tarikh A'atham Kufi pp 128 -130

Chapter 12

Abdul Hamid of Egypt and Allamah Abdullah Subaiti write that Abu Dharr stayed in Medina after the death of Umar. He saw that Uthman was favourably inclined towards Bani Umayyah whose influence had grown deep into the Islamic State which had assumed the magnificence of a kingdom. People indulged in pomp and show, and led highly luxurious lives. They had become fond of the worldly gains. He saw that most of the companions were totally changed. Zubayr, Talha and Abdul Rahman bin, Auf (having reconciled with the government) had purchased lands and houses. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas had agates fixed in his palace, had raised it very high, broadened the courtyard and made turrets on it. Therefore, Abu Dharr stood up and came out openly. He was not to be deterred by any commander or caliph. He started inviting people to austerity and attacking Uthman in his speeches.

One day he came to know that Uthman had given the fifth part of the tribute from Africa to Marwan bin Hakam, 300,000 dirhams to Harith bin al 'As, 100,000 dirhams to Zayd bin Thabit, immeasurable wealth from the booties of Africa to his foster brother, Abdullah bin Ali Sarah and the land of Fadak to Marwan which had been snatched from Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet. He started to recite this verse in the masjid.

“Announce a painful torture to those who amass gold and silver and do not spend them in the way of Allah”. (Surah Taubah, 9: 34)

Marwan came to know that Abu Dharr attacked him and Uthman, he complained to Uthman, who ordered his slave to call Abu Dharr to him. Abu Dharr went to him. At sight of him Uthman said: “Abu Dharr ! Desist from what I am hearing, otherwise you will not find anybody more inimical to you than I”. Abu Dharr said, “O Commander! What have you heard about me?” Uthman said, “I have come to know that you instigate people against me”. Abu Dharr asked, “How is it?” Uthman said, “You recite the verse, “Announce a painful torture.....” in the masjid. Abu Dharr said, “O Commander! Do you stop me from reciting the Book of Allah and from disclosing the short-comings of those who have abandoned the commands of Allah! By Allah, I cannot offend Allah for the sake of Uthman. The displeasure of Uthman is better for me than the displeasure of Allah”.

Hearing this Uthman frowned at Abu Dharr but could not decide how to refute the charge. Therefore, he did not say anything and kept quiet for some time. Abu Dharr rose and went away from there, with a firm determination to criticise those who worked against the commands of Allah more than ever.

Abu Dharr attacked Uthman more frequently. So he got very angry and waited for an opportunity to exile Abu Dharr. One day he got the chance and availed himself of it.

According to Ibn Wazih the author of ‘Tarikh Ya'qubi’ people informed Uthman that Abu Dharr Ghifari taunted him in the masjid and had delivered a speech at the gate of the masjid thus:

“O people! He who knows me knows me, but let him, who does not recognize me know that I am Abu Dharr Ghifari. My name is Jundab bin Junadah Rabazi. Allah elevated Adam, Nuh, the progeny of Ibrahim and the

children of Imran, out of the people of the world. The Prophet Muhammad is the heir to Adam's knowledge and to all virtues which had distinguished the Prophets, and Ali ibn Abi Talib is the successor of the Prophet and heir to his knowledge”.

“O bewildered people! If after your Prophet you had preferred one whom Allah has preferred, and had put him last whom Allah has placed last, and had confined the governance and inheritance among the Ahlul Bayt, you would have got countless blessings from above your heads and from under your feet, and no friend of Allah would have been poor and destitute, and no part of the Divine obligations would have been lost, and no two persons would have disputed about the Divine command simply because they would have found the information about that commandment in the Divine Book and the tradition of the Prophet, according to the Ahlul Bayt of their Prophet. But since you have wilfully done what you should not have done, you must suffer the punishment for your wrong doing, and it will not be long before those who have wronged will know to whom they will return”.

It is also recorded in the same book of history that Uthman was also informed that he had made changes in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and the traditions of Abu Bakr and Umar on the foundation of which the edifice of his Caliphate was raised, and that Abu Dharr placed that complaint before the public.

On hearing these things Uthman sent Abu Dharr to Mu'awiyah, Governor of Syria. According to Tarikh Abul Fida, this thing happened in 30 AH.

Scholars say that as Abu Dharr continuously criticized Uthman's actions which violated the religious laws, Uthman imposed severe restrictions on him. It was his directive that nobody should talk to Abu Dharr, or go near him or sit with him. Public meetings were held again and again to proclaim this order.

According to the version of Allamah Majlisi and Allamah Subaiti, Ahnaf bin Qays often used to come to the masjid and sit there. One day he prayed to Allah “O Lord! Replace my unsociability with love and my loneliness with company and grant me such a worthy companion as has no peer”.

After finishing this prayer he saw a man sitting and worshipping in a corner of the masjid. He rose from his seat, approached him and sat down by his side. Then he said to him, “Who are you gentleman and what is your name?” He answered, “Jundab bin Junadah”. On hearing this he said, “Allah is great, Allah is great”.

Abu Dharr said, why did you recite Takbir. He answered, “When I entered the masjid today I prayed to Allah to grant me the best companion. He fulfilled my wish very soon and granted me the honour of meeting with you”.

Abu Dharr said, “I awe it to Allah, more than you, to glorify Him because I was adjudged to be a suitable companion. O Man! Listen to me. The Holy Prophet has told me that you and I will be on a very high place and will remain there till all are free from reckoning”. Abu Dharr further added: “O slave of Allah! Get away from me or you will face some trouble”. He asked, “How is that, friend?” Abu Dharr replied, “Uthman bin Affan

has forbidden people to sit with me and has ordered that whosoever meets me, talks to me and sits with me, will be punished". (Hayat ul-Qulub, by Allamah Majlisi vol. 2. and Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, by Allamah Subaiti).

In short, Uthman became disgusted with Abu Dharr's truthfulness. He carried on his work despite the restrictions and Uthman got regular information about it. At last, being tired of Abu Dharr he decided to send him to Syria.

Chapter 13

Historians say that being tired of Abu Dharr's cry of truthfulness Uthman subjected him to every kind of repression in Medina. It was his order that no one should talk to him and none should sit with him. He was forced to keep his mouth shut, but his truthful cries also persisted. When he gave a speech in the masjid of the Prophet his words reached the ears of the people. As he spoke on matters which were enjoined by Allah and His Prophet his speech moved the hearts of the common people. People grew disgusted with the wrongdoings and anti-Islamic activities of Uthman. Therefore he deemed it politically expedient to turn him out of the city. With this end in view he decided to send him to Syria. Uthman perhaps thought that as Mu'awiyah was the Governor of Syria and also the most cunning man, Abu Dharr could be completely paralysed there. Accordingly Uthman forced Abu Dharr to leave for Syria.

Abu Dharr left his hearth and home with his family and reached Syria. His arrival in Syria confirmed the prediction of the Prophet, which the latter had once made to Abu Dharr in the course of their conversation. According to the exhortation of the Prophet he showed patience and accepted his exile silently ¹.

Abu Dharr was already tired of and disgusted with the anti-Islamic ways of Uthman, but when he reached Syria and saw the behaviour of Mu'awiyah which was ruining Islam he was extremely astonished and said to himself that the entire administrative set-up was out of order. He was compelled to think on account of the style of life of Mu'awiyah that Islam as presented by the Prophet was not only becoming weak but extinct. In view of these things his natural emotions were excited. Sincerity and frankness impelled him to raise a cry of truth. As he was extremely brave, he never hesitated to tell the truth. So, without thinking that Mu'awiyah was the king of the day, he began to perform his Islamic duties and opened his mouth to prevent Mu'awiyah from doing anti-religious deeds, and told him clearly that his modus operandi was as anti-Islamic as that of Uthman bin 'Affan. Allamah Subaiti writes that Uthman's exiling Abu Dharr from Medina to Syria is a positive proof of the fact that Uthman diverted the critical attitude of Abu Dharr from himself to Mu'awiyah. (Abu Dharr al-Ghifari)

The historian Balazari, Allamah Majlisi, Allamah Subaiti and Allamah Amini write that when Abu Dharr reached Syria, Mu'awiyah was getting his palace "al-Khizra" constructed. Thousands of labourers were working there. One day Mu'awiyah was looking at it with pride. Abu Dharr saw him, went near him, and said, "O Mu'awiyah! If this palace is being built with the Public Treasury, it is a breach of trust and if it is done with your money it is extravagance".

Hearing this Mu'awiyah kept quiet, turned his face from his side and made no answer. Abu Dharr went away and reached the masjid. He took his seat there. Some people complained to Abu Dharr against Mu'awiyah saying that they got nothing out of the gifts although a year had passed. Abu Dharr inclined his head forward and then he stood up. People looked at him. He said: "By Allah, such innovations have gained currency these days as are not to be found in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith. By Allah, I see that the

truth is being effaced and untruth is becoming stronger. Truthful people are being falsified and the sinners are being given preference over the virtuous”.

“O aristocrats! O Mu'awiyah and his governors! Sympathize with the poor. Let those who amass gold and silver and do not spend in the way of Allah, know that their foreheads, sides, and backs will be branded with fire. O the hoarders of wealth! Don't you know that when a man dies everything separates from him. Only three things remain for him, lasting charity, useful knowledge, and a virtuous son, who prays for him”.

People heard his lecture, the oppressed poor gathered round him and the rich began to fear him. When Habib bin Muslimah Fahri saw a crowd of people near Abu Dharr, he said, “It is a great nuisance”. He immediately went to Mu'awiyah and said to him, “O Mu'awiyah! Abu Dharr will totally upset the Syrian administration. If you need Syrians you should nip this nuisance in the bud”.

Mu'awiyah thought to himself. “Should I deal with him strictly or leniently? The fire will flare up further by strictness. Should I complain to Uthman? But, what will Uthman say? He will say that I could not improve even one man out of my subjects. Hence, it is better to turn him out of Syria”.

It has been a common practice to suppress with an iron hand the truthful statements of the godly people on account of their bitterness. How could the worldly people remain silent after hearing the speeches of Abu Dharr whose religious fervour had become quite natural with him, and then how could a person like Mu'awiyah, who considered the biggest personality lower to him in his vanity of power and cunningness, act upon the advice of Abu Dharr and how could he tolerate his bitter remarks? Abu Dharr in exhorting tone used to recite the Qur'anic verse “Give them the sad tidings of the severest punishment to those, who amass gold and silver and do not give them in charity”, and it was usual with him that he used to recite this verse against Mu 'awiyah in most of the streets, and on the roads of Syria. When he recited it the poor and the needy surrounded him and often they complained to him of the pleasure-seeking of the rich governors and of their own poverty. Mu'awiyah used to get the information of his preaching activities regularly. At last he imposed severe restrictions upon him and inflicted tortures on him from all sides. When even this much did not work he threatened Abu Dharr with death.

When Abu Dharr heard the threat of death he said, “The dynasty of Umayyah threatens me with poverty and death. I wish to tell them that poverty is more desirable to me than richness, and I like to be under the ground rather than to be above it. I am neither cowed down by the threatening of death, nor by death itself”.

Allamah Majlisi writes on the authority of Shaykh Mufid what the Syrians said about the great sermons of Abu Dharr: “When Uthman exiled Abu Dharr from Medina and sent him to Syria, he took his residence in our midst, and started a series of speeches, which stirred us quite a lot. He used to begin his speech with the praise of Allah and the Prophet and then said:

“Love for the progeny of the Prophet is obligatory on all. One who is without love for them will not even smell the fragrance of Heaven”. He then added, “O people! Listen to me. I used to honour my covenants before acknowledging Islam, during the days of ignorance, before the revelations of the Qur'an and before the appointment of the Prophet. I told the truth, treated my neighbours with sympathy, considered hospitality my duty, was generous to the poor, and let them share my riches with me. When, afterwards, Allah revealed His Book and appointed His Prophet, I inquired about the matters and came to know that the same manners and customs which were ours were also contained in the exhortations of the Prophet. O people! It is most befitting for the Muslims to adopt good morals. It is true that the Muslims acted according to the precepts of Islam, but, my friends! The behaviour of the Muslims was good for a short time. Then it so happened that the tyrants showed such evil deeds as we had not seen before. These people destroyed the traditions of the Prophet, introduced innovations, and contradicted the person who told the truth, joined a group of wicked people and forsook them who were pious and worthy”.

“O Allah! Take my soul if You have for me better things with You than those which are in this world, before I distort your faith or change the tradition of Your Prophet”.

He further said, “O people! Be attached to the worship of Allah and desist from sins”. Then he described the merits of Ahlul Bayt which he had heard from the Prophet and advised people to stick with the Ahlul Bayt.

The Syrians say that they listened to his speeches intently and a great crowd of people gathered round him when he delivered a sermon, till Mu'awiyah informed Uthman of these happenings, consequently he called Abu Dharr to Medina.

As Abu Dharr had greatly vexed Mu'awiyah through his religious lectures, he, in order to silence him somehow, took courage to send him a bag of money because he could not think of any other means to do it.

Scholars and historians say that Mu'awiyah in order to silence Abu Dharr despatched a bag of three hundred gold dinars to him through his special envoy. Seeing this he said, “Tell Mu'awiyah that I need no money from him and returned the bag.”²

Abu Dharr had seen with his own eyes after the death of the Prophet all those tragic events which Aale Muhammad (the Progeny of the Prophet) were forced to face. He spoke candidly against the hoarding of riches, as he had completely understood the aim of the Public Treasury and the objective of the Holy Qur'an, had seen the mode of action of the Prophet and was observing the way of life of Aale Muhammad. When he found the behaviour and way of life of those responsible for Caliphate just in contrast with these traditions he felt extremely perturbed due to his firm faith. He had never imagined what he saw with his own eyes. As soon as Uthman took up the reins of the government and Caliphate in his hands, he forced his emotions from his heart to his lips and he was compelled to spell out what he kept hidden in his heart for a long time. He saw that riches had multiplied beyond imagination, nepotism and favours to kinsmen had reached their highest limits, the wealth of Public Treasury was being distributed to relatives,

friends and supporters instead of the deserving people, without any consideration, and because of this wealth those innovations which were shaking the foundations of Islam, were growing unchecked. So, in accordance with that covenant of truthfulness which he had made with the Prophet, he began to object to, and criticize, those who were responsible for it, in consequence of which he was sent from Medina to Syria. There he saw such anti-Islamic pleasure-seeking innovations which surpassed even the luxurious way of life of Caesar and Khusroe. As he was compelled by the command of the Prophet, and the promise made to him, and also by his religious fervour, he started his preachings there also. He began to give lectures in Syria under the head of the same Qur'anic verse which used to be the theme of his sermon at Medina. In this connection he made many speeches some of which have already been mentioned above.

The caption of his sermon in the denunciation of the amassing of wealth was the verse: "O Prophet! convey the news of painful punishment, to those who hoard gold and silver but do not spend them in the way of Allah, and tell them that a day will come when their money will be heated in the fire of Hell and with it their forehead, sides and back will be branded and they will be told; This is what you had stored for yourself and now taste what you had hoarded". (Surah Taubah, 9:34)

Scholars and historians narrate that while addressing a crowd, in Syria, he said, "By Allah! I behold that truth is perishing, falsehood is being enlivened, truthful people are being contradicted and people are adopting selfishness instead of piety"³.

He further said, "Gold and silver will turn into flames and will encircle those who keep them sealed until they spend them in the way of Allah". Stressing this point he said: "Slates heated in the fire of Hell will be placed upon the chests of those who collect gold and silver, till they pierce through their ribs and shoulder blades", (Sahih Bukhari, Kitab az-Zakat)

Abdul Hamid, the Egyptian author, writes that later when Abu Dharr reached the masjid people gathered round him, and he said to them:

"Spend whatever Allah has given to you. See that the wordly life does not deceive you. Fix a portion of your possessions as a right of the destitutes. The Prophet has said that lust for abundance has made you sink into oblivion".

"The son of Adam says: My possessions, my possessions! But your possession is that which you have eaten away, worn away; or you have given it away in charity, which means that you have deposited it. Allah has forbidden to hoard wealth. The Prophet has said, "Woe be to; woe be to gold and silver". The booty is the right of the Muslims, but Mu'awiyah stores it to spend on his servants and guards and on his pomp and show. Mu'awiyah has forgotten that only two robes are allowable to him from the Public Treasury, one for winter and the other for summer. Furthermore, he can take the expenses for Hajj and Umrah and also a subsistence allowance for himself and his family only as much as a middle-class Qurayshi can take. Booty must be distributed among all the poor Muslims. But alas! Now lands are being acquired, and houses are being built, and thousands of dinars

are being spent on their decoration, and the poor Muslims are being neglected”.

A man whispered in his ear, “Beware! What are you saying about Mu'awiyah? Don't you fear him?”

Abu Dharr addressed him and said: “My friend had advised me to tell the truth, even if it is very bitter, and not to care for the reproach of a reproacher, while I am on the right path. I pray to Allah to give me shelter from cowardice, miserliness, and chastisement”. Then he added, “People have begun to prepare different kinds of dishes, and they take medicines to digest them. Our Prophet did not eat two dishes at a time on any day till the time of his death. When he ate date palms he did not eat bread. The progeny of the Holy Prophet never ate even the barley bread to their fill for three consecutive days till the time of their death. In the house of the Prophet, it so happened sometimes that neither fire was lighted, nor was neither bread nor other food cooked continuously for a month”.

Man asked, “How could he remain alive then?” Abu Dharr answered: “The Holy Prophet ate date palms and drank water. He has said that nobody filled a worse vessel than his belly. Only a few morsels are enough for a man to keep himself alive. If it is so necessary to eat, keep one-third of the belly reserved for food, one-third for water and the remaining one-third for the air. The Prophet has advised us to desist from over-doing because it creates idleness, spoils the body and involves one in a disease. Be moderate in your diet because it saves you from extravagance, strengthens the body and helps in worship. The Prophet never gathered or stored anything. On the contrary, he used to give away in charity whatever he got, so that nothing was left over for his eating. Not to say of Public Treasury the Prophet used to give away even his own rightful share in the way of Allah”.

The aristocrats appealed to Mu'awiyah and complained to him against the propaganda of Abu Dharr. Mu 'awiyah sent for him and made a firm resolve to uproot this menace which had shaken the very foundations of his government and had frustrated his hopes.

Abu Dharr entered the court of Mu'awiyah with his lean and thin body. Signs of determination and steadfastness were manifest on his tawny round face. Mu'awiyah stood up to welcome him and offered him a seat by his side. Then he called the servants and ordered them to bring food. The dining cloth was spread and different delicious dishes, which sharpened the appetite, were served.

