

The Weakness of Nations and the Power of Allah (swt)

There are some Muslims who argue that the re-establishment of the System of Allah (swt), the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood is unfeasible, as they claim that the powerful nations of the world such as the US, the European states, Russia, China and others would unite to destroy it upon its return. Others argue that for armies of the Muslim world, such as in Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt and elsewhere to be mobilised to liberate Muslims in lands where they are occupied, oppressed and killed, such as in Palestine, Syria and Kashmir, would be political and military suicide for Muslim-majority states. They claim that the outcome of such military confrontations would be certain defeat for the Muslims, for they would not only face enemy armies which are larger and perhaps better equipped than their own but also their Western or Eastern supporters and allies. The underlying assertion is that the powerful nations of today are almost invincible, impenetrable, undefeatable and indestructible and destined to rule over the world forever – mirroring the views of the leaders of current states which wield global power, including US President, Donald Trump, who in August 2017, when discussing America's nuclear arsenal, stated: *“Hopefully we will never have to use this power, but there will never be a time that we are not the most powerful nation in the world.”*

For a Muslim to hold such a belief produces a defeatist mentality who succumbs to the status quo and allows oppression, injustice and suffering to continue in this world unopposed. They believe that change can only occur through working within the framework of current institutions such as the United Nations or bilateral diplomacy between warring nations and parties, which also perpetuates oppressive realities. This is because such institutions and actions have proven time and again to have failed dismally in protecting innocent blood and subjugating tyrant rulers, regimes or entities. Rather, they are a means employed by the powerful nations of the world to maintain the status quo concerning their field of influence and hegemony across the globe.

Such defeatist judgements arise from making narrow calculations about the outcome of actions using only the realities of this world. So, it is assumed that a state with greater military power will inevitably vanquish one of a lesser status, as if controlling the outcome of political and military events are like controlling the pieces of a chess board. Such a mentality ignores the fact that there is an external factor to this world Who decides victories, the strength and the longevity of nations: the Creator, Allah (swt), the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Indeed, the manner by which the coronavirus, a microscopic agent, invisible to the naked eye, has crippled the economies of the major current powers of the world – should surely open the eyes of those with reason to the inherent weakness of nations and the overwhelming Power of Allah (swt).

Such a lesson is presented repeatedly in the Qur'an, of how powerful nations and mighty empires who thought they were indestructible and undefeatable and who turned their back on obedience to Allah (swt) and became oppressive and arrogant were wiped from the earth by the One Who decides to whom power should be bestowed: Allah (swt). These Qur'anic stories provide a stark reminder to the believer that invincibility belongs to Allah (swt) alone. Allah (swt) says: **﴿أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ﴾** ***“Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance, and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their faults and raised up after them another generation.”*** [Al-An'am: 6]. And He (swt) says: **﴿قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ﴾** ***“Say: Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters.”*** [Al-An'am: 11]. And He (swt) says: **﴿أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾** ***“Has not the fame of those before them come to them; of the people of Nuh and Ad and Samood, and the people of Ibrahim and the dwellers of Madyan and the overthrown cities; their apostles came to them with clear arguments; so it was not Allah Who should do them injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.”*** [At-Taubah: 70].

Indeed, the story of the people of 'Ad in the Qur'an holds great relevancy to the reality of the super-powers of today and the belief that they are invincible. The nation of 'Ad were the first people to re-introduce idol worship after the nation of Prophet Nuh (AS) who emerged following the great flood sent down by Allah (swt). In Surah al-Fajr, Allah (swt) describes the people of 'Ad as follows: ﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ * إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ * الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ﴾ **“Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with Ad, (The people of) Aram, possessors of lofty buildings. The likes of which were not created in the (other) cities.”** [Al-Fajr: 6-8]. The people of 'Ad had no rival to other nations in the level of power and strength that Allah (swt) had bestowed upon them. Indeed, the power of current leading states, pales into insignificance compared to the power and influence that the nation of 'Ad enjoyed. They ruled all the lands around them and whatever law they made – was the law – unopposed by no other people. Economically, they bathed in wealth and luxuries, and had the most beautiful springs and gardens. Indeed, they had so much wealth that they would build lofty palaces in the mountains in which no-one would live; built just for pleasure and as a display to demonstrate their high status. Allah (swt) also blessed them with large numbers of offspring such that the nation was great in numbers, while the bodies of the people were huge and powerful. And Allah (swt) granted them the skill and intelligence to build an advanced civilization.

