

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 nabiyyika wal afiyata min jami'il bla'eh 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-Ruqa ¹⁰ 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".

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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

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