

Towards a Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics: Reinterpreting Disability Verses through the Lens of *Karāmah al-Insān*

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the persistent issue of ableism in classical Qur'anic exegesis, where disability is often framed within a charity-based and deficit-oriented perspective rather than as an expression of inherent human dignity. Such interpretations risk reinforcing exclusionary attitudes that are inconsistent with the universal ethical vision of the Qur'an. This article aims to reinterpret disability-related Qur'anic verses through the lens of *karāmah al-insān* (human dignity) in order to construct a more inclusive Islamic ethical framework. Employing a qualitative library-based approach, this study utilizes contextual Qur'anic interpretation combined with a normative-philosophical analysis to examine key disability-related terms and their exegetical trajectories critically. The findings reveal that many classical interpretations are influenced by socio-historical contexts that implicitly marginalize persons with disabilities. Through a dignity-based reinterpretation, this study reconstructs the meaning of disability beyond physical limitation, emphasizing ontological equality and moral worth. Furthermore, it proposes a conceptual framework of Qur'anic inclusive ethics grounded in four key principles: dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the Qur'an provides a robust ethical foundation for an inclusive understanding of disability when interpreted through a *karāmah*-based lens. The contribution of this research lies in offering a novel theoretical framework that bridges Qur'anic studies and contemporary disability discourse, while also providing ethical guidance for fostering inclusive Muslim societies.

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INTRODUCTION

Disability has increasingly become a central issue in contemporary global discourse, particularly in relation to human rights, social inclusion, and ethical justice. Within Islamic studies, discussions of disability have shifted from theological and jurisprudential perspectives toward more inclusive, human-centered approaches. However, many classical interpretations of the Qur'an continue to reflect implicit ableist assumptions, where disability is often framed as deficiency, limitation, or an object of compassion rather than a manifestation of inherent human dignity (Ghaly, 2016); (Afriyandi & Rahman, 2020). This tendency risks reinforcing exclusionary attitudes that are inconsistent with the Qur'an's universal ethical vision, particularly in the context of modern disability discourse that emphasizes equality and inclusion (Beaudry, 2025); (Willis & Harris, 2025).

Recent studies have revisited the representation of disability in the Qur'an, highlighting the need for reinterpretation. For instance, Adlini examines inclusive educational values in Q.S. 'Abasa, demonstrating that the Qur'an implicitly promotes inclusivity despite traditional interpretations that appear exclusionary (Adlini, 2023). Similarly, Alfiani and Sulaiman emphasize the ethical lessons derived from the narrative of Q.S. 'Abasa, arguing for the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities within Islamic teachings (Alfiani & Sulaiman, 2022). More recent scholarship by Ali and Codina further explores how disability is represented in Qur'anic narratives, suggesting that these representations are often misinterpreted due to socio-historical biases (A. Ali & Codina, 2025). In addition, Fauzi revisit Qur'anic and Hadith perspectives on disability through contemporary Islamic organizational *ijtihad* (Fauzi, 2025), while Heryana et al employ a *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach to reinterpret disability in relation to empowerment in professional contexts (Heryana et al., 2025). These studies collectively indicate a growing awareness of the need to move beyond traditional interpretations toward more inclusive frameworks.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on disability in Islam, important conceptual and methodological gaps remain in the interpretation of disability-related Qur'anic verses. Existing studies have successfully challenged negative stereotypes surrounding disability and have highlighted the importance of inclusion within Muslim societies. Nevertheless, the majority of these studies still concentrate on descriptive interpretations, legal accessibility, or social inclusion without systematically reconstructing the ethical foundations that underlie Qur'anic discourse on disability (Ghaly, 2016); (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2018); (Billah et al., 2025). Several Qur'anic passages, including Q.S. 'Abasa (80:1–10), Q.S. al-Nūr (24:61), and Q.S. al-Fath (48:17), provide significant textual references concerning disability, social interaction, and moral responsibility. However, scholars have rarely examined these verses within an integrated ethical framework that connects their theological, linguistic, and social dimensions.

More specifically, the first gap is theoretical. Although the concept of *karāmah al-insān* (human dignity) has been extensively discussed as a universal Qur'anic principle affirming the intrinsic worth of every human being (M. Bin Ali, 2022); (Jafari et al., 2024), its implications for disability interpretation remain insufficiently elaborated. Contemporary discussions frequently acknowledge dignity as an Islamic value but seldom employ it as the primary normative principle for reconstructing disability-related meanings in the Qur'an. Consequently, disability continues to be interpreted largely through functional or physical categories rather than through the ontological equality embedded in Qur'anic anthropology (Qurtubi, Nafis, AS, & Panggabean, 2025).

The second gap concerns methodology. Existing Qur'anic studies generally rely on either classical exegetical descriptions or contemporary socio-legal analyses, without explicitly integrating contextual tafsīr with critical disability scholarship. While contextual interpretation enables Qur'anic meanings to be understood in relation to changing social realities, disability studies provide analytical tools for identifying ableist assumptions that have historically shaped religious interpretations (Goering, 2015); (Wickenden, 2023). However, these two approaches have rarely been systematically combined within a coherent interpretive methodology. As a result, reinterpretations often remain fragmented, addressing either textual meaning or contemporary social issues without establishing a comprehensive interpretive bridge between them.

A third gap emerges at the ethical and practical level. Recent disability scholarship increasingly critiques ableism as an epistemological and cultural structure that marginalizes persons with disabilities through assumptions about bodily normality and productivity (Vasut & E Wu, 2025); (Willis & Harris, 2025). Similar concerns have also been raised within contemporary Islamic discourse, where theological reinterpretation is considered essential for dismantling stigma and promoting genuine social inclusion (Sebayang, 2025); (Billah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, Islamic studies have not yet developed a systematic ethical model that translates Qur'anic principles into an inclusive framework for understanding disability beyond charity-oriented or accommodation-based perspectives.

To address these interconnected gaps, this study conceptualizes three complementary analytical components within a unified framework. First, *karāmah al-insān* functions as the normative ethical foundation, affirming that every human being possesses inherent dignity independent of physical ability or social status. Second, contemporary disability discourse serves as the critical analytical lens through which ableist assumptions embedded in historical interpretations and modern social structures can be identified and critically evaluated. Third, contextual tafsīr operates as the interpretive methodology, enabling Qur'anic meanings to be reconstructed by considering the historical context of revelation alongside contemporary understandings of disability and human diversity. Rather than functioning independently, these three components interact dynamically to produce a dignity-centered reinterpretation of disability-related Qur'anic verses that remains faithful to the Qur'an while responding to present-day ethical challenges.

Against this backdrop, this study's novelty lies not merely in reinterpreting disability-related Qur'anic verses but in proposing a Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics Framework grounded in *karāmah al-insān*. Unlike previous studies that generally emphasize descriptive exegesis, legal accessibility, or social inclusion separately, this research integrates Qur'anic ethics, contextual interpretation, and critical disability studies into a single conceptual model. The framework reconstructs disability as an expression of human diversity rather than deficiency and formulates four interrelated ethical principles- human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and inclusive social participation, as the normative foundation for contemporary Islamic engagement with disability.

