

Qur'an and People with Disabilities



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Allah (Exalted be He) is full of grace for man; He created him in the fairest stature, and has subjected to his use all things in the heavens and on earth. But – out of His will and wisdom- He takes away from some people some of these bounties, whether they are injuries or disabilities, whether being born with it, or becoming disabled afterwards.

No matter what caused it, the disabled suffers both physically and psychologically. Given that God has ordained justice on Himself, they, the disabled, are compensated fairly for it by Him; they have the same bounties in some other ways. For example, blind people have superior memory skills. Also, persons with hands disabilities have many other skills.

Also, compensation for disabilities in this life can take place in the Hereafter. Every disabled person should be patient and look for Allah's reward:

Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!
(Az-Zummar 39:10)

As for the psychological harm disabilities cause, the Qur'an and Sunnah in various texts talk about the remedies of such disabilities and disprivileges and God's rewards in order that the disabled's hearts can find peace and contentment.

Leave it to Allah



The soul rests and finds peace only when having trust in God, and, therefore, feeling satisfied with whatever God has decreed for them. That why Allah says:

And whatever favor is bestowed on you it is from Allah; then when evil afflicts you, to Him do you cry for aid. (An-Nahl 16:53)

Explaining this verse, At-Tabri says: having good health and able bodies, having a lot of money , it is from Allah alone, there can be no one other than Him. whatever happens in this world happens by Allah's will.

,Afflicted with hardships, illnesses, pray to Allah God for the amelioration of the condition, because no one other than Him could heal

In another place in the Qur'an, where much healing takes place, God says:

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 Allah: In order that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favors bestowed upon you. For Allah loves not any vainglorious boaster. (Al-Hadid :20,23)

Removal of Hardship



Out of mercy towards such servants with disabilities and excuses, God forgives the offence they may commit and removes the hardship they may encounter as a result of their failure to get out for jihad given their inability to do, considering the disability they have.

Out of His profound wisdom, God allows them an alternative act most suiting their conditions, i.e. advice for the sake of God, the Almighty, and His Messenger. Accordingly, if they do their dawah-based duty and advise obedience and faith for the sake of God and His Messenger, the sin resulting from their failure to join jihad will be forgiven for them.

After God mentioned those with excuses among the Bedouins and that those who lied to God and His Messenger sat at home, He said:

There is not upon the weak or upon the ill or upon those who do not find anything to spend any discomfort when they are sincere to God and His Messenger. There is not upon the doers of good any cause [for blame]. And God is Forgiving and Merciful. (At-Tawbah 9:91)

In another position, having mentioned those who remained behind among the Bedouins, God, the Almighty, said:

There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys God and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment. (An-Nur 24:61)

The crux of the matter is obedience to God, the Almighty, and His Messenger as far as possible.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us that those with a valid excuse get as much reward as those who get out, fight and exhaust themselves. He (peace be upon him) said: "You left behind some people in Madinah who did not fail to be with you wherever you went and whatever you spent (of your goods) and whatever valley you crossed." Prophet Muhammad was asked: "How can they be with us when they are still in Madinah?" He replied "They were hindered by a valid excuse."

Priority for Psychological Rights



How great is the religion where God, the Almighty, blames His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) for something belittled by many people! Had it not been revealed in the Quran, it would have passed unnoticed, but God, the Almighty, willed to reveal Qur'anic verses to be recited until the Day of Judgment at the beginning of a chapter named after the incident though the chapter came to handle matters of creed and the last day.

It is the chapter of "Abasa" whose beginning came as an honor for every blind person. Ibn Um Maktoum, a blind man, came to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) asking him to teach him from the knowledge God taught him, while he was busy with inviting a group of Qurayshi elders to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) frowned and turned away from the blind man. So God, the Almighty, revealed the following verses:

The Prophet frowned and turned away because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge] while he fears [God], from him you are distracted. (`Abasa 80:1-10)

This weak blind man who came in quest of guidance and knowledge is better in the sight of God than the elders of the people who disdained and turned away from the way of right. Though Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was busy with them for the sake of religion rather than himself as he wanted to guide them as a benefit for religion as a whole, all of this in the sight of God cannot be to the detriment of the weak Muslims including those with disabilities and others.

Commenting on this verse, Mr. Sayyid Qutb (may God be merciful to him) noted:

The matter is greater and more comprehensive than this individual incident and its direct subject matter. Rather, it pertains to the principle that people should receive standards and values from heaven rather than earth and take into account heavenly considerations rather than earthly considerations.

Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. (Al-Hujurat 13)

It is the noblest one in the sight of God that deserves care, attention and celebration, even if he lacks all other qualifications and considerations generally accepted under the pressure of the earthly reality and terrestrial context. Lineage, strength, money, and all other values are weightless when they are stripped of faith and piety. The only case where they are weighty is the case when they are used for the purposes of faith and piety.

Prohibition of Sarcasm and Mockery



The people with handicaps and disabilities may seem objects of sarcasm and mockery. Therefore, the Qur'anic prohibition of the acts of sarcasm and mockery is absolute, clear-cut, detailed and addressed to both men and women, using gender-specific terms and pronouns.

