



## Quraish Shihab's Tafsir of QS. 'Abasa (80): 1-10: Rethinking Disability In Contemporary Context

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### Abstract

*This study explores the contextual interpretation of QS. 'Abasa (80): 1-10 as articulated by Quraish Shihab in his renowned work, tafsir al-misbah. The surah recounts an incident where the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) frowned and turned away from Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, a visually impaired companion. This narrative serves as a critical foundation for discussing issues of equality and the rights of persons with disabilities within an Islamic framework. Employing a qualitative research methodology with descriptive analysis, this study examines primary and secondary data to uncover the modern applicability of these verses in addressing contemporary discrimination against persons with disabilities. The findings reveal that QS. 'Abasa emphasizes the principles of equality and inclusivity, advocating for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in a manner commensurate with those of the broader society. The study concludes that a modern interpretation of QS. 'Abasa can serve as a philosophical foundation for fostering a more just and equitable society, underscoring that piety (taqwa) is the sole criterion for human distinction in the eyes of Allah.*

**Keywords:** Al-Qur'an, Disabilities, Quraish Shihab

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penafsiran kontekstual terhadap QS. 'Abasa [80]: 1-10 menurut Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah. Surah 'Abasa mengisahkan peristiwa ketika Nabi Muhammad SAW bermuka masam dan berpaling dari Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, seorang penyandang disabilitas (tunanetra). Fokus penelitian ini adalah mengeksplorasi isu kesetaraan dan hak-hak kaum disabilitas dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana pesan yang terkandung dalam ayat-ayat tersebut dapat diaplikasikan dalam

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konteks kekinian guna mengatasi praktik diskriminasi terhadap penyandang disabilitas. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis deskriptif terhadap data primer dan sekunder. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa QS. 'Abasa menegaskan prinsip kesetaraan yang seharusnya dapat diwujudkan bagi kaum disabilitas, sebagaimana hak yang dimiliki oleh masyarakat pada umumnya. Selain itu, ayat-ayat tersebut juga menekankan pentingnya perhatian yang lebih inklusif untuk menjamin terpenuhinya hak-hak kaum disabilitas. Interpretasi modern terhadap QS. 'Abasa dapat menjadi landasan filosofis bagi terciptanya masyarakat yang lebih adil dan setara bagi seluruh individu, tanpa memandang kondisi fisik atau latar belakang sosial. Penelitian ini juga menyimpulkan bahwa ketakwaan merupakan satu-satunya parameter yang membedakan derajat manusia di hadapan Allah, sehingga prinsip kesetaraan dan keadilan harus menjadi pilar utama dalam interaksi sosial.

**Kata kunci:** *Al-Qur'an, Disabilitas, Quraish Shihab*

## **Introduction**

The creation of humanity by Allah SWT is an embodiment of divine wisdom, one that manifests in a rich and diverse array of physical, intellectual, and emotional conditions. This variation among individuals reflects a profound aspect of human existence our differences are not a flaw but a testament to the boundless creativity and intentionality of the Creator. Within this spectrum of human diversity are individuals with disabilities, whose conditions and abilities distinguish them from those considered "normal".<sup>1</sup> The term "disability" itself inherently implies a separation or distinction from the societal norm, leading to perceptions that these individuals are fundamentally different or lesser than others. This distinction has often been a source of marginalization, and in many cases, it contributes to discrimination, both overt and subtle, against persons with disabilities.

The societal perception of disability is often grounded in the assumption that persons with disabilities are incapable of performing tasks effectively, contributing meaningfully to society, or leading independent lives. These beliefs stem from misconceptions about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities, and these biases can significantly hinder their full participation in society. This discriminatory mindset is particularly evident in various social spheres, with employment being one of the most prominent areas of exclusion. Persons with disabilities often encounter substantial barriers during recruitment processes, facing difficulties in securing positions or even being considered for job opportunities. These challenges are not merely a matter of physical or logistical accommodations but are indicative of deeper, entrenched societal attitudes that question the value and potential of individuals based on their disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

Nahar, the Deputy for Special Child Protection at the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA), has highlighted the persistence of these discriminatory attitudes in the workplace. His statement underscores the barriers that persons with disabilities face in gaining access to the labor market, often resulting in

