

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES...



At present, due to the recent surge of calamities around the world, a situation of uncertainty and bewilderment prevails everywhere. Every individual is naturally disturbed about what he should do in these circumstances. But does the solution to a distressing situation lie in getting distressed? Or do the present conditions demand something else from us? Who should we turn to in these circumstances? Whose help should we seek? Who will guide us? Naturally this can only be done by Someone Who is even more aware than us of our situation, its causes and consequences. Who else can that be but Allah Ta'ala --- He Who has power and authority over everything, He before Whom everything in the earth and the skies is prostrating and obedient. Let us turn to Him and ask Him for guidance.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَدَشِّرَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

“And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: “Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return. They are those on whom are blessings from their Lord and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.” (Al-Baqarah: 155-157)

PATIENCE AND CONSTANCY

This life is a test and the good or bad events in our life are meant to see who remains patient and thankful and who reacts impatiently or becomes ungrateful.

Allah says:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَنَبْلُوكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ۗ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

“Everyone is going to taste death, and We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good. And to us you will be returned.” (Al-Anbiya: 35)

A Muslim's attitude must not be controlled by circumstances, but by Divine Teachings. He doesn't swing between the two extremes of jubilation and despair. A Muslim remains constant in doing good both in adversity as well as joy. In adversity he does *sabr* and gets rewards and in good times he still remembers Allah and does *shukr* for which he is rewarded.

Not only must we remain patient ourselves, but we must enjoin others around us to face hardships with fortitude, deliberation and planning rather than panic, excitement or pessimism. Man cannot avert loss unless he does these four things:

وَالْعَصْرَ ﴿٦٦﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

"By the time, verily man is in loss. Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience." (Al-'Asr)

HAVE FAITH IN ALLAH

All gain or loss lies only in Allah SWT's control. Have trust in Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the Earth.

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

"Is not He Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls on Him, and Who removes the evil?" (An-Naml:62)

Along with taking practical steps and putting in the utmost effort for constructive work and self-improvement, keep complete faith and trust in Allah's Being and Powers.

Do not let your iman be affected by doubting the Mercy or Wisdom of Allah or by giving in to pessimism and despair.

SEEK HELP THROUGH PRAYER & SUPPLICATION

Allah Ta'ala says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ

"O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salat (prayer). Truly Allah is with the patient." (Al-Baqarah: 153)

Try to offer prayers with more punctuality and more concentration. Extraordinary situations call for some extraordinary ibadah. Offer nawafil (voluntary prayers), Tahajjud and Salat-e-Tauba, etc and specially make the following Quranic supplication in these circumstances:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience and set firm our feet and make us victorious over the disbelieving people." (Al-Baqarah: 250)

Particularly pray for safety from trials, afflictions and for the protection of your faith. Make excessive supplications for the afflicted people and extend all possible help to stop the oppression and to help the oppressed.

Prophet SAW said:

"Supplication is beneficial regarding things (calamities) that have happened and things which have not yet happened, so devote yourselves to supplication, O servants of Allah." (Tirmidhi)

HARDSHIPS AND CALAMITIES ARE A WARNING

It is necessary for every heedful eye to learn a lesson from the calamities and disasters occurring in the lives of individuals and nations. To call them a turn of events, natural calamities or merely an accident and to move on can prove harmful.

Allah Ta'ala says:

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And verily we will make them taste of the near torment (in this world) prior to the supreme torment (in the Hereafter) in order that they may return (repent)."

(As-Sajdah: 21)

THE WAY TO AVERT CALAMITIES

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا ءَامَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

"Was there any town that believed and its faith saved it (from the punishment) except the people of Yunus; when they believed we removed from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and permitted them to enjoy for a while (more). " (Yunus:98)

Consequently, faith in and obedience to Allah Ta'ala is the only way to salvation.

TURN BACK TO YOUR LORD

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ

"And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him before the torment comes upon you (and) then you will not be helped." (Az-Zumar: 54)

The need of today is to focus on one's own reformation on an individual and collective level. If we cannot set right the disorder in the world, we can at least correct our own selves.

Let us then strive for our own improvement because the hardships that others are facing today may well engulf those tomorrow who are now mere spectators.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً^ط وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"And fear the fitnah which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong and know that Allah SWT is severe in punishment." (Al-Anfal: 25)

SEEK FORGIVENESS FOR SINS

Let us confess our sins before Allah SWT and pay special attention to 'Istighfar' (seeking forgiveness).

Allah Ta'ala says:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful." (An-Nur: 31)

Prophet Hud (AS) said the same to his people:

وَيَقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَىٰ قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

"And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as criminals."
(Hud: 52)

Thus, Istighfar brings blessings not only in the Hereafter, but in this world too.

