

# Islamic Ethics of Disability: A Sunnah-Based Model for Social Integration

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## Abstract

This research aims to investigate the foundational principles governing Prophet Muhammad's interactions with people with disabilities, ultimately formulating a normative model for Islamic-based social integration. The study addresses the unfortunate reality that people with disabilities continue to face persistent marginalization and stigma within contemporary Muslim societies, despite the strong ethical teachings of Islam. This paper offers a crucial new perspective by shifting the focus of Islamic disability studies from traditional theological and juridical approaches toward a sociological analysis rooted in the Prophet's actual social practices. The methodology employed is qualitative library research, utilizing primary data from the Hadith, *Sīrah* (Prophetic biography), and classical Islamic texts, complemented by secondary data from contemporary scholarly literature. The analysis is conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, synergistically applying Émile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social capital, and John Rawls' theory of justice. The findings demonstrate that the Prophet's interactions were not merely acts of moral compassion but rather reflected a systematic effort to build social participation and responsibility among people with disabilities. This was achieved through the deliberate provision of symbolic capital (honor and recognition), the elimination of stigma, and the active provision of equal social access. The novelty of this research is the formulation of a Sunnah-based social inclusion model that integrates Islamic values with modern sociological theory, thereby explicitly enriching the discourse on modern social integration and global disability studies, while also serving as an inspiration for policies and empowerment strategies for persons with disabilities in contemporary society.

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## INTRODUCTION

Disability, whether physical or mental, is an inseparable part of the reality of life in society. People with disabilities often face social challenges ([Jurado Caraballo & Quintana García, 2025](#)) and discrimination that often prevent them from participating fully in various aspects of life, such as in the world of work ([Kusmawati et al., 2024](#)), economy, society, and politics ([Mulyani et al., 2022](#)). This is exacerbated by the negative stigmas attached to them. In many countries, including those with Muslim majorities, persons with disabilities are still often viewed as a marginalized group ([Banks et al., 2017](#)).

According to a 2023 report by the World Health Organization (WHO), it is estimated that there are around 1.3 billion people in the world, or around 16% of the global population, who live with significant disabilities ([WHO, 2023](#)). Most of them live in low- and middle-income countries, including countries with Muslim-majority populations, which still face limited access to education, employment, health services, and social participation ([WHO, 2023](#)). These inequalities are not only structural in nature but also stem from social stigma and negative perceptions that remain strong towards people with disabilities. *Rohwerder's* study shows that stigma in developing countries is often influenced by cultural beliefs, misguided religious interpretations, poverty, and a lack of

medical understanding of disability, which leads to social exclusion and systemic discrimination (Rohwerder, 2018).

In line with this, Babik and Gardner emphasize that social stigma towards disability is formed from an early age through family, education, and media environments, due to a lack of positive interactions that reinforce negative stereotypes towards people with disabilities (Babik & Gardner, 2021). In the context of modern Muslim societies, similar phenomena are still widely found. Disability is often perceived as a test, a curse, or the result of sin, even though Islamic teachings emphasize the equal dignity of every human being before Allah regardless of their physical condition (Bengtsson, 2018). These empirical facts demonstrate the urgency of reviewing Islamic normative values in order to build a more inclusive and equitable social paradigm for persons with disabilities. This highlights the importance of a more inclusive and egalitarian approach towards them, especially in the context of religion, which should be the main driver of social equality and justice.

Islam, as a religion of *rahmah*, emphasizes the values of equality, justice, and respect for every individual regardless of background, social status, or even physical condition. The Prophet Muhammad, as a role model, paid great attention to people with disabilities. In his life history, Prophet Muhammad interacted with people with disabilities such as 'Abdullah ibn Umī Maktūm and 'Itban ibn Mālik who were blind, 'Amar ibn al-Jamuh, a person with a physical disability (lameness), and others, confirming that the Prophet cared not only about spiritual matters but also about social and communal issues occurring in real societal life.

The Prophet's interaction with people with disabilities illustrates a model of social inclusion based on principles of justice, respect, and equality for all groups. The Prophet did not marginalize his companions with disabilities; instead, he gave them the same place to play active roles in Medina society, in social and religious life.

In the contemporary era, the issue of disability and social integration has become highly relevant, both in the context of Muslim countries and globally. Although many countries have established various policies to protect the rights of people with disabilities (Fisher et al., 2023), the challenges in achieving better social integration remain. Therefore, it is important to explore the principles of social integration taught by the Prophet Muhammad in order to enrich our perspective and apply them in a modern context, with the aim of reducing stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities.

Several pieces of literature have examined this topic, including studies on the ethics and patterns of interaction of the Prophet with persons with disabilities. Existing studies tend to examine the Islamic view of persons with disabilities, in which Islam shows compassion, social justice, equality, and emphasizes the dignity of persons with disabilities, as in the studies by Mehmood & Parveen, (2024) and Zakiyah & Ghifari, (2023). In addition to these values, other studies highlight the theological and legal reflections of Islam on the condition of persons with disabilities, where theologically, this condition can be an opportunity to increase spirituality, while in Islamic law, they are guaranteed health and spiritual practices such as patience and gratitude, as in the study by Singh, (2024). Other research explores the rights of persons with disabilities in Islam and concludes that persons with disabilities require special attention because they are dependent on others and will never be productive and useful in a social environment until their rights are fulfilled, as in the study by Ahmad et al., (2023). In contrast to the previous studies, the studies by Junaidi et al., (2024) and K. Goje, (2025) look at how the Prophet empowered people with disabilities and state that the sunnah is more friendly towards people with disabilities, thus combining a modern approach and the sunnah in the agenda of optimizing policy provision and best practices to improve the conditions of people with disabilities.