However, with all this power, they became arrogant and rejected Allah (swt) and the message of Prophet Hud who was sent to guide them back to the worship of one God. They claimed to be the greatest nation on earth who were not in need of guidance from anyone. Allah (swt) says: ﴿فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً﴾ **“Then as to Ad, they were unjustly arrogant in the land, and they said: Who is mightier in power than we? Did they not see that Allah Who created them was mightier than them in power, and they denied Our revelations?”** [Fussilat: 15]. And instead of using their power wisely for good, they engaged in mischief and behaved brutally. Therefore, Allah (swt) sent a fierce wind to destroy them to show generations to come – Who has All-Power, Who has All-Might, Who Alone is invincible, and Who decides the rise and fall of nations. Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ * سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى كَأَنَّهُمْ ﴿عِصْيَانًا﴾ **“And as to Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent. Which He made to prevail against them for seven nights and eight days unremittingly, so that you might have seen the people therein prostrate as if they were the trunks of hollow palms. Do you then see of them one remaining?”** [Al-Haaqqa: 6-8]

Hence, this huge powerful nation was wiped away from the face of the earth in a matter of days by Allah (swt), as if they never existed; destroyed by that which is not visible to the human eye: wind – for its presence is sensed only by the affect that it creates. Subhaanallah! Indeed, Allah (swt) takes an oath in Surah Al-Fajr, emphasizing the weight of the message which is to follow, that the ultimate destiny of the tyrants and oppressors of this world who reject Him is destruction, for He does not allow oppression and disobedience to persist in dominating this earth. He (swt) says: ﴿فَاكْثُرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ * فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ * إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ﴾ **“So they made great mischief therein? Therefore your Lord let down upon them a portion of the chastisement. Most surely your Lord is watching.”** [Al-Fajr: 12-14]. And He (swt) says: ﴿يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ﴾ **“Was God to seize people immediately for their injustice, no living creature would be left on earth. He gives them respite for an appointed time. When their term is over, they will not be able to change the inevitable.”** [An-Nahl: 61]

Hence, this is the Sunnah of Allah (swt) in the way He deals with arrogant and oppressive rulers and nations throughout the passing of time who reject The Truth, spread corruption, and who oppose and persecute the believers. We saw how Allah (swt) destroyed the arrogant king Nimrod who believed he was God, with something as tiny as a mosquito that entered his nostril and reached his brain. We saw how Prophet Dawud (AS) destroyed the huge and powerful leader of the Philistine army – Jalut – who was an enemy of Allah (swt), with a single sling shot of a small stone. We saw how Pharun who ruled over a mighty empire was drowned in the sea along with his army. And we saw how our beloved Rasul (saw) defeated the Quraysh at the Battle of Badr and how the Muslims defeated the mighty Persian empire in the Battle of Al-

Qadisiyyah during the Khilafah of Umar bin Al Khattab (ra), despite the Muslims being hugely outnumbered by the enemy during these conflicts. Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّن قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِسُّ﴾ **“And how many a generation have We destroyed before them! Do you see any one of them or hear a sound of them?”** [Maryam: 98]. Indeed, the political, economic and military power of many of these nations and empires that Allah (swt) destroyed exceeded greatly the leading states of today. Allah (swt) says: ﴿أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ﴾ **“Have they not travelled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them while they were stronger than these in power? And Allah is not such that any thing in the heavens or in the earth should escape Him; surely He is Knowing, Powerful.”** [Fatir: 44]. All this, is an enduring lesson to show humankind that All-Might belongs to Allah (swt) alone, and that regardless of how advanced, sophisticated and powerful a civilization is, when Allah (swt) decrees its end, it can happen swiftly. It is also a striking reminder that when He (swt) decrees the victory of the believers over their enemy, there is no amount of political, economic, military or technological strength that can prevent it.

However, there are some Muslims who argue that such accounts of great victories for the believers over their enemies are stories of the past, related to the presence of the Prophets or Sahaba amongst the believers of those times, and cannot be taken as examples of how Muslims should deal with the political realities of today. However, such a claim is negated by the numerous magnificent victories against powerful nations that Allah (swt) granted for this Ummah under centuries of Islamic rule following the period of the Sahaba and Khilafah Rashidun. Take for example, the great victory of the Muslims against the Crusaders under the leadership of the great Muslim Commander, Salahuddin Ayubi, at the time of the Abbasid Khilafah, which led to the liberation of the blessed land of Palestine and surrounding areas from the grip of the oppressive Christian occupiers. In the third Crusade that followed the Battle of Hattin and the liberation of Jerusalem, Germany, France and Britain formed an alliance consisting of a huge army, led by their Kings, to try to retake the sacred city. Some estimates of the German army alone put the numbers of soldiers at 300,000 – a huge number at those times. However, despite Salahuddin’s army being modest in number compared to the Crusader alliance, he resolved to defend Al-Quds no matter what, for this was the blessed land of Islam, and this was the Order of Allah (swt). It was reported that as the German faction of the Crusader army marched towards Ash-Sham, their king – Frederick Barbarossa – died, then disease and disunity spread amongst his soldiers so that by the time his army reached Ash-Sham to face Salahuddin, they were only a few hundred in number, and they were weak and broken. Meanwhile the French king, Phillip II got sick after the siege of Acre, a city in Palestine, and returned with his army back to France, leaving King Richard of Britain to face Salahuddin alone. However, Richard’s soldiers were also suffering severely from the heat and lack of fresh water, and at night they were plagued by tarantulas whose bites were poisonous and painful....so by the time they had Jerusalem in their sights they only had around 2000 fit soldiers and were unable to take the city. Allahu Akbar! It is truly a great lesson for the believers that Allah (swt) is the supporter of those who actions are based upon Islam and FOR ISLAM!

