



٠٩-٠٦-١٤٣٤هـ.أ - الشريم - المسجد الحرام

Earthquakes: Signs, Lessons and Precepts

Khutbah Topic

His Eminence Sheikh Saud Al-Shuraim –may Allah protect him– delivered this week’s Friday Khutbah titled: **Earthquakes: Signs, Lessons and Precepts** in which he said that earthquakes are signs from Allah (ﷻ). He explained that there are lessons to be learned from these signs by which Allah deters His slaves. Sheikh Al-Shuraim refuted the allegations that these signs are mere natural phenomena and that there is no wisdom behind them.

Part One

Praise be to Allah (ﷻ); *«There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.»* [Al-Shura: 11]. *«He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.»* [Al Furqan: 2]. He (Allâh) *«surrounds all things in (His) knowledge»* [Al Talaq: 12], and *«He (Allah) keeps count of all things (i.e. He knows the exact number of everything)»* [Al Jin: 28]. *«No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision. He is Al-Latîf (the Most Subtle and Courteous), Well-Acquainted with all things.»* [Al-An’am:103].

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone with no associate, and that Muhammad is His messenger and His chosen Prophet over all His creatures and the closest to Him; he conveyed the Message, and delivered the trust, and counseled the *Ummah*, and left it on the White Path the night of which is as bright as

daylight; none but the doomed would stray off it. May Allah send his *salat* and blessings upon him, his virtuous and pure family, his wives –the mothers of the faithful– his Companions, the *tabi'in*, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

Having said that, I urge you, servants of Allah, to fear Allah **﴿and believe in His Messenger (Muhammadﷺ), He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk (straight). And He will forgive you. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾**
[Al-Hadid: 28]

O servants of Allah!

People's lives are full of ups and downs, apprehension and aspiration, giving and taking as well as times of strength and times of weakness. Yet, amidst all this, people may be either aspiring for good and bliss or fearful of doom and gloom. Their fears and hopes are related to their faith, inner selves, minds, wealth and honour. They hope for guidance but fear temptation; they hope for the life of the soul but fear its unlawful death; they hope for sound mind both sensually and spiritually but fear mental disorders literally and figuratively, and the same applies to wealth and honour.

In their consideration of their Creator's universal laws, people hope for life-sustaining rain but fear devastating floods; they hope for auspicious and promising breeze but fear devastating tempestuous gales. Sagacious people are cognizant of some of the Creator's wisdom behind the way He is handling His universe, and the signs He is sending every now and then. Their belief in Allah, the Almighty, and their remembrance of His days and what happened to the nations before them make them stare in horror as a consequence of Allah's signs and seriously consider His universe-governing laws. In their minds, the moments of verifying old prophecies are re-enacted –these are the prophecies foretold by the most honest and the most truthful Prophet (ﷺ) concerning the colossal events that will take place towards the end of time.

Earthquakes are among Allah's signs –the vents foreseen by the divine revelation and the *Sunnah*.

In the Holy Quran Allah swears thus: **﴿By the sky (having rain clouds) which gives rain, again and again. [11], And the earth which has a fault. [12]. Verily, this (the Qur'ân) is the Word that separates (the truth from**

falsehood, and commands strict laws for mankind to cut the roots of evil). [13] And it is not a thing for amusement.﴾ [Al Tariq: 11-14]. He (ﷺ) also says, ﴿Say: "He has power to send torment on you from above or from under your feet, or to cover you with confusion in party strife....﴾ [Al-An'am: 65]. Qur'an exegetes interpret "torture from under the feet" as "sinking of the earth and earthquakes."

In his *Sahih*, Al-Bukhari narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Doomsday won't come until knowledge ceases, earthquakes multiply, and time passes flying ..."

Although during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) no earthquakes took place, Muslims knew about them from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). They believed in them and realized that they were signs from Allah (ﷻ) Who sends them upon whomever He wishes of His servants.

The recent recurrence of earthquakes is an express manifestation of the miraculous prophecies in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) as he mentioned the multiplicity of tremors towards the end of time.

Allah (ﷻ) swears by *﴿the earth which splits (with the growth of trees and plants)﴾*, a fact that was unknown 14 centuries ago. It was only discovered in the last century when scientists found a huge fault in the earth's crust deep in the ocean where most of the tremors take place. The Almighty's swearing by *﴿the earth which splits)﴾* evidences the miraculous nature of the Qur'an so that the atheists may realize how deviant their path is, and know that the geological fault they have discovered only recently was mentioned by Allah (ﷻ) fourteen centuries earlier, and what Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who could neither read nor write, was nothing but a divine inspiration and did not speak of his own desire. *﴿So believe in Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad ﷺ), who believes in Allâh and His Words [(this Qur'ân), the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allâh's Word: "Be!" - and he was, i.e. 'Îsâ (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)], and follow him so that you may be guided.﴾ [Al-A'raf: 158].*

The first recorded earthquake took place during the reign of Al-Faruq Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه). Safiyah Bint Abi 'Ubaid reported, *"The earthquake during the reign of Caliph Omar was so severe that our beds rattled. Omar addressed the people saying, 'You have committed a sin, therefore you deserved this punishment. If this ever happens again, I am leaving you.'* Another version reports that he said, *'That tremor was nothing but a punishment for your sin. I swear by Allah, if it recurs, I will never ever stay in this place.'*" [Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaiba]

O servants of Allah!