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<sup>1</sup> Lily Iskandar, *Ziarah Imam Bersama Disabilitas, Pelayanan Sakramental Bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius Anggota IKAPI, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ramona H Sharma et al., "Ableism and Employment : A Scoping Review of the Literature," *Social Sciences* 14, no. 67 (2025): 1–26; Jason Olsen, "Employers: Influencing Disabled People's Employment through Responses to Reasonable Adjustments," *Disability and Society* 39, no. 3 (2024): 791–810, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2022.2099251>; Sophie Teborg, Lena Hünefeld, and Tomke S. Gerdes, "Exploring the Working Conditions of Disabled Employees: A Scoping Review," *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology* 19, no. 1 (2024): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12995-023-00397-z>.

their exclusion from the workforce. This exclusion not only limits their opportunities for economic independence but also reinforces societal stigmas that perpetuate inequality.<sup>3</sup> The situation calls for urgent attention to address these biases, advocating for the principles of inclusivity and equality values that are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings.

The study of disability within the Qur'anic framework has garnered significant attention over the years, with scholars analyzing various verses and themes related to the treatment of individuals with disabilities. Classical interpretations of disability in Islamic texts have focused on specific terms such as *bukmun* (mute), *ṣummun* (deaf), *a'ma* (blind), and *a'raj* (lame), which are used in the Qur'an to describe individuals with physical impairments. These interpretations generally emphasize that the Qur'an advocates for the equal treatment and inherent dignity of all human beings, regardless of their physical or mental condition. Central to these discussions is the understanding that human worth in Islam is determined by *taqwa* (piety) rather than physical ability or appearance, as stated in numerous verses such as in *Al-Hujurat* (49:13), which proclaims that all humans are equal in the eyes of Allah, with piety being the only distinguishing factor.<sup>4</sup>

Previous studies have explored various dimensions of disability within the context of the Qur'an, providing valuable insights into how Islamic teachings approach the topic. Research such as Ahmad Hidayat "*Influence of Taqwa (Piety) and Amal Saleh (Good Deeds) on Patience Among Muslim Students at an Islamic Campus*", emphasize the role of piety and good deeds in personal growth, but they do not address the specific challenges faced by individuals with disabilities or the Qur'anic principles that apply to their rights.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Ridho Riyadi "*Hak Dan Kebutuhan Dasar Penyandang Disabilitas Di Dalam Al-Quran*", offers a foundational understanding of disability rights from an Islamic perspective but is largely theoretical.<sup>6</sup> In addition, studies, such as Rahmah "*Mad'u: Disabilitas Dalam Islam*", and Anshari "*Pendidikan Islam Dan Disabilitas: Telaah Pemikiran Abdullah Naskih Ulwan*"<sup>8</sup>, also contribute to the discourse.

Rahmah's research explores the moral and spiritual dimensions of disability in Islam, while Anshari focuses on inclusive education. Although both of these studies make significant contributions to the understanding of disability in the Islamic context, they primarily address the theoretical and educational dimensions, without considering the full spectrum of social challenges that people with disabilities face in modern society.

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<sup>3</sup> Anita Permata Dewi, "Perempuan Dan Anak Penyandang Disabilitas Alami Kerentanan Berlapis," *Antaranews*, 2022, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2696405/perempuan-dan-anak-penyandang-disabilitas-alami-kerentanan-berlapis>; Dhea Erisa and Dini Widinarsih, "Akses Penyandang Disabilitas Terhadap Pekerjaan: Kajian Literatur," *Jurnal Pembangunan Manusia* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jpm.v3i1.1027>.

<sup>4</sup> Masyur Fuad and A Ghofur, "Pendidikan Penyandang Disabilitas Dalam Alquran," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2, no. 2 (2019): 46–68, <https://stai-binamadani.e-journal.id/Tarbawi/article/view/126>.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Hidayat et al., "Influence of Taqwa (Piety) and Amal Saleh (Good Deeds) on Patience Among Muslim Students at an Islamic Campus," *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2024): 89–105, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v3i1.188>.

<sup>6</sup> Ridho Riyadi, M. Adin Setyawan, and Khoirul Wahyu Wahidatun, "Hak Dan Kebutuhan Dasar Penyandang Disabilitas Di Dalam Al-Quran," *Studia Quranika* 7, no. 1 (2022): 93–117, <https://doi.org/10.21111/studiquran.v7i1.6620>.

<sup>7</sup> Rahmah Rahmah, "Mad'u: Disabilitas Dalam Islam," *Alhadharah* 15, no. 30 (2016): 53–61, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v15i30.1220>.