God, the Almighty, says:

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not carp at one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.
(Al-Hujurat 49:11)

This Qur'anic verse involves crystal clear prohibition that a people should not ridicule another people. Not content with that, the Qur'an addresses prohibition to women though they are included in the gender-inclusive term of "people". Foreknowing that ridicule is frequently made among women, God addressed particular prohibition to them.

The verse also includes prohibition of "carping", i.e. finding fault with one another which may assume the form of words or gestures. Then prohibition of calling one another by offensive nicknames follows later in the verse. Finally, the Qur'anic verse intimidates and dismisses those who may commit any of those prohibitions and refuse to repent as wrongdoers.

Those prohibitions may serve as a psychological siege which protects the people with handicaps and disabilities from any verbal or even gestural abuse so that a handicapped Muslim can live in the Muslim community in an atmosphere of friendliness and psychological peace with the wider society.

In corroboration of the foregoing, the Qur'anic context decisively emphasizes in the same chapter that the standard of preference in the sight of God is only piety and good works. God, the Almighty, says:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted. (Al-Hujurat 13)

Piety is the standard of preference in the sight of God, the Almighty, for both healthy and handicapped people according to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He said: "God does not look at your forms or your wealth, rather He looks at your deeds and your hearts." (Sunan Ibn Majah)

With those lofty, sublime values pioneered by Islam in mind, both healthy and handicapped people rest assured and have the peace of mind under the shade of the justice of God which requires absolute equality among His creatures.

The justice of God, the Almighty, entails that he who loses one of his senses should be compensated with another advantage. The greatest manifestation of this justice is represented in making preference among all people dependent on good deeds and heart rather than property or body.

The Handicap of the Non-recognition of the Right



It is known for people that deafness means the loss of the sense of hearing, and also blindness means the loss of the eyesight. However, this kind of handicap is a worldly one that Almighty God has promised those who forbear it a great reward as we showed previously.

Yet, there is a serious kind of handicap that some of those who were given a sharp eye and strong hearing take part in while those who lack these faculties in reality do not. It is the handicap of understanding and reasoning that ensues from relinquishing the religion of Allah and disbelieving in His Verses.

In numerous verses, the Qur'an referred to this accurate meaning which if the disabled understand, they will praise God for their conditions. So long as the handicap is not in religion or faith in Almighty Allah it is welcome.

The measures of God are based on his Absolute Justice and Great Wisdom. The real blindness is that of hearts. Neither the good vision keeps from blindness nor does a sound ear prevent deafness unless the person using them in considering the signs of Allah in the Universe and takes lessons from the past nations.

Almighty God says, "So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." (Al-Hajj 22:46) Al-Khatib Ash-Shirbini said regarding this verse, "This blindness is the only real one which is the loss of the insight."

Almighty God has threatened those who suspended their faculties from recognizing the signs of faith in Him with the punishment of Hellfire. He says, "And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless." (Al-A`raf 7:179)

Who fails to make use of his senses will be entered the Hellfire in the Hereafter while in this world he is not better than animals whose senses do not go beyond fulfilling their bodily and worldly needs, including food, drink and reproduction. Indeed, this is the utmost heedlessness, God forbids!

Almighty Allah characterized the disbelievers with the most prominent characteristics of handicap represented in deafness, dumbness and blindness. This involves a kind of entertainment for those who were stricken with any of these handicaps in reality. They have to praise God that He has made that handicap in their body not religion. Almighty God says, "The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at what hears nothing but calls and cries cattle or sheep - deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not understand." (Al-Baqarah 2:171)

Sheikh Said Qutb said regarding this verse, "This is the utmost reproach of those who handicap their mind, close the outlets of information and guidance and take the matters of doctrine and Islamic Shari`ah from the wrong directions."

Almighty Allah restricted the acceptance of guidance to those who hear the call of faith including those who lose the sense of hearing. Also, He described those who refrain from listening to guidance with death as He said, "Only those who hear will respond. But the dead - Allah will resurrect them; then to Him they will be returned." (Al-An`am 6:36)

God stresses this meaning in another place as He said, "Say, "I only warn you by revelation." But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned." (Al-Anbiya' 21:45)

Almighty Allah described those who fail to hear the call of Allah with loss of understanding which is the status of many animals that already have the sense of hearing but they do not recognize with it except some ambiguous things. He says, "Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason. Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them hear. And if He had made them hear, they would [still] have turned away, while they were refusing." (Al-Anfal 8:22-23)

In another verse, God denies the characteristics of understanding and hearing from those who take their own desires as their God and do not hear the call of their Lord, He says, "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him? Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except like livestock. Rather, they are [even] more astray in [their] way." (Al-Furqan 25:43-44)

Yet, those who suspended their faculty of hearing are going astray more than animals. The compiler of "At-Tahrir wa At-Tanwir" said regarding this, "God went on describing their state as he states that it is worse than that of animals. He confirmed that they are farther stray than animals. Going astray is deviating from the purposed end, because animals understand some of what they hear of deterrence from their shepherd while those people do not realize anything of the speech of their guide and leader, namely Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)."

Thus, the Qur'anic verses recur putting matters in its proper position making the society live in an atmosphere of psychological stability and social solidarity. It will be like one unity which the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted for his nation.