

FACTORS FOR NATION'S RISE AND FALL: AN ANALYSIS FROM QURANIC PERSPECTIVE

Tazul Islam

Senior lecturer, Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies (FPQS) University Sains Islam
Malaysia (USIM), Email: tazuljb@yahoo.com; drtazul@usim.edu.my

Sayyid Muhammad Yunus Gilani

Associate Professor in Islamic studies at International Islamic University Malaysia.
Email. dr.yunusgilani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the Qur'anic factors for nation's rise and fall. It highlights on how the divine law, *sunnatullah*, is functioning in this connection. The researcher depends on the textual analysis method dealing with relevant verses of the Quran. Hence, various types of Tafsir books were consulted. The findings include as follows: according to Quran, the universe is created and regulated in a systematic way which makes it a cosmos and not a chaos. This system is called *sunnatullah*, the natural laws of cause and effect. The case of nation's rise and fall is also governed by the same divine system. The Quran depicts the standards and virtues such as strong belief system, righteous deeds, justice, reformation, renewal, having knowledge and wisdom might raise a nation to the sublime position among other nations. Similarly, it refers to some factors such as luxury, injustice, religious extremism, disunity that could propel a nation from the sublime to the ridiculous. It is expected that this study would deliver a significant contribution to this subject.

Keywords: Rise, Fall, Nation, Civilisation, Quran.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Islamic worldview, God creates the universe and manages it in a systematic way under His just and merciful order. This is what makes it a cosmos and not a chaos. Everything here follows *sunnatullah*, the natural laws of cause and effect. Even the rise and fall of nations in time and space is governed by these divine laws. The actions and reactions, beliefs and worldviews, visions and practices do lead to effects and results in a system, which if studied and understood can be predicted and taken care of in developing societies and civilizations. It is the worldview, collective conduct, behavior, mission, and vision of a nation which leads to rise or eventual fall of a nation. These rules and laws governing the rise and fall of nations are directly and indirectly referred and elucidated in the Quran and *hadith* for us to learn and develop our vision and action

accordingly, to save us from civilizational decline in this world and eternal damnation in the hereafter. Taking cognizance of and heeding these rules, help individuals, communities, societies, and nations to rise and develop in a multidimensional and sustainable manner. This article presents a Quranic perspective of these rules of rise and fall of nations. References from the Quran and *hadith* and views of reputed experts on the subjects have been cited and examined to authenticate the findings and conclusions. The role of *iman* (belief), *amalsalihah* (righteous deeds), *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal), *ilm* (knowledge) and *hikmah* (wisdom), *qital* (Fighting) and *'adl* (justice), in the rise of a nation, is addressed. The impact of disunity, dissention, luxury, injustice, exploitation, and religious extremism on the downfall of a nation is analyzed.

2. FACTORS THAT GIVE RISE TO A NATION

A sound national character and perfect leadership qualities are the catalysts for a nation to rise. A nation, in strength, must transcend its contemporaries in this very ideal character and leadership qualities. Its ideals should appear as the best choice in comparison to others.

2.1 Belief in Islam (Iman) and its role in Building a national character and leadership quality:

Belief in Islam includes belief in Allah (SWT), Angels, Divine books, Messengers of Allah (SWT), the Day of Resurrection (life in Hereafter) and the Destiny (measure of goodness and evil from Allah (SWT))¹. *Iman* is a core topic of the Quran which is, in fact, the central issue of Islamic belief system (*aqidah*). While the first thirteen years of the Quranic revelation focused on *aqidah*, the subject of *iman* got the lion's share of its content². However, the relevance of the rise of a nation with *iman*, refers to the effects of *iman* on human life and character. In other words, the role of *iman* in giving rise to a nation can be realized through the effects incorporated with its influx in human mind. The first and foremost, *Iman* changes the passage of thoughts and therefore change man's actions, approaches, and character. Thoughts and actions are deeply interlinked, and they are foundations of building a character-trait. The inconsistent thoughts and unorganized actions cannot build a trustworthy character. A strong character is always the product of firm beliefs, constant thoughts, and an organized way of thinking. According to the Qur'anic term, the intellectual basis of human character is called "*iman*"³. It brings and binds the people together and creates in them a model character and uniformity in their thoughts and

¹ The sixth article of belief is mentioned in the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him). The words used in the Hadith, in Arabic, are "walqadre khairihi washarreh minAllah itala."

² Qutb, M. (2004). *Dirasat Quraniyyah*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 33.

³ Maududi, A. A. (2002). *Understanding Islamic Civilization*, translated from Urdu by Muhammad Khalid Farooqi. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 62.

actions and finally turns them into a community, a culture, and a civilization⁴. The following verses show the relation of *iman* with the rise of a nation:

“Allah (SWT) has promised those of you who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, But all who, after [having understood] this, choose to deny the truth - it is they, they who are truly iniquitous!” “Yet if the people of those communities had but attained to faith and been conscious of Us, We would indeed have opened up for them blessings out of heaven and earth: but they gave the lie to the truth - and so We took them to task through what they [themselves] had been doing”(Quran, 7: 96-100)

The above-mentioned verses assert that believers are His nominees for mastery on the earth if they truly represent the demand of *iman*. The verses recall the past nations like *Bani Israel* which gained the Allah's (SWT) promise of mastery on the earth through their patience against torments that they had faced from their enemies. Moreover, in the context of painful aftermath of the *Uhud* war, Allah (SWT) conveyed the same message of holding patience to the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) against torments they received in the battlefield. Along with patience, these verses refer to some other virtues like *taqwa* (God consciousness) and *tawakkul* (God dependence) which qualified past nations as well as follower of the last Prophet (pbuh) for the leadership position. It is obvious that these virtues are the manifestations of *iman* and higher virtues of Islamic ethics.

