

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

INDEED TO GOD WE BELONG AND INDEED TO HIM IS OUR RETURN - 'INNA-LILLAHI-WA'INNA-ILAYHI RAJIUN'

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Muslims oft cite the Arabic phrase '*inna-lillahi-wa'inna-ilayhi rajiun*' when news of a death reaches them. The phrase is usually imparted as a reference **to** the departed soul and translates as 'Indeed to God we belong and indeed to Him is our return'.

This phrase is used once in the Quran and is **not** used in the almost exclusive sense as it is used today for the news of death. Furthermore, the usage of the term in the Quran is for the living to acknowledge and contemplate their own departure and with a view to 'see the bigger picture' when any difficulty, affliction, misfortune or calamity (Arabic: *musibat*) befalls them.

The phrase has been used to instil patience and to acknowledge that despite the level of affliction or difficulty (whatever it may be), in the end, each soul will depart and return to the Creator and as such, the affliction is merely transitory.

Let us note the Quranic verse:

002:155-156

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits (of your toil); and give good news to the patient. Those who say when a misfortune (**Arabic: Musibatun**) strikes them: Indeed! to God we belong and indeed to Him is our return (**Arabic: inna-lillahi-wa'inna-ilayhi rajiun**)"

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۝

inna-lillahi-wa'inna-ilayhi rajiun
(read from right to left)

Illustration - Joseph Islam

The verse above and the common usage today are rather different. Indeed, any difficulty or affliction should be recognised as an earthly transitory test and it is in this context that one should say "inna-lillahi-wa'inna-ilayhi rajiun" with regards primarily themselves. Those that have departed, their records and tests on this earthly transitory plane have ceased.

Indeed, even with regards the departed soul the phrase '*inna-lillahi-wa'inna-ilayhi rajiun*' is perfectly apt. However, to unnecessarily restrict its usage exclusively for the news of another's death and not to make use of it for oneself in all earthly difficulties, losses and calamities, is an unnecessary restriction and not warranted by the Quran.

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