

# Moral Teachings of Islam

## 6.1 Moral Teachings in Islam- Main Ethical Questions

### **Summary:**

Many writers who write about Islam are not totally familiar with Islam. They present the Five Pillars of Islam as the whole of Islam. However, it took us twelve sessions just to explore in some reasonable degree of depth (not total depth) the meaning and significance of each of the Five Pillars.

The Five Pillars represent the very bare minimum and the foundation of moral and ethical requirements. When we talk about pillars we are literally talking about pillars with no walls, ceiling furniture, partitions and thus the Five Pillars alone do not constitute all of Islam. Islam has its own set of ethical and moral system that covers all aspects of life independent of any other existing system whether it is secular or religious.

### 6.1 Main Ethical Questions

#### **Host: How would you define morals and ethics?**

Jamal Badawi:

Ethics is defined as a study of human conduct as it relates to certain basic ideals. That is why ethics is regarded as normative science rather than positive science. Normative represents basic ideals and how things are supposed to be. Ethics and morals are fields of study that focus on the knowledge of good and evil. They are the basis that we use to evaluate behavior as being good or bad.

#### **Host: Many people question whether ethics and morals have any relevance today given the advanced nature of our civilization and technology. Are these ethical questions relative to day to day life?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is interesting to note that since man was put on earth till now man never ceased to think and contemplate about these moral questions of good and evil. Mankind did achieve great strides in modern technology and space age, but are these advancements in the total and complete sense what humans are really aspiring towards? The

relevance of this subject is so great that all of our social, economic and political problems come from moral problems. At the heart of all of our contemporary problems is the basic ethical question.

When we talk about technological advancement, we should ask how much did we advance in the human sense? What is happening to the institution of the family? What is happening with the younger generation when we hear about a generation gap, antagonism, frustration, discontent and lack of a sense of purpose? There is disintegration of sexual morality as evil is regarded as good and good is regarded as evil. All of these things are upside down now all in the name of modernism. Honesty has become meaningless unless it is beneficial. People think that they do not worship any God because they are liberated are indeed worshipping other false gods (wealth, power, expediency).

The world has gone through a lot in two World Wars and numerous other wars. There has been a great deal of cruelty done by man to his fellow man. A great philosopher, Burton Russell at one point said that it would be unfair to beasts to say that man has descended to the level of beasts. Indeed if I may add that sometimes beasts are regarded as more humane because a beast only kills for food. The senseless murders that are all over our news give us clear indications that we can no longer put our heads in the sand.

Lewis Mumford in his book *Conduct of Life* says “The invisible breakdown of our civilization, the erosion of values, the dissipation of human purpose, the denial of distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, and reversion to subhuman levels of conduct.”

Harold Titus in his book *Living Issues in Philosophy* says “Man has devised numerous plans and organizations for gaining greater security and comfort yet he suffers from mental and emotion security as to the meaning of life the meaning of the world in which he lives and the kind of life he wants to live with his fellowmen.”

An eloquent expression about the same problem has been given by Northrop in his book *The Meeting of East and West* in which he says “It would seem that the more civilized we become the more incapable of maintaining civilization we are.”

The relevance of the moral is not simply important but perhaps more important that it used to be.

**Host: Can you elaborate on the point that the main concern of ethics and morality has to do with the study of good and evil? What are the major areas that are studied in ethics?**

Jamal Badawi:

Basically four questions are covered in books of philosophy and ethics and they are:

1. What is supreme good? What is the ultimate criterion that allows us to judge if something is good or evil?

There are three major answers to this question. One answer is that the ultimate good is happiness. So anything that makes people happy is good and anything that makes them sad is evil. The second answer is perfection. The attainment of perfection should be achievable, and anything that helps achieve perfection is good and the reverse is evil. A third suggestion is that duty for the sake of duty, an idea presented by Emanuel Kant one of the famous philosophers. This point basically says that people should do their duty for the sake of duty and not for any other purpose.

If we look at all these answers we find that they are all part of secular morality. This type of morality follows that system of belief that is divorced from God. This is the belief that we can answer these questions without believing in God or the life hereafter.

If we look into these answers we find that there are lots of conceptual problems. First of all, we will discuss happiness as the ultimate good. Again what is meant by happiness? Is it sensual happiness, spiritual happiness or mental happiness? There is no clear answer. Also, whose happiness are we talking about? Is it an individual's happiness, a group's happiness, a society's happiness, a nation's happiness or the happiness of mankind at large? There is a great deal of ambiguity.

Moving on to perfection, what is the standard of perfection? How do we get the standard of perfection? Whose perfection should we strive to achieve? Is it perfection of the individual, of a group, of society, of a nation, of mankind?

Duty for the sake of duty is perhaps the most ambiguous ways of defining something that should be absolute and clear. What does it mean to do one's duty for the sake of

duty? What causes people to follow a particular moral law? What is the rational that lets people do this duty?

2. What are the sources of knowledge about good and evil?

There are all types of answers under secular morality which are quite contradictory. This shows again the deficiency in the approach. The school of Empiricism focuses on human experience and regards it as the ultimate source of what is good and what is bad. A second school is called Intuitionism which says that humans by nature have a kind of insight and feel for what is right and what is wrong. A third school is called Rationalism which is the use of reason (many famous philosophers of the past such as Aristotle, Plato, Espinoza and Hegel were all in this school) to find out what is really good or evil.

When we say experience (Empiricism) as a source of what is good or what is bad, whose experience are we talking about? If one is talking about universal human experience this means that one has to have full data on experience before coming up with an answer. When one evaluates human experiences in an effort to come up with conclusions one will run into lots of problems. Ideally the person doing this evaluation must not only have full access to the data but has to be level minded, very objective and have no bias in his/her interpretation which is impossible. When working with any number of experts every person will interpret human experience depending on his own field of study or competence. It is impossible to get a universal agreement and thus everything will become relative. The other problem is that in order to get full data on experience one might have to wait for too long. Thus people will be lost for centuries before a clear answer is found because the data is simply unavailable. Both other schools Intuition and Rationalism may be partial sources for judging what is good and what is evil, but again they are only not sufficient.

3. Who sanctions morality? What is the power that makes sure people follow morality?

One school claims that the main sanction for morality is the nature of morality itself. This means that there is an automatic feeling of happiness when the right thing is done and bad feeling when something wrong is done.

There is also the law of Practical Reason which believes that there is a self imposed law that following morality is practical and imposes itself. Some also claim that it is the political power in any particular society that sanctions morality. They force

morality with jails, police and power. Others would say it is not political power but informal social pressure that makes people follow social norms.

#### 4. What truly represents the motives of moral conduct?

This point addresses what motivates people internally to be moral. One claim is that people have an inherent inborn respect of the law, but those who said that were unaware of what has been taking place in the last two decades. Others claim that it is simply the desire for perfection with the motivation being an inborn attitude that guides people. A third school (a combination of schools) follows the idea of punishment and reward. In this case people follow morality because they are rewarded if they do and punished if they don't. The schools vary as to who gives the reward. One claim is that it is a reward by the State (political power) the others say that it is by society (social pressure) by being ostracized or rejected if one is bad or being accepted and respected if they are good.

In both of these whether we talk about sanctions or motives we are back in square one because they each vary in regards to individual groups, society or mankind at large. After all this, one is still left in confusion on the basis of secular morality.

**Host: Is the secular moral thinking completely unreliable and completely devoid of any kind of truth?**

Jamal Badawi:

One can not say that any of those ideas that represent the fruit of human thought and great effort on the part of many philosophers throughout history is all devoid of any truth. At one point I even mentioned that there might be some gems of truth in some of the ideas, but the problem is that they represent partial aspects of understanding of ethics and morality. The main problem is that when we don't have a complete and comprehensive system of ethics and morality one is left with a situation where there are so many gaps and unanswered questions. In this kind of situation we find that many philosophers try to fill the gaps with assumptions or imagination which may or may not help to resolve the issues. Even though there have been some attempts to answer these questions we don't get a clear indication as to how we can use the answers as a foundation or basis upon which we can build a righteous individual or society. Above all these attempts try to establish a moral system as if mankind is independent of God by divorcing the discussion of morality from the belief in God and hereafter.

## 6.2 Moral Teachings of Islam- Foundations of Islamic Ethics

### **Summary of 6.1 "Main Ethical Questions"**

There is hardly any difference among people of today that the world is facing a crisis as our civilization is being threatened. Some say that the problem is economic, social, technical or political which only emphasizing the symptoms of the problem rather than the real causes. We tried to indicate last time that at the heart of all of these problems is basically a moral crisis. We also indicated that ethics and morality can either be secular or religious. The last program focused on secular morality and how it addresses some of the issues that are faced in ethical systems.

The points covered were mainly: what is the ultimate good one should strive for, what are the sources of knowledge for good and evil, whom has the right to sanction the moral or ethical code and finally what motivates the individual internally to follow the moral code. The thrust of the program was a discussion and critique of how secular morality answers these questions. For example one answer was that happiness is the ultimate good one should strive for. Some said that perfection and others said that duty for the sake of duty is ultimate good. Sources of knowledge of good and evil were suggested to include human experience or empiricism, intuition, inspiration or reason. Again in terms of sanctions and motives for morality there are various explanations given as people may do it in pursuit of happiness, perfection or because of political or social pressure.

In our basic critique of how secular morality answers these questions first of all we indicated that there is lack of clarity in defining what exactly is meant by happiness. The answer to any given question is never the same, thus there is no clear stable ethical moral system in the secular system. The main problem is that the secular system tries to establish a system completely separate from God which is probably the heart of the problem.

## 6.2 Foundations of Islamic Ethics

### **Host: What are the main differences between secular ethics and religious morality and ethics?**

Jamal Badawi:

Basically the difference between the two is that religious morality is based on the belief in God as the creator of the universe and second in the belief in the hereafter. The problem here is that the fundamentals of religious morality is not all the same for all religions.

**Host: What is the Muslim concept of God as it relates to the ethical system?**

Jamal Badawi:

Essentially a Muslim believes in absolute perfection, sovereignty and lordship of God as he is the only creator and sustainer of this universe. Some of the major divine attributes of God include things like absolute perfection, absolute life, absolute knowledge, absolute power, absolute mercy and absolute justice. I would also like to indicate that the emphasis in Islam on the absolute transcendence and perfection of God goes hand in hand with the emphasis on God as a personal God. This is important in relating to some of the philosophical ideas about God being so transcendent that He is so different and removed from this universe. Many philosophers like Plato and Aristotle believe in the Hellenistic philosophy which believes that God is impersonal. They believe that He is identical with the world or totally separate from it. This is not the view held by Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The question of God as a personal God in Islam is a relationship which is a loving conscious submission to the will of God. The question of closeness is reflected very succinctly in the Quran (50:16) where God says “We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.” In Islam we have both the absolute power and transcendence of God alongside His direct relationship with mankind.

**Host: How different is this concept of God than that held by other religious communities?**

Jamal Badawi:

When we talk about religious morality we are talking about ultimate ideal, supreme good and the highest model for human conduct. This is not a major problem in Islam because of the Muslim belief in one supreme and universal God whose divine attributes are not shared by any of his creators which automatically leads us to a moral and ethical system which is completely stable. This is the only plausible explanation about God which is consistent with the scientific mind of today.

Any person whom observes the phenomena in nature can see that there are certain permanent laws that the universe doesn't work in a hap hazard way and there is definitely coordination between the different components of this universe. This in itself leads to the conclusion that there must be a single and uniform will behind creation. Some people like to refer to this as the laws of nature, but as a believer one should put it as the laws that God created in nature. If we look at this issue using fair minded scientific deductions of the universe we will come to the conclusion that there is a single will and creator behind it all. If we compare this to polytheism we run into

difficulties. By definition polytheism believes in more than one ultimate will or sovereign which can not be. The Quran makes it very clear when it says (21:22) “If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both!” Polytheism covers all beliefs in more than one god, creators sharing some or all of God’s divine attributes or the belief in minor gods who might intercede between man and God.

### **Host: What is the Biblical concept of God compared to the Islamic concept of God as revealed in the Quran?**

Jamal Badawi:

The extent of difference between Islamic monotheism and the concept of God as depicted in the Bible is not as large as the difference between Islamic monotheism and other forms of polytheism which are totally rejected on the part of the Muslim. There is a very common error that is repeated by authors that write about Islam that gives the impression that the Islamic concept of monotheism is simply a kind of extension or based on the Biblical concept of God.

There are many scholars (non-Muslim) who have pointed out that among the early Israelites the conception of God was of a sort of super human being. If we look at the book of Genesis it describes God as needing rest after He created the heavens and earth and that He walked in the Garden and that Adam and Eve heard the sound of his feet. Sometimes He was depicted as a God who is jealous of the power of humans like in the famous story of Babel and when the humans began to build the tower of Babel God said that they were becoming very smart and that is why He changed the language of some of them which is the explanation of having different languages in the Bible. In other places God is depicted as someone who makes mistakes and of people correcting Him. Many times in the Bible the term God of Israel is used giving the impression that He is more of a tribal God. When we see these descriptions we can see the justification of the scholars who said that God was viewed more as a super human which doesn’t match with the transcendence of God and his total freedom from these human defects. Also, to contrast the idea that He is only God of Israel we find that the first chapter in the Quran says “Lord of the universe” and the last chapter in the Quran describes God as “Lord of mankind” not of Arabs, Muslims, or any other group but of all of humanity. In between the first and last chapter of the Quran it is consistent that God is of the whole of mankind and not a specific group of people. We can conclude that the Islamic concept of monotheism is definitely far from being a replica of what is found in the Bible.

In the New Testament we find certain passages are attributed to Prophet Jesus (PBUH) which indicate that he is the son of God who came to shed his blood on the cross in order to save humanity. From the Quranic point of view we find that this concept of God is not acceptable. A Muslim believes that Jesus is a holy, righteous



and noble prophet from among the greatest prophets of God. Jesus is exclusively human just like all other prophets of God. In Islamic monotheism is definitely the purest and highest form that we can think of in terms of purity of monotheism and it is extremely erroneous to say that Prophet Muhammad is a replica of the Biblical concept of God.

**Host: How does the difference you described effect the question of ethics?**

Jamal Badawi:

Last week for example we discussed the fundamental question of ethics which is to identify the supreme Good in order to establish some sort of criteria for good and bad. If the conception of the highest ideal which is God, in the case of religious morality, is mixed up with imperfections, errors or inconsistencies then how can it be used as an absolute source of morality?

When a believer upholds pure monotheism where God is totally and completely perfect and free from any imperfections that apply to us as humans and when this belief is so consistent and coherent that there are no vague doctrines or inconsistencies a stable source can be referred to as ultimate good. Another point is that by acknowledging God as the soul provider of all gifts in this life leads people to be faithful and to lovingly and consciously submit with loyalty to God. Submission is the meaning of the term Islam.

By believing in God and His perfection and divine attributes as the soul power in this universe and as the ultimate deity who has full and perfect knowledge it follows that God knows what is in our hearts and minds and that we can not hide anything from Him. This results with a feeling of self control as one knows that they can get away with stuff if they are not caught but that they can't get away from the all encompassing knowledge of God.

**Host: You had mentioned that the belief in the hereafter is the difference between religious and secular ethics. Can you explain some of the views held by religions other than Islam on the issue of life in the hereafter?**

Jamal Badawi:

For example, eastern religions look at the pleasures of this life as something that passes which is common in other religions but their conclusion is different. They conclude from this that because they are passing pleasures there is no sense to try to get anything in this universe. Their attitude is that the best thing to do in this life is to renounce the body, physical existence, and to focus on purifying the soul. Saving their soul means getting it out of the shackles of material and leading a life of meditation becomes their ideal way of living. This is not limited to eastern religions as we find in a book by E.F. Scott called *The Ethical Teachings of Jesus* he indicates that some of the early Christians (of the first, second and third century) tended to uphold similar views that somehow the kingdom of God is only going to take place in the future and that denouncing this world would be an act of piety.

**Host: How does the Islamic view point of life in the hereafter contrast with the above view?**

Jamal Badawi:

Islam teaches that the belief in the hereafter should not mean in any sense neglect of this life. The Quran says in (28:77) when addressing Qarun, one of the contemporaries of Moses, “but seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world.” Islam firmly holds the belief in life in the hereafter but ultimate righteousness is not to renounce this world but rather that we should coordinate this life with the life hereafter. One aspect of preparing for life hereafter is to accumulate credit for salvation by struggling on this earth to achieve justice right here on earth. Yes the kingdom of God is partly in the hereafter but the other part is right here.

## 6.3 Moral Teachings of Islam- Human Nature in Islam

### **Summary of 6.2 "Foundations of Islamic Ethics"**

The first thing we discussed was the difference between religious and secular morality. We said that in religious morality covers basic subjects like the concept of God, belief in the hereafter, nature of the human beings and a person's role on earth. In regards to the concept of God we saw how Islam insists on pure and perfect monotheism and rejects the philosophical notion of God as being an impersonal being that is so high or great that He is totally separate from the universe or that he is totally identical with it.

We indicated also that Muslims believe in God as a personal God. We also said that Islam rejects the polytheistic notion of God, the belief in other gods beside God or minor gods, which is contradictory to logic and science. The universe is ruled by one ultimate will as there can be no two conflicting powers.

Third we said that when we compare Islamic monotheism with the concept of God in the Bible (in both The Old and New Testaments) we find that there are differences. In The Old Testament we are left with the impression that God was perceived to be a super human as He is described as someone who walks and needs rest after having created the heavens and earth and in The New Testament it addresses the necessity of blood sacrifice in order for God to accept mankind. Similarly we have indicated that the importance of this pure consistent belief in God is essential and related to the ethical outlook of the believer.

In a similar way we discussed the belief in the hereafter. We said that Islam does not accept the notion of renouncing this world in order to earn the hereafter and that both should be coordinated and harmonized in order for the person to fulfill his duty on earth.

### 6.3 Human Nature in Islam

**Host: What are some views that are held by others regarding human nature?**

Jamal Badawi:

The first common view that addresses human nature views the human as an evolving animal. In this view the basic nature of the human is materialistic that had no divine plan for the creation of the human on earth. The second view is that the human is a spiritual being. The soul is over emphasized in this view while the body is nothing more than an illusion that should be neglected or tortured in order to free the soul from the shackles of materialism. A third approach regards the human as an intellectual being with an over emphasis on the intellectual qualities of the human. This view regards intellect as the master of everything and as the ultimate judge over revelation. Fourthly, there is the view that a human is a sinful being. Sin in this case is essential in human existence, as mankind inherited sin and is desperately looking for salvation. Some scholars refer to the writings of Paul who regarded sin as a universal tendency and human beings as people who are enslaved by their flesh's nature. In this view the wages of sin is death and salvation is not through the law but only through blood sacrifice.

**Host: What is a Muslim's point of view in regards to these views?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all Islam rejects the notion of regarding the human as an animal and that there is no divine plan behind creation. In the Quran in (54:49) "Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure." A similar verse appears in (25:2) "He who created all things, and ordered them in due proportions." Thus the notion of haphazard existence is alien to the mind of a Muslim. The notion of regarding the human as an animal is described in the Quran as very erroneous as found in the Quran in (47:12) "those who reject Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode." In (7:178) it talks about those who over emphasize material existence and forget about the existence of the soul and how they are less guided than animals because animals don't have the spirituality and knowledge that we have.

In regards to the human only being a spiritual being, we do believe in the soul, but the problem again is the over emphasis of the spiritual aspect at the expense of the material aspect. An example would be torturing the body because of the belief that the salvation of the soul is achieved by neglecting the body. This belief leads to celibacy and monasticism which goes against human nature. There are a few people who can take the discipline of this highly saintly type of behavior which can not be expected from average people. Also civilization would not be able to perpetuate itself. Once people are pushed against their natural needs which are partly physical then they are also being pushed to discard the law.

If we look at the point that views the human as an intellectual being, we can see that intellect is very useful but can be deficient. There are lots of sources of knowledge, intellect is a very important one but is not all. When we talk about intellect whose intellect are we talking about? Do we follow my intellect, your intellect, his intellect or her intellect? There is always a lack of an ultimate standard of right or wrong and as such to over emphasize intellect is to worship it and forget that there are other sources of knowledge.

The fourth item regards the human essentially as a sinful being which contradicts with Islamic teachings which does not accept any notion of original sin. Islam does not regard the human as a falling being. Mankind is actually regarded as a special creature who is trying to rise above his or her shortcomings and to overcome the weaknesses that might be inherent in his or her creation. Again the whole notion of original sin is not inline with the Islamic idea of mankind.

**Host: How do Muslims interpret the story of Adam and Eve without accepting the doctrine of original sin?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is no dispute that the story of Adam and Eve appears in the Quran however the way it is interpreted is quite different. When the Quran talks about the story of Adam and Eve it does not present only as the story of the first man and woman but rather it depicts the ethical experience of Adam and Eve as well as every other human being. Each human being has within himself the spirit of God but is also created from matter. How a person fulfills his spiritual aspiration and yearning with the limitations of the physical body is in itself the experience that Adam and Eve have gone through. The physical part of our existence is what tempts us to disobey God and our spirituality pulls us out of this. We fall make mistakes and our spirit is what helps us recover or overcome this. In addition to this when the Quran speaks about the story of Adam and Eve it addresses the fact that they committed their mistake, realizing their mistake, repenting and praying sincerely to God who forgave both of them. An example of this is found in the Quran in (2:37). There was no original sin as God who created Adam and Eve knew their weaknesses, He know that they could not help it at times so He forgave them when they showed a sincere attitude and as such it ended there. The Quran is very clear that sin can not be inherited and no soul can carry the burden of another soul or passed on to a future generation. In Islam every child is born pure just like a white cloth. To say that a person is born with tendencies towards sin is a different issue than saying that someone comes into this world a sinful person. The other thing is that human existence on earth is not a punishment for what is so called original sin because there is no original sin.

Life on earth was planned by God as we were destined to live on earth. Before the human being was created God was telling the angels that He is going to create trustees that will live on earth. So what happened with Adam and Eve was just a lesson they had to go through before coming to earth.

So what do we do if we as humans have a tendency to sin? The Islamic approach is very simple and direct. First acknowledge the sin, feel sorry about it, earnestly pray for forgiveness and have the determination not to fall into it again and if the sin involves the right of another person the fourth condition would be to return whatever was taken from them or to ask them for their forgiveness. In a simple and direct approach the Quran says (3:135) "And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,- and who can forgive sins except Allah.- and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done." Another example is found in (11:114) "For those things, that are good remove those that are evil." In a very moving citation in (20:32) "But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who,- in fine, are ready to receive true guidance." This is a very simple direct approach of sin and the redemption of sin.

## **Host: What is the Islamic view point on human nature?**

Jamal Badawi:

A human being is regarded by Islam as the trustee of God. In the Quran in (2:30) "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not." Here the term *khalifah*, the trustee of God, was very specifically mentioned as the essence of the human being. In a very similar citation in (6:165) it says "it is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth." This does not mean that God needs our help but rather it shows the dignity that God has endowed on mankind. The essence of the *khilafah* starts with the notion that the human being is regarded as the crown of creation as shown in the Quran and even Angels were commanded to bow down in respect to man kind. The Quran also says in (17:70) "We have honored the children of Adam."

The secret for the honoring of mankind is that only the human being has to integrate and harmonize the various components of his existence by utilizing his physical body, intellect and soul. We find that the Quran describes the human as having been created from clay, the material part, in chapter two it talks about God teaching mankind his intellect, and in (15:29) it talks about having the spirit of God within him and that God breathed into mankind of His spirit.

The reason why human beings are dignified is that they have free choice, and the potential for good and evil. In (90:10) the Quran states clearly that God has "shown him the two highways" of truth and falsehood. In (76:3) it says "We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)." In (18:29) God gives the human being the choice when it says "'The truth is from your Lord": Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it)" and each will deal with the consequences of their actions.

The fourth point of why a human is the trustee is the notion of responsibility. Responsibility goes side by side with freedom of choice. First of all, in the Quran in (75:36) it says "Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?" Thus if there is responsibility and purpose on earth, it follows that one will be questioned about this responsibly. Another verse in the Quran in () says "Did ye then think that We had created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)?" As a response to some of the people who used to talk in pride about their ancestors (when people talked about their relation to Abraham and other Israelite prophets) the Quran says in (2:141) "That was a people that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and ye of what ye do!" In the time of the Prophet (PBUH) some of the Israelite used to boast that if they were going to go to the fire will only touch them for a few days in (2:80) "And they say: "The

Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days:” Say: “Have ye taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise? or is it that ye say of Allah what ye do not know?” Addressing the Muslims themselves in order to avoid the attitude of spiritual arrogance the Quran says in (4:123) “Not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book (can prevail): whoever works evil, will be requited accordingly. Nor will he find, besides Allah, any protector or helper.” It is essential when we talk about the trusteeship of mankind on earth that we realize that it is a big job and we will be held responsible for our deeds.

## 6.4 Moral Teachings of Islam- Muslim View of the Universe

### **Summary of 6.3 "Human Nature in Islam"**

The foundation of any ethical system raises the question of how a person views their own nature. We started by exploring and critiquing some of the common views of human nature. The first view was that man evolved from animals. We said that this basically denies the existence of any purpose in life or that there is a divine plan that makes humans distinct. The next view over emphasizes the spirituality of mankind (which is important but sometimes overdone). This view leads to denunciation of this world and going to the extreme that torturing the body is a virtue which will save the soul. The third view over emphasizes the intellectual aspect of human nature which leads to the worship of the mind and overlooking the fact that as humans we need something more than the intellect, we need something that is divine. The fourth view sees the human as a sinful being. We said that this blows sin out of proportion and leads to a kind of pessimistic view of life as if the person is constantly haunted by sin. We indicated that as far as Islam is concerned even though the story of Adam and Eve appears in the Quran there is no implication of original sin, or that the sin is inherited by the descendents of Adam and Eve as God who created them knew their weakness and nature as humans and forgave them when they repented. We also discussed the notion of repentance for sin in Islam.

