

Disability rights in Islamic Law: A study of Quranic teachings and the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

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Abstract

Introduction: This research article aims to explore the rights of disabled individuals in Islamic law. The study focuses on Quranic teachings and the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to understand the Islamic perspective on disability rights.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the Islamic perspective on disability rights and to highlight the importance of providing disabled individuals with their complete rights, not just on the basis of equality but also on the basis of kindness. The study also aims to identify the lack of appropriate means of livelihood for disabled individuals as a significant issue.

Method: This study is based on a review of relevant literature on the topic of disability rights in Islamic law. The study focuses on Quranic teachings and the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to understand the Islamic perspective on disability rights.

Result: The study argues that disabled individuals require extraordinary attention from society because they are dependent on others for many things. Until disabled individuals are given their complete rights, they cannot become productive and useful members of society. The study also highlights the lack of appropriate means of livelihood for disabled individuals as a significant issue. This is causing an increase in their unemployment rate and hindering their abilities. The study concludes that Islam has provided the best laws for the protection of the rights of disabled individuals, including respect, dignity, and other rights. These laws have practical examples in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and are numerous.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of providing disabled individuals with their complete rights, not just on the basis of equality but also on the basis of kindness. The study argues that Islam has provided the best laws for the protection of the rights of disabled individuals, including respect, dignity, and other rights. These laws have practical examples in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and are numerous. The study concludes that it is essential to provide disabled individuals with appropriate means of livelihood and to ensure that they are given opportunities to become productive and useful members of society.

Keywords: Disability in Islam, Justice, Rights of Disabled Individuals, Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Teachings, Quranic Exemptions, Seerat-e-Tayyiba

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1. Introduction

Allah, the Creator of the universe, has fashioned every element, animate or inanimate, with a purpose, leaving nothing without reason. Even the minutest creations are brought into existence with intent, demonstrating the Creator's supreme wisdom. Human beings, endowed with intellect, consciousness, and understanding, endeavor to fathom the purpose behind Allah's creations. However, owing to their finite intellect, there are instances where the purpose may elude them, leading to the misconception of certain elements being deemed as useless. As Allah reminds us in the Quran: "Did you then think that we had created you without purpose, and that you would never be returned to us?"¹

Islam, recognizing the intrinsic value of each individual, has taken particular care in addressing the needs of disabled individuals. Through heart purification and rehabilitation programs, Islam endeavors to empower them, fostering their inclusion as productive members of society rather than perceiving them as burdens. In contrast, modern Western societies often approach the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities by creating specialized initiatives. A historical perspective illuminates Islam's comprehensive approach to addressing the issues confronting disabled individuals. The religion not only attends to their physical needs but also focuses on heart purification and rehabilitation, offering opportunities and facilities that enable them to contribute meaningfully to society. In this regard, Islam stands as an exemplary model, showcasing its unparalleled commitment to the welfare of disabled individuals—a commitment unparalleled in any other religion.²

2. Meaning and concept of disability, definition, and terminology:

Disability is a comprehensive and broad term that includes sensitivity to human nature and temperament and physical and mental symptoms of disability. Life affairs and duties are affected by the partial and general disability of the human body. Disabled individuals do not have the ability to work on an equal footing with other members of society or to perform their duties. In Urdu, the word disability is used to express mental and physical defects and shortcomings. Disability is an Arabic word; its meaning is a person who has an excuse, specifically, an individual experiencing mental or physical confinement or someone encountering an incident. According to the Arabic dictionary, this term is not solely used to denote mental and physical defects and shortcomings but also holds a moral breadth and generality in its literal meaning. Concepts such as travel, illness, disability, and women's ailments are encompassed within the concept of disability.³

In Islamic jurisprudence, all individuals who cannot act on religious orders due to a legal excuse (disease, travel, disability, and women's ailments) or who have obtained some exemptions in the religious orders are referred to as "Ahl al-Aazaar".⁴ The British law (for disabled individuals) presents a practical definition of disability in the global context of disability." A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities".⁵

According to medical experts, a person who is permanently limited in participating in daily life activities is called disabled. Disability can be physical, mental, or spiritual. In most cases, disability is the result of some disease.⁶

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disabled individuals as those who are permanently limited in participating in daily life activities due to physical, mental, or sensory disabilities. Disabled individuals are those who have partial or general disability of the human body due to any organ or part of the body or the basic principles of physical health. Disability can be mental or physical, congenital or accidental.⁷

In the context of disability, the above definitions are comprehensive, effective, and practical. All diseases that affect human life and duties, such as diabetes, blood pressure, etc., are included in these definitions. A physical or congenital defect that affects a person's ability to perceive, feel, hear, see, and think to the extent that it becomes difficult for the person to maintain his existence is called disability.

