بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Decline of Ideology and Ideological Nation -
Understanding the term 'Decline' and its application in current reality

The understanding about concept of decline is important for an ideological dawah carrier. Concepts that we are attempting to build in the Ummah are integrally linked to our understanding about decline. If we do not understand decline, then we cannot build a coherent set of concepts within the Ummah. The subject of decline can be applied to many spheres. However, the decline of Ideology and Nation is the most important sphere in the subject of decline. Nevertheless, decline can also be applied to many other spheres like decline of political party, politician, economy, etc…

In order to assess whether any Ideology or Nation has gone into decline, we need to have a self-consistent definition of decline, which can be applied uniformly to all the spheres of decline. Decline is the opposite of revival; to achieve revival we must reverse the decline. Revival is defined as intellectual elevation. From our culture, we understand this to be applied to a society. Intellectual elevation is about building the thoughts on a consistent and coherent basis. Hence, all the detailed concepts related to actions that satisfy man's instincts and organic needs must be built on a viewpoint about life, which in itself is built upon a creed. This is intellectual elevation, because each concept is justified on a primary concept, and each primary concept is built upon the creed. Therefore, revival is reflected in a specific set of concepts that the society holds, by virtue of which, it solves the problems it faces.

A society is defined according to the interests. The interests we mean here are the benefits and harms that the society legislates for itself. It establishes an authority in order to safeguard these interests, hence there must be unification on certain essential concepts such that this authority is established and obeyed. Both are critical i.e. its establishment and its obedience. From a societal viewpoint, this translates into a unification within the society about the creed, the viewpoint of life emanating from the creed, resulting in a criteria of action. When the people in the society are unified on these concepts together with a system that acts to protect the interests built upon these concepts, then we can say that this society is intellectually elevated. It is important to understand that this unification on the interests is necessary before any system can be defined and adhered to, because the sole purpose of the system is to safeguard the interests. Since the interests are built on the creed, the system is characterised by the creed. The unification on these interests will only occur if people in the society are unified on the basis upon which these interests are defined.

Madinah al Munawwarah is an adequate example to illustrate this. Prior to Islam, the people of Madinah were fragmented into three groups, the Aws, the Khazraj and the Jews. They solved their problems by a mutual balance of interests, not on a unified basis that all three groups agreed upon. After accepting Islam, Islam became the basis upon which all three accepted, although the Jews did so reluctantly. The creed of Islam was accepted and the interests were defined according to the concept of Halaal and Haraam.

Hence in any dispute, members of the society accept the authority of the state to settle the dispute. Some of the society may not be happy about the decision of the state, but will accept the judgement, built on the premise that the state is there to safeguard the creed on the basis of which the interests are defined. Hence, although they may be disagreement on the specific problem, the society is unified on the creed, the viewpoint in life and the values that emanate from the creed. And they see the state as safeguarding this basis, which surpasses, in importance, the specific dispute.

Hence, when the term the 'basis of the state' is used, this refers to the manifestation of the creed in terms of the viewpoint in life from which the interests are defined and enforced. The greater the unification on these concepts, the stronger the state, and greater the cohesion that will exist in the society in the event of a challenge.

If revival is the unification of the basis upon which problems are solved [1], then decline must be the questioning of the basis upon which society solves problems, and hence the basis upon which society is built. Therefore, decline will be manifested in elements of society questioning the validity, not only of the legislation but also of the basis upon which that legislation is built. The natural progression of this questioning of the basis is an erosion of the authority that is there to protect the basis, resulting in fragmentation in society and eventually the collapse of Ideology takes place.

However, two things need to be understood on Ideological Society's decline. First, society does not decline as just like that i.e. the questioning of the basis in a society does not occur on mass level so easily. It can be noticed in any society, in general, all the members are necessarily in agreement with the basis of society. That is why, the likes of few individuals like Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul whose thought were not in agreement with the basis of society in Madinah, is not indicative of decline. Similarly, a Socialist in the United States and his view of American society does not indicate the decline of America. Rather, the decline of society is triggered by an ideological challenge either by a movement/party, or a state carrying alternative ideology which will make the general masses to question the basis of society. This definition and understanding of 'Decline' can be applied to any nations, the nations of past and present. Let's apply this to the Ummah of past and the present western secular capitalist society especially its leader United States of America.

