

Zulfiqar-Choudhary: Patience and Determination in the Face of Social Indifference

Amjad has written *Unyielding Spirit* so that by making his life an example, other disabled individuals like him can gather the courage to live. They can learn to fight problems and live. Recognizing Amjad's absolute resolution, steadfastness, and courage, he was given the title of "One in a Million" in America, while Saudi Arabia honored him with the title of a Hero. The entire world has cited him as a role model. Why is there such a massive difference in human attitudes between our societies and those of Europe? One primary reason for this has been highlighted by Amjad Farooqi in his book, detailing how, inside China, upon the mere order of a teacher, the most highly trained staff stops a train to safely board a disabled passenger, going completely against standard laws.

...only the highly trained staff stops the train against the law to board a disabled passenger. On the other hand, at the Sargodha and Jhang railway stations, they do not just extend inhumane treatment to a disabled passenger, but rather, despite the passenger possessing a business-class ticket, the ticket checker threatens to throw the disabled person out of the train along with his wheelchair for not buying a separate ticket for the wheelchair. Inside China, a professor is given so much high respect that under his order, not just in China but inside Hong Kong as well, special immigration arrangements are made for the disabled person. The flight is held back for up to an hour just so a disabled passenger can board first before the plane fills up. On the other side, our domestic airlines refuse to board a disabled individual even after they have fulfilled all necessary requested requirements. When permission is finally granted, his luggage is thrown onto the aircraft seat like ordinary trash. On one side in Europe, unknown people stand up for the rights of the disabled, while the best doctors of Saudi Arabia call him "Dear Brother." On the other side, in his own beloved homeland, he is made a target of extreme humiliation. The younger brother driven away by the harsh treatment of four stepbrothers, searched for his livelihood across multiple countries, eventually migrating to Sweden. In Sweden, he was granted permission to drive commercial transport vehicles on a European international license. However, despite possessing this license, when it came to driving public transport in Sweden, the job, life the phase commenced. First, all the candidates were gathered at a central point and divided into groups of two. Their eyes were securely blindfolded, a white cane was placed in their hands, and they were told to walk to a bus stop located approximately two kilometers away. Upon reaching there, they were instructed to board the bus. Because my eyes were blindfolded, as I attempted to step onto the bus, the driver did not merely move the bus slightly forward, causing me to slip from the steps, but rather, two staff members immediately supported me so I wouldn't fall backward. Even after boarding the bus, the blindfold was not removed. After driving around for about two hours, the bus finally came to a stop at a specific location, and our blindfolds were untied. It turned out to be the exact same location where our eyes had been blindfolded in the first place. There, we were informed that your bus will be driven by disabled individuals. This entire practical exercise was conducted solely so that you could gain firsthand experience and feeling of the severe problems that occur in the daily life of a disabled person. Brother tells me that even today, whenever I see a disabled individual on the road, I experience a strange, deep pain in the exact spot where my leg was injured that day. Societies are built through moral training and education, not through mere academic degrees or material wealth. After traveling through Pakistan and the civilized world, one clearly

recognizes the stark difference in the treatment extended toward disabled individuals. On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Punjab Minister of Health cut a cake alongside Amjad Siddiqi. If the government considered its exceptional son unworthy of any national honor, that is their own understanding, but the fact that the Health Minister cut a cake alongside him is...If people want, they should just read his story, and if a shift in behavior occurs while dealing with patients across London and Pakistan, that in itself will be an award. The honorable Minister should mandate that doctors and medical staff, before joining their duties in Pakistan, must obtain training by living as a disabled individual for at least one full day cannot give, then at the very least, inside medical professional courses, Amjad Siddiqi's book, which contains the core subject of Medical Ethics, should be declared mandatory. This will be no less than an honor and an award for Amjad Siddiqi from the government. Doing this might help promote a compassionate, human-friendly attitude toward disabled individuals inside Pakistan. Our religion stands entirely upon the foundation of an ethical moral system. In the eyes of religion, the best individual is the one whose ethics are excellent, and who looks after the creation of his Creator, especially the disabled and needy individuals. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself stated: "I have been sent solely for the completion of excellent morals." His holy character is the absolute best template for humanity. Yet, today's Muslim stands miles apart from this core foundational requirement of religion. He is the one who commanded the best kind of gentle treatment even toward animals; consequently, institutions for the protection of disabled animals came into existence there in the West. They adopted this ethical system, and as a result, welfare institutions for the disabled emerged there. The life story of Amjad Siddiqi is an echo of this very same moral system, which needs to be read repeatedly, and there is an absolute need to ponder and reflect upon what we are doing and what our Creator desires from us. Amjad Siddiqi wants to take us along with him on this journey of pain. Come, let us become his companions, and extend the exact same respect, honor, and recognition to our disabled citizens, ensuring them the exact same rights they deserve as fundamental human beings.

-Zulfiqar Choudhary