

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

We will insha Allah remind ourselves of our duties and responsibilities as good Ahmadi Muslims, which we have taken from a book known as *Makarim Akhlaq* compiled by a scholar of the 6th century AH. I have taken this from a website on the net. It concerns the advice that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) gave to Hazrat Abu zar Al Ghaffari, a very close companion of his at the latter's asking. But before I tell you about the hadith I would like to say a few words about Hazrat Abu Zarr (ra) himself. About the circumstances of his life we read on the net:

“In the Waddan valley which connects Makkah with the outside world, lived the tribe of Ghifar. The Ghifar existed on the meagre offerings of the trade caravans of the Quraysh which plied between Syria and Makkah. Jundub ibn Junadah, nicknamed Abu Dharr, was a member of this tribe.

He was known for his courage, his calmness and his far sightedness and also for the repugnance he felt against the idols which his people worshipped. He rejected the silly religious beliefs and the religious corruption in which the Arabs were engaged.

While he was in the Waddan desert, news reached Abu Dharr that a new Prophet had appeared in Makkah. He really hoped that his appearance would help to change the hearts and minds of people and lead them away from the darkness of superstition. Without wasting much time, he called his brother, Anis, and said to him:

"Go to Makkah and get whatever news you can of this man who claims that he is a Prophet and that revelation comes to him from the heavens. Listen to some of his sayings and come back and recite them to me."

Anis went to Makkah and met the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him. He listened to what he had to say and returned to the Waddan desert. Abu Dharr met him and anxiously asked for news of the Prophet.

"I have seen a man," reported Anis, 'who calls people to noble qualities and there is no mere poetry in what he says."

"What do people say about him?" asked Abu Dharr.

"They say he is a magician, a soothsayer and a poet."

"My curiosity is not satisfied. I am not finished with this matter. Will you look after my family while I go out and examine this prophet's mission myself?"

"Yes. But beware of the Makkans."

On his arrival at Makkah, Abu Dharr immediately felt very apprehensive and he decided to exercise great caution. The Quraysh were noticeably angry over the denunciation of their gods. Abu Dharr heard of the terrible violence they were meting out to the followers of the Prophet but this was what he expected. He therefore refrained from asking anyone about Muhammad not knowing whether that person might be a follower or an enemy.

To make a long story short, eventually he met Hazrat Ali (ra) who told him that he would lead him to the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw).

Abu Dharr did not sleep a wink the rest of that night because of his intense longing to see the Prophet and listen to the words of revelation. In the morning, he followed closely in Ali's footsteps until they were in the presence of the Prophet.

As-salaamu Alayka Yaa Rasulullah, (Peace be on you, O Messenger of God)," greeted Abu Dharr.

Wa Alayka salaamullahi wa rahmatuhu wa barakaatuhu (And on you be the peace of God, His mercy and His blessings)," replied the Prophet.

Abu Dharr was thus the first person to greet the Prophet with the greeting of Islam. After that, the greeting spread and came into general use.

The Prophet, peace be on him, welcomed Abu Dharr and invited him to Islam. He recited some of the Quran for him. Before long, Abu Dharr pronounced the Shahadah thus entering the new religion (without even leaving his place). He was among the first persons to accept Islam.

He is reported to have said:

"After that I stayed with the Prophet in Makkah and he taught me Islam and taught me to read the Quran. Then he said to me, 'Don't tell anyone in Makkah about your acceptance of Islam. I fear that they will kill you.'"

"By Him in whose hands is my soul, I shall not leave Makkah until I go to the Sacred Mosque and proclaim the call of Truth in the midst of the Quraysh," vowed Abu Dharr.

The Prophet remained silent. I went to the Mosque. The Quraysh were sitting and talking. I went in their midst and called out at the top of my voice, "O people of Quraysh, I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

My words had an immediate effect on them. They jumped up and said, "Get this one who has left his religion". They pounced on me and began to beat me mercilessly. They clearly meant to kill me. But Abbas ibn Abdulmuttalib, the uncle of the Prophet, recognized me. He bent over and protected me from them. He told them:

"Woe to you! Would you kill a man from the Ghifar tribe while your caravans must pass through their territory?" They then released me.

I went back to the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and when he saw my condition, he said, "Didn't I tell you not to announce your acceptance of Islam?" "O Messenger of God," I said, "It was a need I felt in my soul and I fulfilled it." "Go to your people," he commanded, "and tell them what you have seen and heard. Invite them to God. Maybe God will bring them good through you and reward you through them. And when you hear that I have come out in the open, then come to me."

I left and went back to my people. My brother came up to me and asked, "What have you done?" I told him that I had become a Muslim and that I believed in the truth of Muhammad's teachings.

"I am not averse to your religion. In fact, I am also now a Muslim and a believer," he said.

