

Chapter 73: Physically Handicapped Children

Some children are physically handicapped from birth, others develop infirmities after accidents. There are many physical disabilities like blindness, lameness, deafness, dumbness etc. There are other children, who may not have any physical abnormalities, but they might be abnormally short, fat, with jutting teeth, small and sunken eyes and several such features.

There is no fault of the individuals with these aberrations. Allah has given birth to them, as they are. All the creations have their own beauty, it is our thinking that makes yardsticks for judging good looks.

Since the disabled individuals will be conscious of their disability, they will be sad and subject to the feeling of inferiority. If efforts are not made to remove this feeling from their minds, they will always be sad and morose.

With the inferiority complex in him, a person loses his vibrant personality. They start thinking that they are incapable of any good. They will be reluctant to accept responsibilities and come forward to work with alacrity. They literally surrender ignominiously. They might even have access to criminal thoughts as a rebellion against their pitiable condition in the social fabric.

The disabled are pitiable. It is the duty of the other members of the society to put such handicapped persons at ease. They should give them the same treatment as they give to any normal person. They should not make them conscious of their defect through any overt or covert act. Some people cut practical jokes on the handicapped persons making their defect a matter of ridicule. This will be like piercing their hearts with arrows.

Islam strictly prohibits laughing about the physical defects of others. This attitude is counted amongst the major sins a person can commit. There is order for so much care in this matter that the believers are required not even to do anything that can slightly remind the handicapped person of his defect.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

"Don't stare at people under distress and at the lepers, lest your looks provoke the feelings of sadness and shame in their hearts."¹

It is the responsibility of Muslims to show more attention and care to such persons with a view to ameliorate their feelings of sadness. They must encourage the handicapped to lead as normal a life as possible. The parents of handicapped children carry an onerous responsibility. They should remember that even the handicapped are having the capacity to excel. If the parents try to fathom the aptitude of such children and help them to utilize their latent capabilities properly, they can be molded into efficient and skilled persons. They can excel in scientific and technical fields.

Thus they can achieve respected positions in the society. There are innumerable instances of handicapped persons scaling big heights in different activities and reaching the pinnacle of success despite their defects. The parents should not be conscious of their child's defects and also abstain from mentioning about it to anyone, at least not in the presence of the child himself or his siblings.

They should not mention about the defect in the child even in a commiserating manner. Their treatment of this child should not be any different than the treatment they give to their other normal children. If a handicapped child expresses his anxiety about his defect, the parents must try to put him at ease. Remind him of, and praise, his other faculties and encourage him to make good use of them to prove himself a useful member of the society.

The parents must make a careful study of the latent capabilities in the handicapped child and then consult knowledgeable persons to seek their advice and recommendations for the right course of action. Then they should humor and encourage the child to try and develop the chosen skills. The parents will thus be doing a great service to the society by making their handicapped child a useful member of the community.

Thus, the handicapped person would, in a way, overcome his handicap and make the best use of the talent gifted by Allah to him.

A girl writes in her letter thus:

"A friend of mine told her life's story to me in these words:

' One day I fell down to the ground from the terrace when I was thirteen years old. My back-bone was fractured which rendered me a handicapped person for life. For some time I got treatment at a hospital. Although I had terrific pain, later on I realized that the days at the hospital were the better days for me than what I suffered after returning home.

When I was discharged from the hospital and reached home, my parents started treating me as a sworn enemy. They used to say, ' You are the cause of shame and ill luck for us How can we tell others that we are the parents of a crippled daughter? You will remain foisted on us forever Instead of consoling me for my predicament, day and night they were taunting me.

They never for a moment thought that I was the victim of an unfortunate accident and personally not responsible for what happened. to me. I used to plead to Allah every day to give me death and release

me from the life I was living With my paralyzed legs, I used to drag myself around the house and do the work. None ever bothered about my predicament. In fact my parents stopped considering me their daughter.

My youth was being spent in sorrow and pain. At the age of 15 I looked like an old woman of fifty. My parents died and my brothers and sisters never bothered about me. After sometime I was married. My husband was a very kind person. He loved me very much. Prior to this I had forgotten what is love and affection. Now my condition started to improve day by day. I am now a hale and hearty person. Allah has given me children. I am now spending a happy and contented life.”.

1. Bihar al-anwar, v 75, p. 15

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