

Disability Topics in the Islamic Faith

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Agenda

- Disability in Islam
- The Concept of Test and Patience in Islam
- The story of Ibn Um Maktoom
- Disabled Individuals in the Islamic History
- Notes for Support Groups, Counseling and Independent Living Services
- Muslim Resources in Austin, TX.
- Q&A

Disability in Islam

- The concept of disability, as understood today, is not directly discussed in the Quran or the Sunnah/Tradition of the prophet, peace be upon him.
  - References to Deaf, Dumb and Blind in the Quran: Figurative Speech to those who reject God
  - Al-Quran 2:18 "They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they return not (to the Right Path)."
- Islam focus so much on intellect and reason to recognize God. (- *As if those who recognize or perceive God are mentally disabled !)*
  - References such as:
    - 36:68 "And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in creation; do they not then understand?"
    - 32:27 "Do they not see that We drive the water to the arid land and then We bring forth herbage from which their cattle and themselves eat; will they not then see?"
    - 7:26 "… Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may be mindful."
- Al-Quran 22:46 "Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? *Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are In their chests."*

Disability In Islam - continued

- Islam View of Disability:
  "Islam sees disability as morally neutral. It is seen neither as a blessing nor as a curse. Clearly, disability is therefore accepted as being an inevitable part of the human condition. It is simply a fact of life which has to be addressed appropriately by the society of the day. - *Imam Issa A. Musa Imam of Islamic Council of Victoria – "Disability: An Islamic Insight"*

  Some might consider disability as a Blessing.

  - Hadeeth: "When Allah wants good for a person, He afflicts him with difficulties and hardship (to test him/her)"

  - "Allah is with those who patiently persevere" Al-Quran 2:153, 2:249, 8:46, 8:66

The Concept of Test and Patience in Islam

- Islam teaches that all humans will be tested
  - Al-Quran 29:2 -3"Do men think that they will be left (at ease) because they say, We believe, and that they will not be tested with affliction? We did test those Before them, and Allah will certainly know (by bringing it to the world of reality) those who are true from those who are false"
- The Test in life is for all people – Able and Disable!
- Islam teaches patience: Al-Quran Chapter 103:
  "1. By time (Allah makes an oath)
  2. Indeed Man is in loss
  3. Except such as have faith and carry out benevolence, enjoining others unto truth, and reminding of patience."

The Concept of Test and Patience in Islam - Continued

- No Blame on the disabled individuals who cannot do good deeds
  - Al-Quran: 9:91 "There shall be no blame on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who do not find wealth to spend (in the sake of God), so long as they are sincere to Allah and His Apostle; there is no way (to blame) against the doers of good; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."
  - Al-Quran 48:17 "There is no harm in the blind, nor is there any harm in the lame, nor is there any harm in the sick and whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, and whoever turns back, He will punish him with a painful punishment"

The Story of Ibn Um Maktoom

- The story of Ibn Um Maktoom teaches equality in dealing with all people - Al-Quran 80:1-12 (Surat Abasa)
  - " 1. He frowned and turned away,
    2. because there came to him the blind man.
    3. What could inform thee that he might grow (in grace),
    4. or take heed and so the reminder might profit him?
    5. As for him who thinks himself independent,
    6. to him do you attend.
    7. And no blame is on you if he would not purify himself.
    8. And as to him who comes to you striving hard,
    9. and he fears God --
    10. from him will you divert yourself
    11. Nay! surely it is an reminder.
    12. Let him who will, mind it."
- Discussion of the Story

Disabled Individuals in the Islamic History

- Ibn Um Maktoom
  - *Performs the Call for the Prayers*
  - *The prophet appointed him as Amir (highest authority) in Madina when the prophet was out of Madina*
- Amr ibn Al-Jamuh was lame in one leg and walked with a clear limp.
  - *Died as a Martyr in the Battle of Uhud (though he was not required to attend because of his disability)*
- Julaibib was "unattractive" and "very short"
  - *When he died, the prophet dug the grave, and said: "This man is of me and I am of him." He repeated it several times so everyone could hear.*
- Imam Ibn Hazm (a leading Muslim jurist in Spain in the twelfth century) advocated that disability would not be an impediment to becoming a leader of the Ummah (Muslim Community)

Notes for Support Groups

- The Privacy of the disabled is paramount
- Disabled Muslims might still be required to perform religious duties like Prayers (based on the level of their disability). Accommodations should be made to such individuals.
- Faith of disabled individual maybe stronger than able individual. Do not underestimate their faith in God.
- Islamic Rules apply to disabled individuals as other individuals. (based on the level of their disability) for example:
  - Gender Mixing is not allowed (in most cases)
  - Treatment of disabled individuals by the opposite gender should only be permitted when same gender doctor is unavailable or for medical emergency
  - Consumption of Unlawful foods (such as the ones contain Pork Products, Alcohol products … etc) is forbidden. All meat must be slaughtered according to the Islamic Law.
  - When in doubt, ask the family or the Disabled Person
- You can also contact the closest Mosque with specific questions.

Notes for Support Groups - Continued

- How can I comfort a Disabled Individual/Family
  - Remind them that this life is a Test and that they need to be patient
  - Remind them that they will be rewarded for their patience
  - Tell them of successful stories of Disabled Muslims in the Past
  - Tell them that they there is no blame on them for not doing certain religious activities (based on their disability level)
  - Tell them that Islam treats all people equally. If they are being mistreated because of their disability, then it's the Cultural influence on the people and Islam does not approve of such behavior.
  - Explain to them that Islam teaches that we do not own our bodies – we are entrusted to look after our bodies. God is Wise, and He chooses to test us in several ways.
  - For the Family of the disabled, remind them with this hadith (saying) of the prophet: *'You are given sustenance and victory for the virtue of those who are weak amongst you.'*

Resources in Austin, TX

- Islamic Centers (Mosques) in Austin
  - North Austin Muslim Community Center – NAMCC
    - 11900 N. Lamar Blvd Austin, TX 78754
    - http://www.NAMCC.org
    - You may contact the Imam for questions about Religious Duties or for assistance in Counseling a disabled Muslim
  - Islamic Center of Greater Austin, ICGA 2 locations
    - 5110 Manor Road Austin, TX 78723
    - 1906 Nueces St Downtown Austin
    - http://www.AustinMosque.org
  - Masjid Ibrahim
    - 1701 W. Ben White Blvd Austin, TX 78704
    - http://www.MasjidIbrahim.org
  - The Islamic Ahlul Bayt Association (IABA) – *Shia Mosque*
    - http://www.iaba-austin.org

Q & A