Then we discussed the Islamic point of view on human nature. It is summarized in one sentence as human nature for the Muslim is that God has made us His trustees on earth. First of all mankind is made as the crown of all other creations and the Quran indicates that God breathed into humans of his soul/spirit. Thus each one of us has the spirit of God within him which makes us quite distinct from other beings. This view leads to a balanced outlook on human nature without over emphasizing one element or the other as humans are made of matter, intellect and spirit. A result of this dual nature of mankind having the spirit of God which is from the highest and the fleshy nature from the lowest implies that humans have the freedom of choice and that mankind is a free agent. With freedom of choice comes responsibility for ones deeds and whether or not they follow divine guidance, on the Day of Judgment.

## 6.4 Muslim View of The Universe

**Host: What the effects of this view of human nature on a person's attitude and outlook?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are four basic areas under effect; the first one is self acceptance. If the human being realizes his or her nature and is quite realistic about weaknesses and strengths then the person would not be in a situation where he is not totally haunted by weakness and sin nor too arrogant and haughty about his strengths.

The second point is that as trustees we have limits in the way we should behave which are set by He who gave us this trust. For example Islam considers suicide as a moral crime because Islam doesn't accept the argument that the human body is ours and we can do with it what we want. In Islam the body is a trust in our hands which is given to us by God and should not be abused, killed or destroyed but to be used to fulfill our mission on earth. By the same token destruction of the environment or unwise use of it is morally wrong because it is not ours but rather a trust. We do not have the right to misuse personal property and things we own, even though Islam recognizes individual ownership it is all still a trust.

Both acceptance and limits of trusteeship lead the individual to have a view of life which is integrated as all aspects of life are put together. In Islam there is no false distinction of those people who are called religious because of their focus on the spiritual aspects of life and those who are secularists whose concern are the non-spiritual aspects as they should all be integrated. This way a person doesn't waste time dividing life into different jurisdictions or spheres and would not get confused with the different rules that apply to each area.

The fourth point is that with this kind of understanding of human nature life is regarded as a test. It appears in the Quran that life on earth is not just something that we go through without a particular mission or sense of purpose. The nobility and dignity of the human race lies in the capability of humans to overcome their weakness and shortcomings and to do their best to fulfill the mission that is entrusted in them. An example from the Quran is in (67:1-2) "Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power; He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-



Forgiving.” Life itself is a test and the materials, intellectual or spiritual capabilities that we have are simply tools to accomplish this particular mission. This kind of view enriches life as it provides for a more dynamic view and demands more active participation morally speaking on the part of the human in righting the wrong and in struggling to achieve peace and social justice. This is part and partial of morality as morality is not based on individualistic salvation. As a great scholar put it one of the great contributions of Islam to moral theory is the socialization of moral laws and that moral law is not individual piety but rather individual piety and the struggle within society to do the right and forbid the evil.

**Host: What is the nature of the universe as perceived by Muslims? How does this perception affect the outlook of a Muslim?**

Jamal Badawi:

The ethical outlook of the individual is not only connected to the view of nature but also to how a person views the world. More specifically Islam regards the universe as a tool aiding human kind to perform its function as trusteeship of God on earth. This kind of view definitely contrasts other views of human nature which regard nature as an adversary to mankind. In other words the view that Islam presents as an alternative to the common view is that the entire universe is created to be subservient to mankind in fulfilling their duty. This is why a Muslim would not use the terms victory over nature and subduing nature which give the impression that nature is an enemy. To a Muslim the universe is a friend and a person should never feel out of place because the Quran itself says that God created the universe to be subservient and of use to mankind. We also find that the Quran documents this in (16:14) where it talks about God making the oceans subservient to mankind. In (2:29) it talks about God creating the entire earth for human use.

People in the past and even after Islam came believed that if one studies the solar system or tries to explore space that they might be encroaching on the powers of God but 1400 years ago the Quran put it clearly in (45:13) that not only is the entire earth created for the benefit of mankind but also God had made subservient all that in the skies or heavens. This gives mankind permission to explore and harness the powers of nature. The Quran even refers to the phenomena found in nature and that we are required (a moral obligation) by virtue of belief to ponder on these creations as is found in (7:185) “Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah hath created?” It is quite clear that harnessing these natural resources is part and partial of the trusteeship and that the view of the Muslim of the world is quite open.

**Host: Can you elaborate on the concept of worship as viewed by Muslims?**

Jamal Badawi:

Worship is not mere ritual. When a Muslim use the term worship it does not imply the performance of certain rituals, rights or acts of piety or devotion to God. In Islam any activity is a potential act of worship as long as two conditions are present, one that the intention behind the activity is wholesome and pure and second it should be done within the limits prescribed by God. A person's whole life can be a constant and continues act of worship. A person's learning, school, office, factory, shop and even recreation can all be acts of worship. The Quran says in (7:31) "Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance?" Thus even recreation with good intention and within the limits prescribed by God can all be regarded as potential acts of worship. There is one key verse in the Quran in (51:56) "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me." This verse can not be interpreted to mean that God created us to constantly pray but it means that our wholesome living in accordance to His commands is worship. Even the pure act of worship such as the prayers which are totally devotional acts is not necessarily something that God wants or needs from us but ultimately it is a kind of training for us on discipline and moral virtues which is ultimately beneficial to us.

**Host: How does learning relate to a Muslim's view of the world?**

Jamal Badawi:

Knowledge and faith are not necessarily contradictory to each other like the thesis and antithesis. The act of learning, as I mentioned earlier is an act of worship provided that one is learning for a good cause. I think it would be interesting to remark here that the very first verse and word revealed in the entire Quran was *Iqra'a* which means recite, proclaim and read. In the first passage revealed from the Quran it refers to teaching twice and the pen as one of the tools of learning. There is no wonder then that the attitude that is found in the Quran and the Prophetic tradition are both very much in favor of learning. One verse in the Quran in (35:28) "Those truly fear Allah, among His Servants, are given knowledge." In other words people who have the right knowledge and who have the openness to study this knowledge carefully and objectively are more cognizant of Gods power and mercy and more God fearing than those who are ignorant. In the Quran in (58:11) it says "And when ye are told to rise up, rise up Allah will rise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) Knowledge." All types of knowledge that help mankind fulfill their role as trustee of God is a way of moving to higher degrees in the site of God. The same emphasis is placed on the subject of knowledge in the Prophetic Tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), an example is "seeking knowledge is mandatory on every Muslim." So in Islam it is a duty not just a privilege on every Muslim male or female to seek knowledge and learn. In another saying he said he said that the angels would extend their wings as a symbolic expression of pleasure and satisfaction with people who are seeking knowledge. In that sense to build a balanced civilization that combines material as well as moral progress is not only inline with Islamic teaching but is actually a duty incumbent on each Muslim male and female.

**Host: In the first program we answered how secular morality answers common ethical questions that are raised how would these questions be answered by Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all we said that the basic problems in ethical theory are:

1. What is ultimate good? What is worth striving for or living for?
2. What is the ultimate source of knowledge of right and wrong, good and evil?
3. What are the sanctions for following the moral code? Who has the right to enforce it?
4. On an individual level what motivates the individual to observe the moral code?

To answer the first question we said that many philosophers give various answers that ultimate good is happiness, duty for the sake of duty or perfection. Before a Muslim answers any of these questions we have to answer another set of questions:

1. Who are we?
2. What is the nature of the human being?
3. How do humans perceive the world around them and how do they relate to this existence?

These questions have been answered along with other fundamental ethics like believing in God and the hereafter.

For a Muslim the ultimate good that is worth living for is to pursue the pleasure of God. The main goal of a Muslim is succeed in the test of life while emerging from it honorably and successfully. If we are able to achieve the pleasure of God then we know that the act is good or not is whether it aides in achieving the pleasure of God.

The ultimate source of knowledge and right or wrong is divine revelation. Divine revelation is a source of knowledge that comes from God who makes no error. It doesn't deny the use of other sources but simply puts them in perspective under the banner of divine revelation.

The third and fourth questions which deal with the sanction of morality are answered by the combination of the pursuit of the love of God and trying to keep away from anything that displeases God. So in this case it is both love (more noble and acknowledgement of His bounty) and fear (not just being scared but fear of displeasing He to whom we owe everything including our existence) that motivate the individual to observe the moral code.

This way the whole picture of the ethical framework is easily and logically answered within the framework of Islam.

## 6.5 Moral Teachings of Islam- Characteristics of Islamic Moral Code

### **Summary of 6.4 "Muslim View of The Universe"**

In the last program we discussed the relationship of the human and the universe. The first point made is that the whole universe was made to be subservient to mankind. An example of this is found in (45:13) where it mentions that God made subservient to whatever is in the heavens which opened the doors to space exploration without feeling that there is any infringement on the domain of God.

Secondly, the powers in nature are not regarded as adversaries to mankind but rather as a friend. Everything that has been created is put here to aid with a human's mission on earth.

The third point is that the way Islam views worship is not the act or rituals but any activity may constitute for the Muslim as an act of worship even though it may not necessarily be a ritual. Related to this is the attitude towards knowledge and learning. If the human is the trustee of God on earth and if the universe is made subservient to humans it means then that knowledge is positive. The first word revealed in the Quran was *Iqra' a*, read.

We concluded the first four programs in the series by covering what makes the Islamic ethical system distinct. We talked about the oneness of God which provides the ultimate ideal for man kind to strive for in terms of moral ethics. We talked about the life hereafter in terms of human responsibility and the view of the human as the trustee of God on earth. And the last point we covered was the fact that the universe is subservient to mankind. This was the conceptual foundation of the moral code of Islam.

## 6.5 Characteristics of Islamic Moral Code

**Host: What are the major objectives of the Islamic moral code?**

Jamal Badawi:

The main objective is to build or create an Islamic personality, a personality which lives by its deep faith in God and in loving, conscious submission and commitment to God. We want to create a personality which is nourished by divine love and restrained from temptation by the fear of displeasing God, a personality which understands and accepts its role and mission on earth as trustee of God. This would give the personality a sense of responsibility, sense of direction, clarity of vision and meaning to their existence on earth. Now if we have a large number of people who meet this criteria or are close to it we would form an Islamic community which is involved in ordaining the good and fighting off the evil and injustice in society. In other words it is not just individual salvation or individual moral elevation but something that needs to be done at a collective level within society in order for the human race as a whole to participate in fulfilling this responsibility of being the trustee of God. There is no wonder that we find that the last Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in a famous *Hadith* narrated in the collection of Malik “I was sent in order to perfect moral quality to bring perfection, completeness and comprehensiveness into the highest and most noble moral qualities that have been preached by all the prophets.”

**Host: How does the Islamic moral code relate to faith?**

Jamal Badawi:

Some people tend to feel that faith and moral conduct don't have a one to one type of relationship. This is not so in Islam as any reform at an individual or social level must start with moral transformation. Some might appeal to patriotism, the power of the law or fear of punishment by political authorities to encourage people to practice or follow the moral code. However if one really wants to have any profound moral elevation or a reform which is not temporary the civilization must be concurrent with the moral code that was revealed by God. We find that the Quran has its own unique way of interpreting history. One verse in the Quran (13:11) says “Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).” We can talk about change in society, building this institution, removing that institution or reforming that system but it is all superficial until people change what is in their own hearts and their own commitment to God. Another place where this is found in the Quran is in (8:53) “Because Allah will never change the grace which He hath bestowed on a people until they change what is in their (own) souls.” This shows an interpretation of history and the rise and fall of different civilizations in the past and how many times, just like our present civilization, where God endows people with plenty of blessings, resources, richness and luxuries that no previous generations enjoyed but it all can be destroyed because this blessing can be changed if people change themselves and become ungrateful and disgraceful.

We find that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) answered the question of morals and faith in a very eloquent way in a few of his sayings. In a narration by Ahmad one time the Prophet asked the people around him “Who amongst you is the most beloved by me and who will be the closest to me on the Day of Judgment?” They asked “Who would it be?” He replied “The best of you in manners and morals?” In the collection of *Hadith* by Al-Tabrani the Prophet said that “Among the believers those who are most complete in belief are the best in behavior.” In this case faith and behavior go hand in hand. In dozens of places, when ever the Quran addresses faith it also addresses good deeds. An example that is found in the Quran is “those who believe and do righteous good deeds.” Another saying by the Prophet is that “faith is not something that comes by wishful thinking but is something that is entrenched in the heart and is confirmed by deeds.”

### **Host: What is the relationship of the moral code to acts of worship?**

Jamal Badawi:

A Muslim’s entire life can be a continuous act of worship so long as it is done with good intentions and within the boundaries that God has placed. In Islam there are Five Pillars of Islam. We will take prayer, which is preformed five times a day, as an example. If one tries to relate prayer to morals one will discover that what is meant by them is not the mere ritual or movement but the whole act of prayers is a type of moral training. Prayers are moral training on a conscious loving submission to the will of God, humbleness before God and a reminder for the individual to keep away from evil. In the Quran in (29:45) it says “Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do.” In another collection of Hadith by Al Bazzar it is reported that God says that “I accept prayers only from those who humble themselves before my glory, did not oppress any of my creators, those who did not spend the night while insisting on something wrong and immoral that they have done (repented), those who remembered me during the day, those who are kind and merciful to the destitute, wayfarer, the widow and those who are compassionate to those who are suffering or injured. This is the essence of what is meant by the prayer.

Another pillar of Islam is the Zakah, or payment of poor’s dues. The intention behind Zakah is not a kind of tax that one has to pay reluctantly and grudgingly. Zakah in essence relates to morality because it is a religious duty not just something that is imposed by the state. It represents the expression of love, compassion and mutual concern towards people who are less fortunate. An example of this is found in the Quran in (9:103) “Of their goods, take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them.” It purifies from the feeling of selfishness and lack of concern for others. Again the same term used for charity is used not only for paying money to those who are needy but as the prophet of Islam says “a good word is also an act of charity.”

Fasting is another Pillar of Islam and again the idea behind it is not only to temporarily restrain one's self from food and drink from dawn to sunset. Like the Prophet said that some people fast and the only benefit they get from their fast is hunger and thirst while the main moral lesson in fasting is training of the person to permanently restrain from evil. This is why the Quran in (2:183) it says that "Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint."

Finally, Hajj the pilgrimage is not about traveling and wearing specific clothing and going through certain rights. Pilgrimage is full of lessons of moral behavior, patients, and the meeting of roughly two million people in the same going through the same difficulties and being patient with one another. The Quran in (2:197) requires there be no argument or indecency during the pilgrimage. If we look at the acts of worship which are purely acts of devotion and worship aside from the rest of a person's life we find that the connection between worship and the moral codes is so strong that they are just inseparable.

**Host: What is Islam's stand on people who are active in their acts of worship but their personal behavior does not seem to be consistent with their apparent devotion?**

Jamal Badawi:

The Quran does not separate belief from actions. From an Islamic point of view the lack of practice of the moral code in one's life is an evidence of weak faith regardless of what the person claims to be. The real evidence of faith is its translation into actions and real concrete behavior on the part of the individual. Answers to this question can be found in some of the beautiful sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Ahmad some people asked the Prophet "such and such woman prays a lot, pays lots of charity and fasts beyond the minimum required however she seems to have the habit of hurting her neighbors with her tongue." He answered "she is in the hell fire." All her worship did not make up for the lack of moral behavior. Then they asked him about "a woman who prays the minimum and a little bit more, doesn't fast as much, and she doesn't pay as much in charity (all the charity she can give are small pieces of cheese) but she doesn't hurt her neighbors." He said "she is in paradise." So in this case the woman made less acts of worship there was still clear evidence of faith (of course it is not meant that one is substitute for the other).

In a narration by Muslim Prophet Muhammad said to his companions "Do you know who is truly bankrupt?" They answered that the bankrupt is someone who doesn't have any money or property. He replied "No the one who is really bankrupt is the one

who comes in the Day of Judgment with impressive things in his record like prayers, charity and all that and he cursed and swore at such and such a person, made false accusations against such and such person, when he usurped unjustly the property of such and such a person, killed such and such person and beaten such and such person. All this persons acts of credit will be taken and given by way of retribution to those whom he wronged until all the deeds that should have helped him get into paradise are exhausted and when there are still people who have been wronged by him who did not get their rights then God will take from their evil deeds and add them to his own till he is thrown into the fire.”

In another collection of Hadith by Al Bihaki that Prophet Muhammad said “Good character and moral conduct melts sins and mistakes as water melts ice.” We all know we are sinners but by good deeds we can reconcile ourselves to God. Actually in this *Hadith* he was echoing a verse in the Quran which says “good deeds whip away sins.” The Prophet continues that “bad character spoils good deeds just like vinegar spoils honey.” Like I said earlier we are not saying moral character and good behavior is a substitute for faith as one can act nicely because of rejection of faith or God he could be in trouble. Neither one is a replacement of the other but both should really go hand in hand.

**Host: Should moral codes be updated to take into consideration new circumstances or contemporary approach?**

Jamal Badawi:

If what is meant has to do with updating the fundamental principals or foundations of the moral code then the answer is definitely no. If what is meant by this is the extension of the application of the moral code or adapting the application not the principle then the answer is yes. When we talk about the fundamental injunctions as explained in the Quran and the sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad the source of this information is revelation which comes from God. If any human being says that we are more up to date than God this means they are claiming knowledge that exceeds the knowledge of God. The point that is to be made is that the basic principals that come from revelation are not bound to time. No human being, no institution religious or otherwise, no group of scholars can meet in a convention and decide to do this or that. Indeed if we open the door for this kind of relativism of our moral principals then if people’s biases and deviations go down a certain way then we the moral standards would follow the same path and we would have nothing firm to stand upon. Islam tells us to leave the revelation of God as it contains ultimate wisdom and instead of lowering the morals lets elevate people’s moral behavior so that they come close to these standards. Islam is in no way against dynamic change in society but it means that if we start tampering principles we will have no structure and no foundation to stand on.



## 6.6 Moral Teachings of Islam- The Lawful & Unlawful

### Summary of 6.5 "Characteristics of Islamic Moral Code"

We basically covered four points. The first point was the objectives and goals of the Islamic moral code. We indicated that the main purpose of the moral code is to build up an Islamic personality which lives by faith in God which is nourished with divine love which accepts its responsibility as trustee of God on earth. The result would be to have a community of believers who ordain the good and forbid the evil.

The second point was a discussion of the relationship between the Islamic moral code and faith. We said that the Quran makes it clear that one can not pay lip service to faith or simply say that they believe. The Quran says that there is always correlation between belief and performing good deeds. The ultimate test of faith is whether it is translated into reality and concrete actions that follow the moral code.

The third point was the relationship between the moral code and worship. Again we said that these are not contradictory points and should go hand in hand but neither can replace the other. In other words a person can not claim to possess good moral qualities while neglecting their duties towards God in terms of acts of worship. On the other hand one can not claim to possess good moral properties while neglecting their duties towards God (acts of worship). Also, one can not busy themselves with the ritualistic performance of acts of worship while forgetting about their moral behavior. Both moral code and worship should go hand in hand.

The fourth and last point we discussed last time was the extent of stability of the Islamic moral code. We said that if what is meant by moral code covers the foundations, objectives, basics and general principals then they are not subject to any change by any human being. These principals are not time bound and are broad principals that are always applicable. God out of His infinite wisdom of the past, present and future has prescribed these things so we have no right to claim to have more expertise than God. In details or extensions of applications we can expand on them without violating those principals.

## 6.6 The Lawful and Unlawful

**Host: Which aspects does the moral code emphasize?**

Jamal Badawi:

The moral code in Islam is not the type of code that is confined to personal behavior, spiritual aspects or limited compartments of human life but it rather encompasses the entirety of human life. The best way to describe moral life in Islam is that is fused into all aspects of life whether it's on a personal, social, economic or political level. For a Muslim it doesn't make sense to pray for a couple of hours per day or week and then prey on God's creatures for the rest of the time. If a person really expresses faith in God and is committed to the moral code then they don't leave their morals at the place of worship but carry it with them everywhere they go.

The moral code in Islam covers everybody; there is no particular group or class of people who may be exempt from the implementation or obligation to follow the moral law. To illustrate this I will tell a brief story that took place during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet was in debt and his creditor was a fellow who was a little rough and impolite and he came to the Prophet (PBUH) and he started talking to him very harshly. So one of the companions of the Prophet got very angry at this rude treatment of the Prophet and was getting ready to punish him. So the Prophet said wait both of us need something better than what you intended on doing (which was to attach the creditor). We both need your advice, you should advise him to ask politely and you should advise me to be patient and to pay him his due right. So the moral code doesn't only cover all aspects of life but it also covers all individuals who claim to belong to the community of believers.

**Host: It is suggested that in general moral codes are vague, how does Islam address this issue?**

Jamal Badawi:

Fortunately this is not the case in the moral code of Islam. This is based on a clear reason, prophet hood basically carried the same message and Islam as completed by Prophet Muhammad really culminated, specified and made more concrete so that it provides clear guidance to humanity. With this basis we find that the moral code of Islam has lots of examples and illustrations both in the Quran, the word of God, and the sayings, deeds and approval of Prophet Muhammad which shows how the moral code is applied. In Islam it does not simply say to the follower be good, be virtuous, and be moral it rather says be good and shows one how to be good, be virtuous and these are acts that could help one become more virtuous.

Islamic jurisprudence clarifies this aspect in a unique way. There are five degrees of lawfulness. The first degree is called *Mubah*, translated as permissible. Permissible is the baseline and contains things that are neither mandatory nor required nor are they regarded as detestable or forbidden. For example a person likes a particular type of food, gardening or carpentry we can not say that it is a religious requirement or forbidden to do these things.

If we go up one degree from *Mubah* we come to *Mustahab* or commendable. This is an act which is not obligatory on every Muslim but it is highly recommended. An example is that it is commendable to fast beyond the minimum required fasting of Ramadan or to pray extra prayers beyond the five daily prayers.

The highest is the *Fard* which is mandatory acts, which are the bare minimum obligations of anyone who claims to be a sincere and true Muslim. An example would be to perform the minimum five daily prayers, fasting the month of Ramadan, the duty on a Muslim to support his family financially, emotionally and otherwise, and the duty of the ruler (covering a variety of aspects of life).

Below the baseline of permissible is *Makrooh* which means detestable. This is something in Islamic law which is not absolutely forbidden and does not constitute a major moral sin but it is highly discouraged. For example smoking is not as unlawful as drinking or other intoxicants but it is a detestable act.

Below this comes the *Haram* which are forbidden or unlawful acts. This includes things which are regarded in Islamic jurisprudence as absolutely prohibited including things such as killing, adultery, drinking and other intoxicants.

This is a beautiful example that the does and don'ts are not black and white. There are degrees, for example if one moves above the permissible there are things which are commendable, highly commendable and then it becomes very close to becoming an absolute requirement. For things that are detestable there are degrees again as we keep going down till we get to the point of highly detestable and then it merges with the unlawful acts. In this sense Islamic jurisprudence is quite rich with more specific examples.

**Host: What is the philosophy behind regarding things to be unlawful?**

Jamal Badawi:

In Islam nothing is regarded as unlawful or forbidden by way of depriving mankind from something that is enjoyable. As I mentioned before that God made the entire earth and the heavens subservient to mankind. The notion that the unlawful is simply made so to deprive mankind is not true. Second of all nothing is considered unlawful or forbidden in Islam simply because taboo without good reasons. Thirdly, nothing is made unlawful in order to punish us after the advent of Prophet Muhammad. The Quran indicates that in the past in divine law that was revealed prior to the advent of Prophet Muhammad, given to other Prophets, there were cases where certain wholesome and lawful things were forbidden by way of punishment. For example in the Quran in (6:146) it talks about the fact that God punished some of the people

before Islam for their infraction by forbidding them good things. When the prohibition is not on the basis of deprivation, taboo or punishment why are things prohibited?

The Quran answers this in (7:157) “Those who follow the apostle, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures),- in the law and the Gospel;- for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him, -it is they who will prosper.” The key in this citation is that the basic rule is that if something is good and pure it is lawful if not it is forbidden. One interpretation of the yoke that the verse mentions is that if there was any punishment prior to Islam that forbade lawful and pure things it has been removed as everything that is good is permissible and everything that is evil is not. Of course it may take us an awful long time before we discover what is impure and bad about certain types of food which is prohibited or other things like drinking or smoking. Even then a true believer would not have the attitude that they will not accept it till it is proven to be wrong. A true believer would have full confidence and trust in God and would readily accept the rule and know for a fact that if they are forbidden from something it is because it is bad and not a punishment.

### **Host: How can person identify things which are lawful or unlawful?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a book we can refer to which is called “*Al-Halal wa Al-Haram fi al Islam*” by Dr. Yusuf Al Qaradawi which means the lawful and unlawful in Islam, and he summarizes in the first few pages of the book very beautifully some of the basic rules in terms of the of determining the lawful and the unlawful. I will just give some of those rules which are relevant to our topic.

The first general rule is that everything is regarded as permissible (lawful) unless there is clear evidence that it is not. An example of this is found in the Quran in (2:168) “O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good.” The basic rule is to start from things being permissible rather than the other way around. It doesn’t say that everything is not permissible unless something is specified to be permissible. Also, in (5:119) it talks about how God has already specified certain things which are unlawful.

