



باسمہ تعالیٰ

The Causes of Calamities and The Primary Solution

Cause and Effect:

Allah Ta'ala has created this world upon a system of causes and effects. Every action produces a result, and every cause leads to an outcome by the will of Allah Ta'ala. When a person eats, his hunger is satisfied, and when he drinks, his thirst is quenched. This system is so evident in our daily lives that no one questions it. However, this principle is not confined to the physical world alone. Just as Allah Ta'ala has established causes and effects for our physical well-being, He has also established causes and effects for our spiritual well-being and for the conditions that prevail within societies. The Quraan Majeed and ahaadeeth repeatedly teach us that actions have consequences. Certain deeds become a means of attracting the mercy and blessings of Allah Ta'ala, His protection and assistance, while other deeds become a cause for hardships, deprivation and various forms of punishment.

No hardship befalls anyone except by the will of Allah Ta'ala. Nevertheless, Allah Ta'ala has made sins and acts of disobedience among the causes of many difficulties and tribulations that people experience.

For this reason, the Quraan Majeed and ahaadeeth draw our attention not only to the virtues and rewards of good deeds, but also to the harmful consequences of sins. When obedience to Allah Ta'ala becomes widespread, its blessings are witnessed in individuals, families and communities. Likewise, when sins become common and people distance themselves from the commands of Allah Ta'ala, the consequences are not restricted to the sinners alone. Rather, difficult conditions, trials and various forms of turmoil may spread throughout society.

As we witness the challenges, unrest and xenophobic attacks that afflict communities around us, it is important that we reflect upon the guidance of the Quraan Majeed and ahaadeeth regarding the relationship between our actions and the conditions that Allah Ta'ala causes to prevail among His creation.

Declaration of the Quraan:

Allah Ta'ala informs us in the Quraan Majeed that the hardships and tribulations experienced by people are often the result of the sins and wrongdoings they commit. Allah Ta'ala says:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۖ

Whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults). (Surah Shura v30)

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ۝

Calamities have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned so that He (Allah Ta'ala) makes them taste some of what they did, in order that they may return (to the right way). (Surah Room v41)

Declaration of the Ahaadeeth:

Many ahaadeeth explain how certain sins become a cause of various hardships and calamities. In the following ahaadeeth, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) mentioned specific sins and some of the hardships that they bring about:

Sayyiduna 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhuma) narrates that Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) once addressed them saying:

« يَا مَعْشَرَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ حَمْسٌ إِذَا ابْتُلِيْتُمْ بِهِنَّ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ تُدْرِكُوهُنَّ : مَ تَظْهَرِ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي قَدَمٍ قَطُ حَتَّى يُعْلِنُوا بِهَا إِلَّا فَشًا فِيهِمُ الطَّاعُونَ وَالْأَوْجَاعُ الَّتِي لَمْ تَكُنْ مَضَتْ فِي أَسْلَافِهِمُ الَّذِينَ مَضُوا ، وَلَمْ يَنْقُضُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِلَّا أَخَذُوا بِالسِّنِينَ وَشِدَّةِ الْمُتُونَةِ وَجَوْرِ السُّلْطَانِ عَلَيْهِمْ ، وَلَمْ يَمْنَعُوا زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ إِلَّا مُنِعُوا الْقَطْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ، وَلَوْلَا الْبَهَائِمُ لَمْ يَمُطَّرُوا ، وَلَمْ يَنْقُضُوا عَهْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَهْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا سَلَّطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ فَأَخَذُوا بَعْضَ مَا فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ ، وَمَا لَمْ تَحْكُمِ أَيْمَانُهُمْ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَيَنْحَرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ بَأْسَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ »

“O Muhaajireen! There are five matters with which, if you are afflicted — and I seek Allah’s protection that you live to witness them — (contain no goodness whatsoever¹):

Immorality (zina and other acts of indecency) does not become widespread among a people to the extent that they openly commit it, except that plagues and such diseases would spread among them which had never appeared among their predecessors.

They (i.e. people) do not give short measure and weight except that they are afflicted with drought, difficult living conditions and the oppression of their rulers.

They do not withhold the zakaah of their wealth except that they are deprived of rain from the sky; and were it not for the animals, they would receive no rain at all.

They do not break the covenant of Allah and the covenant of His Messenger except that Allah causes an enemy from among others to gain power over them, who then seizes some of what is in their possession.

