

## Psychological Approaches to Natural Calamities in The Quran: An Analysis of Coping Strategies

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### Abstract

This paper aims to explore the psychological approaches and coping strategies that the Qur'an offers in response to natural calamities. This research seeks to shed light on the wisdom and guidance provided by the Qur'an to help individuals and communities navigate the psychological challenges posed by natural disasters. The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to identify Qur'anic verses that address natural calamities and their associated psychological aspects. Additionally, it investigates the coping mechanisms and psychological resilience strategies advocated within the Qur'anic text. The findings of this study may have practical implications for individuals and communities facing natural calamities in contemporary times. Finally, individuals can discover solace, strength, and resilience in the face of adversity through the guidance provided by the Qur'an. Moreover, this research contributes to the emerging field of disaster psychology by offering a unique perspective from the Qur'an and providing coping strategies for natural disasters.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Natural calamities, such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and droughts, have historically brought immense suffering to individuals and communities worldwide. The psychological approaches to natural disasters in the Quran involve a blend of spiritual guidance and practical coping strategies that aim to foster resilience and psychological security. Razzaq, N. A. (2021). Natural disasters can result in both immediate and long-term psychological distress, often leading to higher rates of mental health issues like PTSD and depression. Newton-Howes et al., (2018). These events often result in significant psychological distress, including fear, anxiety, grief, and trauma. Various factors, including cultural, social, and religious influences, shape the way people cope with such adversity. In the context of Islam, faith plays a primary role in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to natural disasters. The Quran, as the central religious text in Islam, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how to psychologically and spiritually navigate adversity. It offers specific guidance on coping with calamities in a way that promotes resilience, emotional stability, and spiritual growth.

This paper examines the psychological approaches to coping with natural calamities as outlined in the Quran, with a focus on the coping strategies prescribed for believers. Quranic key strategies include reliance on Allah (tawakkul), test (bala), patience (sabr), prayer (salah), gratitude (shukr), and social solidarity are central to this analysis. Çınaroğlu, M. (2024). These teachings provide a distinctive approach to coping, where adversity is interpreted as a divine test meant to strengthen one's faith and character. By examining these coping mechanisms, the paper seeks to bridge the understanding between Islamic teachings and contemporary psychological perspectives, highlighting how spiritual coping mechanisms contribute to mental well-being during crises (Al-Ajarmeh, 2021).

The Quran's approach to coping with natural disasters is not only rooted in theological principles but also has significant psychological dimensions. This study aims to show how these Quranic teachings resonate with modern psychological theories of resilience and coping. The

analysis of Quranic verses provides a framework for integrating faith-based strategies into broader psychological coping mechanisms. In doing so, the paper enhances our understanding of how individuals and communities, particularly within an Islamic context, can manage the emotional and psychological consequences of natural disasters (El Azayem & Hedayat-Diba, 1994).

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- i. To explore how the Quran provides psychological approaches and coping strategies for handling natural disasters.
- ii. Natural calamities cause immense psychological distress.
- iii. The Quran offers spiritual guidance and resilience-building strategies.
- iv. This study bridges Islamic teachings with disaster psychology.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study aims to explore the psychological approaches to natural calamities in the Quran, specifically focusing on the coping strategies embedded within Islamic teachings. The research methodology consists of a qualitative approach involving thematic analysis of Quranic texts, supplemented by secondary sources such as Islamic theological literature and relevant psychological studies on coping mechanisms.

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research follows descriptive and interpretive design, employing a qualitative content analysis to examine relevant Quranic verses and interpret them within the framework of psychological coping strategies. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of the religious, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of coping as presented in the Quran.

### **3.2 DATA COLLECTION**

**Primary Sources:** The Quran serves as the primary source of data. Selected verses related to calamities, tests and trials, patience (sabr), reliance on Allah, prayer, hardship, gratitude, community support and trust in God, are identified for in-depth analysis.

**Secondary Sources:** Islamic exegeses (tafsir), such as those by Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi, and Al-Tabari, are consulted to provide contextual understanding and interpretation of the relevant Quranic verses. In addition, psychological literature on trauma, stress, resilience, and religious coping is reviewed to create a comprehensive understanding of the psychological dimensions of these teachings.

### **3.3 SELECTION OF VERSES**

The verses for analysis are selected based on keywords and themes related to natural calamities, human response to disasters, and divine guidance during times of hardship. Specific attention is paid to concepts of: Tests and Trials, Patience (sabr), Faith in divine wisdom, Prayer and spiritual connection, Trust (tawakkul).