There are two primary sources and one secondary source of knowing when something is lawful or unlawful. The most important and primary source is the word of God,

Quran, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad. Since the Quran is the word of God and God is the creator and sustainer and lord of the universe then He alone has the right to determine what is lawful and what is not. This is why we find in the Quran in (42:21) that it addresses people who follow codes of life other than what is prescribed by God “What! have they partners (in godhead), who have established for them some religion without the permission of Allah.” Thus, the ultimate right for legislation whether it be in the moral code or otherwise belongs to God alone.

A second primary source is called, *Sunnah*, which are the deeds, sayings and approval of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to the Quran whoever obeys the messenger of God is obeying God because the prophet was not speaking out of his own whims or ideas. The only difference between the *Sunnah* and the Quran is that the Quran was revealed to him word for word, where as for the *Sunnah* the meaning was revealed to him and he used his own words.

The secondary source is based on both the Quran and *Sunnah*. With the passage of time, centuries after the Quran and *Sunnah* were revealed, new questions arise like euthanasia or new drugs etc. and in this case one can not decide on these subjects without any foundation if these things are lawful or unlawful. An example is that the Quran specifically mentions intoxicants or what people interpret to be wine, but now we have new things such as *hashish* or LSD and it is quite possible for a Muslim jurist who understands these rules to say that these substances are analogous to wine because they have the same effect and harm as the scripture mentions and so it becomes *Haram* by analogy.

We should also notice that anything that is likely to lead to something that is unlawful is also unlawful. If adultery is regarded in Islam as unlawful then pornography for example which is likely to encourage adultery is also unlawful. Also, regarding points which are not clear in their relation to unlawful things and there is doubt it is better for the person to keep away from doubtful situations. There is a beautiful *hadith* on this point where the Prophet (PBUH) says that Allah has prescribed things as clearly lawful or unlawful, but in-between there is a gray area and whom-ever wants to protect his faith will stay away from it and those who fall into the gray area may fall into the un-permissible.

The other thing is not to play any legalistic tricks or to claim that because of one's good intention they have done wrong. Good intentions do not justify wrong doings and Muslims doesn't accept the Robin Hood approach of robbing the rich to pay the poor. If theft is wrong it is wrong both ways whether you have good intentions or not. There are exceptions in absolute cases of necessity which we will cover at a later time.

## **Host: What is the Islamic view about making things that are lawful unlawful?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is case is just as bad as trying to make the unlawful lawful. It is understandable to see how making something unlawful lawful would be infringement on the power of God. In the matter of making something lawful that is unlawful no one has the right whether they are individual scholars, groups of scholars, religious institutions, king or ruler to contradict the things that are clearly specified in Islam. These are not matters that are based on relativism because once one starts tampering with this nothing will be left.

The same principle applies to making things which hare lawful unlawful, to forbid things that God made available to people. To clarify this we refer to Quran in (10:59) where it rebukes people who make things lawful or unlawful without scriptural evidence. The same thing is repeated in (6:138) and another citation which is even more direct is in (5:87) “. O ye who believe! make not unlawful the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for Allah loveth not those given to excess.” So as we are forbidden to loosen the moral codes we are also forbidden from unduly restricting ourselves from what God has made available. There is one exception to this, for example if a just government determines that a species of moose or wheals are endangered and they say not to hunt this type of animal. However, they can not say that it is a moral sine to eat them because it can not be forbidden from a religious sense.

## 6.7 Moral Teachings of Islam- Prohibitions to Protect Faith & Life

### **Summary of 6.6 "The Lawful and Unlawful"**

There were five basic points that we discussed last time. First of all, we said that in Islam there is no distinction between secular or religious as all aspects of life come under one jurisdiction and as such the moral code in Islam is not a separate compartment but is fused in of human activity.

The second point was the extent of specificity the moral code is in Islam. We said in Islam it doesn't only tell people to be good or righteous but actually shows in detail with lots of examples on how to be righteous. In Islam there are division between

different types of acts starting from the permissible, which is the base line and anything that is not prohibited or mandatory is regarded as permissible. Up one step from permissible is *Mustahab* or commendable and if we go further up there are acts which are mandatory. Going down from permissible there are certain acts which are not strictly prohibited but are detestable or discouraged. The lowest are the unlawful acts. This is another aspect of specificity where acts are categorized depending on whether they are positive or negative.

The third point was the discussion of the main philosophy of the unlawful in Islam. We said that it is not because things are taboo, or a way of punishment or a deprivation that things are made unlawful. The basic rule that is followed is that whatever is permissible is wholesome and good and whatever is unlawful is harmful physically, mentally or spiritually.

The fourth point was the methodology used to find out if something is lawful or unlawful. Again as a basic rule anything that is regarded as unlawful must have some evidence to that effect from the Quran, the word of God, or from the Prophetic tradition or any analogy or interpretation based on these two sources.

The final point was the fact that making things that are lawful unlawful is just as bad as making things that are unlawful lawful. The right to say what is right and what is wrong is not ours but God's. If God has specified something in the scripture and defined it as right or wrong no body has the right to interpret it as one way or the other if the person sincerely believes in God.

## 6.7 Prohibitions to Protect Faith and Life

**Host: What is a method of classifying the unlawful acts according to the moral code of Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are a number of ways that one can classify the lawful and unlawful in Islam. One can divide them or subdivide them on the basis of personal, social, economic and political aspects of life. However, I found a classification which is more logical and easy to follow which covers the lawful and unlawful in Islam. There are five basic objectives behind Islamic law which relate to the moral code. The objectives are to safe guard *al-deen*, faith, *al-nafs*, life, *al-akl*, the mind, *al-ird*, honor, and *al-mal*, property. Any regulation whether it is lawful or unlawful relates in a way or another to the protection and safeguarding of these five basic things. In order to

safe guard faith it is necessary to avoid and or fight things like *shirk*, sorcery and tyranny. These are only examples and not the complete list. To protect or safeguard life we find that the moral code of Islam involves fighting against killing, suicide, social injustice and other things that relate to the protection of life. To protect the mind the moral code includes prohibition of all types of intoxicants. To protect honor we find that the moral code involves prohibition of adultery, fornication, and slander of other people. To protect property there is prohibition of theft, cheating, usury and so on. In other words one can show how each of these five main objectives of Islamic law can be met through certain aspects of the moral code.

**Host: In the protection of faith what is meant by *shirk* as a moral sin?**

Jamal Badawi:

*Shirk* in Arabic literally means to associate and to assign partners, in the legislative sense it means that a person associates others with God in His powers. I should emphasize here that this doesn't only mean the association of other gods beside God, which is a form of polytheism, but that Islam also regards attributing any of God's divine attributes to any of his creatures to be a form of associating others with God.

The Quran responds to people who invoke names other than the names of God believing that these names have any power beside God in a very simple way in (7:194) "Verily those whom ye call upon besides Allah are servants like unto you: Call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if ye are (indeed) truthful!" A similar statement is made in (39:38) again that only God is able to remove difficulty and is the only one who has power in the universe.

Islam is very particular about keeping monotheism pure and simple and not to mix it with any mythical or philosophical ideas. In fact in the normal day to day practices of the Muslim the term *La Illah Illa Allah* is repeated constantly. It is repeated in the call to prayer and in the prayer. The Quran is full of citations that emphasizes that the corner stone of Islam is not to associate others with God. According to the Quran it shows that the only moral sin that can not be forgiven is to associate others with God. In (4:116) in the Quran it says "Allah forgiveth not (The sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this: one who joins other gods with Allah, Hath strayed far, far away (from the right)." There is almost an identical verse in the same (4:48) "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed." An even more dramatic description which shows how fatal this kind of moral sin could be is in (22:31) "if anyone assigns partners to Allah, is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far- distant place." The emphasis on this question is very clear in the Quran. In the Quran in (72:20) Allah commands Prophet Muhammad to say "I do no more than



invoke my Lord, and I join not with Him any (false god).” In chapter (18:43) it shows that people who associate others with God would regret doing so on the Day of Judgment and they would say “Woe unto me! Would I had never ascribed partners to my Lord and Cherisher!”

### **Host: Was *Shirk* regarded as a sin in other revelations preceding the Quran?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes it was regarded as a sin in previous revelations and Islam is not unique in this respect, but Islam rather culminates this eternal truth that God has given to His prophets. In chapter 7, *Al A'raf*, there are a number of stories about different prophets from the past such as Noah, *Hud*, *Salih*, Jakob, *Shu'aib*, Moses and others and each of them is quoted saying the same statement “Worship God alone, you have no other God, Deity or Lord but Him.” In (21:25) it says very clearly to Prophet Muhammad that “Not an apostle did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me.” In (36:61) “And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?”

Sometimes the Quran even specifies a major Prophet to have repeated and emphasized these teachings of God. For example in (2:133) it quotes Prophet Jacob when he was on his death bed “What will ye worship after me?” They said: “We shall worship Thy Allah and the Allah of thy fathers, of Abraham, Isma'il and Isaac, - the one (True) Allah. To Him we bow (in Islam).” Prophet Jesus is also quoted in the Quran in (5:75) saying “O Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.” Whoever joins other gods with Allah, - Allah will forbid him the garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrong-doers be no one to help.” Another Prophet who is seen as a person of wisdom is Luqman (31:13) where he is advising his son “O my son! join not in worship (others) with Allah. for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing.”

The Quran also addresses Prophet Muhammad, the last prophet of Islam which was the message of all the prophets, in (39:65) “But it has already been revealed to thee, - as it was to those before thee, - “If thou wert to join (gods with Allah, truly fruitless will be thy work (in life), and thou wilt surely be in the ranks of those who lose (all spiritual good).” There is a command in the Quran telling the Prophet Muhammad to tell his people regarding the basics of the moral code (6:151) “Come, I will rehearse what Allah hath (really) prohibited you from”: Join not anything as equal with Him.”

In essence of *Shirk* or worshiping others with God is the worst of moral sins according to the teachings of all the prophets from Adam to Abraham, Moses, Jesus

and finally Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This was the universal message of prophets through history in accordance to the Quran.

**Host: Could you address the close connection between belief which all of people regard as just being dogma and the more practical aspects of moral behavior?**

Jamal Badawi:

When we think of *Shirk*, in the way we explained it, and once we avoid this moral sin according to Islam and admit the absolute oneness of God and His attributes then the person would willingly and lovingly and consciously submit to the will of God. A person would submit to Him in spirit, mind and body would be dedicated in obedience to God. Once one admits this and removes any mistakes on this issue from their thinking which would allow them to understand their priorities. Then it would also be clear that the injunctions of God would take priority over every other thing whether they are pressures of other individuals, social norms or indoctrination of institutions. Removing *Shirk* from one's life teaches the individual not to put his or her own opinion above the command of God as found in the Quran in (49:1) "O Ye who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger. but fear Allah. for Allah is He Who hears and knows all things." This very clearly ties between the act of belief and the philosophy of life and clarity of one's objective and direction.

**Host: Can we address the other issues regarding safeguarding faith?**

Jamal Badawi:

Sorcery we discussed in some detail in a previous series on Islamic Belief. Basically Islam makes it unlawful for a person to use sorcery, to learn sorcery or to seek the help of sorcerers. Also divination and the belief that someone can tell the future are prohibited.

Protection of faith also requires protection of religious freedom and fighting tyranny especially tyranny which results in religious oppression. The concept of Jihad in Islam, which is mistakenly translated as holy war, is used to stop religious persecution or oppression which results from tyranny.

There is also prohibition of the use or adoration of statues which carry a touch of idolatry. There is prohibition of eating animals which are slaughtered in the name of an idol or the name of anything other than the name of God.

**Host: What does the Quran say about the sanctity of human life?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all the prohibition of killing is made clear and in unmistakable terms. In (17:33) the Quran says “Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause.” The life of the human is sacred and should be protected. We find that the Quran after describing the story of Kane and Able, the children of Adam where one killed the other, in (5:32) it tells us with confirmation and approval of the laws that had been revealed to Prophet Moses (PBUH) “We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.” In order to provide concrete protection Islam has legislated capital punishment for deliberate murder (we will go into detail about this subject when we address the social structure in Islam). In this case capital punishment could act as a deterrent and protect life in the community. People should not have miss placed sympathy for the life of a murderer and not the life of the people who he killed and this is why the Quran puts it clearly in (2:179) “In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) Life to you, o ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves.”

**Host: What about Islam’s view on other types of killing such as abortion, mercy killing etc?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is specific legislation for involuntary manslaughter the laws that deal with it are not capital punishment but rather financial compensation to the family of the diseased. A second point is the question of euthanasia or mercy killing, we discussed this under Muslim Beliefs in a previous program, and we said there is no mercy in killing. To give a person a shot or an overdose is another way of killing which is prohibited.

Abortion is another related subject. To abort a human life even the early stages is considered to be murder of an unborn helpless innocent infant. There is only one case where abortion is permitted and that is if it is the only way of saving the life of the mother. Otherwise this is not a subject to be played with under the pretext of personal freedom, because personal freedom is limited by the freedom of others including the freedom of the fetus.

Suicide is forbidden in Islam. The Quran says clearly in (4:29) "Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful!" Suicide is regarded as a moral sin. So it's not just a matter of killing or suicide but rather other aspects that interfere with the sacred aspect of human life that God has given as a gift to mankind.

## 6.8 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: General

### Summary of 6.7 "Prohibitions to Protect Faith and Life"

The main criteria for the lawful or unlawful in Islam are the objectives of Islamic law of known as Sharia'a which is summarized to include five basic areas. These areas are to safeguard faith, life, mind, honor and property. Then we dealt with each of these objectives and the measures one can take in order to achieve them.

First, we started with *shirk* as a way of protection of faith. We said that *shirk* which Islam regards as a moral sin means to associate others with God in His divine attributes and qualities. We also said that this point was regarded as a moral sin not only by Islam but by all the prophets in the past and we quoted the teachings of the prophets in the Quran. Secondly, we talked about other issues which relates to the protection of faith like avoiding sorcery, divination, and all types of things which shoe belief in powers other than the power of God. We talked about tyranny and religious oppression in relevance to the concept of Jihad in Islam which is a way of protecting faith against those who want to deprive people from the right in what they chose to believe in.

Then we started discussing the second main objective which is the protection of life or *nafs*. First, we discussed the some of the Quranic citations dealing with prohibition of killing and the sanctity of human life. We also talked briefly about capital punishment as it relates to the major taken to discourage people from killing others. We also talked about other interference of human life such as suicide, abortion and similar acts like euthanasia and how they are regarded as unlawful in Islam.

## 6.8 Diet: General

**Host: Could you explain the issue of safeguarding human life and social injustice?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is classified under the protection of life also in Islam when one talks about the sanctity of life it means more than simply keeping the person alive, but rather to keep the person alive in a dignified way. In Islamic law for example relating to the protection of life there is a minimum guaranty, if there is a truly just Islamic society, of each individual in society in terms of his or her basic needs which include food, clothing, shelter and the means of transportation and according to some Muslim jurist tools for trade. The presents of greed in society and the presents of exploitation of people who are not being paid as much as they should for their work are aspects of social injustice in Islam that could threaten the life of the human being. Of course we are not talking about a totalitarian system, which Islam doesn't support, but what Islam is against are the serious inequalities and lack of justice which make some people suffer a great deal without even satisfying the minimum basic requirements of life.

**Host: Do the dietary regulations of Islam fall under the category of safeguarding life? What are the dietary regulations?**

Jamal Badawi:

From an Islamic perspective dietary regulations relate to the protection of *nafs* or life. Part of the objectives of Islamic law is that a person should not only be alive with his basic needs but also in good health. The basic philosophy of the unlawful in Islam is not deprivation or punishment but rather as the Quran puts it what is permissible is wholesome and good and whatever is unlawful is harmful.

Most of the prohibited diets, almost all are mentioned in one verse in (5:3) "Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah. that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety." This verse covers a wide range of categories.

Most of these categories belong to protection of life but some belong to the protection of faith for example eating animals that are dedicated to idols or when killed a name other than God's name is invoked.

The categories that relate to the protection of life start with dead meat which is the flesh of an animal which died without being properly slaughtered with a form of releasing the blood. First, would someone's human tendencies want to get a swollen

dead animal and eat it? In terms of our human nature Allah created us to keep away from things that might have potential harm. The harm of this can be of different types. When an animal is dead it is difficult to know why the animal died as it could be from a contagious or dangerous disease which could carry over when eaten. The animal could have died after eating a poisonous plant which again can be dangerous to us. We also know that when an animal dies the blood congeals in the vessels. We are also told by scientists that blood is one of the best mediums for the growth of bacteria. If the dead animal has any germs or sickness the blood would be the best source for it to grow and then it would transfer the harm to the person who eats it and this why the letting of the blood is essential.

Of course one may wonder about fish, and if we should slaughter or how do we kill fish? Fish is exempt from this as found in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad said that two dead things have been allowed and they are fish and locust (people in some areas eat this). However, if the fish has been dead for some time and might be going bad then it doesn't make it permissible because it may be harmful.

The other thing that is mentioned is blood. In the pre-Islamic days some people used to cut the animal, take some of its blood and they would drink it. This from an Islamic point of view is a cruel way of treating the animal. In addition there could be harm from drinking raw blood. Also the blood could be polluted. The only acceptance to this would be organ meat like liver or the spleen as was also mentioned in the same saying by Prophet Muhammad. These items do not have flowing blood even though they may contain some of the elements included in the blood.

There is also the category of animals which are strangled. First, of all it is cruel to strangle the animal to death. Second the blood does not flow out of the animal and some of the difficulties we discussed before could be involved. Another category is that one can not eat the meat of animal which died of a violent blow which is because it was killed with cruelty. Also animal that dies because of a headlong fall can not be eaten because the blood was not let out. Another category is an animal which was partly eaten by another animal. First of all it is hard to tell how long this meat has been dead and it could have been exposed to disease through the animal that ate from it. The only exception would be if one reached the animal while it is still alive then one can slaughter it and let the blood out in order to make it permissible.

### **Host What is Islam's position regarding hunting?**

Jamal Badawi:

Hunting is permissible in Islam just like fishing. The difficulty that may arise in hunting is that one may not get to the animal in time before it dies to hold it down and

slaughter it. Some of the major conditions for hunting in Islam are first, the tool used to hunt needs to induce blood letting. Also Islam has nothing against stunning an animal first, in order to reduce its pain at the time of slaughter. If one uses a stunning device for hunting it is actually preferable. A second requirement, which is interpreted differently by Muslim jurists, is that the name of God should be mentioned when the person hunts the animal. So the name of God should be mentioned when the person is shooting or aiming the arrow. If a person is using an animal such as a dog to hunt the animal should be trained not to eat from the hunted animal. Fourth, it is permissible to eat the meat if the hunter is a Muslim or one of the People of the Book usually the Jews and Christians. The reason for this is that there is more in common between the People of the Book and Muslims. If one hunts an animal and reaches it before it dies it is better to let the blood out.

### **Host: What are the regulations for how to kill an animal or slaughter it?**

Jamal Badawi:

In the case of slaughtering a domestic animal first of all, one must use a sharp tool which makes the killing fast and less painful. The best way for killing the animal is to slit the throat and the two main veins around it. Some jurists regard the mention of God's name at the time of slaughter to be an absolute condition in order for meat to be legitimate. Other jurists believe that if one forgets to mention the name of God that it is permissible but if it is deliberately left out then it is not. A third opinion is that the mention of the name of God is essential but doesn't have to be done at the time of slaughter if one can not do it. An example would be if one buys meat which is slaughtered by Jews or Christians, people who believe in God, but did not mention His name when slaughtering the animal one can mention it at the time when one starts eating. It is preferable if Muslims within a community try to arrange to have the animals slaughtered properly with the invocation of the name of God. A third point is that slaughtering an animal should be done as humanely as possible. God has made the animals serviceable to us as God has created higher creators using lower creators. For example plants are eaten by animals and animals are eaten by human beings. On the other hand if animals are left and not hunted they might die and suffer. Also we should not kill for sport but rather for sustaining and improving the health of human beings.

Prophet Muhammad said in a collection of Hadith by Muslim that "God has ordained you to be kind in everything, if you kill you do it in a kind way, or if you slaughter you do it in a humane way." More specifically he says "when one of you kills an animal let him sharpen his knife and put the animal in a resting position." In the collection of Hadith of Al Hakim he says that one should not kill an animal in front of another animal. Once the Prophet saw a person getting ready to kill an animal and started sharpening his knife in front of the animal and the Prophet said "Would you like to kill the animal several times?" referring to the suffering the animal would go through watching him sharpen his knife. Also, one should not drag the animal in a cruel way.

Like I mentioned earlier stunning is not objectionable in Islam. Some people use a stunning gun that doesn't kill the animal but knocks them down and might even reduce the pain.

For Muslims who live in predominantly non-Muslim societies God has allowed them to eat food from People of the Book unless it is already forbidden for specific reasons as in the case of pork. In fact in the Quran in (5:5) "This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them." A Muslim however can not eat meat that is slaughtered by an atheist, polytheist or pagan.

**Host: Is it permissible to use bones or hides of dead animals?**

Jamal Badawi:

These are permissible. The prohibitions that we discussed in this program relate to food. Islam doesn't forbid one from using the hides or bones of animals for purposes other than food. There is more than one saying of Prophet Muhammad which justifies this. For example in Bukhari and Muslim the Prophet passed by a dead lamb and he said "Why don't you take the hide, clean it and tan it and use it?" They said "Its dead oh messenger of Allah." He replied "God only forbade eating dead animals." Another saying of the Prophet in Al Tirmidhi he says "Any hide which is tanned is clean." This has lead some jurists to interpret that even the skin of animals which are forbidden like pigs for example may be used for shoes etc.

## 6.9 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Pork (Religious Aspects)

### **Summary of 6.8 "Diet: General"**

Last week we continued our discussion on prohibitions in Islam and more specifically on the issue of dietary laws. We cited the verse in the Quran (5:3) that summarizes prohibited foods in Islam. These foods include an animal that died on its own, from a fall, of strangulation, beaten to death, gored to death and eating pork.

We discussed possible explanations of the prohibition of eating meat that falls under these categories. This involves the question of cleanliness and protection of health. We also covered the question of mercy to animals even when killed for food. This lead us to cover the rules in Islam for killing animals for food which includes sharpening the knife, not being cruel to the animal, not killing an animal in front of another animal, not sharpening the knife in front of the animal and so



on. This fit together as we discussed procedure and attitude towards animals in general.

## 6.9 Diet: Pork (Religious Aspects)

**Host: What are the injunctions in the Islam against the eating of pork?**

Jamal Badawi:

The prohibition of swine is mentioned in four verses in the Quran. These verse verses are found in (2:73), (5:3) which we sited in the last program, (16:15) and (6:145). It is interesting to notice that in the first three verses that I mentioned are addressed to Muslims. The interesting thing is that in the last one found in (6:145) it addresses all people not necessarily just Muslims. “Find not in the message received by me by inspiration any (meat) forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be dead meat, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine.” In this we see that the Quran asserts that this prohibition did not originate from the last revelation but was revealed to previous prophets in the past and that has been general prohibition that applies to all revealed faith.

**Host: Is the prohibition of pork limited to the meat or does it include other things as well?**

Jamal Badawi:

The prohibition applies to the whole thing. In the English translation of the Quran it is written that the flesh is forbidden. The original Arabic word is *lahm*, which is used in the Quran for all edible portions of the pig. In the Quran describing the development of the human fetus it uses the word flesh in(23:14) and in (2:259) where it says “Look further at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh.” This verse shows that everything that is on the bones is flesh. The Quran also refers in (35:12) and (16:14) to fish as lean meat which applies to the whole fish not just parts of it. When the Quran describes the animals that are to be sacrificed during the pilgrimage it says in (22:37) “It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah, it is your piety that reaches Him.” The Quran says in (56:21) and (52:56) when describing the delights of paradise it talks about all the meat that will be offered so that people can enjoy themselves. The Quranic usage of *lahm* includes any edible part of the animal.

**Host: What are the similarities between the prohibition in Islam and in Judaism (prohibit pork also)?**

Jamal Badawi:

He who revealed the law to Prophet Moses (PBUH) is the same deity who gave the Gospel to Prophet Jesus (PBUH) and is the same who revealed the last scripture the Quran to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Muslim believes in all those faiths and the prophets that were sent to nations before Islam and that the same basic revelation came from the same God throughout history.

In Leviticus 11:7-8 “And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.” These statements from the Old Testament are very clear that not only is the swine an unclean animal but that its flesh is prohibited. This is not the only reference in the Old Testament prohibiting both Jews and Christians (who both believe in the Old Testament) from eating pork. We find for example in Isaiah 65:4 “Which each swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable (things is in) their vessels.” In Isaiah 66:17 it again talks about God’s anger against those who eat pork “They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one (tree) in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.” When it says consumed it means by the fire. These clear statements in the Old Testament make it clear that God did not make the pig to be eaten as it is consistently prohibited in various scriptures. I also remember reading an article years ago that mentioned that in Buddhism swine flesh is also forbidden.

