

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 off.³

It cannot be denied that exile is tantamount to assassination. Those who are banished from their homelands 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'ud ⁶ 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 Abbad 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'ham 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](#).

[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-Sufiyana, 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

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