Restoring Patients' Lives and Physicians' Conscience:

An Islamic Treatment of Deb's Law

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

This position paper addresses the responsibilities of Muslim patients and physicians under the Illinois End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act, also known as Deb's Law. The law is slated to take effect on September 12, 2026. The law permits a physician to prescribe medication intended to bring about the death of a qualified terminally ill patient. Although no physician is required to prescribe the medication or otherwise participate in aid-in-dying care, the law does require physicians to refer the patient either to a willing professional or to a person or organization that can assist the patient in seeking such "care."

Life, in Islamic theology, is granted by Allah, The Exalted. *Ḥayāt*—or "life"—is an eternal attribute of Allah Himself—He is "The Living" (*al-Ḥayy*) and the "Grantor of Life" (*al-Muḥyī*). To be granted life is itself a great blessing as it is an opportunity to recognize and serve Him: Allah states "I have not created Jinn and Man except so they worship me." [al-Dhāriyāt (51):56] One interpretation of "worship" in this verse is "recognition" (*maʿrifah*).[i] Human life traverses six distinct phases: the "Realm of Souls" (*ʿĀlam al-Arwāḥ*), the "Realm of the Womb" (*ʿĀlam al-Arḥām*), the "Worldly Life" (*al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*), the "Transitory Realm" (*al-Barzakh*) which is typically in the grave, the "Plains of Resurrection" (*Maḥshar*), and the "Final Abode" in Heaven or Hell (*Jannah and Jahannam*). Each stage maintains certain objectives and laws, and each preceding stage transitions directly to the other as a continuum.

Thus, the worldly life is by no means the final abode. Rather, it is the locale for "sowing the seeds" of one's good deeds and values so that he may reap his investment in the Hereafter. That being said, it is an abode defined by the challenges of work, struggle, and toil. These challenges translate to social, financial, emotional, political, and, even, physiological issues. However, Allah does not put an individual through a test that they cannot bear.[ii] If one is put through a test, that means they have the capacity to overcome it.

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Patience upon these challenges is rewarded. The Prophet ﷺ has beautifully stated, "Amazing is the affair of a believer! Indeed, all of his affair is good and that is for none other than a believer! If goodness comes to him, he is grateful and, thus, it is good for him. And if difficulty befalls him, he is patient and, thus, it is good for him."[iii] An individual—or civilization for that matter—that maintains such a myopic worldview as to disregard half of Man's life-trajectory—with respect to the Hereafter— *cannot truly* appreciate the beauty and value in metaphysical and *Ākhirah*-based virtues such as gratitude, patience, trust, and resilience. To elaborate, an observation that is incomplete or conducted through a faulty lens may produce negative results. For example, if one looks at just one tile on an elaborate mosaic, one may conclude that there is nothing more than a single tile; consequently, it may seem meaningless and incoherent as one has not seen the entire work. Similarly, if one views that mosaic by holding up red film and looking through it, one may conclude that the tiles comprising the mosaic are all red or have a reddish tint. Hyper-focusing on this worldly realm while ignoring the Hereafter may lead one to assume that the world is evil and unjust. Viewing this world through a materialistic lens may yield inaccurate results. This world and its temporary enjoyments are just one part of the entire picture. Countless Qurʿānic verses and Prophetic texts inform us that temporary difficulty and suffering in this world is reciprocated by everlasting bliss and abundant rewards in the Hereafter; these bounties are given to those who exercise resolve and patience. He ﷺ has said, "Not a thorn or anything greater [pricks] a believer except that Allah raises him a rank by virtue of it or removes a sin through it."[iv]

Our bodies are entrusted to us by Allah; we have not been given *carte blanche* over them. Because life is sacred, taking one's own life—whether or not one is diagnosed with a terminal illness—is unequivocally prohibited.[v] Allah ﷻ states, "…And do not kill yourselves…" and the Prophet ﷺ said, "…Whoever sips poison and subsequently kills himself, his poison will be in his hand [and he will be] sipping it in the Fire of Hell, abiding therein, being caused to abide therein—eternally!" Suicide is an act of ingratitude towards the blessing of life. Yes, life, even with tribulations, *can* be a blessing. That is, if one adopts patience.

