

Factors of Muslims Weakness

What is apparent from pursuing the steps of the Ottoman leader is that in return for the abolition of Islamic rule, the Allies agreed to drive the Greeks away from Thrace and themselves evacuate Constantinople and the whole of Turkey. For this reason, when the National Assembly discussed Turkey's issue with its leader, after his success in regaining national territory from the Greeks, they were addressed with, **"I don't believe in a league of Islamic States, nor do I believe even in a league of Ottoman nation. Everyone of us is free to have his own opinion. But the government should commit itself to a fixed, planned policy based on facts. It should realise one goal only, to protect the country's life and independence within the framework of its natural territories. Therefore, neither passion nor fancies should influence our policy. To hell with dreams and ghosts. They cost us a lot in the past."**

Thus, Mustafa Kamal Ataturk declared his interest in Turkey's independence as a Turkish nation, not as an Islamic Community. In other words, he gave his loyalty to Turkey rather than to Islam.

Europe proceeded to invade the Islamic World in an imperialist manner by way of missionary activity and under cover of education and humanity. Immense funds were allotted to this invasion so as to reinforce the Political Information Bureau and Imperial Cultural Circles which had to let the door of the Islamic World be wide open before missionary armies. Consequently, missionary societies spread in many Islamic lands, and most of these societies were English, French and American, and through them British and French influence diffused into the body politic of the Islamic countries. By time they brought the educated Muslims into close contact with the West, dominated culture, and directed Arab and Turkish nationalism in order to attain two goals:

First, to isolate the Arabs from the Ottoman Muslim State which they wanted to get rid of; for this cause they stirred the feeling of chauvinism. Second, to untie the mighty bond of faith which held together the whole Muslim Community.

Missionary societies realised the first goal but failed to implement the second. For this cause preaching nationalism among Turks, Arabs, Persians, Kurds and others will remain the wedge which can disjoin Muslims' unity and bind Muslims to their doctrine. These missionary societies passed through different stages, and their effect on the Islamic world was really great. It was they who brought about Muslims' weakness and decline. It was they, too, who placed the first brick in the wall which imperialism built between Muslims and their progress. The West set up these missionary societies because it had suffered in the Crusades from Muslims' firmness and patience in '**Jihad**'. Worse still was the fact that when the Crusaders encountered Muslims in the battlefield they depended on two things erroneously:

1) They relied on the Christians who inhabited the Islamic world, and there were many of them in Muslim countries, especially in Syria. These Christians used to stick to their religion. Therefore, missionary societies considered them their brothers in religion and believed they would conspire against Muslims and support their fellow Christian Crusaders.

2) They depended upon their own great number and immense power. So while Muslims were disrupted and disunited, disintegration started to penetrate into their state, and the Westerns thought that if they defeated Muslims once, they would defeat them forever, and then it would be easy to get rid of them once and for all. But their hope vanished and their intuition proved to be false. Their astonishment was great when they saw the Arab Christians siding with Muslims during the war. In fact, those Christians were not affected by empty rumours particularly because they were living with Muslims under the same laws and sharing with them the same food. Actually, Islam guaranteed all their legal and social rights, and the Khalifah and governors observed that these rights were truly carried out. The *Fuqaha* said in this respect, **"We must advise them honestly in all affairs; defend them against any harm they are exposed to, keep their money, family, honour, rights, and interests safe; and do unto them all that which a morally-good person should do."** This attitude naturally made Christians support and fight for Muslims.

The Crusader's astonishment was much greater when they saw that the second goal, the break-up of Muslims unity failed. Therefore, they launched a crusade against Syria and took it, brought utter defeat upon Muslims and used the ugliest atrocities against them. They invented for the first time in history the method of evacuating Muslim inhabitants from their homelands. They have done so in all their wars with Muslims, and this remains their way up till now.

First, they succeeded and thought that their blow was fatal and final, and so they believed that they forestalled any resistance on the Muslims' part to rise. But Muslims determined to drive the Crusaders away

from their lands, although they stayed in Syria for a period of almost a century during which they set up kingdoms and emirates. But in the end the Muslims launched a counter attack, threw the Crusaders back, defeated them decisively and drove them out of their lands.

The Crusaders inquired about the secret of Muslims' strength and found it in Islam, whose doctrine was a source of Muslims great power, and whose rulings, even towards non-Muslims, were a cement which brought in coherence among the various inhabitants of the Muslim World. So, the Westerns thought of devising a new way through which they could invade them. They discovered that they should launch a cultural invasion via the preaching of the Gospel so that they could win the Christians support, stir doubts about Muslims' religion and shake their faith.

The Westerns carried out this new tactic, founded a big missionary centre in Malta at almost the end of the sixteenth century and made it a base for their missionary attacks against the Muslim world. After they settled permanently and remained for some time, they felt it necessary to extend their activities, so they moved to Syria in 1625 and tried to start new well organized movements, but their activities were very limited. They established only some small schools and published some religious books. They suffered greatly from Muslims' persecution, reluctance and struggle, yet they remained firm until 1773 when the missionary societies of the Jesuits were cancelled and all their institutions closed except for some of the weak missionary societies such as the Lazarists missionary society. But in spite of the existence of these societies, the influence of preaching was cut off. Then missions had no presence any longer except in Malta until 1820 when the first missionary centre in Beirut was founded. There they faced many difficulties but they nevertheless carried on their duties. Their first concern was directed toward religious instruction, while their concern for teaching proper was comparatively slight.

In 1834 missionary expeditions spread in different parts of Syria. A college was opened in Ain-Tura, a Lebanese village, and the American mission moved its print shop from Malta to Beirut in order to print and publish books. The famous American missionary Elie Smith worked energetically, he and his wife opened a school for girls. In reality, the room for his activities was enormous. The program of primary education in Syria which Ibrahim Pasha took from France, was a good opportunity for the Christian missionaries to seize; so, they exploited it and took a distinct part in the spreading of education, and meanwhile filled the hearts of Christian subjects with hatred against Muslims. They also brought a religious contact between Muslims and Christians such that when Ibrahim Pasha withdrew from the lands of Syria in 1840; anxiety, chaos and confusion spread, and the people were divided between themselves. The foreign delegations seized the opportunity of the weakness of the Ottoman state and started to ignite the flames of civil war. Before one year was over, and once 1841 began, dangerous anarchy and turmoil occurred between Christians and Druzes. The Ottoman state, influenced by the pressure of foreign states, was impelled to create a new order for Lebanon, thus dividing it into two parts, one governed by the Christians and the other by the Druzes, and the two presided by one governor. The Ottomans did so in order to avoid any friction between the two rivalling factions. But this order did not succeed because it was unnatural. Both England and France interfered in the conflict and enkindled civil war whenever those in charge tried to extinguish it. The English and the French also fuelled the conflict between the two rivalling factions as an excuse for their intervention in Syria's affairs.

Ar-Raya Magazine, April 1992