

The voice of nature

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The Quran states that belief in God does not emanate from external sources. It is integral to human nature. But this nature is double-sided, a trait which becomes apparent when disaster strikes. The chapter entitled Yunus (Jonah) of the Quran refers to this reality: "Whenever any trouble befalls a person, he prays to Us all the time, lying on his side, sitting or standing; but when We remove his trouble, he goes on his way as if he had never prayed to Us for the removal of his trouble. Thus it is that the doings of the transgressors are made to look fair to them" (10:12).

This means that when all is well, a man may deny God's existence, but when there is a calamity and he is unable to deal with it, he feels that he is helpless; his inner nature, consciously or unconsciously, calls out at that point to God. In times of crisis, he admits that there is a superior power and that without the

help of this power, he cannot hold himself on this earth.

A notable example of this is Ali bin abi-Talib, a companion of the Prophet, who admitted that he had discovered God in a moment of helplessness. This is a common experience. There are ups and downs in everyone's life. Everyone suffers some kind of unwanted situation; but such moments are moments of discovery. Helplessness is the surest way to find God.

This is true not only of those who deny the existence of God; even believers may have this kind of experience. It is but natural that a believer may at times feel that his conviction in God has weakened or has even been forgotten. But then he receives some kind of shock in his life, physically or mentally. This serves as a reminder of God, after which he rediscovers his Lord. His faith is restored.

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