These studies have not yet examined the Prophet's patterns of interaction with persons with disabilities in the context of building social integration and cohesion. Not only how the Prophet treated them, but also his efforts to provide opportunities for participation and responsibility to persons with disabilities in accordance with their competencies so that they could be involved and

contribute to the social environment. This study also seeks to explore the values of empowerment that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) practiced toward persons with disabilities, particularly in the areas of education and the provision of opportunities for social participation. The lack of attention to this empowering dimension has caused much of the existing scholarship to focus solely on the moral and theological values of Islam toward persons with disabilities, resulting in an understanding of interactions that remain static rather than inclusive. In this regard, the present research asserts the necessity of a paradigmatic shift from a narrowly theological and juridical focus centered primarily on moral virtue, patience, and ritual exemptions toward a sociological-practical analysis of the Prophet's patterns of interaction. This perspective demonstrates that the Prophet's actions were not merely expressions of compassion but rather systematic strategies for constructing social integration and communal cohesion within the Medina society.

The primary novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis between the Sunnah and modern sociological theory namely, Émile Durkheim's organic solidarity, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social capital, and John Rawls' difference principle to substantiate that the Prophet actively engaged in functional empowerment of persons with disabilities. This was manifested through the provision of symbolic capital, such as recognition, dignity, and social esteem to eliminate stigma, and, more critically, the granting of functional access to structural positions of significance, such as serving as the *mu'azzin* and as the Prophet's deputy in Medina. Accordingly, this study formulates a Sunnah-Based Model of Social Inclusion that reframes persons with disabilities not as objects of pity but as active subjects contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Conceptually, the innovative contribution of this article lies in its shift of focus from the ethics of passive treatment toward a structural analysis of the Prophet's empowerment practices in fostering social integration and cohesion. The distinctive perspective advanced herein is that the Prophet deliberately implemented empowerment-oriented policies by granting opportunities, roles, and social responsibilities aligned with each individual's capacities. By examining this dimension, the study underscores that the *sīrah nabawiyah* represents not merely a historical record of moral virtue but a model of capability-based social inclusivity, offering both a theoretical framework and a practical blueprint for addressing the challenges of disability integration in contemporary Muslim societies.

## METHODS

This study aims to redirect the focus of Islamic disability studies from predominantly theological and juridical dimensions toward an exploration of the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with persons with disabilities as tangible social practices that foster communal integration. In contrast to earlier research that highlights themes of compassion, patience, or Islamic jurisprudence concerning disability, this study situates the Prophet's engagements with his disabled companions within the theoretical perspectives of Durkheim's social integration, Bourdieu's notions of *habitus* and social capital, and Rawls' theory of justice. Through this interdisciplinary synthesis, the Prophet's conduct is revealed to be not only historically significant but also academically relevant for expanding contemporary discussions on social integration and disability studies. Consequently, this research offers an innovative contribution by proposing an Islamic value-based model of social inclusion that can inform policy development and practical strategies for the empowerment of people with disabilities, particularly within Muslim-majority societies.

In line with this novel focus, this study aims to explore two subtopics: first, the Prophet's interactions with persons with disabilities; second, the principles of the Prophet's interactions with persons with disabilities that can serve as a model for social integration for persons with disabilities in modern society. This study is qualitative research with a library research approach (Naamy, 2019). This method was deliberately chosen to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the substance of the Prophet's interactions with persons with disabilities obtained from relevant and credible data on this topic.

Furthermore, this study uses a descriptive-analytical approach to describe the patterns of the Prophet's interactions with his companions with disabilities and analyze these principles of interaction with social integration theory to see the core perspective of this subject (Ambarwati, 2022). Furthermore, the research data is classified into two categories: primary and secondary data. The primary data for this study are sources that contain the Prophet's interactions with his companions with disabilities, including Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muṣṭafī, Tārīkh Ibn Sa'ad, Tārīkh Ibn Hishām, and others. These sources were chosen because of their influence and recognition in explaining information about the Prophet's life. Meanwhile, secondary data are used to enrich the analysis. The secondary data in this study are books and articles related to Islamic ethics and the Prophet's interactions with people with disabilities. This study is expected to contribute to providing a broader perspective on the principles of interacting with people with disabilities in a more inclusive manner based on Islamic values to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities in social and religious life.

Data analysis was conducted in three stages. First, content analysis to classify primary data into categories of patterns of interaction between the Prophet and his companions with disabilities. Second, thematic analysis to extract main themes such as respect, empowerment, inclusion, and social justice. Third, critical analysis using Emile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social capital, and John Rawls' theory of justice to see the similarities and differences with Islamic principles. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, which involves comparing primary information with secondary interpretations, as well as through discussions with experts in Islamic studies and sociology to reduce analysis bias. With this methodological framework, the research is expected to produce systematic, credible, and academically accountable findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Prophet's Interaction with People with Disabilities

In several hadiths and history books, there are references to companions with disabilities and their interactions with the Prophet. This section will describe the Prophet's interactions with these companions with disabilities. This section is important to provide a foundation for seeing the principles of social integration practiced by the Prophet in forming a society that is inclusive and friendly towards people with disabilities.

First, 'Abdullah ibn Ummi Maktūm. His real name was 'Abdillāh ibn Qais ibn Zaidah ibn al-Asham ibn Rawahah al-Qurasyī al-'Amirī. Meanwhile, the name Ummi Maktūm came from his mother's nickname, 'Atikah, who was one of the people who migrated to Medina in the early wave (al-Zahabi, 1985). According to Ibn Sa'ad, migrated before the Battle of Badr. In Medina (ibn Sa'ad, 2001), he was respected by the Prophet, appointed as one of the (*mu'aẓẓins*) (ibn Sa'ad, 2001), and appointed by the Prophet as his representative in Medina during the war as well as the imam for Muslim prayers.

Abdullah ibn Ummi Maktūm, in his interactions with the Prophet, was twice the reason for the revelation of verses, namely Surah 'Abasa verses 1-10, when the Prophet was busy preaching to the leaders of the Quraish. The Prophet hoped that they would embrace Islam so that their followers would also embrace Islam. In the midst of the conversation, Ibn Ummi Maktūm came and interrupted them, saying, "*O Messenger of Allah, teach me what Allah has taught you!*" He continued to repeat this request without knowing that the Prophet was busy preaching to the leaders of the Quraish. This incident led to ridicule from the Quraish leaders that the Prophet's followers were only blind, ignorant, and slaves. This situation suddenly made the Prophet turn his face away from Ibn Ummi Maktūm and only stare while talking with the Quraish leaders. Then the surah 'Abasa was revealed as a warning to the Prophet not to ignore people who sincerely wanted to learn about their religion, even if they were blind (al-Qasimi, 1418). Since this incident, the Prophet always joked whenever he met Ibn Ummi Maktūm, saying, "*Welcome, the one for whom my Lord rebuked me,*" and the Prophet spread his cloak to embrace him" (al-Shabuni, 1997).