Inclusive Terminology: Redefining Language for Empowering Disabled Individuals

The terms "Apahij" and "Mafluji" are now considered obsolete because they give a sense of helplessness to disabled individuals and make them feel less capable. In the context of disability, it is essential to use inclusive terminology that empowers disabled individuals. The following terminologies are important to know:

- **Special Needs:** These are the needs for which disabled individuals have legal rights. There are different types of special needs, just as there are different types of disabilities.
- **Special Rights:** These are the rights that disabled individuals obtain due to their special needs.
- **Special Individuals:** This term refers to disabled individuals.
- **Full Participation:** This means the full participation of disabled individuals in the development and progress of society.

- Equality: This means providing disabled individuals with the same standard of living as other people in society.⁸

Using inclusive terminology is an important step towards empowering disabled individuals and promoting their full participation in society. By using terminology that is respectful and empowering, we can help to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Quranic Vocabulary and Disabled Individuals: Olī al-Zarrār in Divine Discourse:

In the Holy Quran, beautiful and clear terms have been used to refer to the disability of special individuals. The following are the terms used in the Quran:

- Olī al-Zarrār: “Those believers who sit at home, unless they do so out of a disabling injury, are not the equals of those who strive in the way of Allah with their possessions and their lives. Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their possessions and their lives over those who sit at home; and though to each Allah has promised some good reward, He has preferred those who strive (in the way of Allah) over those who sit at home for a mighty reward.”

In Islam, those who stay at home without any disability and those who fight in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives are not equal. Hazrat Bura’ a bin Azib narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) called Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit to write the verse “Those who stay behind (due to injury or other reasons) are not equal to those who fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives.” He brought ink and a tablet. The Prophet (PBUH) said, “Take these and write: ‘Those who stay behind (due to injury or other reasons) are not equal to those who fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives.’” Ibn Umm Maktum, who was blind, was present behind the Prophet (PBUH). He said, “O Messenger of Allah, I am blind and cannot see. How can I get the same reward as those who can see?” The Prophet (PBUH) then revealed the words “except for those who are disabled” and the verse was thus revealed: “Those who stay behind (due to injury or other reasons) are not equal to those who fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives over those who stay behind by a great reward.”⁹

In English, “Olī” is translated as “Persons,” while “Zarrār” is translated as “Difficult.” Therefore, the correct English translation of “Olī al-Zarrār” is “Persons with difficulties.” All documents related to disability by the United Nations use this term for disabled individuals. In addition, British laws also use this term for disabled individuals.

Exploring the Meaning and Concepts of Quranic Terminology “Olī al-Zarrār” in the Context of Scholarly Interpretations

The Quranic term “Olī al-Zarrār,” comprised of the words “zar” and “zarar,” holds profound implications for understanding the challenges faced by individuals encompassed by the broader concept of disability. As elucidated by lexicographers and religious scholars, these terms extend beyond physical afflictions to encompass a spectrum of adversities, including poverty, destitution, lack of knowledge, virtue, physical pain, chronic illness, and visual impairment.

Imam Raghib Isfahani provides a comprehensive exploration of “zar” and “zarar.” “Zar” denotes a negative situation, whether internal or external, such as lack of knowledge, virtue, or limb, while “zarar” encapsulates adverse conditions like poverty and physical affliction. The removal of affliction, as mentioned in the Quran, exemplifies the relief from challenges faced by an individual.¹⁰

The Quranic verses emphasize the disparity in reward between believers who strive in the cause of Allah and those who stay at home, highlighting the elevated status of the former. Notably, the term “Alzarar” is specifically associated with individuals facing disabilities, acknowledging their unique struggles¹¹.

In a Hadith, the concept of patience in the face of adversity and the lack of patience during times of prosperity is highlighted. This underscores the broader scope of the term “Alzarar” to include individuals tested with poverty, adversity, and punishment. The notion of not causing harm to oneself or others is emphasized¹².

The interchangeability of “Alzarar” and “Alzuarar” underscores their shared connotation of harm and the antithesis of benefit. Linguistic derivatives such as “Zarrah” and “Adarra” further emphasize the notion of causing harm, reinforcing the Quranic and Hadith injunction against causing harm.

The pronunciation of “Zar” with a “Dhamma” or “Fatha” imparts distinct connotations, with the former indicating a negative situation and the latter signifying the opposite of benefit. The Quranic verse “Affliction has touched me” associates “zarar” with illness, elucidating its relevance in contexts where harm or affliction is present.¹³

The Al-Mu’jam al-Wasit dictionary concurs that “Zar” refers to a broad spectrum of adverse situations, including poverty and physical affliction¹⁴. The Quranic verse “We and our families are in great distress” exemplifies the encompassing nature of “Zar.”¹⁵

The term “Oli alzarar” specifically refers to individuals facing visual impairment, physical disabilities, illness, or financial constraints. Scholars and jurists acknowledge the inclusivity of the term, encompassing a diverse range of challenges faced by individuals with impaired vision, physical disabilities, illnesses, and

financial constraints.