This study aims to reinterpret disability-related Qur'anic verses through a contextual and normative-philosophical approach grounded in *karāmah al-insān*. Specifically, it seeks to (1) critically examine classical interpretations that may reflect ableist assumptions, particularly in relation to Q.S. 'Abasa (80:1–10), Q.S. al-Nūr (24:61), and Q.S. al-Fath (48:17); (2) reconstruct the meaning of disability within a dignity-based ethical framework; and (3) formulate a conceptual model of Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics that contributes to contemporary Islamic scholarship on disability. Through this integrated approach, the study advances both Qur'anic studies and disability studies by offering a coherent ethical

paradigm that aligns the Qur'an's universal vision of human dignity with the contemporary pursuit of social justice and inclusive citizenship.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative, library-based research design, focusing on reinterpreting disability-related Qur'anic verses through a contextual and normative-philosophical framework. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study because it explores meanings, values, and interpretations embedded in religious texts rather than measuring empirical variables (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023). In this regard, the research focuses on understanding the ethical and conceptual dimensions of disability in the Qur'an, especially in relation to the principle of *karāmah al-insān* as a foundation for inclusive Islamic ethics.

The primary data of this study consist of selected Qur'anic verses that explicitly or implicitly refer to disability-related conditions, including blindness, deafness, muteness, physical impairment, mobility limitations, and other expressions historically associated with disability in Qur'anic exegesis. The identification of these verses used a systematic keyword-tracing technique with classical Qur'anic concordances (*Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān*) and digital Qur'anic search platforms that enable lexical retrieval based on Arabic root words. Keywords such as *a'mā* (blind), *a'raj* (lame), *aṣamm* (deaf), *abkam* (mute), and other semantically related expressions were first identified through concordance searches and subsequently verified by examining their contextual usage within the Qur'an. The resulting corpus was then cross-checked with classical exegetical works, including *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr al-Kasysyāf*, and *Tafsīr Ibn Kašīr*, to ensure interpretive consistency and to trace the historical development of disability-related interpretations.

These Qur'anic texts were then analyzed in dialogue with classical and contemporary tafsīr literature to trace the evolution of interpretive perspectives across different intellectual contexts. Classical exegetical works were employed to identify dominant theological and linguistic interpretations, whereas contemporary scholarship served as a critical resource for reassessing these interpretations in relation to current ethical debates on disability, dignity, and social inclusion. Accordingly, this study adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative design that integrates textual analysis, philosophical reflection, and socio-ethical critique, as recommended in qualitative approaches to religious research (Kaelan, 2010).

Within this analytical framework, *karāmah al-insān* functions not merely as a theological concept but as the normative research approach guiding the interpretation of disability-related Qur'anic verses. Rather than treating disability primarily as a physical deficiency or legal category, this approach evaluates every interpretive finding against the Qur'anic principle that all human beings possess inherent and equal dignity regardless of bodily condition or social status (M. Bin Ali, 2022); (Jafari et al., 2024). Consequently, *karāmah al-insān* serves as the ethical benchmark through which classical interpretations are critically reassessed, ableist assumptions are identified, and alternative dignity-based readings are reconstructed. Methodologically, contextual tafsīr provides the interpretive procedure, disability studies offer the critical analytical lens for examining social exclusion and ableism, and *karāmah al-insān* supplies the overarching normative framework that integrates textual interpretation with contemporary Islamic ethics. This integrated approach enables the study to move beyond descriptive exegesis toward a coherent Qur'anic ethics of inclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Revisiting Disability Terminology in the Qur'an

Mapping Disability-Related Keywords and Their Qur'anic Distribution

Before undertaking contextual reinterpretation, this study first systematically identified Qur'anic verses containing lexical expressions conventionally associated with disability. This step is essential because discussions of disability in the Qur'an have often relied on a limited number of well-known passages without comprehensively examining the broader lexical distribution of disability-related terminology. Accordingly, the identification process used thematic lexical tracing with classical Qur'anic concordances (*al-Mu'jam al-Mufaḥras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*), digital Qur'anic databases, and cross-verification with major classical tafsīr works. The search employed several Arabic keywords that explicitly denote physical or sensory conditions, including *a'mā* (blind), *a'raj* (lame), *aṣamm* (deaf), *bukm* (mute), and *marīḍ* (ill/sick). These keywords were selected because they represent the most frequently discussed disability-related expressions in both classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary disability studies within Qur'anic discourse (Bazna & Hatab, 2005); (Ghaly, 2016); (Handayana, 2016).

The lexical investigation demonstrates that disability-related expressions are distributed across diverse thematic contexts rather than being concentrated exclusively in legal or biomedical discussions. The keyword *a'mā* appears most frequently and occurs in narratives concerning moral accountability, spiritual perception, divine guidance, and eschatological consequences, alongside several passages referring to literal visual impairment. Likewise, *aṣamm* and *bukm* function predominantly in rhetorical descriptions of those who refuse divine guidance, whereas *a'raj* appears primarily in legal and social contexts concerning exemptions from particular obligations. Meanwhile, *marīḍ* is employed in both physical and metaphorical contexts, referring either to bodily illness or to spiritual and moral weakness. This lexical diversity immediately suggests that Qur'anic disability terminology cannot be reduced to purely biomedical descriptions but instead operates through multiple semantic layers depending upon literary context and communicative purpose (Azima, 2017); (Irwandi, 2019); (Iskandar, 2024).

The identification process yielded a corpus of representative verses summarized in Table 1. Rather than treating these expressions as isolated lexical items, the table illustrates how each keyword is embedded within broader theological, ethical, and social narratives. This corpus subsequently becomes the primary dataset for linguistic, historical, and contextual analysis presented in the following sections.

Table 1. Distribution of Disability-Related Keywords in the Qur'an

Arabic Keyword	Literal Meaning	Representative Qur'anic Verses	Dominant Context
أعمى (<i>a'mā</i>)	Blind	Q.S. 2: 18; 6: 50; 10: 43; 11: 24; 13: 16; 17: 72; 20: 124–125; 22: 46; 27: 66; 30: 53; 35: 19; 40: 58; 41: 44; 43: 40; 47: 23	Physical blindness, spiritual blindness, moral ignorance
أصم (<i>aṣamm</i>)	Deaf	Q.S. 2: 18; 2: 171; 5: 71; 6: 39; 10: 42; 17: 97; 27: 80; 30: 52; 41: 44	Spiritual deafness, rejection of revelation
بكم (<i>bukm</i>)	Mute	Q.S. 2: 18; 2: 171; 6: 39; 16: 76; 17: 97	Inability to respond, metaphorical silence, communication
أعرج (<i>a'raj</i>)	Lame	Q.S. 24: 61; 48: 17	Physical disability, legal accommodation, social participation

مريض (<i>marīḍ</i>)	Sick / Ill	Q.S. 2: 10; 2: 184–185; 4: 43; 5: 6; 9: 91; 24: 61; 33: 12; 48: 17; 74: 31	Physical illness, psychological condition, moral weakness
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Source: Compiled by the author based on thematic lexical tracing using Qur'anic concordances and verified through classical tafsīr literature.

A quantitative overview further indicates an important pattern. Lexical expressions denoting blindness constitute the largest category among disability-related terminology, followed by references to deafness, muteness, illness, and mobility impairment. Nevertheless, frequency alone should not determine interpretive significance. The Qur'an consistently employs these expressions in distinct rhetorical settings, meaning identical terminology may convey substantially different meanings depending on textual context. Consequently, semantic interpretation requires attention not merely to lexical occurrence but also to discourse structure, historical circumstances of revelation, and communicative objectives. This observation supports contemporary linguistic approaches arguing that Qur'anic vocabulary should be interpreted through contextual semantics rather than isolated lexical definitions (Azima, 2017); (Yulianti et al., 2024).