Regarding the Ummah in the past, let us begin with the start of Islamic state that the Prophet (saw) had established in Madinah. The state or its basis in Madinah was never questioned even though hypocrites (munafiqeen) existed. Even some attempts taken by the munafiqeen to undermine the state by building the Masjid Diraar and its subsequent destruction by the Messenger of Allah (saw) is not indicative of decline but an attempt by subversive elements to undermine the state which were dealt with Sharii' actions.

During the events of the conflict between Mua'wiyah (ra) and Ali (ra), the question was not the basis, or the creed, but the detailed actions of a Khaleefah on a specific issue. Hence the conflict was over a specific thought and the conflicting priorities attached to them. Mu'awiyah refused to give Ali the pledge of allegiance (bai'ah), thereby refusing to accept Ali's authority until he settled the issue of Uthman's (ra) assassination. Ali's viewpoint, and rightly so, was that the murderers of Uthman will be pursued for sure according to the shari'ah rules, but considered Mu'awiyah's refusal to give bai'ah as a separate issue and tantamount to rebellions. Neither the state, not its basis was being questioned. Indeed, the Romans offered to help Mu'awiyah, who not only refused their help, but responded with an infamous response that "if Ali (ra) sent an army to fight you, I will be on the first line to fight against you". Though what happened between Ali and Mu'awiyah was a major political crisis, nevertheless, what was at question was an understanding or misunderstanding of priorities, not the basis of a state. Similarly, the actions of Mua'wiyah (ra) related to Yazid instituted hereditary bai'ah'. It is the issue on lack of clarity in the understanding of a specific thought and it is considered as misapplication of the one particular sharii' rule regarding Bai'ah, but not considered as questioning the basis of state or decline of the Ummah.

These examples have been used specifically because when placed within the context of decline, it is noted that the Ummah showed great importance to the basis of Society i.e. Islamic Ideology together with its Fikrah (idea) and Tareeqah (method). Though few misunderstanding and conflict over the detailed solutions of Islam aroused, Ummah never questioned the basis of State and Society.

The closing of the doors of ijtihad would have been the final nail in the coffin, from the viewpoint of precipitating decline. It was this activity that ultimately sealed the fate of the Ummah, for the inability to return to the sources means that any misunderstanding of the thoughts cannot be rectified easily. Hence, when new problems are faced, or the creed is challenged with alternative thoughts, the ability to go back to your source provides us with the confidence that our sources can address these new problems. If we look at the motives for closing the doors of ijtihad, they were twofold. First is the fact that people were not

observing the limits of ijtihad, performing liberal ijtihad. Secondly, the scholars at that time felt that the golden age of the Ulema had produced such a vast wealth of knowledge related to Islam, that it was inconceivable that there would be any major issue arising in the foreseeable future that would require a return to the sources and original ijtihad. Again, the Ummah had not declined, for the motives for closing the doors of ijtihad was supreme, even though misguided, confidence in the work of the classical scholars. Thus the basis of the system was never at question.

During the period of the Uthmani Khilafah (Ottoman Caliphate), the military might of the state was unquestionable. Even the Europeans acknowledged that, giving Suleiman al Qanuni the title Suleiman 'The Magnificent'. If we closely examine the Khilafah at this stage, fragmentation in the political sphere had already occurred, and that there was some degree of political autonomy between the various wilayah. If we examine the conquests of the Uthmani state, we cannot compare them to the conquests of the Khulafah Ar-Rashidoon. In the European regions that the Uthmani Khilafah conquered, very few maintained their Islamic identity, after the Khilafah was destroyed. Whereas the regions which were conquered during the earlier days of Islam, maintain their Islamic identity even today and those lands form the bulk of the Islamic lands that we work in. Yet, we do not refer to this as decline, because the basis of the state was not questioned at that time. *It is worth adding here that although the state was supreme, it judged itself using an incorrect criterion, which was comparing itself to the military weakness of the European nations, not a comparison in intellectual strength. If at any point at that time, a party like the Hizb had been established, then the seeds of decline sown in the past could have been easily uprooted and replaced by the pure understanding of Islam.*