In summation, the exploration of “Olī al-Ḍarrār” in the context of disability unveils a comprehensive understanding that extends beyond physical impairments to encompass various adversities faced by individuals. This research contributes to a nuanced interpretation of Quranic terminology and its implications for the broader discourse on disability.

Quranic Lens on Disability: A Comprehensive Study of the Term “Alzu‘āfā and Al-Mustaz‘afīn”

- Alzu‘āfā: “There is no blame on the weak nor on the sick nor on those who have nothing to enable them to join (the struggle in the Way of Allah) if they stay behind provided that they are sincere to Allah and to His Messenger.”¹⁶

This verse from the Holy Quran means that those who are weak, sick, or do not have the means to spend money are not guilty of any sin as long as they are sincere and faithful to Allah and His Messenger.

The Urdu translation of “Alzu‘āfā” is “kamzor” or weak person, while the correct English translation of this term, which also reflects the true meaning of the Quran, is “Persons with difficulties/ disabilities.”

- Al-Mustaz‘afīn: “While taking the souls of those who were engaged in wronging themselves, the angels asked: ‘In what circumstances were you?’ They replied: ‘We were too weak and helpless in the land.’ The angels said: ‘Was not the earth of Allah wide enough for you to emigrate in it?’ For such men their refuge is Hell - an evil destination indeed; except the men, women, and children who were indeed too feeble to be able to seek the means of escape and did not know where to go. maybe Allah shall pardon these, for Allah is All-Pardoning, All-Forgiving..”¹⁷

The term Al-Mustaz‘afīn is used in Surah An-Nisa in the Quran. It refers to Muslims who, despite the order of migration, did not migrate and stayed in Mecca due to their weakness and helplessness. Allah has warned them with a severe punishment and their abode will be Hell. However, helpless men, women, and children are exempted from this warning. The translation of Almustaz‘afeen is weak men, weak women, and weak children. The term “weak” refers to the lack of health, lack of access to resources, and lack of knowledge of the way. Blind and lame people are also included in this term. The correct English translation of this term, which reflects the true meaning of the Quran, is “Persons, Women, and Children with difficulties/disabilities”.

Unveiling Quranic Semantics: A Scholarly Exploration of “Alzua’faa, Almustaz’afeen”

Alzua’faa, Almustaz’afeen: The word “Zua’f” is used in both “Alzua’faa” and “Almustaz’afeen”. According to lexicographers, these words refer to weakness, helplessness, and vulnerability due to physical or mental disability. “Zua’f” means any weakness that is present in the mind, opinion, or body.¹⁸

Scholars and jurists have included people with chronic illnesses, elderly people, blind people, and mentally and physically disabled people in “Alzua’faa” and “Almustaz’afeen”. The jurists have defined it broadly. Imam Qurtubi said: “There is no harm on the weak.” This means that there is no harm on those who are known to be disabled, such as those who suffer from a fatal illness, are elderly, or are blind or lame.¹⁹ Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi clarified that “Alzua’faa” refers to those who have an excuse, such as blindness, lameness, illness, or weakness.²⁰

Quranic Perspectives on Disability: An In-Depth Examination of the Term “Alfuqrā”

Alfuqrā: “Zakat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”²¹

The first expenditure mentioned in the Quran for Zakat is Alfuqrā. According to Arabic lexicon, a person whose spine, bones, and joints are broken is called a “faqeer”. A person whose spine is broken becomes disabled and helpless, and the lower part of his body becomes paralyzed. Such a person is unable to earn a living. The Arabic word “faqeer” originally refers to a disabled person.

Unveiling the Layers of Meaning in Quranic Terminology “Alfuqrā” through Scholarly Lens

The term “Al-Fuqara” is derived from the root word “Fuqr,” which encompasses meanings such as indigence, destitution, and dependence on others for sustenance. Lexically, it refers to those who, despite being in need, do not seek assistance openly, demonstrating resilience and self-respect.²²

The renowned linguist and lexicographer, Imam Raghīb Isfahani, elucidates further, stating that “Fuqeer” refers to a person whose vertebral column, from the nape of the neck to the coccyx, is broken. This description implies an individual who, due to hardship and destitution, carries the burden of poverty with resilience.²³

In the Holy Quran, the term “Al-Fuqara” is addressed in various verses, emphasizing the importance of charity and financial assistance for those in need.