Another significant finding concerns the disproportion between literal and metaphorical usage. Although modern readers frequently associate these keywords exclusively with physical disability, the lexical mapping reveals that many occurrences function primarily as ethical metaphors describing epistemological resistance, spiritual negligence, or moral failure rather than bodily conditions. This distinction is particularly evident in the recurring use of *a'mā*, *aṣamm*, and *bukm*, where the Qur'an repeatedly contrasts sensory perception with moral awareness. Such findings challenge the assumption that disability terminology in the Qur'an uniformly denotes physical impairment. Instead, the semantic evidence suggests that physical expressions often serve broader theological purposes aimed at illustrating human responses to revelation rather than constructing normative judgments concerning persons with disabilities (Irwandi, 2019); (A. Ali & Codina, 2025).

The lexical mapping also shows that the Qur'an carefully distinguishes between verses describing physical conditions requiring legal accommodation and verses using disability-related expressions rhetorically. For example, references to *a'raj* in Q.S. 24: 61 and Q.S. 48: 17 explicitly address practical social participation and legal exemption, whereas many references to *a'mā* concern ethical perception rather than biological vision. This distinction becomes particularly significant because later exegetical traditions occasionally blurred rhetorical and literal meanings, thereby contributing to interpretations that inadvertently reinforced deficit-oriented understandings of disability. Consequently, establishing the lexical distribution constitutes a necessary preliminary step before evaluating how classical and contemporary tafsīr have interpreted these verses differently.

The lexical findings demonstrate that disability-related terminology forms a coherent yet highly diverse semantic network throughout the Qur'an. Rather than presenting disability as a homogeneous category, Qur'anic discourse employs different expressions for distinct theological, legal, ethical, and social functions. This mapping therefore provides the empirical foundation for the subsequent linguistic, historical, and comparative analyses, which examine how representative verses from each keyword category have been interpreted across classical and contemporary exegetical traditions and how these interpretations help reconstruct a dignity-based understanding of disability grounded in *karāmah al-insān*.

Linguistic, Historical, and Socio-Cultural Analysis of Representative Disability-Related Verses

Following the lexical mapping, this study examines representative verses from each keyword category through an integrated linguistic, historical, and socio-cultural analysis. Rather than treating disability-related expressions as isolated lexical units, this approach investigates how meaning is constructed within the Qur'an's communicative context. Such an analysis is consistent with contextual Qur'anic hermeneutics, which emphasizes that lexical meaning emerges from the interaction between language, historical circumstances, rhetorical objectives, and ethical messages rather than from dictionary definitions alone (Azima, 2017); (Hedayet, 2013). Consequently, each representative verse was selected because it reflects the dominant semantic function of its respective keyword while illustrating broader patterns of Qur'anic discourse concerning disability.

The first representative category concerns the keyword *a'mā* (blind), represented by Q.S. al-Ḥajj (22): 46: *"Indeed, it is not the eyes that become blind, but the hearts within the breasts that become blind."*

Linguistically, the verse presents a remarkable semantic shift from physical perception toward moral cognition. The Arabic expression *ta'mā al-qulūb* (the hearts become blind) demonstrates that blindness is deliberately transferred from the sensory organ to the center of moral consciousness. This rhetorical construction indicates that the Qur'an distinguishes biological vision from ethical perception, suggesting that genuine blindness lies not in the loss of eyesight but in the refusal to recognize truth and justice. From the perspective of Qur'anic semantics, this metaphorical extension prevents the term *a'mā* from being understood exclusively as a physiological condition (Irwandi, 2019); (Azima, 2017).

Historically, this verse was revealed within discussions concerning communities that rejected prophetic guidance despite witnessing abundant signs of divine revelation. The criticism therefore targets deliberate moral obstinacy rather than physical impairment. Socio-culturally, blindness in pre-Islamic Arabian society was a recognizable physical condition often associated with dependence and social vulnerability. However, the Qur'an strategically reverses this cultural assumption by relocating blindness from the body to the moral conscience. Consequently, the verse does not stigmatize visually impaired individuals but instead deconstructs the notion that physical ability necessarily corresponds with moral superiority. This semantic inversion constitutes one of the Qur'an's earliest critiques of bodily determinism and provides an important foundation for dignity-based interpretations of disability (A. Ali & Codina, 2025); (Iskandar, 2024).

The second representative category concerns *aṣamm* (deaf), represented by Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 18: *"Deaf, mute, and blind, they will not return."* At the linguistic level, the sequence *ṣummun bukmun 'umyun* forms a powerful rhetorical triad that intensifies the description of complete resistance to guidance. Importantly, these expressions function collectively as metaphors describing epistemological closure rather than medical diagnoses. The verse uses sensory vocabulary to portray individuals who consciously refuse to hear, speak, or perceive truth despite having the physical capacity to do so. This figurative language is a common rhetorical strategy in Qur'anic discourse, where bodily expressions often symbolize ethical conditions rather than anatomical realities (Irwandi, 2019).

Historically, the verse addresses the persistent rejection of prophetic revelation by certain groups. Its objective is theological rather than biomedical. Socio-culturally, hearing represented the primary medium for transmitting revelation in an oral society, making deafness an especially powerful metaphor for refusing divine communication. Consequently, interpreting this verse literally as a statement about persons with hearing impairments would disregard both its rhetorical structure and historical communicative purpose. Instead, the passage criticizes intentional moral disengagement, not sensory disability itself (Yulianti et al., 2024); (Iskandar, 2024).

A third representative category concerns *bukm* (mute), illustrated by Q.S. al-Nahl (16):76, which compares a speech-impaired servant with an individual capable of promoting justice. Linguistically, the verse uses a social analogy familiar to its first audience rather than establishing a universal judgment about people with communication disabilities. The comparison functions as an illustrative example within a broader theological argument concerning false deities and divine sovereignty. The rhetorical emphasis lies on functional contrast rather than personal worth.

Historically, communication competence was essential to leadership, commerce, and tribal negotiation in Arabian society. Consequently, the analogy reflected everyday social experience rather than normative evaluation of disability. Read in its historical context, the verse shows that the Qur'an uses recognizable social imagery to strengthen persuasive communication. It does not formulate an anthropological hierarchy between individuals with and without speech impairments. Such contextualization prevents modern readers from extracting discriminatory conclusions that exceed the verse's intended rhetorical function (Grue, 2015); (A. Ali & Codina, 2025).

The fourth representative keyword is *a'raj* (lame), represented by Q.S. al-Fath (48): 17, which explicitly grants legal exemption to persons experiencing physical limitations. Unlike previous categories dominated by metaphorical usage, this verse refers directly to physical disability. Linguistically, the wording identifies blindness, lameness, and illness as legitimate conditions requiring accommodation rather than punishment or exclusion. The verse therefore introduces a jurisprudential principle grounded in realistic human capability.

Historically, the revelation occurred within the context of military participation, where physical ability directly influenced communal obligations. Rather than excluding persons with disabilities from society, the Qur'an exempts them from responsibilities beyond their capacities while simultaneously preserving their moral dignity and religious status. Socio-culturally, this represents a significant ethical transformation because military participation often signaled social value within tribal communities. By recognizing differentiated obligations without diminishing personal dignity, the Qur'an established an early principle of reasonable accommodation that resonates strongly with contemporary disability rights discourse (Heyer, 2010); (Sholeh, 2015); (Umam & Arifin, 2020).

