



# 40 Hadiths on Social Justice

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## Lecture Notes

## Chapter 35: They Are Not a Burden – How the Prophet (ﷺ) dealt with those with mental illness, disabilities, and special needs.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Anas reported that a woman had a partial derangement in her mind, so she said. Allah's Messenger, I want something from you. He said:

Mother of so and so, see on which side of the road you would like (to stand and talk) so that I may do the needful for you. He stood aside with her on the roadside until she got what she needed.

[Sahih Muslim]

عَنْ أَنَسٍ، أَنَّ امْرَأَةً، كَانَتْ فِي عَقْلِهَا شَيْءٌ  
فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةً  
فَقَالَ " يَا أُمُّ فَلَانٍ انْظُرِي أَيَّ السَّكَنِ  
شِئْتِ حَتَّى أَقْضِيَ لَكَ حَاجَتَكَ " . فَخَلَا  
مَعَهَا فِي بَعْضِ الطَّرِيقِ حَتَّى فَرَغَتْ مِنْ  
حَاجَتِهَا .

[صحيح مسلم]

### Introduction

- The Jahili Arabs would associate curses and bad omen to people with special needs. People would shy away from sitting with them and wouldn't eat with them.
  - The prophet (saw) would insist on drinking and eating with those with special needs.
- A cursory look at the history of the West shows the blatant neglect and persecution of people with special needs that culminated in killing disabled babies in some old European societies.
  - Superstitious beliefs were responsible for this setback. For example, it was believed that people suffering from intellectual disabilities were possessed by devils and evil spirits.
  - Even philosophers and scholars held such ideas. The laws of the legendary lawgiver of Sparta, Lycurgus, and the Athenian philosopher and lawmaker Solon allowed getting rid of those who had disabilities that made them unable to work or engage in war.

- Moreover, the renowned philosopher Plato came and declared that those who have special needs are a malicious category constituting a burden on the society and a damaging factor to his Republic.
- Likewise, English philosopher Herbert Spenser (1820-1903) called on the society to deny those with special needs any kind of help, claiming that this category constitutes a useless, heavy burden for a society to carry.
- When the world was floundering between theories that called for the execution of the mentally disabled and other theories that called for employing them in drudgery, the East and the West, at long last, rightly arrived at the idea of the perfect care for people with special needs.
  - On the other hand, we see how our Messenger was always so merciful toward this type of people.
- Many cultures today continue to have superstitious beliefs or stigmas connected to those with special needs.

### The Example of the Prophet (saw)

- We've spoken before about the Sahabi Julaybib and how the prophet (saw) treated him despite him being ostracized by society.
  - His name Julaybib meant the one who is deformed
  - We discussed his story when discussing racism.
  - The prophet (saw) said Julaybib was a part of his family.
    - "He is from me and I am from him."
- Hadith 35 from Sahih Muslim: عَنْ أَنَسٍ، أَنَّ امْرَأَةً، كَانَتْ فِي عَقْلِهَا شَيْءٌ فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةً فَقَالَ " يَا أُمُّ فُلَانٍ انْظُرِي إِلَى السُّكَّكِ شِئْتِ حَتَّى أَقْضِيَ لَكَ حَاجَتَكَ " . فَخَلَا مَعَهَا فِي بَعْضِ الطُّرُقِ حَتَّى فَرَعَتْ مِنْ حَاجَتِهَا .
  - There was a woman that had some sort of mental disability. She shouted at the prophet (saw), saying that she had a need that he can fulfill.
  - The prophet (saw) "O mother of so and so". That was a way of dignifying her.

- Then he said: “look to any direction/path that you need to walk to so I can fulfill you need”
  - He didn’t dismiss her or ask someone else to help her.
- The prophet (saw) walked with her in some different routes/directions
  - She didn’t even have one singular direction. Shows what her mental state was like.
- The prophet (saw) stayed with her until her need was fulfilled.
- Justice is the minimum in Islam but mercy is the standard.
  - The prophet (saw) demonstrated compassion and love.
  - He also shows humility as a leader and care for each and every one of his flock. His responsibility isn’t just to those of his followers that can benefit him.
- Story of Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom
  - While preoccupied with an attempt to persuade the chiefs of Quraysh to accept Islam, the Prophet (sAws) was interrupted by ‘Abdullah b. Um Maktum, a blind Sahabi. He ‘frowned’ and turned away when that happened. He didn’t get angry or upset, he just did عيوس, which is a wrinkle in the forehead. On top of that, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom could not even see him frowning.
  - Yet Allah revealed in Surah Abasa:
    - “He frowned and turned away, when the blind man came to him.”
    - “But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him?”
  - Meaning do not discount his spirituality or his access. It doesn’t matter if it may have no tangible benefit or less benefit on society.
  - This means that acts of worship must be accessible to those with special needs. For example, proper access to Masajid, including the Haramayn. MUHSEN organization is a great example of this. They certify Masajid and have a special needs Umrah.

