

Remember your HUMANITY and LOVE all SERVE all

By
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This report prepared on the especial request of Press For Peace

This report is full of beautiful reminiscences of Kathi during relief work in Earthquake Disaster in 2005 in Azad Kashmir (Pakistan)

Press For Peace is thankful to Kathi for her LOVE for the Peoples of Kashmir and LOVE for HUMANITY.

The day I reached Muzaffarabad was a day which changed my whole life, but when I reached the city, I didn't know about that.

I came from Islamabad with a Helicopter. It was my first time in a Helicopter and quite an adventurous experience. To see the whole extend of the devastating destruction from above touched my heart and I felt how much suffering is going on down there everywhere...I never saw something like that before. I reached the medical camp on the old Campus of the University.

For 3 days and nights I lived in a tent. It was ice cold. Water dropped into my tent and on my sleeping bag and after 2 days everything was wet and damp. These conditions didn't make my stay easier. There was no bathroom, no privacy. All I had was a public washing basin.

Three days after my arrival somebody was threatening our camp with a plan to plant bomb. From this day onwards it was not allowed anymore to go out alone and the person in charge of the camp decided it was absolutely essential for my security to stay in a house during nights.

I moved into Ismails house. He is a wonderful person, has a beautiful wife and 4 children. Whenever I came home in the evening he was there. He and his wife were very supportive and made me feel comfortable in their home. When they saw me, they exactly knew how I felt. When I was in a sad mood, they always had time to listen to me and I told them everything which burdened my heart. They helped me so much in those days, thanks to both of them.

My daily routine was treating approximately 150-250 patients together with a doctor. It was a 14 hours working day. The age of our patients was between 3 weeks and 85 years. Many were suffering from fever, bronchitis and pneumonia, diarrhoea, joint pain, scabies, fractures and cuts. We were treating the patients in two tents. All we had was one small gas heater to fight the cold. During my practice in the medical camp I treated not only physical diseases but also got to know the stories of a lot of people and tried to give some psychological support as far as possible due to the language barrier.

There was our cook, his name was Ismail. He had very sad eyes, and a soft heart. Everyday I asked myself, why his eyes were so sad. A few days before I left I found out, he lost his wife and 3 other relatives during the earthquake. He is a single father of two now. When the earthquake took place he was far away in Karachi and he also suffers from not being present during the catastrophe to protect his family. He feels guilty for that, of course he is not, but he doesn't know.

There was a girl, 12 years young. Her right leg broke during the earthquake. It was an open fracture and her leg was infected. Every 2nd evening her father and uncle brought her lying on a simple bed to our medical camp. When ever she moved her body she suffered from horrible pain. Since two months she was not able to get up. The first treatment I gave to her took one and a half hours time. I did it very carefully and slowly day by day she learned to trust me. She never smiled but one day I gave her a little Teddy bear. This was the first day, I saw her smiling. The good thing was, after 3 weeks treatment half of the infected wound had healed. There was this father. He brought his baby boy, 6 weeks old. The baby was suffering from pneumonia. It was

wearing thin summer clothes and I asked the father, how he can dress the baby in this cold season like that. He looked at me and started weeping and he explained. He was a teacher in a Mosque. The Mosque got destroyed during the earthquake and he lost his job. He had no income to buy warm clothes for his child. Hearing this I started weeping with him. Immediately I asked our doctor, if we still had some blankets, which we had contributed a few days ago, but unfortunately there were no blankets left. In my tent I had two beds and on each bed was one blanket. I took the baby, went into my tent, wrapped a warm blanket around his little body and gave the baby back into the fathers arms and I said to him **Allah hu akbar, may Allah bless you** and your child.

One evening a boy came, he had an injury on his head and I had to remove the stitches. While doing this we suddenly had a power cut. I had to organize somebody with a torch so that I could finish removing his stitches. Everybody trusted me so much. Even in the darkness with a torch in my hand.

I loved the children of Kashmir. Once a boy came, he had a little injury on his finger. I made the dressing and drew a little smiling face on it. The next day he came with three of his friends. Each of them had a very tiny injury. So tiny, that a treatment was not really necessary. But everybody got his dressing with my little drawings on it...smiling faces or little shining hearts.

At that time I didn't know the result of my action....the next day I had 20 children in my tent. I decided just to draw shining hearts and smiling faces on there little hands. *We had a lot of fun together.* I loved it, to make them happy for now, I loved to look in their beautiful shining eyes

in those moments.