The final representative category concerns *marīḍ* (ill), represented by Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 185, which permits temporary exemption from fasting for individuals experiencing illness. Linguistically, the term *marīḍ* denotes a temporary condition rather than a permanent identity. This distinction matters because the Qur'an consistently describes illness as a situational circumstance rather than an essential characteristic defining personal worth. This lexical usage discourages identity reduction, whereby individuals become permanently labeled by bodily conditions.

Historically, the concession concerning fasting illustrates the Qur'an's broader legal philosophy emphasizing mercy (*taysīr*) and the removal of hardship. Socio-culturally, the verse reflects an ethical orientation prioritizing human well-being over rigid formalism. Rather than demanding identical treatment for every individual, the Qur'an recognizes diverse human capacities while preserving equal moral status. This distinction between equality of dignity and flexibility of obligation later becomes one of the most important ethical principles informing inclusive Islamic jurisprudence (Afzali, 2010); (Asghari, 2023).

Collectively, these representative analyses demonstrate that disability-related terminology in the Qur'an operates through multiple semantic levels encompassing literal description, rhetorical metaphor, legal accommodation, and ethical instruction. The linguistic evidence indicates that physical

terminology frequently serves broader moral purposes, while historical analysis reveals that revelation consistently responds to concrete social realities rather than abstract philosophical concepts. Furthermore, socio-cultural examination shows that the Qur'an repeatedly reshapes prevailing cultural assumptions by shifting human value from bodily perfection to moral responsibility and spiritual integrity.

These findings challenge reductionist readings that equate disability-related vocabulary exclusively with bodily deficiency. Instead, the semantic patterns demonstrate that the Qur'an consistently distinguishes between physical condition and moral evaluation. Disability terminology therefore functions primarily as a communicative instrument for conveying theological and ethical messages rather than establishing hierarchical classifications of human worth. This observation becomes particularly important for the subsequent comparative analysis because it provides the textual basis for evaluating whether classical and contemporary exegetical traditions have preserved, or, in some instances, obscured, these multidimensional meanings. The following section therefore compares representative interpretations from classical and contemporary tafsīr to examine how understandings of disability have evolved and how the principle of *karāmah al-insān* may reconstruct a more inclusive Qur'anic ethical framework.

Comparative Analysis of Classical and Contemporary Tafsīr: From Ableist Tendencies to Inclusive Interpretation

The linguistic, historical, and socio-cultural analyses presented above provide an important foundation for evaluating how disability-related verses have been interpreted across different exegetical periods. The central finding of this study is not that classical tafsīr uniformly marginalized persons with disabilities, but that several dominant interpretive patterns prioritized bodily normality, functional capability, and social utility as implicit standards of human evaluation. Contemporary tafsīr, by contrast, increasingly reorients interpretation toward dignity, inclusion, and equal moral agency. This section therefore compares representative classical and contemporary interpretations in order to identify both continuity and transformation within the Qur'anic discourse on disability.

A clear example appears in the interpretation of Q.S. al-Ḥajj (22): 46, where the Qur'an states that blindness ultimately concerns the heart rather than the eyes. Classical commentators such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kaṣīr generally acknowledged the metaphorical dimension of the verse, explaining that the "blindness of the heart" refers to failure to recognize divine truth (al-Ṭabarī, 2001); (al-Qurṭubī, 1964); (Ibn Kaṣīr, 1999). However, their discussions often retained a hierarchical distinction in which physical blindness functioned as the primary lexical reference, while spiritual blindness was treated as an extended metaphor derived from bodily deficiency. Contemporary scholars increasingly reverse this emphasis by arguing that the verse intentionally deconstructs the assumption that sensory impairment implies diminished moral capacity. In this reading, physical blindness becomes ethically neutral, whereas the real object of criticism is epistemological refusal and moral arrogance (A. Ali & Codina, 2025); (Iskandar, 2024).

A similar shift can be observed in interpretations of Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 18, which describes certain rejecters of revelation as "deaf, mute, and blind." Classical tafsīr frequently treated these expressions as powerful rhetorical analogies illustrating the severity of unbelief, but the metaphors remained closely tied to negative sensory imagery (al-Ṭabarī, 2001); (al-Suyūṭī & al-Maḥalli, 2010). Contemporary disability-sensitive interpretations caution that repeated association between disability terminology and moral failure may unintentionally reinforce stigmatizing cultural assumptions when removed

from its rhetorical context. Consequently, modern interpreters emphasize that the verse criticizes voluntary moral disengagement rather than actual deafness, muteness, or blindness as human conditions (Yulianti et al., 2024); (A. Ali & Codina, 2025).

The contrast becomes even more significant in interpreting Q.S. al-Fath (48): 17 concerning exemptions for the blind, the lame, and the sick. Classical jurists generally understood the verse as evidence for legal concessions based on physical incapacity, focusing primarily on obligations related to military participation and communal duties (al-Qurtubi, 1964); (al-Syawkani, 1994). Contemporary scholarship retains this legal insight but expands its ethical implications. Rather than viewing the verse merely as an exemption from responsibility, modern interpreters present it as a Qur'anic affirmation of differentiated participation grounded in equal dignity. The emphasis therefore shifts from "inability" toward "reasonable accommodation," a concept that resonates with contemporary disability rights discourse and inclusive social policy (Sholeh, 2015); (Umam & Arifin, 2020); (Heyer, 2010).

The table below summarizes the comparative findings.

Table 2. Comparison Between Classical and Contemporary Tafsir Approaches

Verse	Classical Tafsir Tendency	Contemporary Inclusive Reading
Q.S. 22: 46	Physical blindness as primary lexical reference; spiritual blindness as derivative metaphor	Moral blindness becomes the primary ethical focus; physical blindness is not a marker of inferiority
Q.S. 2: 18	Negative sensory imagery used to intensify condemnation of unbelief	Rhetorical metaphor distinguished from real disability conditions to avoid stigmatization
Q.S. 16: 76	Functional comparison emphasizing communicative limitation	Contextual analogy interpreted without reducing personal worth to communicative ability
Q.S. 48: 17	Legal exemption based on incapacity	Differentiated participation grounded in equal dignity and accommodation
Q.S. 2: 185	Concession for illness within legal hardship framework	Mercy-centered ethics recognizing diverse human capacities

Source: synthesized from classical tafsir literature and contemporary disability-oriented Qur'anic studies.

Table 2 shows that the major transformation lies not in the Qur'anic text itself but in interpretive orientation. Classical tafsir emerged within historical societies where physical capability often shaped social status, military participation, and economic productivity. As a result, bodily functionality frequently served as an implicit interpretive reference point. Contemporary interpreters operate within a different ethical environment influenced by human dignity discourse, disability studies, and international inclusion frameworks, leading them to foreground equality, accessibility, and social participation (Goering, 2015); (Katie Ellis, Mike Kent, Kim Cousins, 2024); (Willis & Harris, 2025).

Importantly, this study does not conclude that classical scholars intentionally promoted discrimination. Many classical exegetes recognized the spiritual excellence of individuals with disabilities and affirmed their full religious responsibility and reward. The issue identified here is subtler: certain interpretive conventions inherited cultural assumptions in which bodily completeness functioned as the normative human ideal. When these conventions are reproduced without contextualization, they may contribute to contemporary ableist readings even if such consequences were not intended by the original exegetes (Ghaly, 2016); (Sebayang, 2025).