<sup>8</sup> M Anshari et al., "Pendidikan Islam Dan Disabilitas: Telaah Pemikiran Abdullah Naskih Ulwan," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 15, no. 1 (2021): 83–91, <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v15i1.573>.

Unlike previous studies, this study aims to investigate how the interpretation of QS. 'Abasa (80:1-10), can be applied to contemporary issues surrounding disability rights, using Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah as an exegetical framework.

## **Method**

This article uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive analysis approach to examine QS. 'Abasa [80]: 1-10 and its relevance to contemporary disability issues, focusing on Quraish Shihab's exegetical approach. The study explores how his contextual tafsir can provide insights into Islamic views on disability, inclusion, and human dignity. The primary data consists of the Qur'anic verses of QS. 'Abasa [80]: 1-10, analyzed through Shihab's tafsir and other relevant commentaries. Secondary data includes scholarly articles, books, and literature on disability studies within an Islamic framework, which contextualizes the Qur'anic interpretation in modern disability rights discourse. Data collection follows a literature review methodology, involving the gathering of academic sources, tafsir texts, and disability studies literature. These sources were analyzed to understand how the Qur'anic message applies to contemporary issues related to disability and human dignity. The data was then analyzed descriptively to explore the broader implications of QS. 'Abasa for disability rights. To ensure validity and reliability, the study uses authoritative tafsir sources and peer-reviewed secondary data. Triangulation was applied by comparing multiple tafsir interpretations to minimize bias and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the text. Consistency was maintained by rigorously applying the theoretical framework and methodology, cross-referencing the Qur'anic verses with academic and contemporary disability rights discourses, ensuring robust and reliable conclusions.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Definitions of Disability**

The term "disability" has a rich etymological history that reflects both its linguistic roots and the societal attitudes associated with it. As mentioned, it traces back to the 1570s, combining the prefix "dis-" and the word "ability." The prefix "dis-" has several meanings, but in the context of "disability," it implies a negation or a lack of, often signifying that something is taken away, separated, or hindered. This sets the stage for how disability is often perceived: as something that removes or diminishes a person's capacity to function in the same way as others in society. On the other hand, "ability" conveys a sense of power or potential to act or achieve something, whether that is in the physical, mental, legal, moral, or financial realms.

When combined, the term suggests that disability is the absence or reduction of a person's capacity to perform tasks that others can do, whether due to physical or mental limitations. Historically, the concept of disability has been defined and understood primarily through a medical or deficit-based lens. For example, someone who has polio may have bone deformities that prevent them from walking, and this physical limitation can significantly hinder their ability to engage in everyday activities. This limitation might require them to use assistive devices like crutches or a wheelchair in order to move or perform basic functions, symbolizing how disability is often framed in terms of lack or deficiency.

However, beyond the technical definition, the usage of the term "disability" also carries a significant social and cultural weight. Disability is often viewed negatively, with

an assumption that individuals with disabilities are lesser or unable to contribute meaningfully to society. This assumption can lead to marginalization and exclusion from various spheres of life, such as education, employment, and social participation. In contrast, the modern social model of disability, which emerged in the late 20th century, challenges these perceptions. Rather than viewing disability solely as an inherent personal defect, this model asserts that disability is as much a product of societal barriers such as inaccessible environments, prejudiced attitudes, and lack of accommodation as it is of an individual's impairments.

Therefore, the term "disability" not only refers to a lack of ability but also serves as a means to challenge the societal norms that equate a lack of ability with worthlessness or dependency. By reframing the concept of disability, the aim is to shift the focus from a view of people with impairments as burdens to an understanding of them as individuals with value and potential, deserving of equal opportunities, rights, and social inclusion. This broader perspective seeks to change how society perceives people with disabilities, advocating for inclusive practices and policies that remove the barriers whether physical, societal, or attitudinal that limit their participation and well-being.<sup>9</sup>

In the Indonesian context, the word "penyandang" is derived from "sandang," meaning "to suffer" or "to endure", and is used in conjunction with the term "cacat" to form the common phrase "penyandang cacat." In this context, "cacat" refers to a defect or a deficiency that detracts from the quality or perfection of a person or thing. This may encompass imperfections in the physical body, mental faculties, or even moral or ethical conduct. The term "cacat" can also indicate something that is damaged, flawed, or stained, reducing the overall condition or quality of the subject in question. It is often associated with an inherent lack or incompleteness something that is not considered whole or fully developed.<sup>10</sup>