And as long as their leaders do not judge according to the Book of Allah and do not choose that which Allah has revealed, Allah causes them to fight among themselves.” (Sunan Ibn Maajah #4019)

Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) once said:

« إِذَا ظَهَرَ الزِّنَا وَالرِّبَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ فَقَدْ أَحْلُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ »

“When adultery and usury become rife in a community, then they have drawn the wrath of Allah.” (Mustadrak Haakim #2261)

A Muslim’s Perspective:

An important question that arises is: “What should a Muslim’s perspective be in the face of these various difficulties and hardships?”

In the Quraan Majeed, Allah Ta’ala says,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

“And indeed, We sent (messengers) to nations before you (O Muhammad [sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam]), then We seized them with hardships and sufferings so that they may humble themselves (before Us).” (Surah An’aam v42)

In this verse, Allah Ta’ala explains the plight of the previous nations and the manner in which He dealt with them. When those nations rejected their Ambiyaa (‘alaihimus salaam) and refused to abandon their evil and sinful ways, Allah Ta’ala would first send hardships and trials upon them as a warning and a wake-up call. The purpose behind these trials was to make them turn to Allah Ta’ala, humble themselves before Him and repent for their wrongs.

However, despite the admonishments sent by Allah Ta’ala in the form of difficulties and hardships, they remained immersed in disbelief and sinful practices. Regarding those who failed to heed these warnings, Allah Ta’ala says:

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

“Why then, did they not turn (to Us) in humility when a calamity from Us came upon them? Instead, their hearts were hardened and Shaitaan made the (evil) actions which they were carrying out attractive to them.” (Surah An’aam v43)

After testing them with difficulties and hardships, when they failed to pay heed, reform themselves and turn to Allah Ta’ala in humility, Allah Ta’ala opened the floodgates of wealth upon them as a further trial that would ultimately lead them towards destruction. The more wealth they received, the deeper they sank into the love of the material world and the more negligent they became regarding the commands of Allah Ta’ala.

End Result:

Even at this stage, Allah Ta’ala granted them respite and gave them an opportunity to make amends. However, when they failed to avail themselves of this opportunity, Allah Ta’ala sent upon them a punishment that left them in a state of utter despair. Allah Ta’ala says:

¹ والجزاء محذوف أي: فلا خير. (« حاشية السندي »)

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ط حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

“Thereafter, when they forgot the advice (and warnings which) they were given, We opened for them doors of everything (i.e. the doors of wealth and prosperity), until when they became proud of what they were given, We seized them suddenly (with divine punishment) and they were left in despair.” (Surah An’aam v44)

In these verses, Allah Ta’ala explains the manner in which He dealt with the previous nations who had gone astray. Initially, they were subjected to calamities and hardships as a warning from Allah Ta’ala. However, when they failed to heed these warnings, Allah Ta’ala opened the floodgates of wealth and prosperity for them, as a result of which they became increasingly engrossed in worldly pursuits, distanced themselves further from Allah Ta’ala and moved closer to destruction.

Lesson for Us:

Although these verses directly refer to the previous nations, the Ummah of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is also being addressed and warned not to tread the same path of destruction that the previous nations followed.

Sometimes, Allah Ta’ala tests this Ummah with hardships and difficulties, and these become a means for people to wake up from their slumber and negligence. At other times, when people fail to heed the warning signs of Allah Ta’ala, He may open the floodgates of wealth and prosperity for them. As a result, they may distance themselves further from Allah Ta’ala and become increasingly immersed in affluence and worldly comforts.

Therefore, these verses of the Quraan Majeed teach us two important lessons:

The first lesson is that the difficulties and hardships that we witness in the world are reminders and warnings from Allah Ta’ala which should motivate us to repent, reform our lives and strengthen our relationship with Allah Ta’ala.

The second lesson is that at times, everything in a person’s worldly life appears to be working in his favour. Day by day, his wealth increases and he enjoys more and more worldly comforts. However, this should not deceive him into thinking that all is well and that Allah Ta’ala is pleased with him. Rather, it may be that Allah Ta’ala is merely granting him respite which he may either use to make amends or use to plunge even deeper into sin and evil.

Burma:

Moulana Sayyid Abul Hasan ‘Ali Nadwi (rahimahullah) was a great scholar of the recent past and a saint of remarkable calibre. He was widely accepted throughout both the Arab and non-Arab world, and his lectures and writings earned him recognition across the globe.