However, with the advent of the industrial revolution and the period of technical progress happened in Europe, the intellectual challenge came with the military and economical might. The Ummah turned it on itself where most of the movements that came to address the issues/problems of the Ummah and try to revive it, infact actually, questioned the basis of the state. The attempts to adopt elements of the Western constitutions indicate that within the political circles of the Khilafah, the system was being questioned. It is not worth going through the details of those movements as it is not the scope of this article and moreover it is well documented in the books like Takattul el-Hizbi, Structuring of a Party, by Sheikh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani (Rh) **[2]** and other books of Hizb ut Tahrir. This period proved the point mentioned earlier above, that the questioning of the state manifested itself once a challenge to the state has been made by the presence of alternative ideology i.e. birth of secular capitalism. Indeed, this is consistent with what the party states in the book Mafaheem, Concepts of Hizb ut Tahrir, (pg.01, First para, First line) *"Since the **middle of the twelfth century Hijri (eighteenth century C.E.)** the Islamic world has been rapidly **declining** from its correct position and sinking horribly to the **abyss of decline**………".***[3]**

Why this is critical is that, the requirement is no longer just to unify the Ummah on the errors in the detailed solutions, as was the case between Mua'wiyah and Ali, but the issue becomes the unification on the basis upon which these solutions emanate. Hence, instead of convincing the Ummah about the right of adoption of the Khaleefah, the issue became the existence of the Khaleefah. Instead of convincing the Ummah about the contradiction between democracy and Islam, the issue became the liberal interpretation of Islam from its sources. Instead of convincing the Ummah about the relationship between the wali and the state, the Ummah were justifying the confederacy of states based on Islam. Ironically, one of the reasons for closing the doors of ijtihad were to prevent people from not observing the limits of ijtihad. Yet, the consequence of closing the doors of ijtihad was the liberal interpretation of Islam that included all thoughts and concepts to be part of Islam, even though they may have contradicted Islam.

Hence, the questioning of the basis of state is the indicator of decline, because then the solutions are not adhered to, because the basis from which they emanate is being questioned. People no longer have confidence in the solutions, and those who represent these solutions in the political sphere. If we observe the above series of events, the process

resulting in decline can be described as follows. Any creed manifests itself as a viewpoint of life. From this viewpoint of life emanate a series of interests which are protected by a state. These can be termed the detailed solutions related to life's affairs. The link between these solutions, their sources and the manner by which these solutions emanate from the creed needs to be maintained. A decay in understanding the detailed solutions will result in conflicts in society related to the specific solutions. But once the understanding of these solutions decays to an extent that their link with the sources is severed, then the basis is laid for decline.

Therefore, applying this to the Khilafah State, what occurred initially was the misunderstanding of the detailed solutions from Islam. This we commonly term as the misunderstanding of the thought and method. However, the closing of the doors of ijtihad severed that fundamental link between the sources with the solutions and the relationship between the solutions and the creed. Essentially what this means is, the Muslims did not understand why they were practicing Islam the way it was, and hence would not be able to argue the benefits of Islam from the basis. When confronted with the industrial revolution and the challenge of democracy and freedom, what criteria could they have used to judge what was acceptable from the industrial revolution and what was not? Inevitably we saw the fruits of this, such as the refusal to use the printing machine versus the adoption of democracy as from part of Islam. **Hence any society that is edging towards decline will first be seen to have conflict over the detailed solutions that are implemented by it. Some of them might begin to question the basis, which will be accelerated if an ideological challenge exists.**

In order to apply this definition to the decline of western society, we need to be careful about understanding the nature of secularism. First, the nature of secularism is that it adapts to include new problems, i.e., it legislates to accept a problem. Hence, examples like homosexuality, prostitution, drugs abuse are solved by accepting the legitimacy of these actions, not by addressing the roots cause of the problems. Secondly, the nature of democratic societies is that the ruling spheres will never allow the basis of the system to be questioned, for their very existence as ruling elites is at question. The nature of democracy is that the politicians can and will easily use public opinion in order to legitimise an activity which they are incompetent of solving, hence legislate to accept the problem, not to solve it. Hence it opens up the discussion that if the nature of secularism is such that there will never be a dominant public discussion of the basis of the state, how do we really assess that a secular society is ready for an ideological challenge - that is, is the society in decay, such that it will rapidly accept another ideology if it was challenged? We witness the fact that American society is not what it was before, we can sense that there is a sense of discontentment now that was not prevalent then. How do we characterise this discontentment, or sense of uneasiness?

