

# **Disaster Preparedness in Islam**

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## **1. Background of the Study: Natural Disasters in Pakistan**

Pakistan is located in a region that is prone to a number of natural disasters, such as droughts, earthquakes and floods. In the coastal areas cyclones occur frequently. The latest earthquake in 2005 in the north of the country with a magnitude of 7.6 killed more than 80 000 people and left 3,5 million homeless. Other disasters such a cyclone in 2007 destroyed infrastructure and harmed 2,5 million people. Against this background it becomes clear that sustainable livelihood and disaster preparedness and response is closely interlinked in Pakistan. There is an urgent need for early warning mechanisms, appropriate action to increase awareness and knowledge of the population of risk management and preventive action and the institutionalization of planning and coordination mechanisms to have measures at hand that reduce the destruction of social and physical infrastructure in case of disaster.<sup>1</sup>

The GTZ project “Disaster preparedness and response in North-West Pakistan” is supporting national institutions to improve planning and coordination mechanisms dealing with disasters by consulting ministries and governmental agencies to prepare appropriate disaster management plans. According to UNDP and to the experiences of the GTZ there is a need for research on traditional and current coping mechanisms and on sustainable community approaches to disaster reduction.<sup>2</sup> This compilation of some of the relevant Quranic verses and some of the Prophet’s sayings (Hadith) are aiming at contributing to this need. This compilation is not exhaustive but rather provides a rough overview, which could be expanded and elaborated upon in-depth in a second step.

## **2. Methodology of the Study**

In order to extract the most suitable and related verses from the Quran as well as important Hadith from accessible and translated Hadith compilations (for this study: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da’ud and Sunan Ibn Maja, explanations see below) keywords that are related to disaster issues

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation Report Cyclone YEMYIN and Floods Response 2007, page 4

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.undp.org/cpr/disred/english/regions/asia/pakistan.htm>  
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were researched. The difficulty of this methodology was that the occurrence of these keywords was very low and that verses found did not give sufficient information that would be useful in the context of the GTZ project. Therefore the keywords to be researched were extended, which proved to be a necessary shift in methodology to come to appropriate results. The next step consisted of a compiling both Quranic verses and Hadith and the attempt to comment each keyword. The comments however are based on the experience and the knowledge of the author and do not attempt to interpret the Quran, (this task should be done by an Islamic scholar), but try to connect the verses and Hadith to the context of disaster preparedness and response. The translated version of the Quran used here can be found at <http://www.mideastweb.org>. The Hadith database was found at the University of Southern California <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/reference/searchhadith.html>.

### **3. Basic Information on Islam in Pakistan**

Islam is the official religion of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where 96% - 97% of the total population is Muslim. The majority of Muslims in Pakistan are Sunnis, with a significant Shi'a population (the second largest in the world after Iran).<sup>3</sup> Sufism is popular and widespread. The majority of Pakistani Sunnis belong to the Hanafite school, which is one of four major schools (*madhhabs*) of Islamic jurisprudence. Other Islamic movements respectively small branches of Sunni Islam are the Ahmadiyah, the Deoband, the Barlevi and since the late 70s the Wahabi movement which originates in Saudi Arabia. The Shi'ites are subdivided in Ismailis and Ithna Ashariyyah (the twelve's).

As there is no priesthood in Sunni Islam there is no hierarchical order or one authority for the Muslims to follow. The collective word for Muslim scholars (whether trained or informally appointed by the community) is *ulama*; Sufis call their knowledgeable head *pir*, formally trained religious scholars are called mullah or *mawlana*. It is important to take this fact into regard, when approaching Muslim notables for cooperation.