One of his specialities was the study of history and an understanding of the factors that contribute to the rise and fall of nations.

When he visited Burma in 1961, he observed that the Muslims were actively involved in business and were well-settled financially. They were also supporting many madaaris and other Deeni activities. However, they had become intoxicated with the love of wealth and were deeply engrossed in luxury and extravagance. Their weddings and social functions were also extremely lavish and involved considerable wastage.

After observing the conditions in Burma, Moulana Abul Hasan (rahimahullah) delivered a lecture in which he reminded the Muslims of their responsibilities and warned them of the dangers that lay ahead.

The words that flowed from his tongue were definitely inspired by Allah Ta’ala. This lecture was later translated into English and published under the title, *A Thought-Provoking Lecture*. The essence of Moulana’s message was as follows:

“This time which is passing by should be valued. If you make an effort for the Deen of Allah Ta’ala during this time, your businesses, family and offspring will be safeguarded and you will be granted prosperity and honour in this country. It is not farfetched that the reins of leadership will also be placed in your hands. On the other hand, if you do not make this effort (of da’wah and tableegh), then mark my words, you won’t be able to live in this country.

For Allah’s sake, do not give so much preference to your businesses as you are currently doing. Do something for the sake of Deen. Honestly speaking, if I had the power, I would have closed down all your shops, factories and businesses, not for a few months but for a few years, and sent all the people out to involve themselves in the work of da’wah and tableegh.

I am not making a political statement. Rather, using the divine light that Allah Ta'ala has granted every believer, I am making this statement, that if you do not spare any time for the Deen of Allah Ta'ala, it will be difficult for you to stay in this country. When those circumstances arise, your businesses and factories won't be spared!

It is possible that my lecture is being recorded. Those who listen carefully to my words will remember my words one day. I am not a saint who is able to predict the future. Rather, this is as obvious as someone predicting rain when seeing the clouds forming, the lightning and the winds blowing. He will not be regarded as a saint, rather even a child of tender age will come to the same conclusion. Similarly, I am able to warn you of the cruel and ruthless days that are to come."

As it often happens, when people hear words that are difficult to accept, they tend to dismiss them and brush them aside with negative comments.

However, shortly thereafter, a military revolution took place and many people lost everything overnight. Those who had once lived in luxury were left with virtually nothing. Conditions deteriorated to such an extent that many of them became deserving of zakaah. They eventually fled the country barefoot, seeking safety and refuge.

Moulana Abul Hasan (rahimahullah) was blessed with remarkable insight. He recognised the signs and accordingly warned the Muslims of Burma. However, they failed to take heed and were compelled to face the consequences. We should take lessons from the experiences of others and not allow ourselves to become a lesson for others.

Solutions:

The primary means of attracting the mercy of Allah Ta'ala and bringing about favourable conditions is to turn to Allah Ta'ala with humility and to rectify ourselves.

Allah Ta'ala declares in the Quraan Majeed:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ط

"Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change themselves." (Surah Ra'd v11)

The following points may be expounded on:

1. Turn to Allah Ta'ala with humility.
2. Engage in sincere istighfaar and tawbah.
3. Establish salaah and discharge zakaah. Every individual should resolve to perform salaah punctually.
4. Increase the recitation of the Quraan Majeed.
5. Reduce unnecessary screen time, switch off the television and utilise the time in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.
6. Implement proper Deeni education in the makaatib.
7. Reconcile disputes and differences.
8. Seek guidance from the 'Ulama and maintain strong links with them.
9. Create an atmosphere of unity and brotherhood.
10. Join and maintain family ties.
11. Encourage the reading of the books of fadhaa-il.
12. Maintain the limits of the sharee'ah when engaging in business.
13. Abandon baseless customs commonly practised at weddings and other functions.
14. Change your intention for being in this country from dunya to Deen.
15. Keep the masaajid alive with aa'maal day and night.
16. Stay away from every sin, especially interest, zina, immodest behaviour, oppression and extravagance.
17. Give abundant sadaqah.
18. Make a lot of du'aa.
19. Put your complete trust in Allah Ta'ala.
20. As far as possible, remove all pictures of animate objects from your homes and businesses.
21. Try to do everything in accordance with the sharee'ah.
22. Keep the heart clean from all evil traits such as pride, jealousy and evil intentions.
23. Seek essential Deeni knowledge.
24. Fulfil the rights of Allah Ta'ala and the rights of His creation.
25. Consume only that which is halaal, pure and wholesome.