Ibn Ummi Maktūm was also the reason for the revelation of verse Q.S al-Maidah [4]: 95, which states that there is no equality between believers who sit idly by (not participating in jihad) and those who go to jihad, whether with their wealth or their lives. This verse was revealed after the Battle of Badr, where a group of people refused to go to the battlefield while the Prophet was fighting (al-Shabuni, 1997). When this verse was revealed, Ibn Ummi Maktūm, who did not participate in the battle because he was blind, asked, "*O Messenger of Allah, I am blind. If I were able, I would certainly join the battle. Is there any leniency for me?*". Then the continuation of the verse *Ghair ulu al-dharar* (except the blind) was revealed, which excludes and gives leniency to people who have '*uzur syar'i*' (obstacles justified by sharia) for not participating in battle, such as people with disabilities and other illnesses (al-Zuhaili, 1418).

In Fazlur Rahman's analysis, this hadith/event demonstrates two hermeneutical movements. First, historically, God's reprimand was a correction to the priority of *da'wah* (preaching/invitation to Islam) which was still influenced by the elitist social system of Mecca. Second, normatively, the verse affirms the principle of spiritual justice, that every individual has an equal right to receive religious guidance. The *ratio legis* (underlying reason/legal principle) of this event is the affirmation of the value of equality and respect for the pursuit of knowledge, regardless of physical condition. The Prophet subsequently changed his behavior significantly every time he met Ibn Umm Maktūm; he would greet him with great respect, saying, "*Welcome to the one because of whom my Lord rebuked me.*" This shows that Islam not only corrected individual behavior but also reformed the social structure that was discriminatory against people with disabilities.

Another companion who was also blind was 'Itban ibn Mālik ibn 'Umar ibn al-'Ijlan (ibn Sa'ad, 2001). According to Ibn Sa'ad and Ibn Ishāq, the Prophet Muhammad made 'Itban ibn Mālik and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab brothers. 'Itban ibn Mālik even participated in the battles of Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq despite being blind. Al-Bukhārī narrated that 'Itban ibn Mālik led his people in prayer. This happened when one day he complained to the Prophet, "*O Messenger of Allah, lately the nights have been very dark with rain and strong winds, and I am blind. Would you please pray in a place in my house that will become my place of prayer?*". The Prophet said, "*Where is the place of prayer that you like?*". 'Itban then showed him the place he liked, and the Messenger of Allah prayed there. That place became the place of prayer for 'Itban and his people (al-Bukhari, 1422). However, on another occasion, he asked for leniency so that he would not have to pray in congregation at the Prophet's Mosque, but the Prophet refused, saying, "*Do you hear the call to prayer?*" 'Itban replied, "*Yes.*" "*Then there is no leniency for you,*" replied the Prophet (ibn Sa'ad, 2001).

The hadith concerning 'Itban ibn Mālik illustrates the Prophet's empathetic dimension towards the specific needs of people with disabilities. According to the narration by al-Bukhārī, 'Itban was a companion of the Prophet who suffered from blindness in the later years of his life. He complained to the Messenger of Allah that heavy rain and the darkness of night made it difficult for him to go to the mosque. He requested that the Prophet be willing to pray in his house so that the place could be designated as a private *musalla* (place of prayer). The Prophet granted his request and performed the prayer there.

The social context of this hadith is in the Medinan phase, where the Muslim community had established a stable social and ritual structure. 'Itban's request was not merely a personal plea but a reflection of the need for spiritual access for groups with physical limitations. Within the framework of *asbābu al-wurūd* (the occasion or reason for the hadith), this hadith shows that the Prophet did not view disability as an obstacle to religious practice but rather accommodated it through legal flexibility (*rukhsah*). According to Fazlur Rahman, the Prophet's action reflects the second movement in his hermeneutics: the derivation of a universal normative principle that Islamic law embodies the spirit of compassion and ease (*taysir*). The *ratio legis* (underlying legal principle) lies in the recognition of the spiritual rights of people with disabilities to remain engaged in religious life in a manner consistent with their capabilities. The Prophet rejected exclusion and presented equal spiritual inclusion.

'Umar ibn al-Jamuh ibn Zaid ibn Haram was a man with a severe disability (ibn Sa'ad, 2001). Before the Battle of Uhud, 'Amar ibn al-Jamuh expressed his desire to participate in the battle because he had not participated in the Battle of Badr. However, his children opposed his desire because of his chronic disability. Then he reported to the Messenger of Allah and said, "My children are preventing me from joining you in battle, but I really want to set my crippled foot in Paradise." The Prophet replied, "You have a valid excuse not to participate in the battle, so there is no obligation for you to perform jihad." Meanwhile, the Prophet also advised 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh's children not to prevent their father from participating in the battle and to pray that their father would become a martyr. Finally, 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh joined the battle and was martyred in it (ibn Sa'ad, 2001). Al-Zahabi narrated that the Prophet once asked the Bani Sualaim, "Who is your leader?" They replied, "Our leader is al-Jad ibn Qais, but we are not loyal to him." The Prophet continued, "What disease is more dangerous than the absence of loyalty in a group? Your leader is al-Ja'd al-Abyad, namely 'Amar ibn al-Jamuh" (al-Zahabi, 1987). On another occasion, the Prophet also praised 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh by saying, "The best man is 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh" (ibn Sa'ad, 2001).

'Umar ibn al-Jamuh was a companion with a physical disability (a severe lame). When the Battle of Uhud took place, he wanted to participate in the fighting despite being opposed by his children due to his physical condition. Initially, the Prophet granted him an exemption from the obligation of *jihad*, but upon seeing his immense enthusiasm, he granted permission and prayed for him to achieve martyrdom (*syahid*). He subsequently fell in the battlefield.

