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**The Divine Tradition of Diminishing
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of Nations.**

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The Divine Tradition of Diminishing The Land At The Peripheries, and Its Effect on the Rise and Decline of Nations

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Abstract

The Holy Qur'an is the true source for understanding the divine traditions that and control life and on which the universe is based. The current study seeks to explore the divine tradition in diminishing the lands from their peripheries, identifying its manifestations and tracing its impact on the prosperity and collapse of nations. The analytical approach was used in the study to investigate how nations can be able to preserve their civilizational gains and be wary of falling into chaos and destruction.

Among the most important conclusions are the following: This divine tradition provides insight into the strategic planning for the rise and fall of civilizations, and it is appropriate to be studied for understanding the rise and decline of states. Understanding this divine tradition helps decision-makers and those involved in the security of nations develop appropriate solutions to secure their countries and states. The study shows the semantic depth of the Qur'anic expression in expressing this divine tradition.

Keywords: Divine Tradition- Diminishing Land – Peripheries- Prosperity – Degeneration of Nations.

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Introduction

Divine traditions are the laws according to which the events of the universe take place. Reflection on these traditions would lead to exploring the signs of God in the souls and in the open horizons, and the nature of the governing laws that harness the heavens and the earth for the benefit of humanity. The greatest source describing these divine traditions for us is the Qur'an through which we discover the system of human life is regulated. Divine traditions include social and legal aspects that can explain and regulate the changes in human life. Fulfillment of these traditions leads to the realization of the mechanism of urban construction, civil habitation, and manageable change. Through these traditions, we learn about the secret of the changes in times and dominance of states, as all of this follows based on a sustainable management and not random change.

Among these divine traditions is the law of "diminishing the land at its peripheries" [DLP henceforth] [Q. 13:41]. It is the tradition that explains the factors of the collapse of nations and civilizations, and it is one of the signs of this terrible decline. The present study explores the linguistic meaning of this tradition, the contexts of its occurrence in the Holy Qur'an, the sayings of the exegetists in its interpretation, some of its manifestations, and the insights resulting from its sound understanding.

Research Significance:

The importance of the research lies in the following:

- 1) There is no study that was specified for this tradition, its causes, and its realistic applications.

- 2) The study seeks to reveal the enormous wealth of knowledge in the Qur'an regarding this tradition and to clarify its effects on the prosperity and decline of nations.
- 3) This research is related to an important issue that affects the reality of Muslims in a time of vulnerability and suggests appropriate solutions in the light of the visions of Qur'anic knowledge.

Research questions:

The research questions are summarized as follows:

- 1) What is meant by the DLP divine tradition?
- 2) Where is it mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and what are its semantic effects?
- 3) What are the implications of this tradition? What are its applications in life?
- 4) How can we properly benefit from this tradition in drawing up a strategic plan to preserve the civilizational gains of nations and avoid the factors of weakness and decline?

Research objectives:

- 1) Introducing the DLP tradition, its occurrence in the Holy Qur'an, reviewing the interpretations, and defining the Qur'anic approach in dealing with this tradition.
- 2) Highlighting the manifestations of this tradition, its realistic applications, and its impact on the prosperity and collapse of nations.
- 3) Reaching visions resulting from the correct understanding of this divine tradition and benefiting from it in preserving the nation's foundations and its civilizational gains.

Review of literature:

While the DLP tradition was not specified in an independent research, there are studies on divine traditions in general, such as: “The Divine Traditions in Nations, Groups, and Individuals According to The Islamic Shariah” by Dr. ‘Abdul Karīm Zaidān. The purpose of this book is to guide for Muslims, as individuals, nations and groups, to see the ways of salvation from the decline and backwardness that befell them in the light of divine traditions. “The Divine Traditions in Human Life and The Impact of Belief in Them on Creed and Behavior”, by Shirīf Ṣāliḥ, is a PhD dissertation from Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, (1407 AH / 1987 AD). This dissertation aimed to list the divine traditions related to human life regarding guidance and misguidance, trial and scrutiny, and to explain their impact on the belief and behavior of Muslims. “The Divine Traditions in Nations Through The Verses of The Holy Qur’an” by Dr. Hassan bin Ṣāliḥ Al-Ḥumaid, Dar Al-Faḍīlah, Riyadh, 2nd edition, 2011 AD. One of the most important objectives of this study was to clarify the comprehensive and integrated approach of the Qur’an regarding the traditions that govern the lives of nations, from both theoretical and practical perspectives. And all these studies were generic, and did not address the great DLP divine tradition that we are dealing with in the current study.

There are studies that mentioned the traditions of the rise and fall of civilizations, such as: “The tradition mentioned in the Qur’an regarding the rise and fall of civilizations” by Dr. Muḥammad Haishūr, the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Cairo, (1417 AH / 1996). This study aimed to study the Qur’anic traditions

in the rise and fall of civilizations based on the contemplation and reflection on the divine traditions of the rise and civilizations, the reasons for their decline. The author dealt in the fourth chapter about the divine traditions in the Qur'an regarding the fall of civilizations. In the fifth chapter, he dealt with the traditions of civilizational renewal and substitution in the Qur'an. Another study is "The causes of the destruction of the predecessor nations as mentioned in the Qur'an" by Sa'īd Muḥammad Bābā Sīlā, Al-Ḥikmah Journal, Britain - Leeds, 1st Edition, (1420 AH / 2000 AD). This study aimed to give examples of the stories of perishing nations mentioned in the Qur'an, and to mention the most prominent reasons for their destruction. Neither study dealt with the DLP tradition, although it is closely related to the laws of the decline of civilizations.

Thus, the present study is a substantive addition to the field of researching the laws for the rise and fall of civilizations both in the subject and mode of analysis. None of the previous studies, to the researcher's knowledge, paid attention to this aspect. The present study introduces the concept of the DLP divine tradition, traces its manifestations and applications in life and draws conclusions based on the sound understanding of it.