The Quran, the holy book of the Muslims plays the most important role for the findings and the teachings of scholars. The Quran is the basis for the Sharia, the guideline of daily life. The deeds and sayings of the prophet (Hadith) form the other pillar, which is needed to develop rules and regulations for the community and the individual and to interpret the Quran. There are

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<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Pakistan)



different compilations of Hadith for both Sunnis and Shiites transmitted by recognized scholars from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. For the Sunnis these are Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Da'ud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Sughra al-Nasa'i and Sunan Ibn Maja, of which the first two are mostly used when citing Hadith. As mentioned above most Sunnis in Pakistan belong to the Hanafi school of thought, which is regarded as the most liberal of the four schools. The predominant way of interpreting the Quran in the Hanafi tradition is reasoning about precedent similar cases and drawing a logical consequence for nowadays questions (analogical reasoning – Qiyas). Furthermore the consensus of Islamic scholars (*Ijma'*) is deemed to be most important for the exegesis of the Quran. It is useful to keep in mind that the principle of *Ijma'* entails the chance to incorporate local traditions into Islamic principles, which makes the exegesis of the Quran flexible<sup>4</sup> and also gives a chance to negotiate innovative approaches to disaster preparedness.

#### **4. Disaster and disaster preparedness in the Quran**

The following paragraph is structured as follows: First the keyword or the topic researched is mentioned followed by the verse and a short commentary. Many verses in the Quran describe disasters in a different context than the one that is deemed to be useful for practical work in disaster preparedness. They are related to the refusal to obey God and to doubt in the message of the Prophet Mohammad or to descriptions of the judgement day. Verses do not offer other solutions to this kind of disasters but to start believing in God. It has to be kept in mind while working with fragments from the verses that some of the statements can only be fully understood in the historical context.

##### **(1) Keyword: Disaster as a punishment for unbelievers or as test for believers**

*Quran 2:18-20*

*Or another example is that of a dark storm-cloud in the sky charged with thunder and lightning. They press their fingers to their ears at the sound of each stunning thunderclap for fear of death: Allah is encircling the unbelievers from all sides. The lightning terrifies them as if it was going to snatch away their eyesight; whenever it flashes they walk on; when it becomes dark, they stand still. And if Allah wanted He could have totally taken away their hearing and their sight; for Allah has power over everything.*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-hanafi.htm>

**Comment:** This and other verses are related to the almightiness of God, who punishes the unbelievers with disasters. These verses could be understood as a description of a physical disaster but also as an allegory to how the unbelievers could feel when punished by God for their deeds.

*Quran 2: 155-157*

*We shall surely test your steadfastness with fear and famine, with loss of property, life and produce. Give good news to those who endure with patience; who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return." Such are the people on whom there are blessings and Mercy from Allah; and they are the ones that are rightly guided.*

**Comment:** Patience and trust in Allah when facing disasters is one of the key values in Islam.

*Quran 57:3-4*

*He knows all that enters the earth and all that emerges from it, all that comes down from Heaven and all that ascends to it; and He is with you wherever you are. Allah is aware of all your actions. To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all affairs go back to Allah for decision.*

**Comment:** Again God is the cause for everything that occurs, including disasters. On the other hand he is the one to provide remedy, if Muslims follow his rules (e.g. respect, mutual help, responsibility for oneself etc., see below). (This verse could be used to justify negligence and deny own responsibility!)

## **(2) Keyword: Responsibility for oneself**

*Quran 2:44*

*Would you ask others to be righteous and forget to practice it yourselves? Even though you read your Holy Book? Have you no sense?*

**Comment:** The Quran emphasizes that responsibility for oneself is more important than to correct others. The knowledge of Islam and the Quran should provide enough reason for a Muslim to practice what he is asked to do instead of pointing to others.

*Quran 2:141*

*That was a nation who has already passed away. They are responsible for what they did and you are for what you do, you shall not be questioned about their deeds.*

**Comment:** Again responsibility for own deeds is stressed in this verse. It also includes that every new generation is asked to find new approaches to challenges instead of following blindly, what others have done.

*Quran 2:170*

*When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has revealed." They reply: "Nay! We will follow what our forefathers practiced." Well! Even if their forefathers had no sense at all and lacked guidance?*

**Comment:** The Quran stresses the importance of own judgement and the value of contemporary knowledge that can be distinguished from previous knowledge. By no means people have to follow traditions, if they are not suitable to tackle a contemporary challenge. The verse provides backup for innovation and change.