The combination of these terms, "penyandang cacat", is frequently used in Indonesia to refer to individuals who live with physical or mental impairments, yet the usage of such a phrase tends to emphasize their perceived deficiencies or imperfections rather than recognizing their full humanity and potential. This can perpetuate societal biases and reinforce a narrative that views disability primarily in terms of what is lacking rather than what is unique or valuable. This perception plays a critical role in the way society interacts with and includes persons with disabilities, often leading to exclusion and marginalization, as they are frequently seen as incomplete or incapable rather than as individuals with distinct abilities and rights. The language used to describe disability plays a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and influencing how individuals with disabilities are perceived and treated. The prevailing terminology, particularly in the context of "penyandang cacat", highlights deficiencies and imperfections, which can foster exclusion and marginalization. By framing disability in terms of "lack" or "defect", society is often inclined to overlook the unique abilities, contributions, and inherent dignity of individuals with disabilities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara M Altman, "Definitions, Concepts, and Measures of Disability," *Annals of Epidemiology* 24, no. 1 (January 2014): 2–7, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2013.05.018>; Aurora H Brinkman et al., "Shifting the Discourse on Disability: Moving to an Inclusive, Intersectional Focus," *Am J Orthopsychiatry* 93, no. 1 (2024): 50–62, <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000653>. Shifting.

<sup>10</sup> Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Neng Priyanti, "Representations of People with Disabilities in an Indonesian Newspaper: A Critical Discourse Analysis," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2018), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v38i4.5818>.



A shift in the terminology and framing of disability is essential in fostering a more inclusive and empowering perspective. Moving away from terms that emphasize deficits and instead adopting language that acknowledges the rights, abilities, and humanity of individuals with disabilities can challenge societal biases and promote more positive and inclusive views. This linguistic shift is not only a matter of changing vocabulary but also of redefining how disability is perceived in society. By adopting inclusive language, we can encourage a culture of respect, equity, and empowerment, where people with disabilities are seen as full and active participants in all areas of life. Such a shift is crucial for breaking down discriminatory barriers and advancing social justice, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their physical or mental conditions, are valued and included.

### **Thematic and Contextual Interpretation of QS. 'Abasa: Disability in the Qur'an**

QS. 'Abasa (Chapter 80) is a pivotal surah that provides significant insight into the ethical and social treatment of individuals with disabilities within an Islamic context. It addresses crucial themes of equality, respect, and the inherent worth of all individuals, regardless of their physical or sensory abilities. The surah, consisting of 42 verses, recounts an event in which Prophet Muhammad SAW, during an interaction with the Quraysh leaders, turns away from Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, a blind companion, to continue the conversation with the powerful figures of the Quraysh. This moment, described in the verse "'Abasa wa tawalla" ("He frowned and turned away"), is a crucial moment that sets the stage for a deeper teaching on the need for inclusivity and equal treatment in society. The divine correction of the Prophet in this instance provides a foundation for the broader moral message of the surah, which emphasizes that no person should be judged solely based on their physical appearance or abilities.<sup>12</sup>

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ۖ (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ۚ (٢) وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهٗ يَرْكَبُ ۚ (٣) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الْذِّكْرُ ۚ (٤) أَمْ أَمَّا مَنْ  
اسْتَعْزَى ۚ (٥) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى ۚ (٦) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبُ ۚ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ۚ (٨) وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ۚ (٩)  
فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى ۚ (١٠)

*Meaning: "(1) The Prophet frowned and turned away. (2) Because there came to him the blind man interrupting. (3) But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. (4) Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him?. (5) As for he who thinks himself without need. (6) To him you give attention. (7) And not upon you (is any blame) if he will not be purified. (8) But as for he who came to you striving for knowledge. (9) While he fears Allah. (10) From him you are distracted."*

At the heart of this surah lies the theme that human worth should not be determined by one's physical attributes or capabilities. The Qur'an teaches that piety (*taqwa*) is the only true measure of a person's value in the eyes of Allah. This message, which stood in stark contrast to the prevailing societal norms of pre-Islamic Arabia, challenges the societal focus on physical prowess and status as the primary criteria for determining a person's worth. In a society where social hierarchy was largely defined by

<sup>12</sup> Riyadi, Setyawan, and Wahidatun, "Hak Dan Kebutuhan Dasar Penyandang Disabilitas Di Dalam Al-Quran."

wealth, power, and physical strength, the treatment of individuals with disabilities was often neglectful or dismissive. Those with physical impairments were frequently marginalized, viewed as lesser individuals whose contributions to society were often underestimated or ignored. Through the verses of QS. 'Abasa, Allah's correction of the Prophet's behavior acts not only as a personal reprimand but also as a profound critique of these societal values.