Iman (belief) is both light and strength. One who acquires true belief may challenge the whole universe and be saved from the pressure of events in accordance with the strength of his belief.⁵ Through the light of belief, man rises to the highest of the high and acquires a value worthy of Paradise; and through the darkness of unbelief, he descends to the lowest of the low and falls to a position fit for Hell.⁶ Just as belief is a light which illuminates man and makes legible all the missives of the Eternally Besought One inscribed upon him, so too it illuminates the universe, and delivers the past and the future from darkness⁷. The Quran mentions: “Allah (SWT) is the Protector of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into light (Qur'an, 2:257)”.

With this force and might of *iman*, in the golden era of Islam, all the material, moral and spiritual resources of man were brought into use to make him an ideal citizen of an ideal State. Though the Islamic Commonwealth was the richest and the most powerful State of its time. Maududi mentions, “as long as Muslims were very strong in their beliefs, they were at their zenith of advancement in their worldly life. While they became weak in their beliefs, they lagged in the way of progress and surrendered to the dominance of other nations⁸.” He adds “*Iman* and its

⁴ *ibid.* 63.

⁵ Nursi, B. S. (N.D) *The Words*. Turkey: Istanbul, Sozler Publications, 322.

⁶ *ibid.*319

⁷ *ibid.*320

⁸ Maududi, A.A. *op. cit*, 65-66.

doctrines have the strength to build a moral system of a higher standard. Since its ethics are so pure and clean, they can prepare people for success in their worldly life. History shows that the nations that believe in fictitious and superstitious beliefs lose the strength to advance or to play a dominant role in the world. The fictitious thoughts and beliefs create such a bad effect on their minds that their best skills become dull, they lose courage in their feats, intensity in their determination, vastness in their vision, enlightenment in their minds, valor in their hearts, and at last, they fall into the abyss of everlasting disgrace, misfortune, slavery, and oppression⁹.”

Iman cultivates righteous deeds and noble character which comprehends worshipping Allah (SWT), constructing the world, public welfare and so on. It multiplies man's ability of contribution and construction ten times more than his natural ability when it reaches its peak in strength¹⁰. In short, whatever Islam comprises is based on the belief in Allah (SWT). If this foundation is removed, the whole structure of the Islamic system and civilization will fall down¹¹. As the fundamental concepts play an important role in creating and strengthening the national character, “*Imaniyyat*” creates a special model of national character, then a civilization is established and a peculiar shape of it takes place¹².

2.2 Righteous Deeds (al-amal al-salih): The concept of *Iman* is comprehensive, and it is connected to righteous deeds. In an absolute sense, there can be no *iman* where there is no “good work”.¹³ Sayyid Qutb argues that the righteous deed is the fruit of *iman* (belief), which consolidates its existence and its spirit in human mind. Islam itself is a dynamic ideology, whenever it comes to existence in the mind, it turns into righteous deed. *Iman* is not well-represented if good deed does not result from it. As for those who claim to be Muslims and are yet spreading corruption on earth, fighting reform i. e., the establishment of Allah (SWT)'s system and his *shariah* in life, they have no *iman* at all¹⁴. It is a fashionable image of latent belief. Therefore, the Quran always presents the discourse of *iman* in parallel with mentioning “righteous deed” because no reward would be offered if the *iman* (belief) is idle, which does not work and does not produce any good deed¹⁵. However, “Righteous deeds” refers to all good beneficial deeds¹⁶. It includes all commands and prohibitions of Allah (SWT)¹⁷. Al-Razi defines “Righteous Deeds” as the deeds which prevent human mind from seeking worldly interest and encourage seeking interest of otherworldly life¹⁸. Righteous deed is the output of the *iman* which

⁹ *ibid.* 64.

¹⁰ Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2000). *Ummatunabyna Qarnayin*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 177-78.

¹¹ Maududi, A.A. *op. cit.*, 90.

¹² *ibid.* 68.

¹³ Izutsu, T. (1993). *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 93.

¹⁴ Qutb, S. (N.D) *Fi Zilal al-Quran*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol.1, 152.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 172.

¹⁶ Al-Zuhayli, W. (1422 AH). *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit*. Damascus: Dar al-Fkr, , vol. 2, 1027.

¹⁷ Ibn Ashur, T. (1984). *Al-Taharirwa al-Tanwir*. Tunis: Dar al-Tunisiyyah, vol. 30, 532.

¹⁸ Al-Razi, F. (2000). *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol.8, 232.

embeds its existence and vivacity in the heart. Islam itself is the dynamic movement, when the heart conceives its existence; it turns to practice the righteous deed¹⁹.