Mu'awiyah said to Abu Dharr, “Yes, please!” Abu Dharr refused and said, “I eat two kilograms of wheat every week. This has been my practice since the days of the Holy Prophet. By Allah I will not do anything beyond that until I join him”. Then turning to Mu'awiyah he said, “You have changed your way. The food which is being prepared for you at the moment is not like the one, which was prepared before. You get the bread cooked of fine flour, have several dishes on one dining-cloth, and put on one pair of garments in the morning and another in the evening. You were not so in the days of the Prophet. Your condition was no better than that of a poor man”. (Sahih Muslim, Sunan Nisai and Sunan Baihaqi)

Mu'awiyah: "Abu Dharr! My officials complain against you. They say that you incite the poor against them".

Abu Dharr: "I prevent them from hoarding".

Mu'awiyah: "Why do you do this?"

Abu Dharr: "I do this because Allah has said, "Warn them of painful torture to those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah ". (Surah Taubah, 9:34)

Mu'awiyah: "O Abu Dharr! I order you to desist from your mischiefs".

Abu Dharr: "O Mu'awiyah! By Allah, I will not stop from it until wealth is distributed among the poor".

Anyway, troubles surrounded Abu Dharr from all sides. Great tortures afflicted him at the hands of Bani Umayyah. Oppressions were let loose on him. But he did not show any weakness and did not refrain from his preaching activities. He now started more serious attacks.

Abdullah Subaiti, Abdul Hamid Misri and Manazir Ahsan Gilani say that Abu Dharr kept on performing the duty of preaching regularly and giving warning of painful chastisement to the hoarders. At last Mu'awiyah began to think of plans to save himself from his biting remarks and, to frustrate his mission. He came to the conclusion, however, that there could be a chance of freedom from the attacks if hoarding is proved with those who speak against it. Therefore, he hit upon a plan, and got convinced that it would surely hit the target.

Ibn Athir, after mentioning the Qur'anic verses, writes that when Abu Dharr could not be silenced in anyway, Mu'awiyah sent somebody with a thousand dinars to Abu Dharr at night. Abu Dharr took the money and distributed it among the needy before dawn and did not keep even a single coin, for himself.

Mu'awiyah, after the morning prayer, called the man who had taken the gold coins to Abu Dharr; ordered him to go to Abu Dharr and tell him in a feigned anxiety, "O Abu Dharr! Save me from the torture of Mu'awiyah. Mu'awiyah had sent those gold coins to somebody else, and I have delivered them to you by sheer mistake".

The messenger of Mu'awiyah went to him and told him exactly in the same manner what Mu'awiyah had taught him. Abu Dharr said, "O son! Tell Mu'awiyah that the money sent by him was distributed among the needy before the day dawned. I have none of the coins at this moment with me, and if he has a mind to take them back he should give me three days time, during which I will provide them to him from somewhere".

That man repeated the same thing to Mu'awiyah who said, "Undoubtedly Abu Dharr does himself what he asks others to do"⁴

Abdullah Subaiti, after quoting this incident writes in a philosophical passage that Abu Dharr was a personality of a very lofty character. Bani Umayyah showed great short-sightedness in understanding him. That is why they felt the need of such a political swindling. Abdul Hamid Misri writes after this incident: "Mu'awiyah understood that Abu Dharr was true to his words. He spent all the dinars in one night. Mu'awiyah failed to achieve his purpose. He showed leniency to Abu Dharr but to no avail. Then he used

violence against him but to no effect. In the end, he wanted to purchase him for three hundred dinars, but could not succeed”⁵.

According to scholars and historians Abu Dharr was still in Syria when Mu'awiyah despatched an army with the permission of Uthman for a naval war (Tarikh Abul Fida). Abu Dharr was busy with his own work. After the conclusion of the war, Mu'awiyah sent for Abu Darda, Umar bin ai-Aas, Ubadah bin Samit and Umme Hizam, who were the companions of the Holy Prophet.

When they arrived Mu'awiyah said to them: “I am tired of admonishing Abu Dharr but he does not listen to me. He is harassing me. You have also been honoured with the companionship of the Prophet as Abu Dharr has been. Go to him and ask him to stop his activities and spend the rest of his life quietly and peacefully. I am fed up with him and so are the rich people of the country”.

These people readily agreed that they would go to Abu Dharr and would request him as ordered by Mu'awiyah. So they unanimously decided upon a programme and visited him. They said to Abu Dharr. “We have come on behalf of Mu'awiyah. He has sent us to you with the request that you should desist from your preachings and pass your life in peace”.

Hearing this Abu Dharr became furious. He thought that those people regarded his preachings absolutely justified and they knew that whatever he was doing was in conformity with the Will of Allah and His Prophet and still they had come to him at Mu'awiyah's behest”.

First of all he addressed Ubadah bin Samit and said: “O Abul Walid Ubadah! There is no doubt that you have priority to me in every respect and have superiority over me in everyway. You are older in age and have been in the company of the Prophet for a longer period. You are sensible, intelligent, well-versed in religious affairs, and possess a good personality. But I am sorry to say that in spite of knowing everything well you have come to advise me at the instance of Mu'awiyah”.

“O Ubadah! Do I not understand things? Have I lost all sense of reasoning? Are you not aware of the circumstances? Is what I say wrong? Are not my exhortations in conformity with the intentions of Allah and His Prophet? O Ubadah! It pained me a great deal that being an intelligent person, you who know everything well, came to advise me. Listen! I have a strong hatred for this whole deputation because a well-informed man like you has come in this deputation”.

Then he turned to Abu Darda and said: “O Abu Darda! You have been blessed with little love for the Prophet. It was definite with you that if you had not acknowledged the faith immediately you would have been deprived of the honour of companionship owing to the death of the Prophet. But you acknowledged the faith, were honoured with the companionship, and were regarded as a good companion. But listen! You were not as much benefited by the companionship of the Holy Prophet as I was. You cannot understand his objectives as much as I do. I understand the objectives of the Prophet and do according to the desire of Allah and His Prophet. So you have no right to advise me”.

Then he addressed Umar bin' Aas and said in a harsh tone: “O Umar bin' Aas! I recognize you very well. What else have you done other than participating in the battles? Of course, you were honoured with the companionship of the Holy Prophet, but you never got a chance to live with him. You were always away from the Prophet on account of wars. You can neither understand his intentions nor are you capable enough to form a correct opinion about my action and behaviour. I know that you are under the influence of Mu'awiyah at this time. That is why you have come to admonish me thoughtlessly”.

Then he turned to Umme Hizam and said: “What should I tell you? You are a woman. There is no doubt that you got the honour of companionship. Still you are a woman, at any rate, and you have the brain of a woman”. Then he said: “Go and tell Mu'awiyah to sharpen his wits, to act upon my advice and not to lose his faith on account of the world”.

After hearing all these things all of them kept quiet. After a short while they took leave of Abu Dharr and came back to Mu'awiyah. They told him that they had conveyed his message to Abu Dharr .He asked them as to what they had said and what answer he had given. Ubadah bin Samit repeated the whole event and said in the end, “I never sat in a company where such sharp reproofs had been so frankly administered”. (Musnad Ibn Hanbal, Masanid Abu Dharr)

Abu Dharr was busy preaching in Syria, when the time of Hajj arrived. He sought the permission of Uthman and expressed his wish to go out of Syria to pilgrimage and to stay at the shrine of the Holy Prophet for a few days. Uthman sent him the letter of permission from Medina and Abu Dharr went for Hajj. He performed Hajj and he went to Medina. He stayed near the grave of the Prophet for a few days and then came back to Syria. Balazari has also narrated this event in a few sentences.

On his return from Hajj again he restarted his preaching activity .On one side he was using his full force in exhortations and on the other side innumerable applications of the rich people were reaching Mu'awiyah to seal Abu Dharr's lips. The main theme of these applications was that people recited on the roads and streets the verse of the Qur'an in which there is a warning for the moneyed people being branded with the heated gold and silver, thus creating difficulty in their passage to Syria. As a consequence of it Mu'awiyah got it proclaimed that nobody was allowed to be in the company of Abu Dharr or sit with him⁶ .

When Abu Dharr got the news of this social boycott he himself began to ask people not to come to him or sit with him. This was because he thought that if somebody came to him he would be subjected to torture by the government. But as he could not help preaching he himself reached the place where some people had gathered and began to perform his duty.

According to Ibn Khaldun when a group of people went to see him after this order of social boycott, Abu Dharr himself asked them to leave and remain away from him.⁷

It appears from Balazari's report that those people who had contacts with Abu Dharr and listened to his speeches were more severely dealt with than Abu Dharr himself.⁸

How courageous Abu Dharr was! He did not tolerate any severity to those who used to visit him, and did not want them to suffer any inconvenience. But so far as his personal sentiments were concerned he insisted on expressing them with full faith and fervour. He never bothered about any gain and loss in the way of Allah.

Notes

1. Al-Ghadir Allamah Amini, vol. 8, p. 302
2. Al-Ishtiraki az-Zahid, Tarikh Balazari, al-Ghadir, vol 8, p 293
3. Al-Balazari, vol. 5, p. 56
4. Tarikh Kamil, vol. 3, p. 24, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, part 10, p. 54
5. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, p. 133
6. Tabaqaat Ibn Sa'd, p. 176
7. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, p. 2
8. Tarikh Balazari, vol. 5 p. 65

Chapter 14

Abu Dharr was a truthful man. He used to admonish others fearlessly to do lawful acts. Mu'awiyah was a worldly man. Abu Dharr very often used to direct him to do what is good till people began to feel ashamed of the residents of Syria. One day Mu'awiyah said to Abu Dharr, "You are not so virtuous as to direct me to do good deeds before the public. Hearing this Abu Dharr said, "Be quiet! Shame on you!"

In short, when Mu'awiyah could not mend his ways and could not suppress Abu Dharr's tongue, he decided to banish him from Syria. Consequently he resolved to send him to Jabal al-'Amul. Subaiti says that when Abu Dharr called the people there towards Ahlul Bayt they readily accepted the invitation! As the area was quite extensive his call did not remain confined only within the internal limits of Jabal al-'Amul but reached the adjoining areas as well.

It is obvious that Mu'awiyah had sent Abu Dharr from Syria to Jabal al-'Amul only because he thought that his preaching activities among those strangers would come to a stand-still, but when he came to know that Abu Dharr with his fiery speech had made the people in Jabal al-'Amul inclined towards the truth, (Allamah Subaiti writes that Abu Dharr made the people devotees of Ahlul Bayt through his preachings and laid the foundations of two masjids there one at Sirfand which is situated near the river bank between Sur and Sayda and the second in Mes situated at Haulah) ¹ he called him back to Syria immediately.

Abu Dharr restarted his work on his arrival in Syria. He used to sit at Bab Damishq (Gate of Damascus), after the morning prayers, and when he saw the line of camels laden with the government owned goods he called in a loud voice: "People! This line of camels which is coming is not laden with goods but with fire. Accursed be the people, who direct others to do good but do not do good themselves, and woe be to those who prohibit others from evils but commit them themselves"²

Then he rose from there and went to the gate of Mu'awiyah's palace and made the same speech. This had become his routine and he used to do it regularly. At last, Mu'awiyah got him arrested.

Abu Dharr had in view the tradition, which has been quoted by Khatib al-Baghdadi and Ahmad bin Hanbal. According to this tradition the Holy Prophet said to his companions: "O my companions! Listen attentively. After me the rulers (of my ummah) will be like the aristocrats. To them there will be no difference between justice and injustice and between truth and falsehood. But, whosoever goes to them to justify their falsehood, and supports them in their injustice, will have no connection with me, and will not reach me at the Cistern of Kauthar and the man who has no connection with them, does not justify their falsity, and does not support them in their injustice, will be from me and I will be from him, and he will reach me at the Cistern of Kauthar"³.

Every sensible man can understand that under the circumstances Abu Dharr could not care about any power. His conduct; apart from being natural and innate, was the result of the Holy Prophet's teaching. There is not a

single instance recorded in the authentic histories to show that in his lifetime Abu Dharr had ever hesitated to tell the truth.

Jalam bin Jandal Ghifari, the Governor of Qinsarin says: “Once, during the Caliphate of Uthman when I was the Governor of Qinsarin I, went to Mu'awiyah, the Governor of Syria on some business. Suddenly I heard that somebody was shouting at the gate of the palace and was saying loudly: The line of camels coming to you is laden with the Hell-fire. May Allah curse them who ask others to do good but do not do it themselves. May Allah curse those who prohibit others from evils but commit them themselves.

At that time I saw that the face of Mu 'awiyah changed, colour on account of anger. He asked me if I recognized the man, who was crying. I answered in the negative. Then Mu'awiyah said, This is Jandab bin Janadah Ghifari. He comes to the gate of our palace daily and repeats the same words which you heard just now. Then he ordered him to be killed.

Suddenly I saw that Yaqudunah brought Abu Dharr dragging and made him stand in front. Mu'awiyah said to him, “O the enemy of Allah and His Prophet! You come daily to us and repeat such words. I would have surely got you killed if I could kill any companion of the Prophet without Uthman's permission. Now I will get his permission regarding you”.

I wanted to see Abu Dharr because he was from our tribe. When I looked at him I saw he was tawny-coloured, lean and tall. His beard was not thick, and his back was bent on account of old age.

Abu Dharr said in answer to Mu'awiyah: “I am not an enemy of Allah and His Prophet but you are the enemy of Allah and His Prophet and your father was also an enemy of Allah and His Prophet. You people professed Islam for self interest but remained infidels at heart. The Prophet of Islam cursed you twice and damned you so that you may never be satiated. I have heard from the Prophet of Allah that his ummah should remain on guard against the mischief of the man with big eyes and wide gullet, who is never satiated with food although he eats too much, when he becomes the ruler of his ummah.

Hearing this Mu'awiyah said, “I am not that man spoken of by the Messenger of Allah”. Abu Dharr said, “O Mu'awiyah! It is no use denying that you are definitely the same man and listen! The Prophet has informed me that by that man he meant you and you alone. O Mu'awiyah! One day when you were passing in front of the Prophet, I heard him say: O Allah! Damn him, and do not fill his stomach except with dust. O Mu'awiyah! I have heard him also say that Mu'awiyah's flank is in Hell-fire”. Hearing this Mu'awiyah laughed shamefully, ordered him to be arrested, sent him to prison and wrote to Uthman about the whole affair”⁴.

Having sent Abu Dharr to prison Mu'awiyah in his letter to Uthman complained against Abu Dharr which meant that he should be called back from Syria. Accordingly Uthman called him from Syria to Medina. The contents of the letter according to the translation of Tarikh A'tham Kufi Shafi'i⁵ are as follows:

“After due respect Mu'awiyah ibn Sakhr humbly states that Abu Dharr has provoked the Syrians against you. He is removing love for you from the hearts of the people. He remembers Umar and Abu Bakr all the time, and

reminds their good conduct and virtues. He mentions you with bad words and calls your words and deeds faulty and mistaken. It is inexpedient to keep him in Syria, Egypt and Iraq-Arab because the people of these places are mischief-mongers, and join the seditious people soon and create disturbance. I have informed you of what has come to light. Now whatever the Caliph decides will be better. Wassalam”.

A camel rider started with the Mu'awiyah's letter and presented it before Uthman at Medina. As soon as Uthman received the letter he at once wrote back to Mu'awiyah: “Your letter to hand; I came to know what you wrote about Abu Dharr. As soon as you receive this letter send Abu Dharr to Medina on the back of a rash camel with a hard-hearted rider who keeps the camel running day and night in order to send Abu Dharr to sleep so that he forgets to speak of you and me both”.

On receipt of this letter Mu'awiyah sent for Abu Dharr and made him ride on the bare back of a mischievous camel with a cruel rider. He told the rider to keep the camel running day and night and not to let him stop at any place till he reaches Medina. Abu Dharr was tall and lean and by that time had become so old that all the hair of his head and beard had grown grey. Besides this he had grown very weak. There was no cloth or saddle on the back of the camel. The guide gave him merciless treatment. On account of all these troubles and injuries Abu Dharr's thighs were wounded and ruptured, and he felt great pain and exhaustion.

Historians agree that Abu Dharr was sent from Syria all alone. His family was not with him. Most probably he was not allowed to go home and take his family with him. He must have been called from the prison and directly despatched to Medina.

According to Allamah Majlisi and Allamah Subaiti when Abu Dharr was to leave for Medina and the Muslims got the news of his departure they came to him and asked him where he was going. Abu Dharr replied, “Uthman has called me to Medina. I am going from here at his call. O Muslims! Uthman being offended with me had sent me here towards you. Now I am again called to Medina. I know that this time I have been called for torture. But it is essential for me to go, anyhow. Listen! Relations between me and Uthman will remain like this. You should not feel sorry and worried in this respect”.

Notes

1. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, p.139
2. Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2 p. 148 and al-Ghadir, vol. 8, p. 299
3. Tarikh al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, vol. 2, and vol. 5, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal vol. 1
4. Hayat al-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 1043, al-Ghadir, vol. 8, p. 299, as quoted from Tarikh Ya'qubi
5. Majalisul Mu'minin p. 119

Chapter 15

When Abu Dharr was leaving, people accompanied him to bid farewell to him till they reached Dair Maran outside the city. There he offered his prayers in congregation. Then he delivered an address, whose translation is given here from Hayat ul-Qulub:

“O people! I bequest a thing which is useful to you”. After that he asked them to thank Allah. All said, “All praises are for Allah”. Then he bore testimony to the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of the Muhammad and all followed suit. Then he said, “I acknowledge the Resurrection on the Day of Judgment, and the existence of Heaven and Hell. I believe in what the Prophet brought from Allah and I call you as witness to this belief of mine”. All said, “We are witness to what you have said”, After that he said, “Whosoever of you will die with this belief will be given the glad tidings of Allah's mercy and generosity, provided that he is not the helper of the sinners, supporter of the actions of oppressors, and accomplice of the tyrants. O group of people! Fury and indignation should also be a part of your prayers and fastings, when you see that people on earth sin against Allah. Do not please your leaders with things which are the cause of Allah's wrath. If those people introduce such things in the Divine faith the reality of which you do not know, leave them and bring their guilts to limelight, even if they torture you and turn you out of their company, deprive you of their gifts, and banish you from the cities, so that Allah may be pleased with you. Certainly Allah is most Glorious and Elevated. It is not proper to enrage Him to please His creations. May Allah forgive you and me. I now leave you to Allah and wish that peace and mercy of Allah be upon you”.

All said in reply, “O Abu Dharr! O companion of the Messenger of Allah! May Allah keep you safe and bestow His blessings upon you! Would you not like us take you again back to our city and support you in the face of enemies”. Abu Dharr said, “May Allah send mercy on you! Now you may go back. Certainly I am more forbearing than you in calamities. Never be scattered and worried, and do not have differences among you”.