The event narrated in QS. 'Abasa is significant because it emphasizes the need to reconsider the values that govern interactions within society, especially regarding people with disabilities. The Prophet's reaction to Abdullah bin Ummy Maktum, who approached him with the intention of seeking guidance, is presented as a failure to see the deeper spiritual potential in a person who may be physically disabled but possesses great moral and spiritual qualities. Allah's rebuke is not a condemnation of the Prophet's actions in isolation but rather an invitation to rethink how all individuals, regardless of their physical limitations, should be treated. The surah, therefore, advocates for a society where individuals with disabilities are seen for their inner qualities, intentions, and capacity for spiritual growth, not merely for their physical condition. It encourages Muslims to provide equal respect and opportunities for individuals with disabilities, recognizing their worth and potential as valuable members of the community.<sup>13</sup>

The interpretation of this surah by prominent Islamic scholar Quraish Shihab, as presented in his *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, adds a profound layer of understanding to the verses. Shihab explains that the term 'abasa, used in the third person, reflects Allah's gentle and pedagogical approach to correcting the Prophet. The use of third-person language, rather than a direct admonition, is a subtle yet significant feature that highlights the educational and guiding nature of Allah's communication with the Prophet. Shihab suggests that Allah's correction is not merely a reprimand but an opportunity for the Prophet and, by extension, the Muslim community to reflect on and reconsider their attitudes toward those who are marginalized or overlooked in society.<sup>14</sup>

This method of addressing the Prophet is significant because it illustrates the importance of gentleness and wisdom in correction. It serves as a reminder that, when addressing issues of social justice and equality, the approach should be one of kindness, patience, and understanding, particularly when dealing with sensitive matters such as the treatment of individuals with disabilities. The use of the third person in the verse underscores the pedagogical nature of the divine message, emphasizing that correction in the form of teaching is the most effective way to bring about positive change in attitudes and behavior.

Shihab's interpretation further stresses that the surah's message is not intended solely for the Prophet Muhammad SAW but is a universal lesson for all of humanity. The correction is a call for all Muslims to recognize the dignity and value of individuals with disabilities, encouraging society to treat them with respect and honor. The surah emphasizes that the internal qualities of a person such as their intentions, sincerity, and pursuit of spiritual purity should be valued above their physical condition. In this way, the surah challenges societal norms that prioritize external appearances and material

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<sup>13</sup> Mutiara Sulistiawati et al., "Asbabun Nuzul Surat 'Abasa Ayat 1-10 Dan Hubungannya Dengan Bangun Dari Kegagalan," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Muslim Culture (JITMC)* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1-11; Hudzaifah Achmad Qotadah, Iqbal Syafri, and Adang Darmawan Achmad, "Fostering Religious Inclusivism Attitudes in School Through Learning The Quran and Hadith," *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2022): 145-55, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v1i2.42>.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al Mishbah Jilid 15 : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2017).

status and calls for a shift toward an understanding of human worth that is based on spiritual and moral qualities.

This interpretation aligns with the broader Islamic principle that all human beings, regardless of their physical condition, are equal in the eyes of Allah. The notion of equality in Islam is not limited to the physical realm but extends to the spiritual and moral domains. *Taqwa* (piety) or consciousness of Allah is the sole differentiating factor between individuals, as indicated in the Qur'an and reinforced by the teachings of the Prophet. In this context, individuals with disabilities are no different from those who are able-bodied; they have the same potential for spiritual growth and the same rights to dignity, respect, and inclusion in society.<sup>15</sup>

The message of QS. 'Abasa, as interpreted by Quraish Shihab, serves as a powerful reminder that disability does not diminish a person's value in the eyes of Allah or in the eyes of the community. It encourages Muslims to look beyond physical limitations and to recognize the inner strength and potential of individuals with disabilities. This message is particularly relevant in the contemporary world, where people with disabilities still face marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion from various aspects of social life. The surah calls for the creation of an inclusive society that values individuals based on their moral and spiritual qualities, not their physical attributes. It is a reminder that equality and respect are fundamental principles of Islam and should be upheld in all interactions, especially with those who have been historically marginalized.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the thematic and contextual interpretation of QS. 'Abasa underscores a vital ethical teaching: individuals with disabilities should not be judged based on their physical condition but should be valued for their inner qualities and spiritual potential. Through the divine correction of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the surah advocates for a society that embraces inclusivity and equality, where every individual is treated with respect and dignity. The interpretation of this surah, particularly as elucidated by Quraish Shihab, highlights the importance of gentleness and wisdom in addressing social issues and serves as a timeless reminder of the need for a more just and compassionate society.