In this situation, we must make a special effort to seek collective repentance. This can be a source of strength in our present state of helplessness, in this lies the guarantee to success and the solution to our problems.

REMEMBER ALLAH SWT ABUNDANTLY

Create peace in your inner world in order to prepare yourself to successfully face external hardships.

Allah Ta'ala says:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Ar-Ra'd: 28)

And it is also Allah SWT's promise:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُوا

"Therefore remember Me. I will remember you and be grateful to Me and never be ungrateful to Me." (Al-Baqarah: 152)

Do not forget Allah after this present trouble passes away because Allah says:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أُذَاقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةٌ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

"And when harm touches men, they cry sincerely to their Lord, turning to Him in repentance; but when He gives them a taste of His Mercy, behold a party of them associates partners with their Lord."

THE QURAN IS THE WAY TO SALVATION

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

"Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe to be affected by Allah's Reminder (the Quran) and that which has been revealed of the truth, lest they become as

those who received the Book before and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened? And many of them were disobedient.” (AL-Hadid: 16)

Prophet SAW said:

"Dissension (fitnah) will surely come. A companion asked him what the way out of it is, to which he replied, "Allah's Book is the way (out), for it contains information of what has happened before you and news of what will happen after you and a decision regarding matters which occur among you. If anyone seeks guidance elsewhere, Allah will lead him astray. It is Allah's strong Rope, it is the wise reminder, it is the straight path. He who speaks according to it has spoken the truth, he who acts according to it is rewarded, he who pronounces judgment according to it is just." (Tirmidhi)

Allah Ta'ala says:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

"(This is) a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its verses and that men of understanding may remember (take heed).”

(Sad: 29)

Therefore this Book must be read, understood and its message conveyed to others and principles of living determined in the light of its guidance.

HASTEN TO DO GOOD DEEDS

Do not miss any opportunity to do good. No-one knows when the time to act may run out.

The Prophet SAW said:

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ فَتَنَا كَقِطْعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ

"Hasten in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken by) turbulence which would be like a part of the dark night." (Muslim)

PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO FULFILLMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Do not delay fulfilling the rights of human beings. Make special effort to help the earthquake affectees on a short and long-term basis.

Depriving humans of their rights is oppression, the punishment of which is given both in this world and the Hereafter.

MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO GIVE SADAQAH

There is nothing greater than sadaqah to ward off calamities and difficulties.

The Prophet SAW said:

"Hasten to give sadaqaat because calamities cannot precede them." (Mishkat)

On another occasion he said: "Sadaqah appeases the Lord's anger and averts an evil death." (Tirmidhi)

Sadaqah can be monetary help as well as any other kind of support (physical, moral, etc) you can offer to the affected people.

ENJOIN THE GOOD AND FORBID EVIL

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ

"You are the best Ummah ever raised up for mankind, you enjoin Al-Maruf (all the good things Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (all the evil that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah." (Al-Imran: 110)

The Prophet SAW said:

"By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you must enjoin what is good and forbid what is bad, or Allah will certainly soon send down punishment from Himself to you. Then you will make supplications and they will not be accepted. (Tirmidhi)

NOT JUST TALK BUT SUBSTANTIAL WORK IS REQUIRED

What is actually needed is a change in our behavior. Instead of slogan-chanting, verbosity, and emotionalism we need to work on substantial grounds. Instead of negativity and disillusionment, we must rise and equip ourselves with the armour of knowledge, research and technology. Making research and knowledge our provisions, we must make ourselves stronger in every field and prepare ourselves realistically to meet any challenge.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ

"Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves." (Ar-Ra'd: 11)

Like a poet said: Allah changes not the state of a nation
Who thinks not of changing its own state

LET US ANALYZE OURSELVES:

- How have I reacted in this present situation? With panic, despair and wailing or with dignity, patience and faith?
- Do I only remember Allah when I face hardships or calamities and once it passes away, do I forget Him?
- What positive change has come about in my life after this calamity?
- Have I started to study what guidance Allah has sent for me in the Quran?
- Has my pace in constructive activities (efforts towards personal reformation, hastening in good deeds) increased?
- Do I still put off good deeds for the next day?
- Have I stopped wasting my time? Have I left idleness, laziness and negligence?
- Has there been any change in my routine (recreation, parties, shopping, useless chatting)?
- Have I started worrying about fulfilling my obligations, acts of worship and responsibilities?
- Have I left moral vices such as backbiting, lying, fighting and breaking trusts?
- What have I done to help my Muslim brothers affected by the earthquake?
- What have I sacrificed to serve Allah's Deen?
- If death overtakes me today, am I ready to meet Allah Ta'ala?

If we cannot change ourselves, how can we expect the conditions in the world to change?



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