**Punishments versus tests Reference: Surah-e-Aal-e-Imran Aayah no. 165**

**Aaudhu billahi Minash-Shaitaun-nir-rajeem**

**Awa lamma asawbatkum museebatun qad asawbtum mithlaiha, Qultum Anna hatha. Qul huwa min indi anfusikum. Innallahha ala kulli shai-in qadeer.**

**Translation: What! When a misfortune befell you and you had certainly afflicted (the unbelievers) with twice as much, you began to say, whence is this? Say, it is from you; surely Allah has power over all things.**

**Rabbish-rawh-li-sawdri, wa yassir li amri, wahlul-uqdatam-millisani-yafqahu qowli.**

**Falhamdulillah, wassalatu, wassalmu ala Rasulillah, wa-ala aalihi wa ashabihi ajmaeen.**

Assalamualaikum Quraan Weekly

I wanted to share this one Aayah with you for a very particular purpose, Aayah no 165-Surah-e-Aal-e-Imran. A lot of people ask questions about, why Allah s.wt. put them through difficulty and it is a very difficult question. They wonder, what did they do to deserve this difficulty, is it something they did bad or this is just Allah’s decree to put them through a certain test, how do they know which one is it. Some people, whenever something bad happens to them, they blame themselves, thinking they must have done something, been bad to their parents or missed a prayer, that’s why they have met an accident for e.g., they correlate things from unseen to the seen realm.

These are some of the aayahs which help us understand, so on the one hand Allah says like in this aayah “Awa lamma Asawbatkum Museebatun Qad Asabtum Mithlaiha”, when at the Battle of Uhud, when Muslim had difficulty and the calamity had hit you, the likes of which you had already dished out to the enemy before “Qad Asawbtum Mithlaiha” twice that you did that damage to the enemy the year before “Qultum Anna Hadha” You said how could this happen “Qul huwa min indi anfusikum” tell them this is because what you have within yourselves, this happened specifically because of you, it’s your fault exclusively “InnAllah ha Ala kulli shai-in Qadeer”, indeed Allah is capable of everything. if He hadn’t wanted it to happen, He would have stopped it but He let it happen because it was the result of your actions exclusively.

In Qura’an at other places, Allah says “Ma’a Asawba bilmuseebatin Illa bi-idhnillah ( no calamity hits you or strikes you except for Allah’s permission). So how do you reconcile two things, on the one hand it’s your fault and on the other hand, everything is by Allah’s permission. I want to share this concept very briefly so that it becomes clear to all. So for e.g. when you drive a car over the speed limit and swerving b/w the lanes and then you get into a car accident, **you don’t get to say** in this situation that it was bound to happen because Allah wanted me to have met this accident, it’s the qadr of Allah, whenever He wants us to meet a calamity, it will happen, **you don’t get to say that in this situation,** because this was clearly a result of your shortcoming or negligence, so you can’t blame the decree of Allah s.w.t in this case.

On the other hand, there are things which are clearly and entirely out of your control, e.g. some issues related to your health might be completely out of your control or issues related to death in a family, even a car accident may not be because of your negligence, it might be someone else’s fault or you losing your job, or your business failing might not be because you did something wrong, or a natural disaster in which you or your loved one got stuck in. These are some of the examples in which there is no one to blame here. The things which go wrong in which you have no control or contribution, you can believe that this is a test from Allah s.w.t., it’s not a punishment. In this world, when Allah s.w.t gives punishments, He gives them when the prophets come and He destroys nations when people don’t listen to what prophets say.

When you can make a relationship between what you did and the bad outcome, then you cannot say that it is from Allah as He says ‘wa huwa min indi anfusikum’. So clearly, in other places in Quraan, when calamities happened it says that Allah is letting it happen, e.g. Muslims went through a trouble in Mecca, didn’t they? they get tortured in Mecca and in this case Allah is saying that this is from Him, you just have to be patient in that case. But in Ghazwa-e-Uhad, when archers left their position and because of their leaving their position which they were asked to keep, all kinds of terrible things happened in the Muslim army and so many people lost their lives, even Prophet Muhammad s.a.w was deeply injured and he fell unconscious and they had to retreat back up the mountain, you are climbing up the mountain and not even looking back, in this situation, they did not get to say that it was from Allah s.w.t. because that calamity was the result of their own actions, ‘ qul huwa min indi anfusikum’.

So, in these aayahs we are learning about personal responsibility. It’s a part of our imaan and relationship with Allah s.w.t. that we don’t blame Him for things which happened due to our own fault and should take responsibility for our own actions. Likewise, we don’t blame ourselves for things which are not under our control, because there are things which happen just because of Allah’s will. So, we need to draw a line between the two, in order to maintain a healthy sustained relationship with Allah s.w.t.

**Final Comments**

There are people who don’t understand this balance; you know what happens to them? On one hand they become completely complacent, thinking Allah does everything so I don’t need to do anything and they get angry with Allah s.w.t if things don’t go in their favor, that Allah puts them through all of this. On the other hand, there are people who hold themselves responsible for everything, thinking they are so bad that they are facing difficulty after difficulty and thinking that Allah is letting it happen to them just because they themselves are messed up and they deserve all this. They start loathing themselves. Allah s.w.t doesn’t want us to loath ourselves or to loathe him. There is love that you have to have not only for yourself but to find that love and self-esteem through the love of Allah s.w.t.

This is what these aayahs teach us to distinguish between the calamities which are the result of our own actions and the ones which happen by the will of Allah s.w.t as a test so that we can rise to the occasion.

Baarakallahu walakum Wassalamu Alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu

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