The Quran provides that the course of history is a moral agency and through which the morally superior elements get rise to the top, while those who are morally inferior sink to the bottom. Virtuous living, which is the outcome of a healthy religious faith, must inevitably lead to success²⁰. The following verses contain the matter of being righteous or doing righteous deeds as a factor for the rise of a nation: "Allah (SWT) has promised those of you who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, But all who, after [having understood] this, choose to deny the truth - it is they, they who are truly iniquitous!" (Al-Quran, 24:55) "Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the Message (given to Moses): My servants the righteous, shall inherit the earth." (Al-Quran, 21:105)

A nation with sincere belief (*iman*) and righteous deeds could have superiority to other nations at any point of history. For succession to power and dominance in the world, this inseparable combination between these two elements is a must. If these two elements are separated, the victory goes to the people who adopt the material means. Active believers are the righteous servants of Allah (SWT). The duty of believers is to care for the intent of *iman* which is good deeds and to take the causes of vicegerency so that the promise of Allah (SWT) comes true and His law in this regard comes into effect²¹.

The good qualities in people are prerequisites for having political and royal authority. Since it is a condition²², a rising nation should demonstrate the best qualities, good deeds and the most excellent abilities to be qualified in the eyes of Allah (SWT) for the guardianship of His land²³. If the standard-bearers of the good do not enter the field at all and make no efforts to guide the people on the path of virtue, the void thus created will be filled by spearheads of the evil forces and they will draw the people to the path of evil. But if the standard-bearers of righteousness enter the field of action and perform the task of reforming the society in right earnest, the leaders of evil forces cannot maintain their hold on the masses much longer. These two forces will confront each other in the sphere of morality, and in this combat, evil can never dominate virtue²⁴.

2.3 Reform and Reconstruction According to Standard of the Age: Reform and reconstruction are the perpetual prerequisites for the survival of a nation because if it does not

¹⁹ *ibid.* 172.

²⁰ Ahmad, I. (2002). *Rise and Decline of the Muslim Ummah*, Translated from Urdu by Sanaullah Ansari. Pakistan: Lahore, Markazi Anjuman Khuddamul Qur'an 7.

²¹ *ibid.* 174.

²² Ibn Khaldun. (1980). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 291.

²³ Maududi, A.A. (1978). *Nations Rise and Fall -Why?.* Pakistan: Lahore, Islamic Publications Ltd. 25.

²⁴ *ibid.* 28.

update itself with the standard and demands of its age, it would not be able to cope with challenges of the time and its contemporary nations. It therefore will be bound to take a back seat of the history. This reform is an all-exclusive enterprise; it includes every walk of life of that nation like social, political, religious, intellectual domain. Through this process, a nation gets strength, provision, and fresh energy to make its way forward; and remain up-to-date and vivid²⁵. The Quran gives overwhelming emphasis to reformation and reconstruction while it enjoins a code “enjoining good and forbidding evil”. The Quran mentions: “Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for Iqamat-as- Salat. [i.e. to perform the five compulsory congregational Salat (prayers) (the males in mosques)], to pay the Zakat and they enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden) [i.e. they make the Qur'an as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allah (SWT) rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures).” (al-Quran, 22: 41)

This verse discerns the duties of the people who are given a state power. They must stand with reform acts as well as protect the *khilafah* from every corrupting means²⁶. Those who did not carry out these duties of reform have faced Allah (SWT)'s curse. In the case of *Bani Israil*, the Israelites fell far from Allah (SWT)'s mercy because of their failure to restrain persons from the reprehensible acts, and the abandonment of the practice of forbidding evil. Thus, negligence and abandonment of this major obligatory practice affects nation's sustainability as Allah (SWT) says in the Quran: “Say (O Muhammad SAW): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Exceed not the limits in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of people who went astray in times gone by, and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the Right Path.” “Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawud (David) and 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allah (SWT) and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds.” “They used not to forbid one another from the Munkar (wrong, evil-doing, sins, polytheism, disbelief, etc.) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do.”(al-Quran, 5:77-81) “Enjoining good and forbidding evil” is a perpetual norm recommended by Islam which in fact is an effective tool for maintaining social order and social equilibrium. It protects society from the destructive diseases and promotes it to a righteous institution. If Muslim society practiced this norm it, did not fall in decay and decline. “Why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed of balanced good sense, prohibiting (men) from mischief in the earth - except a few among them whom We saved (from harm)? But the wrong doers pursued the enjoyment of the good things of life which were given them and persisted in sin.”(Al-Quran, 11:116)

Maududi relates the fact of a nation's rise and fall in the following statement:

²⁵ ibid. 8.

²⁶ Al-Sha'rawi, M.M. (1991). *Tafsir al-Sha'rawi*. Cairo: Dar Akhbar al-Yaum, vol.1, 6052.

“According to His law, Allah (SWT) does not concede the hereditary claims of nations that whatever happens they shall not be dislodged from the control of their territories. Allah (SWT) watches only the performance of a nation in her own country. If that nation is engaged in reform and construction; if she expends her energies in the development and reconstruction of her country; if she is engrossed in uprooting the evils and cultivating virtues, then the Master of this universe says, "Yes, verily, you deserve to rule over this land. You have inhabited this country for long and you are a worthy people. Your right over this land is preeminent". But if opposite is the case; if destruction is going apace and construction is held in abeyance; if Allah (SWT)'s earth is being filled with evil and virtue is banished from it; if Allah (SWT) bounties – the natural resources are being mercilessly wasted away instead of being put to some constructive use, in that case, Allah (SWT) will first administer to them some mild shocks and follow them up with severe jolts in order that these people may take heed and mend their ways. When these people do not give up their refractory behavior even after these warnings, they are dispossessed of their right to govern that land and another people, who are comparatively superior in virtue, are installed in power over them²⁷.”