### **Host: Why is it that the Christians community feels that eating pork is permissible?**

Jamal Badawi:

I would like to refer to a very interesting booklet which was written by a Christian evangelist, C. Leonard Vories The hog: should it be used for food “Not infrequently the assertion is made that the unclean animals were cleansed by the Gospel and it is then declared that the New Testament so teaches. Those who have made this subject a study know that the New Testament teaches nothing of this kind. They know too that many honest sincere Christians are quoting scriptures which they believe will liberate them to eat of all flesh and many of those scriptures have no reference at all to clean or unclean meat....” Towards the end of the page he continues to say “It is marvelous too, that some persons can advance the argument that the Gospel of Christ changed the nature of the hog, when there is no evidence that they have permitted it to change their own lives. If any can really believe the nature of the hog can be changed what must they think its nature was before the change? The Gospel has not affected the hog. The Bible so clearly and definitely forbids the eating of pork.” (page 25)

I don’t find this to be very strange because as we quoted before the text of the Old Testament to leave any doubt. I also have a quotation from a historical reference

Lectures in Christianity by Muhammad Abu-Zahra where he quoted Ibn Al Batrique a historian who wrote about Christianity that in the days of Constantine

(which is when he claimed to have embraced Christianity) many Jews were forced to convert to Christianity but many of the Christians at that time suspected that they converted out of fear. It says that the Patriarch of Constantinople went to Constantine and said “I suggest that we cook pork and invite those newly converted Christians to eat from it. If they refuse, then we know that they are still Jews at heart.” But Constantine said “But how? Why should we cook a pig, eat it and feed it to other people if it is forbidden in the Old Testament?” Again the Patriarch apparently quoting what appears in the New Testament said that “After all it is not the thing that comes into the mouth that causes anyone to be unclean but the things that come out of the mouth.”

It is also said that St. Peter once saw a dream where he saw lots of animals in the dream and he claimed that God appeared to him and said slaughter and kill whatever you like. It is quite difficult for me to understand how a dream by any person no matter how pious he could have been could be used as a basis for legislation and making things which are clearly (according to the belief of Jews and Christians) the words of God so easily dismissed. The whole notion that after Prophet Jesus (PBUH) came everything became cleansed seems regardless of what it is. This also contradicts the statement made by Prophet Jesus in Mathew 5:17 “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

If we put all these points together, quite frankly I can't see any foundation theological or otherwise that justifies pork as legitimate food for Christians. I think there are some Christian sects who may not eat pork.

**Host: What are some of the reasons behind the prohibition of pork in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

A Muslim who believes in God and commits himself with willing conscious submission to the will of God would find sufficient (even if there are no other reasons) that God ordered this in the Quran. The Quran is not a statement made by some human being in accordance to his own whims but the word of God as was revealed word for word to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This means that the Quran is not subject to any deficiency of human beings who might give commands that might not be valid all the time. God knows everything, as his knowledge is not restricted to the past, present or future.

In Islam even if a person has this conscious submission doesn't take faith in a dogmatic way as Islam doesn't prevent people from thinking and as we said in a different program the first word that was revealed in the Quran was *iqra'a* read. There are two different attitudes towards this issue: one is that if God says not to do something that one won't do it unless they find the reason and the other one would say ok God says this and thus they trust Him and are prepared to obey Him. The second person was not forbidden to study it and find reasons as to why it is forbidden without placing precondition on whether or not they obey. Also this person would consider finding the reason a way of strengthening their faith and not finding it would inspire hope of find it in the future.

In (49:1) God says "O Ye who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger." In chapter three it describes the believers as those who believe that anything that comes to them is from Allah. I would like to add that on the question of diet we have already discussed some of the reasons why various categories could be harmful like blood (we even discussed it from a medical and scientific point of view) and since swine is under the same category then it must be harmful whether we have discovered it or not.

Another point is that in the Quran we find a clear hint (even though it doesn't give details about pig meat) in (5:3) when it describes eating pig as "impiety." On the other hand in (6:145) swine meat is described as "for it is an abomination - or, what is impious" which means that there is an aspect of filth involved in pig meat which makes it unfit for human consumption. It is well known that a pig by its own nature is a scavenger as it eats anything. Once in a public lecture a person asked me "why did God create the pig?" I replied jokingly "to eat the garbage." What I meant was that if we question why God created the pig then why did He create roaches, lizards, insects and all other animals that are not for human consumption.

Reverend Vories describes in his book what happens in farms when they have both poultry and pigs on the same farm. He says on page 12 that when a chicken dies they put them in burlap sacks till the meat rots and becomes unbearable, then they take the rotten meat to where the pigs are and it is a site to see how the pigs enjoy eating the rotten meat. In another place he says "see the him (pig) in the very height of his glory, on top of a manure pile with his head buried in the dung from which exulted site he give expression to his joy and satisfaction by his rhythmical grunts." This is the nature of the pig and it is no wonder that when people use profanity against each other or try to give an ultimate example of filth they say that it is as dirty as a pig.

**Host: It is suggested that chicken also eats filth and so why is chicken permissible when pig is prohibited?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is true that chickens might get involved in this of activity. But there is a big difference between chicken and pigs. There is scientific foundation for this as we know that the chicken has two stomachs one is glandular and the gizzard. This feature of the chicken is capable of illuminating any impurities that the chicken might have swallowed. There are also other animals that eat cud and have three stomachs which have double or triple the cleaning capabilities. On the other hand the pig's stomach is poor in structure and it takes it about three hours to digest whatever food it eats. This means that if the pig starts eating filth, manure or rotten meat within three hours the ingested items will pass through the pigs system and will be absorbed as part of his flesh. This means that after three hours of the pig having eaten if it is killed and eaten, the person eating it would be eating a dish of processed trash. In addition to this in Islamic law if an animal that people eat like chicken, cows, sheep or any other edible animal develops a habit of constantly eating filth it is not permissible to eat it. This is called *jalalah* and it is an animal that is ridden we are not supposed to ride it and for edible animals they must be isolated for a certain amount of time till they are totally cleansed.

## 6.10 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Pork (Medical Aspects)

### **Summary of 6.9 "Diet: Pork (Religious Aspects)"**

We discussed five basic areas last week. First of all we discussed some of the verses in the Quran which specify the prohibition of eating pork and we said that in Chapter six the impression is left that eating pork is not only prohibited for Muslims but that it has been a universal prohibition to all faiths. This was confirmed when we found especially in Leviticus in chapter 11:7-8 and in the book of Isaiah 65:4 and 66:17 a very decisive prohibition of eating pork in the Old Testament. We said that the Quran being the last revelation of God was revealed to Prophet Muhammad as these laws were revealed to Moses and Jesus (PBUT) and such it is simply confirms the universal prohibition of pork.

A question was raised about the New Testament and why some Christians justify eating pork. We discussed this from the point of view of a Christian priest as we used his booklet The hog: should it be used for food. As a Christian scholar he quotes and discusses these issues and covers the fact that there is no evidence in the New Testament that eating pork has been made permissible and as Jesus himself he came not to destroy the law or prophet but to fulfill. We also discussed the dream of St. Peter and how this can not be taken to a legislative level in order to validate eating pork.

We then discussed the reasons behind the prohibition of pork. First, we said that for a believer who truly believes in God the fact that God forbade eating pig in itself suffices as reason for not eating it. But God does not want us to accept things dogmatically so there is no restriction from a Muslim's point of view to research and find out the reasons behind this restriction provided that these reasons are not preconditions for following the command of God.

We also said that we get a hint from the Quran when it describes the pig as *rijs*, unclean or dirty. We also said that things are not prohibited unless there is good reason because nothing is restricted in Islamic dietary laws unless there is very good reason.

Finally, we discussed if the pig is like other animals that may eat filth. We said there is a big difference because the pig only has one stomach and there is not a lengthy process that the food goes through which limits the purification of the food. In other animals like the chicken they have two stomachs the glandular and the gizzard and in other cud eating animals who have three stomachs so that the digestive process is much longer and purifies food a lot better.

## 6.10 Diet: Pork (Medical Aspects)

### **Host: What if the food of the pig can be controlled?**

Jamal Badawi:

One could possibly isolate the pig but one can not change its nature. This reminds me of an interesting statement made by Reverend Vories that “the naturally filthy hog could be forced into the most sanitary conditions, nourished upon delicacies cake, pie and heavenly hash and still they would be unfit for food merely because God said they are unclean to you.” Like I said whatever one does to a pig it won't change their basic habits. If it doesn't find something filthy to eat it will eat its own refuse. There is no reason for the farmer who raises pigs to avoid feeding them filth because economically speaking they are garbage eaters. There is a scientific book called Modern Biology which is commonly taught in high schools and universities that has a picture which depicts a man pouring the garbage contents of a barrel as the food that is given to pigs.

### **Host: Could you explain the argument against pork from the biochemical view?**

Jamal Badawi:

Before we go into that I would like to refer to a very useful booklet on the subject Pork: Possible Reasons for Its Prohibition by Dr. Ahmd Sakr who is a specialist in nutrition and food technology and served as a professor and chairman of the

Department of Chemistry and Nutrition at the National Chiropractic University in Illinois.

Even though it is difficult to digest excessive amounts of fat of any animal we will see that to digest the fat of a pig is very harmful, difficult to digest and burn. This is relates to the chemical structure of the fat molecules.

Our main concern when we address diet is with neutral lipids (lipids mean fats) which can take various forms known as monoglycerides (MG), [diglycerides](#), triglycerides and free fatty acids. Among all of these forms of lipids the one that is of particular interest to us are the triglycerides (TAG). By looking into the chemical structure of the TAG which is a fat molecule a chemist can see how the fatty acids are distributed in a specific patten and how it relates to the process of digestion. Each triglyceride fat molecule is composed of [glycerol](#) and three fatty acids. It is called triglyceride because it has three combinations of fatty acids. The fatty acids are divided into two basic groups: saturated fatty acids and unsaturated fatty acids.

There are eight different combinations of how fatty acids can be distributed within the triglyceride molecule. In order to digest the fats that we eat the human system must be able to break down the triglycerides into simpler forms of monoglycerides, diglycerides, free fatty acids and glycerol. This process is known as hydrolysis. The process of hydrolysis is facilitated by a secretion that comes from the human pancreas called pancreatic lipase. Scientists have discovered that pancreatic lipase can not easily break down the triglyceride molecule into simpler forms if the position two of the structure of the molecule has saturated fatty acids.

In other words if we have two different kinds of triglyceride molecules one has saturated fatty acids in position two and the other has unsaturated fatty acids in position two. The one with unsaturated fatty acids in position two is easy to digest the one with saturated fatty acids in position two is very hard to digest. The main problem is that experiments have shown that pig fat follows the structure where the saturated fatty acids are in position two and thus it is very difficult for pancreatic lipase to digest them.

**Host: Is this problem of digestion unique to the fat that comes from the pig?**

Jamal Badawi:

To start with we can not say that this particular structure of the triglyceride with the saturated fatty acid in position two is absolutely unique to the pig. In fact some

studies were conducted on meat eating animals (carnivorous) and it was found that they have a high concentration of saturated fatty acids in position two. The animals they used were cats, dogs, rats and pigs. Other experiments were conducted on vegetarian (herbivorous) animals like sheep, cattle, camels, deer and goats. Unlike the first group it was found that generally speaking there was a high concentration of unsaturated fats in these animals. This means that these animals are much easier to digest.

**Host: What happens to lard when it is eaten if it is not digested properly?**

Jamal Badawi:

What happens is that the human body absorbs it as it is. When we take fat from our diet it goes through our blood stream and then it is deposited into our tissues. In the case of plant eating animals the fat is taken and breaks down, digested, goes in the blood stream then it is re-synthesized in the form of human fat so it doesn't accumulate as animal fat in a human. However, when the fat is difficult to break down as in the case of pig fat and fat from other meat eating animals is absorbed as is and accumulates in the tissues which is deposited into the humans as animal fat. What is more fascinating is that among the animals that are classified as easy to digest are poultry, beef, lamb and deer (this is not a comprehensive list). The animals that are difficult to digest include dogs, cats, rats and pigs. Pigs don't really belong with the group of edible animals. In this case we are not talking about scriptures whether it is the Old Testament, New Testament or the Quran but we are relying on pure scientific classification regarding digestion of fats.

**Host: Chemically speaking it is quite convincing that lard is very difficult to digest, but some people say that lard is better because it has a high percentage of unsaturated fats?**

Jamal Badawi:

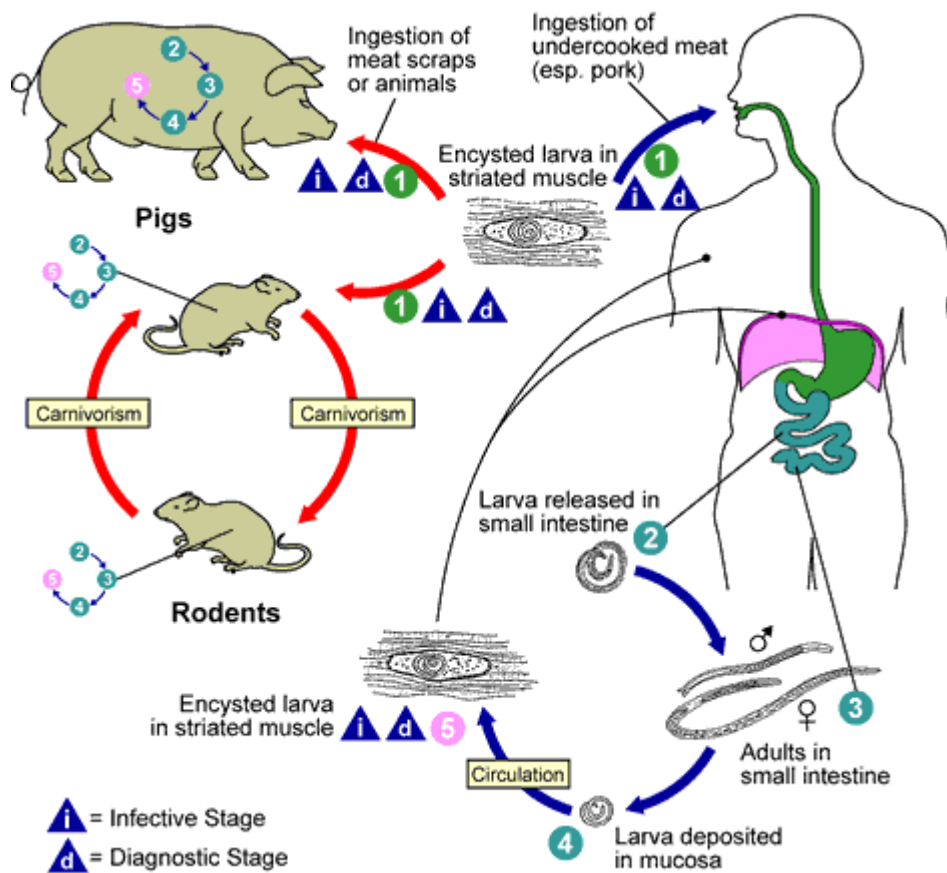
It seems like there is a big mix up as to whether the fat one consumes is saturated or unsaturated and the chemical structure of that fat molecule. Pig fat follows the pattern in terms of molecular structure (USU = unsaturated+ saturated+ unsaturated) which shows that there is more concentration of unsaturated fats in the pig. But where is the concentration of unsaturated fats? They are in position one and three where as the crucial position for digestion is in position two. It is the structure of the fats that matter rather than the quantity of unsaturated or saturated fats.

**Host: What are the possible harms that can come from eating pork from a medical perspective?**



Jamal Badawi:

Generally speaking there are a number of germs bacteria and parasites which infest the pig and live in its flesh. The most dangerous of these is the Trichinae or Trichinella which is a kind of round parasite. The Trichinae are usually encapsulated in a tiny cyst. When a person consumes infested meat, the juices the digest our food breaks down the cyst which contains the larva and as a result the larva is freed. After the larva is released it develops into full adulthood and it mates then it produces microscopic larva (1500 larva per adult Trichinae). It is then digested into the blood stream from the intestinal walls. Once they are in the blood stream the move out of them into the human muscles where it finds permanent residency. The muscle can be the heart, tongue and some say it could possibly move to the brain or nervous system which results in serious ailment.



<http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk/trichinella.gif>

According to a book called Human Hematology by Frost he says that the larva that is encapsulated can be viable for as long as six years.

## 6.11 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Ingredients

### **Summary of 6.10 "Diet: Pork (Medical Aspects)"**

After covering a broad classification of the different types of fats and oils we looked at the neutral lipids. The lipids come in various forms known as monoglycerides (MG), diglycerides, triglycerides and free fatty acids. We focused on the triglyceride molecule is composed of glycerol and three fatty acids. The distribution of the fatty acids makes the difference in how the fat molecule is composed. We said that these fatty acids are either saturated(S) or unsaturated (U). Based on this basic structural composition of the fat molecule we tried to show the various distributions of the fatty acids in the fat molecule.

Many studies show that if there is a high concentration of saturated fatty acids in position two in the structure of the fat molecule within the triglyceride it becomes very difficult to digest. The reason it is difficult to digest is because the pancreatic paste which comes from the human pancreas which helps digest fat can not break down a fat molecule that has fatty acids in position two.

Studies show that in plant eating animals have a relatively high concentration of unsaturated fatty acids in position two which makes these foods rather easy to digest. On the other hand experiments on meat eating animals showed that in general these animals have a high concentration of saturated fatty acids in position two which makes it more difficult to digest. Thus the fat of vegetarian animals is re-synthesized in humans where as the fat of meat eating animals the fats are absorbed as is.

Poultry, beef, lamb and venison are meats that were found to be easy to digest. On the other hand dogs, cats, rats and pigs have a high concentration of saturated fatty acids in position two and are very difficult to digest. This also shows that pigs don't belong to the edible animal category.

We also discussed the myth that because pork contains a high percentage of poly unsaturated fats that it is easier to digest. Even though it is true that pork has high percentage of poly unsaturated fats it still has saturated fatty acids in position two which is the crucial position pertaining to digestion and the fat molecule can not be broken down or hydrolyzed as the chemists say.

We also discussed the medical aspect. We discussed trichinae which is a round parasite that infests pigs. Unlike other worms it gets into the stomach, the capsule which houses it is opened the larva is feed which goes into the human intestines where it matures and mates then releases a large number of microscopic larva which get into the blood stream and gradually move out of the blood vessels into the muscles. This is very difficult to treat and causes many kinds of ailments.

### 6.11 Diet: Ingredients

**Host: How are other edible animals that can transmit disease different from the pig?**

Jamal Badawi:

The round worm that we are talking about can be composed of two basic species whose name starts with taenia. One is called Taenia Saginata and the other is called Taenia Solium. The first species of round worm can also infest cattle, however this species of worm's complete life cycle is completed in the Gastro Intestinal tract. If there is any damage is limited to the GI tract which means that it would be a localized problem which can be treated. The one that infests the pig doesn't complete its life cycle in the GI tract but it rather goes into the whole body until it reaches the muscle and encapsulates itself in the form of a cyst. In this case the damage worst and much more difficult to reach in terms of treatment.

**Host: How does Trichinosis break out?**

Jamal Badawi:

I have a quote from the book Modern Biology which explains it and elaborates on the point of their life cycle "The Trichinae or Trichinella is one of the most dangerous of the parasitic round worms. This round worm passes its first stage as a cyst in the muscle of a pig, dog, rat or cat. If uncooked meat scraps from infested animals are fed to pigs it is likely that the scrap will contain cysts. In the intestines of a pig that eats uncooked infected meat scraps the larva develops into adult worms, mate and produce microscopic larva that pass into the blood stream and into the muscles where they again form cysts. When a human being eats undercooked infested pork the same thing happens. The cysts are released and the larva mature in the intestine and each one discharges in the bloodstream about 1500 young which eventually form cysts in the muscles of the human being. This disease is known as Trichinosis. One method of preventing it is to feed hogs only cooked meat scraps. However, the best way to prevent this disease as well as other parasitic worm infection is to cook all meats as thoroughly as possible and thereby avoid any risk." In fact the best way, as one student was telling me, is to just avoid it all together.

**Host: What is the probability of this happening and aren't there ways that the chances of this happening can be lessened (if meat is properly cooked)?**

Jamal Badawi:

I would like to refer to the booklet we referred to before by Dr. Sakr who is a specialist in food technology. He quotes the USDA leaflet #34 in which it says "in a series of 24 cases of Trichinosis reported recently 22 were said to have resulted from cooked pork." Elsewhere in the booklet he mentioned that some people believe the myth that if one buys the meat from a classy store with clean outlets that they don't have this danger because again he refers to cases where Trichinosis is traced to shops in very classy areas. There is no question that thorough cooking in itself leaving aside religious aspects and the fat problem may help but there is not guarantee that this will illuminate the chances of infestation.

**Host: What ingredients in which pork and its products are used?**

Jamal Badawi:

When buying fresh meat one should avoid anything that has pork, bacon, and ham. One needs to check salami, hot dogs or pastrami to make sure that its contents do not contain pork or lard products.

One has to be careful in restaurants but it is not an impossible task. In many restaurants for example that have stakes (make sure it was not marinated in wine) that are marinated and cooked on charcoal cooked on a clean grill etc. This is usually the case because most of the places that have steaks usually have beef steaks. One can also eat chicken that is not cooked in lard and is fried in 100% vegetable oil. Also for French fires one needs to make sure they use pure vegetable oil. If one orders breakfast items one needs to make sure it is cooked in butter or vegetable oil and make sure there is no lard content.

**Host: How can a person distinguish what foods have lard?**

Jamal Badawi:

The best way to do this is to carefully read the ingredients before buying anything until one knows which items/brands are safe. The major problem is an ingredient called shortening. Shortening is found in most products. One has to check if the ingredients say "animal fat" which could mean there is a chance the product includes

lard. If the ingredients say “beef fat” or “beef tallow” then it’s ok. If the term that is used is just shortening in the ingredients then it could be anything, vegetable oil, animal fat or a combination. So one needs to make sure to find out what is in it or that it says that it is 100% vegetable oil. Carefully reading the ingredients should not be hard.

One should be careful when buying bread. It is the practice of many bakeries to brush the loaf of bread with lard or in the dough. If someone really wants to avoid this it is very simple as there is always a brand or store that sells bread that is made with pure vegetable oil. There are Lebanese, Syrian or diet breads which do not contain shortening. The same thing is applicable to pies and cakes especially in the crusts.

**Host: Are there any other foods that might contain pork ingredients?**

Jamal Badawi:

A common ingredient is gelatin which contains the marrow or skin of animals (may be from pork or other animals). Some brands have the letter K stamped within a circle on the package which stands for Kosher (have not varafied). Sometimes one can write to the manufacturer to find out what the gelatin contains. There are also synthetic gelatins that don’t have any animal base and some people told me that this one will have the letter U on it (I am less sure about this than the K). There are some stores that only carry Kosher items which would include Kosher jello used by the Jewish community who have the same belief concerning pork. Gelatin is definitely something to watch for.

**Host: What about gelatin in drug capsules? What about insulin? What about cheese?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are some drug capsules which are made with gelatin which again can be made from pork or other animals. One can usually open the capsules so I would recommend just opening it and pouring the contents into a cup of orange juice and drinking it that way.

Some claim that insulin has extracts from the pig’s pancreas but it could also be from other edible animals. One can check with the pharmacist to find out what ingredients

were used to manufacture it. There is always a substitute if one really cares to avoid it. If one runs into a situation where the only insulin available is extracted from pork then there is a provision in Islam for that because it constitutes saving a life.

The difficulty with cheese is that in addition to the bacterial culture used for making cheese some manufacturers use a little bit of pepsin which acts more of a catalyst to help in the process of making the cheese. It is said that pepsin may be derived or is usually derived from lard. This is an area which lead Muslim jurists to come up with the explanation that first, it is a chemical product not lard in its original form and second, that it is used in a very minute amount. Someone was once saying that they use an ounce per 10,000 pounds of cheese and that the chemical is used as a catalyst and doesn't really enter the cheese itself. In my opinion because it is used as a catalyst and is only chemical component that it is permissible. However I feel that if a person can find a substitute then there is no excuse to finding a substitute. An example I can find cheddar cheese that is made with bacterial culture but not using pepsin. There are cheese which have rennet (checked with my wife who has a Masters in education specializing in nutrition) and she said that it is from edible animals not pork. Feta cheese that comes from Denmark or the Middle East is usually safe because it uses rennet.

**Host: Are there other meat eating animals that one should be careful not to eat?**

Jamal Badawi:

According to the saying Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in both Bukhari and Muslim (the most authentic sources of Hadith) he said that birds or animals that are meat eaters are forbidden to Muslims (hawks, crows, lions, tigers and so on) which very consistent with the previous discussion we had on meat eating animals and vegetarians.

## 6.12 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Intoxicants

### Summary of 6.11 Diet: Ingredients

In terms of the main criteria for the lawful and unlawful we have objectives of Islamic law or Sharia and then we have examples of things we should avoid in order to reach those objectives. We mentioned that the main objective of Islamic law is to safeguard faith, life, mind, honor and property. In some of the previous programs we focused on measures taken to preserve or safeguard faith by avoiding *shirk* (associating others with God in His divine power), sorcery and tyranny. The second purpose of Islamic jurisprudence is to safe guard life and we discuss the prohibition of killing, suicide (related aspects like euthanasia and abortion), social injustice (may leave people in

society without their fundamental needs) and we spent lots of time on things that relate to impure diets (blood, animals that died without being slaughtered and pork and the reasons behind its prohibition). What we are moving towards today is to cover the measures taken to safe guard the mind.

## 6.12 Diet: Intoxicants

**Host: How widespread was the use of intoxicants amongst pre-Islamic Arabs?**

Jamal Badawi:

Well it was very wide spread. One of the examples of this is that in Arabic before Islam they used to have 100 different names for wine. There was a poet who said “If I die and you bury me plant a grape vine plant on my grave so that my bones can get the taste of it.” This shows how engrossed by the evil of drinking.