These themes are identified by reviewing key chapters and verses, such as those in Surah Al-Baqarah, Surah At-Tawbah, Surah Al-Hud, Surah Al-Mu'minun, Surah As-Sura, Surah Al-Ankabut and Surah Al-Hadid, where calamities and human responses are addressed.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The research employs thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the selected Quranic verses. The analysis proceeds as follows

**Identification of Themes:** Quranic verses are categorized according to recurring themes related to coping strategies, such as tests and trials, patience, prayer, hope and optimism, gratitude, community support and reliance on Allah.

**Interpretation:** Each theme is interpreted using classical Islamic exegeses to ensure an accurate and culturally relevant understanding of the concepts.

**Integration with Psychological Theory:** The Quranic coping strategies are then integrated with psychological frameworks, particularly theories on trauma, stress, and resilience, to demonstrate their relevance to psychological well-being during natural calamities.

### **3.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

To further contextualize the findings, the study conducts a comparative analysis between Quranic coping strategies and modern psychological approaches to dealing with trauma and disaster. This includes examining how Quranic principles align with concepts like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), resilience theory, and positive psychology, thereby highlighting the synergy between religious and psychological coping mechanisms.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Given the religious and spiritual nature of the research, ethical considerations are taken into account by ensuring that the interpretation of Quranic verses is consistent with mainstream Islamic scholarship and respectful of religious sensitivities. Additionally, the integration of psychological theories is done in a way that complements rather than conflicts with Islamic teachings.

## **4 FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Natural calamities, such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, and hurricanes, are events that can cause significant psychological distress. These events often lead to loss of life, property, and security, and can result in trauma, anxiety, and depression among survivors. In Islamic teachings, as expressed in the Quran, natural calamities are viewed as tests from Allah, and coping strategies are framed within a spiritual and psychological context that fosters resilience and emotional balance. This discussion examines psychological approaches to natural calamities as presented in the Quran, exploring how individuals are encouraged to cope through faith, patience, reliance on Allah, prayer, Shukr, hope, test, and community support.

### **4.1 NATURAL CALAMITIES AS TESTS AND TRIALS**

In the Quran, natural disasters are understood not merely as random occurrences but as trials from Allah meant to test the faith, patience, and endurance of believers. (Quran: 2:155) explicitly states, "Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere." This verse frames calamities as opportunities for growth, fostering an understanding that psychological resilience is built through facing adversity. For believers, understanding calamities as divine tests can provide a sense of meaning and purpose, reducing feelings of helplessness and despair.

Psychologically, when individuals perceive a traumatic event as having a higher purpose or meaning, it can alleviate distress and contribute to post-traumatic growth. Tedeschi & Calhoun, (2004). In the Islamic context, viewing natural disasters as tests encourages an acceptance of life's hardships, promoting emotional endurance. The Quran's emphasis on the transient nature of worldly difficulties and the ultimate reward in the Hereafter (Quran: 2:156) serves as a significant coping mechanism, fostering hope and perseverance during crises.

## 4.2 COPING THROUGH PATIENCE (SABR)

The Arabic word *sabr* means patience and originates from a root word that signifies stopping, detaining, or refraining. Al Jawziyyah (1997). Al-Jawziyyah stated that patience involves the ability to control oneself, prevent hopelessness in the community, refrain from complaints, and maintain composure during times of hardship. Fahm, A. O. (2019). In Islam, the aspect of patience emerges from the resilient behaviour portrayed by an individual. According to Islam, patience is the trust that Allah (SWT) will assist when a person faces difficulties, as long as they remain calm and steadfast in their endurance. Uyun Q., & Rumiani R. (2012). An emotional feeling that can eliminate the feeling of bitterness while still in a state of sadness. During times when sadness is deeply felt, the need for *Sabr* (patience) becomes even more critical. This is why patience holds a central place among the core values of Islam. Fahm, A. O. (2019). The Qur'an also stated: Verily! "I have rewarded them This day for their patience and constancy: they are indeed The ones that have achieved Bliss..." (Quran: 23:111).

Patience is a fundamental virtue of Islam. Patience is regarded as a noble virtue, as highlighted in the Quran, "But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs" (Quran:42:43). Schnitker, S. A., & Emmons, R. A. (2007). Islamic teachings also convey that Muslims should patiently await Allah's judgment, as emphasized in Surah Hud, "And be steadfast in patience; For verily God will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish." (Quran: 11:115). Schnitker, S. A., & Emmons, R. A. (2007).