Research Limits:

The study focuses on the thematic analysis of the DLP divine tradition as mentioned in the Quran, discusses its semantic meanings, and reviews the sayings of exegetes. The study is limited to tracing the manifestations of this tradition and the conclusions drawn from analyzing them.

Research Methodology:

The analytical and inductive approaches are adopted in this study, through collecting, reviewing and analyzing relevant data from the sources according to a sound scientific methodology.

Research Plan:

The research consists of a preface, four sections, and a conclusion.

The preface introduces the divine traditions and their types.

The first section identifies the semantic meaning of the DLP tradition.

The second section reviews the occurrences of this tradition in the Holy Qur'an, and its linguistic implications.

The third section lists the manifestations of the DLP tradition, and its realistic applications.

The fourth section suggests insightful conclusions resulting from the correct understanding of this tradition, and how to benefit from it in preserving the foundations and civilizational gains of the nation.

The Conclusion presents the most important results and recommendations.

Preface: Introducing the divine traditions and their types

Linguistic definition⁽¹⁾: The Arabic word sunan (traditions) is the plural of sunnah, derived from the root (sanna) which means: to start an action that is then imitated by others, and becomes a model for others to follow, whether it is good or evil. From this root, different meanings branch out including method, path, approach, law, straight path, context, tradition, and imitation. The plural “sunan” can be pronounced in different ways; sunan, sunun, sanan and sinan.

Technical meaning of Sunan:

Sunan (traditions) have several definitions according to the science in which they are used. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, divine traditions include “every custom people used to follow, as tradition is the path treaded by several people whether they consider to be a form of worship or not.⁽²⁾”

Rashid Shahwan defined sunan as: “God’s signs (and His

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- (1) Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Azhari, Tahdhib Al-lughah, Investigated by: Muhammad Awad Murib, (Bayrut: Dar Ihya Al-Turath Al-Arabi, 2001), vol. 2, p.211, Ismail ibn Hammad Al-Jawhari, Al-sihah Taj Al-lughah wa-sihah Al-Arabiyyah, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Ilm lil-Malayin 1987), 4th ed., vol. 5, p. 2139, Ahmad ibn Faris ibn Zakariya Al-Qazwini, Maqayis Al-lughah, Investigated by: Abd Al-Salam Harun, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1399/ 1979), vol. 3, p. 60, Ali ibn Ismail ibn sydh, almhkm walmhyt Al-Azam, Investigated by: Abd Al-Hamid Hindawi, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 2000), vol. 8, p. 417, Muhammad ibn Mukarram ibn manzur, Lisan Al-Arab, (Bayrut: Dar Sadir, 1414), 3rd ed., vol. 13, p. 226.
 - (2) Ahmad ibn Abd Al-Halim ibn Taymiyyah, Iqtida Al-Sirat almstqym Imkhalfh ahab Al-jahim, Investigated by: Nasir Abd Al-Karim Al-aql, (Bayrut: Dar Alam Al-Kutub, 1999M), 7th ed., vol. 1, p.254.

laws) in the universe, His traditions in the past of time, and His legislative canon that He prescribed for His servants”(1).

However, this definition is not comprehensive as ablution - for example - is an established legislative approach, but it is not a universal tradition and so. Here the meaning is different from what is meant by the jurisprudential term for the sunnah. We can define the divine traditions in view of their nature and characteristics as: “The universal law, or the canon that is dominant and consistent, that bears a retribution based on the behavior of people.”

Consistency may be cosmic, compulsive, or legislative whether desired or enforced.

Traditions can be classified into several types, as follows:

1. Fixed material cosmic traditions (the laws of nature): These are the physical, chemical, biological, and cosmic laws according to which the universe was created by God.
2. Legal traditions: which are the divine laws that God decreed for people should apply in their lives.
3. Customary social traditions: which are realistic social human traditions, which may contradict the cosmic and legal traditions, and may conform with them as people are not subjugated to follow these traditions.
4. Fixed traditions of change: this type belongs to the previous types, but it was singled out because of its importance. This type refers to the traditions that cause the change from prosperity to collapse and vice versa(2).

(1) Rashid ibn Said Shahwan, *tasil Im Al-sunan*, Arabic section magazine, Binjab Lahur University, Pakistan, pp. 17, 18.

(2) Shahwan, *ibid.* p. 60.

The DLP tradition falls within the divine legal and social traditions in the alternation of days.

1. The linguistic aspects of DLP.

The DLP divine tradition is a phrase that consists of four words which will be explained briefly to be an introduction to the sayings of the interpreters regarding this tradition.

The linguistic meaning of the word (Naqṣ) [diminishing]⁽¹⁾:

(Naqṣ) Diminishing refers to any decrease in opposition to increase. Al- Aṣfahānī defined it as: shortage in fortune. In the Qur'an "and a shortage in wealth and lives and fruits" [Q 2: 155]. It is any defect that decreases the perfection of something.

So, naqṣ (diminishing) means reducing from the weight of the origin of a thing. An example is palm dates whose weight decreases when they wither and become dry dates. Metaphorically, a deficiency is called loss because the diminished thing has lost something that was originally there. Diminishing may also mean gradual loss, as it fades part after part, and it may happen all at once.

The linguistic meaning of the word ('Arḍ) [land]⁽²⁾:

Arḍ denotes that the land which is beneath inhabitants and living beings. The word is derived from the root that means the

(1) Ibn Faris, Maqayis Al-lughah, vol. 5, p. 470 ; Al-Husayn ibn Muhammad Al-Asfahani, Al-Mufradat fi Gharib Al-Quran, Investigated by: Safwan Adnan Al-Dawudi, (Bayrut : Dar Al-Qalam, 1412), p. 821.

