

EDITORIAL

A Spiritual Lesson to be Taken from the Earthquake in Türkiye

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About 50,000 earthquakes large enough to be noticed without the aid of instruments occur annually worldwide. Some 100 of these are large enough to cause substantial damage if centered near populated areas. Over the centuries, earthquakes have been responsible for millions of deaths and incalculable damage¹. Lastly, Türkiye and Syria were rocked by two huge earthquakes with magnitudes of 7.7 and 7.6 (Mw), separated by just nine hours on February 6, 2023. After the catastrophe, tens of thousands of deaths occurred with countless others injured. While hundreds of thousands of patients including children injured in the earthquake were treated in the emergency departments and wards of many hospitals, some of them lost their lives. Earthquake victims are in need of shelter, clean water, food, medical and mental care, physical rehabilitation and psychosocial and economic support. Although many articles have been written about the effects of earthquakes on physical, mental, and social health, spiritual dimension of earthquakes has been frequently ignored. Here, we presented a spiritual lesson to be taken from the earthquake in order to draw attention to the spiritual dimension of the earthquake.

The Quran says "Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse, and the mountains as pegs?"². The layer of soil was thrown over the pegs of mountains so that the earthquakes arising from internal upheavals could breathe through the mountains and they would not cause the earth to be shaken out of its motion and duties, and so that the mountains would preserve the earth from the encroachment of the sea³. In the Quran, the Surah Al-Zalzalah (the earthquake) including eight ayats states definitely that in its movements and earthquakes the earth shakes at a command, on receiving revelation and inspiration. And sometimes it trembles⁴. When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion, and the earth throws up her burdens (from within), and man cries (distressed): 'What is the matter with her?'- On that Day will she declare her tidings: For that thy Lord will have given her inspiration⁵.

In just the same way, to forget the dominical command concerning the earth, which is a docile official of the All-Powerful One of Glory, rather, a ship or an aeroplane of His: "Explode a bomb inside the earth prepared through wisdom and will in order to arouse the heedless and the rebellious;" to forget this and to deviate into 'nature', is the very peak of stupidity⁴. In order to defend their way and counter the awakening of the believers and hinder them, the people of misguidance and the atheists display an obduracy so strange and a stupidity so peculiar that it makes a person regret his humanity. For example, in order to make men give up their wicked and wrongful rebellion which recently has to a degree taken on a general form, and to arouse mankind and make it forego this awesome revolt and recognize the universe's Sovereign, Whom it does not want to recognize, the Creator of the heavens and the earth – not on account of a particular title but as Sustainer and Ruler of the whole universe and all the worlds and through a widespread and general manifestation throughout the universe in the universal sphere of His dominicality – has struck mankind in the face with awesome and widespread calamities like earthquakes, storms, and world wars through the universal elements coming to anger – through water, the air, and electricity, which are matchless and constant– and has demonstrated through them in most clear fashion His wisdom, power, justice, and self-subsistence. Although this is the case, certain brainless satans in human form respond to these universal dominical signs and divine reprimands with a foolish obstinacy, saying: "It's nature. It's the explosion of some strata under the earth and just chance. It's the sun's heat clashing with electricity. They utter meaningless

nonsense like this⁴.

A general disaster results from the error of the majority⁶. What is the reason for this disaster (earthquake), which arises from the wrongdoing of a few individuals, occurring to a degree generally throughout the country? Nursi⁴ answered this question as follows: "The general disaster results from the wrongdoing of the majority: most people in effect participate in the actions of those tyrannical individuals by supporting them either actively or morally or in some connection." Disaster is the result of crime and the introduction to reward⁶. Calamities are the result of human error, but they are also the beginning of a reward arising from Divine mercy. In other words, Allah clears people's faults with a calamity, and then gives a new benevolence and treat in return for their cleansing. For a sinful believer, the torment in the grave is a result of his sins, but at the same time that torment is a step towards entering Paradise. Likewise, some misfortunes in the world are the result of mistakes and a precursor and predecessor to the coming of other blessings⁷.

Lastly, the Quran says The (Day) of Clamor: What is the (Day) of Clamor? And what will explain to thee what the (Day) of Clamor is? (It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about, and the mountains will be like carded wool⁸. On February 6, 2023, hundreds of thousands of people in Türkiye and Syria personally experienced the earthquake and the Doomsday event, which was explained in detail in the Surah Al-Zalzalah and Surah Al-Qariah of the Qur'an, which was revealed over 14 centuries ago. The Qur'an also offers a recipe for salvation for today's people as follows: Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. But when (once) Allah willeth a people's punishment, there can be no turning it back, nor will they find, besides Him, any to protect⁹.

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