

experience such terrifying incidents and that “we” will always live in safety. News about disasters, accidents or epidemics surely makes us feel sympathy for the sufferers. We indeed share their sorrow; however, as disasters recede into memory, we become less concerned and such an attitude proves to be a passing interest for us. Once we immerse ourselves in the flow of daily life or face personal problems, we quickly develop a sense of apathy and remain indifferent to those who have been through disaster.

Nevertheless, the notion that every day of one’s life will be the same is a flawed one. This is evident from the warnings of Allah. Certainly, those people who were exposed to various disasters did not know that a natural hazard would throw their life into complete disarray. They certainly started that day as an ordinary one, thinking that it would be the same as the preceding ones. Most probably, it never occurred to them that, on that particular day there would be a drastic change in their lives, which would transform life into a dangerous struggle. On such occasions, lives are reduced to their simplest truths. This is how Allah reminds people that security in this world is a sham. People forget that life is short & temporary. In this state of heedlessness, they spend their lives in pursuit of vain desires instead of living for the good pleasure of Allah.

Viewed from this standpoint, troubles are a mercy of Allah. Allah demonstrates the true nature of this world and encourages people to be prepared for the next life. What appears to be a misfortune is in fact an opportunity offered by Allah. **These misfortunes are given to people so that they may seek to repent and amend their conduct. And to HELP! We must sincerely & earnestly serve our brothers and sisters in humanity – the sons and daughters of Adam – who cry out for relief. Ignore that Robertson “preacher.”**

He needs a dose of the Prophet’s (p) spiritual medicine: “On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will say, “O son of Adam, I fell ill & you did **not** visit me.” The person will say, “Lord, how could I visit you when You are the Lord of the worlds?” He will say, “Did you not know that this person fell ill & you did not visit him? If you did, you would have found Me with him.”

Tales of the ancients: “But how many generations before them have We destroyed? Can you find a single one of them or hear so much as a whisper of them?” (Surah Maryam: 98) Thamud, Ad, Saba, Sumerians, Pompeii. When we hear these “stories” it does not “worry” us. We disregard the inherent lessons.

Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice? Yet they turn not in repentance, and they take no heed. (Surat at-Tawbah: 126)

Tales of the moderns (which in the short time of 100 years will be known also as “tales of the ancients): Most living today have the following in their own times to draw upon. **Do you remember them?**

28/7/1976 Shaanxi, China; 8.0 mag. Estimated death toll 655,000.

17/1/1995 Kobe, Japan; 7.2 magnitude. The duration was about 20 seconds. 5100 deaths. The region was thought to be fairly safe in terms of seismic activity.

17/8/1999 Ismir Bay, Turkey. 7.4 mag. Death toll more than 20,000.

26/12/2003 Bam, Iran 6.5 magnitude. Death toll 26,271. Losses \$1 billion.

26/12/2004 Indonesian 8.9 magnitude tsunami which devastated 12 countries in South Asia. 300,000 dead; one million injured; 5 million homeless; material losses of tens of billion \$US.

8/10/2005 Kashmir Major earthquake of 7.6. A toll of more than 100,000 deaths, about 100,000 injuries and 4 million homeless; material losses in a 20,000 square km area of at least 5 billion \$US.

12/1/2010 Haiti: Major 7.0 earthquake. Death and destruction before our very eyes. **Will you forget this? And the quakes continue in 2010: Chile, Taiwan, Turkey. We should be quaking in fear; better yet, we should FEAR God.**

These tragedies cannot be the “work” of the mechanical processes of the earth, but need a designer, and the designer is the Creator Himself. **And they must have a purpose.** That purpose is **punishment** for the transgressors & the aggressors, **trial** for the pious & honest ones that are caught in the middle & a **reminder** for the survivors. A reminder for all of us. Unless taken with this regard, humanity will never learn. About Kobe, Professor Katayama wrote, “While our country was having a bubbling economy, we Japanese **forgot** to pay due attention to mother nature.”

The Reality: You forgot God.

Does it **not** teach them a lesson, how many generations God destroyed before them, in whose dwellings they now move about? Verily in that are Signs: Do they **not** then listen? (32:26)

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The issue of natural calamities & human sufferings is one of the most **baffling** subjects of science & religion as well as of various other fields of study like psychology & social sciences. Every time a calamity occurs, it gives rise to questions of not only immediate practical importance but also having epistemological & philosophical significance. The people, quite reasonably, want to know the real cause of the death & destruction occurring at the occasions of natural calamities. Have they something to do with the moral behaviour of the victims? Or, are they the outcome of administrative negligence on the part of the rulers.

Or Both!

“Do you feel secure that He Who is in heaven will not cause you to be swallowed up by the earth when it shakes?”

Quran: (al-Mulk 67/16-17)

It is better to live your life knowing that virtue is the root of good outcomes, and evil the harbinger of calamity. “Doomsday will not take place until EARTHQUAKES MULTIPLY, corruption appears & murders rise in number.” If analysis shows that these three problems are at an all-time high then you should take this warning from the Prophet (p) very seriously. It will mean DOOMSDAY.