Historians say that when Abu Dharr reached Medina, leaving his family behind in Syria, extremely tired and exhausted he was presented before the king of the time, Caliph Uthman. At that time there were many people present in the court. As soon as Caliph Uthman saw Abu Dharr, he started reviling him without having any regard for his honour in the eyes of the Holy Prophet. It appears from the statements of the historians that Uthman said whatever came to his mind in that state of fury and rage. He even said, “It is you who have committed improper acts”. Abu Dharr said, “I did nothing except that I gave you an advice and you took it ill and sent me away from you. Then I advised Mu'awiyah. He also did not like it and turned me out”. Uthman said, “You are a liar. You are nursing sedition in your mind. You want to provoke Syria against me”. Abu Dharr said, “O Uthman! only follow Abu Bakr and Umar and nobody will say anything against you”. Uthman said, “What does it matter if I follow them or not. May your mother die!” Abu Dharr said, “By Allah, you cannot accuse me of anything except that I direct people to do good and prevent them from doing unlawful acts”. At this Uthman was filled with rage and said, “O courtiers!

Advise me as to what I should do with this old liar. Should I punish him with flogging, send him to prison, get him killed, or exile him. He has created dissensions in the Muslim society. Having heard this Ali, who was present there, said, “O Uthman! I advise you like the believer of the nation of Firaun to leave him to himself. If he is a liar he will get the recompense for it, and if he is truthful you will certainly be a sufferer. Allah does not guide him who is extravagant and liar. At this there arose an altercation between Uthman and Ali which I do not want to narrate.”¹

Muhammad bin Ali bin A'tham Kufi, writes in this connection:

Ali said to Caliph Uthman, “Do not give him (Abu Dharr) any trouble. If he is a liar he will suffer its consequences, and if he is truthful, that what he says will come to light”. Uthman did not approve of this talk of Ali. Angrily he said to Ali, “Dust in your mouth!” Ali also repeated the same words. Then Ali said, “O Uthman! What is all this you are doing? What an injustice are you committing! It is not proper for you to utter such words about Abu Dharr who is the friend of the Prophet of Allah, on the basis of some unknown things which Mu'awiyah has said. Are you not aware of the opposition, oppression, sedition and corruption of Mu'awiyah? On hearing this Caliph Uthman kept quiet”. (Tarikh A'tham Kufi and Majalisul Mu'minin)

Nurullah Shustari writes that as soon as Abu Dharr saw Caliph Uthman before himself he used to recite the Qur'anic verse: “Fear the day when the Fire of Hell will blaze up and their foreheads will be branded”, by which he meant to say, “O Uthman! It is wrong that you do not give to the poor the riches you hoard, but give to your kinsmen if you ever give. The day is not far off when your flanks and foreheads will be branded in Hell”, (Majalisul Mu'minin, p. 94)

According to Tabari once Ali addressed Uthman and said, “You have given up following your predecessors, and now you simply concentrate upon the Children of Umayyah and your own kinsfolk. You have completely ignored the poor. This is not right at all. From where have you got the right of unlawful distribution of the property of Muslims?” Uthman grew angry at this talk of Ali and retorted, “Those who went before us did wrong to their relatives. I don't want to do that. I am giving to my poor relatives whatever I can” Ali said, “Are they only rightful people whom you give thousand of dirhams from the Public Treasury of the Muslims? Is there no other poor man?”²

Historians such as Abul Hasan Ali bin Husayn bin Ali al-Mas'udi (died 346 A.H.), Ahmad bin Abi Ya'qub and Ishaq bin Ja'far bin Wahhab bin Wazeh Ya'qubi (died 278 A.H.), and Muhammad bin Sa'd al-Zahri al-Basri, Katib al-Abbasi al-Waqidi (died 230 A.H.) narrates this incident thus:

“When Abu Dharr was presented in the court of Uthman he said to Abu Dharr, “I am informed that you have told the people the hadith of the Prophet that when the number of males of Bani Umayyah rises to full thirty, they will consider the cities of Allah as their booty and the slaves of Allah their own slaves and maids, and they will adopt the religion of Allah as a fraud”. Abu Dharr said, “Yes, I have heard the Prophet say so”. Uthman asked the audience of the court, “Have you heard the Prophet say so?”

They said, “No”. Then he called Ali and said, “O Abul Hasan! Do you certify this hadith?” Ali said, “Yes”. Uthman said, “What is the proof of the authenticity of this hadith?” Ali replied, “The Holy Prophet's statement that there is no speaker, under the sky and upon the earth, who is more truthful than Abu Dharr”.

Abu Dharr had stayed in Medina only for a few days after this incident when Uthman sent word to him, saying “By Allah, You will certainly be banished from Medina”³.

Allamah Majlisi writes that after his return from Syria Abu Dharr was taken ill. One day he entered the court with the support of his staff. He had just arrived there when the functionaries of the government appeared in the court with 100,000 dirhams, which they had realized from the different parts of the State. As soon as Abu Dharr saw it he said, “O Uthman! Whose property is this?” He replied, “Of the Muslims”. He asked, “How long will it remain stored and not reach the Muslims?” The Caliph said, “This money will lie with me till 100,000 dirhams more are received, because they have brought this wealth for me. Hence I am waiting for more, so that I may give it to anybody I like, and spend it where I deem proper”. Abu Dharr said, “Which are more, four dinars or 100,000 dirhams?” Uthman said, “100,000 dirhams are more”. Hearing this Abu Dharr said:

“O Uthman! Do you not remember that when you and I went to the Prophet late one night and seeing him sad asked him the reason for his sadness he did not even talk to us on account of the intensity of his grief. Then when we went to him next morning and seeing him happy and smiling asked him why he was so sad the last night and why he was happy that morning he said, “Last night after the distribution of the property of the Muslims only four dinars remained with me; so I was perturbed but I have now given them to the rightful person. Therefore, I am now happy”.

Notes

1. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd al-Waqidi, died 230 A.H. vol. 4, p.168
2. Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 534 and Iqdul Farid, vol. 2, p. 272
3. Murujuz Zahab al-Mas'udi, vol. 1, p. 438 and Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 148

Chapter 16

We have briefly thrown light on the excesses of Uthman in the foregoing pages, and have told that by distributing the money of the Muslims only among his kinsmen he had deprived the poor people of their right, and Abu Dharr, by virtue of his religious fervour and in pursuance of the precept of the Holy Prophet had been forced to raise his voice against these evil practices, in consequence of which he was sent to Syria. Then he was called back to Medina from Syria in a horrible manner and was put to great hardship, As Abu Dharr was a man of principle and was very keen on keeping his promise of being truthful, which he had made to the Holy Prophet he continued with his mission without caring for any authority or reproach from any side. He never cared whether he was talking to a king or to a common man. It did not matter to him if the place where he talked was a street, a bazar, a masjid or a court. The burden and the mode of his truthful cry remained the same throughout.

We now want to write in detail for your information how Uthman had opened the door of the Public Treasury for his own associates and how enormously wealthy his relatives and special followers had become. We present here a list in this connection from which it will be easy for you to judge how those following in the footsteps of the Prophet such as Ali, Abu Dharr, Salman, Miqdad, Ammar and some other companions of the Prophet, could remain quiet. After all, they, too, had their obligation towards Islam. That is why these people protested against these practices.

Now we want to quote a few examples of Uthman's extravagance and nepotism. But, before that, we want to explain how the idea of showing favour to the descendants of Umayyah cropped up his mind and how he exceeded the limit of decency. Ibn Asakir, a historian and commentator of probably the second century hijri writes:

“According to the narration of Anas bin Malik one day Abu Sufyan bin Harb, who had become blind, came to Uthman and inquired if there was anybody else present there”. His companions said, “No”. Then he said, “O Uthman! Make this Islamic State a pre-Islamic state; let the country be like that snatched from somebody, and make it secure and lasting for the descendants of Umayyah”¹.

Respected readers! He is the same Abu Sufyan who had played such a detestable role against the Holy Prophet before the appearance of Islam, as bears no parallel. Then he became a Muslim willy-nilly. He had no respect for Islam in his heart.

Uthman accepted his suggestion and he paid his fullest support to Bani Umayyah, made them rich and taking the State to be a country snatched away from somebody, started treating their original owners cruelly and scornfully. As is obvious the rightful ownership of the Islamic dominion went to Ali and his progeny. Therefore Uthman's treatment with them at the suggestion of Abu Sufyan is unparalleled.

It is evident from the historical accounts that on the night of the death of Umm Kulthum, he had sexual intercourse with another woman simply because she was related to the Prophet, and did not care that his wife Umme Kulthum was about to die².

To explain why people became Uthman's opponents, the historians have written that Uthman gave Fadak to Marwan bin Hakam, which had been snatched away from Fatima during the reign of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph.

Fadak remained in the possession of Marwan and his descendants till Umar bin Abdul Aziz took it back from him and gave it to the Ahlul Bayt who were its rightful owners³. Uthman not only gave away Fadak to Marwan bin Hakam who was his cousin and the husband of his daughter, Umme Aban, but also gave the fifth part of the booty received from Africa i.e. five lac dinars about which Abdul Rahman bin Hambal al-Jama'i al-Kindi addressing the Caliph recited sarcastic verses. In one of its verses he says:

“O Caliph! You brought the accursed Marwan near you in opposition to those who have gone before you, and made him your son-in-law, and then gave him the fifth part of the booties of Africa, doing injustice to the poor”⁴. The historians Ibn Kathir and Waqidi narrate that the total value of the African booties given to Marwan was two crore twenty thousand gold coins⁵. Tabari says that the amount was two crore five lac twenty thousand gold coins.⁶ Besides this, he was given the fifth part of the booties of Egypt also.⁷ Ibn Abil Hadid writes, “The Caliph having married his daughter to Marwan also gave him one lac dirhams from the Public Treasury. At this action of his Zayd bin Arqam brought the keys of the treasury and threw them before Uthman and said that Marwan did not deserve even one hundred dirhams out of it”⁸.

All the historians, commentators, traditionists and narrators among whom Ayesha holds a distinguished position, say it clearly that both Marwan and his father Hakam and also their progeny was cursed and detested by the Prophet. Ayesha says that Marwan was born of the sperm cursed by the Prophet. The Prophet did not tolerate their dwelling on earth. Allah had declared them, their forefathers, and their descendants an accursed genealogical tree and the Prophet of Allah had banished Hakam from Medina. Abu Bakr and Umar also did not allow them to come back. But Uthman called them back, gave them gifts and married his daughter Umm Aban to Marwan.

For details see Mustadrak Hakim, vol, 4, p. 481, Tafsir Qurtabi, vol. 16, p. 197, Tafsir Kashashaf vol. 3, p. 99, printed in Egypt) Tafsir al-Fai'q Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 352, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 4, p. 159, Tafsir Kabir, vol. 7, p. 491, Usudul Ghabah, Ibn Athir, vol. 2, p. 34, Nihaya Ibn Athir, vol. 3, p. 23, printed in Egypt, Sharah Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 2, p. 55, Tafsir Naishapuri on the marginal-note of Tabari, vol. 26, p. 13, Sawaiq Muhriqah p. 108)

When Marwan bin Hakam came back at the call of Uthman he was dressed in tatters and when he came out of his court he was wearing silken clothes with a mantle. The Caliph gave him three lac dirhams out of the charities of Yemen.⁹ He was the man who had been banished by the Prophet of Allah and Abu Bakr and Umar also did not allow him to enter Medina. But Uthman called him back and gave him a gift of one lac dinars.¹⁰

Harith bin Hakam was the brother of Marwan and the husband of Ayesha, the daughter of Uthman. Uthman gave him three lac dirhams from

the property of the Muslims. He also gave him many camels which had been received as charity.¹¹ Uthman also gave him a market “Mahzun”, which was established by the Prophet in Medina.¹² Apart from this the tenth part of the income received from the markets of Medina was also fixed for Harith.¹³

Uthman gave one lac dirhams to Sa'id bin' Aas bin Umayyah. (Abu Makhnaf and Waqidi) Sa'idi's father, Aas was the person who used to torment the Prophet very much. Ali had killed him in the Battle of Badr. (Tabaqat Commentators and historians are of the view that Uqbah is the accursed person who had become apostate after embracing Islam. It was about him that this verse was revealed: “On that day the tyrant will bite his hands”.¹⁴ In this verse the tyrant means this very accursed Uqbah¹⁵.

In short, there is such a large material in the books on history and traditions about the bad character of Walid and his father that a separate and independent book can be written on them. It can be said briefly that Walid was lewd, adulterer, debauchee, and drunkard, who desecrated faith. We give here some significant incidents which throw light on his character.

(1) In the Masjid of Kufah Walid offered four rakats in the morning prayers instead of two as he was intoxicated.

(2) At the command of Imam Ali, Abdullah ibn Ja'far punished him for drinking wine inflicting eighty lashes on him.

(3) When Walid bin' Aas succeeded him to the Governorship of Kufah he got the pulpit washed thoroughly and said, “Remove the filth of Walid from it”. And so on and so forth.¹⁶

Caliph Uthman gave 3 lac dirhams to Abdullah bin Khalid bin Usayd bin Abil ' Aas bin Umayyah and one thousand dirhams to each one of his whole tribe.¹⁷ Ibn Abil Hadid has written the figure of four lac¹⁸.

Ya'qubi writes that Uthman married his daughter to Abdullah bin Khalid bin Usayd and ordered him to be paid six lac dirhams and in this connection wrote to Abdullah bin Aamir that the amount should be paid from the Public Treasure of Basrah¹⁹

Everybody knows the character of Abu Sufyan bin Harb. Uthman gave him also two lac dirhams from the Public Treasury. This money was given on the same day when he had given one lac dinars to Marwan bin Hakam.²⁰

Caliph Uthman gave one-fifth of the booties of Africa to his foster brother Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarah. According to Abul Fida its value was one lac dinars²¹ Ibn Abil Hadid writes that he gave to Abdullah ibn Sa'd the whole booty received from West Africa without giving anything out of it to any other Muslim.²²

Sa'd bin Abi Sarah is the man who had embraced Islam before the conquest of Mecca. Then he migrated to Medina and became an apostate. After his apostasy the Prophet of Allah announced that Sa'd bin Abi Sarah should be killed wherever he was found even if he was under the covering of the Holy Ka'bah. Viewing these things Uthman had hidden him and got him forgiven. (Sunan Abu Daud and Mustadrak Hakim).

Uthman gave two lac dinar (gold coins) to Talha bin Abdullah²³, and gave him several bags of gold and silver.

The examples quoted above have brought to light Uthman's nepotism and his making Bani Umayyah roll in the wealth belonging to the Muslims. Now

we want to explain how the people, other than some special companions, had become the seekers of the world after the demise of the Prophet, and how the world had over-powered them. But, before that, we want to point out that the boost given to Bani Umayyah by Uthman was contrary to the Will of Allah and His Prophet. Allah has called them the damned “tree”. The Prophet of Allah has called them the accursed people of the ummah. Scholars are unanimous that Bani Umayyah had great spite against the Prophet. Ali says that every ummah had some trouble or the other. The calamity for this ummah is Bani Umayyah.²⁴

According to the confirmed view of the Prophet and his progeny Bani Umayyah were a calamity for the ummah but Uthman's attitude towards them was that he took pride in opening the Public Treasury for them. Caliph Uthman used to say “The Public Treasury is ours. We will spend it as we like and will not accept anybody's advice”.²⁵

Now we throw light on the patrimonies of the companions. It will be ascertained from them how much wealth of the Muslims Uthman had squandered and how he had made his kinsmen wealthy.

Zubayr bin 'Awam was the son-in-law of the first Caliph. What he left behind after his death consisted of:

(1) Eleven houses in Medina (2) Two houses in Basrah (3) One house in Kufah (4) One house in Egypt (5) He had four wives

After deducting one-third of his wealth every wife got one-fourth, the value of the whole property came to fifty nine crore and eight lacs.²⁶

Muhammad bin Sa'd al-Zahri al-Basri, Kitib al-Abbasi al-Waqidi (died 230 A.H.) writes that he had lands in Alexandria, Egypt, and Kufah and several houses in Basrah. He received countless bags of grain from Medina.²⁷ Abul Hasan Ali bin Husayn bin Ali Mas'udi (died 346 A.H.) writes that besides these things he had left behind one thousand horses, one thousand slaves, one thousand maids and many tracts of land.²⁸

Talha bin Ubaydullah Tamimi was also the son-in-law of the first Caliph. He had a house in Kufah known by the name of Kanaas. His daily income from the grains was one thousand dinars. He had several inns between Tahama and Tai'f. He had lofty palace in Medina. He had a property in Iraq yielding a monthly income of 10,000 dinars. Musa bin Talha states that he had left two crore two lac dirhams and two lac dinars in cash. He had also left agricultural lands. Besides, he had left three hundred bags of bullock skin full of gold and silver. Ibn Jauzi says that they were bags of camel-skin and were very large.²⁹

Abdur Rahman bin Auf was the brother-in-law of Uthman and it was he who at the instance of Umar made Uthman Caliph instead of Ali as has already been narrated. He left behind one thousand camels, thirty thousand goats and one hundred horses, and left so much gold that it was cut by an axe and then divided. He had four wives. Every one of them got eighty three thousand dinars. He had divorced one of them during his illness and had even him 83 thousand dinars. Besides this he left ten thousand sheep valued at eighty four thousand dinars.³⁰ Now it becomes evident from his patrimony why he had made Uthman Caliph in place of Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas left behind two lac fifty thousand dirhams and a house which he had got constructed at Aqiq. That was very magnificent, sky-high and very spacious palace with beautiful turrets constructed on its upper stories.³¹ It is written on page 120 of the translation of the book of Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sahar that Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas had got agates inset in his palace.

Ya'la bin Umayyah who was the Governor of Yemen left behind him, five lac dinars, many loans with the people and a vast land. Besides, he left a property worth one lac dinars.³²

Zayd bin Thabit was the man who helped Uthman in every way and was submissive to him. He left behind gold and silver in such form that it was cut with axe and hatchet and then divided. In addition to it, he left other assets also which valued about one lac dinars. (Murujuz Zahab, Mas'udi)

This was the generosity, nepotism and favouritism of Uthman, the third Caliph towards his well-wishers. No follower of the Prophet could tolerate the way in which he distributed the wealth of the Muslims among his own people. That is why Ali, Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Ammar kept on protesting against his behaviour.