(2) Ibn Faris, Maqayis Al-lughah vol. 1, p. 79, Al-Asfahani, Al-Mufradat, p. 73, Muhammad Hasan Hasan Jabal, Al-Mujam Al-ishtiqaqi Al-muassal li-alfaz Al-Quran Al-Karim, (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Adab, 2010), vol. 2, p. 810.

softened flat land as mentioned in some lines of poetry by Imr'ū Al-Qays⁽¹⁾.

The derivative araḍah refers to fertility and richness. The plural form Arāḍīn was not mentioned in the Qur'an. Accordingly, in the present study, "land" is defined as: any place that is a basis upon which man as well as other living beings habitat which can extend to include independent territories and nation states.

The linguistic meaning of the preposition (min) [of]:

Grammarians say the preposition (Min) can refer to fifteen different meanings as mentioned by Ibn Hisham. One of these meanings is to mark the beginning of a two-end relation, for example "I started my journey from [min] Baghdad to Kufa". It appears that in this context, it refers to this meaning; i.e., the decrease starts at the peripheries and extendsto the center.

The linguistic meaning of the word ('Aṭrāfi-ha) [its peripheries]:

'Aṭrāf is plural of ṭaraf which refers to the border of the thing or its edge. It is used in bodies as well as times. Metaphorical expressions are derived from this root like "karīm Al-ṭarafayn" [of noble descent], "ṭaraf Al-'ain" [moving the eye lid].

What is meant by the 'aṭrāf [peripheries] here is the physical and intangible edges of the land. If land is every place that is a basis for the inhabitants, then its edges will be its far outskirts that represent its boundaries. Such boundaries are the protective borders of a territory. Based on this, combining the meanings

(1) Imru Al-Qays ibn Hajar ibn Al-Harith, Diwan Imri Al-Qays, Investigated by: Abd Al-Rahman almstawy, (Bayrut : Dar Al-Marifah, 1425 / 2004), 2nd ed., p. 121.

contained in exegeses can help us draw a more comprehensive picture.

So, “aṭrāf” in the context of [Q. 13: 41], refers to the sides of a territory⁽¹⁾, and it can also metaphorically refer to scholars; as it can mean “the noble tip of something” according to Makkī⁽²⁾.

The meaning of the four words combined is: a partial or total deficiency that occurs to the borders of a territory, or to the noble of its people through death, exile, or loss.

2. Occurrence of the DLP tradition in the Holy Qur’an, and its semantic implications

This divine tradition was mentioned twice in the Qur’an:

- A. [Q. 13: 41] “Have they not seen that We set upon the land, diminishing it at its peripheries? And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account”.

It is notable that the title⁽³⁾ of the sūrah in which this verse is located is Al-Ra’d” [Thunder]. Thunder is a cosmic phenomenon, and one can quickly make the connection between the name of the surah and the divine power reflected in this cosmic tradition. It is a tradition through which God shows His knowledge and power over events and people.

(1) Ref: Al-Asfahani, Al-Mufradat, p. 517.

(2) Al-Qaysi, Makki, (2008), Al-Hidayah ila Bulugh Al-nihayah fi ilm maani Al-Quran wa-tafsirihi, wa-ahkamihi, 1st ed., Al-Shariqah, Jamiat Al-Shariqah, (pt.5 / p.3761).

(3) This opinion here and the next one in Surat Al-Anbiya is based on the viewpoint that the title is tawqifi, and therefore those who argue that the title is ijthadi may disagree with it.

B. [Q. 21:44] “We have provided good things for these [disbelievers] and their fathers until life was prolonged for them. Then do they not see that We set upon the land, diminishing it from its borders? So are they the ones who will overcome?”

The title of the surah here is “Al- ‘anbiyā” [The Prophets]. As prophets are the guides of the divine system, once humans deny the messages of the prophets and oppose their reformers, they are doomed.

These two verses lay down a general rule and a comprehensive law for humans, regardless of their religion. It is a terrifying tradition that we must pay attention to.

What is the meaning of the DLP tradition?

Qur’an interpreters mentioned five different views⁽¹⁾ regarding the meaning of the of the verses as follows:

1. God Almighty opens the land of Mecca to His Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) including the regions surrounding Mecca which are outskirts in relation to the Quraysh land. This view is attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās and Muqātil⁽²⁾.

(1) Ref: Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid Al-Tabari, Jami Al-Bayan fī Tawil Al-Quran, Investigated by: Ahmad Shakir, (Bayrut: Muassasat Al-Risalah, 1420 / 2000), pt: 16, p.496, Ali ibn Muhammad Al-Mawardi, Ali, Al-Nukat wa-Al-uyun, Investigated by: Al-Sayyid ibn Abd Al-Maqsud ibn Abd Al-Rahim, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah,), vol. 3, p. 119, Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ali ibn Al-Jawzi, Zad almsyr fī Im Al-tafsir, (Bayrut: Al-Maktab Al-Islami, 1404), 3rd ed., vol. 4, p. 340, and Muhammad ibn Umar Al-Razi, Muhammad, Mafati Al-ghayb, (Bayrut, Dar Ihya Al-Turath Al-Arabi, 1420), 3rd ed., vol. 19, p. 53.

(2) Ref: Muqatil ibn Sulayman Al-Azdi, tafsir Muqatil ibn Sulayman, Investigated by: Abd Allah Mahmud Shihatah, (Bayrut: Dar Ihya Al-Turath Al-Arabi, 1423), =

2. While this view is a correct and realistic interpretation, although both suras were revealed during the Meccan period when Quraish was still powerful. It can however be said that the verses contained warnings to Quraysh of what matters will turn to against them, just as it has happened to others before them who denied their prophets.
3. When a village is destroyed, few houses only remain in its area. This interpretation is attributed to Ibn 'Abbās⁽¹⁾, but it is problematic because the verses state that diminishing would be in the outskirts not its center. Another reading of this interpretation is that if the destruction happens to the center, this leads to people's displacement to the borders. So, this view tells us about the result after the state is destroyed, and its system is gone, people move to separate places in its outskirts.
4. It is the loss of a land's blessings and inhabitants⁽²⁾. This is also attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and Al-Sha'bī who said: "[It means] the lack of lives and fruits". This is also a sound interpretation as the lack of people, fruits, and blessings leads to the diminution of sustenance that is consumed mainly by the people in the center, where the population is dense, and those at the periphery will perish⁽³⁾.

