

Earthquakes Are From The Warning Signs Of Allah: The Advice Of Shaikh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz (may Allah's mercy be upon him)

Translation and footnotes:

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All praise is due to Allāh, and may His peace and blessings be upon Allah’s Messenger, his Companions and whosoever follows his guidance.

Indeed Allah, the Exalted and Most High, is All-Wise and All-Knowing concerning what He decrees and ordains just as He is All-Wise and All-Knowing regarding what He has legislated, and commanded—He creates whatever He wills from signs and occurrences within His creation. He decrees them to put fear into His servants, and as a reminder for them of that which He has obligated upon them in fulfilment of His rights—and to warn them from falling into polytheism by associating partners with Him (shirk), to remind them about opposing His commands, and from falling into what He has prohibited just as He (the Most Perfect) stated:

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْكَآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا

“And We sent not the signs except to warn and to make them afraid (of Allah’s punishment).” (al-Isrā: 59) And Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْكَافِقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٩﴾

“We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves until it becomes manifest to them that this (Qur’ān) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?” (Fussilat: 53) And Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ شِيْعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُم بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ۗ

Say: “He has the power to send torment on you from above or from under your feet, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, and make you taste the violence of one another.” (al-An‘ām: 65)

Al-Bukhāri (no. 7406) reported from Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (may Allah be pleased with him) from Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that when the verse was revealed:

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ

“Say: He has the power to send torment on you from above,” he said:

أَعُوذُ بِوَجْهِكَ

“I seek refuge with Your Face!” And when he recited:

أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ

“Or from under your feet,” he said:

أَعُوذُ بِوَجْهِكَ

“I seek refuge with Your Face!”

Abush-Shaykh Al-Asbahāni narrated from Mujāhid in his commentary of the verse, **“Say: He has the power to send torment on you from above,”** that he said, “Meaning: an awful cry/scream, stones cast down from the sky, and tormenting winds.” As for His (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) saying, **“Or from under your feet,”** Mujāhid said, “Meaning: an earthquake, or collapsing into the earth.”

There is no doubt concerning the prevalence of earthquakes in various places on the earth in these times is from the generality of the signs by which Allah (the Exalted) wishes to instil fear into His servants.¹ All of that which is occurring of earthquakes and other

¹ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

afflictions which hurt people and cause them various types of harm are all due to polytheism (associating partners with Allah in worship), their sins and disobedience just as Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

“And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned—and He pardons much.” (ash-Shoorā: 30) He (the Most High) also said:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾

“Whatever of good reaches you is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, then it is from yourself...” (an-Nisā: 79) And Allah said about the previous nations:

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يُقْبَضَ الْعِلْمُ وَتَكْثُرَ الزَّلَازِلُ وَيَتَقَارَبَ الرِّمَانُ وَتَظْهَرَ الْفِتْنُ
وَيَكْثُرَ الْهَرْجُ - وَهُوَ الْقَتْلُ الْقَتْلُ - حَتَّى يَكْثُرَ فِيكُمْ الْمَالُ فَيَفِيضُ

“The Hour will not be established until knowledge will be taken away, earthquakes become frequent, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase, and money will overflow amongst you.” (Bukhāri, no. 1036)

فَكَلَّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنبِهِ^ط فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَعْرَفْنَا^ق وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“So We punished each of them for his sins—of them were some on whom We sent a violent wind with a shower of stones (Lot’s people); and of them were some who were overtaken by the torment of the awful cry (Thamood and Shu‘aib’s people); and of them were some whom We caused the earth to swallow (Qāroon), and of them were some whom We drowned (people of Noah and Pharaoh). It was not Allāh who wronged them! But they wronged themselves.” (al-ʿAnkaboot: 40)

So it is obligatory upon every adult from the Muslims and non-Muslims to turn to Allah (the Exalted and Most High) in repentance, to be steadfast upon His Religion—and to beware and be distant from everything He has prohibited from polytheistic practices, sins and disobedience such that they attain safety, wellbeing and salvation in this world and in the Hereafter from all types of evil—that Allāh protects them from every trial, and grants them every good just as He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“And if the people of the towns had believed and had piety, certainly We would have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they denied the Messengers, so We took them with punishment for what they used to earn (polytheism and sins).” (al-A‘rāf: 96) And Allah said concerning the People of the Book:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ ۚ

“And if only they had upheld the law of the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to them from their Lord (i.e., the Qur’ān), they would have eaten provision from above them and from beneath their feet...” (al-Mā’idah: 66) And He (the Most High) said:

أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾
أَوَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾
أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۚ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

“Did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment by night while they were asleep? Or did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment in the forenoon while they were playing? Did they then feel secure against the plan of Allah? None feels secure

from the plan of Allah except the people who are the losers.” (al-Aʿrāf: 97-99)

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) said:

“Sometimes Allah permits the earth to take a breath and due to that there befalls on the earth great earthquakes—and as a consequence of that His servants become afraid and fearful, they turn to Him in repentance and they abandon sin and disobedience— they humble themselves before Him in humility, and they feel remorse, as one of the Pious Predecessors said when the earth shook with an earthquake, **‘Indeed your Lord is admonishing you!’** And when Madinah was shaken by an earthquake ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed the people and admonished them, saying, **‘If it happens again, I will not live among you in Madinah.’**”²

(End of the speech of Ibn al-Qayyim) And there are many narrations of the Salaf similar to this.

² Ibn Abī Dunyā reported: “An earthquake struck in the time of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), so he said: ‘O people! This earthquake did not occur except due to some transgression you have committed! By the One in whose Hand is my soul, if it strikes again, I will not live in this city with you, ever.’” (Ibn Abī Shaybah in *al-Musannaf* no. 2/473, and al-Bayhaqi in his *as-Sunan* 3/342—and its chain of narration is *sahīh*).