Maybe some people might say that whatever Uthman did was for his poor kinsmen as he himself said that he considered them deserving of help, and he did not do anything for his own well-being. It may be said in response to it that he who does not have regard for the religious law in matters pertaining to his relatives, will certainly not be careful about himself either. Uthman had a set of teeth made of gold. He used to wear silken fur mantle which cost one hundred dinars. The covering of his wife, Nailah, also cost one hundred dinars.³³ There was safe in the Public Treasury at Medina, which was full of gold and silver. He got the ornaments for his family made out of it. The people protested very much against this, and he had an altercation with Ali also, but he did not care for anybody.³⁴ He got a palace constructed in Medina; it was strengthened by stone and pinnacle and its doors were made of teak and plane. He had hoarded immense wealth. He owned several springs in Medina. The historians write that he left behind, after his assassination, thirty crore five lac dirhams and fifty lac dinars. Out of his assets and other belongings which he left only those which were in the valley of Qura and Hunayn, cost one lac dinars. Besides, he left many horses and camels. According to Ibn Sa'd the value of his patrimony in the valley of Qura and Khaybar was two lac dinars³⁵, And according to Jorji Zaydan it was ten lac dinars.³⁶ Moreover, he left one thousand slaves,³⁷ and at Rabazah he left one thousand camels.³⁸

Umar the second Caliph also could not avoid the taste of capitalism. He had a garden in Hijaz with an annual income of forty thousand dirhams which he spent to satisfy the needs of himself and his family Bani 'Adi³⁹. According to a tradition in Sahih Bukhari Umar asked at the time of his death about the loan which he had to pay back to Public Treasury. People calculated it, and told him that it was eighty six thousand dirhams. He asked them to pay it from the money of Ale Umar. Ibn Hajar Asqalani says that by the word "Ale Umar" he meant his own relatives. That is, he asked them to pay it up from his own assets⁴⁰. Naafe' the slave of Ibn Umar, has denied

that Umar was under debt and has said how Umar could have been under debt when one of his heirs sold his share of the property for one lac dirhams. (Kitab Medina Umar bin Shaybah).

Commenting on the statement of Naafe' Ibn Hajar said that sometimes it so happens that a man is in debt in spite of his being wealthy.⁴¹ A relative asked Umar for some money. At first he scolded him, but later sent him ten thousand dinars.⁴² With these conditions in view when we look at the progeny of the Prophet and how they suffered, we feel sorry and are very much shocked to learn that these people had deprived the Ahlul Bayt even of their right of "Khums"⁴³ and snatched Fadak also from them.

Notes

1. Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 407
2. Tajul Urus, vol. 6, p. 220, Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 8, p. 31, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 126 Mustadrak, vol. 4, p. 47, Sunan al-Kubra Bayhaqi, vol. 4, p. 53, Nihaya Ibn Athir, vol. 3, p. 286 printed in Egypt, Lisanul Arab vol. 11, p. 889, Isabah, vol. 4, p.489
3. Ma'arif of ibn Qutayba, p. 84, Tarikh Abul Fida, vol. 1, p. 168, Sunan al-Kubra Bayhaqi, vol. 6, p. 301, Iqdul Farid, vol. 2, p. 261
4. Ma'arif p. 84, Abul Fida, vol.1, p.160
5. Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 152
6. Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, p.50
7. Ansab al-Ashraf Balazari, vol. 5, p. 25, and Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 44, printed in London
8. Sharah Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 1, p. 67
9. Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 41
10. Ma'arif Ibn Qutaibah, p. 83, Iqdul Farid, vol. 2, p. 261, Mahazirat Raghīb Isfahani vol. 2, p. 212, and Mira't al-Jinan Yafe'i vol. 1, p. 85
11. Ansabul Ashraf, Balazari, vol. 5, p. 52
12. Ma'arif, p. 84, Iqdul Farid, vol. 2, p. 261, Sharah Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 1, p. 67, Mahazarat Raghīb Isfahani vol. 2, p. 212
13. Sirat Halabiah, vol. 2
14. Surah al-Furqan, 25:27
15. Tafsir Tabari, vol. 9, p. 6, Tafsir Baizawi, vol. 2, p. 161, Tafsir Qurtabi, vol. 13, p. 25, Tafsir Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 326, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 3, p. 317, Tafsir Naishapuri in the marginal- note of Tabari, vol. 19, p. 10, Tafsir Kabir Razi, vol. 6, p. 369, etc.)
16. Al-Ghadir by Allamah Amini, vol. 1, p. 274
17. Iqdul Farid, vol. 2 p. 261, and Ma'arif of ibn Qutayba, p. 84
18. Sharah Nahjul Balaghah vol. 1, p. 66
19. Tarikh Ibn Wazih Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 45
20. Sharah Nahjul Balaghah, vol. 1, p. 67
21. Usdul Ghaba, vol 3, p. 173 and Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 152
22. Sharah Nahjul Balaghah, vol.1, p. 67
23. Balazari, vol. 5, p. 7
24. Tathir al-Jinan in the marginal note Sawaiq Muhriqah, p. 143 and Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6, p. 91
25. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 5, p. 17/15 and Tarhut Tashrib, vol. 7
26. Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul Jihad Baab Barakat al-Ghifari Fi-Malihi, vol. 5, p. 17 & 21 Irshad al-Sare Umdat al-Qari Shazarat al-Zahab vol. 1, p. 43, Tarikh Ibn Kathir vol. 7, p. 249 and Tarikh Khamis vol. 2, p. 311

27. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd Waqidi vol. 3, p. 77 printed in London
28. Murujuz Zahab p. 434
29. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 158; Ansabul Ashraf Balazari; vol. 5, p. 7 Murujuz Zahab, vol. 1, p. 434 Iqdul Farid, vol. 2, p. 279, Riazun Nazrah, vol. 2, p. 258, Duwalul Islam Zahabi, vol 1, p.18 and Al-khulasah Khazraji, p. 152
30. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 96, Murujuz Zahab, vol. 1, p. 434 Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 146, Safwatus Safwah Ibn Jauzi, vol. 1 p. 138, Riazun Nazrah, vol. 2, p. 291, Isti'ab Abdul Barr Makki, vol. 2, p. 404 and Tuhfah Ithna Ashariyah by Muhaddith Dehlavi
31. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 105 and Murujuz Zahab, vol.1, p. 434
32. Murujuz Zahab, vol. 1, p. 432
33. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 40, Ansab, Balazari vol. 3, p. 4 and Isti'ab, vol. 4, p. 476
34. Ansab, Balazari vol. 3, p. 4
35. Tabaqat ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 53 and Mas'udi, vol. 1, p. 433
36. Tamaddune Islam, vol. 1, p. 22, printed in Egypt
37. Duwalul Islam, Zahabi, vol. 1 p. 12
38. Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 53
39. Tarikh Tabari, vol. 2, p. 82, printed in Egypt
40. Tarikh Tabari, vol. 2, p.382
41. Tarikh Tabari, vol. 3, p. 383
42. Tarikh Tabari, vol, 5, p.19
43. Izilatul Khifi, vol. 2, p. 256

Chapter 17

It is an established fact that Abu Dharr had seen the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt from very close quarters and remained in very intimate company with them. He had seen very carefully every aspect of their life, and had learnt much from it. He has seen with his own eyes not once but a number of times that the Holy Prophet was lying hungry in the masjid and his children also were hungry at home.¹ Abu Dharr had also seen Ali ibn Abi Talib working on wages wearing coarse clothes. He had seen patches of date leaves in the mantle of the daughter of the Prophet. He had also heard Ali exhorting to his African maid servant Fizzah: “O Fizzah! We, the Ahlul Bayt have not been created for the world or worldly gains. Instead, we have been created for the worship of Allah and the propagation of Allah's message, Islam. It is our duty to boost up the morality of man, to kindle the light of the Unity of Allah in the hearts of the people and to provide the ways and means for their well-being. Abu Dharr had also seen that Ali ate the dried barley bread and kept the bag of his barley flour sealed so that nobody could mix ghee with it². He had also seen that Ali used to take bags of flour on his back to the houses of the poor widows and orphans. He had also seen Ali saying to the world. “O World! Go and deceive others. I have divorced you”. He had also witnessed with his eyes that the progeny of Muhammad used to take food along with their servants and slaves at the same dining-cloth.

He remembered well that once when four dirhams were left over after the Prophet had distributed the money that was with him and this amount could not reach the deserving person, he felt very much grieved. He still recollected these words of the Prophet addressed to him, “O Abu Dharr! Even if I have gold equal to the Mount Uhud I do not like the least of it to be left over with me”.

Under these circumstances how could it be possible for Abu Dharr to observe silence when Islam was metamorphosed and the teachings of the guardians of Islam were being neglected? As soon as the Holy Prophet died everything was changed. Injustice and tyranny were rampant, forced allegiance was demanded, the house of the Ahlul Bayt burnt, and the door was felled upon Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet³.

Ali was tied by the neck with a rope and the great companions lived in the seclusion of their homes. Being forced by circumstances Abu Dharr observed patience for some time. At last he left Medina for Syria and settled there. After some time when he came back to Medina he saw that worldliness of the rulers was at its height. Royal pomp and show had taken the place of the moderate life observed by the Holy Prophet. Favouritism and nepotism were the order of the day, and honesty and piety were the things of the past. The wealth of the Public Treasury was being squandered away. The wealth of Muslims was being used for personal needs. Every relative and well wisher of the Caliph had become a millionaire. Capitalism had expanded. There was an abundance of wealth. Nobody bothered about zakat. Nobody thought of helping the poor. Nobody cared for orphans and widows.

Seeing innumerable things of this kind, Abu Dharr tried to admonish the Caliph Uthman for the protection of Islamic ummah and Islamic State, and advised him as much as he could, but the Caliph did not pay heed to him. At last in view of the promise which he had given to the Holy Prophet and with that intensity of faith which Allah had preserved in his heart he came out on the scene and started publicizing the shortcomings of Uthman. In this connection he also censured hoarding of wealth and capitalism and initiated his speech with those Qur'anic verses which criticize the hoarding of wealth.

As Abu Dharr could not tolerate that the wealth of the public property be spent only upon the Caliph's relatives, and the orphans and widows die of starvation, he accelerated his preaching, and consequently he had to go from place to place. He was exiled again and again sometimes he was banished from Medina and sent to Syria and sometimes he was forced to lead his life in a deserted place like Rabzah.

It is quite obvious that the distribution of wealth is essential among the needy, but it is also worth considering on what principle the wealth is to be distributed among the poor and other entitled people. It was a principle with the Prophet that he distributed the wealth equally. For spoils of war he said that the one-fifth of them is for Allah and His Prophet and four portions for the army of Islam in which all the warriors are equal share-holders. None is entitled to get more than the other. (Sunan Baihaqi). It is learnt from the books on tradition that he distributed the amount of tribute among the Muslims the same day on which he received it. He gave double share to the married people and a single share to a bachelor⁴.

The same procedure was followed by Imam Ali. Hafiz Baihaqi says that once he got some money and property from Isfahan. He divided them into seven equal shares. One loaf of bread was left over; but he divided it also into seven pieces and put one piece with every share. Then he drew the lots and gave the share to one in whose name the lot was drawn⁵. Once two women came to him, One of them was free while the other was a slave. He gave to each one of them a little wheat and forty dirhams. The slave went away with her share but the free woman said, "You gave me as much as you gave to the slave, although I am a free Arab woman whereas she is a slave and not an Arab". The Commander of the Faithful said, "I have thoroughly consulted the Divine Book but could not find any reason for your superiority".

Muhammad Razi Zangipuri writes that during the reign of Ali when the procedure of the Prophet was followed, and the money was distributed on the basis of equality, there spread dissatisfaction and resentment against this method among the high class companions of the Prophet. Ali spoke thus on the expression of their resentment and displeasure: "Is it your order for me that I should seek your help and support by doing injustice to them upon whom I have been made a ruler? That is, should I withhold their due to give you more, and thus to make you my supporter? By Allah, till the stories of nights continue to be told, and a star follows another star i.e. the stars are moving, I will not go near a procedure like that. Even if it had been my personal property I would have divided it equally among the people, but now when it is the property of Allah why should I not observe equality. You

should know that grant of money and generosity without right is squandering and extravagance which raises the giver high in the world but makes him low and disgraced in the hereafter”⁶.

It becomes evident from the above-mentioned principle of the distribution of wealth that the properties will be distributed equally among the poor, the needy and all kinds of deserving people. As soon as Ali assumed Caliphate he declared, “You are the slaves of Allah and the wealth belongs to Allah, This wealth will be distributed equally among you without discrimination or distinction”⁷.

If the Muslims follow the Islamic ways, the life of the poor will not be a burden to them.

Notes

1. Ali'imun Nubuwwah, al-Mawardi, p.146, printed Egypt
2. Allamah Kashif al-Ghita, The Shia -Origin and Faith, ISP 1982
3. Al-Milal wan Nahl vol. 1, p. 25 printed in Bombay
4. Sunan Abi Daud, vol. 1, p. 25, Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal, vol. 2, p. 29 and Sunan Baihaqi, vol. 6, p. 346
5. Sunan Baihaqi, vol. 6, p. 348
6. Islam ka Ma'ashi Nizam, Urdu edition p. 154
7. Nasikhut Tawarikh, vol. 2, p. 21

Chapter 18

Abu Dharr having returned to Medina from Syria was busy in his preachings when one more heart rending incident came to pass and that was the burning of the Holy Qur'an. He was already grieved to see that the Islamic State was being ruined. The wealth of Muslim ummah was being spent on relatives and kinsmen of the Caliph. The door of the Public Treasury was completely closed to the needy, the poor, the orphans and the widows, but it was wide open to the descendants of Umayyah. The poor people were starving while the relatives of the Caliph were purchasing houses, gardens and lands. All of a sudden he got the news that the Caliph got different copies of the Qur'an collected from a far and wide, and put them to flames. Therefore, this important incident became the target of his preaching. The historian Abul Fida writes that this happened in 30 A.H.¹

The historian Ya'qubi (died 278 A.H.) writes in his book that Uthman collected the Qur'an and arranged it in such a way that he placed big surahs (chapters) together and the small surahs together separately, and sending for copies from all sides, got them washed with hot water and vinegar and set fire to them. As a result of it no Qur'an was left except the copy belonging to Ibn Mas'ud which was with him in Kufah. When Abdullah Ibn 'Amir, the Governor of Kufah, asked Ibn Mas'ud for his copy he refused to give it. At this news Uthman wrote to 'Amir to arrest Ibn Mas'ud and send him to Medina. When Ibn Mas'ud came and entered the masjid, Uthman was busy delivering his speech. Seeing Ibn Mas'ud he said, "An ugly and ill-natured animal has come". Ibn Mas'ud also strongly retorted in response. Hearing it Uthman ordered people to beat him. So the people beat him and dragged him in such a way that two of his ribs got fractured.

It is written in the Persian translation of Tarikh A'tham Kufi (printed in Bombay vide page 147 line 8) that Uthman tore off the Qur'an and got it burnt. The same is given in the book "Successors of Muhammad". (W. Irving p.160 printed in London, 1850 A.D.). According to "Najatul Mu'minin" by Mulla Mohsin Kashmiri, Uthman got the ribs of Ibn Mas'ud fractured and snatching his Qur'an got it burnt. According to Rauzatul Ahabab, p. 229 printed Lucknow, Uthman ordered, "My Qur'an must be given currency in my domain and the remaining Qur'ans should be burnt". Accordingly all the remaining copies of Qur'an were got burnt. According to Tarikh al-Qur'an by Abdul Qadir Makki, p. 36 printed Jeddah 1365 A.H. Sahih Bukhari vol. 6, p. 26 printed Bombay, Mishkit Sharif printed Dehli, p. 150, and Tafsir Itqan Suyuti, printed Ahmadi, vol. 1, p. 84; Uthman sent word to Hafsah, the wife of the Holy Prophet, to send him the Scriptures so that he might copy them out and then return them to her. Hafsah sent those Scriptures which were with her and Uthman appointed Zayd bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Zubayr, Sa'id bin 'As, Abdul Rahman bin Harith to collect and copy the Scriptures, and asked all the three men of the Quraysh to write the Qur'an in the colloquy of Quraysh in case there arose some difference on some point in it, because the Qur'an had been revealed in their language. They did accordingly till the Scripture was copied out and Uthman returned the Scriptures to Hafsah as promised and sent one newly-prepared copy to her. Now only the copy of the Qur'an prepared by Uthman remained in

existence and all the other copies were got burnt. According to Fathul Bari of Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani vol. 4, p. 226, Uthman sent back the Qur'an of Hafsa but Marwan snatched it forcibly from her and burnt it. According to Tarikh Khamis p. 270, Isti'ab p. 373 and Sawa'iq Muhriqah p. 68

Uthman got all the copies of the Qur'an burnt except his own and got Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud beaten so much that he developed the disease of hernia. Then he sent him to prison where he died. According to Tuhfah Ithna 'Ashariyah of Abdul Aziz, Ubayy bin Ka'b gave his Qur'an to Uthman and he escaped beating. That Qur'an was also burnt.

It is however recorded in innumerable books that Uthman got the Divine Scriptures burnt. These were the Qur'ans which were compiled in the days of Abu Bakr. When Ummul Mu'minin 'Ayesha got the news of the burning of Qur'ans she became restless. She said, "O Muslims! Kill this man who has burnt the Qur'an. He has committed a great oppression"².

Ayesha was not content with this much, but she constantly expressed her displeasure against Uthman. She said again and again "Kill this jew, Na'thal. May Allah kill him. He has become an apostate"³. According to Tazkirah Khawasul Ummah pp. 38, 40, 41 Ibn Athir Jazari, she used to say, "Kill this Na'thal. May Allah kill him". By this she meant Caliph Uthman. Then Ibn Athir explains why she called Uthman Na'thal. The reason that Na'thal was a Jew in Egypt and his beard resembled that of Uthman. Again he says that according to a statement by Shaykh it meant a fool. He further says that after that 'Ayesha went to Mecca. (Nihayah Ibn Athir)

The historian Ibn Taqtaqi writes that Uthman was killed in consequence of 'Ayesha's order "Kill this Na'thal". The very day his house was surrounded 'Ayesha went to Mecca⁴.

It is obvious that when 'Ayesha, being a woman was so much shocked by this incident, why should Ali not have been shocked by this horrible event? It is learnt from the writings of authentic scholars that Ali got highly shocked by the incident of burning of the Qur'an. Consequently he felt the necessity of consulting Abu Dharr in this respect. Allamah Majlisi writes that after this incident Ali asked Abdul Malik, the son of Abu Dharr to send his father to him. When he came he exchanged views with him about this incident, expressed his grief and said, "It has been ironed and torn to pieces. It is possible that Allah may take revenge upon him with iron". Abu Dharr said, "O Ali I have heard the Prophet of Allah saying, that the tyrant kings would kill the members of his house". Ali said, "O Abu Dharr! Are you drawing my attention to my being murdered, Abu Dharr said, "No doubt, this will happen and you will be the first out of the progeny of the Prophet to be assassinated"⁵.