The findings also reveal that contemporary inclusive tafsīr does not require abandoning the literal meanings of disability-related terms. Instead, it requires distinguishing between descriptive language and evaluative judgment. A verse may describe blindness, lameness, or illness as factual human conditions without implying ontological deficiency. This distinction matters because it lets interpreters preserve textual fidelity while rejecting interpretations that link disability to lesser human worth. In other words, the reinterpretation proposed in this study is hermeneutical rather than revisionist: the Qur'anic vocabulary remains intact, but its ethical significance is reconstructed through a dignity-centered framework (M. Bin Ali, 2022); (Jafari et al., 2024).

The comparative analysis therefore supports the study's central argument that *karāmah al-insān* provides the most coherent normative foundation for contemporary disability interpretation. Once human dignity is treated as an unconditional Qur'anic principle, disability can no longer be understood as a basis for social hierarchy, reduced agency, or moral suspicion. Instead, bodily diversity becomes one expression of the broader human condition within which all individuals remain equally honored before God (al-Qurṭubī et al., 2025); (Asghari, 2023).

The lexical mapping, contextual analysis, and tafsīr comparison demonstrate a clear trajectory within Qur'anic interpretation: from readings that often-centered bodily normality toward readings that increasingly emphasize dignity, equality, accommodation, and inclusion. This trajectory does not negate the classical tradition; rather, it re-engages that tradition through contemporary ethical consciousness and the Qur'an's own universal affirmation of human honor. The next section builds on these findings to formulate a reconstructed understanding of disability through the principle of *karāmah al-insān* and to develop a conceptual framework for Qur'anic inclusive ethics.

Critiquing Ableism in Classical Tafsir Traditions

A representative example of potential ableist tendencies in classical tafsīr can be observed in interpretations of verses employing the keyword *a'mā* (blind), particularly Q.S. al-Ḥajj (22): 46, which states: "Indeed, it is not the eyes that become blind, but the hearts within the breasts that become blind." Linguistically, the verse distinguishes between physical sight and moral perception, indicating that the Qur'ān intentionally relocates "blindness" from the sensory organ to the ethical consciousness. Nevertheless, classical exegetes frequently began their interpretation from the literal meaning of physical blindness before extending it metaphorically to spiritual blindness, thereby preserving bodily impairment as the primary semantic reference (Azima, 2017); (Irwandi, 2019).

In his *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, al-Ṭabarī explains that the verse contrasts individuals whose physical eyes remain functional but whose hearts fail to perceive divine truth (Al-Tabari, 2001). While this interpretation correctly identifies the verse's moral message, the interpretive movement begins with physical blindness as the normative point of comparison. Consequently, spiritual deviation is explained through the imagery of sensory impairment, implicitly presenting blindness as the paradigm of deficiency from which moral failure is analogically derived. From the perspective of contemporary disability studies, this interpretive strategy reflects an ableist tendency, not because al-Ṭabarī devalues blind persons, but because bodily impairment functions as the implicit negative standard for explaining ethical incapacity (Willis & Harris, 2025). This tendency reflects the epistemological framework of his period, in which bodily functionality was widely assumed to represent the normative human condition.

A comparable pattern appears in al-Qurṭubī's interpretation. Although he emphasizes that the verse concerns the blindness of the heart rather than the loss of eyesight, he nevertheless retains the hierarchical distinction between complete sensory perception and deficient spiritual perception, using

physical blindness as the rhetorical basis for illustrating ignorance and misguidance (al-Qurṭubī, 1964). The interpretive emphasis remains on the symbolic value of blindness rather than explicitly separating physical disability from moral evaluation. Consequently, later readers may unconsciously associate visual impairment with epistemic deficiency, even though the Qurʾān explicitly distinguishes between the eyes and the heart.

From a contemporary hermeneutical perspective, the issue therefore lies not in the Qurʾānic text but in the interpretive framework through which the text has traditionally been explained. Recent scholarship argues that Q.S. al-Ḥajj (22): 46 should be read as a critique of moral obstinacy rather than as an evaluative statement about persons with visual impairments. The verse intentionally rejects bodily determinism by affirming that ethical failure originates in the heart rather than in physical conditions (A. Ali & Codina, 2025); (Sebayang, 2025). Accordingly, the ableist tendency identified in certain classical interpretations should be understood as a product of historical epistemology rather than deliberate discrimination. Recognizing this distinction enables contemporary Qurʾānic interpretation to preserve the intellectual authority of classical tafsīr while reconstructing its ethical implications through the principle of *karāmah al-insān*, in which physical diversity no longer marks diminished human worth (Jafari et al., 2024).

Ableist tendencies in classical tafsīr become more apparent when examining interpretations of verses concerning physical impairment (*aʿraj*), particularly Q.S. al-Faṭḥ (48): 17, which states that no blame is imposed on the blind, the lame, or the sick for not participating in military expeditions. The verse was revealed within the historical context of military obligations, where certain physical conditions constituted legitimate legal excuses (*rukhaṣ*) from combat. Classical exegetes consistently interpreted this verse within a juridical framework that emphasized exemption based on bodily incapacity rather than broader notions of dignity or equal social participation (al-Ṭabari, 2001); (Ibn Kaṣīr, 1999).

Al-Ṭabari explains that the categories of *al-aʿmā*, *al-aʿraj*, and *al-marīḍ* are exempt because they lack the physical capability (*ʿadam al-qudrah*) required for warfare. His discussion focuses primarily on establishing legal obligations and exceptions, without further reflection on the social status or moral agency of persons with disabilities (al-Ṭabari, 2001). Likewise, Ibn Kaṣīr interprets the verse as evidence of Allah's mercy in relieving those with physical impairments from responsibilities beyond their capacity, while maintaining the central assumption that military participation represents the normative ideal from which disability constitutes an exception (Ibn Kaṣīr, 1999).

Al-Qurṭubī expands the discussion through fiqh analysis by detailing categories of disability that justify exemption from jihad and other communal obligations. Although his interpretation demonstrates sophisticated legal reasoning, disability remains predominantly conceptualized as a condition of diminished physical competence requiring accommodation through legal concession rather than recognition of equal civic agency (al-Qurṭubī, 1964). Such legal discourse undoubtedly fulfilled important juridical purposes in its historical setting; nevertheless, its emphasis on incapacity inadvertently reinforced a deficit-oriented understanding of disability.

From the perspective of contemporary disability studies, this interpretive pattern closely resembles the medical model of disability, which defines disability primarily through functional limitation located within the individual body (Beaudry, 2025); (Willis & Harris, 2025). The principal concern becomes identifying bodily deficiencies that justify exemption from ordinary social expectations. Consequently, social structures, environmental barriers, and discriminatory attitudes

remain largely invisible within the interpretive framework. Disability is understood as an individual condition rather than as a relational phenomenon shaped by society.

A similar tendency appears in classical interpretations of Q.S. al-Nūr (24):61, which declares that there is no restriction upon the blind, the lame, or the sick in sharing meals with relatives and members of the community. Classical exegetes generally explain the verse as removing social hesitation regarding communal dining with persons who possess physical impairments. Al-Ṭabarī attributes the revelation to prevailing Arab customs that discouraged eating together with disabled individuals because they were considered unable to participate equally during meals (al-Ṭabarī, 2001). Although the verse clearly abolishes this discriminatory custom, classical commentary often concentrates on explaining the legal permissibility of communal eating rather than exploring its broader ethical significance concerning social inclusion.