The *asbābu al-wurūd* (occasion for the event) of this incident shows that the pre-Islamic Arabian society highly upheld the value of physical courage as the benchmark for honor. By allowing 'Umar to participate in the war, the Prophet performed a deconstruction of the paradigm of physical strength into spiritual and moral strength. From Fazlur Rahman's perspective, the Prophet's action represents the first movement (historical understanding) the acknowledgment of the Arab masculine value system and the second movement (normative) the transformation of that value into a universal moral ethic. This ethic dictates that true courage stems from sincerity and the intention to struggle for the sake of truth, not from physical perfection. The *ratio legis* (underlying legal principle) is the shift in the meaning of *jihād* from a physical activity towards moral and social dedication. This simultaneously affirms that Islam provides space for active participation for people with disabilities according to their capacity without diminishing the value of their deeds.

Next was Julaibib, a companion of the Prophet who had an unattractive and small body (dwarfism). His unattractive appearance caused him to be disliked by the people of Medina and tended to be shunned in social circles. However, the Messenger of Allah was very close to Julaibib and respected him greatly because of his praiseworthy character. Some of the companions often joked with Julaibib because he was still single, so one day the Prophet himself proposed a woman from the Ansar tribe to him. The woman's father wanted to discuss it first with his wife, and his wife rejected the proposal because of Julaibib's poor physical condition. Before her father conveyed his decision to refuse, his daughter said, "Are you going to reject the request of the Prophet?" The couple finally changed their minds and agreed to marry their daughter to Julaibib (al-Zahabi, 1987). It did not end there. While accompanying the Prophet in a battle, Julaibib died a martyr there. After the battle ended and the Muslim army emerged victorious, the Prophet asked his companions, "Have you lost anyone?" They mentioned their companions who had fallen on the battlefield. The Prophet asked three times, then he continued, "I have lost Julaibib. Find his body!" They searched through the pile of bodies and found Julaibib's body in the middle of seven enemy bodies that he had killed. Then the Prophet approached his body and said, "This body (Julaibib) is a part of me, and I am a part of him" (Ibn al Hajaj, 1987).

Julaibib was a companion of the Prophet described as being small-bodied and unattractive in appearance. In the Medinan society, which was still heavily burdened by social hierarchy based on lineage and looks, he faced discrimination and found it difficult to marry. The Prophet then personally proposed an Ansari woman for him, although the girl's parents initially rejected the proposal. When the daughter learned that the proposal came from the Prophet, she said, "Would you

*reject the request of the Messenger of Allah?"* Eventually, they married, and Julaibib later fell as a martyr (*syahīd*) in the battlefield. The *asbābu al-wurūd* (occasion for the event) of this hadith shows the Prophet's effort to dismantle the Arab social order that linked honor with lineage and physical attributes. In Fazlur Rahman's perspective, the Prophet's action is an expression of the universal values of equality and social justice derived from the particular context of Medinan society. The *ratio legis* (underlying legal principle) is the elimination of discrimination based on physical and social status, and the affirmation that human nobility lies in piety (*taqwa*) (Qur'an, Surah al-Hujurat verse 13). The Prophet did not merely help Julaibib, but also taught Medina society to reconstruct their social views toward people with disabilities, transforming them from objects of pity into dignified subjects entitled to love, family, and social honor.

Next was Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd, who had very small calves and weak hands. He had a close relationship with the Prophet and was one of his special companions because of his extensive knowledge. Despite his small stature and poverty, he was blessed with a calm soul, extensive knowledge, was one of the memorizers of the Qur'an, and became a role model for other companions (al-Zahabi, 1985). Ibn Mas'ūd liked to use Arak wood as a *siwak* to clean his mouth. To get Arak wood twigs, Ibn Mas'ūd climbed the tree. While he was in the tree, the wind blew and his lower robe opened, revealing his small calves to the other companions. Seeing his very small calves, the companions laughed. The Prophet felt uncomfortable with this situation and asked, "What are you laughing at?" They replied that it was because of Ibn Mas'ūd's calves. Hearing this answer, the Prophet immediately replied, "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, those two small calves are heavier than the mountain of Uhud" (Ibn Hanbal, 1995).

Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd was known to be small-bodied with very thin calves. On one occasion, the companions laughed at his disproportionate body when he climbed a tree. The Prophet rebuked them and said, "By the One in whose Hand is my soul, those two calves are heavier on the scale than Mount Uhud." Socially, this hadith emerged in the context of an Arabian society that highly valued physical strength. In Fazlur Rahman's approach, this hadith shows the process of reconstruction of social values from the glorification of the body towards the appreciation of morality and knowledge. The *ratio legis* (underlying legal principle) lies in the principle of *karāmah insāniyyah*, which is the respect for human dignity in its entirety without physical discrimination. The Prophet did not merely forbid mockery but also instilled the value that the measure of nobility lies in inner quality and social contribution. This hadith serves as the foundation of social ethics for eliminating bodyism and physical-based discrimination in modern society.

A hadith from Ummu Jundub tells of a woman from the Banu Khas'am who brought a speech-impaired child to the Prophet. The woman explained her child's condition and that he was her only remaining family member. The Prophet immediately asked for water, washed his hands, gargled with the water, then asked the woman to give the child water to drink, pour some of it on the child's body, and pray for the child's recovery. A year after the incident, Ummu Jundub met the woman again and learned that her child had made a full recovery and even had extraordinary intelligence (Ibn Majah, 2009).

The *asbābu al-wurūd* (occasion for the event) of this hadith shows that the Prophet accepted a plea for help without regard for social status or physical condition. From Fazlur Rahman's point of view, the Prophet's action is a manifestation of the universal values of compassion (*rahmah insāniyyah*) and social concern. The *ratio legis* (underlying legal principle) is that the right to healing and physical protection is part of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law), namely the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*). This hadith expands the meaning of treatment from a medical act to an expression of solidarity and spiritual concern for the vulnerable.

