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Part 12: Understanding of the Early History of Islam

The meaning of the ‘early history of Islam’ are those events which took place after the official appointment of the Prophet Muhammad (‘s) – specifically that which occurred after the migration to Madinah as a [significant] portion of the verses of the Qur`an were revealed after this event. Thus, amongst all of these events, having knowledge of the history of the battles and expeditions which were carried out is very effective in offering commentary on some of the verses of the Qur`an.

There are numerous verses in regards to events such as the Battles of Badr, Uhud, Ahzab; the event of Bani Mustalaq; the peace treaty of Hdaybiyyah; the victory over the city of Makkah (Fathul Makkah), the tribe of Bani Nadhir and the Jewish nation. Thus, having a comprehensive knowledge of the history of these events which have been discussed in the Qur`an in their own particular way also acts as a clear source for understanding the verses of the Qur`an which are related to the battles, expeditions and other events and this issue is one of those which is clear and understandable for all commentators of the Qur`an.

In this regard, one must refer to the authentic and true historical accounts, which have been written by the impartial and nonaligned historians. Through employing a systematic and methodical process, the correct historical accounts must be separated from the unauthentic reports.

Of course, within the books of history and biography, there are unfounded reports and narrations which are not in line with our Islamic beliefs, nor are they congruent with the verses of the Qur`an. Thus for the researcher who possesses awareness of the principles of history, he would be able to differentiate between the truth and falsehood (in these historical reports).

In this regard, we can recommend the following books: *as-Sirah* of Ibne Hisham, *Murujul Dhahab* of al-Masudi, *Imtiaul Asma* of al-Maqrizi and *al-Kamil* by Ibne Athir. However, it must be understood that we can not accept the entire content of these books. Rather as can be seen, some of them contain issues which have absolutely no foundation and go against both the intellect and the narrated proofs!

For example: In *al-Kamil* by Ibne Athir, when he relates the incident of Zaid and his wife, Zainab, he mentions something which no one other than an open and aware enemy [of Islam and the Prophet (‘s)] would claim to have occurred.¹

In addition, in regards to the attack of the army [from Yemen on the Kabah] and their destruction through the small birds which were sent to destroy them (by Allah (awj)), things are mentioned which go directly against the verses of the Qur`an!²

The work, *as-Sirah* of Ibne Hisham, is the best book which has been written in regards to the life of the Noble Prophet of Islam (‘s). In actuality, this book is a summary of the work, *as-Sirah* of Ibne Ishaq, which is unfortunately no longer available. If however, the Muslim scholars are able to find a copy of this book in any of the libraries of the world and after making minor corrections and some additional research (on the sources referred to in the book) are then able to have this work printed, then it would not be inconceivable that this book would open up a new horizon on the life of the Prophet (‘s) for us which the *Sirah* of Ibne Hisham has not been able to accomplish! It should be kept in mind that Ibne Ishaq was a Shi’a, while the one who summarized his work, meaning Ibne Hisham, was a Sunni, and thus, in various issues, there was a difference of opinion between them.

1. *al-Kamil* by Ibne Athir, vol. 2, pg. 121

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pg. 263

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