- We don't judge who deserves spiritual nourishment.
- Hadith: المسجد بيت كل مؤمن. The mosque is the house of every believer.
  - That includes those with special needs.
- After that incident:
  - The Prophet (saw) would always greet Ibn Um Maktum by saying, "Welcome to the one for whom my Lord rebuked me!"
  - The Prophet (saw) appointed him as a muezzin upon migrating to Madinah.
  - The Prophet (saw) placed Madinah under his command during his absence on several occasions.
- Incident with 'Itban ibn Malik
  - Contrast with 'Itban ibn Malik (ra). He was a blind man from the Ansar.
  - He said to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "I wish that you, O Messenger of Allah, would come and perform Salah in my house so that I would take it as a place of prayer."
  - As a reply, the Prophet promised to visit him and perform prayer, so humbly saying, "I will do, if Allah so wills." `
  - 'Itban said, "Allah's Messenger and Abu Bakr came early in the morning. Allah's Messenger asked for permission to enter, which I gave." Without sitting, he immediately entered and said, "In which part of your house do you like me to pray?"
  - I pointed to a certain place in the house, so the Messenger of Allah stood and started praying and we, in turn, stood and he lined us in a row. He performed a two-rak'ah prayer, ending it with taslim (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

#### Extra Reward of Those with Special Needs

- Hadith of Bukhari: عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ إِذَا ابْتُلِيَ عَبْدِي بِحَبِيبَتَيْهِ فَصَبَرَ عَوَّضَتْهُ مِنْهُمَا الْجَنَّةُ

- Anas (rA) reports that the Messenger of Allah (sAws) said, "Allah said: If I afflict my servant in his two dear eyes and he remains patient, then he will be compensated for them with Paradise."
- Hadith of Bukhari: حَدَّثَنِي عَطَاءُ بْنُ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ ، قَالَ : قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ : أَلَا أُرِيكَ امْرَأَةً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ؟ قُلْتُ : بَلَى ، قَالَ : هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ السَّوْدَاءُ ، أَنْتِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَتْ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ! إِنِّي أُصْرَعُ ، وَإِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ لِي . فَقَالَ : " إِنْ شِئْتَ صَبَرْتِ وَلَكَ الْجَنَّةُ ، وَإِنْ شِئْتَ دَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُعَافِيكَ " . فَقَالَتْ : أَصْبِرُ . فَقَالَتْ : إِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ لَا أَتَكَشَّفَ ، فَدَعَا لَهَا
- Ibn 'Abbas once said to me ('Ata bin Abi Rabah), "Shall I show you a woman of the people of Paradise?" I said, "Yes." He said, "This black lady came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'I get attacks of epilepsy and my body becomes uncovered; please invoke Allah for me.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said (to her), 'If you wish, be patient and you will have (enter) Paradise; and if you wish, I will invoke Allah to cure you.' She said, 'I will remain patient,' and added, 'but I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me that I may not become uncovered.' So he invoked Allah for her."
- In another narration, "If you wish, be patient and you will not have any reckoning." She said, "I'll be patient, and not have any reckoning!"

### How Society Treats Those with Special Needs

- In a narration, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (rA) felt that he was more entitled to others, so the Prophet (saw) said, "And are you grant victory, or granted provisions, except by virtue of the weak among you?" [al-Bukhari; Kitab al-Jihad]
- Hadith: "Cursed is he who misleads a blind person away from his path"
- This speaks to an individual as well as a community.

### Competence of Those With Special Needs

- Just because someone has a special need doesn't mean they are incompetent, completely disabled, and should be disregarded. It may even be that they have a separate special ability.

- Muhammad Ali would say that people assumed his mind deteriorated due to his Parkinson's disease even though it didn't.
- Hadith: عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَجُلٌ أَعْمَى فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِي قَائِدٌ يَقُودُنِي إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ فَسَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُرَخَّصَ لَهُ فَيُصَلِّيَ فِي بَيْتِهِ فَرَخَّصَ لَهُ فَلَمَّا وَلَّى دَعَاهُ فَقَالَ هَلْ تَسْمَعُ النِّدَاءَ بِالصَّلَاةِ؟ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَأَجِبْ
- Abu Hurayra (rA) reported that a blind man came to the Prophet (sAws) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have no one to guide me to the mosque." So he asked the Messenger of Allah for a concession to pray in his home and he was given a concession. When he turned away, the Prophet called him and said, "Can you hear the call to prayer?" He said yes. The Prophet said, "Then respond to it."
- The concession of not going to every Salah is still but the prophet (saw) understood something from this man's question.