To facilitate the empirical analysis of Prophet Muhammad's efforts toward social inclusion, the key interactions and his attitude toward the six companions with disabilities are classified and presented in the table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the Prophet Muhammad's Attitude toward Persons with Disabilities

Companion with Disability	Type of Disability	Key Interaction/Event	Prophet Muhammad's Attitude
<b>Abdullah ibn Umm Maktūm</b>	Blind	Triggered revelation of Surah 'Abasa; requested exemption from jihad; appointed mu'azzin and prayer leader	Honored and uplifted him; provided access to religious and social roles
<b>'Itban ibn Mālik</b>	Blind	Requested the Prophet to pray in his house due to difficulty reaching the mosque	Granted ease (rukhsah) and fulfilled his spiritual needs
<b>'Umar ibn al-Jamuh</b>	Severe physical impairment (lame)	Asked to join the Battle of Uhud despite being exempt	Recognized his determination; permitted him; praised his sincerity
<b>Julaibib</b>	Dwarfism/ small stature, socially stigmatized	Prophet proposed a spouse for him; died as a martyr	Removed social stigma; elevated his dignity; affirmed his worth
<b>Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd</b>	Very thin calves, physically small	Companions laughed at his legs when he climbed a tree	Prophet rebuked mockery and affirmed his spiritual weight
<b>Child of Banu Khas'am</b>	Speech impairment	Prophet performed a symbolic healing prayer and provided comfort	Offered equal access to healing and care

When analyzed as a whole, every interaction of the Prophet with people with disabilities exhibits a consistent pattern: Recognition of individual dignity. Provision of space for social and religious participation. Reform of discriminatory social structures. In Fazlur Rahman's perspective, these hadiths are a source of dynamic social ethics. The First Movement of his hermeneutics the understanding of the historical context opens the way for the social reconstruction of the hierarchical and exclusive Arabian society. The Second Movement the derivation of the universal principle affirms the values of compassion, justice, and inclusivity that form the core of the Sunnah.

Thus, the *ratio legis* of all these interactions is the realization of the principles of *al-musāwah* (equality) and *al-ta'āwun* (social solidarity) that transcend the personal dimension towards a just social order. The Prophet did not merely establish an ethics of compassion individually, but also built a social system where people with disabilities had a place, a role, and social responsibilities in accordance with their capacities. These principles, when extrapolated to the present day, become the foundation for the Islamic paradigm of social inclusion that mercy and justice are not only moral values but also a social framework that demands concrete realization in public policy, education, and religious life.

### The Prophet's Interaction with Persons with Disabilities from a Social Integration Perspective

Social integration is a dynamic process that takes place in social life, where every individual or group from diverse backgrounds can interact, collaborate, and live harmoniously together in one social order (Holt-Lunstad & Lefler, 2019). This principle accommodates the acceptance of diversity, recognition of equal rights and obligations, and rejection of all forms of discrimination, marginalization, and social exclusion. In this context, social integration does not only mean the absence of conflict in the social order, but also necessitates active and open participation for all individuals in the social system (Zielińska-Król et al., 2025). Integration is one of the indicators of

good social cohesion in a diverse society consisting of groups with diverse conditions, including groups of persons with disabilities.

The principles and patterns of the Prophet's interaction with people with disabilities will be analyzed using several social integration theories, namely Durkheim's theory of social solidarity, Boudieu's theory of habitus and social capital, and John Rawls' theory of social justice. These theories were chosen because they are considered capable of mapping the basic principles that form and bind social cohesion.

In Durkheim's perspective, society is considered a unity and interdependent through their respective functions in the social system (Alpert, 1940). Society is born out of togetherness, so solidarity is the main key to social integration. Solidarity refers to a condition of relationships between individuals or groups based on shared moral beliefs and supported by shared emotional experiences (Wahyuni, 2017). Moral teaching is important to support increased social integration and solidarity. The Prophet demonstrated social solidarity by never excluding any individual, including people with disabilities, from the social and spiritual life of Muslims. An example is Julaibib, a small man (dwarfism) who was unattractive. He was disliked and tended to be shunned by the people of Medina, but the Prophet made him a close friend and honored him, even proposing a beautiful woman to him in order to affirm Julaibib's existence in the Medina community environment.

In addition, the Prophet also provided direct participation and empowerment opportunities for people with disabilities in social life. This point can be seen from the Prophet's trust in 'Abdullah ibn Umī Maktūm, a blind man, as a *mu'azzin* (call to prayer) and replacing the Prophet as the imam of congregational prayers for Muslims when the Prophet went to war. The opportunity to become an imam was also given to 'Itban ibn Mālik, a blind man, albeit on a smaller scale, namely as the imam for his people during the rainy season. This practice confirms the Prophet's recognition of the social contribution of people with disabilities despite their physical limitations. The social solidarity practiced by the Prophet in Durkheim's classification is known as organic solidarity (Alpert, 1940), in which each individual plays their respective social function in a complete social order. More than just mechanical solidarity, which is the similarity of feeling and practice, the Prophet demonstrated the realization of Durkheim's organic solidarity. This type of solidarity arises from functional interdependence that values differences in roles within a complex social system. By appointing Abdullah ibn Umī Maktūm (blind) as a *mu'azzin* and even the Prophet's deputy in Medina during war, the Prophet gave a vital structural function to people with disabilities, striving to create integration for people with disabilities, showing that they are not only accepted morally and symbolically but also recognized structurally and as a functional part of society, given space and their roles valued fairly and proportionally.

When viewed from the perspective of Bourdieu's habitus and social capital, the Prophet's interaction with people with disabilities is a practical manifestation of these two concepts. Through his actions, the Prophet not only set a moral example, but also reconstructed a more just and inclusive social order (Tan & Liu, 2022). Habitus itself is a system of dispositions embedded in each individual, in the form of ways of thinking (Bufton, 2003), feeling, and acting, which are shaped by life experiences and the social environment in which they grow up (Costa & Murphy, 2015). Pre-Islamic Arabs (*Jāhiliyyah*) tended to marginalize groups that were considered weak, especially people with disabilities, because they were considered unproductive and unfit to appear in public spaces. This was because they needed strength to defend themselves and assert the existence of their group (Mubarok, 2019). Prophet Muhammad formed a new perspective on marginalized groups by bringing the principles of equality, empathy, compassion, and recognition of human dignity, regardless of physical condition.