Prescribing life-ending medications—or even referring patients to a prescriber—is not allowed. The Qurʿān states "And assist each other in righteousness and God-consciousness, and do not assist in sin and transgression."[vi] Since suicide is a sin, facilitating and assisting in it will itself constitute a sin. Allah ﷻ also states: "…Whoever takes a life unjustly or in transgression on earth, it is as if he has killed all of Mankind. And whoever gives life to [an individual], it is as if he has given life to all of Mankind…then, many of them—after [all] that—are excessive."[vii] Numerous Islamic legal and ethical rulings support this idea.[viii] Additionally, facilitating suicide for terminally-ill patients seemingly affirms that such individuals are less valuable, or that their value is determined by certain material measures. Whereas, there is beauty, value, and goodness—beyond materialistic forms—that comes from those individuals. Abū al-Dardāʾ (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Seek out for me the weak for you are but given provision and help because of the weak among you."[ix] It is a communal responsibility to provide care and comfort to such individuals. The Prophet ﷺ explained that it is a religious right of

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every Muslim to be visited when sick.[x] In fact, the Prophet ﷺ explained that when someone visits the sick, they are in fact entering the plucking grounds of Jannah and are visiting Allah ﷻ himself![xi]

Deb's Law exposes its own scandalous nature by requiring the following in the death certificate: 1) the death must be attributed to the underlying terminal illness, 2) the death must not be classified as suicide or homicide, and 3) the patient's use of the aid-in-dying medication must not be stated on the death certificate. The general prohibition against lying in Islam is well-known. Since Muslim physicians will—*inshāʾAllah*—not be prescribing fatal pills, they may be saved from participating in one more wrong: deceit. However, if a situation arises in which a patient dies on the watch of a physician who is innocent of prescribing the aid-in-dying medication, that physician could be required by the law to lie on behalf of other individuals who acted to cause the death—a perverse result indeed.

Physicians should reflect on the Prophetic hadith: "Allah, mighty and majestic is He, has not sent down any disease except that He sent down with it a cure."[xii] It is antithetical to the responsibility that physicians have to expedite their patient's death—doctors heal, not kill! Their responsibility is to continue researching and looking for cures all the while making *duʿāʾ* (supplication) to Allah. "Nothing can change destiny except *duʿāʾ*."[xiii]

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[i] Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr fi-l-Tafsīr*, 1st ed. ed. Māhir Adīb Ḥabūsh and others (Istanbul: Dār al-Lubāb li-l-Dirāsāt wa Taḥqīq al-Turāth, 1440/2019), 14:63.

[ii] Sūrat al-Baqarah (2):286.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن نَّسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۖ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ۚ أَنتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

[iii] Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayri, "Kitāb al-Zuhd wa-l-Raqāʾiq, Bāb al-Muʾmin Amru-h Kullu-h Khayr," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad Dhihnī Effendi and others (Turkiye: Dār al-Ṭibāʿat al-ʿĀmirah, 1334), 8:227.

حدثنا هداب بن خالد الأزدي وشيبان بن فروخ جميعا عن سليمان بن المغيرة (واللفظ لشيبان) حدثنا سليمان حدثنا ثابت عن عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى عن صهيب قال قال رسول الله ﷺ عجبا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله خير وليس ذاك لأحد إلا للمؤمن إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيرا له وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيرا له

[iv] "Kitāb al-Birr wa-l-Ṣilah wa-l-Ādāb, Bāb Thawāb al-Muʾmin fī-mā Yuṣību-h min Maraḍ aw Ḥuzn," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 8:15.
وحدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وأبو كريب (واللفظ لهما) ح وحدثنا إسحاق الحنظلي قال إسحاق أخبرنا وقال الآخران حدثنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن إبراهيم عن الأسود عن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله ﷺ ما يصيب المؤمن من شوكة فما فوقها إلا رفعه الله بها درجة، أو حط عنه بها خطيئة

[v] Sūrat al-Nisāʾ, (4):29.
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

Muḥammad Ismāīl al-Bukharī, "Kitāb al-Janāʾiz, Bāb Mā Jāʾ fī Qātil al-Nafs," in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. group of scholars (Būlāq, Egypt: al-Maṭbaʿat al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah, 1311), 2:96

حدثنا أبو اليمان أخبرنا شعيب حدثنا أبو الزناد عن الأعرج عن أبي هريرة قال قال النبي ﷺ الذي يخنق نفسه يخنقها في النار، والذي يطعنها يطعنها في النار

"Kitāb al-Ṭibb, Bāb Shurb al-Summ wa-l-Dawāʾ bi-h wa bi-mā Yukhāf min-h wa-l-Khabīth," in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7:139.