Developing the earth is counted among the purposes of man's creation as a vicegerent on earth, as He, the Exalted, said in the words of *Salih* speaking to his people: O my people worship Allah (SWT), you have no Allah (SWT) other than Him. He has created you from the earth and made you dwell in it! (Al-Quran, 11: 61) This means that man is required to build the earth; which in a sense is an obligation. Allah (SWT), the Most High has given mankind the intellect, and with knowledge He qualified him for vicegerency over the angels; and by it, he gave him precedence over the angels, whom He did not teach what He taught Adam, of the names of things and their characteristics. When He favored him with this it was for him to use his intellect and industry in building the earth; and to benefit from what Allah (SWT) has dispensed for him, without pride and promiscuity²⁸.

One of the causes of the sustainability of a nation is reformation. Allah (SWT) does not cause to decline any nation having righteous people who pursue the reform agendas on the earth. This is the divine law. They play role, like doctors, who protect their nation from disease and pandemic spreading within. If the nation heeds to their advice and takes the courses of prevention before outbreak of the disease and remedies after inflictions, it remains safe from disease and epidemic. Similarly, if the nation does not respond to the reformers' agenda, it would be endangered and subjected to decline²⁹.

2.4 Knowledge, and Intellectual Vigor and Wisdom: the reason of man's superiority in the whole creatures is knowledge. Man is more superior to angels because he is more knowledgeable

²⁷ Maududi, *op. cit.*, 8.

²⁸ Al-Qaradawi, *op. cit.* 198.

²⁹ Ridha, R. (1990). *Tafsir al-Manar*. Egypt: al-Haiyya' al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kutub, vol. 12, 201.

than them. It was proved when Allah asked the angels after creating Adam and the earth the names in it; they could not be able to answer while Adam named all the creatures. A civilization or a nation cannot be on rise unless it establishes a perfect trend of knowledge³⁰. So, a nation needs the subjects who are capable of a careful and rational understanding by which they can explore the welfare of the people. This power could qualify a nation for the position of leadership. In the past, Allah (SWT) has gifted knowledge to the people who were chosen by Him for the leadership of their respective nations. The supportive evidence can be found in the following verses of the Quran: "The man in Egypt who bought him, said to his wife: "Make his stay (among us) honorable: maybe he will bring us much good, or we shall adopt him as a son." Thus, did We establish Joseph in the land, that We might teach him the interpretation of stories (and events). And Allah (SWT) hath full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not". "When Joseph attained His full manhood, We gave him power and knowledge: thus do We reward those who do right."(Al-Quran, 12: 21-22) "To Solomon We inspired the (right) understanding of the matter: to each (of them) We gave Judgment and Knowledge; it was Our power that made the hills and the birds celebrate Our praises, with David: it was We Who did (all these things)." (Al-Quran, 21:79)

According to above-mentioned verses, it can be said that Allah (SWT) asserts the strength of knowledge as a pre-requisite for any nation or person to rise and being dominant. As in the past, He equipped prophets with knowledge before choosing them for the position of state power. This precedence is frequented as regard to many people like prophet *Sulayman, Yusuf, Daud, Talut, Luqman*, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and others. Knowledge has precedence over actions, and it is in fact the foundation of all actions. Without the right knowledge, it is not possible for a man to act rightfully. The right knowledge and the right way of thinking can build man's character along the right lines and can acquire the ability to use his power of reason and choice in the right direction. Therefore, whatever system of training and civilization that is in making should be based on the foundation of this kind of knowledge. If there is anything corrupt in this kind of knowledge, the whole system of training and civilization will be corrupted³¹. Islam recognizes the only system of training and civilization, which is based on the real knowledge (*al-Ilm*). Islam rejects all those systems that are not founded on the real knowledge, because they lead man's powers and skills in the wrong direction, by crooked ways³².

Wisdom is "a higher dimension of consciousness", which many people who have not attained faith have not experienced. With such consciousness, the individual's mind is very clear. However, what provides this clearness is neither the brain's capacity, nor sharpness of intelligence, nor skill. The cause of this clearness of mind is the person's *iman* (faith in Allah

³⁰ Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1993). *Knowledge and Islam*. Cairo: MaktabaWahbah, 11.

³¹ Maududi, A.A. *op. cit.* 86.

³² *ibid.* 87.

(SWT)) and the Qur'an. One who uses the Qur'an as a guide is rid of all the ignorance and incorrect information he formerly had. This is replaced solely with correct knowledge.

3. FACTORS FOR A NATION'S FALL

Fall of a nation does not mean the abolishment or destruction of that nation. It means disappearance of its identity and remaining as an indistinctive weak nation³³. According to Allah's (SWT) universal law, a nation which uses causes of survival would survive, and the one which overlooks those causes, would become weak and die because of its negligence³⁴. However, there are two norms of nations' rise and fall. One is supernatural which was applied to some previous nations of the prophets like 'Aad and Samud and others who declined to accept the divine message brought by the prophets, indulged in committing grave sins, practiced gross injustice, tyrannized the weak and corrupted the social, political and religious standards³⁵. The second norm in nations' rise and fall is regulated by the law of cause and effect that Allah (SWT) determines for human society and civilization. The causes which pave the way of decline and fall, as mentioned in the Quran, are extravagance, committing sin and obscene deeds, offending people, and superstitions. There is no such nation, which was granted power and happiness, but it took these perverted courses and ruinous corruptions until Allah (SWT) had not taken its happiness, superiority, and power.