In addition, the Prophet shifted the negative stigma constructed by society against the weak, especially people with disabilities, to active acceptance and empowerment that provided space for participation for the weak. This can be seen from the refusal of pre-Islamic Arabs to sit and eat with the weak and people with disabilities (Mubarok, 2019). The Prophet also once showed his dislike for

'Abdullah ibn Ummi Maktūm when he was in dialogue with the Quraish leaders, inviting them to embrace Islam. The Prophet immediately corrected this attitude after receiving a warning from God. Subsequently, the Prophet changed his view of Ummi Maktūm by giving him attention, empathy, and active participation, such as making him a *mu'azzin* and an imam for prayer. The negative stigma attached to Julaibib, a man with a small and ugly body, and Ibn Mas'ūd, a man with small calves, was shifted to the belief that social and moral status is not determined by physical appearance, but by piety and contribution to society. Julaibib was referred to by the Prophet as part of himself, and Ibn Mas'ūd's small calves were declared by the Prophet to be heavier than the hill of Uhud. This statement affirmed the existence of these two companions with disabilities so that they could integrate, feel part of society, and contribute to it.

Meanwhile, social capital is the network, trust, and social honor that a person has to obtain a role and influence in a social environment (Asquith, 2019). People with disabilities certainly do not have social capital, so they are always marginalized in society, including in pre-Islamic Medina society. Through his interactions with people with disabilities, the Prophet provided them with access to social capital and instilled a value of respect for every individual, including people with disabilities, in the community. The Prophet did this by providing symbolic capital, in the form of respect, empathy, and compassion, and social capital, including becoming the Prophet's representative in Medina when the Prophet went to war, becoming a muezzin, participating in war, and so on, to people with disabilities so that society's view of people with disabilities could shift.

Meanwhile, from John Rawls' perspective of social justice, the Prophet's interaction with people with disabilities showed fair, respectful, and compassionate treatment. There are two main principles of justice in Rawls' concept. *The first* is the principle of liberty, where every individual has the same rights to the most extensive basic freedoms that can be mutually agreed upon by everyone in society (Rawls, 1999). In practice, the Prophet never revoked the civil, religious, social, and political rights of people with disabilities. On the contrary, people with disabilities still had the right to religious and social participation, even the right to participate in jihad (within their capabilities). Recognition of these civil rights was reflected in the Prophet's interactions with Julaibib, Ibn Ummi Maktūm, and a girl from the Banu Khas'am tribe. The Prophet treated them kindly, with empathy and compassion. Meanwhile, the provision of space for participation is clearly illustrated by the opportunity given to 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh to participate in jihad in the Battle of Uhud, Ibn Ummi Maktūm becoming the muazzin, the Prophet's representative for Medina when the Prophet went to war, and 'Itban ibn Mālik becoming the imam for his people. The Prophet changed the mindset of the people of Medina that disability was not a barrier to respect and attention.

The *second* principle is difference. According to this principle, social and economic inequality is acceptable if it benefits the most disadvantaged and there is fair access to jobs and positions (Rawls, 1999). In practice, the Prophet paid special attention to people with disabilities. This can be seen from the Prophet's attention to Ibn Mas'ūd, Julaibib, and Ibn Ummi Maktūm. This practice is in line with Rawls' principle, whereby policies should benefit the disadvantaged or the most vulnerable groups. In the context of Islam, this principle is manifested in the theory of *maqāṣīd al-shari'ah*, which is to protect the life, religion, mind, offspring, property, and dignity of every individual, including vulnerable persons with disabilities (Wahid et al., 2025). Not only that, the Prophet also opened up fair access to positions and offices for people with disabilities. The appointment of Ibn Ummi Maktūm as the Prophet's representative in Medina when the Prophet went to war was an important position when Medina was without leadership. This position emphasized that physical limitations did not prevent people with disabilities from actively participating in the social system. Ibn Ummi Maktūm was also given the mandate to lead Muslim prayers. The same was given to 'Itban ibn Mālik to become the imam for his people, which once again emphasized the existence of persons with disabilities in the communities where they lived. These practices are in line with Rawls' principle of fair access, namely that social positions must be open to all members of the group, regardless of their physical condition.

## **Social Integration of People with Disabilities by the Prophet Muhammad**

The Prophet is a role model for Muslims, whose actions are guided by revelations that were indeed prepared as examples to follow. In the context of interacting with people with disabilities, the Prophet demonstrated principles of interaction that can serve as models and solutions to the challenges of modern society in empowering people with disabilities. Today, the challenges faced by persons with disabilities remain complex, ranging from negative stigma (Rohwerder, 2018), discriminatory treatment (Thompson et al., 2023), social exclusion (Babik & Gardner, 2021), and even difficulty accessing spaces for participation. These conditions further marginalize persons with disabilities in the social order. Indeed, there have been modern efforts to mitigate these problems, but combining these efforts with the perspective of the Sunnah will enrich the perspective in formulating policies and practices that favor persons with disabilities (K. Goje, 2025).

The previous explanation has shown the patterns and principles of the Prophet's interaction with people with disabilities to create stable social integration in the Medina community. From this explanation, here are some of the Prophet's principles of social integration in relation to people with disabilities. First, Providing symbolic capital to persons with disabilities. People with disabilities in the social order often experience a double burden. Physically, they have limitations, while in the social environment they are also often marginalized and considered useless (Sarkar & Parween, 2021). The Prophet, in his role as a role model in the Medina community, provided symbolic capital that people with disabilities in society did not previously have. Symbolic capital refers to social resources that are not material in nature but have value, honor, and recognition in society. This means that the Prophet himself practiced social recognition of every member of society, including people with disabilities, for their status, honor, and reputation in the social environment. The Prophet demonstrated the core values of Islam towards people with disabilities, which stem from compassion (*rahmah*), justice (*takāful*), and human dignity (*karāmah*) (Mehmood & Parveen, 2024). For example, Ibn Ummi Maktūm, who was initially not accepted in the Prophet's council of dialogue with the Quraish because he was blind; the exclusion of Julaibib in Medina because he was a dwarf and not good looking; and the ridicule of the people towards Ibn Mas'ūd because of his very small calves. They were then valued, recognized, and honored by the Prophet as a form of social capital so that they would not be marginalized in the social order. For people with disabilities, symbolic capital from social leaders is important because it can influence the way society views and behaves towards them (Eilers, 2020). With symbolic capital, they indirectly feel valued, respected, and not inferior in social interactions. This formulation is the initial capital for social integration.