This interpretive emphasis illustrates an important distinction between legal accommodation and ethical transformation. Classical commentators clarified that persons with disabilities should not be excluded from communal meals, yet they rarely developed this verse into a comprehensive principle of social equality or inclusive citizenship. Contemporary scholarship argues that the ethical message extends beyond legal permission toward dismantling stigma and affirming the equal social participation of persons with disabilities (Billah et al., 2025); (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2018). Thus, while classical tafsir faithfully addressed immediate legal questions, its analytical horizon remained largely confined to jurisprudential concerns rather than broader ethical reconstruction.

Identifying these patterns should not be taken as a rejection of classical tafsir. Rather, it demonstrates that classical interpretations were inevitably shaped by the historical, legal, and cultural priorities of their respective periods. Their principal objective was to determine religious obligations within specific social contexts, not to formulate a comprehensive theology of disability or an inclusive ethical framework. Recognizing these contextual limitations enables contemporary scholarship to appreciate the enduring authority of classical tafsir while simultaneously extending its ethical implications through concepts such as *karāmah al-insān*, which foreground inherent human dignity beyond physical functionality (M. Bin Ali, 2022).

A further illustration of interpretive ableism can be observed in verses employing the keyword *aṣamm* (deaf), particularly Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 18, Q.S. al-Anfāl (8): 22, and Q.S. Fuṣṣilat (41): 44. Linguistically, the root ṣ-m-m denotes the inability to hear. However, within Qur'anic discourse these verses predominantly employ deafness as a metaphor for deliberate rejection of divine guidance rather than describing persons with hearing impairments. Classical exegetes, including al-Ṭabarī and al-Zamakhsharī, consistently interpret *ṣummun bukmun 'umyun* (deaf, dumb, and blind) as figurative expressions for obstinate unbelievers whose hearts are closed to truth (al-Ṭabarī, 2001); (al-Zamakhsharī, 1987). Their interpretations accurately recognize the metaphorical dimension of these expressions, yet they rarely distinguish explicitly between metaphorical deafness and the lived reality of individuals with hearing disabilities.

This absence of conceptual differentiation has important ethical implications. When metaphors describing spiritual obstinacy repeatedly employ disability-related vocabulary without adequate clarification, later readers may unconsciously associate physical impairment with moral or spiritual deficiency. Contemporary linguistic studies emphasize that metaphor not only communicates meaning but also shapes social perception through repeated semantic association (Azima, 2017). Consequently,

although the Qur'anic text critiques ethical attitudes rather than bodily conditions, interpretive traditions that overlook this distinction may inadvertently reinforce stigmatizing assumptions.

Recent Qur'anic scholarship has therefore proposed a more context-sensitive reading that carefully separates metaphorical language from anthropological evaluation. Studies on disability narratives in the Qur'an demonstrate that physical impairment is never presented as diminishing a person's intrinsic worth. Instead, the Qur'an consistently directs criticism toward arrogance, injustice, and refusal to recognize truth, irrespective of physical condition (A. Ali & Codina, 2025). Likewise, contemporary theological reflections argue that disability should be understood within the broader framework of human diversity rather than deficiency, thereby rejecting interpretations that implicitly equate bodily difference with spiritual inadequacy (Fauzi, 2025).

These observations suggest that the main difference between classical and contemporary tafsir lies not in the Qur'an's textual meaning but in the ethical horizon through which the text is interpreted. Classical commentators understandably focused on lexical explanation, legal implications, and theological clarification, shaped by the intellectual priorities of their era. Contemporary interpreters, by contrast, draw on disability studies, human rights discourse, and social ethics to examine how inherited interpretations shape the lived experiences of persons with disabilities (Ghaly, 2016). Consequently, reinterpretation expands ethical application rather than rejecting classical scholarship.

Table 3. The Comparative Findings

Disability Keyword	Representative Verse	Classical Tafsir Orientation	Contemporary Contextual Interpretation	Ethical Implication
<i>a'mā</i> (')	Q.S. 80: 1–10; 22: 46	Emphasis on physical condition and metaphorical blindness as ignorance (al-Ṭabarī; Ibn Kaṣīr).	Distinguishes physical blindness from moral blindness; emphasizes dignity and social inclusion.	Human dignity transcends physical ability.
<i>a'raj</i> (lame)	Q.S. 48: 17; 24: 61	Focus on legal exemption and bodily incapacity (al-Qurṭubī; al-Ṭabarī).	Understands exemptions as protection of rights while affirming equal participation in society.	Inclusion beyond legal accommodation.
<i>aṣamm</i> (deaf)	Q.S. 2: 18; 8: 22	Interpreted metaphorically as spiritual rejection without explicit differentiation from disability.	Separates metaphorical discourse from physical disability and rejects stigmatizing associations.	Ethical language must avoid reinforcing ableism.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that ableist tendencies emerge primarily from historically conditioned interpretive frameworks rather than from the Qur'anic text itself. The Qur'an consistently affirms the equal worth of every human being, while certain classical interpretations understandably reflect the juridical priorities and socio-cultural assumptions of their respective historical contexts. This distinction is crucial because it shifts the focus of critique away from revelation toward the evolving process of interpretation.

The findings support the argument that *karāmah al-insān* provides the most coherent normative foundation for reconstructing disability-related interpretation in the contemporary period. By positioning inherent human dignity as the primary interpretive principle, disability is no longer viewed through the lens of bodily deficiency but as one dimension of human diversity deserving equal respect, participation, and justice. This ethical reconstruction ultimately forms the conceptual bridge toward a Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics, in which Qur'anic interpretation is guided not only by linguistic and historical analysis but also by the Qur'an's overarching moral commitment to dignity, equality, and social inclusion.

Reconstructing Disability Meaning through *Karāmah al-Insān*

Reinterpreting disability-related Qur'anic verses requires more than revisiting individual exegetical opinions; it requires a coherent interpretive framework that connects the Qur'an's linguistic expressions, historical contexts, and overarching ethical vision. In this study, *karāmah al-insān* functions as that interpretive framework. Rather than serving merely as a theological concept, it operates as the primary analytical lens through which disability-related verses are re-examined, evaluated, and reconstructed. Accordingly, every interpretation is assessed according to a fundamental Qur'anic question: Does the interpretation preserve or diminish the inherent dignity that Allah has bestowed upon every human being as affirmed in Q.S. al-Isrā' (17): 70? This criterion transforms *karāmah al-insān* from a normative doctrine into a practical hermeneutical principle for evaluating classical interpretations and constructing more inclusive contemporary readings (M. Bin Ali, 2022); (Qurtubi et al., 2025).

Within this framework, disability is no longer interpreted primarily through the categories of physical limitation or legal concession, but through the ontological equality of all human beings before God. Classical tafsir undoubtedly made indispensable contributions to understanding the linguistic and juridical dimensions of disability-related verses. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the previous section, many classical interpretations were shaped by socio-historical assumptions in which bodily functionality implicitly represented the normative standard for social participation (Ghaly, 2016). Consequently, disability often appeared in interpretive discussions of exemption, incapacity, or exceptional legal status. While these interpretations accurately reflected the concerns of their historical contexts, they did not explicitly formulate disability within the broader ethical framework of universal human dignity.

Contemporary tafsir has begun to expand this interpretive horizon by incorporating insights from contextual hermeneutics, disability studies, and Islamic social ethics. Recent scholarship emphasizes that verses concerning blindness, deafness, or physical impairment should be understood within their rhetorical, historical, and ethical contexts rather than being reduced to descriptions of bodily conditions alone (Adlini, 2023); (Alfiani & Sulaiman, 2022); (A. Ali & Codina, 2025). This contextual shift successfully challenges many inherited assumptions regarding disability. However, contemporary interpretations often remain fragmented, focusing either on educational inclusion, legal protection, or social empowerment without integrating these dimensions into a unified Qur'anic ethical framework.

