

Sermon 130: O Abu Dharr!...

Delivered when Abu Dharr ¹ was exiled towards ar-Rabadhah

(ومن كلام له (عليه السلام

لأبي ذر(رحمه الله) لما أخرج إلى الربرة

O Abu Dharr! You showed anger in the name of Allah therefore have hope in Him for Whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (pleasure of this) world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about. How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you.

You will shortly know who is the gainer tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah would open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions they would have loved you and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum.

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، إِنَّكَ غَضِبْتَ لِلَّهِ، فَارْجُ مَنْ غَضِبْتَ لَهُ، إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ خَافُوكَ عَلَى دُنْيَاهُمْ، وَخَفَتَهُمْ عَلَى دِينِكَ، فَاتْرُكْ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ مَا خَافُوكَ عَلَيْهِ، وَاهْرُبْ مِنْهُمْ بِمَا خَفَتَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ؛ فَمَا أَحْوَجَهُمْ إِلَى مَا مَنَعْتَهُمْ، وَأَغْنَاكَ عَمَّا مَنَعُوكَ! وَسَتَعْلَمُ مِنَ الرَّابِحِ غَدًا، وَالْأَكْثَرُ حُسْدًا. وَلَوْ أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَيْنِ كَانَتَا عَلَى عَبْدٍ رَتَقًا، ثُمَّ اتَّقَى اللَّهَ، لَجَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْهُمَا مَخْرَجًا! لَا يُؤْتِسِنُكَ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ، وَلَا يُوحِشُكَ إِلَّا الْبَاطِلُ، فَلَوْ قَبِلْتَ دُنْيَاهُمْ لِأَحْبُوكَ، وَلَوْ قَرَضْتَ مِنْهَا لَأَمْنُوكَ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 130

- (1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah*, 206;
- (2) al-Jawhari, *Kitab al-Saqifah*, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh*, II, 375;
- (3) al-Ya'qubi, *Ta'rikh*, II, 120.

1. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari's name was Jundab ibn Junadah. He was an inhabitant of ar-Rabadhah which was a small village on the east side of Medina. When he heard about the proclamation of the Prophet, he came to Mecca and after making enquiries saw the Prophet and accepted Islam whereupon the unbelievers of Quraysh gave him all sorts of troubles and inflicted pain after pain, but he remained steadfast. Among the acceptors of Islam he is the third, fourth or fifth. Along with this precedence in Islam his renunciation and piety was so high that the Prophet said: "Among my people Abu Dharr is the like of `Isa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary) in renunciation and piety".

In the reign of Caliph `Umar, Abu Dharr left for Syria and during `Uthman's reign also remained there. He spent his days in counselling, preaching, acquainting people with the greatness of the members of the Prophet's family and guiding the people to the rightful path. The traces of Shi'ism now found in Syria and Jabal `Amil (north of Lebanon) are the result of his preaching and activity and the fruit of seeds sown by him.

The Governor of Syria, Mu'awiyah, did not like the conduct of Abu Dharr and was much disgusted with his open criticism and mention of the money-making and other wrongful activities of `Uthman. But he could do nothing. At last he wrote to `Uthman that if he remained there any longer he would rouse the people against the Caliph. There should therefore be some remedy against this. On this, `Uthman wrote to him that Abu Dharr should be seated on an unsaddled camel and dispatched to Medina. The order was obeyed and Abu Dharr was sent to Medina. On reaching Medina he resumed his preaching of righteousness and truth. He would recall to the people the days of the Holy Prophet and refrain them from displays of kingly pageantry, whereupon `Uthman was much perturbed and tried to restrict his speaking. One day he sent for him and said: "I have come to know that you go about propagating that the Holy Prophet said that:

"When Banu Umayyah will become thirty in number they will regard the cities of Allah as their property, His creatures their slaves and His religion the tool of their treachery."

Abu Dharr replied that he had heard the Prophet say so. `Uthman said that he was speaking a lie and enquired from those beside him if any one had heard this tradition and all replied in the negative. Abu Dharr then said that enquiry should be made from Amir al-mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.). He was sent for and asked about it. He said it was correct and Abu Dharr was telling the truth. `Uthman enquired on what basis he gave evidence for the correctness of this tradition. Amir al-mu'minin replied that he had heard the Holy Prophet say that:

"There is no speaker under the sky or over the earth more truthful than Abu Dharr".

Now `Uthman could do nothing. If he still held him to be liar it would mean falsification of the Prophet. He therefore kept quiet despite much perturbation, since he could not refute him. On the other side Abu Dharr began speaking against the usurping of Muslims' property quite openly and whenever he saw `Uthman he would recite this verse:

And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way; announce thou unto them a painful chastisement. On the Day (of Judgement) when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then shall be branded with it their foreheads and their sides and their backs; (saying unto them) "This is what ye hoarded up for yourselves, taste ye then what ye did hoard up." (Qur'an, 9:34-35)

`Uthman promised him money but could not entrap this free man in his golden net, then resorted to repression but could not stop his truth-speaking tongue. At last he ordered him to leave and go to ar-Rabadhah and deputed Marwan, son of the man (al-Hakam) exiled by the Prophet, to turn him out of Medina. At the same time he issued the inhuman order that no one should speak to him nor see him off. But Amir al-mu'minin, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, `Aqil ibn Abi Talib, `Abdullah ibn Ja'far and `Ammar ibn Yasir did not pay any heed to this order and accompanied him to see him off, and Amir al-mu'minin uttered these sentences (i.e., the above sermon) on that occasion.

In ar-Rabadhah, Abu Dharr had to put up with a very hard life. It was here that his son Dharr and his wife died and the

sheep and goats that he was keeping for his livelihood also died. Of his children only one daughter remained, who equally shared his starvation and troubles. When the means of subsistence were fully exhausted and day after day passed without food she said to Abu Dharr: "Father, how long shall we go on like this. We should go somewhere in search of livelihood." Abu Dharr took her with him and set off for the wilderness. He could not find even any foliage. At last he was tired and sat down at a certain place. Then he collected some sand and, putting his head on it, lay down. Soon he began gasping, his eyes rolled up and pangs of death gripped him.

When the daughter saw this condition she was perplexed and said, "Father, if you die in this vast wilderness, how shall I manage for your burial quite alone." He replied, "Do not get upset. The Prophet told me that I shall die in helplessness and some Iraqis would arrange for my burial. After my death you put a sheet over me and then sit by the roadway and when some caravan passes that way tell them that the Prophet's companion Abu Dharr has died." Consequently, after his death she went and sat by the roadside. After some time a caravan passed that way. It included Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, Hujr ibn `Adi at-Ta'i, `Alqamah ibn Qays an-Nakha'i, Sa'sa'ah ibn Suhan al-`Abdi, al-Aswad ibn Yazid an-Nakha'i etc. who were all fourteen persons in number. When they heard about the passing away of Abu Dharr they were shocked at his helpless death. They stopped their riding beasts and postponed the onward journey for his burial. Malik al-Ashtar gave a sheet of cloth for his shroud. It was valued at four thousand Dirhams. After his funeral rites and burial they departed. This happened in the month of Dhi'l-hijjah, 32 A.H.

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