112100 - Response to one who claims that the Muslims' backwardness is because of their adherence to their religion

the question

Some people claim that the reason why the Muslims are backward is their adherence to their religion. Their flawed argument is based on the idea that when the west gave up all religions and freed themselves from them, they reached the level of civilized advancement that they have reached. What is your opinion?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Such words can only come from one who is weak in faith or has no faith at all, is ignorant of history and knows nothing of the means of success and prevailing. When the Muslim ummah adhered to its religion at the beginning of Islam, it had power, might and strength, and were advanced in all aspects of life. Indeed, some people say that the west did not advance in different branches of knowledge except after learning and taking knowledge from the Muslims in the early centuries of Islam. But the Muslim ummah started to fall short in its commitment to its religion and introduced into the religion of Allaah things that are not part of it, in terms of beliefs, words and actions. That led to falling behind and becoming backward to a large extent. We know for certain, and Allaah is our witness, that if we go back to what our forebears followed in religious terms, we would become great and honoured and would prevail over all people. Hence, when Abu Sufyaan spoke to Heraclius, the Byzantine ruler – and Byzantium at that time was regarded as a superpower – and told him about the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions, he said: "If what you are saying is true, then he will take possession of what lies beneath these two feet of mine." When Abu Sufyaan and his companions left Heraclius, he said: "The affair of Ibn Abi Kabshah is becoming so serious that the king of Banu'l-Asfar [i.e., the Byzantines] is afraid of him."

With regard to what has happened in the western kaafir and atheist states of progress in terms of industry and the like, our religion does not forbid that, if we follow its teachings. But unfortunately we have lost both. We have neglected our religion and we have neglected our worldly affairs. But Islam is not contrary to such progress; rather Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (tanks, planes, missiles, artillery) to threaten the enemy of Allaah and your enemy, and others besides whom, you may not know but whom Allaah does know. And whatever you shall spend in the Cause of Allaah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly.”

[al-Anfaal 8:60]

“He it is Who has made the earth subservient to you (i.e. easy for you to walk, to live and to do agriculture on it); so walk in the path thereof and eat of His provision. And to Him will be the Resurrection”

[al-Mulk 67:15]

“He it is Who created for you all that is on earth”

[al-Baqarah 2:29]

And there are other verses, which clearly state to man that he should earn and work and benefit, but not at the expense of his religious commitment. These kaafir nations were originally kaafir, and the religions that they followed were false religions; their religion and their rejection of their religion is all the same, with no difference. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:85]

Although the Jews and Christians have some characteristics in which they differ from others, with regard to the Hereafter they and others will all be the same. Hence the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) swore that any Jew or Christian among this nation who heard of him and did not follow what he brought would be among the people of Hell. So they are basically kaafirs, whether they follow Judaism or Christianity or not.

With regard to what they have of rain and other blessings, this happens to them as a test from Allaah, to hasten their good things for them in this world, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, when he saw the marks of his reed mat on his side, and ‘Umar wept and said: “O Messenger of Allaah, the Persians and Romans [Byzantines] are living a live of ease and you are in this state.” He said: “O ‘Umar, these are people for whom their good things have been hastened in this world. Doesn’t it please you that this world should be for them and the Hereafter should be for us?” Moreover, they are faced with drought, calamities, earthquakes and destructive storms, as is well known and is always broadcast in the media, in newspapers and elsewhere. But those who make the claim referred to in the question are blind; Allaah has blinded them to the truth and they do not know what is really going on.

My advice to them is to repent to Allaah from such thoughts before death takes them unawares, and to turn back to their Lord. They should realize that we will have no might or pride or strength or leadership unless we come back to the religion of Islam in a true sense, in word and deed. They should realize that the path these kuffaar are following is false and is not true, and their final destiny will be the Fire, as Allaah has told us in His Book and on the lips of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). This blessing that Allaah has given them of ease is nothing more than a test and a trial, and hastening of good things in this world, until they die and leave behind this comfort and go to Hell, where the loss, pain and grief will be increased for them. This is the wisdom of Allaah behind the ease that these people enjoy. But as you say, they are not free of calamities that befall them, such as earthquakes, droughts, storms, floods and so on. I ask Allaah to guide this questioner and bring him back to the truth, and to give us all insight into our religion, for He is Most Generous, Most Kind. End quote.

And Allaah knows best.