Allah mentions in Surah At-Tawbah: “The charities are only for the poor, the needy, those employed to collect [zakat], those whose hearts are to be reconciled, for the freeing of slaves, for those in debt, for the cause

of Allah, and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”²⁴

This verse categorizes the beneficiaries of charity, among whom are the “Fuqara,” underscoring their rightful place in the distribution of Zakat and other charitable contributions.

The significance of helping those in genuine need is further emphasized in a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “The poor person is not the one for whom a date or two or a morsel or two (of food is sufficient but the poor person is he who does not (beg or) ask the people (for something) or show his poverty at all. Recite if you wish, (Allah's Statement): “They do not beg of people at all.”²⁵

This Hadith underscores the authenticity and nobility of those who, despite severe need, refrain from openly soliciting assistance, embodying the true essence of “Al-Fuqara.”

In conclusion, “Al-Fuqara” in the Quranic context represents individuals facing hardship with dignity and self-restraint. The Quranic injunctions and Hadith highlight the responsibility of the community to support and uplift those experiencing genuine need, thereby fostering a society based on compassion, empathy, and mutual assistance.

Understanding Disability Types: Physical, Communicative, and Mental Disabilities Explored

There are three types of disabilities:

Physical disability: Physical disability refers to a defect, wound, or deformity in the human body that creates an obstacle in carrying out the normal activities of life.

Communicative disability: A communicative disability is a lack of ability or a complete absence of the ability to speak or hear.

Mental disability: This type of disability is considered the most dangerous of the three. Mental disability can be mild or severe. Complete mental disability or impairment of mental abilities is also included in mental disability. In some countries, such children are declared insane. The number of mentally disabled people is increasing day by day. Mentally disabled people may appear normal, but they are not capable of thinking. Some mental illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and blood pressure are more dangerous than others. Mental illnesses often occur from childhood, and sometimes the cause is bitter incidents and events in life. However, if such a person is treated by a good doctor on time, then recovery is possible, otherwise, in the other case, such people become a burden on society and the earth.²⁶

Compassion in Action: Unveiling the Rights of the Disabled Community in Islam

Disabled people are a part of human society that deserves more attention than ordinary people. In the present era, efforts are being made for the rights of disabled people, but Islam has taken care of the rights of disabled people 1400 years ago. The welfare, education, and livelihood of disabled people are special rights. Special rights refer to the rights that disabled people obtain on the basis of necessity, and if only disability is the reason, then it is not a right but a mercy. Nature has put the pain of humanity in your heart, so behave better with someone. It is up to every person to behave like this or not. But the right is that which he is forced to pay. Therefore, the necessities of disabled people are not based on compassion and kindness but they are their real rights. No civilized society can ignore disabled people or not give them a respectable place in society. Islam is a religion of respect for humanity. Since disabled people deserve special attention for their identity and dignity in society, Islam has also given special instructions in this regard. It should be clear that all the rights that are available to ordinary people in society, disabled people are also entitled to these rights on the basis of equality.²⁷ However, Islam has also given some special rights to disabled people, in addition to the rights of ordinary people. By utilizing the abilities and capabilities of disabled people in an appropriate manner, they should be made an effective part of society. The brief outline of the Islamic teachings, ideas, and services regarding the care and rehabilitation of disabled people is presented below.

3. Islamic Perspective on Disability Rights: Surah Abasa and the Inherent Worth of Every Individual

Islam has granted equal status to every individual in matters of life, regardless of their race, color, or social status. It is a common social practice to ignore disabled people in everyday life and social interactions. The Holy Quran has condemned this practice and has given humanity the right to dignity and respect. Islam has taken care of the rights of disabled people from the beginning of Islamic civilization. Surah Abasa was revealed in the early days of Islam, and its initial verses are related to disabled people. The purpose of these verses is that every person who seeks the truth is important, whether he is blind, lame, or dumb. By studying the initial verses of Surah Abasa, it becomes clear how much importance and value Islam attaches to the life of disabled people.²⁸

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In Islam, disabled people have the right to be respected and enjoy social justice. They are to be provided with basic needs such as food and clothes and receive treatment and rehabilitation²⁹. Shariah has guaranteed the rights of disabled people to live a dignified life and made them an inseparable part of their community, who enjoy the same rights as others, except for rights exempted by Shariah³⁰. People with disabilities have rights over their families, including the right to take measures to eliminate the causes that lead to disability. The family should pay necessary expenses for its members with disabilities, provide them with appropriate education based on compassion and respect, and strive to meet their basic needs such as marriage, housing, etc. People with disabilities have rights over the state, including health care through the establishment of specialized medical institutions for the treatment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities, appropriate education, labor that takes into account abilities and means of people with disabilities, financial adequacy of financially disadvantaged people with disabilities through Zakāh, Awqāf, charities, and public funds, and traveling by appropriate means, including providing appropriate means of transport and establishing appropriate standards for public buildings and utilities to facilitate their movement.³¹