حدثنا عبد الله بن عبد الوهاب حدثنا خالد بن الحارث حدثنا شعبة عن سليمان قال سمعت ذكوان يحدث عن أبي هريرة عن النبي ﷺ قال من تردى من جبل فقتل نفسه فهو في نار جهنم يتردى فيه خالدا مخلدا فيها أبدا ومن تحسى سما فقتل نفسه فسمه في يده يتحساه في نار جهنم خالدا مخلدا فيها أبدا ومن قتل نفسه بحديدة فحديدته في يده يجأ بها في بطنه في نار جهنم خالدا مخلدا فيها أبدا

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Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qurʿān*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Qamḥāwī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1405), 2:216.

{ولا تقتلوا أنفسكم} قد اقتضى النهي عن قتل غيره وقتل نفسه

[vi] Sūrat al-Māʾidah (5):2.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُحِلُّواْ شَعَـٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا ٱلشَّهْرَ ٱلْحَرَامَ وَلَا ٱلْهَدْىَ وَلَا ٱلْقَلَـٰٓئِدَ وَلَآ ءَآمِّينَ ٱلْبَيْتَ ٱلْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَٰنًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَٱصْطَادُواْ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُواْ ۘ وَتَعَاوَنُواْ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُواْ عَلَى ٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ ۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ

[vii] Sūrat al-Māʾidah (5):32.

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَٰلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ أَنَّهُۥ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًۢا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَآ أَحْيَا ٱلنَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَـٰتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ

[viii] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *al-Aṣl*, 1st ed. ed. Abū al-Wafāʾ al-Afghānī (Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif, 1966-1973), 2:554.

محرم أرسل محرما إلى محرم فقال إن فلانا يقول لك إن في هذا الموضع صيدا فذهب فقتله كان على المرسل والرسول والقاتل جميعا جزاء وإن دل محرم محرما على صيد هو يراه ويعلم به فقتله لم يكن على الدال إذا قتله شيء محرم استعار من محرم سكينا ليذبح بها صيدا فأعارها إياه فذبح بها الصيد فلا جزاء على صاحب السكين ويكره له ذلك

Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-Rāʾiq*, 2nd ed. (Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī), 8:336.

…فمن مشايخنا من قال الجواب عندهما على التفصيل إن كان ما أوجره من السم مقدار ما يقتل مثله غالبا كان عمدا محضا وإن كان قدرا لا يقتل مثله غالبا فإنه يكون خطأ العمد ومن مشايخنا من قال بأنه على قولهم جميعا يكون خطأ العمد سواء كان مما يقتل مثله غالبا أو لا يقتل وكان كمن أوجر رجلا سقمونيا لا تحتمله النفوس فمات لا يكون عمدا محضا وإذا تناوله فشرب من غير إكراه لم يكن عليه قصاص ولا دية سواء علم الشارب بكونه سما أو لم يعلم وفي الخانية لا قصاص عليه ولا دية لأنه شرب باختياره إلا أن الدافع خدعه فلا يجب عليه إلا التعزير والاستغفار ومن دفع سكينا إلى رجل فقتل به نفسه لم يكن على الدافع شيء

Khalīl b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Shaybānī al-Naḥlāwī, *al-Durar al-Mubāḥah fi-l-Ḥaẓr wa-l-Ibāḥah*, 2nd ed. ed. Luʾayy b. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Khalīlī al-Ḥanafī (Dār al-Fatḥ, 1442/2021), 529.

التسعون الدلالة على الطريق ونحوه لمن يريد المعصية فإنها لا تجوز لأنها إعانة على المعصية قال الله تعالى ولا تعاونوا على الإثم والعدوان ومنها الدلالة للشرطي والظلمة إذا ذهبوا للظلم والفسق.

Group of scholars, *al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah*, 2nd ed. (Būlāq, Egypt: al-Maṭbaʿat al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah, 1310), 4:391.

وإن كان في ولده فاسق لا ينبغي أن يعطيه أكثر من قوته كي لا يصير معينا له في المعصية، كذا في خزانة المفتين

Mufti Riḍāʾ al-Ḥaqq, *Fatāwā Dār al-ʿUlūm Zakariyyā*, 2nd ed. ed. Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyās b. Afḍal Shaykh (Delhi, 2016), 4:545-546.