Allah (SWT) most certainly does not like - nor can He be expected to like - that His world should be destroyed, devastated, or spoiled with disorder, foul-play or tyranny and oppression³⁶. Therefore, those who take the destructive courses like corruption on the earth, injustice in its all forms, administering the world affairs in wrong way, indulgence in luxury and religious extremism. These are the factors or forces that lead a nation to decline. A nation's success or failure and advance or decline depends on both material and moral factors. Both are necessary, but neither on its own is sufficient but the moral dimension is more decisive. The uniqueness of a nation lies in its moral awareness and moral attributes, and moral laws govern the advance and decline of a nation. These attributes, when possessed by any people or group, generate the human capital from which a powerful social entity may be created. But having gathered this capital together, a group will only become vigorous and strong if other moral attributes are also developed³⁷. When the moral decay afflicts a very large number of individuals, it is natural that this disease which corrodes a nation's morals should assume an epidemic form and manifest itself in the collective behavior of that nation³⁸.

³³ Qutb, S. *op. cit.* vol. 4, 160.

³⁴ *ibid.* vol. 4, 161.

³⁵ Ridha, R. *op. cit.* vol. 8, 358.

³⁶ Maududi, A.A. *op. cit.* 3.

³⁷ Mawdudi, A.A. (1984). *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change*, Edited by Khurram Murad. United Kingdom: London The Islamic Foundation), 95.

³⁸ Maududi, A.A. *op. cit.* 19.

Among Allah's (SWT) Ordinances is the natural law that with the prevalence of degeneration and the spread of evil, sinful, and corrupt deeds, as well as disorder in the nation, the time for its deterioration and destruction draws near. Almighty Allah (SWT) says: "Have they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed whom We had established on the earth such as We have not established you? And We poured out on them rain from the sky in abundance and made the rivers flow under them. Yet We destroyed them for their sins and created after them other generations."(al-Anam, 6). "Narrated By Zainab bin Jahsh: That the Prophet once came to her in a state of fear and said, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah (SWT). Woe unto the Arabs from a danger that has come near. An opening has been made in the wall of Gog and Magog like this," making a circle with his thumb and index finger. Zainab Bint Jahsh said, "O Allah (SWT)'s Apostle! Shall we be destroyed even though there are pious persons among us?" He said, "Yes, when the evil person will increase." [Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4, Book 55. Hadith No.565.]

There are many *hadith* clarifying the effects of sin and corruption on the moral, social, economic, and political life in general. It suffices to mention the *hadith* reported by *Ibn Umar* saying, "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) approached us and said: "O, Muhajirin! (immigrants to Medina) there are five calamities, that if you are tried with them, and I seek Allah (SWT)'s Refuge lest they should befall you. These calamities are: When obscenity and sin spread among people, Allah (SWT) will punish them through plague and unknown of diseases that never appeared in the time of their forefathers who passed away. When they refuse to pay Zakah, they will be denied water from the sky and they will have rain only for the sake of their animals. When they break the Covenant of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet, Allah (SWT) will give power to their enemies over them and let them take some of their property and fortune. When their rulers do not adhere to Allah (SWT)'s Book and attempt to preach and choose of His Laws, Allah (SWT) will make their rivalries great among themselves.[Note: Reported by *Ibn Majah* in *Al-Fitan* (No.4009)]

3.1 Disunity and discord: There are many verses of the Qur'an and many sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah (SWT) be on him) has said: "The Israelites perished only because of their excessive questioning and their disputes over their Prophets." The reason of making all this emphasis on unity and warnings against disunity is its dire consequence on a nation. As Allah (SWT) says: "And obey Allah (SWT) and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: For Allah (SWT) is with those who patiently persevere."(Al-Quran, 8:46)"Allah (SWT) did indeed fulfill His promise to you when ye with His permission Were about to annihilate your enemy,-until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the booty) which ye covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did He divert you from your foes in order to test you but He forgave you: For Allah (SWT) is full of grace to those who believe."(Al-Quran,3: 152)

Tanazu in this verse, refers to dispute, discord and disagreement which lead to disunity³⁹. Muslim scholars aptly understood the denotation of these verses. They mostly identified two consequences of disunity: firstly, getting weaker and being failure⁴⁰, and then secondly, loosing state power⁴¹. However, *Ibn Khaldun* made the consequences of disunity clearer by pointing that the *asabiyyah* (group feeling) and the religious consciousness decline in strength as the society and civilization go through different stages and acquire new causes which finally lead to the fall of the whole civilization⁴². Group feeling is necessary to the Muslim community. Its existence enables it to fulfill what Allah (SWT) expects of it⁴³. When group feeling is destroyed, they thus invite their own destruction⁴⁴. Practically speaking, the first sign of the *ummah*'s emerging crisis was infighting (*fitnah*) which broke out in a series of destructive civil wars within the Islamic state. The third *khalifa* of Islam was martyred during these wars as was his successor the fourth *khalifa* Ali ibn Abi Talib. Eventually the *khilafa* came to an end. The infighting that ultimately resulted in the fall of the *Khilafa* is an important event in the history of the *ummah*⁴⁵.