In short, it becomes evident that Abu Dharr was deeply affected by this terrible event. He also added one more theme to his speeches and called it an un-Islamic way. Let it be known that as the burning of the Qur'an injures the Islamic spirit so some modern writers have changed the word "burning" where the burning of the Qur'an is narrated. Shah Walyullah Dehlavi, in the life events of Uthman writes, "He did away with other Scriptures which were considered to spread differences". (Izalatul Khifa vol. 1, p. 274)

Notes

1. Tarikh Abul Fida, vol. 2, p. 100, printed in Amritsar, 1901 A.D
2. Anwarul Qulub, Muhammad Baqir Majlisi p.313
3. Rauzatul Ahbab vol. 3, p. 12
4. Tarikhul Fakhri p. 62, printed Egypt
5. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 104

Chapter 19

Historians say that Abu Dharr delivered his speeches on specific topics, in the masjid, outside the masjid, in the bazars, on the thoroughfares, on the streets, and at every place where he got an opportunity to do so. He did not fear his assassination because the Prophet of Allah had told him that nobody would be able to kill him or turn him from his faith, nor did he fear reproaches because he had sworn allegiance to the Holy Prophet on this point. He was dead-sure that whatever he did was in conformity with the wish of Allah and His Prophet. That is why he was busy all the time in discharging his duty with great courage and fervour.

On one side Abu Dharr's preaching grew intensive and on the other side Uthman was out of his beat with his self- indicating conscience in the mirror of his character. He consulted Marwan to know by which device Abu Dharr was to be silenced and how his criticism of Uthman's character, and his opposition to the hoarding of wealth could be stopped.

Marwan said, "There is only one device to achieve that end, that is, some money should be sent to Abu Dharr. He may perhaps accept it and keep quiet". Uthman heard this reply of Marwan and became silent. The reason of his silence was that he knew Abu Dharr's nature. He knew very well that Abu Dharr had no greed for money. But Marwan insisted and got the permission. He called two men, gave them a purse of two hundred dinars and said, "Take it to Abu Dharr at night and tell him that Uthman had wished him well and asked him to take the purse and spend it on his needs".

Those men came to Abu Dharr at night with the purse. He was, at that time, busy offering prayers in the masjid. Perhaps he was staying in the masjid of the Prophet at that time, because Uthman had forcibly called him from Syria while his family was still there.

Looking at the visitors Abu Dharr asked them who they were and why they had come? Presenting the purse to him they said, "Caliph Uthman has sent you his regards and has asked you to accept these two hundred dinars for your expenses". (Kashkol Bahai).

Abu Dharr said, "Has he given an equal amount to any other Muslim as well?" They replied, "No, to none else. This is the Caliph's generosity towards you alone. Please accept it". Abu Dharr said, "I am also one of the Muslims. When the Caliph has not given anything to any other Muslim I alone cannot accept it. I do not need it when the other poor Muslims have been ignored. Go, take it back and tell him that only a little wheat is enough for me. I am earning my livelihood. What should I do with these dinars?"¹ Marwan had formed an utterly wrong opinion of Abu Dharr. He was under the impression that just as other seekers of the world did not care for faith and belief for the sake of wealth, Abu Dharr would also do the same. He did not know that Abu Dharr was on a much higher level as compared to the seekers of the world.

If we look at it carefully Abu Dharr exactly followed the Holy Prophet and Ali in sending the money back and in saying, "What does it mean to send the money to me alone ignoring other Muslims?" These were the people who cared for Muslim masses more than for themselves. They did not like that they should be rolling in wealth while the poor remained poor.

They did not like that there should be the least difference between themselves and the poor people. As a proof of it we may cite the incident of Ali's breaking of the fast as narrated by Ahnaf bin Qays before Mu'awiyah in his court.

According to Mansur bin Husayn Abi (d. 422 A.H.) in his book *Nasr-ud-Durar*, as quoted by Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Ale Kashiful Ghita, Ahnaf bin Qays said, "Once I went to Mu'awiyah. He placed before me too many kinds of dishes. I was still wondering to see them when he put before me a special dish which I could not recognize. I asked him what it was. He answered that they were the intestines of the duck stuffed with brain, roasted in the pistachio oil and sprinkled with spices. Hearing this I began to weep. Mu'awiyah asked me the reason of my crying. I said that I remembered Ali at the time.

One day I was with him when the time of breaking the fast approached. He asked me to stay. In the meantime a sealed bag was brought in. I asked him what it contained. He answered that it was the flour of parched barley. I asked him if it was due to the fear of theft or due to economic hardship that the bag had been sealed. He answered that it was not due to either of the causes. The precaution was due to the fear lest his sons should have mixed butter oil or olive oil with this flour.

I further asked if butter oil or olive oil was forbidden. He answered that it was not forbidden. Still, it was necessary for the leaders of the ummah keep themselves attached to the ranks of the poor masses, so that scarcity of means might not turn this poverty-stricken class into rebels. Mu'awiyah told me that I had recalled a person whose virtue could not be denied".

Anyway, those who had brought the purse of gold to Abu Dharr went back to Uthman and told him what Abu Dharr had said. Uthman said to Marwan, "I already knew that Abu Dharr would not accept the money".

Abu Dharr remained busy preaching as usual. Whatever he said was not in opposition to any particular person. Rather, he wanted the people not to forget Allah on account of hoarding of money but to strengthen the principles of Islam by sympathizing with the poor. Abu Dharr could not tolerate the wealth of the Public Treasury being spent on the undeserving persons freely while the needy starved. He could not even tolerate the tearing and burning of the Qur'an. He could not help criticizing those guilty of such heinous crimes. He had the commands of Allah and His Prophet before him. He had the principles of Islam in view. He wanted the Muslim rulers to tread the path of Islam.

In short, on one side Abu Dharr was busy discharging his duty of preaching, and on the other side, Uthman was anxious how to gag him. To achieve this end he tried to devise every kind of plan but could not succeed. At last he ordered through a general proclamation, "Nobody should sit with Abu Dharr, nor talk to him". (al-Mas'udi)

The order of the ruler had to be carried out unconditionally. As soon as this proclamation was made people gave up contact with him and ceased talking with him. People fled from wherever Abu Dharr passed lest it should be reported to the Caliph that they had met Abu Dharr. Nobody listened to him, nor attended to him. But what a brave man Abu Dharr was. He never

cared for these things. He was convinced that whatever he was doing was in consonance with the Will of Allah. Therefore, he was completely satisfied with what he was doing and no restriction on his speech could succeed.

Subaiti says that in spite of the proclamation Abu Dharr continued exhorting the people as usual, so much so, that in Medina the descendants of Umayyah who were the supporters of Uthman, got tired of him and complained to Uthman, that Abu Dharr had not given up his sermons as yet. He has tired us out. For Allah's sake devise some other means". Hearing this Uthman ordered Abu Dharr to be presented in his court.

Under orders from Uthman people caught Abu Dharr and brought him to the court. Uthman said, "O Abu Dharr! I have warned you in every way but you do not take my advice. What has happened to you?" Abu Dharr replied, "Curse be on you, O Uthman! Is your mode of conduct similar to that of the Holy Prophet, or similar to that of Abu Bakr bin Quhafa and Umar bin Khattab? You are doing with us what the tyrants do". Uthman said, "I do not know anything. Get out of my city".

Abu Dharr: I also do not want to stay near you. All right, tell me where should I go?

Uthman: Go wherever you like but be off from here.

Abu Dharr: May I go to Syria?

Uthman: No, I have got you dragged from there. You have made Syria offended with me. Can I send you there again?

Abu Dharr: Then, May I go to Iraq?

Uthman: No, you want to go where people criticize their rulers.

Abu Dharr: Should I go to Egypt, then?

Uthman: No.

Abu Dharr: Should I go to Kufah?

Uthman: No.

Abu Dharr: Where should I go then? Should I go to Mecca?

Uthmah: No.

Abu Dharr: O Uthman! You stop me from going to the House of Allah! What does it matter to you if I go there and worship Allah till death?

Uthman: No, by Allah, never.

Abu Dharr: Then you should tell me where I should move away. Should I go out to the forest?

Uthman: No.

Abu Dharr: Then should I go back to my pre-Islamic days and take my residence in Najd. After all tell me some place where I should go to.

Uthman: O Abu Dharr! You should tell me which place you like most.

Abu Dharr: Medina, or Mecca, or (according to Jahiz) Jerusalem.

Uthman: You cannot live here at any cost. Now you should tell me the place you dislike most.

Abu Dharr: Rabzah.

Uthman: Well, I order you to leave for Rabzah. Hearing this Abu Dharr said, Allah is Great! The Holy Prophet had truly said that all this was to happen.

Uthman: What had the prophet said?

Abu Dharr: He had said that I would be banished from Medina, would be stopped from going to Mecca and would be forced to take my residence at the worst place Rabzah where I would die and would be buried by a group of Iraqis going to Hijaz.

Hearing this Caliph Uthman, according to A'tham Kufi, said, "Get up and go to Rabzah. Stay there and do not go anywhere".² He was tortured with severe injury. Then the Caliph ordered Marwan to send him to Rabzah on the bare back of a camel without a saddle, and to announce that nobody should go to see him off³.

It cannot be denied that exile is tantamount to assassination. Those who are banished from their home- ands prefer assassination to exile. Events speak for themselves that those who were turned out of their homelands always wept bitterly. Patriotism is a gift of nature. Traditions have called it a part of faith. Prophet Yusuf used to weep for his homeland sitting on the royal throne of Egypt.

Not to speak of other prophets, let us think of the life events of Prophet Muhammad. He was forced to migrate from Mecca to Medina. But whenever he remembered Mecca or saw some inhabitant of that city, his eyes were filled with tears. Alas! Abu Dharr was being driven out of his hometown. Imagine how he must have been feeling especially when he was leaving the tomb of the Prophet. But it could not be helped because he was forcibly sent into exile according to the established practice of Caliph Uthman, who expelled from his hometown every person with whom he got offended. According to the historian Tabari it was the practice of Uthman that he separated from the people the person, with whom he was displeased and he used to say that no punishment was more severe than that⁴.

Orders had been issued for the exile of Abu Dharr and also to the effect that nobody was to accompany him or talk to him, or see him off or visit him. Abdullah ibn Abbas says that when Abu Dharr was turned out of Medina to Rabzah it was announced under orders from Uthman that nobody was to talk to Abu Dharr or to come out in order to see him off⁵.

This was the order which paralysed the people and confined them to their houses. Nobody could have courage to come out of his house to see off an esteemed companion of the Holy Prophet like Abu Dharr except Imam Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Aqil, Abdullah bin Ja'far, Abdullah ibn Abbas and Miqdad bin al-Aswad .

Though the companions of the Holy Prophet could not speak out their thoughts against Uthman's orders for Abu Dharr's exile, yet they became extremely perturbed. Not only those companions, who were present there, got perturbed but also those who were not in Medina but who heard the news of his banishment became restless. For example, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud⁶ who was in Kufah and likewise the people who belonged to his tribe became extremely agitated.

In short, on Uthman's order Marwan brought a camel without a saddle and was about to send him off when suddenly Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Aqil, Ammar, Abdullah ibn Ja'far, Miqdad bin al-Aswad and Abdullah ibn Abbas came out and said, "O the accursed Marwan! Stop. Don't seat him on the camel yet. We have to say good-bye to him".

Ali said, “O Abu Dharr! Don't worry. People got scared of you because of their greed for the world, and you did not fear them on account of your faith till the time came when they exiled you. Abu Dharr! Every kind of trouble comes to him who is pious, but remember that Allah devises wonderful means of deliverance for the pious. Nothing can give you of consolation except the “truth”. The “truth” will be your companion in loneliness. I know that you can get alarmed only by untruth and that cannot come near you.”

Then Imam Ali asked his sons to bid farewell to their uncle.

After hearing this Imam Hasan said, “O my dearest uncle Abu Dharr! May Allah have mercy on you. We are seeing what is being done to you. Our hearts are burning. Don't be worried. Allah is your guide and only Him you should have before you. O uncle! Have patience at this calamity till you reach my grandfather, while he is happy with you”.

Then Imam Husayn said, “O my uncle! You need not worry as Allah has power over everything. He can remove every trouble in which you are involved. His Glory is wonderful. O uncle! People have made your life miserable. Of course you don't care. Let the world separate from you, sooner or later. I pray to Allah for giving you support and patience. O uncle! Nothing is better than forbearance. Have trust in Allah. He is the disposer of your affairs”.

Ammar said in great anger, “May Allah not sympathize with him who has put you to great trouble and may he not give rest to him, who has made you restless. O Abu Dharr, by Allah, if you had welcome the world of the world-seekers, they would not have turned you out, and if you had approved of their conduct, they would have befriended you. When you stood firm to your faith, the seekers of the world grew weary of you. Don't be worried as Allah is with you. These are the unfortunate worldly-minded people who sustain the greatest loss. Similarly, other people also spoke and consoled Abu Dharr in different words”.

After hearing these speeches Abu Dharr burst into tears and said, “O the blessed members of the Holy Prophet's Family! When I saw you I remembered the Holy Prophet and blessing surrounded me. O my revered ones! You alone were the means of solace to me in Medina. Whenever I saw you I got the satisfaction of my heart and peace of mind. O my elders! Just as I was a burden to Uthman in Hijaz, I was the burden to Mu 'awiyah in Syria. He did not like to send me to Basrah or Egypt, because he has his foster brother Abdullah ibn Sarah as the Governor of Egypt, and the son of his maternal aunt, Abdullah ibn 'Amir as the Governor of Basrah. He has now sent me to a place which is a desert where I do not have any supporter other than Allah. By Allah, I know Allah alone is my helper and for Him alone I will not care for any wilderness”.

According to Allamah Subaiti, after this Abu Dharr, who had grown old and weak, raised his hands towards the sky and said, “O Allah! Be witness that I am friend of the Ahlul Bayt and will always be their friend for your sake as well as for the sake of the hereafter, even if I am cut to pieces in my love for them”.

After that Ali said, “O Abu Dharr! May Allah have mercy on you. We very well know that the cause of your being driven from place to place is only your love for us, the descendants of the Holy Prophet”⁷

Anyway, when these great personages returned to Medina after having seen off Abu Dharr sorrowfully, Uthman got highly displeased with them.

A'tham Kufi writes: “Abu Dharr started for Rabzah and Ali and other companions came back. The Caliph sent for Ali and asked him why he had gone out of Medina to bid farewell to Abu Dharr and why he had taken a group of the companions with him, in defiance of his orders. Ali asked him if it was incumbent upon him to carry out the orders of Uthman even if they conflicted with the obedience to Allah and the truth. He, then, swore by the name of Allah that he would never do it”⁸.

Notes

1. Abu Dharr Ghifari, p.126 and Hayat ul-Qulub vol. 2, p. 1039
2. Dam'ah Sakibah vol. 1, p. 194
3. Murujuz Zahab-Mas'udi, vol. 1, p. 438, Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 148, Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol. 4, p. 168. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 1033. Majalisul Muminin p. 94, Tarikh A'tham Kufi, p. 131, Kitab al-Sufiyania, Abu Uthman Jahiz
4. Tarikhut Tabari, vol. 4, p. 527
5. Saqifah, Ahmad bin Abdul Aziz Jauhari, Murujuz Zahab, vol.1, p. 438, Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid
6. Allamah Subaiti says that the companions of the Prophet expressed their indignation at the exile of Abu Dharr to Rabzah. According to Mustadrak of Hakim when Abu Darda heard the news of his banishment he exclaimed, “Inna lillahe wa inna illaihe raji'un” (We are for Allah and we will return to Him). He repeated it ten times.
When Abdullah ibn Mas'ud heard this news in Kufah he became restless and he addressed a gathering of people in the masjid of Kufah, “O people! Have you heard this verse?” “Still, it is you who kill your own people, turning some of them out of their homes”. He objected to the Caliph by reciting this verse. Walid, the Governor of Kufah reported this incident to Caliph Uthman. The Caliph wrote him back to send Ibn Mas'ud to him. When Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reached Medina Uthman was busy delivering his address. Seeing him Uthman ordered his slave Aswad to beat him. He dragged him out of the masjid and there throwing him down on the ground he gave him a sound thrashing, confined him in his house and stopped his pension for life. (Abu Dharr Ghifari, p. 146, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol.5, p 197)
It should be known that Ali has also expressed his concern regarding the banishment of Abu Dharr in supplication of “Zammul Quraysh” (Sahifah Alawiyah).
7. Abu Dharr knew that love for the Ahlul Bayt is the foundation of Islam. According to Jazairi, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq has quoted the Holy Prophet as saying: “Just as everything has its foundation, the foundation of Islam is the love for us, the Ahlul Bayt (Anwar No'maniah).
8. Tarikh A'tham Kufi, p. 131, printed Dehli

Chapter 20

Abu Dharr was passing his days at Rabzah in utter solitude and loneliness. There was nobody to look after him too to inquire about his condition. He had no means of solace. Had his family been with him he would not have felt his loneliness so painful. They were still in Syria and Abu Dharr was driven out of Syria to Medina and then banished to Rabzah.

Abdul Hamid Jaudatus Sihar writes that when Mu'awiyah came to know that Uthman had exiled Abu Dharr he sent his wife (with others) to Rabzah. When Abu Dharr's wife came out of her house she had only a bag with her. Mu'awiyah said to the people, "Look at the belongings of the preacher of austerity". At this Abu Dharr's wife said, "It contains a few coins and not dirhams or dinars and those too, only to suffice for the expenses". When the wife reached Rabzah she saw that Abu Dharr had constructed a masjid there.

Various historians have mentioned the construction of a masjid by Abu Dharr at Rabzah. We find its mention in the books of Tabari, Ibn Athir and Ibn Khaldun. In the Arabic copy of Tabari there is a sentence that "Abu Dharr had drawn a line of a masjid" there and at that place he used to offer his prayers, just as today also people collect some earth in a jungle and name it a masjid. It was not a proper masjid, nor was it possible for him to construct a masjid like the one of today. According to Abdul Hamid during the days of Hajj when people passed through Rabzah they offered prayers in the masjid of Abu Dharr. This means that, that was not a populated place. If there had been a population there it would have been mentioned in some book of history that the people of that place offered prayers in that masjid, just as a mention is found of the pilgrims offering their prayers in it.

Allamah Subaiti writes that Abu Dharr was in a state of loneliness and was passing his days in such a condition at Rabzah that no human being could be seen there except an occasional wayfarer who sometimes passed that way. There was not a place where he could take refuge. There was a tree under which he lived. There was no arrangement for his food. There were poisonous grasses all around, and they caused his and his wife's death"¹.

