

# Ways of Interacting with the Physically and Mentally Disabled in Religious Teachings

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## Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Physically and mentally disabled people are a part of community whose lifestyle has its own particular conditions and the quality of the interaction of people with them is of paramount importance. This issue has long been raised in human societies and religious teachings. Exploring verses and narratives to find out the duties of community members in their interaction with mentally and physically disabled people is one of the foundations of the research that helps enhance their quality of life. Therefore, this research is to find the view of the Holy Quran and narrations on how people should interact with mentally and physically disabled people.

**Method:** In this research, verses and narratives related to mentally and physically disabled people have been investigated through materials and thematic analysis. The authors reported no conflicts of interest.

**Results:** The findings show that people should provide mentally and physically disabled people with financial support, spiritual needs like respectful behavior, and no humiliation. Emotional needs such as affection and generosity; and social needs like interaction and assistance and avoiding resentment are the other types of need.

**Conclusion:** People play an important role in satisfying different needs of mentally and physically disabled people mentioned above. Performing these tasks by community members brings about positive features such as self-confidence, community reunification, empowerment and feeling of satisfaction in mentally and physically disabled people.

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## Summary

**Background and Objective:** Physically and mentally disabled people are a part of community whose lifestyle has its own particular conditions and the quality of the interaction of people with them is of paramount importance. This issue has long been raised, receiving attention in communities and religious teachings. Exploring verses and narratives to find out the duties of community members in their interaction with mentally and physically disabled people is one of the foundations of the research that helps increase their quality of life. Therefore, this research is to find the view of the Holy Quran and narrations on how people interact with mentally and physically disabled people.

**Method:** This descriptive research was conducted Using materials and thematic analysis. Verses and narratives related to mentally and physically disabled people were firstly extracted; then, they were categorized regarding their purposes. After that,

interactions with the mentally and physically disabled were examined and analyzed.

**Results:** According to the verses and hadiths, when interacting with the physically and mentally disabled, people have some duties as follow:

A) financial needs: in many hadiths providing basic and financial needs of the disabled is recommended. For example, according to one hadith, Imam Sadegh (PBUH) gave some money to a follower who was sight-impaired to employ a servant to help him for daily walk (1).

B) spiritual needs: This need is the most important need of disabled people which has two axes: 1. Respectful interaction of community with them and not disdaining them. As an example we can refer to the beginning verses of Abas surah that reads: whenever a needy person comes to you, if he is blind, the best thing to do is paying more attention to him and behaving kindly (2). 2. Following the Islamic rules when you are with them: some people have this wrong belief that if the person is blind or deaf, they can show any kinds of

behavior such as not wearing modest clothes or say whatever word -like gossiping- theological rules have forbidden such behavior and mindset, having ordered people to follow Islamic rules. As an example it is narrated that the son of Ome Maktom asked the Prophet to enter his house while his two wives Ayesha and Hafseh were with him, Prophet Mohammad ordered them to get up and go to their room: but they said: he is blind! Prophet answered: although he doesn't see you, you can see him (1).

C) emotional needs: One of the emotional needs of the disabled is treating them with kindness and respect which is highly recommended by our Imams. Abohamzeh Somali quoted from Imam Baqer (PBUH): If a human has these four traits, God will bestow him Heaven: providing a shelter for orphans, showing mercy to the disabled, being kind with his parents and getting along with his slaves (4). Apart from that, religious leaders showed their dissatisfaction with those who act against this. As an instance, Imam Hossein blamed the leaders who keep silent against the cruelty of oppressors and quoted: you have violated the rights of the weak, you have left the blind, deaf and disabled on their own and don't show them mercy (5).

D) social needs: Among the duties of people while encountering the disabled is an effective relationship with them. One of the good instances of this interaction is being present in their parties and also inviting them to your parties while talking and eating with them. It is narrated that the cause of descending this verse (Noor Surah 61) -that talks about giving permission to eat with the blind, lame and sick people- pointing out that healthy people shouldn't separate their foods from the disabled, trying to interact with each other (6).

To raise the motivation of people to provide the needs of the disabled, religious leaders have pointed out the rewards of God for them. For helping the blind, it is narrated: if someone helps a blind person to take forty steps, the reward of a little bit of that will be more than giving charity to the whole world (8), and also about the good deeds of conveying the message to the deaf people, Imam Sadegh said: helping the deaf understand a message without frowning and getting angry is a nice charity (3).

Not annoying the disabled is another need of their social needs. According to hadiths, bothering the disabled can be seen differently:

A) Gazing: staring at the disabled will annoy them. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) says: don't stare at those who suffer from leprosy since this upsets them (6).

B) Frightening: frightening the disabled causes their power or potential to decrease and this is against all Islamic and humane rules. Those who do this have to compensate. It is narrated that Imam Sadegh (PBUH) told Aboharoun Makfouf who was blind: what is your idea about a blind who walks around the city, suddenly a man calls him and says: There is a well in front of you and the blind man couldn't walk anymore. The blind man got close to the person and said: I was walking around the city and didn't need a guide; then

Imam said: He is your guide hereafter to compensate (11).

C) Mocking: Imam Sadegh said, when you see someone who got involved in a calamity and you are blessed, say: oh God, I never mock. I'm not proud and I thank you for all my big blessings (12).

D) Blaming: It is narrated that after Prophet Ayyub got cured, he was asked: what has bothered you the most when you were sick? He responded: Enemies' blames (5).

E) Showing off: This also upsets them. Prophet Mohammad quoted: when you see someone getting involved in a calamity, thank God but in a way that they don't hear you since they get sad (9).

**Conclusion:** People play an important role in meeting different needs of mentally and physically disabled people mentioned above. Performing these tasks by community members creates positive features such as self-confidence, community reunification, empowerment and feeling of satisfaction among mentally and physically disabled people.

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The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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