**Host: How did Islam succeed in illuminating it from the lives of the Arabs?**

Jamal Badawi:

The main reason for Islamic success in whipping out such habits is the training of people to believe in Allah and to accept His authority in directing our lives and to train ourselves to obey Him rather than our own minds and inclinations which are usually bias towards one way or the other. This approach of loving and conscious submission to the will of God is reached then one would be receptive to receive any command from God. Once this was inculcated into the hearts of men and women it was not difficult to gradually move forward. But in addition to this you are right in implying that faith in itself might not have succeeded in whipping out something like this which was really part and partial of their lives.

The other wisdom that we find in the scripture of Islam is that it gradually allowed people to rid themselves of this particular habit. For example the first verse revealed in the Quran that discouraged people to drink or use intoxicants appears in (2:219) “They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit.” Some studies show that in some States in the US for every dollar that the State earns from selling liquor they spend between two and \$11 in terms of rehabilitation. Even if there was an economic benefit it is still less than the magnitude of the harm that comes.

In the second stage in (4:43) it went one step farther “O ye who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged.” We must remember that a Muslim prays on a regular interval from morning till they go to bed. Which meant that those who were still unable to rid themselves of the habit, were restricted to drink only after the night prayer and before the early morning prayer. So then people started getting the hint

that this is something that God doesn't like. Then finally in (5:93) came the most decisive verse in the Quran about irrevocable final prohibition which reads "O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper." This was a decisive verse that came in one of the chapters which was among the last to be revealed in the Quran called Al-Ma'ida. In fact historians report that when this verse was revealed those who were half way through drinking just threw it away and those who had any jars at home broke them on the streets of Medina till the streets were flowing like rivers with the wine. First people were committed to obeying Allah then there was a very gradual and effective approach instilled for eliminating bad habits.

**Host: What is the original word used in the Quran for intoxicants? Why is it translated as intoxicants?**

Jamal Badawi:

The original Arabic word is *khamr* and was commonly used to refer to any drink that causes one to be intoxicated. This includes things that are fermented like wines or beers or things that are distilled like whisky, jinn and brandy. If we take the strict meaning of *khamr* it relates to two very interrelated meanings. One is pronounced in Arabic *khamra* which is a verb that means covered. The other meaning is *khamura* which means fermented. Both meanings are related because when one drinks something that is fermented it clouds the mind.

The reason I translated the word as intoxicants is if we simply say wine there are so many other things that also cause the same clouding of the mind so it must fall in the same category. There are two reasons why it should not only be translated as wines or strong drinks is that in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which is reported in Ahmad, Abu Dawood and An Nasai he says "Some of my people in later days will drink wines which they have given different names." The name does not really matter as the effect is what really counts. An interesting remark was made by Omar Ibn Al Khattab the second Caliph after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he stood in the same place that Prophet Muhammad used to give his sermon and he said "*Khamr* is anything that clouds the mind."

**Host: Some people argue that the term used in the Quran to prohibit the use of intoxicants is not as strong as the term "forbidden" or *haram*, what is your response to this?**

Jamal Badawi:

The word used in the Quran is *fai'jtanibuh* which some translate as avoid or keep away from. It is important first of all to clarify that for anything to be unlawful the



word *haram* or that “this is unlawful” in those exact terms is used. For example the term *la'in* or cursed is used for major sins which is even worse because it means that the person who commits this sin is far from the mercy of Allah. Sometimes the Quran describes certain deeds as being similar to the handy work of Satan which is even stronger than using the term *haram*.

The other point that should be kept in mind is that if this argument is correct that the word *haram* must be used in the Quran in order for something to be forbidden we would be on shaky ground. There is nowhere in the Quran that says killing is *haram* or unlawful. Yet killing is mentioned in the Quran as being one of the most abominable acts that have ever been committed. Many of the major sins (which everyone agrees are unlawful) do not appear in the Quran with the word *haram* but other terms are used to convey the point.

Third, the word used in the Quran *faijtanibuh* means to take aside or keep away from. The Quran uses this term in something that no Muslim or non-Muslim would dispute as being absolutely unlawful in Islam, which is the worship of Idols or to put associates of God. This appears in the Quran in (16:36) as “avoided false Gods” so can anyone say that this is not unlawful as it uses the derivative of the same word. The Quran also speaks of the major sins *Kaba'ir* which appear in more than one verse in the Quran in (42:37), (53:32) and (4:30) which all talk about major sins and use the word *ijtanibu*.

The story of Abraham in (14:35) praying to God to “Preserve (*w- ijnubni*) me and my sons from worshipping idols” also uses the same word. When the Quran talks about avoiding the fire on the Day of Judgment in (92:17) it uses the same term.

The Quran also uses the term *rijs* which means impurity and un-cleanliness in (22:30) which refers to the worship of idols and is also used in (5:93) to refer to drinking. The fact that the term *rijs* is used leaves no doubt that it is absolutely forbidden. There has never been a doubt as there has always been agreement amongst all Muslim jurists throughout history that it is definitely *haram* as confirmed in the Quran and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

**Host: What are some examples of what the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had to say about the use of intoxicants?**

Jamal Badawi:

As we should take his behavior as example we should point out that he never touched intoxicants even before he became a prophet. He also has decisive statements about this subject. One of them is that God will not accept the prayers of a person who drinks for 40 days unless he repents. He says a person who drinks in this life will not enjoy wine (which does not cause intoxication) in the hereafter. He says in a Hadith narrated in Ahmad that a person who dies addicted to drinking or intoxicants would meet God as if he worshiped idols unless he repents before his death. In another saying of the prophet narrated in Bukhari and Muslim he says “Everything that causes intoxication is *khamr* (intoxicant) and every *khamr* (intoxicant) is *haram* (unlawful).” There is no wonder that intoxicants are called the mother of abominations but in fact people who drink may commit any number of moral offenses.

**Host: Is social drinking (small amounts) or drinking things other than hard liquor permissible?**

Jamal Badawi:

A saying of the Prophet (PBUH) makes the answer to this very clear as found in Abu Dawood and Ahmad he says that if one needs to drink a lot of something to get high then even small amounts of it are forbidden. In another similar saying narrated in Ahmad, Abu Dawood and AlTirmithi he says “If one needs a certain amount (sixteen pounds) in order to get high even a handful of that is *haram*.”

There are also some scientific studies that show that even though not everyone who drinks becomes addicted to alcohol that in many cases addiction starts by social drinking. Islam closes the door on this because not everyone is able to control themselves once they start.

**Host: What about other intoxicants such as hashes and marihuana etc.?**

Jamal Badawi:

The basis for this is from the hadith that “Everything that causes intoxication is *khamr* (intoxicant) and every *khamr* (intoxicant) is *haram* (unlawful)” which doesn’t say that the item that creates intoxication is a drink or liquor. The other basis for this is by analogy which is a rule in Islamic jurisprudence that if there is something harmful and has been forbidden and there is something else that has the same effect then by analogy it should also be forbidden. Some things have the same effects or even more harmful effects like cocaine.

**Host: Can a Muslim buy sell or deal with liquor or intoxicants even if they do not use it themselves?**

Jamal Badawi:

Islam is practical. It doesn't ask one to do something and then provide a social, political or economic environment that encourages the opposite or the wrong thing. When something is forbidden in Islam the way is paved so that the entire system operates in the same direction. In the collections of Hadith by Tirmithi and Ibn Maja Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was reported as saying that there are ten categories of people who are cursed who have anything to do with intoxicants. First of all the one who makes it, the one who asks someone to make it for him, a person who drinks it, a person who carries it, a person to whom it is carried, a person who serves it, a person sells it, a person who takes its price, a person who buys it and a person for whom it is purchased. Some jurists even say that a person who raises grapes (which is legitimate) with the intention of selling it to wineries is also contributing to this prohibited act.

There is also a saying of Prophet Muhammad narrated in Ahmad in which he says a person who really believes in Allah and the hereafter should not sit at the same table where wine or intoxicants are served. It is also important to stay away from places where wine is served.

**Host: How wide spread is drinking and the use of drugs within Muslim communities?**

Jamal Badawi:

To start with I must say that Muslims are not angels and followers of any faith follow their faith to some degree or the other. It is however interesting to note that in Muslim countries and others. Even though Muslims today do not necessarily follow their faith very strictly or else they would not be in the pathetic situation they are in today. Even then the strength of this Quranic prohibition is noted. Indeed there are several countries which prohibit buying, selling or importing wines. There are some countries that have it in their legislative process bills for the absolute prohibition of dealing with liquor. Above all the spread the spread of drinking is far less than in other places. Of course there are Muslims who drink and take drugs but they are mostly among the more corrupt or more affluent segment of society who might see it as a sign of prestige or those who have weakness in their heart and they feel that by

imitating the technologically advanced that the yare being advanced. On the whole it is less prevalent and statistics can be checked for numbers on this matter.

## 6.13 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Intoxicants Continued

### Summary of 6.12 "Diet: Intoxicants"

We discussed four basic areas last time. First of all, we discussed how Islam prohibits everything that clouds the mind. Even though the term used in the Quran is *khamr* some people mistakenly translate it into wine but rather it is anything that clouds the mind as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said. Second, the prohibition in Islam is definite and strict. The Quran says that intoxicants are an abomination of the handy work of Satan. The Quran uses *ijtanibuh* and other derivatives of the word to refer to avoiding major sins and hell fire. It is also used in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which corroborates what the Quran already established. There is a Hadith narrated by Muslim where the Prophet said after the final verse prohibiting intoxicants was revealed in the Quran “God has made intoxicants unlawful and whoever hears this verse and has any intoxicants should stop drinking it and get rid of it.” The third point was that the prohibition did not only refer to strong drinks but any intoxicant that might be light (ex. Beer). This ruling applies by analogy to any other drugs that might have the same effect of clouding the mind. The final question was about the spread of drinking in the Muslim world. We said that Muslims after all are not angels but any observer would see that the spread of drinking in the Muslim world is far less than it has spread in other communities. Even then it is not socially acceptable as drinking is looked down upon socially and religiously speaking.

### 6.13 Diet: Intoxicants Continue

**Host: What are some of the reasons for the prohibition of intoxicants that are found in the Quran or Hadith?**

Jamal Badawi:

The harms of intoxicants can be found in a wide variety of resources. We will look at it from the Islamic point of view and try to relate it to the contemporary point of view.

A reference to this would be a verse we cited last time from the Quran in (5:90-91) “O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan’s handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan’s plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with

intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?"

If we analyze these two verses in the Quran there seems to be three basic groups of reasons given. First of all, it says that intoxicants are Satan's handiwork. The term used in the Quran is *rijs* which means something unclean and improper. This uncleanliness may take different forms. Once the person is intoxicated and his mind is beclouded, self control or inhibition is removed and a person is likely to commit moral sins. There is no wonder then that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said definitely that "Intoxicants is the mother of evils" because it could lead to more evil. He also said that whoever drinks might neglect the prayer and might commit incestuous type of acts because their self control is not intact. This reminds me of a symbolic story that could have been true about a saint who was offered one of three alternatives under duress to kill, to commit adultery or to drink. He said maybe drinking is the least of these three evils so he drank. When he drank he committed adultery and while still under the effect of the intoxicants he committed murder. Whether the story is real or symbolic, it shows that we might belittle the danger that can result from intoxication.

The other thing that can be regarded as an aspect of Satan's handiwork is that Satan has no interest in our wellbeing as humans. If God calls intoxicants an abomination and Satan's handiwork there must be additional harm that is not just spiritual or moral. An example of this is the harm could be inflicted on us physically, the damage that it causes to the livers and the harm that it does to economic life. Many studies have been conducted to show the effects of intoxicants on productivity, loss of work days because of absentees or tardiness, mistakes, cost of rehabs, cost of detoxification and the high price society pays for drinking in terms of crime and accidents. They say that about fifty percent of fatal high way accidents are caused because of intoxication.

The second aspect that can be derived from these two verses is that Satan is interested in spreading hatred and discord between people. I come back to the question of crimes and because a person may get addicted to drinking to drugs he may have to steal to satisfy his thirst which could result in armed robbery and murder. People murder because they are under the influence of intoxicants as many homicides are connected to drinking. They commit suicide, as people get to high and just walking out the window from the tenth floor and fall. There have been studies on spouse (wife) and child abuse which were shown to be connected to a great extent with drinking. The discord that is caused by humans because of drinking is found to be very evident by those who study family disputes and problems. Many times drinking has been the cause of the break down of poorer families especially when the cost of drinking and drugs causes severe financial problems and raises family disputes.

The third aspect which is based on the scripture revealed 1400 year ago but we are now discovering more and more the extent of wisdom behind it. The verse says it keeps you away from remembrance of God and from prayers. This shows again that by clouding the mind a person is abusing one of the greatest blessings or gifts that God has given which is our intellect. Drinking and drugs is an escape from reality, from life, from the state of being alert which is a requirement in order for any human to perform his role on earth, to have a meaningful life and to be aware of what is going on. By escaping from that state one is abusing his mind and as such they are keeping away from the remembrance of God and this is the beginning of additional evils.

**Host: How can we successfully restrict the use of intoxicants without restricting the freedom of the individual?**

Jamal Badawi:

Some people are not completely aware of Islamic approach as they think it is just laws. The approach of Islam does not start from the law it starts from the heart. One might recall that from the previous program when we talked how the Quran gradually moved from first discouraging people not to drink or use intoxicants then to requiring that they should pray while sober and then finally prohibiting it. This process took a period of time that allowed people to easily get rid of the bad habit. This is what is called in modern terms detoxification or rehabilitation as one can't give this up overnight. The most important thing about it is that it starts from the individual, his conviction, his faith, his commitment to a particular way of life that is wholesome and clean. Once the person is convinced he can start the process of rehabilitation. The additional point that would help achieve this without depending on the implementation of the law is to provide an atmosphere where these things are not easily accessible or encouraged. If one opens any paper whether newspapers or magazines and we find prominent advertisements for booze among other things. In order to cleans society and discourage these promotions of drinking would help people to get rid of this habit. I don't really thing this is impossible as we find examples of champagnes against smoking because of the harm of smoking. Publicity, education, motivation, stimulation and people gradually move towards getting rid of these things without applying the heavy hand of the law. The main issue is whether society is ready to accept this or not and whether this trend is based on reasons that are deeply ingrained in the belief in God and the will to live properly?

**Host: How come Islam strictly prohibits the use of intoxicants but one of the delights of paradise is *khamr* or what is interpreted as wine or intoxicants?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all when people drink or take intoxicants there could be a variety of reason why they do so. It can be related to stress or something similar to that, but most people drink to achieve some sort of pleasure from this state of clouding the

mind. The main problem here is that on one hand one feels pleasure and the other hand there are draw backs (spiritually, morally, socially and economically). How can someone achieve the pleasures with the drawbacks?

By definition paradise is a place where no one suffers and where one is rewarded for abstaining from evil and by applying self control while on earth. The pleasures in paradise according to Islam include both spiritual and physical pleasure. How does God explain to us the nature of the pleasures of paradise? No human language can adequately explain how one will achieve pleasure without the drawbacks. But most of us can understand told that we will get better pleasure than the pleasure we get here when one gives up intoxicants here in order to drinks in paradise. Thos who say that forget that the Quran itself says that the type of *khamr* found in paradise is not of the same nature of the *khamr* that we have here on earth. In one verse in the Quran in (37:46-47) it describes it as “Crystal-white, of a taste delicious to those who drink (thereof), Free from headiness; nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom.” This means that the drink is of a different kind that no human language can express which give the pleasure but not the drawbacks of worldly intoxicants. The Quran itself indicates that the various descriptions of paradise are only similarities that describe the unimaginable reality of paradise to our mind. For example in (32:17) it says “Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them- as a reward for their (good) deeds.”

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in order to show us that these things are only approximations “In paradise there are things that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no thought could have made it occur to the human perception.” In order to please God one gives up booze here and gets an even better pleasure in paradise and in both places one is a winner (because on earth one will avoid the draw backs).

**Host: I would like to ask about the use of alcohol to keep people warm in cold areas and the use of anesthesia for operations and in cough drops etc.?**

Jamal Badawi:

As far as using alcohol to keep warm that is not the only source that can keep people warm as God has blessed humanity with lots of additional means of keeping warm. In fact some refer to honey as one source of ready energy as well as sports and other means. Every door is not closed so that we have to resort to drinking to keep warm and it may even be more costly than other available means of keeping warm.

As far as using alcohol in medicine there are two aspects of this. First of all, one should not jump to the first opportunity to break the law and use intoxicant if it can be avoided. Evidence of this is found in Muslim and Ahmad where it is reported that the

Prophet (PBUH) saw someone making wine and he said “No, it is an ailment not a cure.” In another saying narrated in Abu Dawood he said “God has created the diseases but He also created the cure so seek cure and avoid using cures which are unlawful.” In Bukhari he said “God did not make your cure in something that He has forbidden to you.” This is the approach that a Muslim should approach the subject with. However, there is also a general rule in Islam of absolute necessity. This means that if a situation arises where the avoidance of forbidden things means losing a life or living with a severe disease or suffering then and only then there are exceptions. This is based on the Quran as it says “Make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction” as found in (2:195) or “Do not kill yourself” as found in (4:29). On this basis Muslim jurists said that if for example a situation arises where one has to have an operation, anesthesia is a form of clouding the mind but is absolutely necessary.

As for cough drops there are alternatives. Islam doesn't say suffer but there are alternative medication that can be taken for cough so why take ones that have alcohol. And even if there are no other medications available and the coughing is really bad there are different percents of alcohol in different medicines. Some have 1% and other have 25% like Niquil, so if one is forced to take the medicine one should take the one with the least amount of forbidden ingredients. It is still better to find a substitute for that.

### **Host: What about using alcohol in cooking, mouthwash or colognes?**

Jamal Badawi:

Only in the last one there is no problem. However, using alcohol in cake and trying to let it burn out is not permissible. The texture of the cake is such that there is no guaranty that there is enough oxygen which will allow all the alcohol content to evaporate. The same thing goes for cooking as it may leave traces in the food. Above all why should a Muslim while knowing that the Quran is very strict against drinks and intoxicants use ingredients that may contain alcohol?

Mouthwash if not swallowed inadvertently is absorbed through the tissue of the mouth. However the use of alcohol in perfumes or colognes is ok. Many Muslim jurists say that there is no problem with that because after all one is not drinking or absorbing it. It is used as a dissolvent for the ingredients. There are some Muslims who prefer to use perfumes that are oil based.

## 6.14 Moral Teachings of Islam- Diet: Other Issues

### **Summary of 6.13 "Diet: Intoxicants Continued"**



There were five basic areas that we discussed last time. First of all we took a quick look at the harm of intoxicants as derived from the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). We said that the Quran describes it as handiwork of Satan as it is harmful morally which causes discord in society and it effects the spirituality of the individual because it clouds his or her mind and keeps them from the remembrance of God.

All of that is in addition to the physical and economic harms that are caused by intoxicants. Any program put in place to limit the negative effect of the intoxicants can not be imposed by laws but should be preceded by a process of education and awareness and should develop motivation so that people want to rehabilitate themselves. The strongest motive would probably be religious and spiritual. An atmosphere must be created where intoxicants are not encouraged and advertised everywhere.

The third point was that even though the Quran does talk about delightful and pleasing drinks in paradise which in accordance to the Quran is not the same type of fermented booze we have here on earth. There are lots of pleasures in paradise but not of the nature that we know here.

The fourth point was that the use of intoxicants, particularly anesthesia in surgery is permissible because it is an absolute necessity. In medicines however, the basic rule is to try to avoid ones that have alcoholic content. Also in regards to cough medicines one should try to find substitutes that do not contain it, but in absolute necessity one should use the ones that have least amount of alcohol.

We also discussed foods that may contain alcoholic contents like cakes, wine in foods or mouth washes. These things should be avoided as they are not permissible.

#### 6.14 Diet: Other Issues

##### **Host: What about the use of vinegar?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all there is no problem with the use of vinegar which does not contain intoxicants which can becloud the mind. A second thing is called *istihala* which means the total transformation of one thing to another. An example would be grape juice which is permissible but when it is fermented it is transformed completely into wine which is not permissible. Also the wine can transfer into vinegar. The basic

rule in Islam is that if the thing completely changes the rule can also change as to it being permissible or not. So if grape juice turns into wine it is forbidden but if wine turns into vinegar then it becomes permissible. This is an interesting rule that can be applied to a variety of situations. There is one saying of Prophet Muhammad narrated in Muslim in which he says that vinegar is one of the good foods.

**Host: What about shellfish, clams, lobster, shrimp and scale-less fish?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is no restriction whatsoever on anything that comes from the sea. In fact the Quran says in (5:96) "Lawful to you is the pursuit of water-game and its use for food." Anything that comes from the sea is permissible. Indeed one person asked the Prophet (PBUH) and he said "We travel in the sea and we only have a little amount of water what should we do? If we use it for ablution we might go thirsty." He replied "You can make ablution with the water from the sea." He also said that the water of the sea is pure and clean and anything that comes from it is permissible. There is no evidence whatsoever that any of those foods are restricted.

**Host: What sources can be referred to in order to find out which types of cheese contain pepsin and which do not?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is an interesting little booklet which is available at no cost from the Muslim World League Office in New York it is called Cheese and was written by Dr. Ahmad Sakr a professor of chemistry specializing in questions related to food technology. This booklet talks about the types of cheeses and the various methods used in cheese production. It says that the most common enzyme used in coagulating is rennet which the commercial name for rennin which is an enzyme that comes from the stomach of cud eating animals particularly calves. Pepsin is the ingredient to watch for because it may come from the stomach of the pigs. However, he corresponded with a number of cheese manufacturers and out of 10-11 companies only two said that they use pepsin. The booklet also says that recent development in cheese processing is moving away from animal enzymes and towards microbial enzymes or bacterial cultures. One of the managers of the cheese companies that he corresponded with estimated that 98% of the cheese made today is made using microbial enzymes rather than animal enzymes.

**Host: Are there any restrictions regarding cooking or serving of food?**

Jamal Badawi:

No there is nothing like that. What is intended in Islamic law is prohibiting of foods that are unclean or might cause harm so there are no restrictions by way of the preparations or mixing of foods.

The only thing that has to be watched for is serving food in solid silver or gold. The main idea behind this is not to show off with too much undue luxury when serving food. There are a few sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in which he says that anyone that eats using solid silver or gold it is as if they are eating fire. Some might ask about the use of spoons, forks and knives that might be coated with silver to keep them from rusting which is ok. The prohibition is on the use of solid silver or gold pots or serving pans.

The only other prohibition that we did not mention is any food that is not forbidden but proven to be harmful. Suppose one discover that there is a certain kind of fish or plant which is poisonous, even though its specific name is not prohibited it is prohibited in the broad Islamic law and its objective of maintaining good health.

**Host: Are there other things that we are discouraged from eating or is recommended for us not to eat?**

Jamal Badawi:

Let's take a brief look at dietary laws within the framework that we discussed before. We talked about acts that a Muslim should or should not do that runs along a continuum of five basic points. These range from absolutely prohibited acts, to acts which are detestable, to acts which are permissible, then to acts which are commendable and finally acts which are mandatory. So far we have been covering the first point, the strictly prohibited acts, which include eating dead meats (suffocated or not slaughtered properly), drinking blood, eating swine meat, eating predators, meats dedicated to other gods than God and intoxicants.

The next step down from fully prohibited is highly discouraged (detestable) which include tow items smoking and excess eating or drinking. From the point of view of Islamic law smoking has a number of harms. First of all, in Islam one's health and life and body is not something that one can say that they own and can dispose of in which ever way they like. As we know that there is definite harm from smoking (which do not only include lung cancer) then by implication if I smoke knowing that I am hurting my body I am abusing the trust which God has given me. Second smoking represent expenditure which are unnecessary even if one is rich as in Islam ones property and possessions are not theirs in the absolute sense.

Property is a trust from God in ones hands and one is not entitled to abuse it in an unbeneficial and harmful way. Third, smoking has been proven to be strong habit forming which is very difficult to get rid of. Again the Islamic attitude towards life is that one should not be dominated by such bad habits. In Islamic law one is not supposed to hurt themselves or others. The harm of smoking is not like that of coffee or tea which can also be harmful.

The other item that is highly discouraged is excess eating or drinking. For example in the Quran (7:31) it says “eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters.” Excess here could mean over eating and drinking or it could mean a lack of a balanced diet. A third meaning of excess on the negative side which is where people think they can be more pious by neglecting their body and not getting enough nutrients. These things are not approved in Islam as one should always eat in moderation. In Nissai and Tirmithi which are collections of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he says that a human being does not fill any worst container than one’s own stomach. In other words the worst container to fill is one’s own stomach. He says that it is enough for the human to eat a few meals a day to keep him going. When a person eats one should allocate a third of his stomach for food, a third for drink and a third for air. Of course this is symbolical so that one divides their stomach into three parts rather than filling the stomach totally. This was revealed 1400 years ago and today we find in medical research that the body does not really benefit from all the food one eats. This means that the body would have to exert certain effort in order to digest and then more effort to get rid of the extra food one has eaten.

The other thing that is detestable that the Prophet (PBUH) said as narrated in Bukhari that one should not eat while reclining. Again this does not reflect humbleness. In addition to this there are some things that are detestable under certain conditions. The Prophet said that people who eat fresh onions or garlic should stay home and not mix much in public. There is no prohibition for eating cooked onion or garlic but if it is fresh one better keep away from people for a while.

