**ARTICLE-ALPARSLAN KUYTUL**

**THE UMMAH, RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MUSLIMS OF ARAKAN**

I start by praising Allah, who showed us the right path and gave us duty and honour by naming us ummah, and by sending peace and blessings upon His Prophet, who struggled day and night to make this ummah come into existence and to make us brothers and sisters, and sending Salam to all my brothers and sisters, who work hard to resurrect and build this ummah.

Through the history of humankind Allah (Azza wa Jalla) has elected some populations to establish justice, avoid injustice, and build a society and a civilisation in the way that Allah orders. Allah (awj.) states in Surah Al-Anfal: “Those who believed, emigrated, and strived with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave them shelter and help—they are truly guardians of one another. As for those who believed but did not emigrate, you have no obligations to them until they emigrate. But if they seek your help ˹against persecution˺ in faith, it is your obligation to help them, except against people bound with you in a treaty. Allah is All-Seeing of what you do..“1

As the verse shows, the conditions of being an ummah and of being an individual of an ummah are as follows:

1. To believe as it should be

2. To emigrate on the way of faith and for the cause of Allah when it is necessary,

3. To fight and struggle (make jihad) with your wealth and life for the cause of Allah,

4. To give shelter and aid to those who emigrated. Only those, who fulfil these factors, are guardians for one another.

We can also call these the elements of being an ummah. I.e. a community, that does not carry these characteristics, does not count as an ummah. There is no doubt, that those, who do not emigrate and fight when it is necessary, who do not give shelter to their brothers and sisters and do not share their grief, are far from being an ummah.

Being an ummah means being responsible. That a community is named as an ummah means, that its individuals are given the task of being the imams of the earth. As a matter of fact, the word ummah derives from the same root word as the word imam. Those, who are ummah, are the imams, the leaders of the earth. Hence, they must restrain injustice and oppression, sins and insurrections. They must ensure the protection of the five factors which the religion was sent for. I.e. the protection of faith, mind, property, life, and generation.

The individuals of an ummah have the duty of making Islam rule over the world. While they are obligated to secure the religion of Haqq (True religion), i.e. the Tauhid on the one hand, they are also obligated to protect and ensure the safety of the churches and synagogues of the Ahli Kitab (People of the Book), who’s books are falsified.

Furthermore, they secure the mind by doing what a right and pure sense tells, prohibiting what a pure mind defines as wrong, such as sins like drinking alcohol, gambling, interest and prostitution. Moreover, they secure the mind by forbidding that it is idolised and considered more important than the revelations of Allah. They do not allow the mind to be sullied by ideologies and philosophical notions.

The individuals of an ummah protect property by saving it from being taken into possession unjustly, such as through corruption, interest, and exploitation. I. e. they do not allow these to be practised in society and prohibit them by law.

Moreover, they protect life by implementing deterrent punishments like qisās (reprisal) for murder and by conveying the fear from Jahannam. At the same time, they protect life by teaching that murdering a person unjustly equals murdering all of humanity, they protect life by forbidding suicide and abortion.

As previously said, to protect the mind Islam prohibits wickedness like drinking alcohol, gambling, taking drugs, committing adultery, and sodomy and consequently protects the generation from all evil that would derive from these sins. By showing the generation beneficent goals, they drive its energy in the right direction. And by showing the right way to build a civilisation, they protect them from running into dead-ends and falling into emptiness. They make them gain a strong willpower to win the struggle against their nafs (desire).

Every ummah was tasked with realising these factors on earth. As long as they fulfilled this task Allah (j.j.) made them sustain and helped them. Hence, their mission and their honour persisted. However, when they showed laziness and started to enter a period of stagnation, He warned them by making them experience some of the things that would happen when they continue this way. When they did not learn their lessons and let this situation continue, Allah (swt.) took this honourable mission from them and split them. This implies the end and the death of an ummah.

Even when an ummah still exists for a while after its death, it is impossible that it resurrects. Therefore, Allah Azza wa Jalla states in Surah Al-Araf: “And for every nation is a [specified] term. So when their time has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”2

Subsequently, new generations receive the flag. In Surah Maidah, Allah (j.j.) informs about this sunnah as follows: “O believers! Whoever among you abandons their faith, Allah will replace them with others who love Him and are loved by Him. They will be humble with the believers but firm towards the disbelievers, struggling in the Way of Allah; fearing no blame from anyone. This is the favour of Allah. He grants it to whoever He wills. And Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing.3 In the context of this sunnah, Allah (swt.) took this duty away from the ummahs before us and gave it to the last ummah.