3.2 Luxury: Islam denounces luxury and luxury seekers because luxury is based on wasting and squandering the wealth and depriving others from meeting their needs. It makes self-centeredness and selfishness as a center of thinking and makes efforts without looking into ethical bindings. So the luxurious grab wealth through misappropriation, excessive interests, corruption, injustice and similar illicit means. They popularize an extravagant consumption and materialistic trends in the society. As a result, social injustice, moral degeneration, dissoluteness, emergence of social ills and corruption sprout up and social welfare means drop to minimal level. *Ibn Khaldun* asserts this reality and points out that man is composed of body and soul. One of the weakening elements of this soul is luxury caused by excessive obsession of sedentary culture. In the process of trying to satisfy the increasing demands of his needs, in this type of culture, man adopts bad qualities and employs immoral means to achieve his ends⁴⁶. Quran declares the consequence of luxury: "When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them :then (it is) We destroy them utterly."(Al-Quran, 17: 16)

³⁹ Tantawi, M. S. (1997). *al-Tafsir al-Wasit*. Cairo: Dar Nahdha Misr, vol.1, 1834.

⁴⁰ Al-Razi, F. D. (2000). *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol. 7, 410.

⁴¹ Al-Mawardi, A.A. (ND). *al-Nukat wa al-'Yun*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol.2, 72.

⁴² Agil, S.O.S. (1997). *Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Social Science and the Rise and Fall of Nations*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute Perkemanganf Minda, 1997, 25.

⁴³ Ibn Khaldun. (1940). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1980, 414.

⁴⁴ . *ibid*. 287.

⁴⁵ Abu Sulayman, A. H. (1997). *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, translated from Arabic by Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo. USA: Virginia, the International Institute of Islamic Thought, 23.

⁴⁶ Agil, S.O.S. *op. cit*. 22.

This verse equivocally reveals that the fall and weakness of a nation are caused by luxury. As luxury leads a nation to the immorality and dissoluteness, it paves the way for it to the pitfall of destruction⁴⁷. Luxury emerges in a nation accompanying with immorality and sickens its ethical standards and then its functions turn to be evil and wicked, therefore, its power and strength go down, its affairs become corrupted, and its fiber of unity deteriorates to such a level where the individuals of the society do not find themselves in any tie with one another. This condition of a nation provokes the strong nations to take over and occupy its seat⁴⁸. It is what happened to the Jews, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Turks and others⁴⁹. Ottoman Turks gave themselves up to the temptations of ease and luxury; their morals deteriorated, and their rulers grew tyrannical. Internecine feuds and dissensions put in their sinister appearance, and provincial governors and generals of the army turned corrupt and disloyal⁵⁰. Due to this gross harmfulness of luxury, the Prophet prohibited his *ummah* from indulging in it. As he says: "I am not afraid of your poverty but I am afraid that you will lead a life of LUXURY as past nations did, whereupon you will compete with each other for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them." [Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith: 385, Vol. 4, Book 53.]

Luxury corrupts the moral institution and innate disposition, makes the feelings harsh; therefore, the minds which are by nature responsive, receptive, and emotive lose their sensitivities. For this reason, Islam fights against luxury and establishes its social doctrines on the basis that there be no excuse for the luxury-lovers to exist in Muslim community because they are the rot which corrupts its surrounding. These people cannot comprehend the wisdom behind life and cannot promote the proper regulation which makes its way to reach to its far-reaching goal⁵¹.

Luxury-seekers in any nation, are the elite society who possess huge assets and luxury-means, therefore, they live in the lap of luxury, comfort, and ease, until their minds become trifling, and they become indulgent in immoral and shameful activities. They look down on ethics and values, sacredness, and dignity; and spread corruption and sinful exercises; and undermine the fundamental values which a nation cannot live without. Consequently, they fall into laxity, lose their liveliness and elements of power and cause of existence; then their tenure heralds the end. Luxury corrupts the nation's character. Through luxury, the soul acquires diverse kinds of evil customs and loses the good qualities which are the qualifications for (royal) authority. According to the law of Allah (SWT) which he has determined for His creatures in this connection, the bad qualities usually lead to retrogression and ruin⁵². The will of Allah (SWT) fixes an unchangeable regulation and law for human beings. When the causes are available, the

⁴⁷ Abu Zahra, M. (ND). *Al-Islam wa Makarim al-Akhlaq*. Dar al-Katib al-Arabi, 7-8.

⁴⁸ Ridha, R. *op. cit.* vol. 8, 278.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 358.

⁵⁰ Nadwi, A. H. A. (2003). UK: Islamic Academy UK. *Islam and the World: The Rise and Decline of the Muslims and Its Effect on Mankind*, 105.

⁵¹ Qutb, S. *op. cit.* vol. 4 p. 2467.

⁵² Ibn Khaldun, *op. cit.* 341.

effects will be resulted according to His will. As luxury is a declining element, the existence of luxury-lovers in any nation indicates that its foundation is weakening, and it is following the path of decline⁵³.

Corruption of individual inhabitants is the result of painful and trying efforts to satisfy the needs caused by their (luxurious) customs; the bad qualities they have acquired in the process of satisfying (those needs) and of the damage the soul suffers after it has obtained them. Consequently, individuals become devoted to lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury and usury because of satisfying their desires and pleasures resulting from luxury; their bad habit reaches at such a stage form where they cannot restrain themselves from following the ways and the means of immorality⁵⁴. The greater their luxury and the easier the life they enjoy, the closer they are to extinction. Once things that go with luxury and submergence in a life of ease break the vigor and the group feeling gets destroyed, the tribe is no longer able to defend or protect itself. It will be swallowed up by other nations⁵⁵, because time feasts on them, as their energy is extinguished by (mere material) well-being and their vigor drained by nature of luxury⁵⁶.

