

A Brief Sketch of The Violators of the Sabbath

Allah, the most High says,

“And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so we said to them: Be apes, despised and hated (or separated from everything). (2:65)” “So we made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it and admonition to those who guard (against evil) (2:66)”

Some have said that, it was an example for other cities, which were ahead of it or behind. Some have said that is was a persecution of those people who did wrong things.

Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq has said to be mutilated was the lesson for others, who witnessed them. And those who were born afterwards listened the story from their ancestors, and we also take lesson from these incidents.

Imam Al-Hasan al-‘Askari has said that Allah changed them into apes as they were disobedient and were hated by others, and kept them away from His bounties. It was a punishment for them and kept the people away from it. It was the lesson for them so that they can be saved from chastisement.

Imam Zayn al-‘abidin has stated that there was a tribe that lived near the seashore. Allah and his apostle told them not to catch fish on Saturday but they disobeyed their commands and prepared holes and tanks and rivulets near the sea so that they can catch fish easily. The fish entered the rivulets and tanks through holes and were caught. And in the evening could not return to the sea and the next day (Sunday) they caught them and said we have not caught you or touched you on Saturday. They were lying. In this way by catching and selling fish, they became very rich and led a luxurious life. They all were about eight thousand in all. About one thousand were doing the work that Allah disliked. Allah says,

“O Muhammad ask them (Jews) about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath on the surface of the sea, and on the day on which they do not keep the Sabbath, they did not come to them We try them because they transgressed.” (7:163) “And when a party of them said, why do you admonish a people whom Allah would destroy and whom Allah would chastise with a severe chastisement?”

They said, to be free from blame before your Lord and that happily they may guard (against evil)” (7: 164)

Imam said they were three groups among them, one was disobeying Allah and catching fish, a group prevented them from it and the third group remained silent.

Allah, the Exalted also said,

“So when they neglected what they had been reminded of, we delivered those who forbade evil and we overtook those who were unjust with an evil chastisement.” “Therefore when they revoltingly persisted in what they had been forbidden, we said to them; Be (as) apes, despised and hated. (7: 165)

Ten thousand people saw their condition that did not care of Allah’s chastisement, left them there, moved to another place, and settled there because they were afraid of chastisement. But at once the Divine chastisement came upon them and they became apes. All the gates of cities were closed no one could go out and no one can enter the city. When the people of other areas heard about it, they came and climbed the wall to see. They saw all males and females were apes and moving around here and there. The people opened the gate and the people who prevented them from evil also entered along with them and asking them whether they were their relatives. But the apes cried and answered them by nodding their heads, “Yes, we are your relatives.” They lived for three days only and Allah sent a heavy rainfall and they all were drowned. From that day Allah, the creator created apes that we see today.

Imam Zayn al-‘abidin said, “This happened due to fish that they all turned into apes, but what will happen to those who killed the grandson and progeny of the Prophet ? Allah has not punished them in the world but a severe chastisement is prepared for the day of judgment. If they had obeyed Allah and His orders for not catching fish on Saturday, they would not have been punished. The people who advised them to prevent from wrath should have also prayed to Allah and He would have accepted their prayer. But they advised them only, and not prayed to Allah and they all became apes. Because Allah has written this in the Protected Tablet.”

Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq has stated that Allah ordered the Jews to leave the worldly matters on Friday, but they did not obey His orders. Instead of Friday, they sanctified Saturday. Due to this Allah prohibited them to catch fish on Saturday.

According to another tradition, it is stated that Allah has transmuted a group of The Israelites which vanished into the sea. They have turned into animals, like apes, pigs and many other animals. Some have turned into aquatic animals.

According to ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim Allah gave them ample time to think and they became very rich and said that catching fish on Saturday is good and legitimate for them, but it was prohibited previously. When they started fishing on Saturday, they became wealthy. One day they were asleep and Allah delivered His chastisement. They belonged to The Israelites and inhabited a coastal town. They watered their

fields with this water and the fish came in large numbers on Saturday but were not coming on Sunday. The people put their nets in their canals on Saturday. The water became less in ebb of the sea, fish could not return back again to the sea and remained in nets. They caught the fish next day. Some learned men from their community advised them several times but they did not pay attention and all were caught in the chastisement and turned into pigs and apes. For this reason, fishing was prohibited on Saturday. At that time Muslims and non-Muslims considered Friday holy but Jews opposed them and sanctified Saturday. Due to their opposition, they turned into apes and pigs.

Imam al-Baqir has stated that in the book of 'Ali it is recorded that there was a tribe from Thamud. To examine them Allah dispatched much fish to their doors and it also entered their water tanks and canals every Saturday. Some ignorant people started catching fish. The learned persons prevented them. One day the Satan came to them and said, "Allah has not prevented you to eat fish, He has forbidden to catch them on Saturday and eat on Sunday." Due to this, people were divided into three groups. The first group said, "We will hunt on Saturday and it is legal." The second group said, "It is unlawful." And the third group was quiet. They did not say anything and said to the second group not to advise them. Allah would punish them. The people who advised them often, decided to leave the city that night as they were afraid they would also be held along with them in Divine chastisement. Therefore, they moved to the forest and passed the night. In the morning, they returned to their own city to find the condition of the offenders. When they reached the gates of the city, they found them closed. They knocked the again and again. Instead of humans voices they heard the animal sound. They brought a ladder and a man climbed up to see inside. He saw apes and swine roaming the city. Imam al-Baqir has stated that in the book of 'Ali it is recorded that there was a tribe from Thamud. To examine them Allah dispatched much fish to their doors and it also entered their water tanks and canals every Saturday. Some ignorant people started catching fish. The learned persons prevented them. One day the Satan came to them and said, "Allah has not prevented you to eat fish, He has forbidden to catch them on Saturday and eat on Sunday." Due to this, people were divided into three groups. The first group said, "We will hunt on Saturday and it is legal." The second group said, "It is unlawful." And the third group was quiet. They did not say anything and said to the second group not to advise them. Allah would punish them. The people who advised them often, decided to leave the city that night as they were afraid they would also be held along with them in Divine chastisement. Therefore, they moved to the forest and passed the night. In the morning, they returned to their own city to find the condition of the offenders. When they reached the gates of the city, they found them closed. They knocked the again and again. Instead of humans voices they heard the animal sound. They brought a ladder and a man climbed up to see inside. He saw apes and swine roaming the city.

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