
HOW SHOULD A MUSLIM VIEW A CALAMITY?

By: Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saahib (RA)



For Muslims there are lessons to learn in the face of every calamity. Despite having faith in the absolute power of Allah Ta'ala, we are still not focused enough to remember Allah Ta'ala in the face of trials. All our attention is focused only towards material support which we hope will get us out of trouble. We do not take idols, icons and images as our saviours, but tragically the material support systems, the scientific conclusions, vaccines, logistics and rescuing squads have become no less than an idol for us! We become so impressed and engrossed in them that somehow we forget Allah Ta'ala and His absolute power.

Take sickness as an example. When we get sick, we think of nothing but our doctors, physicians and medication. Take the example of a storm or flood. Once we are in it, we hope to be rescued by some person. We feel that our destiny depends on them, and in doing so, we overlook the very Master of the universe in Whose control lies our destiny. We persist in doing this, despite the warning of the Qur-aan Shareef that hardships and accidents are generally the outcome of the evil deeds of human beings themselves and that this calamity is a mild sample of the punishment of the hereafter. When we look at it from this angle, these hardships are actually a mercy for the Muslims. Heedless people are given a wake-up call so that they may use this occasion to seek forgiveness for their evil deeds and start thinking about how to give up sins. In this way they could remain safe from the greater and harsher punishments of the hereafter.

This does not mean that the use of material means through medicine etc. should not be used. Instead what needs to be emphasised is that we should believe in Allah Ta'ala as the supreme controller of everything. As for the use of material means, we should use them too, taking them to be nothing but His blessings, because all means are His creation and His blessings which serve human beings under His command and will. The fire, the air, the water, the dust, and all forces on the face of the earth are subservient to the command of Allah Ta'ala. Unless He so wills, fire cannot burn, water cannot extinguish and medicine cannot bring any benefit. History teaches us that human beings who become heedless of Allah Ta'ala and start relying on their self-invented mechanisms face a relative increase in concerns and calamities.

Today, the number and variety of instruments invented to remove pain and difficulty and to improve comfort and luxury are things that man had not even dreamt of half a century ago. Despite this, man was not as sick and troubled as man is today. Similarly, we have vaccines to fight against epidemics, medical squads to cover accidents and advanced communication systems which would hasten the provision of emergency care and equipment. However, the more we increase our material defenses against accidents and calamities, the more we seem to be affected by them. On the other hand, in the past, the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala was not as bold as it is today. People used items of comfort as a blessing from Allah Ta'ala for which they were grateful. However, man today wants to use these same conveniences and measures with a sense of self-achievement and pride, which in actual fact is rebellion in disguise. Undoubtedly, despite all of our advancements we cannot save ourselves from hardships.

Therefore, a true Muslim, in order to remove his pain and anxiety at the time of distress, should first turn to Allah Ta'ala and rely on Him instead of only depending on material solutions to relieve him from his difficulty. If he fails to do that, he will meet the same end being witnessed today. Whatever material solutions there are available should be used as a blessing from Him. However, if we take a look at the remedy proposed by Qur-aan Shareef, the only one way of staying safe from all kinds of hardship is to turn to Allah Ta'ala, The Creator of the universe.

[Adapted from Ma'aariful Qur-aan by Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saahib (rahmatullahi alayh)]