The Quran places a strong emphasis on patience (*sabr*) as a critical psychological tool in coping with calamities. Patience, in this context, is not passive acceptance but an active form of endurance, requiring steadfastness in faith and the regulation of emotional responses to adversity. (Quran: 3:200) Commands, "O ye who believe! persevere in patience and constancy: vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear God; that ye may prosper." In psychological terms, patience can be equated to emotional regulation, a critical component of coping mechanisms.

People who practice emotional regulation are more capable of handling stress and anxiety effectively. Gross, J. J. (2002). The Quran promotes patience by encouraging believers to maintain hope in Allah's mercy and to believe that relief will eventually come, "Verily, with every difficulty There is relief" (Quran: 94:6). This aligns with modern cognitive-behavioural approaches, which emphasize the importance of resilience and positive thinking in coping with stress and trauma.

## 4.3 RELIANCE ON ALLAH (TAWAKKUL)

Reliance on Allah, or "Tawakkul," is a crucial concept in Islamic psychology, highlighting the importance of trusting in divine guidance for maintaining psychological well-being. (Bonab, B. G. et al. (2011). Tawakkul is an attitude of surrender to Allah SWT after making maximum efforts and accepting the decree of Allah SWT. The following Qur'anic verse interprets the point: Say: "Nothing will happen to us Except what God has decreed for us: He is our protector": And on God let the Believers Put their trust" (Quran: 9:51). For Muslims, Tawakkul (reliance on Allah) is one of the most powerful ways to inspire motivation and improve behavior. It is an essential part of Muslim life, especially in times of stress and hardship. Achour, et al. (2016). Research shows that relying on Allah acts as a powerful coping strategy, greatly helping to reduce anxiety and depression. Bonab, et al. (2011). (Quran: 65:3) says, "And He provides for him from (sources) he never Could imagine. And if Anyone puts his trust In God, sufficient is (God) For him. For God will surely accomplish His purpose: Verily for all things Has God appointed A due proportion." This verse reflects the importance of trusting in Allah's wisdom and control over all events, even those that seem devastating.

Tawakkul provides a psychological framework for managing uncertainty and uncontrollable events. In situations where natural disasters strike, individuals may feel powerless and overwhelmed. However, by practicing tawakkul, they are encouraged to trust in Allah's plan and to believe that,

even in the face of destruction, there is divine wisdom. Studies on religious coping have found that reliance on a higher power can significantly reduce feelings of anxiety and promote mental well-being (Pargament, 1997). By placing their trust in Allah, believers can mitigate feelings of fear and uncertainty, fostering a sense of peace and psychological stability even in the midst of chaos.

#### **4.4 PRAYER AS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL COPING STRATEGY**

Prayer, which is central to Islamic practice, plays a dual role in addressing both psychological and spiritual needs. Prayer (salat) is considered the most practical religious method for managing stress in the lives of Muslims. It breaks up periods of work-related stress, providing the body with physical, mental, and psychological rest. Prayer (du'a) and other spiritual practices are highlighted as crucial responses to trials and natural calamities in the Quran. Verses such as "seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for God is with those who patiently persevere." (Quran 2:153) emphasizes the importance of engaging in prayer as a source of comfort and emotional support during difficult times.

From a psychological perspective, prayer can be seen as a form of meditation or mindfulness practice, which helps to reduce stress, increase focus, and enhance emotional regulation. Karim, Z. (1984). Studies have shown that spiritual practices, including prayer, are linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, as well as a greater sense of wellbeing. By fostering a deep connection with the divine, prayer provides a stabilizing force that allows individuals to process and cope with trauma.

#### **4.5 HOPE AND OPTIMISM IN THE FACE OF HARDSHIP**

Hope and optimism not only serve as protective factors but also work together to strengthen resilience. Hope supports the growth of resilience by offering a foundation for positive adaptation, while optimism helps sustain psychological balance during challenging times. Oktan, V. (2012). The Quran provides reassurance of relief after difficulty, as in the verse "Verily, with every difficulty There is relief" (Quran:94:6). This statement encourages hope, which is an essential component of resilience in psychological frameworks. The Quranic promise of relief following hardship instills hope, a crucial factor in resilience. Hope, as a psychological concept, has been shown to enhance coping capacity by reducing feelings of despair and promoting motivation.

Hope has been found to promote emotional recovery by fostering optimism, which encourages adaptive coping strategies. Religious frameworks that offer hope play a crucial role in building psychological resilience during times of disaster. As Seyal and Laher (2020). The Quran's messages of future ease after hardship function as a form of cognitive restructuring, allowing believers to reinterpret their suffering in a positive light.

