

SA'ADAH

*But as for those who [by virtue of their past deeds] will have been blessed with happiness
Quran 11:108*

IIUM PSYCHIATRY DEPARTMENT-RUN BULLETIN



Reflective Practice

BY ASSOC PROF DR NORA MAT ZIN & DR AHMAD NABIL MD ROSLI

There have been many instances in the Quran where we are enjoined to reflect the experiences of this life.

The word **Read in the Name of Your Lord** in Surah al Alaq is not merely an encouragement to start reading books rather more importantly to read **His Signs** which are present in ourselves and in the universe.

In order to do this we have to strive and prepare ourselves with a pure and open heart in order to receive the Truth. *Self-conceit* ie *I am better than him*, is one of the abominable trait that hinders one from gaining true knowledge.

Start with admitting our weakness vulnerability. Only through this, we can see our needs and work for improvement. For the beginning, ask ourselves the following questions:

What it is?

Describe a specific problem, encounter, result, feeling, or response that we had or currently having.

So what?

Relate the meaning of it to ourselves. What have we learnt about ourselves; thoughts, attitudes, strengths or weakness, and connection with others

What is next?

Identify what can we do internally and externally to improve ourselves.

Let's get started!

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ALONG CAME THE FLOOD

An experiential article, detailing the experiences and reflections of the writer during the recent flood crises

BY DR HIJAZ RIDZWAN

Prologue

The rain that poured down was like any other rain one would expect during the monsoon season. The only difference was that it continued to rain heavily for three days in a row. That morning, our three year old daughter performed in a concert to celebrate the end of her playschool year. We dined heartily, with not a single clue of what was to come.

When it rains, it pours...

We knew it was coming. What we didn't know was how bad it was going to be. The kids were delighted that we allowed them to bathe in the rain. The floods are a yearly event. It had never significantly affected us before. After all, our house was on high ground. Or so we thought.

***No calamity befalls anyone
except by Allah's will. And
whoever has faith in Allah, He
will rightly guide their hearts
through adversity. And Allah
has perfect knowledge of all
things***

Al-Quran 64:11



The Forced Humility Amidst Vulnerability

When it came, it came swiftly. Water was surrounding us from all angles. My heart sank when the flood started seeping through the doors and into my house. And at that point, it seemed like it was the worse thing that could happen. A sacred border had been breached. The house was no longer safe.

Unfortunately, things only got worse, as the water kept rising. My wife and I were furiously trying to save what we could. Although deep down, we knew that our efforts were rather futile. There was a feeling of helplessness while we were wading through the furniture, at one point pushing the floating fridge out of the way. But we could not bear the thought of letting our hard earned worldly possessions be destroyed by this uninvited fiendish guest.

But alas, our efforts were mostly in vain. We were forced to admit defeat

The Delusion of Being in Control

There were certain moments of complacency, a fugue-like state as I moved along slowly without purpose, almost willing the water to subside. As the water was quickly filling up the house, almost cutting off access to the ground floor, I started to realize the ramifications if my family did not evacuate soon. We had to leave, or risk being cut off from any access, or worse; hanging on to the roof waiting for help.

All emergency services were swamped with distress calls including from our own family. It would be pessimistic to say the least in presuming that help would arrive anytime soon.

The power had been cut. It was pitch dark except for the dim light from our dying phones. The air stank of muddy water. I could hear the neighbour's guard dog barking and whining. It was trapped, but so were we.

I felt helpless. Powerless. Resigned.



The Good Samaritan

Help did eventually arrive, albeit in the most unexpected circumstances.

A good samaritan is defined as a person who does good deeds out of compassion without expectation of any form of reward. It was a term coined based on stories from the Gospel of Luke, early in the 1600s.

Our samaritan arrived in his creaky old boat. He refused to share anything other than his first name, adamantly dismissing my requests for his contact number.

"I have a boat. Many others do not. I have a responsibility to save other people's lives.."

"You have to be brave. We are going to have to swim a bit. Just hold on and try not to move too much," I explained to my kids.

Staring at death in the face

"The currents are too strong, you have to swim out," he cried from his boat. It was a daunting prospect. We had three small children to think of.

"You have to be brave. We are going to have to swim a bit. Just hold on and try not to move too much," I explained to my kids.

I carried them one by one to the boat. My heart was beating furiously, willing them to hold on as tight as they could.

I heard a scream. I looked back. It was my wife.

She holding on for her life to the boat, struggling to pull herself up. The currents were pulling her away, which made it more difficult.

I heard a second scream. It was my eldest son, who was bravely waiting alone in the dark cold water for me to bring him to the boat. He had lost his nerve and was shouting out my name, probably scared because I had left him for too long.

"I'm still here. Stay there, I'll be back for you soon," I shouted, hoping that my voice would ease his fears.

I had to leave him and save my wife. The currents were unforgiving. She was hanging on, but only just. With the little adrenaline left in me, I pushed her up onto the boat.

At the end of all the drama, we were saved....

Dealing with Trauma

"We don't have anymore things because of the flood," said my eldest son.

"And since ALL of our toys are gone, you HAVE to buy us new ones," echoed his twin.

"I got to ride on a boat" screamed the little one excitedly.

Children are resilient creatures. Their innate ability to find silver linings amidst the cloudy storm is nothing short of amazing.



Are Psychiatrists Allowed to Cry?

Helping patients to deal with loss is a staple part of being a psychiatrist. Most of us are able to 'autopilot' the basic concepts of coping, with minute alterations catered and individualized for each patient.

Yet things aren't as easy as it seems when one is sitting on the other side of the consultation room.

Five Stages of Grief

Kubler and Ross never mentioned the non-linearity and interchangeability between the stages of grief.

There were moments that felt like acceptance had been achieved, only to sink back to sadness triggered by some nonchalant reminder of the magnitude of loss, such as a torn photo of our firstborn twins sticking out of the mud.

There was a deceptive sense of catharsis seeing the house cleaned and emptied of all the ruined furniture, and the immediate oscillation into anxiety at the vast emptiness that was once filled with memories.

Acceptance

"How much is your estimated loss?" asked the policeman typing up my flood report.

I had never really thought much about all the possessions that I had lost. My family was safe. So instead, I was grateful for what I DIDN'T lose.

***"And to Allah belongs
whatever is in the heavens
and whatever is in the
earth.."***

Al-Quran 53:31

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Garden of Knowledge and Virtue

LEADING THE WAY

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