As mentioned earlier, the beginning of decline is the conflict over detailed solutions. Hence, over a period of time comparisons will exist between the nature of society now and before. These will begin to focus on the problems currently and compare them to the reasons of their absence in the past. I will quote an example in my field of work to understand this point. Let's take students as an example. When we speak to many teachers, lecturers, professors in the Western society they would say that the behaviour of students now is unacceptable. The respect that lecturers had in the past has been replaced by disrespect. Though this might not be the case in the conservative and third world countries but our discussion is about the Western society especially, the US. The physical abuse of lecturers, professors and teachers, etc. is countered by legislation against threatening behaviour. Yet surely physical abuse is against the law, whether performed against a lecturer or any other individual. We would look at it from the point of view that how can a society produce individuals who do not respect these values. We would say that this is **individualism**. They view it as bad behaviour.

In social life, the curbing of benefits to unmarried mothers is yet another example. We would argue that what society produces such a large number (in excess of 10 million)

unmarried mothers? In addition, the need to pursue fathers who do not pay maintenance to their spouses. Both examples are problems that emanate from freedom of the individual. Both are examples of **rampant individualism**. Again, the society does not see any harm in them but legislates to counter their disruptive behaviour. We can quote numerous examples like these to prove that decay exist in the west, and people start to question the detailed solutions of secular democratic system and started to show their dissatisfaction on the secular democratic system.

To highlight more on this, let's see some more examples, the recent assault of the hooligan supporters of Trump upon the icon of Democracy, Capitol Hill, also represents the sorry state of Democracy and rampant individualistic mentality. The dramatic assault has exposed the false claim of those that still advocate Democracy, asserting that Democracy unites nations, allows peaceful transition of power, grants rights to all, protects the minorities, quells unrest, allows productive debate and is the pinnacle form of civilization. In the homelands of Democracy, white supremacist backed regimes are assuming power. In the standard bearer of Democracy, an unarmed Afro American citizen is choked to death by police, but the police are shy of halting a vandalizing hoard of violent white supremacists. As for the world's largest democracy, the Hindu State, Muslims are systematically persecuted. As for the pioneer of Democracy, France, it cannot even tolerate the veil of a Muslim woman. This incident exposes the institutional failures of the Western system at all levels: Institutionalized racism, institutionalized xenophobia, institutionalized wealth inequality, institutionalized corporate interests, Institutionalized disparity of access to health care, etc. Decades of political apathy has now exploded into mistrust of the system and the breakdown of a divided society. America is a divided nation across political, economic, racial and cultural lines and is coming apart at the seams. American democracy is damaged in the eyes of its people and the world. These events give rise to increase of people questioning the detailed solutions of democratic secular capitalist ideology.

With respect to the status of leading state of Capitalist Ideology, America, in political, economic, and foreign policy, it has gone down and not in the position as it was before. Many notable thinkers have started to pen articles about the demise of Capitalism and America's global prestige, indicating the West's and America's decline (on the verge of decline) in political, economic, social and foreign policy etc., such as Robert Kagan, a known neoconservative, mentioned in his book, *Superpowers don't get to retire: what our tired country still owes the world, starts by saying, "Almost 70 years ago, a new world order was born from the rubble of World War II, built by and around the power of the United States. Today that world order shows signs of cracking, and perhaps even collapsing."*

The German weekly news magazine, Der Spiegel had the cover page titled, 'Is the American dream over?', in it, Klaus Brinkbäumer, a writer mentioned, *"The fall of America doesn't have to be a complete collapse — it is, after all, a country that has managed to reinvent itself many times before. But today it's no longer certain — or even likely — that everything will turn out fine in the end."* David Klion writing in this month's Foreign Policy Magazine wrote an article titled: *"The American Empire Is the Sick Man of the 21st Century".* Paul Kennedy theorizes that *"America's overseas military commitments spurred by deficit spending are indicative of America's impending decline."*

Several books have been written on the decline of West and America by notable writers. The famous American thinker and politician Pat J. Buchanan wrote a book titled: *The death of the west; How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasion Imperil Our Country and Civilization*. Two authors, Patrick Artus and Marle-Paule Virard wrote a book titled Capitalism is on its way to Self-Destruction. And others books like *Mediocracy* by the French Canadian writer Alain Deneault and the book *Decadence: The Life and Death of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* by the French Philosopher Michel Onfray are also discusses the decline of west and especially America.

These books and articles expose the reality of United States of America and its weakness. However, the powers posing challenge to America like Germany, Russia and

China are all rising powers within the current capitalist system and thus they have an interest in maintaining it. As a result, they will always give the Secular Capitalism a credit and will not challenge it to make it decline and collapse. Hence, they are all rising powers, within the current capitalist system and thus they don't present alternative options for a system that would lead to the collapse of the current capitalist Ideology.