= vol. 2, p. 3838, Ali ibn Ahmad Al-Wahidi, Al-Wasit fi tafsir Al-Quran Al-Majid, Investigated by: wa-taliq Al-Shaykh Adil Ahmad Abd Al-Mawjud, wa-akharin, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1994), vol. 3, p. 20, Ibn Al-Jawzi, Zad almsyr, vol. 4, p. 340.

(1) Ibn Al-Jawzi, Zad almsyr, vol. 4, p. 340

(2) Ibid.

(3) Some scholars may not agree with this meaning.

5. It is the loss of jurists, scholars and the noble of its people⁽¹⁾, who preserve the intellectual and national security, and do not preoccupy themselves with pleasures and desires. This view is also attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. This is a valid explanation as it the loss of leaders in knowledge and administration who guard the country and help in its development that leads to the destruction of nations and only the scum of the earth will remain. These multiple narrations reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās are delt with according the principles of interpretation that consider multiple narrations as examples as long as they do not contradict. Therefore, they are all accepted, and this is the framework within which we accept these interpretations.

The ruin of states after their flourishing⁽²⁾. This interpretation represents the outcome after the land was diminished from its outskirts, the scientific and judicial leaders were gone, and external forces ruled over it.

Al-Māwardī⁽³⁾ mentioned a sixth view, which is: “the injustice of its rulers” which is a detailed explanation of the most important causes for the diminishing of land from its outskirts. Injustice causes the peripheries to be neglected and looted by criminals.

(1) Al-Tabari, Jami Al-Bayan fi Tawil Al-Quran, vol. 16, p. 496, Muhammad ibn Yusuf Abu Hayyan, Al-Bahr Al-muhit fi Al-tafsir, Investigated by: Sidqi Muhammad Jamil, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Fikr), vol. 6, p. 400.

(2) Mahmud ibn Hamzah Al-Kirmanī, Gharaib Al-tafsir wa-ajab Al-tawil, (Jiddah / Bayrut: Dar Al-Qiblah lil-Thaqafah / Muassasat ulum Al-Quran), vol. 1, P. 572.

(3) Al-Mawardi, Al-Nukat wa-Al-uyun, vol. 3, p. 119, Ref also: Al-Kirmanī, Gharaib Al-tafsir wa-ajab Al-tawil, vol. 1, p. 572, Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Shawkani, Fath Al-qadir Al-Jami bayna Fanni Al-riwayah wa-Al-dirayah min ilm Al-tafsir, (Damascus / Bayrut: Dar Ibn Kathir, Dar Al-Kalim Al-Tayyib, 1414), vol. 3, p. 108.

Such rulers may even become agents for external forces that covet the territory. In such a case, attack will be on the borders not the center. Destruction of the borders, however, heralds the destruction of the center.

So, what is the soundest of these meanings?

Imam Al- Ṭabarī drew on the context of Surat Al-Ra'dd⁽¹⁾ [Q. 13] to give preference to the first view of these rich meanings, saying “The soundest of these is the promised victory of Muslims led by prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) over Quraysh. The meaning is that the disbelievers asked for miracles that will lead to their destruction if they do not believe in them. So, Allah is warning them not to request such tests because infidels before them have already been destroyed by diminishing their nations from the borders [to the center]. {And whether We show you part of what We promise them or take you in death, upon you is only the [duty of] notification, and upon Us is the account.} (Q. 13: 40) {Have they not seen that We set upon the land, reducing it from its borders? And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account} [Q. 13:41].

A sounder strategy is to combine all of these meanings as follows:

First: the lands and territories that God opened for his Prophet (PBUH) of the areas that surround Mecca, which are outskirts for the state of Quraysh. Like other territories that were opened by the Muslim armies; the conquest starts from the peripheries to the centers. Likewise, any movement of change tries to start from

(1) Al-Tabari, Jami Al-Bayan fi Tawil Al-Quran, vol. 16, pp. 497, 498.

the peripheries so as to besiege the center.

Second: If the change is evil, then the destruction of the center leads to the displacement of the population to the peripheries, or even to the outskirts of other neighboring countries. The displaced then become powerless under the new regime that seized the center.

Third: Among the most important reasons for the collapse of nations and decline of the center is the loss of inhabitants, fruits, and blessings, which leads to disloyalties in return for obtaining sustenance or developing wealth.

Fourth: Among the most important reasons for the collapse of nations is also the death of jurists, scholars, noble people or leaders who preserve the intellectual and national security, and do not preoccupy themselves with pleasures and desires.

Fifth: The oppression of rulers is one of the most important reasons for diminishing the lands at the peripheries.

Sixth: If the above happens, this land or those countries will be ruined after habitation, manipulated after power and civilization, and dominated by external ambitions and internal foolishness.

3. Manifestations of the DLP tradition, and its realistic applicati



Fig. (1) Manifestations of the DLP divine tradition.

In addition to what Al-Ṭabarī said, we can add the following manifestations:

3.1 The decrease of inhabitants and blessings:

As for the decrease in population, notice how China is sounding the alarm about the decrease in its population, and abandoning the strict policy that limits the number of children to one. Population explosion is thus an opportunity not a challenge if there is a wise administration to this unique force.

Decrease in blessing refers the financial crises that beset nations. Al-Sha’abī expressed that as “a lack of lives [of people] and fruits”. Neglecting the sources at the peripheries.