### **Host: Are there certain foods and drinks that are recommended?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes, there are few things that are encouraged but are not obligations. There are a few foods that we find reference to in the Quran and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and people who keep this diet stay quite healthy. First of all honey, as there is a whole chapter in the Quran called An Nahl (The Bees) and in verse 68 and 69 it talks about the blessing of the honey that God gave us “And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for men: verily

in this is a Sign for those who give thought.” In addition to the glucose found in honey there are other very useful ingredients. Honey can be used as a gentle laxative. It is very effective as a cough medicine. In fact if one puts some honey in warm water with a few drops of lime it really soothes coughs and may be a substitute for cough medicines that have alcohol. It is also used for intestinal problems and indigestion. A pharmacist told me of a person who was about to die from hepatitis. After trying many medicines they started using honey intravenously and the person recovered.

The second food that is mentioned is milk. The Prophet (PBUH) was narrated to have said whenever he ate something “Oh God, bless this for us and give us something better than it.” But when he drank milk he said “Oh God, bless this for us and give us more of it.” This means that milk is one of the top healthy recommended foods.

The third is olive oil. The olive tree is mentioned in the Quran as a blessed tree. Fourthly, the Prophet (PBUH) recommended we eat 7 dates in the morning. He said this is very good for us and people who have tried it keep very healthy.

Finally, something that is useful is the voluntary fasting which gives the digestive system a rest.

**Host: Are there any other points that are commendable related to diet?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are things that I classify under proper etiquette. There are few things that are recommended regarding etiquette in regards to diet. There is a saying by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he was advising a young boy he said “When you eat start by mentioning the name of God, eat with your right hand and eat from the closest point to you from the dish or serving tray.” This single saying summarizes three of the etiquette of Islamic eating. First, one is to mention the name of God. One of the known formulas is *Allahuma barik lana fi ma-razaktana wa quina athab al-nar* which means oh God bless what you have provided for us and save us from the hell fire. The second thing is to eat with the right hand because the left hand is used for other things. The third aspect is to eat from nearest point (avoid extending the hands too much) which is a matter of basic manners.

Other things that were recommended by the Prophet is that a person is required to wash their hands thoroughly before eating, if one eats using his hand he should use three fingers and the person should eat while sitting. Another interesting thing that the Prophet said as reported in Tirmithi and Ibnu Maja is that when people eat they should eat together as a group not alone because there is more blessing when a group of people eat together. Another point is that if a Muslim does not like a particular food he should not criticize it. Abu Hurira a companion of the Prophet said that the Prophet (PBUH) never criticized any type of food but whatever he liked he ate and what he did not like he did not complain about which is narrated in Bukhari and Muslim. Another one is that if one has guests it is not appropriate to finish eating before them. The idea is to be sensitive to the guest who might feel a bit shy and if the head of the house stops eating he may stop even though he really would like to eat more.

If people are eating together one should not eat before everyone else finishes unless there is an urgent need to take leave. If a person is offering drinks (permissible ones) he should offer the others and be the last one to drink. In Abu Dawood, Ibnu Maja and Tirmithi it was reported that we should wash our hands after eating especially if it is greasy. Finally, after the person finishes eating he should thank God for what He provided. One of the common formulas for this is *Alhamdulillah alathi ata' mana wa- sakana wa-ja'alana Mulsimeen* which means Grace or thanks to God who gave us food and drink and made us Muslims. The Prophet indicated this specifically when he said "God is pleased with his servant if whenever he eats or drinks something he thanks God for it.

## 6.15 Moral Teachings of Islam- Prohibitions to Protect Honor: General

### **Summary of 6.14 "Diet: Other Issues"**

Basically what we are covering are the five objectives of Islamic Sharia'a which are the criteria that indicate what is lawful and unlawful in Islam. In some of the earlier programs in the series we talked about safe guarding faith which involves avoiding things like *shirk* (associating others with God), sorcery, magic, tyranny (suppresses people's religious freedom) and so on. Second, we touched on the protection of life and in order to protect life Islam provided certain prohibitions such as killing, suicide, abortion (except if it is to save the life of the mother), euthanasia, social injustice (because it threatens peoples wellbeing and survival) and we spent quite a bit of time on the question of diet that might be harmful to the individual. The third was the safeguarding of the mind by prohibiting all kinds of intoxicants whether they are wines, drugs or anything that clouds the mind. Today we will be getting into the fourth objective which is to safeguard honor. In this case we are discussing honor in the sense of sexual morality which protect the chastity and morality of the believer.

## 6.15 Prohibitions To Protect Honor: General

**Host: How can a moral code that addresses sexual morality be viable today that was developed 1400 years ago?**

Jamal Badawi:

From the Islamic standpoint the main mix-up is that a believer is not supposed to follow “traditions” nor is he expected to follow laws that were developed by human beings from the past. When we are talking about sexual morality from an Islamic context we are addressing divine commands which were not developed by any human being or evolved by society but rather something that supersedes traditions whether these traditions are old or new. Throughout human history this kind of argument has been repeated. Many people think that this is the argument of the Space Age but indeed it reflects human weakness throughout history. In previous civilizations, thousands of years ago, whenever people felt like ridding themselves from the needed self control or restraints in matters of sexuality or other issues they start saying that it’s a new civilization and we have changed.

When the Muslim follows the Islamic code he is following an ultimate moral code that determines what is right and wrong. In Islamic belief as we indicated early in this series a Muslim does not believe in relative morality which would then introduce human bias which would allow people to interpret things the way he or she like. Once we realize that the moral code is not something that evolved gradually or was imposed by a social tradition but comes directly from God who has no reason to be bias or to not be aware of anything that may develop in the Space Age or beyond.

**Host: How can people who are constantly changing be expected to follow a permanent and unchangeable moral code?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, it is fair to say that people do change, but what kind of change? If by change we mean the level of education, scientific knowledge, economic developments and the way we perceive or see things then there is no dispute. Yes, people do change as God created the universe in a dynamic form. If we mean by change the basic innate nature of human beings then we have to stop.

For an example no one says that the sun is reactionary, traditional or rigid because it has followed the same cycle for thousands of years. No one says this because we all know that there are certain eternal permanent laws that regulate the movement of the sun. The sun moves with continuous dynamic change but within boundaries set by a specific law which rules these changes. Thus we can not say the sun is rigid. In the same way that there are permanent laws in nature or in the physical universe there are

also permanent and unchangeable laws that rule the moral behavior of human beings as ordained by the Creator who knows what is best. Once a person believes in God he also knows that there are things that are permanent and stable. So there might be change in knowledge or other things but there is no basic change in the main laws of good and evil of right and wrong and basic human nature.

**Host: What is the essence of the teachings of Islam on sexual morality?**

Jamal Badawi:

In essence when we talk about sexual morality we are talking about clear prohibitions regarding the satisfaction of the sexual urge in any other way other than legitimate and recognized marriage. This, rules out pre-marital sex, post-marital sex and extra-marital sex. Marriage has to be a natural recognized heterogeneous male female type of relationship.

**Host: How would you respond to those who say it this is a puritanical outlook?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a big difference between purity and Puritanism or puritanical. If one means by purity freedom of sin, freedom of evil, innocence and chastity then yes, Islamic sexual morality emphasizes purity because anything outside of marriage is. If we look at the definition of Puritanism or puritanical we find it is a doctrine that is practiced by the Puritans a group found in England and American colonies in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Puritans are described to have extreme and excessive strictness in matters of morals and religion. Within this definition Islam has nothing to do with Puritanism because Islam has nothing to do with excess one way or the other, whether it is suppressing the sexual urges or opening the door for its insatiable satisfaction. Islam is characterized as being realistic and balanced.

**Host: What do you mean when you say Islam is more balanced and realistic?**

Jamal Badawi:

We can first compare it to one extreme which is promiscuity and opening the door of looseness in matters of morals. There were philosophers who used to say that pleasure is the basis of morals. Some even called for removing the privacy of sex so that it becomes something that is common for everyone or communism in matters of sex.

On the other hand there are those who regard sexual desire to be unclean, dirty, Satanic or evil in itself. Islam's approaches the matter of sex with balance and realism as it recognizes basic human instincts without making one feel that it is dirty



or guilty when this instinct is satisfied. But at the same time it provides rules for how sexual desire can be satisfied.

In terms of the restrictions provided we read in the Quran in (17:32) “Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).” So first of all it talks about the prohibition of sexual relationships outside of the recognized marriage. We also find in the Quran a description of the behaviors and characteristics of believers in (25:68-70) “Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred except for just cause, nor commit fornication; - and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the Penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy,- Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” There is no question when it comes to fornication or adultery as it is clearly stipulated in the Quran.

On the other hand what I meant by balance and realism is that it doesn't make the person to feel guilty regarding the natural instinctive feel to satisfy one's sexual desire. For example we read in the Quran in (3:14) “Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (To return to).” As we can see it does not condemn all the desires of humans. It goes on in the next verse to say that what is better than all worldly pleasures is the pleasure of God. It does not condemn these things but rather says that God created people with the instinctive desire to have property, children and sexual desire (as to men wanting women and of course the reverse is applicable). Sexual desire in itself is not a sin and is not evil. All the Quran says is that these things are fine but don't focus on these things but on the life hereafter and living a righteous life.

The desire for marriage is explained very succinctly in the Quran as a desirable thing (not an inevitable evil). In (30:21) “And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.” The matter of marriage and having spouses is regarded as a blessing from God, not a something to be ashamed of or hide. In another verse in the Quran it says that one of the bounties of Allah is that He created for us children and grandchildren. Thus the love of children and having families is a commendable act. There is no virtue in monasticism or celibacy according to Islam. Sexual desire is basic human nature and nothing to be ashamed of.

Once the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with his companions and was telling them about the various things that they could be rewarded for by God, then he told them that when one of them goes to his wife and has private relations with her that he gets reward for it. They raised their eye brows and were stunned by this. They said “Oh Prophet of God, do we do things that we derive pleasure (physical) from and still get divine reward from God for it?” He said “If the person does not fulfill their basic needs in a legitimate wholesome marriage would he or she be tempted to do so through fornication or adultery?” They said “Yes.” He said “Then wouldn’t he be punished for this infraction?” They said “Yes.” He said “Then they are rewarded when they do it in the lawful way.”

In a similar story it was said that some people went to the household of the Prophet (PBUH) to ask about the kind of worship he does to become closer to God. When they found out that the Prophet (PBUH) lived a normal life, worshiped God and enjoyed the legitimate things within the boundaries that God had set some of them were not satisfied. One person said that he would always pray all night. The other person said that he would cleanse himself by fasting all the time. The third person said that he would cleanse himself by not getting married and staying away from women. The Prophet (PBUH) knew of this discussion and he came to them and said “In the name of God, I am the most pious of you and closest and most fearful of God among you however, I pray and I sleep and I fast and break my fast also I get married. Whoever deviates from my path is not of me.” This showed again that one should not look down on the matter of sex as long as it is directed in the proper channel that God has provided.

In one of the saying of the Prophet he said “The best enjoyment in this life is a pious and good wife.” And this is of course applicable in reverse as the best enjoyment for a woman in this life is a pious and good husband.

**Host: What are some of the additional measures which are provided by Islam to safe guard sexual morality?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is a good point because some people seem to think that all Islam is about are laws, more laws and penal law which is a mistake towards what the main purpose of Islamic law is in establishing society. When there is something that is prohibited or restricted for a good cause in Islam there is a whole process within society and within the thinking and orientation of the individual to support this it. This is what some people call today as the system approach as we don’t just look at partial aspects but rather one looks at how the entire system supports a given direction. For example when we talked about intoxicants in a previous program, we saw that one can’t just issue prohibition laws (which failed in the States) but rather one has to go through a process of education, change the structure of the economy, change people’s attitudes

and religious motives. Once these changes take place the entire process of reformation moves in a certain and sure way.

It is very difficult and next to impossible within the context of the present civilization to be able to maintain chastity. When one is in an atmosphere or culture where there is constant stimulation for sex in everything (sex is being used to advertise everything from cars to toothpaste) and the woman's body is being abused to promote products and make a fast buck. All this indecency and pornography it is very difficult for a person who wants to be righteous to main it. The measures within the context of Islamic law involve a number of things. One might have noted in the verse I sighted before "Nor come nigh to adultery" does not say do not commit adultery or fornication but it says do not get near it. It says do not go near it because the sexual urge is very powerful and one should not get involved in a way that he or she becomes tempted to point where they loose control. This is why it is better to stay away from the temptation from the beginning. This could also mean that one should take a number of additional measures and precautions. One is to avoid lusty looks. This is consistent with the teachings of all the prophets. Prophet Jesus was quoted as saying that a person does not only commit adultery physically but in his heart also. Second, in order to avoid lusty looks one must take into account what causes them such as dress code (for men and women). Thirdly, one should not encourage free and unrestricted mixing which could provide inspiration to commit something that is inappropriate. These are some of the measures that would help a virtuous society fight indecency. I can say that so far I have not seen a perfect example of this in our modern age because of the decay of the Muslims. But if we really had a pious Islamic society one would not find magazines, movies or programs that are spoiling the attitudes of young people and encouraging them to commit all kinds of indecent acts.

## 6.16 Moral Teachings of Islam- Sexual Morality

### **Summary of 6.15 "Prohibitions To Protect Honor: General"**

There are five basic points we addressed last time. First of all we discussed safeguarding honor as one of the five basic objectives of Islamic law, the others being protection of faith, life, mind and property. This specific topic refers more specifically to sexual morality in an Islamic society.

In the second point we indicated that Islam regards the pursuit of sexual satisfaction with any partner outside the boundaries of recognized marriage as a major moral sin.

The third point was a discussion of the objections and reservations some people may have against following such clear cut divine command. For example some people would say we are in the Space Age how can we follow old ideas about sex? We responded to this by saying that the Muslim is not simply following tradition or ideas of any human being but is following divine law that came directly from God for the benefit of all. The other reservation we addressed is that some say that people change and how can we have permanent moral laws? Our response to this was that there is a difference between people changing in that they gain more education, technology, perception and change in the basic human nature. Moral laws deal with human nature which does not change from time to time.

The other argument is that people say that Islam is too strict with respect to sex and they compare it to Puritanism. Again we said there is a difference between purity in terms of innocence from sin and Puritanism a philosophy that was extreme in regards to religion and sexual morality which was common in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. We also said that Islam does not have extremes one way or the other.

The fifth point was an elaboration of what we meant by a healthy balanced wholesome and realistic approach of Islam to human sexuality. The Quran does not condemn sex in itself but regards it as a blessing that God has provided to perpetuate human life. There is no negativity attributed to sex as it is seen as a blessing. On the other hand Islam is strict as to how it permits the fulfillment of that sexual urge which is only allowed within the boundaries of marriage. Adultery, fornication or any other form of sexual perversion are considered to be major moral sins in Islam. Finally, a key point is providing a social atmosphere with an environment where people are encouraged to live a wholesome and virtuous life

## 6.16 Sexual Morality

**Host: How are sexual perversions defined within the scope of Islamic law?**

Jamal Badawi:

A sexual perversion is any pursuit of sexual partners for the purpose of sexual satisfaction other than one's own legitimately wed spouse. This does not only refer to adultery and fornication (male and female who are not legally wed) but it also includes group sex, swapping, groupies (having a family with common wives and husbands and children being for the entire family), sodomy, homosexuality (applying to males or females), and the use of animals (bestiality). This is all regarded as a way of bringing down the wholesome urge for sex to a low level rather than seeking the legitimate wholesome method of satisfaction.

The Quran itself gives an example of some of these perversions (I am sure anyone who is religious whether Muslim, Jew or Christian is familiar with the story of Sodom and Gomorra) when it talks about Prophet Lut in (7:80-84) “We also (sent) Lut: He said to his people: “Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds.” And his people gave no answer but this: they said, “Drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!” But we saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who legged behind. And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!”

Their acts were mentioned in the Quran as sin and crime as it also described the punishment that was sent upon them.

**Host: What are measures that can be taken on a social level as a society as a whole to safeguard against these things?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, when Islam deals with any problem whether it is sexual morality, economy or politics it tries to solve the problem from its roots rather than dealing with the outer superficial symptoms. This is unlike the common notions that people have about Islam when they assume that Islam only depends on penal law to enforce this. We indicated in the previous program that even though Islam requires this high moral standard it is very difficult for an individual no matter how courageous to be able to practice this if the whole atmosphere and pressure of society is pushing the person away from his or her moral ideals. We are not saying it is impossible but it is very important that society pressures the good rather than the evil. It follows from this that it is important not only to motivate the individual to practice virtue but also to encourage society to encourage virtue. When Islam calls for fighting immorality and indecency in society it includes a number of things. First society should fight pornography and nudity which is a cheap exploitation of human sexuality in order to make a fast buck. This includes newspapers, magazines (I am not just talking about skin magazines but even respectable magazines are not free from indecent photographs which are not appropriate from the standpoint of Islamic morality) and movies (everyone is familiar with the level it has descended to. When we see the lines in front of theaters when an X rated movie comes out that it is a matter of exploiting people’s human instinct in order to make as much money as possible. But worst of all there are programs on TV which invade the privacy of people’s own homes.).

In order to deal with the problem we must look at the roots. For example, Islam tries to deal with the problem of prostitution not by punishment but rather by trying to remove the reasons for this unfortunate and dehumanizing type of activity. I am sure

those are unfortunately in this situation are not doing it because of their own choice but because of certain social and economical injustices that may have provided this kind of avenue for them. To deal with this problem one has to go through a process of education, motivation, religious appeal, and the removal of injustices economically and socially and then perhaps people will become more receptive in their attitudes. On the whole in a society that truly follows the scripture not just claims to be Islamic is to try to avoid anything that results in spreading evil and corruption in society. The Quran gives a warning against those who want to spread evil for whatever motives in (24:19) "Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not." This is a big warning to anyone who tries to spread corruption in society. As we mentioned in the last program even business people are not free from this because some are simply using the bodies of women for advertisements. Many women including non-Muslim women view this as exploitation of the human body.

**Host: What would be your response to those who claim that society has no business interfering in the matters of sex? Even if society would attempt to do that as the standards of sexual morality are in dispute?**

Jamal Badawi:

As a Muslim I would agree with this if you mean restraint of spying on people in their own homes. In that sense spying is prohibited in Islam. But if it is meant by that that society has no right to provide for certain amount of control in order to protect the moral fiber of society, to protect the decay and prevent the decay of the family and society at large then I beg to differ. After all personal freedom in any political or social theory is restricted by the extent by which that freedom infringes on the freedom of others or when it threatens to destroy the society at large. No body questions the right of society to take measures to prevent air pollution, because one can not poison the air that is breathed by someone else, nor does anyone question the right of the state to take measures to control water pollution, because if we can dump anything into the lakes we would kill the fish and affect human beings as well. If air pollution and water pollution are legitimate dangers to society that justify being controlled why not let society by mutual agreement the right to take measures to control moral pollution!? Why do we emphasize the physical pollutants, such as air and water, and not the more important aspect of pollution that threatens to destroy society in a worse way than water or air pollution ever can?

The material civilization or philosophy that is predominant today that diverts our attention to the material things but moral pollution the fundamental source of the strength of any nation, society or the world at large is not looked at with much apprehension or a fraction of apprehension. When measures are taken from a socio-political side to limit moral pollution based on clear and explicit expressions from the scriptures (not human ideals or bias interpretations), which is divine, then things will

have more authority and justification especially if people are believers and accept God.

**Host: What are the responsibilities that individuals have to respect themselves?**

Jamal Badawi:

In the Quran in (24:30-31) “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. . And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.” Then it goes on to say under what condition women can display their beauty and ornaments. The original Arabic term of lowering the gaze is used with the term *min* which means to lower of their gaze (which doesn’t mean that they should not look at all). This means that looking with an innocent casual look that is not staring or thinking lusty thoughts about the person in itself is not condemned. In fact the Quran in (31:19) quotes Luqman, a wise man, who was advising his son when he said “Lower of your voice” which means that he can speak but without raising his voice unnecessarily.

In the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he clearly indicated that what is forbidden is lusty look that is likely to arouse sexual feeling and may lead the person to commit adultery or fornication if there is no control and things develop from one stage to the other. Legally wed spouses however are allowed to look at one another with as much lust as they want, because the whole idea is to satisfy one’s self fully within the clean boundaries of marriage and to be reserved as far as others are concerned. The other thing that the Prophet explained was that many parts of the body can commit adultery, the hand, the ears and the eyes. He said that adultery of the eyes is the look (the look with desire) which is reported in Bukhari.

**Host: What about the look that where the person is not deliberately staring or being lustful especially in America where people of the opposite sexes mingle freely?**

Jamal Badawi:

This question is not new because even in societies with less intermingling there are opportunities where people might see each other. The answer to this was given by the Prophet (PBUH) reported in the collections of Hadith by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and Tirmithi that the Prophet (PBUH) was asked about the sudden look and that he replied “Turn your gaze.” There is no sin in this because one did not deliberately try to have lusty looks. In another occasion he was advising his cousin Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) when he said “Ali do not follow the first look with a second look. The first

look is for you (one is not blamed for the first look) but the second look is not for you. This of course is provided that the first look is not a stare and that one turns their gaze.

**Host: Is complete and total separation between the two sexes required in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, those who say that should be praised for their noble motives, because their intention is to provide a virtuous atmosphere where there is minimum degree of temptation. However sometimes Muslims go through excess that are not consistent with Islamic law or goes beyond what is minimally required. Of course precautions are fine but to say that those precautions are minimal in themselves is another subject. I am not implying in any way that Islam encourages unneeded and unrestricted intermingling of the sexes. Islam definitely does not encourage this in gatherings where there is likely to be encouragement or a threat to the sexual morality of individuals or society as a whole. An example of this would be the high school setting of today with the magnitude of illicit relationships. If it is possible to avoid this and have separate gender schools it would be better than to impose these kinds of relationships on young people. Some people may find this strange but there are still ladies colleges that are found throughout the country. On the other hand Islam doesn't say that women can't be in a place where there are men provided that the basic Islamic understanding of behavior, modesty and dress are observed.

Even in the days of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) women came to the mosque and participated in prayers and educational functions but within the proper Islamic attire. They were seated in their own area where they could avoid unnecessary intermingling while still asking questions and participating in the discussion. There is no record of physical partitions or other things to separate men and women.

So the issue is not the problem of having men and women in the same place but rather the context, objectives and the type of behavior and etiquette that is observed during their gathering in order to maintain mutual respect between both the sexes and regard one another as humans and not sexual objects.

## 6.17 Moral Teachings of Islam- Modesty & Dress Code

### Summary of 6.16 "Sexual Morality"



First, we started by emphasizing that Islam considers the pursuit of the satisfaction of the sexual urge outside the boundaries of legitimate and recognized marriage a major sin. Examples of this would be adultery, fornication, homosexuality or any other sexual perversion.

Secondly, we emphasize that the program that Islam lays out to achieve this purity is not done simply by preaching or by over emphasizing penal law but by integrating the activities of society and individuals to encourage people to follow the pure path. We looked at some of the social measures that Islam suggests to help improve the situation. We said that first of all Islam calls for fighting against pornography in whatever form it may take, to resolve the problem of prostitution by getting at the roots of the problem (various socio-economic problems that may have given rise to this) and thirdly to promote the standards of decency within society at large.

Then we looked at the individual's responsibility in this pursuit. We indicated that the Quran warns against lusty looks at members of the other sex other than one's own wife or husband. We also said that this doesn't mean that a person doesn't look at all nor does it mean that there should be complete separation between males and females. Lusty looks are to be avoided and the kind of mixing where the basic standard of behavior and Islamic dress are not observed. The problem is not having men and women in the same place because men and women both occupied the mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) and he did not object to it so long as the rules were respected.

## 6.17 Modesty and Dress Code

**Host: Why does Islam have stipulations regarding the Islamic dress in its moral code?**

Jamal Badawi:

The way a Muslim looks at it on the basis of the Quran is that dress performs more than one function. Those who make this argument seem to over emphasize two aspects of the function of dress while leaving out the third. One aspect is that dress protects from different weather conditions. The second aspect is regarded as one aspect of beatification or decoration.

What seems to be forgotten is that according to Islam dress has a moral function. The justification of this is found in the Quran in (7:26) "O ye Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment (clothing) upon you to cover your shame (private parts), as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness,- that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may receive admonition!" First of all it

emphasizes that piety the inner purity of the heart is very important. On the other hand it shows that dress has a moral function because it is related to piety. Covering the body is mentioned as well as covering the moral sins and trying to overcome impurities.

The other aspect is that the verse starts by addressing mankind in general as it is not addressing Muslims or the believers when it says “O ye Children of Adam!” This means that the question of the lack of dress or nudity is an evil that should be eradicated, an evil that does not only hurt Muslims but ultimately hurts the moral wellbeing of humanity at large. This is not a matter of replacing the formal aspect of outwardly compliance of the dress codes with piety, but rather an effort to have both. If piety is truly in the heart it will show on the outside.

**Host: Many people have the mistaken impression that the regulation regarding the dress code applies more to the females than to males how would you clarify this situation?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are also Muslims who lack the understanding as to the true nature of Islam and the insightful comprehension of Islam. Indeed the protection of moral standards in an ideal Muslim society in preservation of this purity is a responsibility that doesn't fall only on the shoulder of one sex. If we recall in the previous program we sighted verses from the Quran related to lusty looks in (24:30) “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.” Then in the beginning of the following verse (24:31) it says “And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.” This is just one of many incidents in the Quran where it addresses both males and females at the same time on the same plane. It is absolutely right when you say that some people mistakenly think that females have many restrictions and the male can do as he wishes. We also find that when the Quran praises chastity and high moral ideals it addresses both males and females.

One of the most impressive citations in the Quran on this issue appears in (33:35) “For Muslim men and women,- for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise,- for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” Males and females are being referred to in each of the virtues which is clear evidence that the responsibilities are joint.