### **Implications of QS. 'Abasa for Contemporary Disability Rights and Inclusion**

QS. 'Abasa (Chapter 80) offers profound insights into the ethical and social treatment of individuals with disabilities. The surah, through its portrayal of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) interaction with Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, a blind companion, delivers a divine message that reverberates through time, offering essential lessons that hold immense relevance for contemporary discussions on disability rights and inclusion. The surah highlights the importance of treating all individuals with dignity, regardless of their physical or sensory challenges. This message of equality and respect for those with disabilities, which was revolutionary at the time of its revelation, continues to be incredibly significant today, particularly in addressing the ongoing challenges that individuals with disabilities face in modern society.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Miftahuddin, "Ketika Nabi Muhammad Ditegur Allah: Tafsir Q.S. 'Abasa (80) Ayat 1-4," *Islami*, November 23, 2019, <https://islami.co/ketika-nabi-muhammad-ditegur-allah-tafsir-q-s-abasa-80-ayat-1-4/>

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an Juz 'Ammah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Murtaza MZ and Roma Wijaya, "Education for Disabilities: Analysis of Ma'na Cum Maghza 'Abasa: 1-11," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Raushan Fikr* 11, no. 2 (2022): 223-38, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jimrf.v11i2.6069>.



In the historical context of pre-Islamic Arabia, physical prowess, social status, and wealth were often seen as markers of a person's value, with disabilities frequently viewed as a source of weakness or inferiority. The revelation of QS. 'Abasa challenged these notions, providing a radical shift in how individuals with disabilities should be perceived. The incident of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) turning away from Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, and the subsequent divine correction, is not merely a personal reprimand but a broader social directive for all of humanity. It emphasizes that a person's worth is not to be determined by their physical appearance, abilities, or social standing but by their internal qualities such as piety and righteousness (*taqwa*). This foundational lesson not only addressed the cultural prejudices of the time but also established a blueprint for how to treat individuals with disabilities in a just society.<sup>18</sup>

The principles outlined in QS. 'Abasa, however, remain highly relevant in modern times. In contemporary society, the challenges for disability rights often revolves around key issues such as access to education, equal employment opportunities, and social participation. Individuals with disabilities continue to face systemic barriers in these areas, often relegated to the margins of society. The concept of equality, as depicted in QS. 'Abasa, calls for a dismantling of these barriers, urging that persons with disabilities be afforded the same rights, opportunities, and respect as others. This includes the right to an education, the ability to participate in the workforce, and equal access to social services and cultural participation.<sup>19</sup>

However, despite the clear and powerful message in the Qur'an regarding the equal treatment of individuals with disabilities, its application in the real world is still lacking in many places, including within Muslim-majority countries. Though some Muslim communities have made strides toward inclusivity, the full implementation of the Qur'anic teachings remains an area for growth. For example, in many parts of the world, public spaces, transportation systems, and educational institutions still lack adequate accessibility features for individuals with disabilities. Even in countries with progressive disability rights laws, enforcement remains a significant challenge. Thus, the need for a more consistent application of these principles in everyday life remains a pressing issue.<sup>20</sup>

One area where the teachings of QS. 'Abasa can be directly applied is in education. The surah emphasizes the inherent value of every individual, irrespective of their sensory abilities. In modern societies, individuals with disabilities still face significant barriers in accessing education that is both inclusive and equitable. While some progress has been made in integrating disabled individuals into mainstream education systems, many schools and universities lack the necessary resources and accommodations to support the full participation of students with disabilities. The importance of creating inclusive educational environments is directly in line with the Qur'anic call for equal treatment, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the same quality of education and opportunities for growth as their peers. This can be achieved through the provision of

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<sup>18</sup> Anshori, "Disabilitas Menurut Al-Qur'an," *JALSAH: The Journal of Al-Quran and as-Sunnah Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022): 34–45; Dewi Umaroh, "Makna 'Abasa Nabi Muhammad Dalam Al-Qur'an (Aplikasi Semiotika Roland Barthes Terhadap Q.S. 'Abasa [80]: 1)," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2020): 116–27, <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/Al-Bayan/article/view/11640/5308>.