#### **4.6 GRATITUDE (SHUKR) AND POSITIVE REAPPRAISAL**

Another psychological approach encouraged in the Quran is gratitude (shukr), even in the face of calamities. The Quran states that true worshippers are those who are grateful and give thanks. "Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not faith." (Quran: 2:152).

(Quran: 14:7) reminds believers, "If ye are grateful, I will Add more (favours) unto you]." This teaching encourages individuals to focus on what they still possess rather than solely on what has been lost. Gratitude as a coping strategy shifts the focus from negative emotions, such as fear and grief, to positive emotions that promote well-being.

Positive reappraisal, a coping strategy that involves finding the silver lining in difficult situations, is psychologically beneficial in managing stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). By practicing gratitude, survivors of natural disasters are encouraged to find moments of grace and opportunities for growth, even in the most challenging circumstances. This aligns with the Quranic



perspective that “Verily, with every difficulty There is relief” (Quran: 94:5-6). Encouraging optimism and psychological strength.

#### **4.7 COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND CHARITY**

The Quran also emphasizes the importance of collective coping strategies, particularly through community support and charity (sadaqah). In times of disaster, the Quran encourages believers to assist one another and to share resources with those in need. (Quran: 5:2) states, " Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye not one another in sin and rancor." This directive highlights the role of social support systems in fostering resilience during crises.

Psychologically, social support is a well-documented factor in promoting mental health during times of trauma and disaster. Studies have shown that individuals with strong social networks experience lower levels of post-traumatic stress and recover more quickly from traumatic events (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). The Quranic emphasis on charity and cooperation during calamities strengthens communal bonds, ensuring that individuals do not face their difficulties alone. This communal approach to coping not only meets physical needs but also addresses emotional and psychological distress by fostering a sense of belonging and collective resilience.

#### **4.8 SUBMISSION TO DIVINE WILL (QADAR)**

The concept of Qadar, or divine predestination, teaches that everything occurs according to God's will. The Quran emphasizes that everything in the universe, including natural calamities, occurs according to Allah's will. (Quran: 54:49) asserts: " Verily, all things Have We created In proportion and measure.” This belief in predestination (Qadar) can provide psychological comfort to believers, as it encourages them to accept that such events are part of a divine plan. For instance, the Quran states, " No misfortune can happen On earth or in your souls But is recorded in A decree before We bring It into existence: That is truly easy for God " (Quran: 57:22).

Acceptance of this divine decree helps in adapting psychologically to the reality of the situation, reducing feelings of anger or bitterness that may arise from the perception of injustice

#### **4.9 DIVINE WISDOM AND CONTROL**

The Quran acknowledges that natural calamities are part of divine wisdom and control. Believers are encouraged to trust in Allah’s plan and recognize that everything occurs according to His will. (Quran: 57:22) states, " No misfortune can happen On earth or in your souls But is recorded in A decree before We bring It into existence : That is truly easy for God ."

These approaches offer psychological comfort and guidance, helping believers to navigate the emotional and spiritual challenges that arise from natural calamities

#### **4.10 REFLECTION ON THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF LIFE**

The Quran encourages believers to reflect on the temporary nature of worldly life and to view natural calamities as tests from God. Verses such as " Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere." (Quran: 2:155) encourage a perspective that sees trials as part of a greater divine plan, rather than as purely negative events.

This reflection encourages cognitive reframing, a psychological technique where individuals change their perception of a negative event to find meaning or purpose in it. By viewing calamities as tests rather than punishments, individuals may experience reduced emotional distress and gain a sense of purpose, which is critical for psychological resilience.

#### **4.11 REMINDER OF THE AFTERLIFE:**

The Quran frequently reminds believers that the life of this world is temporary and that true reward or punishment lies in the afterlife. This perspective can help believers cope with the loss and devastation caused by natural calamities, as it shifts the focus to the eternal life. The verse " Every

soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the fire and admitted to the garden will have attained the object (of life): for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception." (Quran: 3:185) emphasizes this temporal understanding.

#### **4.12 RESILIENCE AND RECONSTRUCTION:**

The Quran encourages resilience and the rebuilding of life after calamities. The message of resilience is coupled with the encouragement to learn from past experiences and to renew one's commitment to faith and good deeds. This can lead to psychological empowerment and a proactive approach to recovery.

By incorporating these themes, the Quran provides a comprehensive psychological framework for coping with natural calamities, offering believers a blend of spiritual, emotional, and communal resources to navigate such challenges.