The present study therefore proposes *karāmah al-insān* as the integrative principle that connects these diverse interpretive developments into a coherent model of Qur'anic disability ethics. Under this framework, reinterpretation proceeds through three analytical stages. First, classical tafsir is examined to identify historically conditioned interpretations and their juridical or linguistic foundations. Second, contemporary contextual scholarship is used to recover the Qur'an's broader ethical objectives while engaging modern disability discourse. Third, these findings are synthesized through the principle of

karāmah al-insān, ensuring that the final interpretation consistently affirms inherent dignity, equality, and inclusive participation as the Qur'an's primary ethical commitments.

Table 4. The Transformation Proposed

Interpretive Stage	Primary Orientation	Understanding of Disability	Ethical Implication
Classical Tafsir	Linguistic explanation and legal categorization	Disability is primarily discussed in relation to bodily limitation, legal exemption, and individual incapacity.	Protection through legal accommodation, but limited emphasis on equal social participation.
Contemporary Tafsir	Contextual interpretation and socio-ethical critique	Disability is increasingly understood within historical context, social inclusion, and anti-stigma perspectives.	Recognition of equality and critique of exclusionary social structures.
Author's Reinterpretation (<i>Karāmah al-Insān</i> Framework)	Dignity-based Qur'anic hermeneutics	Disability constitutes one manifestation of human diversity without affecting inherent human dignity or moral agency.	Inclusive ethics grounded in dignity, justice, equal participation, and social responsibility.

This analytical progression demonstrates that reinterpretation is neither a rejection of classical tafsir nor a simple adoption of contemporary disability theories. Instead, it represents a process of ethical reconstruction in which classical linguistic insights, contextual interpretation, and contemporary social concerns are integrated within the Qur'an's own normative worldview. Thus, *karāmah al-insān* serves as the evaluative bridge connecting textual fidelity with ethical responsiveness.

The reinterpretation of Q.S. 'Abasa (80): 1–10) illustrates this analytical process. Classical commentators generally emphasized the historical narrative involving Ibn Umm Maktūm and explained the verses within their immediate context (al-Ṭabari, 2001). Contemporary scholarship extends this interpretation by emphasizing the Qur'an's critique of elitism and social exclusion rather than focusing on blindness as the defining characteristic of the companion (Adlini, 2023); (Alfiani & Sulaiman, 2022). Through the framework proposed in this study, the ethical significance becomes even clearer: the passage's central concern is not disability itself but the violation of human dignity caused by discriminatory patterns of social recognition. Consequently, the Qur'an redirects moral attention from bodily difference toward equal respect for every individual regardless of physical condition.

Similarly, verses employing terms such as *a'mā*, *a'raj*, and *aṣamm* should no longer be interpreted primarily through categories of deficiency. Linguistic analysis demonstrates that these expressions frequently function as rhetorical devices describing moral or epistemic conditions rather than physical impairments (Azima, 2017). When interpreted through *karāmah al-insān*, these metaphors cannot legitimately be used to construct negative assumptions about persons with disabilities because the Qur'an consistently distinguishes between ethical accountability and physical embodiment. Moral responsibility depends upon conscious human agency rather than bodily perfection.

This reconstruction also aligns with contemporary understandings of disability that emphasize the interaction between individual diversity and social structures. Whereas the medical model locates disability within the individual's body, the social model identifies exclusionary environments and

discriminatory attitudes as the primary sources of disability (Goering, 2015); (Beaudry, 2025). The dignity-based framework advanced in this study complements these perspectives by grounding social inclusion not merely in human rights discourse but in the Qur'an's own theological affirmation of universal human worth. Consequently, inclusion becomes a religious and ethical obligation rather than simply a social policy.

Reconstructing disability through *karāmah al-insān* represents a paradigmatic shift from deficit to dignity, from accommodation to equal participation, and from charitable compassion to ethical justice. This reconstruction not only strengthens contemporary Qur'anic interpretation but also establishes a comprehensive conceptual foundation for Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics, in which disability is understood as an integral expression of human diversity fully encompassed within the Qur'an's universal vision of dignity, justice, and social inclusion.

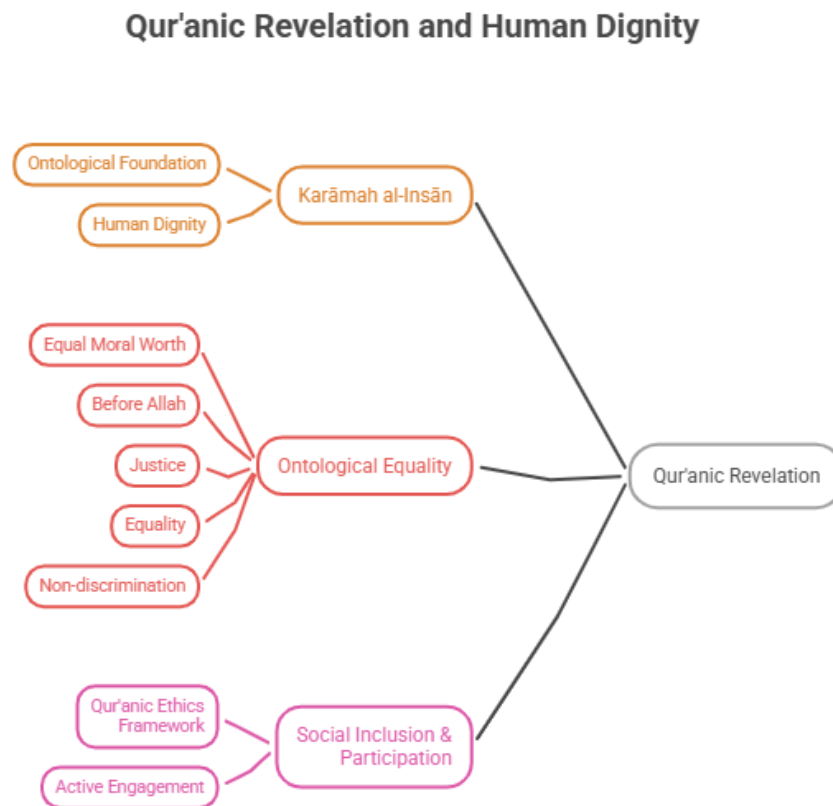
Towards a Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics: A Conceptual Framework

The preceding analyses show that reinterpreting disability-related Qur'anic verses requires more than correcting individual exegetical conclusions; it requires a coherent interpretive paradigm that translates the Qur'an's theological vision into an operational ethical framework. Accordingly, this study proposes Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics as a normative paradigm that systematically integrates textual interpretation, moral philosophy, and contemporary disability discourse. Within this paradigm, *karāmah al-insān* is not merely one ethical principle among others but functions as the foundational epistemological and ontological premise from which all subsequent ethical commitments are derived. Thus, the proposed framework explains not only what the Qur'an teaches about disability but also how disability-related verses should be interpreted in order to remain consistent with the Qur'an's universal affirmation of human dignity (Saruhan, 2025).

Unlike conventional interpretive approaches that begin with legal categorization or physical description, the framework developed in this study begins with the Qur'an's ontological affirmation that every human being possesses inherent dignity by virtue of being created and honored by Allah (Q.S. al-Isrā' 17: 70). This ontological equality functions as the primary interpretive criterion through which every disability-related verse is evaluated. Consequently, whenever an interpretation implicitly diminishes human worth on the basis of bodily, sensory, or cognitive difference, such an interpretation requires critical re-examination because it conflicts with the Qur'an's overarching ethical vision (Mohamed Adil, 2025). In this sense, *karāmah al-insān* becomes the normative filter through which inherited interpretations are assessed rather than merely an abstract theological doctrine.