Lack of [quality] inhabitants and lack of blessings is also reflected in neglecting geographical peripheries, although they may be full of bounties, ready to be invested for the good of

human economy. Because of the remoteness of the periphery from the center, they are neglected. Examples include the suburbs in Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, where the periphery actually yields blessings that are greater than the ones in the center. While the fruits of the peripheries are collected and sent to the center, no clear interest is in these areas. This leads to the decline of civilization, or failure of security in the peripheries. "And the mighty hand of God shows signs in the rich nations – once they transgress and become corrupted – where the strength is diminished as well as the wealth leading to a reduction in their value, and confinement into a limited area after they had authority and extensions."⁽¹⁾

3.3. When the periphery of the states is out of control, it will be a breeding ground for rebellion, and this is a sign of the eventual demise of its center:

The biography of the prophet can be a guiding example in this respect. The Prophet (PBUH) reconciled with Quraysh, and that reconciliation was a clear conquest, after which the Prophet (PBUH) focused on the peripheries surrounding Medina and Mecca either through peace, or by force. So, the parties supporting the pagan rule that dominated Mecca eroded, and this led to the gradual collapse of the hostile enemies of the Muslims. Examples of these procedures include the conquest of the fortresses of Naḍīr, Qurayḏa, and Khaybar. The Prophet (PBUH) worked to reduce the peripheries of the vast lands of the disbelievers as a prelude to the conquest of its center, which is Mecca. This

(1) Syyyid Qutb, *Fi zilal Al-Quran*, (Bayrut / Cairo: Dar Al-Shuruq, 1422), 17th ed., vol. 4, p. 2065.

coincides with the first interpretation which also represents the applied part of the DLP divine tradition.

In contrast to the conquest of the Prophet (PBUH), the forces that rebel against any country exploit the outskirts of the lands where they will be able to control as the outskirts are always neglected and left with few houses. The Abbasids for example were able to overthrow the well-established Umayyad state through starting from its peripheries, i.e. from Khurasān.

3.4 The loss of scholars and noble leaders:

This happens especially when the decision-making center has become under control of a group of corrupt oppressors. This interpretation of the peripheries confirms the importance of scholars, respecting them, caring for them, protecting them, and providing a decent life for them. So that they can carry out their mission and protect the national security of Muslims, as they are the heirs of the prophets who play the greatest role in the intellectual protection of societies. God Almighty says ““Are those who know equal to those who know not?” [Q, 39:09]. So, the meaning can encompass all these aspects as indicated by Muḥammad Al-Makkī when he said: “Diminishing applies to the lack of wealth, souls and fruits, just as it applies to eradication, annihilation, the loss of freedoms and the shrinking of fertile land and greenery in front of the advancing seas and deserts”⁽¹⁾.

(1) Muhammad Al-Makki Al-Nasiri, *Al-Taysir fi Ahadith Al-Tafsir*, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, 1985), vol. 4, pp. 123-4.

3.5. Brainwash of the rising generations is one of the most important manifestations of this divine tradition:

Delusion of minds through brain wash or misleading is worse than the theft of money as Al-Bashīr Al-Ibrāhimī⁽¹⁾ notes. Nothing is more heinous than handing over the minds of our children, the men of our future, and our promising energies to human vampires who distort their minds morally and politicaly as they like. This is evident within unsupervised foreign schools, or unguided scientific missions.

Introducing such foreign ideologies that are not guided by our religion would help them complete the task of destroying our national security.

While the Muslim Ummah, in its dark ages these days, has a high sense of security regarding defense and security issues, it is not as attentive to such danger in the draining and delusion of minds.

Colonial expansion does not necessarily mean the reduction of the physical land. Rather this is done through the reduction of the political, economic and cultural extremities of the land in order to achieve its expansion. The land would then be like a slave subjugated to external masters who control the trade through transcontinental companies. The cases in Libya and Yemen are evident of such external control through keeping tribal wars raging.

This terrifying divine tradition (the decrease in the land at the peripheries) includes Muslims as well as non-Muslims, regardless of nationality, race, or religion. Some people think that it applies only to the disbelievers, but this is wrong as we are warned

(1) Ref: Athar al-Imam Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, vol. 3, p. 316.

against not being attentive to the plan of God. (Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people) [Q. 7: 99].

This divine tradition is one of the laws where there is no repel to the judgment of God. It is obligatory for a Muslim to fix his heart on this belief, and to act according to its requirements. For Allah said after mentioning this tradition in Surat Al -Ra'dd, "Do they not see that We diminish the land at its peripheries? And Allah pronounces a doom-- there is no repeller of His decree, and He is swift to take account.) [Q. 13: 41].

3.6. The physical diminishing of parts of the Earth:

This is what the researchers have proven in the scientific exegesis of the Qur'an. A summary of what they mentioned is that the word "Arq" in the Quran refers to the planet earth, the land on which we live, or the soil that covers the dry rocks. Diminishing the land would thus mean:

A. The sense of the planet Earth:

- 1) It shrinks, and its size is constantly decreasing.
- 2) It is slightly flattened at the equator.
- 3) the melting of ocean floors under the continents due to the movement of the Earth's lithosphere plates.

B. The sense of inhabitable land:

- 1) The various erosion factors cut the lofty heights and throw that into depressions at the surface of the earth until its surface is leveled.
- 2) The waters of the seas and oceans are dominant over the land.

C. The sense of soil that covers the dry rocks:

Diminishing the land here means desertification, i.e. the encroachment of the desert over green areas, and the receding of arable soil because of man's corruption of the earth's environment.

These six meanings - individually or collectively - give a scientific dimension to the meaning of diminishing the earth at the peripheries. They do not contradict the basic semantic significance of the expression. They rather complete each other⁽¹⁾.

4. Conclusions based on this divine tradition and how to benefit from them in preserving the gains and foundations of the Ummah.

Conclusion drawn from the sound understanding of the DLP divine tradition.