There may be differences between males and females in the specific restrictions on each or the extent of coverage of the body. These differences are not in principle but have to do with the natural differences between the two sexes.

First of all, there are different classifications of the various acts as viewed in Islam starting with acts that are required or mandatory, acts that are commendable, acts that are permissible, acts that are detestable and finally acts that are forbidden. There are acts under each of these classifications that apply to both males and females and then there are also specific requirements that are specific to men and others that specific to women.

For example under required acts both males and females are required to cover the *awrah* which is defined as navel to knee for males and for females it is the whole body except for the face and hands. From the commendable classification cleanliness, tidiness and modesty are expected of both males and females. Wearing a turban for a male would be more desirable and a cloak would be a commendable thing for a female. In the detestable acts we find vanity and imitation detestable for both males and females. And finally in the category of forbidden, we find immolation of the clothing of the other sex is forbidden for both males and females. There is a prohibition that applies to males which forbids them from wearing gold or silk.

**Host: Could you expand more upon the required area? What does *awrah* mean?**

Jamal Badawi:

Usually when the word *awrah* is translated to English only a partial meaning is given. One of the common translations of *awrah* is private parts. Private parts, however, is only one aspect of *awrah*. The original Arabic term is a lot more comprehensive. The bare minimum, that a person should never expose to another person (even those of the same sex) are the private parts. The Prophet (PBUH) put it very clearly when he said that a male should not see another male's private parts and a female should not see another female's private parts. The only exception to this of course is if there is a necessity for saving a life, treatment, or medical examination. This may sound strange for people who are used to going into swimming pools and showers with people who don't have anything covering their waist. Muslims should leave or not get involved in this kind of situation. In addition to this the technical meaning of *awrah* also includes parts of the body that one should not expose to other people.

The bare minimum for males is to cover the area between the navel and the knee. There have been different opinions whether the thigh for a man must or is

desirable to be covered. The *awrah* for a female in Islamic law includes the entire body with the exception of the face and hands. This definition of *awrah* could vary depending on the circumstances. For example there are no restrictions between husband and wife. Between a woman her son, brother, uncle or father for example the restrictions are less. Thus the definition of *awrah* varies depending on circumstances.

**Host: When one looks at the fact that *awrah* for males is different than for females. Some might argue that there are more restrictions on the female than on the male or that males are more attractive than females. How would you respond to this?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is no question that females find males attractive. It is just part of the scheme of creation that there is an attraction between opposite sexes so that they can get married and raise a family and perpetuates human kind. In fact in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he said that even if a man comes from the far east and a woman comes from the far west (from totally different cultures) there can still be mutual attraction between both of them.

On the other hand it is unreasonable to say that men and women are 100% equal even in terms of physiological and physical structure. Comparatively speaking a woman is definitely relatively more attractive than men. My favorite example of this is that if a male meets the minimum requirements of covering from the navel to the knee where the waist up is exposed one can not argue that it is the same if a female did not have any cover from the waist up. It is obvious that God created women with more beauty and attraction comparatively speaking.

Many times when the question of fairness is raised the perspective for where these instructions came from is not clear especially in the minds of non-Muslims. Some people think that these are codes imposed by religious leaders, jurists or by the Prophet (PBUH) himself. What is forgotten is that the dress code in Islam is not a matter that people came up with but it is actually based on the revelation itself, the Quran, and the sayings of the Prophet. The sayings of the Prophet are not his own ideas as the Quran indicates that he speaks what is revealed to him. A committed Muslim woman would never follow the dress code of Islam simply because of social pressure or because someone imposed it on her (in an ideal situation). It is rather done with a sense of commitment, manifestation of the belief in God, trust in the validity of His teachings and instructions which is for the good of all. When a woman follows the dress code she is obeying God rather than her husband or anybody else for that matter.

Throughout my travels in North America I have received complaints from ladies whose husbands want them to uncover which is a strange attitude on the parts of some males. It boils down to the question of trust in God and in acceptance of His rules rather than the rules of any human beings. Since God is neither male nor female we can not say that He is bias by having more or less restrictions on one or the other of the sexes. This is a matter of His eternal wisdom that requires certain things for the benefit and morality of the entire society.

**Host: Are these requirements applicable at all times? Are there some occasions or circumstances where there are exceptions?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is perhaps another misunderstanding that some people may have that a Muslim woman must cover or observe it in the privacy of her own home. When a woman is alone or when there are no forbidden males she is free to wear whatever she likes. Second, with her husband (if they are alone) she is free to wear anything. Islam encourages a woman to beautify herself for her husband and the man to beautify himself for his wife. There is no restriction for a woman when she is with her husband. In addition to this there are categories where the dress code is relaxed. For example when a woman is in the presence of her *mahram*, who are men who do not qualify to marry her she doesn't have to cover fully as long as she is covered with some degree of modesty. She doesn't have to cover her hair, arms, legs or neck for example.

**Host: What are the categories of exemptions? And why are they exempted?**

Jamal Badawi:

These exceptions are listed in (24:31) “And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss.”

First of all, there are no restrictions with one's own spouse. The second category is people that a woman could never marry even if she is unmarried which include her father, son, brother and nephew. This set of people are exempt because after all it is a

natural instinct that God has put in human kind that one doesn't look with lust to these categories (mother, sister or daughter) unless the person is really sick.

There is also the exception for other women. This doesn't mean that a woman can uncover herself completely but that the rules are relaxed in regards to covering the hair, arms or legs. There are differences of opinion as to whether these other women must be Muslim or if they can also be non-Muslim. The reasonable explanation from my humble understanding is that the rule is relaxed when in the presence of any other women. In return for observing the strict dress when one goes out there is complete relaxation in the privacy of one's home.

## 6.18 Moral Teachings of Islam- Dress Code Continued

### Summary of 6.17 "Modesty and Dress Code"

Our main emphasis last time was to understand why Islam includes the matter of dress in its code of behavior. We indicated that Islam doesn't look at the matter of dress as a decorative thing or for protection from weather conditions. In Islam dress in accordance with the Quran has a moral function. The question of dressing or not dressing properly is relevant in Islam to the moral standards of a society and its promotion of decency.

Another point was that the dress code in accordance to Islam is not limited to females. We covered various evidences that show the fact that the responsibility for maintaining moral standards in a society is a joint responsibility of both males and females. In both cases they are required to follow the path of God and it is not males making laws for females or vice versa. Both males and females in a truly Islamic society follow the commands and directions that God has revealed for the benefit of all concerned. We said that there may be some differences in terms of the extent or nature of the requirement of the Islamic dress for males and females. This doesn't mean that one follows the rules and the other doesn't. The basics of dress for each gender fall into five categories of required, commendable, permissible, detestable and forbidden. In each of these categories there are rules that apply to men and women alike and others that are specifically to males and others to females.

Most of our discussion focused on the first category of acts. We said that both Muslim males and female the basic requirement is to cover the *awrah* which means the part of the body that should be covered in the presence people from the other sex with the exception of certain categories. The definition of the *awrah* for males is from the navel to the knee (with some differences of opinion about whether the thigh should be covered). For female the whole body is *awrah* except for the face and hands

provided that the cloth is not transparent and not tight so as not to show the skin and the shape of the body which can arouse temptation. We indicated that this dress code is not to be followed at all times. In the privacy of one's home or in the presence of one's spouse there are no restrictions. There are also certain categories of close relatives before whom a Muslim woman doesn't have to observe the complete code which covers the entire body. An example of these would be one's father, son, brother, nephew, uncle and stepfather because these are people who a person would not look at in a sexual sense. Also the people in these categories a person can never marry. The woman can show her hair, arms and legs in front of these people.

## 6.18 Dress Code Continued

### **Host: Is the wearing of the veil a religious requirement?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is no evidence in terms of the original sources of Islam, Quran and Hadith, that shows that covering the face is a mandatory requirement for all Muslims, but in fact we find evidence to the contrary. There is a very famous saying of the Prophet known as Hadith Asma'a, and is about when Asma'a sister of Aisha (the wife of the prophet) entered the house of the Prophet and had clothing on that was not properly concealing and when the Prophet entered and saw her he was angry and turned his face and said "Asma'a when a woman reaches maturity it is not appropriate for her that anything of her body show except for this and that" and he pointed to his face and hands. This Hadith is narrated in Abu Dawood Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made a clear acceptance of the face and hands. The other evidence which is even clearer is that all Muslim jurists agree that a woman can have valid prayers without covering her face. It is however a requirement that when a person goes to prayer that his or her *awrah* must be covered or else the prayers would be invalid. Thus, if a woman's prayers (an act of worship) are accepted when her face and hands are not covered then how come it is forbidden for her to uncover them in public? If for the Pilgrimage, one of the basic Pillars of Islam neither male nor female are allowed to cover their face. If covering the face is a requirement how could it be non-applicable in the matter of worship which is even more worthy of observance. In addition to this there are numerous sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) indirectly show that covering the face was not a requirement or universal practice of Muslim women. For example in some sayings it says that the Prophet (PBUH) was saying such and such and a girl looked this asked a question. Some narrators describe the color of the woman or girl's complexion and if they covered it then how could the narrators know what it was. Most of these sayings are found in some of the most authentic sayings of the Prophet like Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nassai, Abu Dawood and Al Bihaqi. In the Quran it says tell the believing men and tell the believing women to lower their gaze it assumes that there is something to look at.

In fact a good reference for further discussion of this is found in a nice book by Muhammad Nasir Al Deen Al Albani in Arabic. The title of the book is translated to *Muslim Woman's Dress According to Quran and Sunnah*.

**Host: There are Muslim women who do wear the veil is this wrong or too strict on their part?**

Jamal Badawi:

Covering the face can not fall in the categories of forbidden, detestable or mandatory because it is permissible. In some cases it could even be commendable in the case where there is lots of corruption and the woman feels that this would be better protection for herself or society. Some jurists say that it might even be more than recommended in the case of clear corruption. The only case where the covering of the face is forbidden is in the Pilgrimage. In fact I have seen women in North America who drive their cars and go everywhere with a veil. One can not blame them for this but actually they could be commended for their self imposed reservations.

I should add that one should not over emphasize this with Muslim women who are trying to practice Islam. A woman who did not practice Islam fully and used to wear normal everyday cloths and tries to practice more should be commended for her courage in covering and meeting the minimum requirement of covering everything except the face and hands.

**Host: What are some more commendable points related to dress?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is commendable for both males and females to observe cleanliness, tidiness and modesty both in body and dress. For the male it is commendable to wear some kind of head cover particularly the turban. For women it is commendable to wear a cloak or over garment. By definition commendable acts means things that are not required but rather praise worthy type of acts.

To start with cleanliness is a highly commendable act that is emphasized in the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). For example in the Quran (9:108) "Allah loveth those who make themselves pure." In (2:222) it says that "Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean." Cleanliness in Islam carries several meanings which include moral purity, spiritual purity as well as physical purity and purity of clothes. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that cleanliness is half of the faith.



The second item is tidiness. The dress code in Islam does not imply that one should have a clumsy type of appearance. A narration by Abu Dawood says that the Prophet (PBUH) said “Whoever has hair let them honor it (by tidying it).” In another occasion it is said that a man went to meet the Prophet (PBUH) and his hair and beard were fuzzy and un-managed and the Prophet told him to go tidy himself up. The man tidied himself up and came back and the Prophet praised him and said “Isn’t that better for you than if one of you comes with his hair and beard fuzzy as if he is Satan.”

Thus the Prophet emphasized neatness alongside of modesty and covering. In several collections of Hadith like Tirmithi, Ahmad and Nasa’i Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said “Allah loves to see the effect of his blessing on his servant.” If God gave one the means to have nice neat clothes one should use it and not be overly strict with oneself as long as they observe the minimum requirements.

Modesty is also important for both males and females. One should cover/dress in a way that it does not stimulate physical or sexual feelings. For example we mentioned earlier that the minimum requirement for a man to cover himself from navel to knee but this doesn’t mean that a man should just go exposing his chest.

A commendable act for males is the use of a turban and this can take a variety of forms. The Prophet said that when men cover their head they have the appearance of angels. Hair covering for females is mandatory in front of people from the other sex that are not close relatives. The cloak is recommended for females which can take the form of an overcoat or a wide piece of cloth that is designed to cover the body and is worn over the regular clothes. Again this is not required because there is none incident when Um Salamah the wife of the Prophet asked him can a woman pray in her regular clothes and he said yes as long as her clothes are long enough as to conceal her body. Some women find the cloak convenient because they can wear anything underneath it.

### **Host: What about categories of permissible and detestable?**

Jamal Badawi:

In principle the permissible things in one’s dress include all other things that are not classified as required, commendable, detestable or forbidden. The basic rule in Islamic law is that if any act is not classified in the other four categories then it is permissible. One does not need special text that says one can do this. This includes colors (there is no restriction on colors so long as it is not flashy or attracts much attention) and designs. Some people think that one must wear colors or designs that

are limited to a specific country or culture which is not true. For example the Prophet recommended a garment/dress (goes down to the knees or heels) that is worn by the male with pants underneath. Any clothing design, for males or females that meets the basic requirement of Islamic dress is permissible.

The detestable acts include vanity and imitation. Vanity in fact can be detestable or forbidden depending on the degree. If someone is dressed for the purpose of showing off in an overly flashy way and effects one's pride it could be in the category of forbidden.

Imitation can either be detestable or forbidden. If a person imitates non-believers in their dress for the purpose of losing his or her identity it is not acceptable. If it is a matter of good design or material that doesn't contradict Islamic requirements then it is fine.

**Host: Could you develop the category of the forbidden?**

Jamal Badawi:

The most conclusive forbidden act is the imitation of other sexes. According to the narration of Ibn Abbas cursed those men who behave, act or dress like women and women who behave, act or dress like men. This is a kind of rebellion against the pure nature that God created. Another forbidden aspect of imitation that I mentioned before is to imitate people in their dress which contradicts Islamic rules or for the purpose of expressing weak identity.

Vanity could also be forbidden if it reflects pride on the part of the individual. For example, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) if a person wears clothes of fame for the purpose of pride in this life God will clothe him in humiliation on the Day of Judgment. In another saying he says that a person who has a long dress (for highness) is absolutely erroneous because it reflects pride and vanity and a person should be humble while also being neat and clean. This doesn't mean that a person has to shorten their dress. Abu Bakr the companion of the Prophet once asked do I have to shorten my dress and the Prophet said no you are not doing that for the purpose of vanity.

In addition there is a restriction that applies only to males but not to females. A Muslim male is forbidden from wearing gold or silk. In both Bukhari and Muslim the

Prophet says that whoever (males) wears silk in this life will not wear it in the hereafter. In another saying he said gold and silk are permissible to the female of my *Ummah* (followers) and not for its males which is narrated in Tirmithi and Nassa'ai. The exception would be in the case of having to use silk in the case of skin disease or medical purposes.

## 6.19 Moral Teachings of Islam- Beautification & Behavior

### Summary of 6.18 "Dress Code Continued"

In the last few programs we focused on the safeguarding of honor as one of the objectives of Islamic law and part of the moral teachings of Islam. More importantly we dealt with issues as to the prohibition of fornication and adultery. There are also preventative measures that Islam requires in order to prevent this from happening. This includes the purification of society from pornography and indecency and the prohibition of lusty looks to the opposite sex. The last few programs we also dealt with modesty and the dress code in Islam for both men and women.

Today's series follows these programs because personal adornment and beautification is one aspect of the over all appearance that connects with the question of dress. Like dress beautification and adornment is not prohibited but Islam provides boundaries that protect and safeguard an individual's social morality.

## 6.19 Beautification and Behavior

**Host: Can you give us an outline of today's topic in general?**

Jamal Badawi:

This topic does not focus on women but involves the responsibility of males and females with some slight differences depending on the nature of the sexes. We also have a division of acts in Islam broken up into five parts: mandatory, commendable, permissible, detestable and forbidden. For each of these five categories we have various codes that deal with both males and females, others that are more suited for males and others that are more suited for females.

For this topic we have nothing under mandatory acts. Under commendable for the male it is commendable to grow a beard and trim the mustache. For females it is commendable to use Henna (a die used for beautification). Under the commendable both females and males are recommended to die grey hairs, clip nails, beautification

of self for spouse in the privacy of ones home as well as other personal hygiene that is related to beautification. Permissible is anything that is not specified in the other categories. Also gold and silk are permissible for females but not for males. Under detestable we have the plucking of grey hairs, *qasa'a* which has to do with shaving of the head or excesses (which could also be forbidden if it is overly done). Under forbidden we have gold and silk for males, perfume and makeup when in public for females. Under the category of forbidden which applies to both males and females we have tattoos, wigs, plucking the eyebrows, filling the teeth and non corrective plastic surgery and tempting walk and talk (may apply more to females).

**Host: Can we go back and examine these categories a little more closely beginning with the commendable acts?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all the category of mandatory is blank because it is different from dress in that dress has a certain minimum requirement that has to be covered or concealed. Of course for the question of beautification we can't have something that is really mandatory where one is a sinner if they don't do it.

Under commendable it is recommended according to the teaching of the Prophet (PBUH) to grow a beard. It should be kept up and trimmed and doesn't have to be excessively long. In fact according to some jurists it is forbidden to shave the beard and others say that it is only a recommended act and if it is done that is good and if not it is only detestable that one shaves it. Second, it is commendable for males to trim the mustache. Some people misinterpret this to mean shaving the mustache whereas the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) that deals with this does not say shave it but shorten it so that the hair doesn't come over the lips and interfere with meals.

For females it is commendable for them to use Henna (a die) that is used in the hands. The Prophet (PBUH) recommended women to die their hands, which was not regarded as display of too much beauty. Henna also softened the hands.

It is commendable for both males and females to die grey hairs. Again there is a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) that this is something that gives Muslims a unique identity because others in his time did not die grey hair. There is one case however where the person is old and his whole head is white he should die it but while avoiding black. Also Henna can be used to die hair. Clipping of the nails is also recommended. This shows that it is not appropriate for Muslim males or females to grow their nails which can begin to look like claws. It is also commendable in Islam to beautify one's self for their spouse in the privacy of their homes. Some people get the wrong notion that because Islam emphasizes chastity and modesty for a woman in

public that this means that she can not beautify herself. The truth is far from this as a woman is encouraged to do so in the privacy of her home. Indeed this is a mutual responsibility that some men are not aware of. Ibn Abass a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) once said “I beautify myself for my wife as she beautifies herself for me.” There are also other aspects of personal hygiene that are commendable.

**Host: What are these other aspects of personal hygiene?**

Jamal Badawi:

The best way to answer this question is to refer to a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) which is narrated in Muslim and Bukhari in which it says that the Prophet recommended five things for the Muslim as commendable acts: circumcision (for males), removal of pubic hair, removing arm pit hair, trimming the moustache (for males), and clipping the nails. In the collection of Hadith by Muslim the companions narrate the Prophet said that people should not leave hair in the above mentioned areas or nails without clipping for more than forty days. This is not only a matter of hygiene but is related to our topic because it is one aspect of beautification.

**Host: Can we elaborate on the permissible and the detestable?**

Jamal Badawi:

Permissible is defined as any other act which is otherwise defined as part of the other categories. But I like to point out that it is permissible for females to use gold and silk which is not permissible for males.

In the category of detestable are acts that are not totally and completely forbidden in a sense of being major mistakes but are hated acts. These include plucking of grey hairs. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that when a believer has a grey hair it is his light. This means that it should not be plucked but dying is commendable. Another detestable act that was not only known in the days of the Prophet (PBUH) but is still practiced today and is called in Arabic *qasa'a*. *Qasa'a* means shaving part of the hair and leaving the rest. This is not trimming or cutting ones hair as one can shorten their hair but *qasa'a* is to shave one part of the hair while leaving the rest. One can shave their hair completely, trim it, cut it or leave it as it is.

It is detestable to have accesses, even in things that are permissible, if it stimulates desire and lust in the opposite sex. Depending on the degree of access it could fall under the category of the forbidden acts.

## **Host: Can you clarify the last category of forbidden?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all there are things that are forbidden specifically to males. Gold and silk are permissible for females they are forbidden for Muslim males. It is also a forbidden for females, in regard to the natural differences of the sexes, to wear perfume and makeup when in public. A woman can wear perfume and makeup freely in their own home without being exposed to people who are not supposed to see this display of beauty. This rule doesn't apply to males because when a female wears a fragrant perfume definitely adds a great deal of attraction to herself and by nature it becomes very tempting for males. I am not saying that perfume for males is not attractive but in a comparative degree it is much more damaging morally if women go around with lots of perfume or makeup.

A forbidden act for both males and females is tattooing (using a needle to place dye under the skin) which fools around with the nature of Allah's creation and is something permanent that can not be easily undone. Wearing wigs whether they are made of natural hair or of synthetic hair is also forbidden for both. Indeed the Prophet (PBUH) called wigs or extensions as falsification which gives the wrong impression of what a person has.

Another point that is emphasized in the sayings of the Prophet is the plucking of the eye brows. The term used in the sayings is *tarqiqe* which means thinning of the eye brows or as was the practice in some cases shaving/plucking the whole eyebrow and drawing in an eyebrow instead. I should indicate here however that there is a reference which is found in Tirmithi that a woman came to Aisha (may God be pleased with her) the wife of the Prophet (PBUH) and she asked her if she could remove hair that is on her face in order to beautify herself for her husband and Aisha replied "Remove those things that are embarrassing as much as you can." Some interpret this as being a few hairs here and there which are unusual for women to grow and might be embarrassing can be removed.

A third forbidden act is filling of the teeth. This used to be a custom of some women who wanted to look younger and would file their teeth so as to make them look smaller which is called *washr* in Arabic. The other thing is that some used to widen the gap between the teeth which was regarded by some women as a sign of beauty so they would file between the teeth. This is also forbidden by the Prophet (PBUH). This act is called *tafleej* in Arabic. In addition to the fact that it is forbidden in Islam I am sure that from a medical stand point filling the teeth may not be very healthy.

One more item that is forbidden for both males and females is non-corrective plastic surgery. There is nothing wrong with a person getting corrective surgery when they are involved in an accident and there is some kind of disfiguration. In this case one is only trying to correct the damage that has occurred as a result of the accident. Some jurists indicated that if a person is born with a deformity which causes embarrassment that there is nothing wrong with having plastic surgery. What is meant by non-corrective or unnecessary plastic surgery is when someone who has a fine face but feels like their nose was a little smaller they would look more beautiful. People now have face lifts to make themselves look younger or have unnecessary surgery and this is not permitted. To be overly obsessed with one's material/physical appearance unnecessarily has been forbidden in Islam and is regarded as a rebellion against the creation of God.

**Host: What are some references on some of the forbidden acts?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are numerous documentations found in the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). Some are general and some are more specific and relate to these particular categories. Among the general ones is a verse in (4:119) which indicates that these kinds of desires are a satanic inspiration. The verse says that Satan says "I will mislead them, and I will create in them false desires; I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and to deface the (fair) nature created by Allah." There is a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) in the collection of Muslim it says that the Prophet cursed a woman who does the tattoo and the woman who gets it done and the woman who files the teeth and the woman who gets her teeth filed. In Bukhari and Muslim there is also a prohibition for those who make gaps between their teeth in order to look more beautiful. In another saying which is narrated in Bukhari, Tirmithi and Abut Dawood the Prophet again cursed the women who joined their hair with other hair (wigs and extensions natural or otherwise) and those who pluck or thin their eyebrows.

Many of the sayings of the Prophet may use the female gender only because they are more likely to do this but not because it is not forbidden for males. One jurist, Yusuf Al Qaradawiy, says that if these acts are forbidden for women they are even more forbidden for a man. If a woman is not supposed to falsify her appearance by wearing a wig then it is more logical that a man should abstain from committing these type of acts.

**Host: Could you expand on the prohibition of tempting walk and talk?**

Jamal Badawi:

This was included largely under codes for females because it is sickening to imagine a man walking and talking in a tempting manner. There are reference to this in the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter and it refers most of all to women. First, it shows that walking while stamping the feet or shaking the body in order to attract attention would be contrary to the whole concept of chastity which is not just an outwardly display of piety but the movement be stimulating.

As for talking there is no problem for a Muslim male to hear a female talk. In chapter 33 of the Quran it instructs women not to speak in a way that is seductive or would be interpreted as such.

I would like to briefly mention two things. One is the aspect of privacy. It is forbidden for a male and female who are not lawfully together through marriage or family to be alone in a park, apartment or any other place.

Finally, an aspect that relates to Penal Law in Islam is called *alqasf* which refers to a person who accuses a chaste woman in the matter of her honor. This is regarded as a criminal act which is very punishable in Islamic Law.

## 6.20 Moral Teachings of Islam- Prohibition to Safeguard Property

### **Summary of 6.19 "Beautification and Behavior"**

We had several programs in the last few weeks which covered the main criteria for what is lawful and unlawful which we organized along the five basic purposes of Islamic law: safeguarding faith, life, mind, honor and property. We spent several programs discussing the various measures that are suggested in Islamic law to safeguard each of these. Today we start the last part of this particular segment of the criteria for lawful and unlawful which is safeguarding property. This is one aspect of moral law the other being the appeal to the spiritual quality of the individual.

## 6.20 Prohibition to Safeguard Property



**Host: Can you give us an outline of today's program?**

Jamal Badawi:

We are going to go over what measures are provided by Islamic Law to safeguard property. Mainly we are going to cover prohibitions of theft, usury, gambling, cheating, monopoly and waist.

**Host: What approach is used by Islam to prevent theft?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are at least four points we need to remember when dealing with an issue like this. The first and most important approach is the spiritual and moral appeal which is the appeal to the individual himself to be God conscious in his/her actions. This inculcates in an individual the quality of having a living consciousness which makes theft repulsive to the person's moral and spiritual sense.