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Empowering Disabled Individuals: Islamic Rights and Support

Islam, recognizing the importance of societal life, has established laws and systems for various aspects, including social interactions such as staying with relatives and friends. It is noteworthy that the Quran has exempted disabled individuals from certain principles and regulations. Due to physical and mental disabilities, these individuals may not fulfill economic and business duties; hence, it is the right of the government and society to provide them with the necessities of life.

The Quran explicitly exempts blind and lame individuals from blame when they eat from your homes without permission: "There is no blame on the blind man, nor is there blame on the lame, nor is there blame on the sick, nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses..."³³

This Quranic verse highlights the societal obligation to accommodate and support disabled individuals, recognizing their challenges.

Scholars, such as Syed Abul Ala Maududi, emphasize the right of disabled individuals to receive sustenance from society. Maududi asserts that every household has a responsibility to provide food to a disabled person, allowing them to satisfy their hunger. This right ensures the integration of disabled individuals into society, enabling them to lead a dignified life.³⁴

In conclusion, Islam acknowledges the unique challenges faced by disabled individuals and establishes their right to be provided with life's necessities by the government and society. Quranic verses and scholarly opinions underscore the importance of accommodating and supporting disabled individuals, ensuring their well-being and inclusion in societal affairs. By fulfilling this right, society upholds the principles of justice, compassion, and equality laid out in the teachings of Islam.

Exemption from Jihad: Ensuring Equality and Reward for Disabled Individuals in Islamic Law

When the Quranic verse was revealed differentiating between those who participate in Jihad and those who remain at home, stating that they are not equal, concerns were expressed by individuals like Hazrat Abdullah bin Umm Maktum, a blind companion, and others who were physically disabled. Their apprehension stemmed from their inability to actively engage in Jihad due to their physical conditions. The implication of this revelation was that they might not earn the same reward as those actively participating in Jihad due to their inability to partake in the physical aspects of the struggle. In response to these concerns, Allah, in His infinite wisdom, revealed an exception for those who, without excuse, stay at home. These individuals are considered equal partners in the rewards with the Mujahideen, as they are prevented from active participation by a valid excuse. Essentially, this means that those who engage in Jihad will receive their deserved rewards, even if those who, due to legitimate reasons, are unable to participate are deprived of the physical aspect of Jihad. However, Allah has promised goodness to both categories of individuals.³⁵

Scholars have debated the general obligation of Jihad, asserting that it is not a direct obligation but rather a sufficient one. This implies that if an individual participates in Jihad to the extent required, the obligation is

considered fulfilled, even for those residing in the same area who did not actively partake in Jihad.

The Quranic verse, “There is no blame on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who do not find anything to spend if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger when they are exhorted to strive in the cause of Allah”³⁶, emphasizes that there is no sin on disabled people, those who are sick, or those lacking the means to participate in Jihad if they sincerely dedicate themselves to Allah and His Messenger. This verse specifically addresses those who are genuinely disabled and have clear excuses. Examples include the weak and helpless, encompassing the elderly and those who are blind or lame. Some scholars have included the weak and helpless within the category of the sick.

The criteria outlined in the verse include:

1. The weak and helpless, such as the elderly and those who are blind or lame.
2. The sick.
3. Those who lack the means to participate in Jihad, and the Beit-ul-Mal (Public Treasury) is not responsible for their expenses.

Such individuals are absolved of sin, as Allah declares, “Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear”³⁷. This emphasizes that Allah does not burden anyone beyond their capacity, taking into account their individual abilities. The goodwill towards Allah and the Messenger signifies having a sincere desire for Jihad, love for the Mujahideen, enmity towards the enemies of Allah and His Messenger, and obedience to the commands of Allah and His Messenger. If one is genuinely unable to participate in Jihad, there is no sin upon them.

Furthermore, Allah Almighty has bestowed special qualities upon disabled people, as mentioned in the chapters of Tawbah (9:91) and An-Nisa (4:95), offering further insights that merit detailed study.