### There is No Decrease in Reward for Those with Special Needs

- Hadith of Bukhari: Zayd ibn Thabit (rA) narrates that when the verse was revealed "Those of the believers who sit behind... are not on an equality with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives." [an-Nisa': 95] Ibn Um Maktum came forward as the Prophet (sAws) was dictating this verse to me, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, if I was capable of jihad, I certainly would have." Then, Allah (the Mighty and Majestic) revealed, "Except for those who have a disabling hurt." [an-Nisa': 95]
- Despite being specifically exempt for his disability, and despite being the one who earnestly asked Allah for that revelation, Ibn Um Maktum still could not keep his ambitious spirit from seeking greatness. Thus, he (rA) was martyred during the rule of 'Umar in a momentous victory against the Persians. Found his body firmly gripping on the banner of Tawheed.
- Similarly, 'Amr b. al-Jamuh (rA) came complaining to the Prophet (sAws) before Uhud: "My sons want to prevent me from going out to fight with you, but by Allah, I wish to step with this crippled leg of mine in Paradise!" The Prophet (sAws) said, "Allah has indeed excused you, so you are not obligated to engage in jihad." Then, he said to his sons, "Do not hold him back; perhaps Allah will grant him martyrdom."



He did in fact fall martyr at Uhud, and the Prophet (sAws) passed by his body and said, "It's as if I can see you walking with that leg of yours, and hearing it, in Jannah."

- If someone prays Salah while sitting down or lying down, it won't decrease their reward in any way.
- The Hadith that mentions a decrease in reward is about those are able to pray standing but choose to pray their optional Salahs like Qiyam while sitting.

### Fihi Issues

- "Verily, Allah absolved the blind from the duties that necessitate eyesight, the crippled from the duties that involve walking or cannot be done with lameness, and the sick from the duties canceled on account of sickness, such as fasting, the conditions and pillars of salah, and jihad and so forth." (Imam al-Qurtubi)
- The Prophet (sAws) made it clear that three types of people are not accountable; "A sleeping person till he wakes up, a child till he grows up, and an insane person till he turns sane" (Ibn Majah).
- Allah has not only absolved them, but has also absolved their caretakers in some cases.
  - Those who need to leave Muzdalifah at night because they're vulnerable
  - Those who need to stay home because they're sick, those who must miss Jumu'ah because of some disability. Those who need to be present to drive, serve, protect them are also consequently absolved.
- It is reported that when the Prophet headed along with his army toward Uhud, intending to pass by a farm owned by a blind hypocrite, the latter insulted the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The blind man picked a handful of dust and insolently said to the Prophet, "By Allah, if I am certain that none but you will be affected by it, I will definitely throw it at you." The Companions of the Prophet were about to kill that blind person, but the Prophet forbade them, saying, "Leave him alone" (Ibn Kathir).



- The Prophet did not capitalize on the fact that the blind man was weak; he did not order that he be killed or even harmed, though the Muslim army was on its way to battle and the situation was critical and the nerves were tense.
- Al-Hasan ibn Muhammad said, "I entered upon Abi Zayd Al-Ansari, who called out the Adhan and Iqamah while he was sitting." He added, "a man advanced and led us in prayer. That man was lame whose leg was hit in the Cause of Allah, the Exalted" (Al-Baihaqi).

### History

- The Prophet's society was a society that was marked by mutual support, cooperation, and unity in consoling, honoring, and respecting those with special needs. For all of this, the course of the merciful Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was the role model in dealing with those who have special needs.
- 'Ataa ibn Abi Rabah was the first Mufti of Makkah. He was blind and paralyzed from the waist down.
- Umar b. 'Abdil'Aziz (rA) instructed his governors from each province to send him the names of the blind, crippled, and too chronically ill to pray in congregation. He then ordered by every blind person should have an assistant to look after him/her, and that every two chronically ill (special needs) persons be attended by a servant. [Ibn al-Jawzi]
- Al-Walid b. 'AbdilMalik (rA) was first to establish care centers for people with special needs. Doctors and caretakers with fixed stipends from the state were hired for this. Special allowance for persons with special needs were granted, and home-aids were sent to the disabled, crippled, and blind. [Ibn Kathir, Tabari]

### Conclusion

- When a person is ill, they are attended by the angels.
- The prophet (saw) said that when you visit someone who is ill, you are accompanied by 70,000 angels and they are still with you when you leave.
- If you want to bring angels in your house or community, you dedicate yourself to serving those who are ill.