One day a little angel came to my tent. Her name is Aysha, she was 9 years young. She had a disease called Amyasthenia. Her muscles were very weak, she was not able to walk or to move her head, arms and legs properly. She was a real angel this girl, a shining star. Her wonderful caring mother brought her every evening to my tent, because Aysha wanted to see me and I gave her half an hour of my time. She sat on my lap and I talked to her in English or German. Whatever I said, she was able to exactly repeat it. One day I and the doctor were invited to visit her family. We went to the place, where they lived in a tent, and Aysha and I were so happy. I don't know how this wonderful family arranged and organized everything, but we had delicious dinner, *they treated us like kings.*

There was this little boy, I think he was 3 years old. He had a heavily bleeding injury on his head. His head, his neck, his shirt and hands were full of blood. For children in this young age it's shocking to see all this blood, not knowing what is going on. His mother was screaming desperately and because of her screaming this little boy was more shocked than through his injury. The first thing I did, I calmed down the mother. The boy relaxed a little bit but he refused to sit. I allowed him to stand.

I spoke in German to him and I don't know how it happened, he did exactly what I told him. I spoke in my softest and sweetest voice to him, to make him listen to me and to make him feel relaxed and to lead his attention away from his pain. The result was that I was able to treat him easily.

Once I was in the doctor's tent when suddenly a family brought a young woman, she was pregnant. She was agitated because of horrible pain. Her family members put her on the bed. She was not able to lie. While the doctor was talking to the family members I helped her to sit up. Unfortunately I don't speak Urdu and always had to ask for translation, but I understood, that the situation was very serious. We had no female doctor which created the next problem, because a male doctor is not allowed to examine a pregnant woman. In this special situation I was really shocked, because the life of a person or better to say of two persons, namely mother and child, should be more important than this rule. The doctor asked me, to check, if the baby in the mothers womb is still alive.

I told him, I never did this before but he pleased me to try, and so I did my very best. I couldn't feel any movement of the baby and I couldn't hear any heart beat. The doctor decided this woman had to go immediately to hospital.

Our driver brought the car and the woman including all her relatives were brought to hospital. Two hours later the doctor received a call. The expression on his face showed me, something was terribly wrong. This young lady had uncontrollable internal bleeding. The doctors in the hospital were not able to save her life. She and her baby died. I was shocked and sad and more deeply touched when I heard, that her husband and her two other children died during the earthquake. Somehow I felt a little bit relaxed to know, that the whole family is reunited again and I thought maybe I was the last person in her life who

did a little favour to her and help her to sit up, when she was so agitated and desperate.

We were not only working in our camp. From time to time we had medical camps in the higher mountains, to reach people who needed medical treatments and who had no ability to walk down to the city of Muzaffarabad, because it was a long and exhausting walk down and up again.

Early morning we loaded our jeep with all the medical equipment and started our day. We had to pass a lot of tent camps where people had to manage their lives under extremely difficult circumstances.

Finally we reached the street, which was a mud road leading us to the higher areas. *My whole life I had the dream to see the Himalayas. I never ever expected my dream would come true under these circumstances.* The beauty and the breathtaking environment gave me the ability to forget for a short period of time all the suffering which touched my heart again and again. To see these mountains was overwhelming and gave me a lot of energy...

The beauty of GOD`s creation in ultimate perfection.....

While driving higher and higher ,our vehicle came to a point, where we had to do a sharp left turn. I was sitting in front of the jeep, the driver had to move the car towards a by pass. At that point the canyon was 2000 m deep. The driver used the reverse gear to drive half a meter backwards and then again roll towards the canyon. He had to repeat this 5 to 6 times. It looked very dangerous especially from the perspective of

my front seat. The engine hood was floating over the canyon for seconds .During this I was praying: if **YOU** want me now, I am ready, but I would like to stay on this planet a little bit longer...finally it was done and minutes later we reached the place where we wanted to conduct our medical day camp.

While setting up the place I saw people coming down from all over the mountains. I loved to be with the people. *They welcomed us with open hearts.* Everybody was looking especially at me, because my skin is white and may be they never saw somebody from the other part of the world. So many people were traumatized. I saw so many sad eyes and especially the children needed help.

There was a teacher who is a caring angel. I taught him a simple but very effective technique which I suggested him he should do twice with the children in school. I explained to him, how it will help to release the traumas of those kids.He promised to train them daily.

The wonderful caring women cooked food for us on open fire. For a person like me from the other part of this world very unusual. The food was delicious and the people so nice. I had no ability to talk to them, because I cannot speak Urdu, *but the language of our hearts needed no words.*

When we left, everybody was standing around our car. The women and I were hugging each other, the kids were holding my hands and kissing me and I kissed them. *I wished to come back to this place very soon, but I never was there again.*

We had to be back in Muzaffarabad before darkness, because it was too dangerous to drive in the dark. Daily we had aftershocks and due to heavy rainfalls the ground was instable and there were land slides everywhere. Sometimes we had to wait till a bulldozer made the way free.

A few days later the teacher, from the mountains, his name was Masoor, came to our camp on the University Campus to meet me. He just came to tell me that he uses my technique daily and that he can already feel the change in the children. This made me more than happy and it was so nice, that he came just to tell me that.