The fact that a society is a ummah, and therefore responsible from the whole world, ensures that the society is balanced and restrained.In times when it is weak, it does not show the infidels and the tyrants any resignation and it continues the fight against them. And in times when it is strong, it does not become cruel and does not become a Firaun, because it is aware of its servanthood and the fact, that it is an ummah and thus in charge of establishing justice on earth.

Of the ummahs before us, the Christians and the Jews (the Bani Israil) saw, that being an ummah is an honourable but difficult duty, that it includes the establishment of security and justice in every area on the whole world, and that this requires lifelong jihad and struggle. So, they searched for easy ways to go to Jannah without performing this duty and experiencing difficulties. And in their opinion, they found them. The Jews said: “We are the superior race. We are the children of Allah and His beloved. Never will the fire touch us, except for a few days.” And the Christians said: “Hz. Isa (as.) came and was crucified for our sins. He endured pain, so we are safe. It is sufficient for us to just believe that he is God. No matter how many sins we commit, and no matter how much we ignore our duties, with this believe we will go to Jannah.” Both groups wanted a ‘Jannah for free’, without fulfilling their duties.

Aren’t there also many among us who say, that they will go to Jannah because “they are the grandchildren of a sheikh or under favour of their sheikh”, without fulfilling their duty and paying the price of Jannah? Or those, who ignore commands of the Religion like jihad or struggle as they are difficult for them, and who reduce the Religion to belief, prayer and morals? Instead of rejecting western civilisation and struggling to establish their own civilisation, they take an easy way out by choosing a moderate and concessive understanding of religion and reconcile with western culture. Don’t they show human ideologies as suitable for Islam or even a part of Islam to escape the fight against kufr? Aren’t there those, who exhibit a nationalist-racist attitude and only care for the problems of their own race, even though, when they are an ummah this means, they must be brothers and sisters with every Muslim regardless from their race, taking care of their problems and helping them. When Hz. Ali (ra.) listed the seven major sins, he counted returning to a nomadic life after the hejira as one of them. What he meant by this was, after being civilised and an ummah, leaving the understanding of ummah and being racist and tribalistic. Because the Bedouins were racist and tribalistic.

This rule, that Allah has carried out for all populations, was also put into action for this ummah. Our ummah started to stagnate and regress almost three centuries ago, began to show signs of collapse two centuries ago, and was collapsed and fallen apart one century ago. And since one century, be it in Turkey or anywhere else on the Muslim’s lands, tens of millions of Muslims were martyred, and yet so many are disabled and in a miserable state. They were deprived of their rights, treated as second-class citizens in their own countries, and exploited physically and emotionally.

Today, Muslims in several states, that we have never heard of and could not even show on the map when we were asked to, are groaning in cruelty. One of these states is the Republic of Myanmar, formerly named as Burma or Birmania. In Myanmar, there are almost 1.7 million Muslims. Almost 800 thousand of them live in Arakan, a province that borders Bangladesh. According to a report of the UN, two million Muslims emigrated from Arakan due to poverty and oppression. They flew abroad and had to live as refugees.

In a massacre in 1938 thousands of Muslims in Arakan were murdered. Over 500 thousand Muslims were forced to leave their homeland and emigrate. Four years later, in 1942, according to some sources 100 thousand, according to others 150 thousand Muslims were slaughtered by Buddhists. In additional massacres in 1947, 1954 and 1962 over 20 thousand Muslims were slaughtered, and 1.5 million Muslims were forced to emigrate to Bangladesh, as their villages were burned. Buddhists were placed by the state in their evacuated places.

With a new citizenship law in 1982, the Muslims of Arakan were denaturalised and found themselves in the state of refugees in their own country. They were deprived of all rights, such as the right to vote, the right to take advantage of the health care system, or the right to work in government departments. When a Muslim wants to go from one village to another, they must gain permission and pay fees. Even for marriage they must gain permission from the government, pay fees, and they are not allowed to have more than two children. They are forbidden to build houses, repair their houses, and to dig wells. Moreover, they are forbidden to go outside at night, to build mosques, and to maintain or repair mosques.

Noor Hussain, a representative of the Muslims of Arakan in Bangladesh stated, that the regime of Myanmar has slaughtered about 30 thousand Muslims by this time. According to the leader of the Muslims in Arakan, Muhammad Yunus, who attended a meeting in Istanbul, the situation is even worse. He stated that about 50 thousand Muslims were slaughtered and 50 thousand Muslims were arrested.

With the wish to continue in the next edition with the topic, how this ummah, that was sent as imams of this earth, could reach such a miserable state, and dependent on which reasons and rules it has regressed...

1. Al-Anfal, 72

2. Al-Araf, 34

3. Maidah, 54