### **(3) Keyword: Fairness and mutual respect**

*Quran 2:188*

*Do not misappropriate one another's property unjustly, nor bribe the judges, in order to misappropriate a part of other people's property, sinfully and knowingly.*

**Comment:** The morale of the Quran is based on mutual respect and fairness as well as an independent judiciary. This verse could be an important background support for the setting up and cooperation of institutions working in disaster response, for fair and just procedures and against corruption.

*Quran 4:135*

*O believers! Stand firm for justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even though it be against yourselves, your parents or your relatives. It does not matter whether the party is rich or poor - Allah is well wisher of both. So let not your selfish desires swerve you from justice. If you distort your testimony or decline to give it, then you should remember that Allah is fully aware of your actions.*



**Comment:** Justice applies to all regardless of sex, kinship, personal interests or wealth. The Quran emphasizes that it is not enough to care only for one's own interest and own family and neglect the responsibility for the community.

*Quran 49:11-13*

*O believers! Let no men laugh at other men who may perhaps be better than themselves; and let no woman laugh at another woman, who may perhaps be better than herself. Do not defame through sarcastic remarks about one another, nor call one another by offensive nicknames. It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after being a believer, and those who do not repent are the ones who are the wrongdoers. O believers! Avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another (to say something about another behind ones back that if one hears it, dislikes it). Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would abhor it. Fear Allah; for Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, Merciful. O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous. Allah is All-Knowledgeable, All-Aware.*

**Comment:** Mutual respect should be the basis of relationships between human beings.

#### **(4) Keyword: Willingness to help one another**

*Quran 2:195*

*Give generously for the cause of Allah and do not cast yourselves into destruction by your own hands. Be charitable: Allah loves those who are charitable*

*Quran 2:215*

*They ask you what they should spend in charity. Say: "Whatever you spend with a good heart, give it to parents, relatives, orphans, the helpless, and travellers in need." Whatever good you do, Allah is aware of it.*

**Comment:** The Quran mentions the need for charitable activity for the needy. The helpless, orphans and travelers could also be understood as refugees or internally displaced due to a disaster, which should receive help.

Quran 2:274

*Those who spend their wealth in charity by night and day, secretly and openly, they will have their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear or to regret.*

**Comment:** Help for others does not need to be declared or documented to be of value, which means that the public visibility is not the most important but the intention with which charitable activities are done.

Quran 2:261-264

*The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain that sprouts into seven ears, each bearing one hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wishes. Allah has boundless knowledge. Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah and do not follow their charity with reminders of their generosity or injure the feeling of the recipient, shall get their reward from their Lord; they shall have nothing to fear or to regret. Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing. O believers! Do not make your charity worthless by reminders of your generosity or by injury to the recipients feelings, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. Their parable is like a hard barren rock covered with a thin layer of soil; a heavy rain falls, leaving it just a bare stone. Such people will not gain any reward that they thought they had earned. Allah does not guide the unbelievers*

**Comment:** The verse points to an important issue, which is precaution and foresight. According to Quran prevention (here injury) is better than cure (here charity). Another issue pointed out here is that the ones who receive aid should not be regarded as lower than others.

Quran 59:9

*A share of the spoils shall also be given to those who made their abode in Medina (the Ansar) and believed even before the arrivals of the immigrants and love those who migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to them, and prefer those immigrants over themselves, even though they themselves are poor. In fact those who are saved from the greediness of hearts, are the ones who will achieve true success.*

**Comment:** Although this verse can only be understood in its historical context (the Ansar were the first to accept Islam and to give the Prophet Mohammad refuge, when he left

Mekka) the verse illustrates how people should deal with refugees or others who had to migrate. Even though the host country might be poor it is recommended to be helpful and supportive.

*Quran 93:6-10*

*Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did He not find you lost and gave you guidance? Did He not find you poor and made you self-sufficient? Therefore, do not treat the orphan with harshness and do not chide away the beggar*

**Comment:** Mutual help is important for people to gain back their ability to be independent after a loss (in this case the orphan who lost the parents, but applied in the disaster context it could be the loss of livelihood). This verse can be understood as a request to help people to become self-sufficient.