Earthquakes are signs of Allah (ﷻ) that He sends upon His land for a profound wisdom. It is He Who possesses decision of all matters before and after. He creates whatever He wishes and chooses. He is all Merciful. His mercy precedes His wrath. Rather, His mercy contains everything. However, this does not mean that we may rely on Allah's reward, and neglect His punishment. It does not mean relying on His mercy and ignoring His wrath, or relying on His forgiveness and forgetting His punishment. ***«Did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment by night while they were asleep? [97] Or, did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment in the forenoon while they were playing? [98] Did they then feel secure against the Plan of Allâh? None feels secure from the Plan of Allâh except the people who are the losers.»*** [99] [Al-A'raf: 97-99]. Al-Hassan Al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, *"A believer performs good deeds in fear and apprehension; a delinquent commits sins feeling safe."* That is, O servants of Allah, the one who is oblivious of Allah's vengeance.

Leading Muslim scholars have said that earthquakes are signs used by Allah (ﷻ) to deter His servants. They are on par with eclipses, etc. Allah sends them upon those people so that they may realize the bliss of the earth's stability, equilibrium, and steadiness. Cave-ins, tremors and quakes are trials and tests or punishments and admonitions such as those that annihilated Thamud and the cave-in that routed Qârûn (Korah). Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar said, *"Gales and whirlwinds cause fear of, and repentance to, Allah, but tremors and similar signs are more effective in this respect. The statement mentions that recurrence of earthquakes is a sign of Doomsday."*

When Kufa was shaken by an earthquake during the days of Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه), he said, *"O people! Your Lord is displeased with you, so accept His displeasure and repent to Him before He takes no notice as to which valley you perished in."*

Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz wrote about a tremor that shook the Levant; he said, *“Get out! And he who can give to charity, let him do so, for Allah Almighty says, **﴿Indeed whosoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islâmic Monotheism) shall achieve success, [14]. And remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Lord (worships none but Allâh), and prays (five compulsory prayers and Nawâfil – additional prayers).﴾ [15] [Al-A’la: 14-15]***

Therefore, servants of Allah, it is a tenet of Islam to take lessons from earthquakes. One is required to do good deeds explicitly so that Allah (ﷻ) may bring his servants benevolence, and one has to abandon evil doings explicitly so that Allah may spare them evil consequences.

Good deeds include repentance, asking for forgiveness, and giving charity. Some scholars have allowed the performance of prayers, though this is not a unanimous decision. “Ibn ‘Abbas –may Allah be pleased with them both– performed prayers in Basra when an earthquake struck,” [Narrated by Bayhaqi with an authentic chain of authority].

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ***“My Ummah (nation) is a recipient of (Allah's) mercy, it will not be tortured in the Hereafter; its torture in this life consists of (enduring) ordeals, earthquakes, and murder.”*** [Narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud with a good chain of authority]

What is meant is that the Muslim *Ummah* as such, not as separate individuals, will not be tortured.

Fear Allah, O servants of Allah! Seek His mercy and forgiveness and avoid His wrath; for Allah's mill grinds slow but sure; He prolongs an oppressor's life, but when He seizes him, He will never release him: ***﴿And Your Lord would never destroy the towns wrongfully, while their people were right-doers.﴾*** [Hûd: 117]

Therefore, hold tight to the righteousness of souls and societies, and do reform them; for Allah exempted the towns from destruction if true compassionate reform is implemented; some of the causes of destruction include the rejection of advice and the neglect of reform; Qârûn, for instance, was not caused to sink down into earth until he was addressed (by Allah): ***﴿Do not exult (with riches, being ungrateful to***

Allah))[Al-Qasas: 76]; but he became proud and arrogant; also, the earthquake did not strike the *Thamûd* (people) until they hated advice.

Allah has warned nations by saying: *«Such is the Seizure of your Lord when He seizes the (population of) the towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful, (and) severe.»* [102]. *«Indeed in that (there) is a sure lesson for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. That is a Day whereon mankind will be gathered together, and that is a Day when all (the dwellers of the heavens and the earth) will be present»* [Hûd: 102-103].

May Allah bless you and me by the *Qur'ân* and the *Sunnah* and make their verses and wise sayings beneficial to you and me! I say this and seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah for me, you, and the rest of the believers, males and females alike, of all sins and wrong-doings; therefore, ask Him for His forgiveness, and repent to Him. Verily, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving!

Part Two

Praise be to Allah for His blessings, and thanks are due to Him for His guidance and bounty.

Some of the *Sunan* (the laws within Allah's universe) that Allah has made include that some nations should be scared by wars, some others by the shortage of security, a third group (of nations) by lack of wealth, lives, and fruits, a fourth by trials, earthquakes, and the like.