After that the author adds that the reason to send Abu Dharr to such a place was only to stop his speeches, so that nobody could hear him, since he had a charm in his tongue. Whenever he spoke, he spoke the truth, which shook the foundations of the government.

In short, Abu Dharr was leading his life at Rabzah with his family in extremely straitened circumstances. There was no sympathizer there. But those honest men who had loved and reverence for him in their hearts used to go to see him. According to the historian Waqidi, Abul Aswal Duayli says: "I wished with all my heart to visit Abu Dharr and ask him why he was turned out. Therefore, I went to him at Rabzah and asked him if he had come out of Medina of his own free will or he had been forcibly expelled. "He said, "Brother! How to tell you that when I was sent to Syria I thought that I had gone to a place which was an important place of the Muslims. I was happy there but I was not allowed to stay there and was called back to Medina. When I reached there I consoled myself with the idea that was the

place to which I had migrated and where I had received the honour of companionship of the Holy Prophet. But, alas, I was turned out of that place also and now I am where you see”. After that he said, “O Abul Aswad! Listen to me. I was sleeping in the Prophet's masjid one day”. By chance the Holy Prophet came in. He woke me up and said,

“O Abu Dharr! Why are you sleeping in the masjid?”

Abu Dharr: The sleep overwhelmed me and suddenly I went to sleep.

The Prophet: Tell me what you will do when you are turned out of this masjid?

Abu Dharr: I will go to Syria then, because signs of Islam are found there. It is also a place of Jihad.

The Prophet: What will you do when you are turned out of that place also?

Abu Dharr: I will draw my sword at that time and will behead the man who turns me out.

The Prophet: I give a far better advice to you.

Abu Dharr: What is that advice?

The Prophet: You should let yourself be dragged when you are dragged, and that you should accept what is told to you, and should not fight.

O Abul Aswad! According to the Prophet's advice I listened to them and accepted what they said. I still listen to them to accept what they say. By Allah, He will take revenge on Uthman for what he has done to me and he will be proved the worst sinner in my case when he reaches in the court of Allah”².

The narrators of this authentic tradition are highly reliable and trustworthy as written by Allamah Amini in his book “al-Ghadir”.

Somebody asked Abu Dharr during his stay at Rabzah, “O Abu Dharr! Do you have any wealth?” He said, “My wealth is my deeds”. He also said, “By wealth I mean the worldly wealth and I want to know if you have any worldly wealth or not”. Abu Dharr said, “I never spent a day or a night with treasure or the worldly wealth with me. I have heard from the Holy Prophet that the treasure of man is his grave i.e. the wealth of the world is nothing, but the conduct of man must be good, because this will be of use at every place especially in the grave. The wealth of the world remains in the world, and the good conduct benefits you in the Hereafter”³.

Allamah Majlisi quoting Shaykh Mufid narrates from Abu Amamah Bahili⁴ that Abu Dharr after reaching Rabzah wrote his tragic experiences to Huzayfah bin al-Yaman, ⁵ the companion of the Holy Prophet who was probably at Kufah. In that letter he has given some pieces of advice and described his troubles and hardships. He writes:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful My dear Huzayfah,

I write to you to fear Allah in such a way that your crying exceeds limits. O brother! Renounce the world for the sake of Allah. Keep yourself awake the whole night in the worship of Allah, and give your body and soul to hardship in the way of Allah. These are the useful practices. O brother! It is necessary for a man, who knows that the person with whom Allah is displeased will have to remain in Hell; to turn away from the worldly comforts, keep awake all the night for Him and suffer hardship in the way of

Allah. O brother! It is essential for the man, who knows that the pleasure of Allah is a message to live in Heaven, to try constantly to seek His pleasure in order to get deliverance and success. O brother! One should not mind the separation of his family for the pleasure of Allah. Only the pleasure of Allah is the security of Heaven. If Allah is pleased all our affairs will be accomplished and the Hereafter will be agreeable. But, if Allah is displeased it is difficult for us to have a happy end. O my brother! A person, who wishes to be in the company of the Prophets and saints in the Heaven, should mould his life as I have done, and should act upon what I have mentioned above. O Huzayfah! You are one of those people to whom I feel pleasure to tell of my pains and sufferings. In fact I console myself by telling you what befalls or has befallen me.

O Huzayfah! I have seen the tyranny of the tyrants with my own eyes, and have heard their offensive words with my own ears. Hence, I was compelled to express my views on those disgusting talks and to tell them that whatever was being done was absolutely wrong. I did accordingly, and consequently those unjust people deprived me of every kind of privilege. They expelled me from city to city and drove me from place to place and they separated me from my brothers and kinsmen. O Huzayfah! They wreaked havoc upon me and worst of all they deprived me even from visiting the shrine of the Prophet.

O Huzayfah! I am putting before you my sufferings, but I am afraid lest this expression of mine should turn into a complaint against Allah. Huzayfah! I admit that whatever decision my Lord and Creator takes in my case is right. I bow my head before His command. May my life be sacrificed in His way. I am desirous of His pleasure. I am writing all this to you so that you may pray to Allah for me as well as for the devoted Muslims.

Peace be on you”.

Abu Dharr

It is not known how Abu Dharr sent this letter to Huzayfah bin al-Yamin. When Huzayfah read this letter his eyes were filled with tears. He recalled the traditions of the Holy Prophet concerning Abu Dharr. What moved him most was Abu Dharr's exile and loneliness. He picked up the pen with extreme anguish and wrote a reply to this letter.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

My dear Abu Dharr,

I received your letter and came to know your affairs. You have scared me of my return on the Day of Judgment and have persuaded me to do certain things, for the improvement and betterment of myself.

O brother! You have always been a well wisher of mine as well as of all the Muslims and have been sympathetic and kind to all. You were always anxious for the welfare of all. You always showed the people the path of virtue and forbade them to do the evil. Of course, guidance is the exclusive right of Allah. He gives deliverance to whom He likes and deliverance depends upon His pleasure. I pray to Allah for His general forgiveness and widespread blessing for myself, for the chosen and the common men and for all the people of this ummah I have come to know of those surprising facts, which you have mentioned in your letter, that is, your banishment from your

hometown, your abandonment in a strange land without friends and supporters, and your having been thrown away from your house.

O Abu Dharr! The news of your sufferings has broken my heart into pieces and the sufferings which you are experiencing at the moment are extremely saddening. But, I am sorry to say that I cannot do anything from here. Would that I had purchased your calamities for all my money. By Allah, had it been possible I would have sacrificed all that I have for you. O Abu Dharr! Alas! You are in troubles and I cannot do anything. By Allah if it had been possible for me to share your troubles I would have certainly done it. How painful it is that I cannot meet you.

It is difficult to reach you. If these cruel people make me equal partner with you in your troubles I am willing to take upon myself your hardships. But, alas, it cannot be this way.

O Abu Dharr! Do not be worried. Allah is your supporter. He is seeing all these matters. Brother! It is necessary for both of us, you and I, to invoke Allah and request Him for the bestowal of good reward and for deliverance from punishment for us. O Brother! The time is approaching near when you and I will be called in the presence of Allah and shall be leaving soon.

O brother! Do not be worried at the troubles you have been facing and do not be alarmed. Pray to Allah to grant you its recompense.

O brother! I consider death is far better for us than to live here. Now it is necessary for us to leave this transient world, because soon disturbances⁶ will come in succession one after the other. These disturbances will go on mounting and will crush up the virtuous people of the world. Swords will be unsheathed in these disturbances and death will surround men from all sides. Whosoever raises his head in these disturbances will certainly be killed. No tribe of all the tribes of the towns and the deserts of Arabia will remain unaffected. At that time the cruellest will be considered the most revered one, and the most pious one will be looked down upon. May Allah save us from the evils of that time.

O Abu Dharr, I pray for you all the time. May Allah keep us under His mercy and protect us from haughtiness in worship. He is a great disposer of our affairs. We always expect His generosity.

Peace be upon you”.

Huzayfah⁷

Scholars say that Abu Dharr was spending his days with his family at Rabzah when suddenly his son Dharr fell sick. There was no physician in that deserted place to approach for treatment except trust in Allah. At last the disease aggravated till the time of his death approached. The distressed mother took up his head from the sand and put it on her knee. The son breathed his last. The mother and sister started bewailing, Abu Dharr was deeply shocked but his trust in Allah consoled him. He controlled himself and didn't weep. As it was a desert there were no arrangements for funeral. History does not tell us at this point how Abu Dharr buried his son, but it is known from an authentic source what he did after burial and how he expressed his feelings in words.

Muhaddith Ya'qub Kulayni writes: "When Abu Dharr's son Dharr died Abu Dharr put his hand on Dharr's grave and said, "O my son! May Allah have mercy on you. You were a very able son of mine. You have died while I am happy with you. You should know that, by Allah, I did not suffer any loss by your death and I do not need anybody except Allah. O son! If there had been no consideration for the horror after death I would have been happy to wish to replace you in the grave. But now to my mourning your death has kept you off mourning (for me). By Allah, I did not weep on your death but what you have suffered makes me weep. Would that I had known what was asked of you and what you said in reply. O Allah! I have excused my rights which he owed to me. O my nourisher! I pray you to excuse whatever rights he owned to you. My Lord! You are more forgiving than I." ⁸

Shaykh Abbas Qummi writes in his book 'Safinatul Bihar' (vol. 1 p. 483) that the words uttered by Abu Dharr on the grave of his son Dharr were also uttered by Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a) on the grave of his son Isma'il.

Abu Dharr had not yet forgotten the death of his young son when his wife also left him for ever. According to Allamah Abdul Hamid Abu Dharr and his family members were passing their days in such a condition that they had no proper arrangement for food except that they got a little piece of meat now and then out of the camel slaughtered for the government officials⁹. They generally used to eat grass or other such things in those days. One day Abu Dharr's wife ate some poisonous grass by which she contracted a fatal disease and died¹⁰. Abu Dharr also fell sick.

After the death of his wife Abu Dharr felt more lonely. He had only a daughter with him. When the people residing around Rabzah came to know of Abu Dharr's sickness some of them came to see him. According to the statement of Abu Dharr's daughter they said to him. "O Abu Dharr! What are you suffering from and what do you complain of?" Abu Dharr replied, "I have complaint against my sins". They said, "Do you desire something?" He said, "Yes I desire to have Allah's mercy". They said, "If you like we can call a physician". He said, "Allah is the Absolute Physician. The diseases as well as the remedy are in His power. I don't stand in need of a physician"¹¹. He was certain of his death.

Majlisi, on the authority of Sayyid Ibn Taus, quotes Mu'awiyah bin Tha'labah as saying: "When Abu Dharr's condition deteriorated at Rabzah and we got its information we left Medina for Rabzah to see him. After inquiring about his condition we desired him to make his will. He said that he had expressed his will, whatever it was, before the Commander of the Faithful".

We asked, "By the Commander of the Faithful do you mean Caliph Uthman?" He said, "Never! By the Commander of the Faithful is meant one who is the rightful Commander of the Faithful. O Ibn Tha'labah! Listen to me! Abu Turab, (The Father of the Earth) Ali is he who is the blossom of the earth. He is a divine scholar of this ummah. Listen! You will see many abominable things in the world after his death). I said, "O Abu Dharr! We see that you make friends with those whom the Holy Prophet loved".

Now we want to say something about the place Rabzah where Abu Dharr was confined and he was not allowed to go out of its bounds.

Scholars and historians agree that Rabzah is situated at a distance of three miles from Medina near Zate Araq on the way to Hijaz and at that time it was not more than desolate wilderness. Shaykh Muhammad' Abdoh writes in the footnote on page 17 of vol. 2, of Nahjul Balaghah that Rabzah is a place near Medina where the grave of Abu Dharr lies. Ibn Abil Hadid says that Abu Dharr's exile to Rabzah was one of the causes which led to the revolt of the Muslims against Uthman.

There is no doubt that Abu Dharr achieved the highest rank of faithfulness. He kept in view till the last moments of his life that he had promised to the Prophet to speak the truth and not to mind any reproach for the sake of truth. Shah Walyullah Dehlavi writes that it was the practice of the Prophet that he took oath of allegiance of different kinds from different people i.e. to go on Jihad, to renounce innovation, to establish the Islamic laws, and to speak the truth. (Shifa'ul 'alil)

The oath that he had taken from Abu Dharr was that of speaking the truth. Abu Dharr acted according to the oath of allegiance after fully knowing its implications, and why should he have not acted so, when he had the conviction, which admitted of no doubt, that whatever he was doing was in absolute conformity with the Will of Allah and the intentions of the Holy Prophet¹². In this respect he never cared for the mightiness of the government nor was he scared of his getting into troubles. He tolerated every kind of oppression and bore every kind of discomfort but did not stop from speaking the truth, till he was twice sent into exile. His last exile was without a parallel.

He lay confined in a desolate desert. To say nothing of a house for shelter, he had to stay under the shade of a tree, without any arrangement for food and without a place to reside, rest or sleep in. But with his lofty courage and determination Abu Dharr bore with cheerfulness all the hardships for the pleasure of Allah. His wife and young son having died, the time had now approached when he was waiting for his own departure in that desolate place with his only young daughter with him.

Alas! The last day of Abu Dharr's life approached in that desolate place. He was in prayers and his daughter was restless and anxious in view of her father's condition and approaching end. There was no man, not even an animal in sight. The moment was near for the angel of death to come, for the humanity to cry, and for the daughter to be deprived of her fathers love. She had not only seen but was still observing the helplessness of her father for whose love she became emotional again and again.¹³

We here reproduce the tragic story of Abu Dharr's death as related by his daughter, in the light of Majlisi's writing. She says: "We were passing our days with untold sufferings in the wilderness. It so happened one day that we could not get anything to eat. We kept on searching round the jungle but could not find anything. My ailing father said to me, "Daughter! Why are you so much worried today?" I said, "Dad! I am extremely hungry and weakness has overtaken you also on account of intense hunger. I have tried my utmost to get something to eat but could not find anything so that I might feel honoured before you". Abu Dharr said, "Do not be worried. Allah is the great disposer of our affairs". I said, "Dad! This is correct but there is

nothing in sight for the fulfilment of our needs. He said, "Daughter! Hold me by the shoulder and take me to such and such direction. Perhaps we may find something there". I held him by the hand and started in the direction he had asked me to go. On the way my father asked me to make him sit on the ground. I seated him on the hot sand. He gathered some sand and lay down with his head upon it.

As soon as he lay down on the ground, his eyes began to revolve and he got into the agony of death. Seeing this I started crying hoarsely. Then keeping control over himself he said, "Why do you cry, daughter?" I said, "What else shall I do, then father?" It is a desert and not a single man is seen here. I do not have a shroud for you and also there is no grave digger here. What will I do if you breathe your last in this desolate place?

He wept at my helplessness and said, "My daughter! Don't be worried. That friend of mine in whose love and in whose children's love I tolerated all these hardships had informed me of this event in advance. Listen! O my dear daughter! He had told before a group of his companions on the occasion of the Battle of Tabuk that one of them would die in a desert and a party of companions would go for his funeral and burial. Now, none of them is alive except me. All of them have died in populated places. Only I am left over and also in a desolate wilderness. I have never seen such a desert land where I am lying in the agony of death. My sweet daughter! When I die cover me with my cloak, and sit down on the way leading to Iraq. A party of believers will pass by that way. Tell them that Abu Dharr, the companion of the Prophet, has breathed his last. Hence please arrange his burial".

He was talking to me when the angel of death looked at his face. When my father looked at him his face flushed and he said, "O the angel of death! Where have you been upto now? I have been waiting for you. O my friend! You have come in the hour of my great need. O the angel of death! May that man, who is not happy to see you never get deliverance. For Allah's sake take me soon to the most Merciful Allah so that I may be relieved of the hardships of the world".

After that, he addressed Allah and said, "O my Nourisher! I swear by Your Being, and You know that I speak the truth that I never abominated death and always wished to meet You".

After that the sweat of death appeared on the forehead of my father and looking at me he turned his face away from the world for ever. We are for Allah and to Him we shall return".¹⁴

The daughter of Abu Dharr continued, "When my father died I ran crying to that path which led to Iraq. I was sitting there waiting for the coming party. Suddenly it occurred to me that the dead body of my father was lying alone. So I ran up to the dead body. Again I came back to the side of the path lest the party should pass by and I might not inform it. Thus I came and went several times.

Now suddenly I saw some people coming on camels. When they drew near I went towards them with tears in my eyes and said to them, "O companions of the Prophet! A companion of the Prophet has died". They asked me who he was. I replied, "My father, Abu Dharr Ghifari".

As soon as they heard it they got down from the camels and accompanied me weeping. When they reached the place they cried and were very much shocked at his sad demise and busied themselves with his funeral rites.

The historian A'tham Kufi states that the party which was going to Iraq comprised Ahnaf bin Qays Tamim, Sa'sa'ah bin Sauhan al 'Abdi, Kharijah bin Salat Tamimi, Abdullah ibn Muslimah Tamimi, Hilal bin Malik Nazle, Jarir bin Abdullah Bajali, Malik bin Ashtar bin Harith etc. These people at once washed Abu Dharr and arranged for his shrouding. After the burial Malik bin Ashtar standing by the side of the grave delivered a speech which referred to Abu Dharr's affairs and a supplication about him. After the praise of the Almighty Allah he said:

“O Allah! Abu Dharr was a companion of Your Prophet and a believer in Your Books and Your Prophets. He fought very bravely in Your way, remained steadfast to Your Islamic laws and never changed or distorted any of Your commands”.

“O my Lord! Seeing some contraventions of the Book and the tradition he raised his voice and drew the attention of those responsible for the ummah towards making improvements, as a result of which they tortured him, drove him from place to place, humiliated him, turned him out of the country of Your dear Prophet and put him to extreme hardships. At last he breathed his last in a state of utter loneliness in a deserted place”.

“O Allah! Grant Abu Dharr a big portion of those heavenly blessings which You have promised for the believers and take revenge on one who has banished him from Medina and give him full deserved punishment”.¹⁵

Malik Ashtar prayed for Abu Dharr in his speech and all those who were present there said “Amin”{May it be so}.

Anyway, when they had finished with the funeral ceremonies, it was evening and they stayed there overnight. They set off the next morning”¹⁶. After Abu Dharr's burial these people left Rabzah but his daughter stayed there according to his will. After some days Caliph Uthman called her and sent her home¹⁷.

Abu Dharr's daughter was however still near her father's grave at Rabzah with a mind to stay there for a few days more when one night she saw Abu Dharr in her dream sitting and reciting the Holy Qur'an. She said, “Dad! What happened to you, and to what extent have you been blessed by the Merciful Allah?” He said, “O my daughter! Allah has bestowed on me limitless favour, has given me every comfort and granted me everything. I am very happy with His generosity .It is your duty to be busy in the worship of Allah as usual, and not to let any kind of pride and haughtiness come to you”¹⁸.