The doctor and I had also to go for assessments around Muzaffarabad. The doctor was a very sensitive person and he knew that I am not so much interested in this work. Most of the time he made the assessment and allowed me to be with the people.

Once we came to a village where I had the chance to look inside destroyed buildings. Watching this gave me an impression, how powerful this earthquake had been, and I was able to imagine what the people experienced this morning, when it happened.

When I came out of one of these houses, an elderly woman came around the corner. We looked into each others eyes and immediately she walked towards me and we hugged each other...**I was holding her in my arms and she started sobbing.** I had a feeling in this moment, that for the first time she allowed her pain to come out. I held her for a few minutes and my face became wet because of her tears. *I felt, how she relaxed more and more in my arms.*

When she stopped sobbing, we looked deeply into each others eyes, I blessed her and we left. We never spoke a single word.

We were on our way to the next village, the way was so small, that a few men had to check the tires of our vehicle if they still were on the way as there was the possibility to fall down the mountain. Finally we reached the village.

There the same situation happened again. An elderly woman came suddenly up the mountain, she saw me, immediately came to me, we hugged each other, she started sobbing, *I held her, my face wet from her tears, a deep look into each others eyes...*and then I had to leave. Again we didn't speak a single word.

Everybody was standing around us, looking at us, may be wondering what was going on there. Nobody said a single word, everybody was in silence for a moment, listening to the language of **ALLAH...**

One day we had to go for another assessment, this time high in the mountains. When we reached there, automatically I was with the souls of the people and the doctor did the work, he was really a nice person.

They brought a chair and a table for me and cooked fresh delicious Kava. The men of the village were sitting opposite me, directly at the edge of the canyon. We were just looking into each others eyes.

I love to connect the souls through eyes, *because the eyes are the windows of our souls.* Nobody was saying anything. There was just special understanding around us. Around us the breathtaking view of the completely beautiful mountains and absolute silence...I never experienced such a silence before and after

that.....

I prayed...please Lord, never let me forget this moment of my life...and he listened to my prayer...!

When we left, the people blessed me...it was so lovely. One day we had a truck full of blankets we distributed near Kohri Bridge. Round about one hundred men gathered around us. The blankets were fixed with metal bands, twenty blankets in each pack. The problem was we didn't have any tools to open the metal band, only a blunt pincer. Ten men tried to open the band one by one...all in vain nothing happened, it didn't open. Finally I suggested that I could try it...all men were smiling about me...and I tried, while praying to help me for not making a fool of myself...and...With only one try the metal band magically opened...

Everybody was laughing and clapping their hands and I was a little bit proud of myself.

The time came closer, that I had to leave Kashmir. The closer the day came, the more difficult it was for me. *I met so precious people, and I didn't want to leave them.* Day by day I became more sad and couldn't eat.

Three days before my departure a mother brought her son, two years old, to our medical camp. He was unconscious and had high fever. We cooled down his little body, I had tears in my eyes and I prayed and prayed to God for his life. The mother and the little sister were waiting outside the tent. I saw their desperate faces, and unfortunately nobody was there to take care and to explain to them what was going on with the little baby.

After minutes which seemed like hours to me, his little body started moving again and finally he opened his beautiful eyes. **He survived...yes !**

Even now, 5 years later, while writing this I have tears in my eyes.

The last day in our camp the girl with the broken infected leg came again and the doctor decided to send her to hospital for x-ray. When we got the result of the x-ray, I was shocked. The bones of her leg were dislocated. She had to undergo a surgery again. I felt so sorry for her because she and her family had to bear so much. Hope she is fine now, never heard again from her, because the **next day I had to leave Muzaffarabad.**

The last drive over one of the hanging bridges... made me terribly sad because **I didn't want to leave.** I would have loved to take some people with me.....!

Finally, I reached Islamabad. After 5 weeks in the earthquake area, where everything was destroyed, I had to go back to normal. *I was very surprised, when I saw Islamabad. It is a very nice and modern city, with all facilities you can imagine. Before the earthquake Pakistan was a black spot on the map for me...and now, after a short period of time everything had changed. Kashmir and Pakistan and all the people there became a part of my heart for ever.*

In the West, the media show a total different view of this country and especially of it's people. Most reports illustrate Kashmir and Pakistan in a negative perspective but where ever I have a possibility I talk about my

experience in this beautiful part of the world and everybody is surprised to hear what I have to say. **I became a messenger for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan**, where ever I am.

Leaving Pakistan was one of the most difficult things in my life. On my flight back, in Abu Dhabi in the middle of the night I had to consult a doctor because I was suddenly sick, had high fever and was nearly collapsing which was a physical sign of my mental condition after I left. In the months and years after my return to Germany I started a totally new part of my life. Everything changed since then; I became an entirely different person on all levels.

Muzaffarabad changed me, but this is another Story

Thanks to all the wonderful people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir with deep love and appreciation for everybody.

Kathi

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