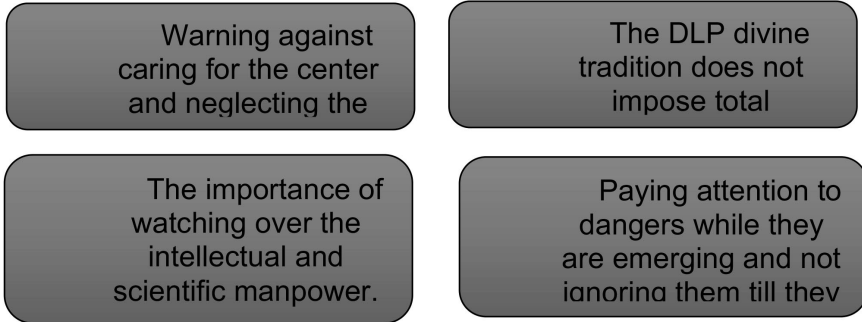


Fig (2) Conclusion drawn from the sound understanding of the DLP divine tradition.

(1) Zaghlul Raghib Muhammad Al-Najjar, Min Ayat al-Ijaz Al-Ilmi: Al-Ard fi al-Quran al-Karim, (Bayrut: Dar al-Marifah, 2005), pp. 153-165.

4.1. Protecting the geographical area of the nation, caring for its development, and not neglecting it.

We referred to how the Umayyad state was destroyed by the movements that emerged at its outskirts. These movements started from Khurasan and the remote areas until they finally destroyed the capital Damascus at the center⁽¹⁾. Likewise, rebels start at the peripheries of the land and invade ports and islands.

A periphery is the remote side, which is the end of the place. Ignorance is often spread among the people of the remote areas. The Prophet (PBUH) warned his servant Thawbān against dwelling within the people in the remote villages. Thawbān said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) told me, 'Do not live at the suburbs. The person who lives in the suburbs is like someone who lives in the graves.'⁽²⁾

What does this conclusion entail?

1. It requires the establishment of a binary system of centralized and decentralized governance. Decentralization at the peripheries leads to arousing interest in the regions through creating scientific projects that stimulate creativity and innovation, setting up economic projects that make people

(1) Ref: Al-Harakat al-Sirryah fi al-Islam, p. 70-88.

(2) Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari Muhammad, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Investigated by: Muhammad Fuad Abd Al-Baqi, (Bayrut: Dar al-Bashair al-Islamiyah, 1989), 3rd ed., babu sakini alqura, p. 203, (579), wa-Sulayman ibn Ahmad Al-Tabarani, Musnad al-Ahamiyn, Investigated by: Hamdi ibn Abd al-Majid a-Salafi, (Bayrut: Muassasat al-Risalah, 1984), vol. 2, p. 99, (986), Al-Albani: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami al-Saghir wa-ziyadatuhu, (Bayrut, Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1988), 3rd ed., vol. 2, p. 1224, (7326).

develop feelings of loyalty and attachment to the centers of the nation, and establishing justice in every walk of life. An example of such governance is the early Islamic state where the center was (Umm Al-Qura) while the peripheries of Yemen, Iraq, the Levant, Maghreb, and Khurasan were enjoying a kind of autonomous governance. With the weakness in communication between the center in Damascus or Baghdad and those peripheries, dangerous movements of independence emerged.

2. One of the most important security tasks is taking care of social and economic justice with the dwellers of the peripheries because they are always neglected while the focus of interest is on the capital cities and metropolises. The Vizier Nizam Al-Mulk understood this, so he divided the fiefs over the army leaders while the tradition of the caliphs and sultans was to collect all the spoils to the court, and then distribute that to the royal family and the leaders. When Nizam Al-Mulk's empire expanded, he decided to assign every village, or fief to powerful leaders of the army who would have nothing other than that village to develop and rule. Such policy led to the prosperity of the country's architecture and the abundance of yields⁽¹⁾.

If the focus is not paid to the development of those peripheral areas, they may fall prey to the wolves of the nations that surround them, and their dwellers may turn into traitorous agents against

(1) Abd Al-Wahhab ibn Taqi Al-Din Al-Subki, *Ṭabaqat Al-Shafiiyah Al-Kubra*, Investigated by: Mahmud Muhammad Al-Tanahi, wa-Abd Al-Fattah Muhammad Al-Hulw, (Giza, Dar Hajar, 1413), 3rd ed., vol. 4, p. 317.

their religion and nation, as indicated in the poetry of Abi Tammam⁽¹⁾.

In his important book "Seize the Moment," the US former president Richard Nixon states that preserving remote areas outside the state is like preserving the state itself, so what about if these remote areas are within the state? In Chapter Six: (The Southern Hemisphere), Nixon focuses on the need for the USA to pay attention to the poor countries of the South, which have fallen into the traps of underdevelopment as a result of the control of corrupt officials, mismanagement, misdirected development policies, and personal conflicts.

Nixon believes that the divide between the North and the South is widening. Therefore, the US should pay attention to the tragic situation in the countries of the South. He warns against ignoring the poor countries, saying: "If we ignore those who are less fortunate, we will not only fail to fulfill our moral responsibility, but we will endanger our economic and strategic interests!"

Nixon refers to the deteriorating conditions in the southern hemisphere, which enjoys enormous resources and a large population growth. Since the people of this region will seek to advance their countries and improve their living conditions, it is good for the US to help them in that by supporting democracy and fruitful investments⁽²⁾.

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, vol. 1, p. 198, Abu Hayyan, Al-Bahr Al-muhit fi Al-tafsir, vol. 2, p. 6, Abu Tammam Habīb ibn Aws Al-Tai, Diwan Abi Tammam Habib ibn Aws, (Nizarat Al-Maarif Al-Umumiyah Al-jalilah, 1900), p. 203.