3.3 Injustice (zulm) and Corruption (Fasad): One of the most fundamental causes of nations' fall is injustice (*zulm*). This term is used in the Quran in a very comprehensive sense. Generally, it refers to "putting something not in its proper place". Injustice is mainly classified in three categories: firstly, injustice towards Allah (SWT): this type of injustice is to associate partners with Him [*shirk*]. The Qur'an says, 'Surely, Shirk is a major injustice.' [al-Quran, 31: 13]. Secondly, injustice to one's self: this type occurs by doing wrong to one's own soul by committing sins and disobeying Allah's (SWT) commands. This is injustice to the self. The Qur'an says, 'Do not wrong yourself...' [al-Quran 9: 9]. Finally, injustice to others: injustice to others is of many types and forms, for example, causing harm or injury by attacking others physically or financially by taking their money, defaming their honor and reputation by slander, doing wrong and inequality, violating their rights etc.

The Quran, in several its verses regarding stories of past nations, implicates injustice with destruction and abolishment. Quran warns of those who exercised shirk and did not heed to the call of the Prophets of Allah (SWT), but tried to falsify them, tortured them and their companions as well, fought against them and expelled them from their native land. Allah (SWT) says in this regard: "And how many populations We destroyed, which exulted in their life (of ease and plenty)! now those habitations of theirs, after them, are deserted,- All but a (miserable) few! and We are their heirs." "Nor was thy Lord the one to destroy a population until He had sent to its

⁵³ Qutb, S. *op. cit.* vol. vol. 5, 11.

⁵⁴ Ibn Khaldun, *op. cit.* 286.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 287.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* 297.

center a messenger, rehearsing to them Our Signs; nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practice iniquity.” (al-Quran, 28:58-59)

A society in which corruption takes place by subjugating people to worshipping man instead of Allah (SWT), it therefore, gets someone who comes up with preventing injustice and corruption, Allah (SWT) will not destroy them. Whereas the nations in which the offenders do injustice and the corrupt pursue corruption, but nobody comes to prevent this injustice and corruption and even there is nobody to condemn, the law of Allah (SWT) would be imperative for afflicting on them either the destruction of abolishment or destruction or dissolution⁵⁷.

3.4 Religious Extremism: Extremism, figuratively, is excessiveness and exaggeration in anything in addition to exceeding the limits⁵⁸. It indicates to a similar remoteness in religion, thought and behavior⁵⁹. However, extremism is a state of mind. Whoever possesses this attitude insists with unnecessary strictness to have his views accepted and becomes very unbending in a controversy. He does not examine other people's points of view with justice nor tries to appreciate it. On the contrary, he interprets every opposite view with the worst of motives and tries to slight it. This behavior of his makes him unbearable to others and makes others irreconcilable to him day by day. If such an imbalance is stopped even at this stage, it is well. But if it is considered as an asset and given more encouragement, it develops into ill temper, peevishness, and scurrility, coupled with imputation of motives and attacks on people holding different views. This attitude cannot be tolerated in any social circle⁶⁰.

As far as religious extremism is concerned, it is a mental disposition of the observant of a religion which is directly contrary to the Qur'anic directive to Muslims to be a justly balanced community of believers (*ummatah wasata*) so that, through the example of their lives, they may bear witness to the truth before all humankind. This verse affirms beyond any doubt that the prescribed course for the Muslim community is the balanced middle way. All extreme tendencies are to be avoided. This injunction towards moderation and balance is emphasized repeatedly in other verses and in the practices and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), with reference to areas such as worship, duties to family, marriage, and other affairs. In fact, he specifically warned against extremism and exaggeration in religion⁶¹(*ghulu*), mentioning its dire consequence which was inflicted on the nations who practiced this evil nature of mind in the past. "Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, Oh people! Be aware of extremism in religion (*din*) because it had perished people previously on you". [Al-Mustadrak (10637), Sunan al-Nasai (10/83) (It is a sahih

⁵⁷ Qutb, S. vol. 4, 273.

⁵⁸ Askalani, I. H. (1379 AH). *Fath al-Bari*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, vol. 13, 278.

⁵⁹ Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2006). *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*, translated from Arabic by Nancy Roberts. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 8.

⁶⁰ Maududi, A.A. (2003). *Islamic Movement Prerequisites for Success*. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 50.

⁶¹ Safi, M.S. *Against Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Muslim Position and Responsibilities*. USA: ISNA, 3.

hadith).] The “people” in this text referred to the people of other religions, particularly “people of the Book” namely, Jews and Christians, and most notably the Christians.

Al-Qaradawi pointed out that all these warnings against extremism and excessiveness are necessary because of the serious defects inherent in such tendencies. The first defect is that excessiveness is too disagreeable for ordinary human nature to endure or tolerate. The second defect is that excessiveness is short-lived. Since man’s capacity for endurance and perseverance is naturally limited, and since man can easily become bored, he cannot endure any excessive practice for long. Or he may even take a different course altogether, going from excessiveness to complete negligence and laxity. The third defect is that excessive practice jeopardizes other rights and obligations. Moreover, the consequences of extremism are exposure to danger and insecurity⁶². The indications of extremism include bigotry and intolerance, which cause a person to be obstinately devoted to his own opinions and prejudices, as well as rigidity, which deprives him of clarity of vision regarding the interests of other human beings. A bigot can never come to terms with others. Agreement is possible and can be reached only when people hold moderate positions, but a bigot neither knows nor believes in moderation. Another mark of extremism is uncalled for austerity and the overburdening of others. Another characteristic of extremism manifests in harsh treatment of others, roughness in one’s approach, and crudeness in calling people to Islam⁶³.

