

The following verse came in Surah Al Araf to talk about a certain Ummah/community:

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ (164)

And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allah is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him."

What is the occasion of this Ayah, which Ummah did it talk about?

What is the lesson learned from this story?

AssalamuAlaikum,

Perfect answers today to Question 18 Masha'Allah. More importantly, all participants answered the question dealing with the lesson learned from the story.

Allah SWT describes the story of the coastal village of what the scholars said was called Ayla. Ayla was part of Bani Israeel. Ayla was northeast of saint closer to the Jordanian border on the Red Sea. Part of the village population disobeyed Allah SWT, and so Allah SWT tested them as it says in the ayah below (كَذَلِكَ نَبَلَّوهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ).

وَاسْأَلْهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرْعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبَلَّوهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ (163)

And ask them about the town that was by the sea - when they transgressed in [the matter of] the sabbath - when their fish came to them openly on their sabbath day, and the day they had no sabbath they did not come to them. Thus did We give them trial because they were defiantly disobedient.

Allah SWT commanded them not to catch the fish on the Sabbath, and they could do so the rest of the week. In the day they are NOT allowed to fish, the fish would come to the surface and would be with beautiful flesh and appealing, and on the days they are allowed to fish, the fish would not come. So, a group from this village decided to play tricks and set the nets the day before the sabbath and pull nets on the day after the sabbath. So, by this they say, we are not fishing on the Sabbath. Another group from the village realized the tricks that this group was doing and advised them against do so, as this is a violation for the commands of Allah. But the transgressors did not listen and continued with their transgression. A third group came up and said to the advising group, to leave the transgressors by saying " why would you advise a group Allah will be punishing them".

In this context, there were three groups. Group one was the transgressors. Group two was the righteous group that advised the first group to stop their transgression and warned them. The third group was the one that wanted to stay silent and more likely took the stand of "it's not our business".

The following ayah shows how Allah SWT punished the first group (the transgressors) and made them into monkeys and pigs, and saved the second group that advised the first group against what their doing. The Quran does not mention specifically what happened to the third group that wanted to stay out of the way. Some scholars say, they were punished with the first group because they did not enjoin what's right and did not forbid the evil. And other scholars mention that they were saved. Rasul Allah PBUH says in the Hadith, who ever sees evil, he/she must change it by his/her hand, if unable then by his tongue, if unable then in his/her heart, and that is the weakest of Iman. Considering this Hadith, the third group should not have stayed silent and should have joined the second group in advising the first group. And that is the lesson learned from this story. One must not stay silent when he/she sees evil. We must work through the appropriate channels to change evil and not be silent and say it's not our business.