Scholars and historians are unanimous that he died on 8th Zilhajjah, 32 A.H. at Rabzah. His age at the time of his death was eighty five years.

Notes

1. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, p.165, printed Najaf, 1364 A.H
2. Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 1, p. 241, Murujuz Zahab Mus'udi, vol. 1, p. 238, Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 148, Mustadrak Hakim, vol. 3, p. 343, Hulyah Abu Na'im, vol. 1, p. 162, Tabaqatul Kubra Ibn Sa'd, vol. 1, p. 166, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 5, p. 156 and p. 180, Sunan Abi Daud, vol. 2, p. 282, Fatahul Bari, vol. 3, p. 213, Umdatul Qari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 291
3. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 1046
4. His name was Sadi bin' Ajlan. He is mostly known by his nickname. Bahilah is the name of a tribe to which he belongs. Many traditions have been narrated by him. He lived at Homs (Syria) where he died at the age of 91. Some people say that in Syria he was the last companion of the Holy Prophet to die. But the fact is that in Syria the last companion to die was Abdullah bin Bashar (Izalatul Khulfa, vol. 1, p. 285).
5. He was a respectable companion. The real name of his father, Yaman, was 'Asal or Umail. He was martyred in the Battle of Uhud. Huzayfah was told the names of hypocrites by the Prophet of Islam. Umar often used to ask Huzayfah the names of the hypocrites. Huzayfah was also a ruler at Mada'in during the reign of the second Caliph (Izalatul Khulfa, vol. 1, p. 282). Tabarsi says that the hypocrites had prepared a scheme to kill the Prophet of Allah in the valley of Uqbah, but it was frustrated by Ammar Yasir etc. Just after that incident the Holy Prophet had disclosed the names of hypocrites to Huzayfah. According to Abu Dharr's statement the list of names disclosed to Huzayfah also included Ashrah Mubashshirah (Ten blessed companions of the Prophet who became famous by this title after the death of the Prophet). (Marginal-note of Ehtijaj Tabarsi, p.29).Noorullah Shustari writes that once Huzayfah went to Abdullah Ibn Umar who did not respect him. At that time Huzayfah told him that those who were better than him (Ibn Umar) were counted as hypocrites. The event of Uqbah took place on the people's return from the Battle of Tabuk. Ali was not with the Prophet. The nose- string of the Prophet's camel was held by Huzayfah and Ammar was driving the camel. When the camel entered a dangerous cleavage some hypocrites tried to kill the Prophet by frightening the camel. But he was saved by the cleverness of Ammar and Huzayfah. Huzayfah had taken his residence at Kufah after the Prophet's demise. He died forty days after the swearing of allegiance to Ali. He was Ali's sincere sympathizer. (Majalisul Mo'minin)
6. Perhaps it refers to the reign of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas.
7. Shifa 'us Sudur, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari p. 105 Al-Fusul by Murtaza Alamul Huda
8. Usulul Kafi
9. Tabari, vol. 5, p. 67
10. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 1049
11. Hayat ul-Qulub
12. Futuhatul Makkiyah Ibn Arabi, chapter 269
13. Most of the historians have attributed the death incident of Abu Dharr to his wife Umm Dharr, but it does not seem to be correct because the historians, such as Mas'udi and Ya'qubi, have written that Abu Dharr's wife and daughter had reached Rabzah. Majlisi has narrated the death of his wife at Rabzah as told by the daughter. Tabari has mentioned that the daughter was sent to Medina after the death of Abu Dharr. Ibn Athir has also admitted the presence of the daughter (vide Tarikh Kamil, vol. 3, p. 51) and not a single trustworthy historian has ever mentioned the arrival of Abu Dharr's wife at Medina.
14. It is established by narrations that Abu Dharr did not feel any pain of death, and it was quite justified because the pain of death is felt only by one whose actions are objectionable or who has done such a thing in life the recollection of which causes obstruction in the exit of soul. For example, when Ayesha felt great trouble in the agony of death and she started heaving deep breaths people asked her, "O the Mother of the Believers! What is the matter? What is this distress?" She answered, "The Battle of the Camel is choking me". (Rauzatul Akhyar narrates from Rabiul Abrar)
15. It is just possible that as a result of such a curse Uthman should have been killed in an exemplary way. History says that his dead body remained lying on a heap of dung for three days and the dogs ate up one of his legs. (Tarikh A'tham Kufi)
16. Tarikh Kamil, vol. 3, Izalatul Khulfa vol. 1, Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4

17. Tarikh Tabari vol. 4 p. 527
18. Hayat ul-Qulub, vol. 2

Chapter 21

Having suffered continuous oppressions, constant tortures and hardships of the successive exiles at the hands of the worldly-minded men, Abu Dharr left this transient world at Rabzah, but the story of his love for Allah is still living and will last for ever. History is replete with examples, truthfulness and his straightforward and honest speeches are resounding in the hearts of the believers. He is still alive through his character even after his death; and he will remain immortal through the principles he held so dear.

The world knows that he died in the way of Allah. He suffered troubles and hardships in support of truth and in establishing and propagating the principles of Islam in the Islamic State. But it is a pity that the tyrant does not repent of his tyranny. We reproduce this incident here in the word of the translator of the "History" written by Muhammad bin Ali bin A'tham Kufi, a historian of the 3rd century hijri. He writes:

"When the news of Abu Dharr's death reached Uthman, Ammar bin Yasir was present there. Ammar said, "May Allah have His Mercy upon Abu Dharr. Allah! Bear witness that we pray for mercy for him with all our heart and soul. O Allah! forgive him".

As soon as the Caliph heard it he lost his temper and said, "O fool!" You will meet the same fate. Listen to me! I don't feel ashamed on account of the exile of Abu Dharr and his death in the wilderness". Ammar said, "By Allah, this will not be my end".

Hearing this, the Caliph ordered his courtiers, "Push him out, banish him from Medina and send him to the same place where Abu Dharr had been sent. Let him also lead the same life and don't let him come to Medina as long as I am alive".

Ammar said, "By Allah! I prefer the vicinity of wolves and dogs to my stay near you". After that he rose from there and came back to his house.

When the Caliph decided to send Ammar to Rabzah and the news reached the tribe of Bani Makhzum they flew into a rage. They said among themselves that Uthman had crossed the bounds of decency. After that they held a council and thought that it would be better if before taking any step this matter is settled by compromise. With this aim in view they came to Ali. Ali asked them, "Why have all of you come at this time?" They said, "A serious problem is facing us; the Caliph has decided to banish Ammar from Medina to Rabzah. Be kind enough to go to the Caliph and persuade him in suitable words to leave Ammar alone and not to banish him from the city otherwise such a disturbance will stir as would hardly be quelled".

Imam Ali listened to them, consoled them and asked them not to make haste. He told them, "I'll go to the Caliph and will try to settle the matter. I am sure it will be settled amicably. I am fully conscious of the situation. I'll bring him round to your view point".

After this Ali went to Caliph Uthman and said, "O Uthman! You are too hasty in some matters and ignore the suggestions of friends and advisors. Once you turned Abu Dharr out of Medina. He was a very virtuous Muslim, a dignified companion of the Prophet of Allah and the best of immigrants. You sent him to Rabzah where the poor fellow died in solitude. On account of this incident, the Muslims have turned all the more against you. Now I

hear that you have decided to banish Ammar as well from the city. This is not a good thing. Have fear of Allah and desist from banishing Ammar from Medina. For Allah's sake don't give such troubles to the companions of the Prophet and let them live in peace". Hearing this Uthman angrily said to Ali. "You should be the first to be banished from the city because it is you who are ruining Ammar and others".

Hearing these indecent words Ali said, "O Uthman! How dare you think like this about me? You will not be able to do it even if you wish it, and if you doubt my words just try. Then you will realize the actual state of affairs and will come to know whom you are facing. And now you say that I am ruining Ammar and others. By Allah all this disorder is from your side. I don't see any fault with them. You are committing such acts as are against the religion and decency. People cannot tolerate them, and are turning against you, and you cannot tolerate these things. You fell offended with everyone and then you cause them trouble. This attitude is far from the ways of the elders". After that he rose from there and went out.

When the people of Bani Makkzum came to Ali, to know what the Caliph had told him in their case, Ali said, "Tell Ammar to remain indoors and not to come out. Allah will save him from the evil designs. The Caliph also came to know of this conversation through somebody and he gave up the idea of exiling Ammar. Zayd bin Thabit said to Uthman, "If the Caliph wishes we can go to Ali to have an exchange of views with him so that the misunderstandings which have cropped up may be removed and the normal relations are restored". The Caliph said, "You are at liberty to do so".

Zayd bin Thabit and Mughyrah bin Ahnas Thaqafi came to Ali, saluted him and took their seats. Then Zayd bin Thabit started praising Ali and said, "Nobody in the world holds that nearness, kinship, status, and honour with the Holy Prophet which you have. None could equal you in the support of and priority in Islam. You are the fountain of virtue and source of generosity".

After this eulogy Zayd bin Thabit expressed his real aim and said, "O Ali bin Abi Talib! We had gone to Caliph Uthman. He has made a sort of complaint against you, and has said that you sometimes object to his actions and interfere in matters which he wants to dispose of. So we considered it wise to come to you and explain those things, so that the mutual annoyances and displeasures may be removed, as it will be a matter of joy and pleasure for all the Muslims".

Ali said, "By Allah, so long as I could. I never objected to nor interfered with anything. But, now, matters have come to such a pass that it is not possible to show tolerance or assume silence. I had told him the truth about Ammar which implied his (Uthman's) welfare, safety and expediency. It was my duty which I performed and now it is upto him to do as he pleases".

Hearing this Mughyrah bin Ahnas spoke out. "O Ali! You should agree to what the Caliph says or does, whether you are convinced of it at heart or not. You should consider the obedience to his orders imperative, because he has control over you and you do not have control over him. He has sent us to you only to testify what you say after which he may be considered excused for whatever he says about you".

“Having heard Mughyrah's words Ali got angry and said, “By Allah he whom you support will never be honoured and he whom you set in motion, will never be at rest. Be off from me”.

Mughyrah was dumbfounded at what Ali said, and he could not utter a word any more. Seeing this Zayd bin Thabit said, “O Ali! Mughyrah talks nonsense. He has said these things of his own accord. By Allah, we have not come to you to bear witness, nor is it our intention to criticize you or to object to what you say. We wanted to open the door of mutual good will and reconciliation and that was the reason for our coming here. We request you to think over it. Ali expressed his pleasure and Zayd bin Thabit went back”.

It has been narrated above how Ali protested to Uthman. It goes without saying that Uthman's excesses had made the companions of the Holy Prophet awfully worried and distressed. They had already become disgusted with Uthman when they heard of Abu Dharr's sufferings. This episode caused great annoyance to the Muslims of all classes. As a consequence of it, people began to criticize the Caliph individually and collectively.

In this connection, Zubayr bin al-'Awam, a companion of the Prophet went to Uthman and said, “Had Umar taken a promise from you that you would not impose children of Abi Mu'it on the people?” The Caliph said, “Yes, he had taken that promise from me”. Zubayr said, “Why did you, then, appoint Walid bin Uqbah, Governor of Kufah?” The Caliph said, “I have done it just as Umar bin al-Khattab had granted the Governorship of Kufah to Mughyrah bin Shu'bah. I had, of course, appointed him the Governor of Kufah but when his conduct became anti- Islamic, that is, he started drinking wine and committing adultery, I deposed him and appointed another man in his place”. Then Zubayr said, “Why did you appoint Mu'awiyah as Governor of Syria?” The Caliph answered, “I appointed him Governor of Syria according to the views of Umar bin al-Khattab because before me it was he who had appointed Mu'awiyah the Governor of Syria”. Again he asked him, “Why did you rebuke the companions of the Prophet, although you are not superior to them in any way?” Uthman said, “I did not speak ill of you. What does it matter if I spoke ill of others?” He, then asked, “Why did you say that the recitation of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was bad, when he had learnt the recitation of the Holy Qur'an from the Prophet? Besides, why did you oppress him? You got him beaten so much that he fainted”. The Caliph said, “He used to utter such sentences as could not be tolerated”. Again he asked, “Why did you kick Ammar bin Yasir and got him beaten so much that he developed hernia?” Uthman said, it was because he used to incite people against me”.

Zubayr then asked him, “Why did you exile Abu Dharr and threw him into a place which was desolate and without a tree. The poor fellow died in a state of helpless despair. O Uthman! Did you not know that the Prophet of Allah considered him a great friend of his, and said that there is no one more truthful than Abu Dharr between the heavens and the earth? Did you not know that the Prophet of Allah did not tolerate his separation and whenever he was away from him, he used to go out in search of Abu Dharr?” Uthman bin Affan answered, “He used to instigate the Syrians against me, defamed me and disclosed my faults to the people”.

Zubayr then asked, “Why did you turn Malik Ashtar and his companions out of Kufah, and why did you separate them from their families?” Uthman said, “They used to create disturbances in Kufah and disobey my Governor, Sa'id bin 'Aas”. At this Zubayr bin 'Awam said, “O Uthman! Your actions are not justified. You did not think against whom you are taking such steps. The facts you mentioned did not warrant that you should have subjected the most revered companions of the Prophet to such tortures. O Uthman! If you allow me, I can point out to you your actions which contravened the very tenets of faith. I insist that you should fear Allah and should not be beside yourself on account of the Islamic State of which you are the Head, otherwise the day is not far off when you will get the retribution of your actions in this very world. This punishment will be in addition to the punishment which you will get in the Hereafter”.

After the tragic death of Abu Dharr when the nobles of Egypt came to Medina to seek a remedy for their grievances and went into the masjid of the Holy Prophet, they saw there a gathering of the Muhajirs and the Ansar. They saluted them and were saluted in return. The Muslims who were gathered there asked the Egyptians, “Why have you come over here from Egypt?” They explained to them the reason for their undertaking such a long journey. They said that the Governor who had been appointed in Egypt was utterly incompetent and mean”.

The Egyptians however, went to the door of Caliph Uthman and sought permission for an audience. They got the permission and went in and after paying their respects said, “O Uthman! We have been persecuted by your Governor. The acts which he is committing are simply heart-rending, painful and saddening. O Caliph! Allah has given you abundant wealth. Be thankful to Allah, have a strict watch over your functionaries and make the welfare of the masses your aim. We have not only brought you complaints against your Governour, but we also protest that the things being done by you are extremely troublesome.”

Uthman said: “Just tell me what these things are”. The answered: “You called back Hakam Ibn 'Aas to Medina again, although the Prophet had exiled him from Medina to Ta'if for good, and Abu Bakr and Umar had respected his decision in their respective regime. You tore the Holy Qur'an into pieces and got it burnt into ashes. You have given control of your kinsmen, the rain-water which was meant for the use of the masses and the people have been deprived of its benefits. You have banished some companions of the holy Prophet from Medina. You want people to follow you under all circumstances whether what you do is in conformity with the laws of faith or otherwise”.

O Uthman! Listen; we tell you openly that we will follow you faithfully if you tread a right path and if you persist in what you are doing at the moment, we will be obliged to throw off the yoke of your allegiance and consequently both of us will definitely be ruined.

“O Uthman! Allah knows everybody's condition. Every Muslim must fear Him. Listen! The relations between the ruler and the ruled are very delicate. The ruler must fear Allah and should desist from doing things which are

against the commands of Allah. We have said what we wanted to say. Now it is up to you to do as you like”.

Hearing this Uthman inclined his head forward and after remaining silent for quite some time said, “For the present I do not want to give explanation to your objections because they are so many but I can simply say about Hakam bin ‘Aas that the Prophet of Allah had not got offended with him due to some of his indecent and improper actions and that is why he had expelled him from the city. Now, when I became Caliph I called him back in view of our kinship. Tell me if the people of Medina have any grievance against him, I will definitely call for an explanation from him”.

Historians say that when people directed at Uthman a volley of objections about some matters he decided to think over those things and in that connection he wrote to all the governors of the dominion to ask the people to come to Medina and make direct complaints to him against the governors. As soon as these letters reached the governors, complaints from all quarters of the dominion started coming to Medina in succession.

The first to come were the people from Kufah, Basrah and Egypt. From Kufah Malik bin Ashtar Nakha'i in the company of one hundred people, from Basrah Hakam bin Heil with two hundred and fifty people, and from Egypt four hundred people including Abu Umar bin Badil, Wahhab bin Waraqa Khuza'i, Kanana bin Shir al-Hammi and Sa'id bin Hamran Muradi reached Medina.

After their arrival in Medina those Muhajirs and Ansar who were disgusted with the behaviour of Uthman and were very much distressed and sad owing to his wrong doings, joined them, and all of them decided by mutual consent that if Uthman thought over those points which they had presented before him and gave correct and satisfactory answers, they would follow him, but if he gave evasive replies as was his wont, they would depose him and make some able and noble man Caliph in his place.

When the informer conveyed this news to Uthman he very much repented and admitted that he had committed a great blunder in calling them to Medina. After seriously thinking over the matter however, came to conclusion that he should not see them. This was his wrong decision, but he took it, hid himself in the house and got the gates closed from inside.

When the people reached the gate of Uthman's palace, he started a dialogue with them from the roof of his house. He said, “Which action of mine do you consider wrong? Rest assured that I will accept every demand of yours and will do as you say. Don't be worried, I won't let you feel aggrieved in anyway”.

Those people said, “You have made rainwater unlawful for the people and have given it to your relatives instead. The Caliph said, “Don't feel perturbed. Listen to me carefully. I have stopped water because I have reserved it for the camels which have come to me in charity, but if you want me to allow it for all the people I have no objection to it”.

They said, “You have torn countless copies of the Qur'an and got them burnt. This is quite in contravention of the Islamic laws”. The Caliph replied, “As there had been many versions of it I compiled one Qur'an and

destroyed all other copies”. They said, “Why did you not bury them instead of setting fire to them?”

They said, “Why did you not accompany the Holy Prophet in the Battle of Badr and why did you not participate in it?” He answered, “At that time, my wife was ill and I was busy in nursing her”. They said, “Why did you not participate in Bay'atur Rizwan (allegiance promised to the Prophet at the place of Rizwan)?” He answered, “I had gone out at that time”. They asked, “Why did you run away leaving the Holy Prophet alone in the Battle of Uhud?” He replied, “I had run away of course, but this sin of mine had been forgiven. So there should be no questioning about it now”.

