

Asif-Ullah-Khan: My Commentary... Unyielding Spirit

Disability caused by a spinal cord injury is so severe that a person is not only left unable to walk, but also loses the ability to move or feel the body below the injury. Life changes completely, and every day you have to face a new test and challenge. To return to an active life with this difficult disability, you heavily lack the proper training required for psychological, physical, and social rehabilitation, which is why there is a severe shortage of new rehabilitation centers in our country for institutions of disabled rehabilitation. Therefore, for people suffering from a new disability, those individuals themselves become as important as an institution who have been living an active, successful, and exemplary life with a disability for decades; who, despite all difficulties, have established a new example of determination and courage, learned new methods to achieve self-reliance, and are leading an active and successful life. If the life circumstances, events, and experiences of such individuals become available to you in book form in your national language, then it is a completely different matter altogether. Since I myself have been living an active life for the past two decades with a severe disability like quadriplegia (a disability in which not only is your body paralyzed below the neck, but your hands also stop working), it is my effort to transfer all the knowledge—based on the difficulties I have endured, research regarding this disability, and personal experiences and observations—in the form of books to other persons with mutual disabilities. Alhamdulillah, a few months ago, my second book titled "Toote Paron Se Unchi Udaan" (High Flight with Broken Wings), written by typing on a smartphone with a paralyzed finger, received a very positive response from people belonging to all walks of life. Today, the book I would like to mention is "Unyielding Spirit" written by Mr. Amjad Pervez Siddiqi, which can prove to be very useful in connection with the purpose described above. "Unyielding Spirit" is the story of a journey in which, as a result of an accident, a person's spinal cord breaks, and from a moving, successful life, they end up on their deathbed. How difficult the journey of life becomes with a disability supported by a wheelchair, and what physical, medical, economic, and social barriers you have to face—all of this has been expressed by Mr. Amjad Siddiqi in his book *Unyielding Spirit* in a very beautiful, detailed, and bold manner. Mr. Amjad Pervez Siddiqi was living a successful life working in a bank in Saudi Arabia when suddenly, in a car accident, his spinal cord broke, and he became a victim of disability for life, confined to a wheelchair. From here, the difficult journey of his life, meaning the "Journey of Pain," begins. Whatever he had achieved in life, he lost it all. His job was gone, his engagement broke off, and even the relatives and close ones who used to envy his successes now began to pity him and consider him inferior. Yes, one thing that turned out well in his life after the accident, which played an important role in his self-reliance and successes, was physical rehabilitation training at a standard center in London at the royal expense of Saudi Arabia. How the way your body functions changes after a spinal cord injury goes? What kind of problems do you have to face? How to solve the problems? And how to run the routines of life while depending on yourself—all of this they learned from the rehabilitation center in London, but now, how to utilize this training to move forward in life, fulfill his dreams, and achieve successes, all of this depended on the power of his determination, courage, bravery, and intentions. After graduating from the physical rehabilitation center in London, his family brought him to Pakistan. Here, a mountain of difficulties stood before him. No one was ready to understand his condition. People's pity-filled eyes pursued him at all times. In short, he became

imprisoned in the house. In Pakistan, he could see no permanent future for himself. He wanted to go back to Saudi Arabia and make a new beginning, but his family members were not ready for this. Finally, with extreme planning, he secretly succeeded in going to Saudi Arabia all by himself. Settling again in Saudi Arabia was also no easy task. Previously, he was completely fine, everything was easy, and life was full of opportunities for progress, but now he had become disabled. A storm of difficulties lay before him. At every turn, he faced physical, social, and environmental barriers. No one was ready to give him a job. He was rejected everywhere by being called disabled, to the extent that his own bank was not ready to employ him again. But he was not one of those who lose heart; his intentions possessed a strength like steel, and in the end, he succeeded in getting a job from his bank on a trial basis. The bank staff thought that since he is disabled, he would not be able to work and would leave the job out of frustration. But he worked day and night, worked even more than a normal human being, and proved that being in a wheelchair by no means signifies that, God forbid, a person's mental capabilities have also become paralyzed and they cannot do any work. Rather, with hard work, dedication, and steadfastness, he can prove to be even more useful than an ordinary person. Eventually, he succeeded in winning the trust of the bank management. To some extent, life was now coming back on track. He got his own personal car, took a house on rent, and earned the blessing of performing Hajj despite his disability. But difficulties were still not ready to leave him alone. A director of his bank felt that his disability was not befitting the dignity of the bank and fired him from the job. Since money had now come to him, instead of struggling for another job, he decided to do business. Importing garments from Pakistan, he began going shop to shop in Saudi Arabia on his wheelchair to sell them. His business kept growing and gradually expanded to China and other countries. Due to his courage and high resolution, he became the apple of the eye of the Arab media. He began participating in various types of TV programs. His interviews started appearing regularly in newspapers, and he began receiving marriage offers from girls in different countries. Where was that time when the girl's family broke off the engagement due to his disability, and where was this time when hundreds of girls were ready to die for him and were pleading to make him their life partner despite his disability. Almighty Allah granted great progress to Mr. Amjad Pervez Siddiqi in business. Despite being on a wheelchair, he has been honored with high awards and titles like "One in a Million" from Saudi Arabia and several other countries. He is the father of two young sons, and has traveled to fifty-two countries of the world in connection with business and medical treatment. After achieving everything in life, he began to deeply miss his homeland; therefore, in the year 2020, after approximately forty years, he shifted back to Pakistan with his family. Mr. Amjad Pervez Siddiqi has spent forty-two years of his life with the disability caused by a spinal cord injury. Although he has progressed immensely in life, he too has to face the difficulties caused by a spinal cord injury disability at all times. Due to this disability, some new challenge or new difficulty awaits you every single day. And if you have not received any formal training to live with this disability, then surviving becomes very difficult. In Pakistan, there is a severe shortage of rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities. In the military setup, AFIRM, and in the civilian setup, apart from the Paraplegic Center Peshawar, there is no notable institution available, which is highly insufficient for a country with a population of 220 million. His book *Unyielding Spirit* is certainly a panacea, not only for youth with disabilities but for everyone. Although he is now at a stage of life where he should rest and enjoy his successes, if he utilizes his experience, his knowledge,

and his connections established across the world to build an international-standard rehabilitation center in the true sense, it will apply balm to the wounds of people affected by spinal cord injuries, and he will continue to receive its reward until the Day of Judgment as a continuous charity (Sadqah Jariyah).

-Asif-Ullah Khan