Building upon this ontological foundation, the proposed framework develops through a sequential ethical structure. Recognizing inherent human dignity generates the principle of ontological equality, affirming that disability neither reduces moral status nor limits one's position as a bearer of divine dignity. From this principle emerge the ethical commitments of justice (*'adl*), equality (*musāwāh*), and non-discrimination, all of which require society to eliminate exclusionary structures and recognize persons with disabilities as equal participants in religious and social life (Goering, 2015); (Dhanda, 2008). These principles culminate in social inclusion, where Qur'anic ethics translates into concrete institutional, educational, legal, and communal practices. Thus, inclusion represents the practical realization of dignity rather than an independent ethical objective.

To clarify this interpretive process, the conceptual relationship proposed in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.



Source: Developed by the author.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics

As illustrated in Figure 2, the framework operates hierarchically rather than independently. *Karāmah al-insān* constitutes the ontological foundation that gives rise to ontological equality. Equality subsequently generates the ethical obligations of justice, equal treatment, and the rejection of discrimination. These normative commitments ultimately take shape in inclusive participation in education, employment, religious institutions, and broader social life. Accordingly, inclusion is understood as the ethical consequence of recognizing human dignity rather than merely an administrative policy or humanitarian aspiration.

The proposed framework also explains the transformation of Qur'anic interpretation itself. Classical tafsir primarily emphasized linguistic clarification, legal categorization, and historical circumstances of revelation. Contemporary contextual tafsir has expanded this orientation by incorporating socio-historical analysis and critiques of exclusion. The present study advances these developments by introducing Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics as an integrative paradigm that connects textual meaning with ethical reasoning. Consequently, interpretation no longer ends with determining lexical or juridical meaning but moves toward evaluating whether a particular interpretation promotes or undermines the Qur'an's universal commitment to human dignity. In this way, the framework provides a consistent methodological pathway from textual exegesis to ethical application.

The significance of this framework extends beyond disability studies. Because its interpretive foundation rests upon universal human dignity, the same analytical paradigm can be applied to other Qur'anic discussions concerning vulnerable or marginalized groups, including women, children, older

persons, refugees, and economically disadvantaged communities. This broader applicability demonstrates that *karāmah al-insān* functions not merely as a disability-related concept but as a comprehensive Qur'anic ethical principle capable of guiding contemporary Islamic social ethics (Asghari, 2023); (Saruhan, 2025).

Furthermore, the framework bridges Islamic ethical thought and contemporary human rights discourse without subordinating Qur'anic values to external normative systems. Rather than borrowing inclusion exclusively from modern disability theory, this study demonstrates that inclusive ethics can be constructed from the Qur'an's own theological foundations. Consequently, concepts such as accessibility, participation, equal opportunity, and anti-discrimination become religious obligations derived from divine revelation rather than solely legal or political commitments (Fauzi, 2025). This integration strengthens both the theological legitimacy and the practical relevance of inclusive policies within contemporary Muslim societies.

The framework also responds to emerging social realities. Developments in inclusive education, assistive technologies, and digital accessibility increasingly require ethical guidance that can address new forms of participation and exclusion. Since the proposed paradigm emphasizes dignity rather than bodily functionality, it remains adaptable to evolving technological and institutional contexts while preserving its normative consistency. Thus, accessibility is interpreted not merely as technical accommodation but as the concrete realization of the Qur'an's ethical commitment to justice, dignity, and equal participation (Mais & Yaum, 2026); (Shpigelman et al., 2022).

The proposed Qur'anic Inclusive Ethics represents the principal theoretical contribution of this study. It transforms *karāmah al-insān* from a theological doctrine into an operational interpretive paradigm, establishes a systematic relationship between ontological equality and ethical principles, and demonstrates how these principles culminate in inclusive social practice. Through this conceptual model, disability is no longer understood as a category of deficiency requiring exceptional treatment but as one expression of human diversity encompassed within the Qur'an's universal vision of dignity, justice, equality, and shared moral responsibility. In doing so, the framework offers a coherent paradigm for future Qur'anic interpretation that remains faithful to the text while responding constructively to contemporary ethical challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study reinterprets disability-related Qur'anic verses through the normative-philosophical lens of *karāmah al-insān* and develops a conceptual framework for Qur'anic inclusive ethics. The findings demonstrate that disability-related expressions in the Qur'an should not be understood exclusively through literal or deficit-oriented readings. Linguistic, historical, and contextual analyses reveal that many Qur'anic terms commonly associated with disability, such as *a'mā* (blind), *aṣamm* (deaf), and *a'raj* (lame), frequently function within broader moral, epistemological, and socio-ethical discourses rather than merely describing physical conditions. Comparative analysis further shows that although classical tafsir made significant contributions to preserving the textual tradition, some interpretations were shaped by socio-historical assumptions that implicitly privileged bodily normalcy and consequently reflected ableist tendencies. Contemporary contextual interpretation provides a more inclusive reading by relocating disability from an individual deficit to a dimension of human diversity grounded in the Qur'anic affirmation of inherent human dignity.

Building upon these findings, this study proposes *karāmah al-insān* as the central interpretive paradigm for reconstructing disability discourse in the Qur'an. Rather than functioning merely as a theological concept, *karāmah al-insān* operates as an integrated hermeneutical framework linking ontological equality with normative ethical principles. This reconstruction culminates in a conceptual model of Qur'anic inclusive ethics consisting of four interconnected principles: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion. The framework demonstrates how Qur'anic ethics can move beyond charitable and welfare-oriented approaches toward justice-oriented inclusion, thereby positioning persons with disabilities as equal moral agents and full participants in religious and social life. Consequently, the study argues that ableist assumptions originate primarily from historically conditioned interpretive traditions rather than from the Qur'anic text itself.

This study is significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to Qur'anic studies by integrating contextual tafsir, Islamic moral philosophy, and contemporary disability studies into a coherent interdisciplinary analytical framework. It also extends the application of *karāmah al-insān* beyond its conventional theological discussion by establishing it as a comprehensive interpretive paradigm for disability-related Qur'anic exegesis. Practically, the proposed framework offers normative guidance for developing more inclusive approaches within Islamic education, religious institutions, public policy, and community engagement. It further provides an ethical foundation for reducing disability stigma and strengthening inclusive practices in Muslim societies while remaining firmly rooted in Qur'anic values.

This study nevertheless has several limitations. First, the analysis is confined to selected disability-related Qur'anic verses and their interpretation within classical and contemporary tafsir traditions, without examining the entire corpus of Qur'anic narratives related to vulnerability and social inclusion. Second, the study adopts a conceptual and text-based methodology and therefore does not investigate how dignity-based interpretations are implemented in contemporary Muslim communities. Future research should empirically examine how Qur'anic inclusive ethics are received and applied across different socio-cultural contexts, educational institutions, legal systems, and disability advocacy movements. Comparative investigations involving various schools of tafsir, Islamic legal traditions, and interdisciplinary approaches to disability would further refine and expand the conceptual framework proposed in this study. Such developments will help strengthen Qur'anic inclusive ethics as a dynamic paradigm for promoting dignity, justice, and equal participation for persons with disabilities in contemporary Muslim societies.

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