Economic Empowerment of Disabled Individuals in Islam: A Comprehensive Approach to Self-Sufficiency and Financial Guardianship

Islam also pays attention to the economic well-being of disabled individuals so that they, instead of becoming a burden on society, can become self-sufficient contributors to its development and progress. In situations where these individuals cannot sustain their livelihood in a commendable manner, Islam designates a guardian for them to ensure that their financial matters are handled in the best possible way. The Sharia's primary objective is to protect disabled individuals from harm, as guided by the Quran: “Do not entrust your properties - which Allah has made a means of support for you - to the weak of understanding, but maintain and clothe them out of it, and say to them a kind word of admonition.”³⁸

Concerning the wealth of affected individuals, which Allah has created as a means of livelihood for all people, do not withhold it. Open it up to them, provide for them, and communicate with them in a benevolent manner.

If a commercial or business transaction involves debt, there is religious guidance for a written agreement from the disabled person's perspective: “If the debtor is incompetent, weak, or unable to dictate, let their guardian dictate for them with justice.”³⁹

For the person whose responsibility it is, if his mental state is affected, or he is weak, or he cannot dictate due to his incapacity, then his guardian should dictate with justice.

It seems that Islam has granted economic and business rights to disabled individuals, allowing them to engage in commerce and investment. Allah's command is clear: “Men shall have a benefit from what they earn, and women shall have a benefit from what they earn.”⁴⁰

The terms “men” and “women” are inclusive in terms of gender, encompassing both disabled men and disabled women in these rights.

Politically Empowerment: Islam's Approach to Political for Disabled Individuals

Islam wants disabled people to be politically empowered to play their role in national development, progress, and political order. In the light of Islam's eternal teachings, this empowerment resulted in disabled people playing a bright and exemplary role in the development, progress, and political order of the state of Madinah, which is a fundamental role and beacon of light for modern developed nations. Hazrat Abdullah bin Umm Maktum was a blind companion of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Narrated by Anas, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ appointed Hazrat Abdullah bin Umm Maktum as the deputy of Madinah twice. Similarly, during the absence of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Hazrat Abdullah bin Umm Maktum also performed the duties of the Imam of Masjid Nabawi ﷺ. In the Islamic era, the person who had the authority and caliphate was also the Imam.⁴¹

Preservation of Dignity: Islamic Provisions for Disabled Individuals

Islam commands the preservation of the dignity and honor of every individual and orders its followers to adopt ethical behavior in their practical lives. Islamic Shariah also prohibits actions that may hurt someone's feelings. Nowadays, the Shariah also forbids the use of certain phrases that are heard by disabled people. As divine guidance states: "O YOU who have attained to faith! No men shall deride [other] men: it may well be that those [whom they deride] are better than themselves; and no women [shall deride other] women: it may well be that those [whom they deride] are better than themselves. And neither shall you defame one another, nor insult one another by [opprobrious] epithets: evil is all imputation of iniquity after [one has attained to] faith; and they who [become guilty thereof and] do not repent - it is they, they who are evildoers!".⁴² This verse prohibits calling someone by an offensive nickname. This blessed verse lays the foundation of Islamic ethics. Disabled people have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. They should be addressed and called in a good manner.

The Right to Hospitality: Islamic Provisions for Disabled Individuals

The Islamic tradition places a significant emphasis on the economic well-being and social inclusion of disabled individuals. According to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the responsibility for the financial welfare of disabled persons primarily rests with the state, yet it extends to the broader society. The Prophet (ﷺ) advocated for maintaining strong familial ties as a means to secure provisions and a prolonged life, reflecting the interconnectedness of personal well-being with social bonds.

In the context of disability, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ specifically underscored the importance of hospitality and service to disabled individuals. The Prophet's statement, as narrated by Anas bin Malik, emphasizes the virtue of assisting and maintaining good relations with disabled kin. This highlights the moral imperative of supporting disabled individuals, viewing such assistance as an honorable act that goes beyond personal gain.⁴³

Furthermore, the Hadith reported by Abu Ad-Darda emphasizes the idea of seeking out the weak for sustenance and victory. In the context of disability, this implies that supporting and caring for the disabled is not only a moral duty but also a source of strength and success for the community. The Prophet's words indicate that a society that looks after its vulnerable members is one that is blessed with sustenance and triumph.⁴⁴

These narrations collectively portray Islam as a religion that encourages compassion, empathy, and active support for disabled individuals. The moral and economic benefits associated with such noble actions align with the broader Islamic principles of justice, social welfare, and communal responsibility. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) provide a comprehensive guide for individuals and societies to fulfill their duty toward the economic well-being and dignified inclusion of disabled persons.

The Right of Kindness: Universal Justice and Compassion in Islam

Islam's framework for justice is inclusive and universal, encompassing both disabled and non-disabled individuals as rightful recipients and contributors to justice. The Quranic directive is explicit: "Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct."⁴⁵

Certainly, Allah commands justice and virtuous conduct. This verse encapsulates the dual obligation of justice and benevolence. Justice, a fundamental right for every member of society, coexists with benevolence, a right reserved for those deserving of kindness. Those deserving include individuals facing physical or mental disabilities, hindering their ability to lead a fully functional life.