Second, Eliminating negative stigma against people with disabilities and shifting the mindset of society towards people with disabilities. In pre-Islamic Arab society, disability was considered lowly and shameful because physical perfection was considered absolute for the pre-Islamic Arab people. A harsh society and prolonged inter-tribal tensions were the reasons they needed strong group members. Moreover, there was a belief in pre-Islamic Arab society that physical disabilities were the result of sinful deeds and possession by evil spirits (Mubarok, 2019). This situation led to persons with disabilities being considered despicable and cast out from society. Even blind, lame, and other sick people were not allowed to attend banquets or sit with other Arabs at that time. The Prophet came with a new theological principle, which is that all humans have the same noble dignity as human beings Surah al-Isrā' verse 70. Furthermore, in Islam, social status is not determined by physical condition but by piety, Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 good ethics (al-Thabrani, 1985), and usefulness in the social order (al-Thabrani, 1983). This principle allows all individuals in society to demonstrate personal integrity and full participation according to their respective capabilities in society. Social integration is created when everyone performs their respective functions in the social structure.

Third, Ensuring social inclusion and active participation of every member of society. People with disabilities are a minority group in society (Anastasiou et al., 2016). Minority groups are often also marginalized groups. The Prophet showed extraordinary inclusiveness towards people with

disabilities to achieve social integration that is fair, empathetic, and equal. In this context, inclusion means involving everyone, including people with disabilities, in social, religious, and community life without discrimination. This principle is reflected in respect for individual dignity and potential. This is evident in the case of Ibn Ummi Maktūm, who was honored and given the opportunity to be the Prophet's representative in Medina when he went to war, Ibn Mas'ūd, who was one of the writers of the revelation, and 'Itban ibn Mālik, who became the imam of his people. To ensure social inclusion, the Prophet rebuked rudeness towards people with disabilities. The Prophet himself experienced this in the revelation of Surah 'Abasa verses 1-10 and in the Prophet's attitude when Ibn Mas'ūd was laughed at because of his small calves.

Fourth, Providing fair and equal access to social capital for people with disabilities in various dimensions of social life, including spiritual, educational, social (D. K. Goje, 2021), and political, so that people with disabilities are fully involved in social life (al-Zuhaili, 1418). Prophet Muhammad's interaction aimed not only to provide compassion but also to create distributive justice, which is a prerequisite for true social integration. This was realized through empowerment strategies that opened access to functional positions, aligning with John Rawls' Difference Principle. The Prophet gave special treatment that benefited the least advantaged group (people with disabilities) by providing key positions. The appointment of Ibn Ummi Maktūm as the Prophet's deputy in Medina and as the *imām* for Muslim prayers is concrete evidence that physical limitations do not hinder participation in the social system, even in the most important structural positions. Granting these mandates and responsibilities directly increased the capacity and existence of people with disabilities, transforming them from objects of pity into active subjects contributing fully to Medina society. In the spiritual realm, for example, 'Itban ibn Mālik was given the opportunity to lead his people in prayer at his home. This directly elevated 'Itban ibn Mālik's status as a person with a disability in the eyes of his people. In education (*ta'dīb*), this is illustrated in the case of Ibn Ummi Maktūm, where the Prophet was directly reprimanded when he ignored his question about Islam. The Prophet's praise of 'Umar ibn al-Jamuh, who was lame, in front of his people and the Prophet's statement about Julaibib, who was part of him, are also clear examples of the Prophet giving them access to social status that was considered equal to that of his other companions.

### **The Sunnah Inclusion Model: A Pillar of Contemporary Disability Policy**

A social integration model rooted in the principles of the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with people with disabilities, as analyzed through the lenses of Durkheim, Bourdieu, and Rawls, is not merely a moral recommendation. Instead, it presents a systematic and strategic foundation for planned policy. In the contemporary context, where people with disabilities in Muslim-majority countries often face marginalization, stigma, and barriers to full participation, this Sunnah model offers both theological legitimacy and a robust sociological framework for addressing these structural challenges (Bazna & Hatab, 2005).

The most fundamental policy implication demands a profound paradigmatic reform: the need to shift the stigmatizing *habitus* within Muslim societies. Negative stigma against disability is not only structural but also stems from erroneous religious interpretations and persistent pre-Islamic perceptions that often view disability as a test or even a curse, leading to social exclusion (Salamuddin & Sebayang, 2025). The Sunnah Model challenges this habitus of marginalization with the principle of bestowing Symbolic Capital in the form of honor, recognition, and status, which is crucial for marginalized groups. The Prophet Muhammad consciously and publicly honored companions who experienced physical stigma, emphasizing that true dignity lies in piety, not physical condition. Therefore, policy must be realized through decisive, nationwide theological-normative social campaigns, launched by the government in collaboration with religious authorities, to massively eradicate stigma (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2018). The goal is to shift the collective mindset from viewing people with disabilities as objects of pity to valued subjects. Furthermore, state

leaders, as role models, must consistently provide symbolic capital through public recognition and awards, emulating the Prophet's way of honoring his companions with disabilities.

The second pillar is ensuring structural integration and active participation, a principle aligned with Durkheim's Organic Solidarity, which values the function of differences in the social system, and John Rawls' Difference Principle, which accepts inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged (Gidron & Hall, 2020). The Prophet set a concrete example of structural integration by providing access to social capital and functional positions to people with disabilities, most powerfully illustrated by the appointment of 'Abdullah ibn Ummi Maktūm (who was blind) as his deputy in Medina during wartime. The policy implication of this principle is the translation of Rawlsian Distributive Justice into an ambitious Mandatory Quota system (Affirmative Action) in the public and private sectors. These quotas must be supported by strict monitoring mechanisms and sanctions to prevent them from becoming mere paper regulations, thereby ensuring fair access to important offices and positions according to their competencies (Liao, 2021). Furthermore, the government must ensure that every individual, regardless of physical condition, has Full Access to Education and Spirituality, emulating God's admonition to the Prophet when he neglected Ibn Ummi Maktūm who sought religious knowledge. Policy must focus on comprehensive accessibility both physical and informational all public facilities, educational institutions, and places of worship.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the pattern of Prophet Muhammad's interactions with persons with disabilities was not merely moral and spiritual, but also represented a planned social engineering effort to build equitable social integration. This pattern is evident through the granting of symbolic capital, the eradication of stigma, and the opening of equal social participation access for persons with disabilities in the Medina society. This confirms that the Prophet's Sunnah functions as a blueprint for inclusive social construction, rather than merely a guide for personal ethics (Billah et al., 2025).