The Quran addresses natural calamities in various ways, often focusing on their spiritual, ethical, and psychological aspects. Believers are encouraged to remain steadfast and to seek strength through their faith. For instance, (Quran: 2:153), it says, "O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for God is with those who patiently persevere."

#### **4.13 SEEKING FORGIVENESS (ISTIGHFAR)**

Calamities can be seen as reminders for believers to turn back to God and seek forgiveness for their sins. Istighfar is encouraged as a means to purify oneself and to gain divine mercy and protection.

(Quran 8:33)" But God was not going To send them a Penalty Whilst thou wast amongst them; Nor was He going to send it Whilst they could ask for pardon."

### **5. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This study offers significant contributions to both the fields of psychology and Islamic studies by examining how religious frameworks, specifically those found in the Quran, provide psychological support during times of natural calamities. The findings highlight the intersection between faith-based coping strategies and modern psychological approaches to trauma and resilience, offering insights that can benefit a variety of disciplines, including disaster mental health, religious studies, and cross-cultural psychology.

#### **5.1 BRIDGING RELIGIOUS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO COPING**

One of the key contributions of this research is its integration of Quranic teachings with contemporary psychological concepts. By analyzing Quranic coping strategies, such as patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), prayer, and social support, the study demonstrates how spiritual practices can align with psychological principles of resilience, emotional regulation, and cognitive reframing. This highlights the value of incorporating religious frameworks into psychological care, particularly in contexts where faith plays a central role in individuals' lives. The research broadens the understanding of how faith and mental health intersect, providing a more holistic approach to coping with disaster-induced trauma.

#### **5.2 ENHANCING CULTURALLY RELEVANT DISASTER INTERVENTIONS**

This study contributes to the development of culturally and religiously sensitive mental health interventions for Muslim populations affected by natural disasters. By identifying Quranic coping strategies that resonate with Islamic beliefs, this research informs practitioners and disaster response teams on how to integrate these religious concepts into mental health support programs. This approach can enhance the effectiveness of interventions by making them more relevant to the spiritual and cultural needs of Muslim communities, ultimately promoting better psychological outcomes.

### **5.3 EXPANDING THE UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS COPING MECHANISMS**

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on religious coping mechanisms by providing a detailed analysis of how Islamic teachings, as expressed in the Quran, serve as a source of resilience during natural disasters. While much of the existing literature on religious coping focuses on Christian or secular frameworks, this research expands the scope to include Islamic perspectives. This diversification enriches the academic discourse on coping strategies across different religious traditions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how faith-based approaches can support psychological recovery.

### **5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE RESEARCH**

By examining the Quranic concepts of patience, trust, and hope in the context of trauma, this study contributes to broader research on resilience and post-traumatic growth. The Quran's emphasis on hope and optimism, for instance, mirrors psychological research on the positive impact of hope in fostering emotional recovery. Additionally, the concept of viewing calamities as tests from God provides a unique lens for cognitive reframing, which can be applied to psychological theories on how individuals interpret and find meaning in adversity. This offers a novel perspective for trauma and resilience researchers to consider how religious frameworks contribute to the psychological resilience of believers.

### **5.5 INFORMING FAITH-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

The research has practical implications for faith-based organizations and religious leaders who play a role in disaster response and mental health support. By understanding the Quranic coping strategies that resonate with Muslim communities, faith-based counselors and leaders can provide more targeted emotional and psychological support. This contributes to a more effective faith-based mental health care model, where spiritual guidance and psychological support are seamlessly integrated.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study has explored the psychological approaches and coping strategies for natural calamities as outlined in the Qur'an, offering valuable insights into how spiritual and psychological principles are intertwined in Islamic teachings. The Qur'an emphasizes key concepts such as patience (sabr), reliance on Allah (tawakkul), prayer (salah), and gratitude (shukr), test (bala), community support (ummah), providing believers with a framework to navigate the psychological challenges posed by disasters. These coping strategies, deeply rooted in faith, align with contemporary psychological theories of resilience and emotional regulation, offering a comprehensive approach to managing trauma and fostering psychological well-being. The integration of these Qur'anic teachings into modern psychological frameworks highlights the potential for faith-based coping strategies to enhance mental health outcomes during times of crisis.

## **7. LIMITATIONS**

The study is limited by its focus on the Islamic perspective as found in the Quran and Islamic exegesis. It does not encompass broader religious or secular approaches to natural calamities, though comparisons with psychological theories are included to contextualize the findings.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

Further research could explore the practical application of these strategies in contemporary disaster management practices.



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