(2) Ref: Nixon, R. Seize the moment: America's challenge in a one-superpower world. Trans. Salah Al-Din Alnkdy, read in Nixon book: anthzwa Al-fursah, (Al-Tabah alshbkyh, Al-Dar Al-Islami lil-Ilam, 2009), p. 8.

All of this should arouse our interest in the peripheries in the event of change in the international balance of power positively or negatively. The divine tradition offers more than a hint to the Muslim nation on how to secure itself in the international community. Paying attention to the peripheries is the key factor to secure the Muslim nations in addition to benefiting from the momentum resources neglected thereof.

4.2. One of the divine laws is not to punish with total destruction at once:

This terrible divine law (diminishing the land at the peripheries) is explained by Al-Razi as “God Almighty will reduce the land of those who disobey from the outskirts and the villages that surround them, until the matter is settled over them, then He will destroy them”⁽¹⁾.

This threat to the center has been expressed in the Qur’an as “And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities, and We have diversified the signs [or verses] that perhaps they might return [from disbelief]”. (Q. 46:27).

Some may object that God has already punished historical civilizations with total destruction, so why wasn’t this divine tradition in effect?

In order to answer this question, we must review the interval periods in history. Some exegetists say the matter of total destruction of the oppressors stopped after the exodus of the Children of Israel under the leadership of prophet Moses. After the time of the destruction of the Pharaoh, the believers are

(1) Al-Razi, Mafatih Al-ghayb, vol. 20, p. 213.

required to follow the divine tradition of mudafa'a (fighting back) to achieve their victory over the aggressive oppressors, and not to expect extraordinary total punishment without fighting back:

It seems total destruction was the divine tradition before the time of Moses. Prophet Shu'aib, for example, says (And O my people, let not [your] dissension from me cause you to be struck by that similar to what struck the people of Noah or the people of Hud or the people of Salih. And the people of Lot are not from you far away) [Q. 11:89]. The believer from the household of the Pharaoh likewise says ("O my people, indeed I fear for you [a fate] like the day of the companies -Like the custom of the people of Noah and of 'Aad and Thamud and those after them. And Allah wants no injustice for [His] servants.) [Q. 40: 30-31]. Commenting on the total destruction of the Pharaoh, Allah says: (And there came Pharaoh and those before him and the overturned cities with sin. And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with a seizure exceeding [in severity]. [Q.69: 09-10].

Supporting this view is the hadith narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri that the prophet (PBUH) said: "God has not destroyed a people, nor a generation, nor a nation, nor the people of a village since He sent down the Torah except for the village whose dwellers were turned into monkeys. Contemplate in the verse: "And We gave Moses the Scripture, after We had destroyed the former generations, as enlightenment for the people and guidance and mercy that they might be reminded." [Q. 28: 43].⁽¹⁾

(1) Al-Tabari, Jami Al-Bayan fi Tawil Al-Quran, vol. 19, p. 584, Muhammad ibn Abd Allah Al-Hakim, Almustadrak ala Al-sahihayn, Investigated by: Mustafa Abd Al-Qadir Ata, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1990), vol. 2, p. 442, Al-hadith Number (3534).

Ibn Kathir said: destroying the former generations means that after the Torah was revealed no total retribution was done as believers were commanded to fight back(1). The evidence is in the verse: “And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah - never will He waste their deeds”. [Q. 47: 04]. Other recitations emphasize the meaning of fighting back(2).

4.3. Securing the intellect of the nation’s scientific leaders as their persecution represents a real decrease in human wealth, and their decrease is like the diminishing of land that leads to ruin and civilizational collapse:

How does loss in scholars happen?

This happens either by death or by having narrow-minded rulers who oppress the scholars and thinkers, imprison or abuse them. When this happens, the nation’s military, economic, intelligence, and media fortunes are turned against itself, and against its best scientific and intellectual leadership. If those who work out how to optimally manage events are lost, then who directs society towards the vital issues, and who enlightens them in the face of stormy developments?

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- (1) Ismail ibn Umar ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azim, Investigated by: Sami ibn Muhammad Salamah, (Cairo: Dar Taybah, 1999), 2nd ed., vol. 6, p. 239.
 - (2) Al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn Abd Al-Ghaffar Al-Farisi, Al-Hujjah lil-qurra Al-sabah, Investigated by: Badr Al-Din Qahwaji, wa-Bashir jwyjaby, (Damascus / Bayrut: Dar Al-Mamun lil-Turath, 1413 / 1993), 2nd ed., vol. 6,p. 190, Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muhammad, Abu Zurah ibn znjlh, Hujjat Al-qira’at, Investigated by: Sa’id Al-Afghani, (Bayrut: Dar Al-Risalah,), pp. 666- 665.

Such scenario is embodied in the prophet's hadith "Only the wicked people will survive, and they will be as fast as birds (i.e., to commit evil) and as ferocious towards one another as wild beasts. They will never appreciate the good, nor condemn evil".(1) The same meaning is recurring in Arabic poetry.

4.4. The importance of extinguishing small dangers as soon as they appear. Otherwise, it may lead to the destruction of nations:

An example of such case is what Ibn Kathir tells us about Marwan bin Muhammad the last of the Umayyad caliphs who once said to some of his addressees: "Do not you see what happened to us? I pity [helping] hands that were not recognized, blessings that were not thanked, and a state that was not helped to win [its battles]. The servant said to him: O Commander of the Faithful, He who neglects the little [danger] so that it may multiply, the small [enemies] so that they grow, and the hidden [conspiracies] so that they appear, who delays the action of today until tomorrow, more than this will befall him. Marwan then said: This saying is harder on me [to hear] than losing the caliphate"(2).

Divine traditions are general and are not limited to the disbelievers, so there is no favoritism in them:

Nasr bin Sayyār was the last ruler of the Umayyads over Khurasan. He was a talented and firm ruler, so he felt the signs of danger and wrote to Yazid bin Omar bin Hubaira, the governor

(1) Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Qushayri, Sahih Muslim, Investigated by: Muhammad Fu'ad Abd Al-Baqi, (Bayrut: Dar Ihya' Al-Turath Al-Arabi,), Alfitani Wa-Ashrat Alssa'a, babun fi khuruji alldajjali wamukthihi fi alardi ... , vol. 4, p. 2258, Al-hadith number (2249).