It is a must that when there is an earthquake or other signs and occurrences such as an eclipse, or powerful winds and floods, the people hasten to repent to Allah (the Most Perfect) humble themselves before Him, and ask Him for well-being and safety—they should make mention of Him plentifully (through dhikr) and seek forgiveness just as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would say at the time of an eclipse: **“When you see it taking place, hasten to the remembrance of Allah (dhikr), supplicating to Him and seeking His forgiveness.”** (Bukhāri, no. 1044)³

At such times it also recommended to show mercy to the poor and needy—and give charity to them due to the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

ارْحَمُوا تُرْحَمُوا

³ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued in this narration:

يَا أُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَاللَّهِ مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَغْيَرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَزْنِيَ عَبْدُهُ أَوْ تَزْنِيَ أَمَّتُهُ يَا أُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَاللَّهِ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمَ لَضَحِكْتُمْ قَلِيلًا وَلَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا

“O ummah of Muhammad, by Allah! There is none who has more self-respect than Allah as He has forbidden that His male or female servants should fornicate. O ummah of Muhammad, by Allah! If you knew that which I know you would laugh less and weep much.”

“Show mercy and you will be shown mercy.” (Ahmad, no. 6255)⁴

He (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said:

الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ

“Those who show mercy [to others], the Most Merciful will show them mercy. So be merciful to those on earth and the One above the sky will be merciful with you.” (Tirmidhī, no. 1924) And he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يُرْحَمُ

“The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.” (Bukhāri, no. 6013) And it has been narrated from ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) that he would write to the governors when an earthquake would strike commanding them to give in charity.⁵

⁴ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

ارْحَمُوا تُرْحَمُوا وَاعْفِرُوا يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَيَلُ لَأَفْئَاعِ الْقَوْلِ وَيَلُ لِلْمُصْرِينَ الَّذِينَ يُصِرُونَ
عَلَى مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“Show mercy and you will be shown mercy. Forgive and Allah will forgive you. Woe to the vessels that catch words (i.e., the ears). Woe to those who persist and consciously continue in what they are doing.” (*Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 380, graded *sahih* by Al-Albāni)

⁵ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **“This nation of mine is a nation that is shown mercy. There will be no punishment for them in the Hereafter—**

And from the means of well-being and safety in such times from all types of evil is the hastening of the rulers in calling to account the foolish (wrongdoers and criminals), obligate them to adhere to the Truth, establish the Law of Allah upon them, and enjoin good and prohibit evil just as Allah has stated:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allāh and His Messenger. Those—Allāh will have mercy upon them. Indeed,

instead their punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed.” (Al-Albānī declared this *hadīth* to be authentic saying, ‘It was reported by Abu Dāwūd (4278), Al-Hākim (4/444), Ahmad (4/410,418) from the route of Al-Mas‘ūdī from Sa‘īd Ibn Abī Burdah from his father from Abu Mūsā... Al-Hākim said, ‘It has a *sahīh* chain of narration.’ Adh-Dhahabī agreed. Ibn Hajr said, ‘Its chain of narration is *hasan*.’ See *as-Sahīhah*, no. 959) Meaning, that there are some from this *ummah* who are tried and punished in this world, and therefore, their punishment in the Hereafter is mitigated or removed altogether—and that is from the great Mercy of Allah that He bestows upon whom He wills.

Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (at-Tawbah: 71) And He (the Most High) said:

وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾
الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَكَتَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَخَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَعَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْأُمُورِ ﴿٤١﴾

“Verily, Allah will help those who help His cause. Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty. Those who, if We give them authority in the land, they enjoin prayers, pay the Zakāt—and they enjoin good, and forbid evil. And to Allāh belongs the outcome of all matters.” (al-Hajj: 40-41) And Allah stated:

وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

“And whoever fears Allāh, He will make for him a way out [of every hardship]. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allāh—then He is sufficient for him.” (at-Talāq: 2-3) And there are many verses similar to these.

Furthermore, Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةٍ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ

“Whoever fulfils the needs of his brother, then Allah will fulfil his needs.” (Bukhāri no. 6951 and Muslim no. 2580)⁶ And he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَنْ نَفَسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ

“He who alleviates the suffering of a believer from the sufferings of the world, Allah will alleviate his suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection, and he who finds relief for one who is hard-pressed, Allah will make things easy for him in the Hereafter, and he who conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in the world and in the Hereafter. Allah is at the aid of a servant so long as the servant is at the aid of his brother” (Muslim no. 2699 and Tirmidhi, no. 1425) And there are numerous narrations that carry this meaning.

We ask Allah to rectify the affairs of all the Muslims—and that He grants them understanding of the Religion and makes them

⁶ The Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ

“A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim, he does not oppress him, he does not hand him over (to an oppressor) and Whoever fulfils the needs of his brother, then Allah will fulfil his needs.” (Bukhāri, no. 6951)

steadfast upon it—that they repent to Allah for all their sins—and we ask that Allah rectifies the affairs of the rulers of the Muslims, that He aids them with the Truth, and that He vanquishes falsehood through them—and that He guides them to judge by the Law of Allah among His servants. We ask Him to give refuge to all Muslims from misguidance and trials, and from the inciting of the Shaytān—and Allah is the One in charge of that, and all-capable over it.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions and all who follow them correctly until the Hour is established.

‘Abdul-‘Azeez Ibn ‘Abdillāh Ibn Bāz (may Allah’s mercy be upon him)

The late Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the head of the Committee of Major Scholars, and the head of the Directorate of Islamic Research and the Issuance of Fatāwa.

(Source *Majmoo‘ Fatāwā* of al-Imām Ibn Bāz, 9/148-152)