Helping humanity in their time of need is certainly a sign of religious sincerity. The path to closeness with God is SERVICE TO HUMANITY

Warning

YOUR CITY COULD BE NEXT

Take Heed

No kind of Calamity can occur,
except by the leave of Allah.
If anyone believes in Allah,
He guides their heart aright.
For Allah knows all things.
(Surat at-Taghabun: 11)

To understand and rationalize natural calamities (occurrences inflicting widespread destruction and distress) on the basis of religion or any other system of knowledge, it is necessary to differentiate between the disasters that occur due to natural events and the misfortunes that are wrought by the people themselves by acting contrary to the Divine moral values. Without having an appropriate classification, we will not be able to establish correct cause and effect relationship with reference to a certain calamity. And, if the cause of an effect is **not** correctly identified, there is a chance that any remedial action taken will not produce the desired results. The question is whether the incidents, like earthquakes, causing destruction are caused by a physical process that takes place in nature or are a consequence of a human moral behaviour. On the basis of their origin and causes, the calamities, thus, can be mainly divided into natural, social and accidental.

1. Natural calamities may further be divided into physical and biological calamities. Earthquakes, floods, cyclones, hurricanes are examples of physical phenomena which cause devastation. Widespread diseases, epidemics, pandemics are examples of biological calamities.

2. Social Calamities are those which are caused by corruption, injustices, moral disintegration, economic exploitation & political oppression.

3. Accidental Calamities are caused by some accident, such as rail, road, sea & air mishaps.

Wrath of God Theory: There are 19 major world religions, which are subdivided into some 270 large groups. Epistemologically, the exact religious response to natural calamities may vary from religion to religion as each looks at these happenings with its specific perspective. Therefore, a generalized picture cannot be presented. However, many people, particularly a section of religious clergy from all backgrounds, generally regard natural hazards as an expression of God's displeasure. They believe that

earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes & floods are indications of the 'wrath of God', to borrow their words. For Muslims, Christians & Jews it is also very common to correlate the physical disasters with the calamities that befell the opponents of the previous Prophets mentioned in the Quran & the Bible. They, thus, regard these natural catastrophes as a chastisement for the affected people from God.

It is important to realize, however, that Haiti's earthquake is **much more** than a "natural" disaster – that this suffering is **not** just part of God's inscrutable plan. As was the case of the devastation that followed hurricane Katrina, **human negligence and oppression** made a challenging natural event into a disaster of hugely devastating proportions.

A prominent "American Christian" leader, Pat Robertson, said that Haiti has been "cursed" by a "pact with the devil." **What a ridiculous & offensive statement.** Has he forgotten the decades of American imperialism that impoverished the island? The sad reality is that the people of Haiti have endured almost constant oppression and injustice since the first arrival of European colonialists five centuries ago. The indigenous population was nearly completely exterminated following the arrival of Christopher Columbus, and then hundreds of thousands of Africans were enslaved and transported to Haiti, where they endured possibly the most brutal conditions ever experienced by humanity. So in rethinking Robertson's view: he's right!!! The "pact with the devil" means the pact with the "white" murderous colonizers. Robertson needs to clean out his "dirty" mind. He can start by leaving his gilded air-conditioned "700 Club" office and taking 700 "white" workers to help suffering humanity in Haiti. Before boarding the plane, visit the bank and withdraw 700 million dollars to rebuild, feed & clothe. Isn't that what Jesus would have done, Mr. Robertson? **Psycho!**

Earthquakes are the most devastating natural forces on earth, with the worst loss of life. Every two minutes somewhere the surface of the earth cracks. The earth shakes millions of times a year. The intensity of three hundred thousand of these earthquakes is minor; they are imperceptible tremors and cause no destruction at all. Twenty of them, on the other hand, are powerful earthquakes which convulse the land. Yet since they often do not hit densely populated areas, they kill few people and cause little economic loss. Only five of these earthquakes reduce buildings to heaps of rubble.

Today's advanced level of technology inspires man with the feeling that he has control over nature. Yet, those

Do then those who devise evil
feel secure that Allah will not
cause the earth
to swallow them up,
or that the wrath will not seize them
from directions they little perceive?
(Surat an-Nahl: 45-47)

who are overwhelmed by such a notion soon feel disappointment. Technology is a tool provided by Allah for the service of man and is entirely under His control. Various events show that even the most advanced technology is impotent to rule nature.

For instance, despite the "earthquake-resistant technology" developed by Japanese scientists, Kobe fell victim to widespread havoc caused by **twenty seconds** of intense shock waves during the 1995 quake. The world's most earthquake-resistant structures built to withstand an intense jolt simply collapsed during a momentary quake. During the previous three decades, the Japanese government had invested trillions of dollars in academic research to develop warning systems for earthquakes. Yet, these efforts yielded no conclusive results at all. Scientists are still unable to devise systems to issue warnings that could reduce the destructive effects of dangerous seismic events. Kobe was a recent example, among many others, demonstrating how vulnerable to unexpected patterns of seismic hits a modern industrialized city is.

This is intended to remind those who forget their purpose in creation of an important fact: everything on earth owes its existence to Allah, who has created the entire material universe. Everything's existence is consequent upon the exercise of the will of Allah. Therefore, nothing has a being separate and apart from Allah. The Quran states that nothing is beyond Allah's control: "Allah has full power & control over His affair; but most of mankind know it **not.**" (12: 21)

Nevertheless, as Allah makes clear in the second part of the verse, the majority of people are not aware of this. They assume, during the course of their lives, that no misfortune whatsoever will befall them, never thinking that they too are vulnerable to any of those devastating disasters. **We feel that "others"**

(Surat ash-Shu'ara: 146-149)

Will you be left secure, in the enjoyment of all that you have here?