They said, “You have banished many companions of the Prophet who suffered great hardships in exile. Some of them were such as were highly revered and dignified. You expelled them from their homes and entrusted their affairs to such inexperienced young men and wicked people who made lawful for themselves bloodshed and forbidden wealth. O Uthman! Among those exiled people was also the companion whom the Prophet loved very dearly, and about whom he said that Allah also loved him and that Allah had ordered the Prophet to love him. You know whenever Abu Dharr went somewhere the Prophet himself used to go out in search of him. You sent him to a desolate desert and there he died of hunger and thirst. What explanation can you give for this misdeed of yours”.

Uthman said, “I banished these people from their hometown when they began to incite people against me. I feared that they would create dissension and discord. Leave it to Allah if you consider it my sin. Now about those people who are still in exile I say that you can call them back through somebody if you so wish. I have no objection”.

They said, “The tyranny that you have let loose upon Ammar cannot be forgiven. Why did you get him beaten so much that he developed hernia and is still lying sick”. The Caliph said, “He criticized me and gave publicity to my defects openly”.

They said, “Why did you distribute the money of the Public Treasury among your kinsmen and made them rich? The poor starve and your relatives live in affluence”. He answered, “Umar bin Khattab also used to do the same. He gave more to one who was capable”. They said, “He did not practise nepotism so much as you did. You gave all the money to your own relatives. Is merit confined to your family only? Were Salman, Miqdad, Ammar, Abu Dharr etc. not competent so as to be deprived of grants and allowances? You have squandered the money and wasted the wealth of the Muslims”. Uthman said, “If you think so, calculate the amount payable by me. I will pay up the money gradually and deposit it in the Public Treasury.

After that the Caliph talked in soft words and cringed before them, and at that time those people went away. The Caliph was not satisfied even after they had left. He knew that those people would attack him shortly. Therefore, he called Abdullah bin Umar and consulted him. He advised him to call Ali and ask him to calm those people. He was sure that they would follow Ali's advice”.

The Caliph called Ali through a special messenger and explaining to him the whole thing desired him to pacify the people. Ali promised him to do

accordingly and coming to the people said to them, “It is better to be cool-hearted”. They were very much angry. They said, “We hold you in high esteem, but we cannot tolerate the outrages and excesses of Uthman”. According to A'tham Kufi, Ali stood surety and said, “Don't be worried, compromise is better than dispute”. After that Ali went to Uthman with the leaders of those groups. After a lot of argumentation they concluded a compromise and Uthman wrote down the following agreement, which we quote here in the words of the translator of Tarikh A'tham Kufi:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

On behalf of Uthman, this document is given in writing to the people of Basrah, Kufah and Egypt who have objected to my actions, and I accept that from now onwards I will act upon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet, will not ignore the will of the people and will avoid disputes. I will call back the people who have been banished from their hometown and will return to the people their confiscated grants. I will depose Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Sarah from the Governorship of Egypt and will appoint a man whom the Egyptians like”.

The Egyptians said, “We want that Muhammad bin Abi Bakr bin Abi Quhafah should be appointed our ruler”. Uthman said, “Yes, that will be done”. In short, Ali, was held surety to all these matters and the evidences of Zubayr bin al-'Awam, Talhah bin Abdullah bin Umar, Zayd bin Thabit, Sohayl bin Hanif, and Abu Ayyub bin Zayd, were recorded and their seals were affixed. The last sentence was, “This document was written in the month of Ziq'a'dah 35 A.H.”. After that Ali and all the people left the place.

Historians say that when Uthman gave a written document of governorship to the Egyptians they left Medina for Egypt happy and satisfied. Accompanied by Muhammad bin Abi Bakr (son of the First Caliph) they were going along their way stage by stage till, according to Ibn Qutaybah and A'tham Kufi, they had traversed three stages or had covered a distance of three nights, when they caught sight of camel-rider going hastily towards Egypt. Muhammad Bin Abi Bakr ordered him to be arrested and brought to him. People rushed up and brought him. Muhammad asked him, “Where are you coming from, and where are you going to?” He said, “I am coming from Medina and am going to Egypt”. They asked him why he was going to Egypt. He replied that he had a personal business. As they had become suspicious they asked him if he had any letter. He denied it. Muhammad bin Abi Bakr ordered him to be searched. When a search was made no letter could be found. Muhammad said, “Search his leather bottle”. When the bottle was emptied of water they found a letter in a ball of wax. When they unfolded it, they discovered that the letter was written from Uthman with his seal on it and addressed to the Governor of Egypt; Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarah.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

I, the servant of Allah, Uthman order you (Abdullah bin Sarah) that as soon as Umar bin Badil Khuza'i reaches you, you should behead him, and cut the limbs of 'Alqamah bin Adis, Kananah bin Bashir, and 'Urwaisi so that they die rolling and wriggling in their blood. Then get their dead bodies hanged by the trees at crossroads. Ignore the orders written in my hand,

which Muhammad bin Abi Bakr carries to you, and if possible kill him with some design. Stick to your post with confidence. Do not fear anything and rule over Egypt”.

Muhammad bin Abi Bakr and the other dignitaries of Egypt got astonished to read this letter and said, “What a sound agreement has been concluded! How sincerely the vow has been made and how faithfully the word has been kept! What would have happened if we had reached Egypt and this slave had reached earlier!”

In short they thanked Allah that they had escaped the danger, and returned to Medina in great haste. There they collected all the companions of the Prophet and read out the letter of Uthman bin' Affan before them. .

After listening to the contents of the letter and discovering the real fact, no inhabitant of Medina remained sympathetic to the Caliph. Strong revolt stirred up and all people began to talk openly against the Caliph. Hearts were filled with excitement and on account of this cunningness everybody got disgusted with the rule of the Caliph. Those people (according to al-Fakhri) who had heard Ayesha's sentence “Kill this Jew Uthman” and those people who (according to Atham Kufi) had become fed up and extremely sad, because their elders had been tortured, got ready to fight.

Bani Salim were enraged because of Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Bani Makhzum were excited owing to the tragic incident that had occurred to Ammar bin Yasir and Bani Ghifar had been infuriated on account of the treatment meted out to Abu Dharr Ghifari. In other words, these tribes revolted because of Uthman's behaviour in relation to their leaders and became so much inflamed that they could not think of anything except to kill Uthman.

Under these circumstances all tribes including the Egyptians resolved to see Ali at first, because he had stood surety for them and had signed the document in that capacity. So all of them came to Ali and presented before him the intercepted letter of the Caliph. As Ali read the letter and came to know of its contents he felt highly shocked. He said in great surprise, “I am very astonished. What has Uthman done?” After that he went to Uthman with that letter and putting it before him he said, “Read it”. When Uthman had gone through it Ali said, “I am at a loss to understand what to do in your case. You have played havoc. I had made these people agreeable at your instance. Now you have done what is unbecoming of a Muslim. I am sorry that you did not even realize the difficulty with which I had removed their antagonism for you. You know that they had started for their homeland fully satisfied and happy on account of their confidence in me. O Uthman! I thought the matter had been settled once for all. I thought that enmity was removed and the Muslims got rid of this dispute. But alas! You yourself ruined the already settled case. O Uthman! Tell me what kind of letter is this? Who is the writer? What kind of act is it? What opinion will the world form about this unbecoming act? What will the world think of this fraud and design?”

Uthman said, “O Abul Hasan! By Allah, I did not write this letter, not did I order anybody to write it, nor did I ask my slave to go to Egypt. I am quite ignorant of this case”. Ali asked. “Is this camel yours?” He replied, “Yes”.

Ali again asked, "Is the seal of this letter yours?" Uthman replied, "Yes". Ali said, "The hand-writing resembles that of your scribe. The seal is yours. The slave is yours and the camel is yours; even then you say that you do not know anything". The Caliph said, "It is possible that I was not informed, and the letter was written and despatched". Anyway, Ali left that place after this conversation.

At last, the Caliph delivered an address in the central Masjid and tried to explain his position regarding the letter. People said, "All right! We suppose that you have not written this letter. But it is established that it has been written in the hand of your scribe, Marwan. The seal is yours. The camel is yours. The slave is yours. Now we ask you to go back to your palace and hand over Marwan to us". The Caliph said, "No, it will never be".

A great disturbance arose after this talk. According to A'tham Kufi fighting broke out and the masjid turned into an arena, so much so that Uthman became unconscious on account of his being stoned. He was then removed to his home.

Now the time approached when those people, who were ordered by Uthman to be killed in Egypt decided to carry out the orders of Ummul Mo'minin, Ayesha, the daughter of Abi Bakr, which she was giving constantly with the words, "Kill this Jew, Uthman. He has become an apostate". So the people surrounded the house of the Caliph. Al-Fakhri writes that as soon as the house was besieged by the rebels Ayesha left Medina for Mecca and Caliph Uthman was killed by the people, under the leadership of her brother Muhammad bin Abi Bakr.

According to Tarikh Abul Fida, Uthman was killed on 18th Zilhajjah 35 A.H. His Caliphate lasted for about thirteen years. His body remained unburied for three days because his enemies prevented his burial. According to Ibn Jarir Tabari the dead body of Uthman lay for two days and nobody could dare bury him. The historian A'tham Kufi writes that the dead body of Uthman could not be buried for three days and remained unguarded till the dogs took away one of his legs. After that Hubayr bin Mut'im Taujeer bin Mut'im and Hakim bin Hizam went to Ali and said, "Please try to get the dead body buried somehow". Accordingly under threats from Ali arrangement were made to bury the dead body. But the people could not agree in any way to bury it in the graveyard of the Muslims. At last his dead body was buried in Hash Kaukab, the graveyard of the Jews.

After that the same historian writes that this event took place on the 17th Zilhajjah, 35 A.H. on Friday after the Asr prayers. Uthman's age at that time was eighty two years. When the news of this event reached 'Ayesha the Mother of the Faithful, at Mecca and she came to know that Uthman had been killed by the distinguished companions of the Holy Prophet she was overjoyed and said, "Allah gave him the retribution for his deeds. I thank Allah He punished him appropriately". (Tarikh 'Atham Kufi, Tarikh Al-Imamah vas Siyasah, vol. 1, Tarikh al-Fakhri, Tarikh Abul Fida, Tarikh Tabari etc.)

In short, Uthman was killed only three years after the tragic death of Abu Dharr. If you think carefully, his murder was occasioned by those very acts from which Abu Dharr asked him to desist. If Uthman had accepted the

counsels of the revered Abu Dharr, he would not have faced this day, and such calamities would not have fallen on him and Abu Dharr also would not have been thrown into seclusion at Rabzah where he died a tragic death.

Chapter 22

Jaun bin Huwi was Abu Dharr's slave whose life history depicts the training of Abu Dharr. According to the Mamaqani, the genealogy of Jaun is as under:

Jaun bin Huwi bin Qatadah bin A 'war bin Sa 'idah bin 'Awf bin Ka'b bin Huwi Habashi¹.

It is written about him that by race he was an African and was in the ownership of Fazl bin Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, from whom Ali bought him for 150 golden coins and he gave him as gift to Abu Dharr. By this Ali wanted Jaun to serve Abu Dharr.

Accordingly, Jaun rendered a meritorious service to Abu Dharr who was extremely happy with him. Jaun served Abu Dharr as well as received the benefit of his company. He observed every aspect of Abu Dharr's character very care- fully and was deeply impressed by it.

Of course Jaun left no stone unturned to serve Abu Dharr. Also there was no place where he did not have the honour of Abu Dharr's company except at Rabzah where his presence is not testified by any reliable book of history. Anyway, Jaun served Abu Dharr as best as he could. After the departure of Abu Dharr to Rabzah he stayed back in the service of Ali. After Ali's martyrdom he served Imam Hasan and when in the year 50 A.H. Imam Hasan was martyred he came to serve Imam Husayn.

In short, he rendered sincere services to the virtuous personalities all his life. When Imam Husayn left his hometown first for Mecca and then for Karbala during the month of Rajab in the year 60 A.H. Jaun was also with him during this journey.

Allamah Majlisi and Allamah Samawi write on the authority of Sayyid Razi Daudi that when fighting started at Karbala on the 10th of Muharram in the year 61 A.H. Jaun came to. Imam Husayn and desired his permission to fight. Imam Husayn said, "You have my permission. But O Jaun! You have stayed with me to live in peace and no wish to be killed!" At these words Jaun fell at the feet of Imam Husayn and said, "O my master, I am not one of those who flatter you during the period of peace and comfort, and leave you in times of adversity. O my master There is no doubt that my sweat gives a horrid smell, my lineage is not noble, and my colour is black, but with your blessing my sweat will become fragrant, my lineage will become noble and my colour will get white in Paradise. By Allah, I will not forsake you unless my blood mixes up with your blood".

At last Imam Husayn accorded him permission. Jaun came to the battlefield, started fighting and recited the following "rajaz" (epic verses):

"O you damned ones! Did you see the fight of the African slave?

See how he fights in support of the Progeny of the Holy Prophet!"

After the recital of the "rajaz" Jaun made a violent attack upon the enemy, fought continuously till he killed twenty five enemies and attained martyrdom. (Muntahul Amal).

Muhammad bin Abi Talib Makki has written that when Jaun was martyred Imam Husayn came to his dead body, placed his head in his lap and prayed to Allah, "O Allah! Brighten the face of Jaun, make his sweat

fragrant and give him a place with the virtuous ones in .Heaven, so that he may stay with Muhammad and his Progeny (Ahlul Bayt)”.

Scholars quote Imam Muhammad Baqir who quotes his father Imam Zaynul Abidin as saying that a few days after Bani Asad had buried the dead bodies of the martyrs and gone away, they found the dead body of Jaun whose face was bright and whose dead body gave out the sweet fragrance of musk².

In short, this faithful slave of Abu Dharr laid down his life for his master, Imam Husayn, fighting against Yazid bin Mu'awiyah, the Umayyad tyrant, with courage, boldness and bravery and attained martyrdom. It is an established fact that immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet, all his teachings and admonitions was disregarded by the hypocrites, whose only aim was to secure worldly gains and set the Prophet's teachings at naught.

Some of the companions of the Holy Prophet who were staunch believers in Islam, and were imbued with his and his Ahlul Bayt's love, rose up to fight, tooth and nail, against these evil forces. They were the true followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Ahlul Bayt and took guidance from what they had said and done. There were other companions also who assumed power and authority in the name of Islam. But instead of serving the cause of Islam, they misused Islam's name and wealth for their personal and family aggrandizement. They squandered away the wealth of the nation as if it was their own property. Among the companions there was one who went so far as to say: “By Allah, until I have exterminated the name of Prophet Muhammad from the face of the earth I shall have no peace”³. This resulted in the coming into being of a new trend i.e. kingship, which brought about horrors in the years to come. Such a deviation from Islam was intolerable for the true companions who could not refrain from uttering the truth even at the cost of their life.

Abu Dharr is a clear example of forbearance, Steadfastness, and courage, which he showed when tortures were inflicted on him so much so that he courted death but did not give up uttering truth, as had been predicted by the Holy Prophet. His example was followed by his slave Jaun also on the sands of Karbala when he valiantly sacrificed his life on the side of the Holy Prophet's grandson Husayn.

Notes

1. Tanqihul Maqal vol. 1
2. Absarul 'Ain, p. 165, printed Hyderabad Deccan, 1357 A.H. & Biharul Anwar, vol. 1
3. Murujuz Zahab by Mas'udi, vol. 3, p. 454, printed by Oarul Andalus Press

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- 5- Usulul Kafi
- 6- Tarikh Abul Fida
- 7- Tafsir 'Ayashi
- 8- Tarikh Rawzatus Safa
- 9- Tafsir Tha'labi
- 10- Tarikh Halabi
- 11- Tafsir Durr-i Manthur
- 12- Tarikh Ibn Wardi
- 13- Tafsir Fatl.lul Qadir
- 14- Tarikh Ibn Khallakan
- 15- Tafsir Ghara'ibul Qur'an
- 16- Tarikh Tabari
- 17- Tafsir Fathul Bayan al-Faruq
- 18- Tafsir Ibn Kathir
- 19- Ummahatul Ummah
- 20- Tafsir Qartabi
- 21- Rawzatul Ahbab
- 22- Tafsir Kashshaf
- 23- Madarijun Nubuwwah
- 24- Tafsir al Fa 'iq Isti 'ab
- 25- Tafsir Kabir
- 26- Tarikh Kamil
- 27- Tafsir Khazin
- 28- Tarikh Murujuz Zahab
- 29- Tafsir Alusi
- 30- Iqdul Farid
- 31- Tafsir Tabari
- 32- al-Imamah was Siyasah
- 33- Tafsir Bayzawi
- 34- Tarikh A'tham Kufi
- 35- Tafsir Fazlur Rahman
- 36- Tarikhul Khulafa ,
- 37- Tafsir Jalalayn Mustatraf
- 38- Tafsir safi
- 39- Tarikh Balazari
- 40- Tafsir Majma 'ul Bayan
- 41- Tarikh Ibn Khaldun
- 42- Tafsir Itqan-i Suyuti
- 43- Tarikh Khatib Bagheadi
- 44- Biharul Anwar
- 45- al-Fitnatul Kubra
- 46- Majalisul Mu 'aminin
- 47- Tarikh Ya 'qubi

- 48- Izalatul Khifa'
- 49- Tarikh al-Fakhri
- 50- Hayat ul-Qulub
- 51- Tarikh al-Khizri
- 52- Nasikhut Tawarikh
- 53- Kibrit Ahmar
- 54- Abu Dharr Ghifari -Subayti
- 55- Futuhat Makkiyah
- 56- Siratun Nabi
- 57- al-Bidayah wan Nihayah
- 58- Tarikh-i Khamis
- 59- Absarul ' Ain
- 60- Tazkara-i Khawasul Ummah
- 61- Tarikh Ibn Kathir
- 62- Tarikh zakir Husayn Ma'arif Ibn Qutaybah
- 63- Ma 'arijun Nubuwwah
- 64- Rawzatul Manazir
- 65- Nurul Absar
- 66- Ansabul Ashraf Balazari
- 67- Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah
- 68- Mishqat Sharif
- 69- Srrah Halabiyah
- 70- Riyazun Nuzrah
- 71- Srrah Zayni Dahlan
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- 91- Sahih Muslim
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- 93- Hilyatul Awliya '
- 94- Sunan Bayhaqi
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- 96- Tahzibut Tahzib
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- 99- Fathul Bari Lisanul Mazin
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- 102- Mizanul A'tidal Masabrhus Sunnah
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- 104- Hayatul Haywan
- 105- al-Munjid
- 106- Kitabul Imta'ul Asma' al-Nihayah
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- 120- Kanzul 'Irfan
- 121- Qurbul Asnad Dumayri
- 122- Muntahul Amal
- 123- Kitab Ikhtisas Shaykh Mufid
- 124- Tahzibul Ahkam
- 125- 'Uyun Akhbar al-Riza

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