

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 Ahul 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 saves 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 f 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 throne". 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 Allam ah 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 Muhmmad 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.

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