<sup>19</sup> Rofi Atina Maghfiroh, Mohamad Ali, and Muh. Nur Rochim Maksum, "Inclusive Education in Surah Abasa Verses 1–10," in *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, vol. 676, 2022, 167–73, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220708.022>.

<sup>20</sup> Faisal A. Alnaser, "Rights of People with Disabilities from Islamic Perspective," *Journal of the British Islamic Medical Association* 16, no. 6 (2024): 1–8.

specialized support, assistive technologies, and accommodations tailored to the unique needs of students with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, employment discrimination remains a significant issue for individuals with disabilities. Despite the legal advancements in many countries that protect disabled individuals from discrimination in hiring practices, prejudice and stigma persist. Persons with disabilities are often viewed as less capable or less productive than their non-disabled counterparts, a perception that reflects the flawed and narrow understanding of human potential that QS. 'Abasa seeks to dismantle. The surah's message encourages the Muslim community, and society at large, to reconsider these biases and to create an environment where individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the workforce. This can be achieved not only through legislative measures that protect the rights of disabled individuals but also through societal efforts to promote awareness and inclusivity. Companies and organizations must be encouraged to provide reasonable accommodations and embrace a more inclusive approach to employment, fostering environments where people with disabilities are not only employed but also empowered to succeed.

Beyond the realms of education and employment, QS. 'Abasa also emphasizes the importance of fostering a society that accommodates the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. This includes ensuring that information and services are accessible to people with sensory impairments, such as through the provision of sign language interpretation, subtitles, or assistive technologies. In today's digital age, accessibility should not be limited to physical spaces but should extend to the virtual world as well. Websites, online platforms, and digital media should be designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access information, participate in online discussions, and contribute to the digital economy without facing unnecessary barriers.

In addition to these practical measures, QS. 'Abasa encourages the Muslim community to act as agents of change in fostering a more just and inclusive society. The surah's critique of societal values and practices regarding disability is not only a call for personal reflection but also a call to action. It is an ethical directive that calls on believers to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded or overlooked. This includes advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, challenging discriminatory attitudes, and promoting policies and practices that are inclusive and equitable. By internalizing and acting upon the Qur'anic principles found in QS. 'Abasa, Muslims are encouraged to play an active role in creating a society where justice, equality, and inclusivity are upheld for all people, regardless of their physical or mental condition.

To fully realize the values of equality and inclusivity found in QS. 'Abasa, a stronger commitment is required from both social and legal frameworks to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Governments, institutions, and communities must take responsibility for ensuring that persons with disabilities have the opportunities and support they need to participate fully in society. This is not only a matter of ethical responsibility but also a social one. The full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all

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<sup>21</sup> Fusvita Dewi, Muhammad Al Farabi, and Ahmad Darlis, "Pendidikan Inklusi Dalam Al-Qur'an Berdasarkan Surat 'Abasa Ayat 1-11," *El-Afkar* 12, no. 1 (2023): 134-52; Muhammad Fadhil Al Faiq and Suryaningsi Suryaningsi, "Hak Anak Penyandang Disabilitas Untuk Sekolah," *Nomos: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Hukum* 1, no. 2 (2021): 44-50, <https://doi.org/10.56393/nomos.v1i2.568>.

aspects of society is an essential component of a just and fair community, and it reflects the core values of Islam, as emphasized in QS. 'Abasa.

Thus, the teachings of QS. 'Abasa offer a timeless and powerful reminder of the importance of treating individuals with disabilities with the same respect, dignity, and equality as any other member of society. The surah challenges both personal and societal biases, advocating for the equal treatment of persons with disabilities in all areas of life. While progress has been made, significant work remains to be done to fully implement these teachings in practical, everyday contexts. It is through the combined efforts of individuals, communities, and governments that the principles of equality and inclusivity in QS. 'Abasa can be truly realized, ensuring that persons with disabilities are not only included but also empowered to thrive in every aspect of society.