We saw similar great victories for the Muslims in the history of Islam, when they fought for the cause of the Deen and responded to the Command of Allah (swt) to defend Islam and the believers, regardless of their lesser numbers or military strength in relation to their enemies. In the 13th century for example, the Tartars, who were a fierce and powerful nation, attacked the Khilafah, killing the Khalifah and occupying around three-quarters of the Muslim world according to some estimates. Heading towards Egypt, the last stronghold of the Muslims, the Tartars sent a letter to the governor of Egypt, Mahmoud Saifudeen Qutuz, which said, **“We have demolished the land, orphaned the children, tortured the people and slain them, made their honoured despised and their leader a captive. Do you think that you can escape from us?”** Qutuz sought the help of the other governors and scholars from the lands of the Khilafah, calling them to unify and stand for the defence of Islam and focus the Muslims to liberate the Islamic lands. At the Battle of Ain Jalut under his leadership, and during this month of Ramadan, the Muslims gained a decisive victory over the Tartars which aided Qutuz to liberate many of the occupied lands of the Khilafah.

Truly, the examples are too numerous to mention of the victories that Allah (swt) blessed this Ummah with when they fought 'Fee-Sabeelillah' and responded to His Command. Hence, the condition for victory for the believers against enemy states and nations, and oppressive rulers and regimes, is not the presence of prophets and Sahaba, nor is it conditional upon the balance of numbers, for Allah (swt) says: ﴿قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا اللَّهِ كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

“Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah’s permission, and Allah is with the patient.” [Al-Baqara: 249] The disbelievers use the logic of the balance of numbers, political power and military strength to judge the outcome of wars and global political struggles. However, this should not be the belief of the Muslim, for we know that Allah (swt) does not operate according to the narrow logic of human beings. Rather, He (swt) has His own principle of what brings victory: the obedience to His Orders, Tawakkul in His Support, and striving to give victory to His Deen - Islam! Allah (swt) says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَصَرَّوْا اللَّهُ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ﴾ **“O you who believe! If you support (the cause of) Allah, He will support you and make firm your feet.”** [Muhammad: 7]

We see for instance, how Allah (swt) gave victory to the Muslims at the Battle of Badr, even though they were one third of the size of the army of the Quraysh, for they fought for nothing but the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and to further the authority of His Deen. However, He (swt) allowed the Muslims to taste defeat against their enemy at the Battle of Uhud, even though they were much better equipped militarily and in numbers to face the Quraysh. This is because at Uhud, the archers on the hilltop disobeyed the orders of the Prophet (saw) to stay in their position due to their pursuit of the war booty, and by default, they disobeyed the Command of Allah (swt). We see also with the Khilafah, when the implementation of the laws of Islam was firm, and the unity between its lands was strong as obliged by Allah (swt), then the state was a formidable political, economic and military force which dominated the world, was feared by its enemies, and was blessed with victory after victory which expanded the frontiers of Islamic rule across huge swathes of land – from Spain to Central Asia. However, when the Muslims became complacent in their study, understanding and implementation of Islam within the Khilafah, and began taking ideas from other ideologies, and became distracted with the dazzles of this world, then the state became weak. This exposed it to the agendas and conspiracies of colonial nations, weakening it, and opening the door to military defeats, division, colonisation and eventually destruction.

Hence, the Qur’an, the Seerah and our Islamic history as Muslims provide us many lessons that should build within us a vision and clear conviction that the System of Allah (swt), the Khilafah, can be established with the Support of Allah (swt) regardless of the strength and advancement of the current powerful states which oppose its return, if we work for it in the way prescribed by our Deen, in obedience to our Rabb (swt). And if we believe in the overwhelming Might of Allah (swt) and the truth of our Deen, then we should also have absolute certainty that the Muslim armies of today can liberate our oppressed brothers and sisters in Syria, Palestine, Kashmir, China, Myanmar and elsewhere, regardless of the size of the armies of other nations, for they are responding to an Order of Allah (swt) alone: to defend the life or lands of the Muslims. Indeed, these convictions and certainties are embodied in the words that we often say but often fail to reflect upon – **La hawla wala quwatta illah billah – there is No Power nor strength except by Allah!** And it is without doubt that Allah (swt) will give victory to those who give victory to Him (swt) and His Deen. Allah (swt) says,

﴿فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَئِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ * تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْتَلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ﴾

“So they put them to flight by Allah’s permission. And Dawood slew Jalut, and Allah gave him kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allah’s repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allah is Gracious to the creatures. These are the communications of Allah: We recite them to you with truth; and most surely you are (one) of the apostles.” [Al-Baqara: 251-252]

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