Religious extremism does not incur any social advantage or grace. Rather, it gives birth to serious social evils like discord and disunity among fellows, blind imitation, rudeness, intolerance, social imbalance, prejudice, and intellectual stagnation, which can be enough to undermine the strength of any nation and then lead it to fall.

4. CONCLUSION

In the context of decline of Islamic civilization, knowing Quranic dynamics for a nation’s rise and fall is significant for Muslims. The Quran presents some fundamental factors of rise of a nation as well as its fall. This research suggests several factors for rise of a nation which are: a) *al-iman* (the belief in Islam); b) righteous deeds (*al-Amal al-Saliha*); c) knowledge and intellectual vigor or wisdom (*ilm* and *hikmah*); d) reform and construction (*islah*) of society as per standards of current time; e) fight (*qital*) against enemy in defense of national entity and interest. However, the Fall of a nation which means disappearance of its identity and remaining as an indistinctive weak nation is two types: 1) supernatural cause which was applied to some previous nations of the prophets because of their great sins, injustice, and disapproving God’s messengers; 2) the natural law of cause and effects. Therefore, the causes of fall of a nation mentioned in the Quran are mainly a nation’s indulgence in injustice, disunity, religious extremism, luxury, and corruption. As everything, in an exactly similar course of law, the ups and downs of the history, rise and fall, progress or decay, personal prospects and destiny of a

⁶² Al-Qaradawi, *op. cit*, 8 -14.

⁶³ *ibid.* 20-25.

nation or country are controlled by the same unavoidable and indiscriminate law of Allah (SWT). Therefore, the Quran suggests that the rise and fall of a nation lies on its own hand and subjected to following the effective causes. If any nation sustains the effective causes and avoid the negative means, it is highly likely that its rise can be sustainable.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abu Sulayman, A. H. (1997). *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, translated from Arabic by Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo. USA: Virginia, the International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- [2] Abu Zahra, M. (ND). *Al-Islam waMakarim al-Akhlaqh*. Dar al-Katib al-Arabi.
- [3] Agil, S.O.S. (1997). *Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Social Science and the Rise and Fall of Nations*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute Perkemanganf Minda.
- [4] Ahmad, I. (2002). *Rise and Decline of the Muslim Ummah*, Translated from Urdu by Sanaullah Ansari. Pakistan: Lahore, Markazi Anjuman Khuddamul Qur'an.
- [5] Al-Mawardi, A.A. (ND). *al-Nukat wa al- 'Yun*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol 2.
- [6] Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1993). *Knowledge and Islam*. Cairo: MaktabaWahbah.
- [7] Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2000). *Ummatunabyna Qarnayin*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- [8] Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2006). *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*, translated from Arabic by Nancy Roberts. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- [9] Al-Razi, F. (2000). *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol.8.
- [10] Al-Razi, F. D. (2000). *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, vol. 7.
- [11] Al-Sha'rawi, M.M. (1991). *Tafsir al-Sha'rawi*. Cairo: Dar Akhbar al-Yaum, vol.1.
- [12] Al-Zuhayli, W. (1422 AH). *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit*. Damascus: Dar al-Fkr, , vol. 2.
- [13] Askalani, I. H. (1379 AH). *Fath al-Bari*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, vol. 13.
- [14] Ibn Ashur, T. (1984). *Al-Taharirwa al-Tanwir*. Tunis: Dar al-Tunisiyyah, vol. 30.
- [15] Ibn Khaldun. (1940). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1980.
- [16] Ibn Khaldun. (1980). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal. New York: Bollingen Foundation.
- [17] Izutsu, T. (1993). *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- [18] Maududi, A. A. (2002). *Understanding Islamic Civilization*, translated from Urdu by Muhammad Khalid Farooqi. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers.
- [19] Maududi, A.A. (1978). *Nations Rise and Fall -Why?* Pakistan: Lahore, Islamic Publications Ltd.
- [20] Maududi, A.A. (2003). *Islamic Movement Prerequisites for Success*. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers.
- [21] Mawdudi, A.A. (1984). *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change*, Edited by Khurram Murad. United Kingdom: London The Islamic Foundation.
- [22] Nadwi, A. H. A. (2003). UK: Islamic Academy UK. *Islam and the World: The Rise and Decline of the Muslims and Its Effect on Mankind*.
- [23] Nursi, B. S. (N.D) *The Words*. Turkey: Istanbul, Sozler Publications.

- [24] Qutb, M. (2004). *Dirasat Quraniyyah*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- [25] Qutb, S. (N.D) *Fi Zilal al-Quran*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol.1.
- [26] Ridha, R. (1990). *Tafsir al-Manar*. Egypt: al-Haiyya' al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kutub, vol.
- [27] Safi, M.S. *Against Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Muslim Position and Responsibilities*. USA: ISNA.
- [28] Tantawi, M. S. (1997). *al-Tafsir al-Wasit*. Cairo: Dar Nahdha Misr, vol.1.