(2) Isma'il ibn Umar ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa-al-Nihayah, (Al-Jizah, Dar Hajar, 1997), vol. 13, p. 266.

of Iraq at that time, informing him of what was happening in Khurasan of turmoil in the last two years, and warning him of the seriousness of the situation. He wrote lines of poetry telling him frankly that if the case continues to deteriorate, it will inevitably lead to a dire consequence, and the state will be uprooted⁽¹⁾.

However, the governor of Iraq did not care, perhaps because he was busy fighting the Kharijites. So, Nasr sought the help of the last Umayyad caliph in Damascus, Marwan bin Muhammad, and informed him of the condition of Abi Muslim Al-Khurasani, his rebellion, and the large number of his followers. The Caliph was busy with the Qayssiyah-Yamaniyah problem⁽²⁾, so he didn't respond to Nasr's request. Nasr wrote other lines of poetry telling him about the dangers of the ongoing sedition, if he wouldn't help him with a provision⁽³⁾.

However, the caliph was preoccupied with ending some fighting in the capital, so he didn't provide Nasr with help. When Nasr lost all hope, he tried to exploit their religious zeal and national pride of the Arab dwellers in Khurasan and implored them to stop fighting among themselves. He recited more lines of poetry lamenting the negligence of the Arabs towards the threat to their existence and their fate⁽⁴⁾.

(1) Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid Al-Tabari, Tarikh Al-Rusul wa-al-Muluk, (Bayrut: Dar al-Turath, 1387), 2nd ed., vol. 7, p. 370,

(2) Ref: Al-niza' bayna al-Qaba'il al-Yamaniyah wal-Qaysyih fi al-Mashriq al-Islami wa-Atharuhu 'ala al-Dawlah al-Umawiyah (64-132h / 684-750 AD), pp. 86-103.

(3) Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun, Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Investigated by: Khalil Shihadah, (Bayrut, Dar Al-Fikr, 1988), 2nd ed., vol. 3, p. 149

(4) Ahmad ibn Dawud Al-Dinawari, Al-akhbar Al-Tawwal, Investigated by: Abd Al-Mun'im Amir, (Cairo, Dar Ihya' Al-Kutub al'rby-Isa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, 1960), pp. 361-362.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this research, the most important findings are:

1. Deep reflection in the DLP divine tradition shows that it is a practical manifestation of the Qur'anic verse: "And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things: and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims". [Q. 16: 89].
2. We explored the power of the Qur'anic method in establishing the divine traditions that govern the universe and the lives of nations in a clear concise accurate expression.
3. The DLP divine tradition must be present in the strategic thinking of state leaders, decision makers, and those interested in the security of the Islamic nation in particular.
4. Different interpreters and commentators of the Qur'an had different views with regard to this divine tradition. The researcher presented a comprehensive view that incorporated all these views.
5. The research highlighted the realistic manifestations and applications of the DLP divine tradition, incorporating the loss of people and blessings, the lack of resources at the peripheries, the loss of control over them, the death of scholars and thinkers, and brain wash [to the rising generation].
6. Important conclusions drawn from the correct understanding of this divine tradition included: caring for the peripheries and not neglecting them, protecting the minds of the nation and its scientific leaders in all fields, facing dangers as soon as they appear, and not being complacent in resistance.

Based on these results, the researcher recommends studying the other divine traditions mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an. The present study can be a model of analysis that incorporates the views of interpreters related to victory and empowerment. Future studies can benefit from this model in the formation of a unique Quranic vision on the factors that may contribute to affect the civilizational collapse of states, peoples, and groups.

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سُنَّة (نقص الأرض من أطرافها) وأثرها في ازدهار الدول وانهارها

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جامعة قطر - الدوحة

ملخّص البحث

القرآن المجيد هو المصدر الحق لفهم السُنن الإلهية التي يقوم عليها الكون، وتتحكّم بالحياة، وهذا يقتضي إعمال الفكر في دراسة الظاهرة القرآنية التي لا يَنْصَبُ معيّنُها؛ لذلك تناول هذا البحث سُنَّة نقص الأرض من أطرافها، وهدف إلى التعريف بهذه السُنَّة، وإبراز مظاهرها وتطبيقاتها، وذكّر الآثار المترتبة على فهم هذه السُنَّة، مستخدماً المنهج التحليلي، والاستقرائي في عرضها، وبيان أثرها في ازدهار الدول وانهارها حتى تكون الأمة قادرة على الحفاظ على مكتسباتها الحضارية، حذرة من الوقوع في براثن السُنن المدمرة.

وخلص هذا البحث إلى عدّة نتائج، أبرزها:

- 1) تمنح هذه السُنَّة تفكيراً عالياً في التخطيط الاستراتيجي لقيام الحضارات وانهارها، وتصلح أن تُدرس ضمن فهم قيام الدول وزوالها.
 - 2) فهم هذه السُنَّة يمنح الفرصة لصنّاع القرار والمهتمين بأمن الأمم أن يضعوا الحلول المناسبة لتأمين أممهم ودولهم.
 - 3) العمق المعنوي الذي جاء به الأسلوب القرآني في التعبير عن هذه السُنَّة، فقد عبّر عنها بالفاظ موجزة ذات معانٍ عظيمة.
- الكلمات الدالّة: سُنَّة - نقص الأرض-الأطراف-الدول.

مجلة الشريعة والدراس الإسلامية

فصلية علمية محكمة تصدر عن مجلس النشر العلمي - جامعة الكويت

سنة (نقص الأرض من أطرافها) وأثرها في ازدهار الدول وانهيارها

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