**ARTICLE-ALPARSLAN KUYTUL**

**THE DECLINE OF OUR UMMAH AND ITS REASONS – 7**

 All praise be to Allah, Who exalted the human by making him His caliph and guiding him to work. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, who served as a role model with his struggle and his works. And peace be upon the companions, who struggled together with our Prophet (saws.), and upon all my brothers and sisters, who endeavour to reawaken our ummah.

 In our last article, we explained, that one of the reasons why our ummah came to this state is ‘becoming lazy’, that as a result of laziness we regressed, and as a result of our regress we developed an inferiority complex and started to imitate the West. Due to the importance of this topic, I would like to continue with it and explain the reasons and solutions of laziness. Our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) states, “My most terrifying fear regarding my ummah is the hugeness of the stomach, the continuation of sleep, laziness, and weakness of yaqîn (iman).”1. Unfortunately, this subversive and terrifying disease, that our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) tells the future generations, i.e. us, has infected almost all Muslims for nearly three centuries. The Muslims only want the ummah’s salvation but 99 percent do not take part in Islamic work and flee from it. However, from that small minority, that does take part in Islamic work, 99 percent do not do their work properly, do not want to do hard work, and do not show steadiness in their work. How did this disease start? In which matters was laziness shown first? Where did it end?

 It is possible to divide laziness into two parts:

 1. Laziness in worldly, i.e. material matters. 2. Laziness in matters concerning the akhira, i.e. spiritual matters. As it can be understood from our classification, laziness was not only shown concerning the akhira and spiritual matters. We did not only neglect our duties as servants and representative caliphs of Allah on earth but in fact, laziness was shown in earthly and material matters, as well. When we discuss the topic of laziness, we must discuss it as laziness and its reasons in the period of health and rise of the ummah on the one hand, and laziness and its reasons in the period of decline and downfall on the other hand. Thus, the topic must be considered in four ways: 1. Laziness that was shown in worldly and material matters in the period of rising of the ummah. 2. Laziness that was shown concerning the akhira and spiritual matters in the period of rising of the ummah. 3. Laziness that was shown in worldly and material matters in the period of decline and downfall of the ummah. 4. Laziness that was shown concerning the akhira and spiritual matters in the period of decline and downfall of the ummah.

 Although laziness was shown in material and spiritual matters in the period of rising of the ummah, as it is mentioned as the first and second points, this was not a widespread condition. In fact, if this was a widespread condition, this would not be the period of rising. Yes, even in the time of our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) there were people, who did not put the dunja into the right place in their hearts, who attached too much importance to it, who left the jihad and thought about increasing their property. But these were only a few people and they were immediately warned by Allah (awj.) and they directly corrected their mistake. As a contrary, again in the time of our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) there were people, who understood the religion wrong and thought, that in order to be pious, it was necessary to leave the dunja completely and only engage in ibadah. They were warned by our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) and understood, that in Islam there is no mystical understanding of religion. Hence, we can say, that in the period of rising there was no laziness to an extent that would make the ummah decline and collapse.

 However, in the period of decline and downfall, laziness was widely spread and reached dangerous dimensions. And since necessary precautions were not taken, it ended with the downfall of the ummah.

 We can observe in the universe, that big or small, living or not lifeless, all beings are in a state of continuous moving, and that nothing stands still. From the gigantic galaxies and stars to the invisibly small microbes and viruses, everything is in a state of continuous movement. Even in lifeless substances, that we think would stand still, electrons are turning in a terrific speed around the nucleus. Seasons are continuously changing, clouds are continuously moving, and every second trees are working to produce fruits, and flowers are working to blossom. Nothing, except lazy humans, stands still.

 Laziness cannot bring anything into being. Laziness is demise and it leads to demise. Those, who work, bring something into being, they bring to existence and they are existent. Those, who are lazy, complain and want time to pass quickly. Those, who work, are grateful and do not want time to pass quickly but to widen and expand. The end of comfort is effort, while the end of effort is mercy.

 In order to make us continuously produce something and leave marks and works behind, the Holy Qur’an states, “So when you have finished [your duty], then stand up [for another]”2. This way it does not allow us to become lazy. This verse must be a principal and fundament for Muslims.

 We must elaborate, why laziness, which is an important reason why our ummah came to this state, especially became widespread in the period of decline and downfall, and find out, which reasons lay behind. In the following there are some of the reasons why we became lazy and their solutions:

 1. Tending to comfort: The human is created suitable for working and for being lazy and they must struggle against their nafs and the shaytan in order to work. However, most people do not want to bear this struggle and they choose comfort instead. Because for comfort and laziness no struggle is necessary. This world is a school and we are its students. And just as the duty of a student is to study and work, the human came to this world to work, as well. Therefore, the human was created suitable for working and happiness is also hidden in working. I.e. while Allah (awj.) gives happiness and inner peace to the person, who works, He gives sadness and unrest to the person who is lazy and does not work. Although the lazy person thinks, that they will be comfortable not working, they will never feel comfortable. And trying to overcome the consequences of their laziness, they will have to work much more. Still, nothing will be how it has to be, because it will be too late.

