BEING A ROHINGYA WOMAN IN 2017/18

IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE

Photographer Abul Kalam was there to document the tragedy, while he himself was part of it. He was there when his Rohingya people were forced from their Arakan homes in Myanmar—forcibly displaced by people who were filled with hatred for them. Victims of genocide.

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be a woman, fleeing for her life while trying to keep her young children and baby safe. As she struggles to make the trip to the safety of Bangladesh, she has in the back of her mind the loved ones she is leaving behind, possibly brutally murdered. Mothers and fathers, husbands, brothers and sisters, children—family.

Have you ever thought about what it must have been like?

Think of all the things that come with being a woman, a mother, a wife. Taking care of her womanly needs. Still nursing a baby, keeping young children close. Making sure that her family’s needs are met.

How terribly stressful the way to safety must have been. The difficulties posed by various terrains. The hunger, the thirst, the longing for safe shelter. “Oh, if there were only a place to rest . . .!”

Upon arriving in Bangladesh, imagine the exhaustion that must have lingered as she lined up to receive food for her family. The only place she found to clean up, a muddy pond.

She was grateful for her new Bangladeshi neighbors, finding comfort in their provision of food and shelter. She and her people were cared for in their dire time of need. What a blessing it must have been to find such generosity!

When she finally came to rest and begin her life as a refugee, grief settled in her heart. She suffered with the memories of all that had been good in her life, cruelly snatched away. Her heart is broken—never to truly find healing.

And yet, she clings to her faith. Resilience comes from knowing that her Almighty God will never abandon her. Her faith assures her that Allah’s mercy will always be with her and her family. He gives her the courage and strength she needs to carry on.

. . . and she carries on, even today.