#### **(5) Keyword: Righteousness for Men and Women**

*Quran 4:124*

*But the one who does righteous deeds, whether a male or a female - provided he or she is a believer - shall enter paradise and will not be harmed a speck.*

**Comment:** The verse supports clearly that men and women are equal before God if they do righteous deeds. This is deemed important for practical work, when it comes to gender-based differences in disaster preparedness and response.

#### **(6) Keyword: Disaster as a part of judgement day**

*Quran 79:27-46*

*O mankind, is your creation harder than the heaven that He built? He raised its canopy and fashioned it to perfection, He gave darkness to the night and brightness to the day. After that He spread out the earth, then from it He brought forth its water and its pasture, set its mountains, and made them beneficial for you and your cattle. When the great disaster will strike, the Day when man will call to mind all that he had striven for. When hell shall be placed in full view of all, then he who had rebelled and preferred the life of this world shall have his abode in hell. But*



*he who had feared standing before his Lord and curbed his evil desires shall have his home in paradise. They ask you about the hour: "When will it come?" But it is not for you to know or tell its timing. Only your Lord knows when it will come. You are but a Warner to him who fears it. On that Day when they shall see it, they shall feel as if they had stayed in this world only one evening or one morning.*

*Quran 82:1-19*

*When the heaven will cleft asunder; when the stars will scatter; when the oceans will be torn apart; and when the graves will be laid open: then each soul shall know what it has sent forth and what it left behind. O man! What has lured you away from your gracious Lord, Who created you, fashioned you, proportioned you, and molded you in whatever form He pleased? Nay! In fact you deny the Day of Judgment! You should know that guardian angels have indeed been appointed over you, who are noble writers, they know all that you do. On that Day the righteous will surely be in bliss; while the wicked will indeed go to hell, they shall enter it on the Day of Judgment, and they shall not be able to escape from it. What will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? It will be the Day when no one shall have the power to do anything for another: for, on that Day, Allah shall keep the entire command to Himself.*

*Quran 99:1-8*

*When the earth will be shaken to her utmost convulsion, and the earth shall bring out all her inner burdens, man shall say: "What is happening to her?" On that Day she shall report whatever had happened on her, for your Lord shall have commanded her to do so. On that Day men shall proceed in sorted out groups to be shown their 'Book of Deeds.' Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it there, and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it there.*

**Comment:** These verses are clearly related to judgement day that is envisioned as a disastrous day for those who have not been following God's rules. The verses are not useful to be used in disaster preparedness and response but have to be mentioned for the sake of completeness and to understand attitudes of some Muslims who interpret disaster as God's will.

## **(7) Keyword: Accept advice from others**

*Quran 7:79*

*So Salih left them, saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the message for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel, but ye love not good counsellors!"*

**Comment:** In the Quran there are many similar verses about people who do not listen to God's or the Prophets' advices, which is seen as a mistake/disaster. For nowadays this could be understood as a request to listen to knowledgeable counsellors and accept their advises. In the context of disaster preparedness it is a useful argumentation to ask the population to support institutions and their disaster preparedness plans.

## **5. Disaster and Disaster Preparedness in Hadith**

### **(1) Keyword: disaster as allegory for fight/quarrel**

*Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 3, Number 114: Narrated 'Ubaidullah bin 'Abdullah:*

*Ibn 'Abbas said, "When the ailment of the Prophet became worse, he said, 'Bring for me (writing) paper and I will write for you a statement after which you will not go astray.' But 'Umar said, 'The Prophet is seriously ill, and we have got Allah's Book with us and that is sufficient for us.' But the companions of the Prophet differed about this and there was a hue and cry. On that the Prophet said to them, 'Go away (and leave me alone). It is not right that you should quarrel in front of me.'" Ibn 'Abbas came out saying, "It was most unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing that statement for them because of their disagreement and noise. (Note: It is apparent from this Hadith that Ibn 'Abbas had witnessed the event and came out saying this statement. The truth is not so, for Ibn 'Abbas used to say this statement on narrating the Hadith and he had not witnessed the event personally.*

*Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Number 717, Narrated Ubaidullah bin 'Abdullah:*

*Ibn Abbas said, "When Allah's Apostle was on his deathbed and there were some men in the house, he said, 'Come near, I will write for you something after which you will not go astray.' Some of them ( i.e. his companions) said, 'Allah's Apostle is seriously ill and you have the (Holy) Quran. Allah's Book is sufficient for us.' So the people in the house differed and started disputing. Some of them said, 'Give him writing material so that he may write for you something after which you will not go astray.' while the others said the other way round. So when their talk and differences increased, Allah's Apostle said, "Get up." Ibn Abbas used to say, "No doubt, it was very unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing for them that writing because of their differences and noise."*

**Comment:** Like in the Quran the Hadith perceive a certain behaviour as disaster. In this case shouting, quarrelling and not listening to each other is regarded as disastrous. For disaster preparedness this Hadith could be used as a proof that Islam enforces cooperation and the acceptance of advice and rejects differences in emergency situations.

## **(2) Keyword: Behaviour in dangerous situations**

*Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 30, Number 100, Narrated Abu Huraira:*

*Allah's Apostle said, "Verily, Belief returns and goes back to Medina as a snake returns and goes back to its hole (when in danger)."*

**Comment:** The Hadith is referring to Mohammad's flight to Medina when the inhabitants of Mekka threatened him because of his message. Transferring it to disaster preparedness it is suggested to construct shelters and places to hide as a means to prepare for the case of disaster.

*Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 71, Number 665e, Narrated Abu Huraira:*

*Allah's Apostle said: The cattle (sheep, cows, camels, etc.) suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle, (or said: "Do not put a patient with a healthy person ). " (as a precaution).*



**Comment:** There is a link to health in this Hadith. Whenever a dangerous situation comes up and some of the population is effected by it is important to act precautions so that the destruction respectively the health hazards are limited as far as possible.

### **(3) Keyword: Help for others**

*Muslim, Book 005, Number 2181:*

*Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Of the dinar you spend as a contribution in Allah's path, or to set free a slave, or as a sadaqa given to a needy, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family.*

*Abu Da'ud, Book 19, Number 2961: Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab:*

*(...) If anything remained after making the contribution of his family, he divided it among the poor Emigrants.*

**Comment:** The help for the family is priority before the care for others. Emigrants and the poor have to be supported after the need for the own family is fulfilled.

### **(4) Keyword: People dying in disasters are martyrs**

*Muslim, Book 020, Number 4705:*

*The Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: The martyrs are of five kinds: one who dies of plague; one who dies of diarrhoea (or cholera) ; one who is drowned; one who is buried under debris and one who dies fighting in the way of Allah.*

### **(5) Keyword: Transparent information sharing**

*Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 74, Number 305: Narrated 'Abdullah:*

*The Prophet said, "When you are three persons sitting together, then no two of you should hold secret counsel excluding the third person until you are with some other people too, for that would grieve him."*

**Comment:** It is important to share information transparently and not withhold it from others. The statement asks for the reflection of own behavior and fairness. It could be understood as the request to share knowledge

**(6) Keyword: Proactive engagement and responsibility**

*Ibn Maja Book 54, Number 54.17.43:*

*Malik related to me from Nafi from Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "When a slave gives good counsel to his master and worships Allah correctly, he has his reward twice over. "*

**Comment:** The Quran asks for proactive involvement and responsibility despite existing hierarchies and encourages the voiceless to have a voice.

**(7) Keyword: Distribution of food in times of scarcity**

*Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 44, Number 670: Narrated Jabala:*

*"While at Medina we were struck with famine. Ibn Az-Zubair used to provide us with dates as our food. Ibn 'Umar used to pass by us and say, "Don't eat two dates together at a time as the Prophet has forbidden eating two dates together at a time (in a gathering) unless one takes the permission of one's companion brother."*

**Comment:** In times of scarcity people have to share what they have and be precautions on how to use what is available. The statement requests foresight in times of scarcity.