 It was not understood, that as a result of working, Allah’s pleasure and help, wealth and power will be reached, injustice will be prevented, justice will be secured, and we will become a world state. Moreover, it was forgotten, that the Holy Qur’an states, “There is not for man except that [good] for which he strives”3. It was not taken into consideration, that as a result of laziness and comfort, Allah’s punishment will be received, poverty and degradation will come, and the honour, that was given, will be taken away. I.e. we could not consider the damage we caused for ourselves, our families, and our ummah.

 2. A mystical and monastic understanding of religion: At the beginning, the aim of tasawwuf was disciplining and purifying the nafs and freeing it from laziness and all other heart diseases, making the person rise, and making them come to a state in which they work for the establishment of the Islamic Civilisation. But over time, this understanding was destroyed in some tariqats, and instead of working, the dunja was left and laziness was shown. Those, who followed this understanding, believed, that in order to achieve taqwa, they had to leave everything, that belongs to the dunja, and step out of worldly life. I.e. in a way they lived a form of monasticism. As a matter of fact, Islam is the only religion that teaches, that it is possible to achieve taqwa and rise while living in the midst of life.

 In fact, Islam does not divide life into worldly affairs and affairs of the akhira. It sees working in accordance with the boundaries of Islam as ibadah. But all of this, as well as the warnings of our Prophet Muhammad (saws.) in this regard was forgotten, in fact, in a way on purpose. Because some people were lazy and wanted to hide their laziness this way by covering their laziness with a religious blanket. Understandings like these, which we define as religious extremism, have caused some Muslims to become lazy and they played an important role in the decline of the ummah.

 3. Wrong understandings of tawakkul: Like in the point before, in terms of tawakkul to Allah, mistakes were made, as well. The meaning of tawakkul was changed into leaving things to the will of Allah without working or taking precautions. These people leave their duties to Allah without fulfilling them and in a way, they see Allah as a servant. Whereas in the right understanding of tawakkul, Allah is not our servant but our helper and supporter. Rasulullah (saws.) says, “Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah”4. As the human is on this dunja to be tested, they are obliged to put all their strength together, take all necessary precautions, do all the works, and then trust in Allah and set forth.

 Tawakkul does not reject working and does not prevent it. On the contrary, even if possibilities are limited, tawakkul makes a person trust in Allah, believe, that His help will come, say, “Ya Allah” and start making his duty. I.e. a person with tawakkul will easily start with a risky work, which a person without tawakkul would never start with. Because the person with tawakkul does not trust in themselves but in Allah. So, a correct understanding of tawakkul does not hinder working but makes even a person, who would not work, start working.

 A person, who has tawakkul, embraces all ways and takes all precautions, but they know, that all of this does not build the outcome. Therefore, they trust in Allah and expect the outcome from Him only. Although this is the understanding of tawakkul in Islam, some people fell into wrong understandings and thought or wanted to think, that tawakkul means, not fulfilling one’s duty, sitting down and trusting in Allah. In fact, they were lazy and with such an understanding of tawakkul they could cover they laziness with religion.

 4. Lack of tawakkul: Just like a wrong understanding of tawakkul, on the contrary, the lack of tawakkul was also a reason for laziness. A lack of tawakkul shows itself in two ways:

 1. Lack of self-confidence: Not being aware of the skills, that were given by Allah, saying, “I cannot succeed anyway” and not starting, and consequently, being lazy. Such a person does not make use of the skills, that Allah gave them, and neither do they have tawakkul in Allah. As a matter of fact, a person will not create success with their own deeds. When they embrace the reasons that lead to success, Allah (awj.) will create success. Hence, even if the person is weak, unknowing and with limited possibilities, when they show effort, Allah can make them succeed.

 2. False self-confidence: Seeing the skills, that were given by Allah, too big, saying, “I will succeed”, becoming arrogant and thinking, that success is completely in one’s own power. In this case, a mistake in trusting in oneself, or in other words, in self-confidence is made. Self-confidence means, that a person is aware of the skills and the particular will, that was given to them, that they believe in the help of Allah and believe, that they can succeed when they do, what is necessary, and that they start working courageously. However, people with false self-confidence do not trust in Allah but in themselves. They think that success is in their own power and they do not have tawakkul in Allah but in their own skills. Not trusting in Allah but in oneself, is even falser than false self-confidence, a more dangerous understanding, and a form of kibr. As Allah is the enemy of the arrogant, these people will be made unsuccessful and they will be punished. While wrong tawakkul led to laziness and consequently, made the ummah decline, not trusting in Allah but in oneself caused the punishment of Allah, Who put such people in their places and made them decline. In the end, both mistakes caused the decline.

 With the hope to continue with this topic… May Allah protect you.

1.Jabir, Ramuz Al-Ahadis

2.Ash-Sharh, 7

3.An-Najm, 39

4.Tirmidhi