We both went to our mother then and invited her to Islam.

"I do not have any dislike from your religion. I accept Islam also," she said.

From that day, this family of believers went out tirelessly inviting the Ghifar to God and did not flinch from their purpose. Eventually a large number became Muslims and the congregational Prayer was instituted among them.

Abu Dharr remained in his desert abode until after the Prophet had gone to Madinah and the battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq had been fought. At Madinah at last, he asked the Prophet to be in his personal service. The Prophet agreed and was pleased with his companionship and service. He sometimes showed preference to Abu Dharr above others and whenever he met him he would pat him and smile and show his happiness.

After the death of the Prophet, Abu Dharr could not bear to stay in Madinah because of grief and the knowledge that there was to be no more of his guiding company. So he left for the Syrian desert and stayed there during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar.

During the caliphate of Uthman, he stayed in Damascus and saw the Muslims' concern for the world and their consuming desire for luxury. He was saddened and repelled by this. So, Uthman asked him to come to Madinah. In Madinah he was also critical of the people's pursuit of worldly goods and pleasures and they were critical in turn of his reviling them. Uthman therefore ordered that he should go to Rubdhah, a small village near Madinah. There he stayed far away from people, renouncing their preoccupation with worldly goods and holding on to the legacy of the Prophet and his companions in seeking the everlasting abode of the Hereafter in preference to this transitory world.

In the year 32 AH, the self-denying Abu Dharr passed away. The Prophet, peace be upon him, had said of him: "The earth does not carry nor the heavens cover a man more true and faithful than Abu Dharr."

Now I will tell you about the advices he received from the Holy Prophet (saw). We may have heard or read about these advices before. But hearing them again has an embalming effect on the heart. I hope each one amongst us will take to heart what the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) said and that we will do our best to live by them.

Abu al Aswad said, "I had arrived at al Rabdha and I met Abu Dharr Jundib son of Janada (a) and he narrated to me." "I entered one day in the midday in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (s) in his masjid. I didn't see anyone at all in the masjid except the Messenger of Allah (s) and 'Ali (s) who was sitting by his side, so I took the opportunity of the emptiness of the masjid (to approach the Prophet (s)). "I said, " Oh RasulAllah (s), by my father and mother, please advise me with such advice that Allah will benefit me by it."

So he said, "Yes, and how noble you are Oh Abu Dharr! Most surely You are from us, the Ahl Al Bait (a), and I am giving You advise so remember it, for surely it is the collection of (all) the paths of goodness. Surely if You memorize them and put them into practice (hafiztaha), You will have by it 'Kiflan'." (Two folds of mercy, in this world and the hereafter)

Oh Abu Dharr! "Worship Allah as if you see Him and if you weren't seeing Him (you must understand that) surely He sees you. Know that the first of worship of Allah is (*Ma'rifa*) gnosis, for He is surely the first before every

other thing, so there is nothing before Him, the single most without any second, the continuing but not to an end. He is the Creator of the heavens and earth and whatever is in them and between them and He is the Subtle, the Aware, and He has power over all things; then (the second most important factor in the worship of God is) belief in me and acknowledgment that Allah sent me to all of humanity as a bearer of glad tidings, a warner, a caller (of people) to Allah by His permission and an illuminating torch of light; Then (the third most important factor in God's worship is) the love of the people of my house, Those from whom Allah has removed (from them) every impurity and purified them a perfect purification.

"You must know Abu Dharr that Allah, the Great and Majestic, has made the 'Ahl al Bait' in my nation the likeness of the ship of Nuh (Noah) whoever rides it is saved and whoever desires other than it is drowned. He has made them the likeness of the Gate of Jericho among the Banu Israel, whoever enters the gate is safe.

Oh Abu Dharr! "Safeguard what I am advising You, You will be happy in this world and next."

"Oh Abu Dharr! There are two blessings seriously taken for granted (misused) by mankind, health and spare time."

Oh Abu Dharr! Take advantage of five things before five things seize you; Your youth before Your old age, your health before your sickness, Your wealth before your poverty, your spare time before your being busy and your life before your death.

Oh Abu Dharr! Beware of Procrastination for you are (in) today and not (in) tomorrow. If there is a tomorrow for you, be tomorrow as you are today. If there isn't a tomorrow for you, you will grievously regret the opportunity you missed today.

Oh Abu Dharr! How many a person there is who has met a day he didn't complete! How many a waiter there is of tomorrow who doesn't find it!

Oh Abu Dharr! Had you known the exact period of time you will live and realize your fate, you would hate hopes and their deception."

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we will have to stop here today. Incha Allah we will continue with the same subject next week. These advices are not just to be listened to and ignored. They have to be absorbed and lived. If we do so

Allah will reward us as the Holy Prophet said. May Allah put each one amongst us among His sincere servants. Ameen.