Islam mandates that the state ensures the provision of all necessary facilities and opportunities for disabled individuals. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) defined benevolence when asked, stating: "To worship Allah as though you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion, then He sees you."⁴⁶

In this profound Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) equates benevolence with worship, emphasizing that treating disabled individuals with kindness is a form of worship. Just as worship is an obligatory duty, so is benevolence toward disabled individuals, and it should be carried out with the same devotion as worship.

Therefore, the Islamic ethos dictates not only the provision of justice to all individuals but also the obligation to show benevolence, especially towards those facing physical or mental challenges. This comprehensive approach aligns with the core principles of Islam, emphasizing justice, compassion, and communal responsibility.

The Right to Healthcare and Compassionate Prayers in Islam

Islam is a religion of brotherhood and mutual care. It instructs that when someone falls ill, they should be visited. This command of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is general, encompassing both disabled and non-disabled individuals. Unfortunately, in contemporary times, the practice of visiting the sick, especially those with disabilities, is not given the priority it deserves. This neglect not only infringes on their rights but also undermines the principles of justice and fairness.

Muslim society is like a wall, each part strengthening the other. The Prophet (ﷺ) enumerated six rights of

one believer over another, and among them, he emphasized the right of visiting when the person is sick: “He visits him when he is sick.”⁴⁷

This Hadith underscores the importance of visiting the sick, and it applies universally, irrespective of whether the person is disabled or not. The act of visiting the sick is not only a gesture of kindness but also a means of offering support, solace, and a sense of belonging to individuals facing physical or mental challenges.

In essence, Islam places great significance on maintaining the bonds of brotherhood, especially in times of sickness. By visiting the sick, Muslims fulfill a duty that not only embodies compassion but also upholds the principles of justice and equality within the Muslim community.

Praying for the Well-being of Disabled Individuals

Similar to other rights, it is also a right of disabled individuals to be prayed for their well-being. When a person with a disability approached you (ﷺ) seeking relief from their condition, you prayed for them.

This practice is rooted in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and reflects the compassionate nature of Islam. It signifies that, just like any other individual, a person with a disability has the right to seek improvement in their condition through prayers and supplications.

In this context, the Quran encourages believers to seek help through patience and prayer: “O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”⁴⁸

The Prophet's act of praying for the well-being of disabled individuals emphasizes the importance of invoking Allah's mercy and blessings upon them. It recognizes their struggles and acknowledges that seeking improvement is a legitimate and commendable desire.

As part of the broader concept of caring for the well-being of individuals with disabilities, prayer is considered a powerful tool in Islam. It not only seeks relief for the person but also demonstrates the communal responsibility of supporting and uplifting one another, irrespective of their physical or mental conditions.

Equal Educational Opportunities: Ensuring the Right to Education for Disabled Individuals in Society

Education plays a fundamental role in the development and progress of any nation. Education is a basic right of every human being. Disabled people have abilities, and education enhances those abilities. In this way, disabled people can also play their role in the development and progress of society. It is the responsibility of society to not deprive disabled people of their right to education.

Path of Benevolence: Islam's Call to Remove Obstacles and Discomfort for the Benefit of Disabled

Islam has been distinguished since the very beginning due to its humane qualities. Islam commands to remove any such thing from the path that causes discomfort to other Muslims. Where ordinary Muslims benefit from removing obstacles, disabled people will benefit even more. If something that causes discomfort is in the way, a disabled person can certainly stumble over it, but a person with a sound mind and body can also suddenly become its victim. As the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying that there was a tree which caused inconvenience to the Muslims; a person came there and cut that (tree) (and thus entered) Paradise.”⁴⁹

In a hadith, you ﷺ have declared the removal of discomfort from the path as charity. “Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: There is a (compulsory) Sadaqa (charity) to be given for every joint of the human body (as a sign of gratitude to Allah) everyday the sun rises. To judge justly between two persons is regarded as Sadaqa, and to help a man concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his luggage on to it, is also regarded as Sadaqa, and (saying) a good word is also Sadaqa, and every step taken on one's way to offer the compulsory prayer (in the mosque) is also Sadaqa and to remove a harmful thing from the way is also Sadaqa.”⁵⁰

Islam is distinguished by its humane qualities. Islam commands to remove any such thing from the path that causes discomfort to other Muslims. Where ordinary Muslims benefit from removing obstacles, disabled people will benefit even more. If something that causes discomfort is in the way, a disabled person can certainly stumble over it, but a person with a sound mind and body can also suddenly become its victim. As the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “You will find that the believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever”⁵¹. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said: “Do not consider any good deed insignificant, even meeting your brother with a cheerful face”⁵². If something is causing discomfort in the path, remove it.