Moreover, there are some recent reports published, researchers from Cambridge University studied the political inclinations of more than 4 million people, employing data from survey projects that encompassed 154 countries between 1995 and 2020. The percentage of people that said they were disappointed with democracy during 2019 hit 57.5%. In fact, the researchers said that 2019 marked "the highest level of democratic discontent" on record. Many Western democracies, such as America, Australia, and UK, are now at their highest-ever level of dissatisfaction with democracy. According to the report, America in particular had seen a "dramatic and unexpected" decline in satisfaction with democracy. The report summed up Americans disappointment with democracy in the following way "for the US, it marks an 'end of exceptionalism' a profound shift in America's view of itself, and therefore, of its place in the world."

Even though these reports allude to the weakness of the capitalist ideology and the US, the torch bearer of Capitalism, still we cannot say that these are enough for the fall of the capitalist ideology. These points do highlight the opportunity that exists, more than before, for the rise of an alternative ideology, led by a strong state, to save the humanity from the evils of Capitalism. However, the mere presence of challenge per se does not prove decline. Neither does the presence of multiple political and military competitors, no matter how sustained, shake a nations belief in its values unless paired with an intellectual thought. Hence, for any ideology to collapse, it is inevitable that an alternative is available for the masses to compare and opt. So that they will question the basis of Society and embrace the alternative Ideology.

Effectively, what I try to convey is that the inherent flaws in the concepts on which this society is built is rising day by day and this will eventually give rise to contradictions laying the basis of decline at future Inshaa Allah. Hence, we cannot say that American or western society is declining, but questioning the detailed solutions of the western ideology exists which can be exploited by an ideological challenge and cause them to decline and collapse very soon Insha Allah.

Decline would come about as a result of a shock. And in the case of past ideological states, this shock would combine the presence of a peer competitor in the form of a great power with an ideological alternative. We know for sure that only the rise of Islam could conceivably do this as only Islam can combine the presence of an ideological alternative with global power ambitions to spread justice. This is why the world needs Khilafah (Caliphate). History is a witness to this phenomenon. It was the rise of the Khilafah that challenged and brought a fall to the then leading state, the Roman Empire. It was the Khilafah that influenced European renaissance that led to the revolutions and new ideology. Similarly, it was the capitalist states of Britain and France that played a role in the destruction of Khilafah. Then it was the USSR that challenged the Capitalist states by adopting Communism as an ideology; and then it was the United States that led the Cold War and fall of Communism giving liberal capitalism as the alternative. In the very similar way, once such a state is established today, it can present its solutions in a challenging manner and build definitive cracks in the wall of Capitalism that is already shaken. Such a state must present the solutions covering economics, politics and legal aspects of a society and there is no available ideology other than Islam that could provide such comprehensive solutions as an alternative to Capitalism. Islam has a capacity to provide solutions based its Ideology for the Political, Economic, Legal, and social aspects.

Hence, this current status quo and the reality of the international situation should motivate us as a Shaab (member) of political Hizb, whose ideology is Islam, should work hard and give our best without showing any slackness of commitment in Dawah, be aware of

the gravity and importance of the task we work for, not occupied with our own worldly matters, to the degree that the dawah became secondary or marginal in our life, in order to re-establish the strong, mighty Khilafah state which will pose the ideological challenge to the current Capitalist society and deliver all the people out of darkness to the light and justice of Islam.

May Allah (swt) make it soon and bless us to witness the victory of Islam reaching all the corners of the globe.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «لَيَبْلُغَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ مَا بَلَغَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَلَا يَتْرُكُ اللَّهُ بَيْتَ مَدَرٍ وَلَا وَبَرٍ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ هَذَا الدِّينَ بِعِزِّ عَزِيزٍ أَوْ بِذُلِّ ذَلِيلٍ عِزًّا يُعِزُّ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَذُلًّا يُذِلُّ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْكُفْرَ» "**This matter will certainly reach every place touched by the night and day. Allah will not leave a house or residence but that Allah will cause this religion to enter it, by which the honorable will be honored and the disgraceful will be disgraced. Allah will honor the honorable with Islam and he will disgrace the disgraceful with unbelief.**" [Musnad Aḥmad]

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