**(8) Keyword: Help for one another**

*Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 64, Number 265: Narrated Abu Huraira:*

*The Prophet said, "The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a Mujahid (warrior) who fights for Allah's Cause, or like him who performs prayers all the night and fasts all the day."*



### **(9) Keyword: Responsibility for property**

*Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 6: Narrated Al-Mughira:*

*The Prophet said, "Allah has forbidden you (..) to withhold (what you should give) or demand (what you do not deserve), (...) or waste your property."*

*Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 64, Number 278: Narrated Abu Huraira:*

*The Prophet said, "The righteous among the women of Quraish are those who are kind to their young ones and who look after their husband's property."*

**Comment:** Muslims (in the second Hadith women) are asked to look after property and not deal with it in an irresponsible manner. (Women are mentioned because men used to go to war and were away from home.) Linking this verse to disaster preparedness it would mean that wasting property or a lack of responsibility for property is unacceptable. This could apply to public property as well, such as the environment, streets, hospitals etc. who have to be respected and looked after.

### **(10) Keyword: Responsibility for the life of every living being**

*Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 38: Narrated Abu Huraira:*

*Allah's Apostle said, "While a man was walking on a road. he became very thirsty. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank (of its water) and then came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself "This dog is suffering from the same state of thirst as I did." So he went down the well (again) and filled his shoe (with water) and held it in his mouth and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him." The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He said, "(Yes) There is a reward for serving any animate (living being) ."*



**Comment:** The statement asks from the Muslim to treat every living being with respect and protect it from harm. This applies not only to animals but to nature and environment as well.

**(11) Keyword: Acting foresightedly**

*Muslim, Book 032, Number 6340:*

*Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: A person while walking along the path saw the branches of a tree lying there. He said: By Allah, I shall remove these from this so that these may not do harm to the Muslims.*

**Comment:** According to this Hadith it is important to act foresightedly and to have precautionous attention towards possible harm. For disaster preparedness this Hadith is key for planning mechanisms.

**(12) Keyword: Hoarding of foodstuff is forbidden**

*Muslim, Book 010, Number 3910:*

*Ma'mar (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: He who hoards is a sinner. It was said to Sa'id (b. al-Musayyib): You also hoard. Sa'id said: Ma'mar who narrated this hadith also hoarded.*

*Muslim, Book 010, Number 3911:*

*Ma'mar b. Abdullah reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: No one hoards but the sinner.*

**Comment:** The statement refers to greed and to the hoarding of wealth of a few people while others live in misery. It could be understood as a request to distribute resources fairly. In disaster situations this is important to avoid that goods distributed for relief are captured by some people and do not reach the other needy (or are sold on the black market.)

### (13) Keyword: Seeking knowledge

*Ibn Maja, Book 59, Number 59.1.1:*

*Yahya related to me from Malik that he heard that Luqman al-Hakim made his will and counselled his son, saying, "My son! Sit with the learned men and keep close to them. Allah gives life to the hearts with the light of wisdom as Allah gives life to the dead earth with the abundant rain of the sky."*

**Comment:** This is one of many Hadith that ask the Muslims to seek more knowledge. For disaster preparedness this would be an entry point for any kind of training or capacity building as education has a traditionally high value in Islam.

## **6. Conclusion**

There is a relevance of both Quran and Hadith for disaster preparedness and response. Both sources stress the responsibility of the individual for himself, his family and the community as a whole. Seeking and sharing contemporary knowledge, even if it contradicts traditions of the forefathers and being open to knowledgeable counselling is mentioned very often. Precaution and planning for crisis is also tackled and many verses and Hadith ask the believer to take appropriate steps to face these challenges. Respect, mutual help and the special vulnerability of migrants/refugees and the poor are stressed and the Muslims are asked to give support. Human life has an important value as well as every other living being. Although the Quran and the Hadith have to be interpreted in a historical context many verses can be "translated" into nowadays needs for facing the challenge to prepare for natural disasters and to handle the consequences of it. However, direct guidelines on how exactly to protect human life and how to change ignorant attitudes towards the environment are not given and still need discussion with Islamic scholars.