Every individual has the right to have their disability eliminated or reduced through the process of rehabilitation, and to have their ability to work restored to the level of non-disabled individuals. The system of human rights is based on the principles of justice and fairness. However, when it comes to the rights of disabled individuals, Islam's approach is not limited to mere justice and fairness, but is based entirely on kindness. The Holy Quran reminds us of the rights of parents, stating that: “Your Lord has decreed: (i) Do not worship any

but Him; (ii) Be good to your parents; and should both or any one of them attain old age with you, do not say to them even "fie" neither chide them, but speak to them with respect".⁵³ This commandment of the Holy Quran regarding the treatment of parents extends to all individuals who have reached old age (including those with disabilities). Disabled individuals require extraordinary attention from society because they are dependent on others for many things. Islam has provided the best laws for the protection of the rights of disabled individuals, including respect, dignity, and other rights. These laws have practical examples in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and are numerous.

The most significant issue for disabled individuals worldwide today is the restoration of their rights. The individuals whose rights are being sought after worldwide are those with special needs. Until disabled individuals are given their complete rights, not just on the basis of equality but also on the basis of kindness, they cannot become productive and useful members of society. The lack of appropriate means of livelihood for disabled individuals is also a significant issue. This is causing an increase in their unemployment rate and hindering their abilities. Although a 2% quota has been set aside for disabled individuals, which is very low, it is not implemented on the basis of merit and capability⁵⁴. Sometimes, it is only limited to advertisements and does not translate into practical action. Disabled individuals should be given opportunities to serve society based on their own merit. Nowadays, there is a trend to deprive disabled individuals of their rights by considering them as a burden. People believe that they do not need wealth and property. However, Islam has made them heirs to inheritance. In the modern era, depriving them of their rights is a great injustice, similar to the ignorance of the past.

Empowering Disabled Individuals in Islam: Beyond Verbal Claims to Practical Rights and Dignity

Islamic law has declared the exemption of disabled individuals from unbearable responsibilities as their fundamental right. The following points are clear from Islamic teachings regarding disabled individuals: 1) Islam instructs to make disabled individuals a respectable and dignified part of society. 2) Islam teaches that disabled individuals should be given special attention and they should not be made to feel that they are being ignored in any field of life. 3) No such responsibility should be imposed on them in social and national life that is unbearable for them. 4) In the allocation of rights granted by Islam, disabled individuals should be given a preferential position so that every path of their access or feeling of deprivation is blocked in society.

Today, there is a need to make disabled individuals useful and productive members of society in every field of society in order to restore their rights. So that disabled individuals become those who shoulder the burden of society rather than becoming a burden on society, and such behavior should not be adopted with them that instead of enhancing their abilities, they are discouraged and they become a burden on society. Apparently, our behavior with disabled individuals is also one of the reasons for their disability. Islam orders to fulfill the rights of disabled individuals in practical terms rather than verbal claims.

4. Conclusion: Quranic and Seerat-e-Tayyiba Perspectives on Disability Rights

In exploring the rights of disabled individuals through the teachings of the Quran and Seerat-e-Tayyiba, it becomes evident that Islam places paramount importance on kindness, respect, and dignity for every individual, regardless of their abilities. The Quran, in its profound wisdom, underscores the significance of treating parents, including those with disabilities, with utmost kindness.

The global issue of restoring the rights of disabled individuals emerges as a central concern. Islam not only advocates for equality but emphasizes kindness as the cornerstone for ensuring the complete rights of disabled individuals. The societal challenges they face, such as unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities, necessitate a paradigm shift in attitudes. While a nominal 2% quota has been set, its effective implementation remains a challenge, often confined to mere advertisements.

Islam, however, envisions a society where disabled individuals are not perceived as burdens but as heirs to inheritance, entitled to respect, dignity, and opportunities for meaningful contributions. The exemption of disabled individuals from unbearable responsibilities is enshrined in Islamic law, signifying their fundamental right to be integral and dignified members of society.

In the pursuit of global justice and inclusivity, Islam guides us to accord preferential treatment to disabled individuals, ensuring that societal structures remove barriers and provide equal access to opportunities. It urges society to view disability not as a limitation but as a unique potential waiting to be realized.

As we navigate the complexities of contemporary challenges, Islam's timeless teachings beckon us to reflect on our responsibilities towards disabled individuals. Let our actions mirror the kindness advocated by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, for in uplifting the rights of disabled individuals, we forge a path towards a society where everyone, regardless of ability, can contribute meaningfully and thrive.

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