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13) Present to your heart the reports of the past ones, and remember that you will soon become one of them

13. Present to it (your heart) the reports of the past ones, and remind it of what befell the earlier ones before you. Travel in their lands and (among) their ruins, and see what they did, from what they have moved away, and where they arrived at and settled. You will find them having moved away from their loved ones and having inhabited an alien abode and (it is) as if you will soon become like one of them.

و اعرض عليه اخبار الماضين وذكّره بما اصاب من كان قبلك من الأولين وسِر في ديارهم، فانظر فيما فعلوا" وعمّا انتقلوا، واين حلّو ونزلوا، فانك تجدهم قد انتقلوا عن الأحبّة وحلّو دار الغربة وكأنك عن قليل قد صرت كاحدهم "كاحدهم

The Mirror of History

The study of the history of the ancient nations and people, and an observation of their remnants and a survey of the factors of their rise and fall are among the principles of Islamic education, Our study of the past will reveal to us that the same factors of rise and fall are still with us today in the form of "the tradition of history". We are subject to this tradition and we are not excluded by it.

This study of the past will show to us that pleasures and depression, honor and misery, assets and hardships, all will pass. Neither do the world's good things deserve our deception and pride, nor should its bad things disturb the ocean of our existence and deprive us of the spirit of satisfaction or patience. You too of whatever group you are, finally you will go away and will face what your ancestors have gone through. It is better for you to learn a lesson from them and not to waste your time as they did.

It is because of this educational principle that nearly one third of the Qur'an consists of the stories and

histories of the past peoples and nations. The Qur'an orders people to travel on the earth to observe the mirror of the history of the past nations.

"Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore, travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters."1

"Have they not then journeyed in the land and seen how was the end of those before them? They were more in numbers than these and greater in strength and in fortifications in the land, but what they earned did not avail them."2

"How many of the gardens and fountains have they left! And cornfields and noble places! And goodly things wherein they rejoiced; thus it was, and we gave them as a heritage to another people. So the heaven and the earth did not weep for them, nor were they respited".3

It is because of this educational principle that Imam 'Ali (as) in different points of Nahj al-Balaghah and even in the present paper attracts our attention to the destiny and fate of the ancient peoples and nations and the factors which had led to their improvements or failures. He drew our attention to how these people left every thing and left this land.

The Poem of Khaqani

O heart that learns out of others' examples see through your eyes,

Use the veranda of Ctesiphon as an example;

Go once from the Tigris River towards Ctesiphon,

Once in a while call the veranda with the tears language,

Perhaps you will listen to the veranda saying:

The dent of each will give you new advice,

Listen to the end-point of the dent for advice;

It says you are from the earth, now we are earth-ridden for you;

Put two or three steps over us, weep two or three drops;

We are in trouble from the songs of the owl,

Pour out flower-water to cure our headaches:

We were court of justice, see what tyranny has gone to us,

See what will happen to the court of the tyrants;

You will laugh at me, wondering what is of fun,

They will laugh at those eyes which do not weep here;

This is the same veranda in which the colors of the people,

In the earth its doorsills were like the picture-gallery;

This is the same castle which kings frequented,

Deylam, Babylon's king, Hindu, Turkistan's king;

The earth is drunk, because instead of wine,

It has drunk Nowshirvan's blood in Hormoz's scalp as a cup,

Many pieces of advice were seen then on his crown,

A hundred new pieces of advice are hidden in his brain;

Kesra and the golden lemon, Parviz and golden vegetable,

All have gone with the wind and have been leveled out with the ground;

Parviz brought golden vegetable to every feast,

So many vegetables he made an orchard out of it;

Parviz is lost now, don't mention his name,

Where is the golden vegetable, go and read kam taraku4 from the Qur'an;

You asked where those crown-bearers are,

The belly of the earth is eternally pregnant with them;

It will take time for the earth to give birth,

Giving birth is hard, getting sperm easy;

This wine which is distributed among men by the gardener is Shirin's blood,

And the container of the wine is made out of the earth of Parviz;

The tyrants have drunk the water of their lives,

The greedy ones are not satiated yet;

The redness of the red river is the blood of the children,

Of this black-eyebrow old man, of that black-breasted woman,

Khaqani, take lessons from this castle,

Till Khaqan, later on, takes lessons from your case.

- 1. . Qur'an 3:137.
- 2. . Qur'an 40:82.
- 3. . Qur'an 44:25-29.
- "كُمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ وَزُرُوعٍ" . 4.

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[&]quot;How many of the gardens and fountains have they left!" [Qur'an 44:25-26]