The end result, O servants of Allah, is: *«but give glad tidings to As-Sâbirûn (the patient) [155] Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allâh we belong and, truly, to Him we shall return.»* [156] *«They are those on whom are the Salawât (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.»* [Al-Baqarah: 155-157]

Here, Allah (ﷻ) mentioned that calamities and scaring (of people) have yielded (positive) result with respect to those who are scared by them, for they would remember Allah and return to Him. Thus, they become entitled to His guidance. No era throughout history or place (country) across the universe is exempt from being frightened. Even during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the best of all ages and times, the sun was eclipsed. He said that Allah (ﷻ) uses it to scare His servants.

Verily, it is a deficiency in the way of thinking, in knowledge and faith to attribute the cause of earthquakes exclusively to natural and geological phenomena, denying the divine merits of wisdom and positivity attached to them or to believe that they (earthquakes) have nothing to do with faith and the subtleties involved therein; let alone those who make fun of anyone who reminds others of Allah's universal (related to the universe) signs and laws; he would be accused of backwardness and criticized for involving religion in everything. They (unbelievers) would say that the cause of earthquakes is too obvious; how, then, could earthquakes be an instance of punishment, trial, or testing?

In order for us to realize which of the previous two interpretations is closer to Allah's guidance (ﷻ), it has been confirmed in the *Two Sahihs* (the two books of Hadith by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim) via Zaid Bin Khalid Al-Juhani that the Prophet (ﷺ) lead his companions in the morning prayer at *Hudaibyah* after a rainy night, then said after the prayer: ***"Do you know what your Lord said? He said: today morning some of My servants are believers (in Me) while others are unbelievers; those who said: we were given rain by the bless of Allah and His mercy are believers in Me, unbelievers in planets; while those who said: we were given rain because of such and such a planet (star), are unbelievers in Me, believers in planets."***

This has been said about rain which is one of Allah's universal *Sunan* (laws), yet we are required to ask Him for it, though its apparent cause is known. Still you will find some people who will interpret its cause as being purely materialistic, disallowing their rotten minds to attribute to rain any significance in terms of admonition, reward, punishment, and trial.

This is no wonder, O servants of Allah, Allah (ﷻ) said: ***«Truly! Those, against whom the Word (Wrath) of your Lord has been justified, will not believe»*** [96]. ***« Even if every sign should come to them, until they see***

the painful torment.) [97]. ﴿ *And We sent not the signs except to warn, and to make them afraid (of destruction).*﴾ [Al-Isra: 96-59]

This being said, send (O you Muslims) –may Allah have mercy on you– your *Salat* (Graces, Honors and Mercy) upon Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (ﷺ), the best of Allah’s creatures, the most honest human being, and the sole possessor of the blessed basin and the only interceder in the Hereafter. For Allah ordered you to do so, saying: ﴿*O you who believe! Send your Salât on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmîc way of greeting(salutation i.e. As-Salâmu ‘Alaikum).*﴾ [Al Ahzab: 56]

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honors and Mercy), Peace and Blessing upon Your Prophet, Servant and Messenger, Muhammad! O Allah! Be pleased with his four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, on all of his Companions, on the *tabiîn* and those who righteously followed them till the Day of Judgment! O Allah! Be also pleased with us all, along with them, by Your Pardon and Generosity, O You, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! And fail polytheism and polytheists (who associate partners with You)! O Allah! Grant glory to Your religion, Your Book and the *Sunnah* of Your Prophet, and Your believing servants!

O Allah! Relieve the distressed among Muslims, alleviate their anguish, pay off the debts of those indebted, and cure our patients and theirs, with Your Mercy, O You, Most Merciful!

O Allah! Grant victory to our brothers who are oppressed and defenseless in their religion, wherever they may be! O Allah! Grant them victory against Your enemy and theirs; O Allah! Grant them victory against those who oppressed them sooner rather than later, You, The Lord of Majesty and Honour! O Allah! Grant them victory in Burma, Palestine, and Syria, against Your enemy and theirs, You, The Lord of Majesty and Honour!

O Allah! Make their enemies the lowest and turn their affairs into scourge and disaster! O Allah! Lord of Majesty and Honour!

O Allah shove away from us expensiveness, epidemics, (money) interest, earthquakes, trials, and the worst ordeals whether implicit or explicit, away from our country and the rest of Muslim countries, O Lord of the Worlds!, The Lord of Majesty and Honour!

O Allah! Grant us safety in our homelands, and set right our *Imams* and Guardians! O Allah! Make our leadership from among those who fear You, guard *taqwa* and seek Your satisfaction, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Guide our leader to say and do whatever You love and please, O You, the Living, the Everlasting! O Allah! Set right his retinue, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Honour!

O Allah! You are Allah, and there is no deity worthy of worship but You! You are the Self-sufficient while we (humans) are destitute! Do send down rain on us and save us from despair! O Allah! Send down rain on us and save us from despair! O Allah! We are but creatures of Yours, we implore You not to make our sins stand in the way between us and Your grace!

﴿... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 201]

Glorified be our Lord, the Lord of Honor and Power! You are free from what they wrongly attribute unto You! May peace be upon all the Messengers! And the last of our supplications is “praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!”