This finding extends the results of several previous studies. For instance, the study by Bazna and Hatab in the *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* explains that Islam offers an alternative paradigm for understanding disability as a form of God's creation diversity, yet its focus remains on theological aspects and religious perception (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). Similarly, Bengtsson in the *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* affirms that the Qur'an presents a narrative of human equality without physical discrimination, but has not explored the social dimension of the Prophet's interactions empirically (Bengtsson, 2018). This study goes further by demonstrating how these principles were operationalized in the Prophet's social practice through structural empowerment of disabled companions.

Furthermore, these research findings complement those of Ibrahim and Ismail in the *Journal of Disability & Religion*, which highlight the importance of psychosocial reform in Islam toward persons with disabilities (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2018). They emphasize changes in social attitudes as the foundation for inclusion, whereas this study shows that Prophet Muhammad not only changed perception but also provided concrete social roles through socio-religious structures, such as the appointment of Ibn Umm Maktūm as the *mu'aẓẓin* and his deputy in Medina. Thus, this research offers historical evidence that social transformation in Islam is praxis-oriented, not merely normative.

From a hermeneutical perspective, the Fazlur Rahman approach utilized in this study yields a new synthesis between the double movement and Durkheim's theory of social integration. While the study by Yusuf & Nahdhiyah in the *International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities (IJISH)* emphasizes the application of the double movement in the context of religious moderation, this research expands the application of that method to read the Prophet's social hadiths within the framework of modern sociological theory. This approach confirms that the understanding of the Sunnah must be historically dynamic and oriented toward universal values such as social justice, compassion, and equality (Ahmad Hasan Ridwan et al., 2022).

Moreover, the integration of Rawls' and Bourdieu's theories within the context of the Sunnah also demonstrates the novelty of this research. While in Western literature, Rawls' distributive

justice and Bourdieu's social capital concept are often used to explain inclusion in secular societies, this study places both within an Islamic theological framework, bridging the gap between religious paradigms and modern social theory. This interdisciplinary approach reinforces the academic significance of the study by positioning the Sunnah as a source of universal social ethics relevant across civilizations.

Thus, conceptually and methodologically, this research offers three main original contributions (Nugroho et al., 2023): (1) Hermeneutical reconstruction of social hadiths through the Fazlur Rahman approach combined with modern social integration theory; (2) Shifting the focus of Islamic disability research from the theological-legal to Sunnah-based social praxis; and (3) The formulation of a Sunnah-based social inclusion model as a paradigm for Islamic social policy that can be adapted in contemporary and cross-cultural contexts.

Overall, this research affirms that the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad is more than just a source of spirituality; it functions as an applicable sociological framework for building an inclusive, just, and civilized society. The Sunnah Inclusion Model formulated from these findings offers a robust conceptual foundation for Muslim-majority nations to realize an inclusive society, providing a strong ethical framework rooted in the principles of *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) and *takāful* (communal responsibility) in Islam, while simultaneously being supported by the analysis of modern sociological theory. By adopting this model, disability policies can move beyond mere rhetoric of charity and transform into structural, planned, and civilized solutions that significantly enrich the global discourse on disability studies through an Islamic lens.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the principles of the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with persons with disabilities and to examine the extent to which these interactions were oriented toward social integration. The findings reveal that the Prophet not only demonstrated compassion and empathy toward individuals with disabilities but also developed a social structure that enabled their active participation within the community. Principles such as the provision of symbolic capital, the elimination of stigma, social inclusion, and equitable access to public roles constitute the ethical foundation for building a just and humane society. From a sociological perspective, these practices reflect Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity and correspond with Rawls' theory of distributive justice and Bourdieu's notion of social capital. Methodologically, the application of Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutical approach adds significant analytical depth, as it enables a dual movement of interpretation historical understanding of the hadith context (*asbābu al-wurūd*) and the extraction of universal normative principles (*ratio legis* or *ḥikmah al-tashrī'*). This approach demonstrates that the Sunnah can be dynamically interpreted to yield ethical foundations for modern social integration that are inclusive of persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, this research is not without limitations. First, being a qualitative, library-based study, its interpretations rely heavily on classical textual sources and secondary commentaries. Limited access to minor hadith manuscripts and wider chains of transmission may constrain the contextual depth of analysis. Second, although this study integrates modern sociological theory, it does not incorporate empirical field data or interviews with contemporary Muslim disability advocates that could provide practical validation of the Sunnah-based inclusion model. Third, the scope of this research focuses primarily on the Prophet's era and does not extend to post-Prophetic socio-political developments such as policies during the Rashidun Caliphate or later juristic elaborations in medieval Islamic thought. For future research, several directions are recommended. First, ethnographic or *living hadith* approaches could be employed to examine how inclusive values derived from the Sunnah are practiced within contemporary Muslim communities, both locally and globally. Second, comparative studies across religious traditions could enrich the discourse on inclusive ethics by identifying intersections between Islam and other faiths in their treatment of persons with disabilities. Third, policy-oriented research should be pursued to bridge Sunnah-based principles with *human rights-based disability frameworks* developed internationally, such as the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Overall, this study underscores that the values of *rahmah* (compassion), *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity), and social justice embodied in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad remain timelessly relevant. Future multidisciplinary and contextually grounded studies are encouraged to deepen the understanding of Islamic ethics toward persons with disabilities and to strengthen Islam's contribution to the global discourse on social inclusion and human justice.

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