

Chapter 33: Benefits of History

The Almighty Allah says:

That nation, (Children of Ibrahim) is gone. They have reaped what they sowed, and the same applies to you. You are not responsible for their deeds. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 134)

This verse has occurred in Surah al-Baqarah with identical wording at two places. At one place it occurs after 2: 133. It says: Were you present when death came to Ya'qub and when he said to his sons: What will you worship after me? They said: We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq, One Allah, and to Him do we surrender. Then it says: Those are a people who have passed away, they shall have what they have earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer what they did.

At other place it occurs after 2: 140. It runs as follows:

Do you say that Ibrahim, Ismail, and Ishaq, and Ya'qub and the twelve descendants of Bani Israil were Jews or Christian? O Prophet of Allah say: "Do you know best, or does Allah? And who is more unjust than he who hides a testimony which he has received from Allah? Allah is not unaware of what you do". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 140)

Here also after this verse the Qur'an says: Those are a people who have passed away (i.e. the Children of Prophet Ibrahim) and his sons were neither Jews nor Christians and they lived before Prophet Musa and Isa. Secondly whatever they were and whatever faith they possessed and whatever good or evil deeds they did cannot benefit or harm you. If they were good people and did good deeds how does it concern you, and if they were evil-doers why should you be worried for their bad deeds?

Is it possible that on the Day of Judgment you will be held responsible for their bad deeds? While studying the history of Ashura we have mentioned in the foregoing pages the names of some good, brave, self-sacrificing, faithful and pious persons, and have also spoken about their good deeds and valor in the path of Allah as well as their steadfastness, virtues and good morals. Similarly we have mentioned the names of some bad, sinful, rebellious and oppressive persons and referred to their bad

and cowardly deeds. Keeping in view the good and bad deeds of the people we have extolled and praised those who were good and decent persons and cursed those who were mean and ignoble.

However, notwithstanding the fact that honoring and sending greetings to the souls of the martyrs and the devotees who sacrifice their lives for the sake of Allah, and cursing those, who oppose truth and draw their swords against the godly people, and eliminate the virtuous and pious persons, who are the best capital of every nation, is a good and proper act, it cannot guarantee the prosperity of man unless he thinks and acts like good persons and shuns the practices of evil-doers. Otherwise the position will be the same as mentioned by the Almighty Allah thus: Those are a people who have passed away, they have reaped what they sowed.

The good and pious persons and the wicked ones formed a nation which went its own way. Whatever goodness and virtue they had is for themselves, and whatever sins and oppressions they committed are also a burden on them. You will neither be rewarded for their good deeds nor held responsible for their bad deeds.

The object of repeating this verse in Surah al-Baqarah with a distance of less than ten verses is to invite the attention of the people to a very important point. One should not feel contented only by saying that Imam Husayn and his companions were great and magnanimous persons and Ibn Ziyad, Yazid and their collaborators were bad and deviated, because very often it is possible that there may be people who send greetings to the sacred soul of Imam Husayn but choose to follow Ibn Ziyad in the matter of thinking, actions and way of doing things.

There are many persons who criticize and revile the bad people of the past and wish that they may be awarded severe punishment, but as far as their deeds and conduct are concerned they choose these very persons as their leaders and guides.

There is no doubt about the fact that supporting truth and the truthful people and opposing the bad persons and the bad deeds, in whatever manner it may be, is something good in itself but it does not place man in the category of good and virtuous people and does not bring him out of the circle of the bad and wicked persons, except when one follows the ways of the former and shuns those of the latter. It is only in this event that a person may be justified in saying that he supports and favors the good and opposes the bad and the wicked persons.

The Holy Qur'an has paid special attention to the narration of the history of the past nations and the stories of the Prophets and of those who opposed them, and a large part of the verses and Surahs of the Qur'an has been specially devoted to this very subject i.e. the history of the ancients.

However, the object of these narrations of the Qur'an is not only that the Muslims should know that Prophet Musa was a good man and Pharaoh was a bad man or that the tribes named 'Ad and Thamud were bad and deviated whereas the people belonging to other nations were good. How do Muslims stand to gain or lose because of the goodness of Prophet Musa and other Prophets and the goodness of

the Christians of Najran, who were killed at the hands of Zu Nuwas, the King of Yemen or the badness of Zu Nuwas?

The object of the narration of the history of the ancients is that the Muslims should ponder over the factors for the advancement, glory and good name of a nation and for the adversity, humility and downfall of another nation, and do things which make nations advanced and respectable, and shun those things which have in the past been the cause of the downfall, adversity, Divine punishment and extinction of the nations.

They should understand that the Divine Sunnah (Divine Path) does not undergo a change. If a nation becomes honorable in the world for some reason, that reason will always be the means of glory, and if a nation becomes degraded and humble for some reason, that reason will always be the source of its misfortune and humiliation.

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