[ix] Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ashʿath al-Sijistānī, (Kitāb al-Jihād, Bāb fi-l-Intiṣār bi Rudhul al-Khayl wa-l-Ḍuʿfāʾ," in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Seida: al-Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyyah), 3:32.

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حدثنا مؤمل بن الفضل الحراني حدثنا الوليد حدثنا ابن جابر عن زيد بن أرطاة الفزاري عن جبير بن نفير الحضرمي أنه سمع أبا الدرداء يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ابغوني الضعفاء فإنما ترزقون وتنصرون بضعفائكم قال أبو داود زيد بن أرطاة أخو عدي بن أرطاة

[x] "Kitāb al-Salām, Bāb Min Ḥaqq al-Muslim li-l-Muslim Radd al-Salām," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 7:3.

حدثني حرملة بن يحيى أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب عن ابن المسيب أن أبا هريرة قال قال رسول الله ﷺ حق المسلم على المسلم خمس ح وحدثنا عبد بن حميد أخبرنا عبد الرزاق أخبرنا معمر عن الزهري عن ابن المسيب عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله ﷺ خمس تجب للمسلم على أخيه رد السلام، وتشميت العاطس، وإجابة الدعوة، وعيادة المريض، واتباع الجنائز قال عبد الرزاق: كان معمر يرسل هذا الحديث عن الزهري، وأسنده مرة عن ابن المسيب عن أبي هريرة

[xi] "Kitāb al-Birr wa-l-Ṣilah wa-l-Ādāb, Bāb Faḍl ʿIyādat al-Marīḍ," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 8:12.

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى التميمي أخبرنا هشيم عن خالد عن أبي قلابة عن أبي أسماء عن ثوبان مولى رسول الله ﷺ قال قال رسول الله ﷺ من عاد مريضا لم يزل في خرفة الجنة حتى يرجع

Ibid., 8:13.

حدثني محمد بن حاتم بن ميمون حدثنا بهز حدثنا حماد بن سلمة عن ثابت عن أبي رافع عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله ﷺ إن الله يقول يوم القيامة يا ابن آدم مرضت فلم تعدني قال يا رب كيف أعودك وأنت رب العالمين قال أما علمت أن عبدي فلانا مرض فلم تعده أما علمت أنك لو عدته لوجدتني عنده يا ابن آدم استطعمتك فلم تطعمني قال يا رب وكيف أطعمك وأنت رب العالمين قال أما علمت أنه استطعمك عبدي فلان فلم تطعمه أما علمت أنك لو أطعمته لوجدت ذلك عندي يا ابن آدم استسقيتك فلم تسقني قال يا رب كيف أسقيك وأنت رب العالمين قال استسقاك عبدي فلان فلم تسقه أما إنك لو سقيته وجدت ذلك عندي

[xii] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, "Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah, Musnad ʿAbd Allah b. Masʾūd raḍiy Allah taʿālā ʿan-h," in *Musnad Aḥamd*, 1st ed. ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ (Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1421/2001), 7:353-354.

حدثنا عفان حدثنا همام أخبرنا عطاء بن السائب أن أبا عبد الرحمن حدثه أن عبد الله بن مسعود قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما أنزل الله عز وجل من داء إلا أنزل معه شفاء وقال عفان مرة إلا أنزل له شفاء علمه من علمه، وجهله من جهله

[xiii] Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, "Abwāb al-Qaḍāʾ ʿan Rasūl Allah ﷺ, Bāb Mā Jāʾ Lā Yarudd al-Qadar illā al-Duʿāʾ" in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 1st ed. ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1996), 4:18.

حدثنا محمد بن حميد الرازي وسعيد بن يعقوب قالا حدثنا يحيى بن الضريس عن أبي مودود عن سليمان التيمي عن أبي عثمان النهدي عن سلمان قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء ولا يزيد في العمر إلا البر

وفي الباب عن أبي أسيد وهذا حديث حسن غريب من حديث سلمان لا نعرفه إلا من حديث يحيى بن الضريس وأبو مودود اثنان أحدهما يقال له فضة والآخر عبد العزيز بن أبي سليمان أحدهما بصري والآخر مدني وكانا في عصر واحد وأبو مودود الذي روى هذا الحديث اسمه فضة بصري

The ruling given herein is based on the interpretation of Islamic Law and is not intended to be an interpretation of any other laws (local, national or international).
The ruling given herein is specifically based on the question posed and the information provided.
This ruling may not be used for any other purpose without prior written consent of Darul Qasim.

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