**Table 1**

Ethical and Social Implications of Surah 'Abasa on Disability

Key Aspect	Description	Ethical and Social Implication	Relevance to Contemporary Issues
Event in Surah 'Abasa	Prophet Muhammad (SAW) turns away from Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, a blind companion, during an interaction with Quraysh leaders	This moment is a foundation for teaching the need for inclusivity and equal treatment in society	Challenges the societal norm of disregarding individuals with disabilities and emphasizes the importance of spiritual potential over physical abilities
Theme of Human Worth	Human worth should not be determined by physical attributes or sensory abilities but by piety (taqwa), as the true measure of value in the eyes of Allah	Emphasizes that people with disabilities have the same intrinsic value as others based on their moral and spiritual qualities, not physical limitations	Encourages inclusivity and equal treatment for individuals with disabilities, promoting a society where spiritual and moral qualities are prioritized over physical traits
Divine Correction	Allah's correction of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is presented as a pedagogical opportunity for both the Prophet and the Muslim community to reflect on societal values	Highlights the importance of reevaluating attitudes toward marginalized groups, including individuals with disabilities, and acting with kindness, patience, and wisdom	Emphasizes the need for a compassionate approach in addressing social justice and equality, especially regarding individuals with disabilities

***Quraish Shihab's Tafsir of QS. 'Abasa (80): 1-10: Rethinking Disability In Contemporary Context- Muhammad Idris Siti hajar-Adang Darmawan Achmad- Muhammad Khozinul Huda-Hudzaifah Achmad Qotadah***

Interpretation by Quraish Shihab	Shihab interprets the use of third-person language in the divine correction as a sign of Allah's gentle and educational approach	This interpretation highlights the need for careful and thoughtful correction when addressing sensitive social issues such as the treatment of individuals with disabilities	Calls for an approach that is understanding and non-judgmental, which is essential in fostering a more inclusive society
Equality in Islam	Equality in Islam is based on spiritual and moral qualities (taqwa), not physical appearance or abilities	Reinforces that all individuals, regardless of their physical condition, are equal in the eyes of Allah and have the same rights to dignity, respect, and social inclusion	Relevant to modern-day issues of disability rights, advocating for equal opportunities in all areas of life, including employment, education, and social participation
Message of Inclusivity	The surah calls for a society that values individuals with disabilities for their inner qualities and spiritual potential	Advocates for societal change where people with disabilities are seen as valuable members of the community, not defined by their physical conditions	Encourages inclusive practices and policies that remove societal barriers, ensuring equal access and opportunities for individuals with disabilities
Contemporary Relevance	The Surah teaches that disability does not diminish a person's value in the eyes of Allah or in the eyes of society	A call to create an inclusive society where individuals are valued based on their abilities, moral conduct, and spiritual growth rather than physical limitations	Highlights the need for continuous efforts to reduce discrimination and marginalization of individuals with disabilities, promoting a more just and compassionate society

**Source:** summarized by authors

## Conclusion

This study highlights the critical role of QS. 'Abasa (Chapter 80) in addressing the ethical and social treatment of individuals with disabilities, both in its historical context and in contemporary society. The Qur'anic verses, especially through the narrative of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) interaction with Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum, present a radical departure from societal norms by emphasizing that human worth is not based on physical or sensory abilities but on internal qualities such as piety and righteousness. This message of inclusivity and respect for individuals with disabilities is as relevant today as it was during its revelation, particularly in light of ongoing challenges faced by people with disabilities in terms of access, rights, and equality. By applying Quraish Shihab's tafsir to the verses of QS. 'Abasa, this study illuminates the broader implications for contemporary disability rights and inclusion. The surah's message transcends the individual event to advocate for a society that values people for their spiritual and moral qualities rather than their physical condition. The divine correction to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is a call for all of society to embrace an inclusive approach, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are treated with equal respect and have the opportunity to contribute fully to society.

The findings stress that while some progress has been made in addressing disability rights, there remains a significant gap in fully implementing these principles in modern society. Issues such as lack of accessibility in public spaces, education, and employment discrimination continue to marginalize people with disabilities. The Qur'anic call for justice and inclusivity provides a framework for overcoming these barriers and advocating for systemic changes that empower individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the application of QS. 'Abasa today calls for continued efforts to challenge discriminatory practices, promote inclusive education and employment, and create accessible environments for people with disabilities. The surah serves not only as a spiritual and ethical directive but as a blueprint for achieving equality, respect, and inclusion in all spheres of life. Through the adoption of these principles, rooted in the Qur'anic understanding of human dignity, we can work towards a society where people with disabilities are not only included but empowered to thrive.

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