

Meeting 1: History, A Source of Human Knowledge Part 1

Date: 19/5/1996 (1/1/1417)

“O’ creatures of Allah, verily Time will deal with the survivors just as it dealt with those gone by.”¹
Experience is one of the most important consequences of human life. By experience, man can improve his life and proceed towards perfection. It is experience which will help us to reduce mistakes, save time and ultimately go forward. However, the life of a human being is so short that one cannot, and should not, rely on self-experience alone. Had I been born, and lived in this world, twice, I would have experienced in the first life and would have benefited from those personal experiences in the second one.

But since this is a mere dream, I should learn from the experiences of other people. Human experimental knowledge is established and based on the very fact that since individuals do not have a sufficient length of life, we should pass on our experiences to others so that they don’t repeat our mistakes.

If Einstein, the German American physicist created a scientific revolution in the 20th century with his theory of Relativity, it was because of the efforts and the records of previous scientists such as Galileo, Newton, Descart and others. Therefore, in order to know any branch of science, you ought to be familiar with the history of the development of that science.

Also, in order to obtain a logical analysis of the present problems of people we need to be familiar with the history of the development of humans, since the roots of many present events goes back into history. In short, history makes us familiar with the reasons for the prosperity of the previous nations as well as the reasons behind their disasters. This will teach us how to gain prosperity and refrain from the miseries of life. That’s why some historians have asserted that history is the mirror of the future. You can, by and large, foresee the future if you are fully aware of the past.

To this end, the Holy Quran, the Book of guidance, has emphasized on the importance of studying

history and quotes the story of the previous nations in many instances. However, the Holy Quran is not just a chronological record of history. That is the main difference between the Bible and the Holy Quran, since the first is merely a historic and chronological book whereas the latter is analytical history. In the Holy Quran we read:

“There is, in their stories instruction (Ebrat) for men imbued with understanding.” (12: 111)

The word ‘Ebrat’ means to pass or transmit from one stage to a higher one. In other words it means a transmission from being, towards becoming. In another Aya we read:

“So relate the story, perchance they may reflect”. (7: 176)

The term ‘Al-Qessa’ in Arabic means searching for the impacts of an event. Therefore, the Quran calls upon people to read the history in order to transmit their society a better and more developed one (Ebrat), and to find out the impacts, both good and evil, of the actions of the previous nations.

[1.](#) Nahjul-Balagha, S. 157

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