

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 it<sup>2</sup>. 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 Prophet<sup>3</sup>.

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 bachelor<sup>4</sup>.

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 drawn<sup>5</sup>. 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.

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

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