Second, Islam tries to inculcate in the individual the quality of work, the virtue of earning something only after one exerts effort. This is done not only done by suggestion to the person but by putting the responsibility on the community or society in general to train the individual so that he can earn an honorable living.

A third thing is that Islam does not work on one side of the equation while leaving the other. It works on the individual and on society. It makes it incumbent on society to provide an atmosphere where people can live a dignified life. In Islamic law the minimum requirement that the state or society is responsible for is to provide sufficient food, clothing, housing and even means of transportation for an individual. People are encouraged to work but if they are unable to find work or if the person becomes sick or incapacitated then society would be responsible to look after this person.

Finally, if the person decides (after all the steps above) to disrespect the property of others then the penal law would come into the picture. But even the penal law in Islam, whether it deals with theft or other offenses, is not intended as a punitive thing but rather as a last resort. Penal law is not applied if there is any doubt which is called in Islamic Law *shubha*.

**Host: Can you explain *shubha* in more detail?**

Jamal Badawi:

The English translation for *shubha* is doubt and does not convey the full meaning because it is a special legal term that is used in Islamic Law. *Shubha* may partly mean doubt. In any crime before penalty can be applied one has to make sure that there is absolutely no doubt that the offense has taken place (dubious evidence can not be applied). *Shubha* can also mean that there was a circumstance that pushed the person to commit the offense and if the circumstance was not there the person would not have carried out the offense. If for example a person committed a petty theft, such as stealing a loaf of bread or some food, even if the crime is proven *shubha* is raised because he could have committed this crime because of hunger. I'll give an example of this during the reign of Omar Ibnul Khatab (the second Caliph after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)) a number of boys were caught stealing a camel. They had been working for a man and they stole one of his camels. When Omar inquired as to why they did this he found that this man did not feed them or clothe them properly. Instead of applying the penalty on the boys he fined the man twice the cost of the camel. So even though they are the ones who stole the camel because of the *shubha* or doubt that he was unjust to them he fined him twice the price of the camel which was stolen. This gives a very clear indication that the purpose of penal law in Islam is not punitive but rather a way to provide a just social system where there would be no reason whatsoever to commit theft. The penalty is there as a deterrent in case a person disregards the sanctity of the property of other people.

**Host: What if someone buys something that is stolen?**

Jamal Badawi:

If the person knows that the item that is being sold to him is stolen then he shares that responsibility. A documentation of this is found in the collection of Bihaki where the Prophet said "Whoever bought something which was stolen while knowing that it was stolen then he is a participant in its sin and its shame." Even if a person doesn't know if an item is stolen but one has doubt that it might be stolen then it would be better to buy it if caught. If everyone does this people would be discouraged to commit theft.

**Host: Could you explain what usury is and how it relates to our topic of safeguarding property?**

Jamal Badawi:

The topic of usury is very broad and we will get into it in more detail when we discuss the economic system of Islam. Usury is to get anything in excess of one's loan or capital without participating fully in the profit and loss. In other words usury is whenever one is guaranteed a certain income without participating in the risk. This is another term used for interest which is when someone puts their money and is

guaranteed certain interest rates regardless of whether the enterprise profits or has losses which is forbidden in Islam. This is related to the moral teachings in Islam. To deal with interest where one doesn't participate fairly in profit or loss is morally offensive in Islam. Islam is not the only faith that considers usury to be a moral offense. An example is found in the book of Deuteronomy (chapter 23) when Jesus entered the temple and dismissed those money changes.

On the other hand this relates to safeguarding property in Islam because interest is an unjust system that results in many problems and moral issues in society. The availability of borrowing without need encourages people who are not in dyer need to borrow and to buy more than they actually need. It induces people to buy more than they actually need and it may induce people to involve themselves in gambling or unreasonably risky enterprises because they can simply borrow the money without feeling the pinch of it being their own money.

However, this doesn't mean that Islam doesn't permit investment. Investment, which equally shares profits and losses are permissible. The only thing that Islam objects to is having fixed interest. Other problems such as mortgage rates, about twenty percent these days, and the kind of fluctuation that drives many people out of their homes are issues related to interest. There are lots of moral, economic and social problems that result form the interest business.

### **Host: What is the moral basis for prohibiting gambling?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a verse in the Quran that answers this question in (5:90-91) "O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?"

There are three reasons given why gambling is not permitted. First of all, it is *rijs* or unclean. In the Islamic philosophy of earnings, the earnings are not moral when one gambles and wins because the chips were in their favor because one won this money without exerting any effort or participating in a legitimate business.

On the other hand the money that one is taking from the other person is unclean because he lost that money in return for nothing really which is regarded as unjust and unfair. When one reflects on the consequence of this illegitimate money exchange one can understand why the verse in the Quran says that it creates enmity and mutual hatred. If you lost \$5000 to me you would not feel like you were my brother or feel compassion and mutual love that you should feel towards other believers. Even if someone says that they took that risk in ones heart there would still be a grudge against the other.

The third reason is that there is a kind of addiction to gambling. If one wins their appetite becomes greater and the want to keep wining, if one looses they keep going in an effort to recover their losses. One will always keep trying and one is never satisfied with winning or loosing which creates a sense of greed and addiction and that is why the verse mentions that this keeps people away from the remembrance of God and from their prayers. In Islam remembrance of God doesn't just mean acts of worship but also other useful activities and pursuits in life.

**Host: What does Islam say about government lottery and sweepstakes?**

Jamal Badawi:

The question of lottery is clearer because it has all the elements of gambling because a person buys a ticket and they may or may not win. The fact that the government whether provincial or federal undertakes the lottery doesn't make it moral or correct, in fact the government should be a good example by stopping this moral evil by not participating in it.

The question of sweepstakes is hazy because one of the elements of gambling is not present as one is not required to buy anything. On the other hand it may resemble free samples that some people present as a gift, and gift taking in Islam is not forbidden. The only doubt that I have about the issue of a sweepstake is that if it is a small gift or sample it might be ok but if it is something worth a lot of money it may raise some question about the legality of this money. I have no conclusive evidence that says that it is clearly not permissible but I would personally keep away from it as it is one of the hazy areas.

**Host: How is cheating related to our topic from the standpoint of Islamic Law?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are a number of ways which cheating is mentioned in the Quran as well as in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One form of cheating that used to be common is to cheat the person when selling them items by giving them less than what they are paying for. This has been forbidden very strongly in the Quran in (6:52), (17:35), (26:181-183) and chapter 83.

Another aspect that relates to cheating during buying and selling is that Islam requires that whenever a person sells something is to make the buyer aware of any defects or deficiencies that might be in the product being sold. A quote by the Prophet (PBUH) found in Bukhari, Al Bihaqi and Al Hakim where he says “The buyer and seller should mutually follow what they have agreed to. If they are truthful and have disclosed all information about the thing they are buying or selling God will bless their transaction. If they conceal information then the blessing will be taken away.”

Another form of cheating is to give the impression that something is good when it is not. In the collection of Muslim there is a saying of the Prophet when he passed by a person who was selling grains. So the Prophet (PBUH) stuck his hand in the grains and found that it was wet. He asked “What is this?” The seller replied “It was raining and part of that grain got wet so I covered it with dry grains.” The Prophet said “No you should expose the wet grain so people know what they are buying. Be absolutely honest in terms of what you are selling.”

In another incident as narrated in Ahmad the Prophet (PBUH) that was selling food that was a mix of bad quality and good quality. The Prophet said “No, each one should be sold separately so that people don’t get the impression that it is all of the same quality.” There is also *bai’ il gharar* which means selling something that is not clear. An example of this is if someone says that they are going to throw their net into the water and they will sell whatever they get or someone says they will sell birds then they go and try to hunt them. Even in agriculture one is not supposed to sell the produce of his/her farm till they harvest it or make sure that it did not get eaten by bugs.

Finally, there is also a similar way of cheating called *alnajash* which the Prophet (PBUH) forbade in Bukhari and Muslim. An example of this would be a person who goes to an auction and doesn’t wish to buy an item but bids on it to increase the price for the others which causes them to pay a higher price.

Another thing that is considered to be cheating is if someone is on his way to the market and one comes to him and gets him to sell his product at a lower price than what the items are going for at the market. The seller should be allowed to reach the market so that he may find out the going price before he sells his product at a lower rate.

**Host: What does monopoly refer to in Islamic law?**

Jamal Badawi:

Monopoly refers to a number of things including manipulation of prices, creating artificial shortages in order to benefit from it. An example of this if people remember in the early 70's when the price of sugar reached over \$5 or more for five pounds of sugar. In reality, many companies were implicated by court later on, there was no shortage but companies were simply hoarding the sugar in order to make it look like there was a shortage so they could make a fast buck. This is one aspect of monopoly especially when it deals with the main staples that people need in their day to day lives. To withhold basic staples and store them in order to create shortages and then when the price is high to sell the product is forbidden. We are not saying that storing items is forbidden. If someone needs to store items in order to regulate consumption over the year it is ok. The idea of withdrawing items from the market that people need for the purpose of creating a shortage is regarded as a monopoly. The Prophet (PBUH) said that a person who does that is cursed. In one Hadith narrated in Ahmad and Hakim he said "Whoever monopolizes basic food items for forty days then God will disassociate Himself from him and will be very angry with him."

**Host: Could you throw some light on the question of waist?**

Jamal Badawi:

As a basic rule in Islam, property is not absolute as we are only trustees and the ultimate and absolute ownership belongs to God. This means that we have no right, even if we own property, to squander it or burn it unduly and hurt ourselves and others. An example of this is found in the Quran in chapter 4 that allows an Islamic society to put under guardianship for people who lack the power of reasoning even though they own things or might be squandering wealth because they have a sickness in order to safeguard it for their benefit and for the benefit of society.

6.21 Moral Teachings of Islam- Moral Virtues: Taqwa

## Summary of 6.20 "Prohibition to Safeguard Property"

The first six programs that we had in this series covered the theory of ethics, the main conceptual framework of understanding the whole question of ethics and morality. We covered the main problems in ethics, the difference between secular and religious morality and the specific unique characteristics of the Islamic approach to morality. We covered questions like the position of the individual in the universe and how a person relates to the universe and how he sees it. We also covered issues like the stability and comprehensiveness of the Islamic moral code.

The remaining fourteen programs constituted the second portion of the issue of moral teachings. We focused mainly on issues that relate to the lawful and unlawful. The main criteria for what is lawful and unlawful are set in order to achieve the main objective of Islamic law which is to safeguard faith, life, mind, honor and property. Under each of these points we discussed a variety of topics. Under the topic of faith we talked about *shirk*, associating others with God, sorcery and tyranny. Under the topic of the preservation of life we discussed killing, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, social injustice and we spent a good amount of time discussing the question of diet. Under the topic of safeguarding the mind we talked about prohibition of wine, alcohol and intoxicants. Under the topic of safeguarding honor we talked about the prohibition of adultery, fornication, and slander. And the last program dealt with the safeguarding of property which covered issues such as theft, cheating, usury and related issues.

The third portion that we are going to get into now, will emphasize the fact that in order to achieve moral excellence it is not enough to appeal to the intellect or to what is lawful or unlawful in an elaborate legal system but above all there is a moral spiritual appeal to the individual to follow what is prescribed by God.

### 6.21 Moral Virtues- Taqwa

**Host: Can you explain the meaning of the word *taqwa*?**

*Taqwa* is a central concept that we find running through the passages of the Quran especially in the verses that deal with individual behavior and social relations. Some of the common translations of *taqwa* in English are piety, heeding or being God fearing. Each of these only gives a partial meaning for *taqwa*. I would like to define it as an attitude which combines elements of caution, God fearing and above all being God conscious.

**Host: Could you analyze some of these elements that you have included in your definition? What does the element of fear mean?**

Jamal Badawi:

When the word fear is used in an Islamic context as it refers to *taqwa* or being God conscious we are not talking about being scared because one can be scared without any feeling of love or respect. People could be scared of a monster but not have any affinity or love for the monster which is not the kind of fear we are talking about. When one is God fearing, this feeling includes the fear of His punishment on the Day of Judgment. When we refer to fear of punishment it is for those who are ungrateful enough so as to disregard, forget and disobey God. If it wasn't for fear as a part of a person's responsibility and accountability people would go around doing whatever they wish to do. This may also include the fear of losing the blessings of God in our earthly life. Many times when we follow laws, systems or philosophies that are against the will of God we suffer part of the consequences in this life. To be deprived of the blessing of God is another fear that induces the individual to follow His path.

In addition to this there is another meaning to fear which is quite different from the first two meanings. It is a more noble fear than the first two types and it is the fear of displeasing the one we love. An example of this would be two people who are truly deeply in love, each of them would try their best to please the other and to avoid actions that would avoid any action that might endanger their love or may displease the loved one. Many times people get upset because they forgot an anniversary or a birthday and are afraid of forgetting them even though they are not doing anything wrong. If we apply this relationship with humans (I am not making an analogy between humans and God) and our loved ones then it is more appropriate for us (if we are true believers) to really fear displeasing the One we love most, and that is God. Displeasing God is an act of ungratefulness and an act of forgetting what God has provided us with because we owe everything to Him (life, property and guidance to worship Him). This kind of fear is not founded on hate or a vengeful concept of God who is seen to be cruel and punishing but it is actually based on love which drives people not to want to displease God.

**Host: What do you mean by “heeding” and “God conscious?”**

Jamal Badawi:

There was a statement made by Omar Ibn Khatab (the second Kalef after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)) when he made a similitude of *taqwa* being God conscious or heeding as a person who is going through a narrow path with all kinds of thorns around him trying to snatch his clothing while trying to protect himself and his clothing from this. In this saying clothing is used as a metaphor describing an



individual's character and how an individual needs to protect it from all divergences and deviations that surround him in his path. The thorns represent temptations that could be greed, acquiring money from any source, illicit relationships, pride and vanity. A person who has *taqwa* tries to heed or avoid anything that displeases God and may be harmful to himself or others.

To be conscious of the presence of God all the time is the core of *taqwa*. To know, feel and realize that God is with us and looking after us at all times and that He knows what we are doing and what our souls whisper results in an attitude which feels a sense of shame to do something wrong in God's presence. This was explained beautifully in a story that took place during the reign of Omar. There was a teenage girl whose mother used to sell milk but in order to make a fast buck she mixed water with milk. Once, the girl saw her mother doing this and said "Mother! Don't cheat." The mother replied "We are in our home. Omar (everyone feared the ruler because he was very strong and whenever something was wrong he wanted to straiten it out) is not here." But the girl illiterate, simple but with her pure faith said "Yes, mother Omar is not here but the God of Omar is here." This is a beautiful and simple expression that shows that there are degrees of being God conscious. The higher the degree of God consciousness the more one is conscious of the presence of God in one's life. Islam doesn't separate between secular, religious, economic or spiritual activities because one has to conduct his behavior with the feeling that God is present.

### **Host: What is the Muslim understanding of divine love?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are verses in the Quran that connect between divine love and *taqwa* (being God conscious). In the Quran in (3:76) "verily Allah loves those who are (*mutakeen*) act aright." When we talk about divine love in Islam we are not talking about a kind of slogan that is repeated and to which lip service is paid. We are not talking of vague emotions because the term love is used. When we talk about divine love or the love of God we are talking about a sense of dependence upon God and the realization on the part of the human that mankind is not self sufficient and that man depends on and needs God.

Divine love is also a sense of gratefulness to God for all His bounty which helps us realize that whatever we do as humans is nothing but an effort to use what God has given us. This love is not only an intellectual cognition or understanding but is also a love that manifests in all aspects of life. The hardest test of the genuineness of this love is to follow the path of God. There is a beautiful expression that addresses Prophet Muhammad in the Quran in (3:31) "Say: "If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." This love must really be manifested in an actual commitment to the path established by God. This love is steadfast and doesn't waiver because of various trials and

tribulation. One has to sacrifice for this love from desire, property, time and if need be life for the sake of God. This love is the foundation for every other type of love. This is the foundation of the love for mankind or other creatures that God has created.

Love in Islam is not a slogan but rather something practical that requires commitment and responsibility. The Quran indicates that to have this true love one has to put the love of God above all other types of love. An example is found in (2:165) "But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah." In a saying by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he says there are three things if a Muslim achieves he will find the sweet taste of faith in his heart. The first one is that a person loves God and his Messenger more than he loves anything else. Divine love is a mutual affair. The Quran says in (5:54) "Soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him."

**Host: Are there specific acts in Islam which will nourish such divine love?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are seven acts that can help with this. In order to earn the love of God one has to first have *taqwa* or to be God conscious. Second, one has to constantly repent to God as we find in (2:22) where it says that if someone does something wrong it does not mean that there is eternal damnation as the door for repentance is always open. God says that he loves those who repent. Thirdly, God loves those who constantly purify themselves. Fourthly, those who do good are mentioned in the Quran in several verses. Fifthly, God loves those who have trust in Him which is found in chapter 3. Sixth, God loves those who are steadfast and who persevere. Seventh, God loves those who are just or judge in equity.

**Host: What are acts that can jeopardize divine love?**

Jamal Badawi:

The Quran doesn't say hate but it says that "God does not love" and it enumerates several acts. One, thing that the Quran mentions that God does not love is aggression or transgression. Secondly, God does not love corruption on earth or mischief found in (2:205). Third, God does not love those who are ungrateful and do not acknowledge the bounties of God. Fourth, God does not love those who reject faith. Fifth, God does not love oppression as mentioned in chapter three. Sixth, some verses mention that God does not love betrayal and the act of treachery. Seventh, God does not love waist. Finally there are a number of verses that show that God does not love vanity, arrogance and pride. On example of this is found in (4:35) in the Quran.

## **Host: What are the manifestations of *taqwa*?**

Jamal Badawi:

The first benefit of having the moral quality of being God conscious (having *taqwa*) is guidance. In the second chapter of the Quran it says that the Quran is guidance for those who are God conscious. Many people read Holy Scriptures but do not benefit from them because their hearts are not receptive and they are not God conscious.

Secondly, the Quran mentions God consciousness as something that helps us have proper vision, wisdom and knowledge. An example of this is found in a beautiful verse in the Quran (8:29) "O ye who believe! if ye fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong), remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you, and forgive you: for Allah is the Lord of grace unbounded." Similarly, the Quran mentions that knowledge and vision is related to *taqwa* "Be God conscious and God will increase your knowledge wisdom."

Third, the Quran mentions piety as one of the preconditions for the blessing of ease and a way out of problems and tribulations in life in (65:4) "or those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy." Then in the following verse it also says "If any one fears Allah, He will remove his ills, from him, and will enlarge his reward."

Fourthly, God consciousness is mentioned in the Quran as a prerequisite for forgiveness of our sins. For example the Quran says "Whoever is God conscious God will forgive his sins and give him/her an abundant reward."

Fifth, God consciousness is a precondition for receiving mercy in the Quran "My mercy includes everything so I will grant it to those who are God conscious." It is also related to ultimate victory in chapter 7 in the Quran "The ultimate destiny is for those who are God conscious."

Finally, *taqwa* is related to ultimate bliss not only in this life but in the hereafter. An example from the Quran "Truly those who are close to God there is no fear on them and they should not grieve, including those who believe and practice God consciousness. To them is the good tiding in this life and hereafter." There is no wonder that the Quran constantly mentions the quality of God consciousness as something which is very essential and that one should not die without being in the state of submission to the will of God as this is something that one should take as a

provision for the eternal journey (mentioned in chapter 2). If this quality spread among people there would be perfect peace.

**Note:** Verses that are quoted but are not cited with a chapter and verse number were translated by Jamal Badawi.

## 6.22 Moral Teachings of Islam- Purity of Intentions

### 6.22 Purity of Intentions

**Host: What is the meaning of the *ikhlas*?**

Jamal Badawi:

The literal meaning for the *ikhlas* is purity. It is used to represent a number of things. In the Quran it is used to describe pure and wholesome milk (not mixed with anything). It is also used in the Quran to refer to purity of faith and belief. Indeed there is one very small yet crucial chapter in the Quran which is called *Al-Ikhlās* (112) which means purity and translates to:

- “1. Say: He is Allah, the One and Only;
2. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;
3. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;
4. And there is none like unto Him.”

It is called the Chapter of Purity because it refers to the purification of the belief in God from any form of polytheism or confusion by worshipping another deity instead of God, beside God or to regard objects as intercessors between man and God. Our focus as a part of the moral teachings of Islam is going to be on purity of intentions.

**Host: What does Islam regards as sincere intentions?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, behind any action or form of behavior there are certain motives. What Islam regards as essential is that the motives behind what we say or do should always be directed towards God. They should always be directed towards the purpose of perusing the pleasure, approval and satisfaction of God. In our daily life through people we encounter on an individual and collective level there are always motives behind actions. These motives are very important because they determine the extent of enthusiasm that people show, the quality and effort that they put into what they are

doing. It also determines the degree of excellence, tolerance and perseverance that people have. Some motives may be easily inferred as some may reflect selfishness, love or worship of money, need for prominence and pride but others are subtle and may not be so easily discovered. The individual himself many sometimes be unaware of some of the inner motives that motivate him.

In Islamic terminology the use of the term *ikhlas al niyah* or purity of intention refer to the inner motive whether people know what it is or not, whether they can discover it or not we know that God sees us and knows what is in our hearts.

### **Host: What if a person does a good deed without the proper intention?**

Jamal Badawi:

Islam does not just look at the superficial aspect of deeds irrespective of the motives behind them. Indeed the way that God evaluates our deeds is not from what we do but from the intention behind it. There is a good example of this in the Quran in (22:37) which deals with the sacrifice of animals during the pilgrimage and says “It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah. It is your piety that reaches Him.” It is the intention and sincerity rather than the superficial or formalistic aspect of our behavior that is important. We also find in the Quran a clear reference to this in (39:2-3) “Verily it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee in Truth: so serve Allah, offering Him sincere devotion. Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors other than Allah (say): “We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah.” Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.” The derivative of the word *ikhlas* is used here to refer to the purity of intention. The same meaning is found in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he says “God does not look at your bodies (what you look like) or to your possessions or property but He looks at your heart and your deeds.” This Hadith ties between intentions and good deeds narrated in Bukhari and Muslim. Another Hadith with the same references he says “Deeds will be judged in accordance with intentions and unto everyone will be a reward consistent with what he intended.”

In the collection of Hadith by Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) was asked about people who sacrifice their life or offer to sacrifice their life for the defense of life or the faith. They asked whether the person who fights because of courage or the person who fights to boast his family, clan or nation or the person who shows off was on the path of God. His answer was that only those who fight and sacrifice in order that the word of God becomes supreme is regarded as a struggle in the path of God.

**Host: When you refer to good deeds are you referring to those that have to do with the pure acts of worship?**

Jamal Badawi:

Using the term pure acts of worship is very relevant here because God created mankind to worship him but worship means one's entire life. Pure acts of worship refer to prayers and fasting which are largely acts of personal purification between man and God. The answer is that good deeds are not necessarily referring to pure acts of worship. Our day to day activities with good intentions can be transformed from a customary act to an act of worship. One scholar said that intention could change acts from customary actions to the honor of worship. For example everybody eats whether they are believers or non-believers however if when we start we feeling of thanks to God for providing for us and we have the intention of eating to strengthen our body and strengthen our health for the purpose of fulfilling our mission on earth then it is an act of worship. Many of us who have wives or children feel the obligation to feed them and most people regardless of faith or philosophy. This very same customary act was described by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as an act of worship and charity. In the collection of Hadith by Bukhari the Prophet says "Anything that you do for the pleasure of God you will get rewarded for. Even the morsel of bread that you put in your wife's mouth is also rewarded." He generalized in a collection of Hadith by Ahmad when he said that any act can be an act of charity with good intention.

In a Hadith narrated in Muslim he says that "If a person constructs a building or plants a seed for the benefit of others and if anybody benefits from the building or the cultivations the person who did those acts with good intentions will get the reward till the Day of Judgment." So if people benefit from it the person who did the deed will benefit from it after his death. In one of the Prophet's sayings he says that even if a bird comes and eats from the plants one would get part of the reward. In other words customary actions can be transformed into some form of worship.

**Host: What is the opposite of *ikhlas*?**

Jamal Badawi:

The term used for the opposite of *ikhlas* or purity is *reya'a* roughly translated as show off. It is something that is done to please other people, or to gain their approval or admiration instead of focusing on getting the approval and satisfaction of God. According to Islam this attitude of *reya'a* or showing off makes even good deeds void and null and in fact could result in punishment. Even in pure acts of worship if the person has this attitude of showing off he may lose the benefit. For example in the Quran in (4:142) "The Hypocrites - they think they are over-reaching

Allah, but He will over- reach them: When they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance.”

The Quran mentions in (2:264) “O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury,- like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (Just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guideth not those who reject faith.” The reward for charity if the intention is not sincerely to please God could just be wash away like rain washes away soil.

In fact in one situation the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with his companions and was describing to them things that would happen on the Day of Judgment one of which was the False Messiah. He was warning people against the deception of the False Messiah and then he said that there was something that he fears more than the false Messiah and he said *alshirk al khafi* (hidden *shirk*, hidden polytheism). The action that is done for the purpose of showing off is very dangerous. An example of this would be people who lengthen their prayers so that people can say “oh look how devoted they are.”

In another saying he said that on the Day of Judgment if anyone has done good acts for the purpose of pleasing God then he will be rewarded and will go to Paradise but those who have done good deeds for the purpose of showing off “let them seek their reward from other than God.” Of course on the Day of Judgment no body has any authority or power but God which means that there is no reward for them.

There is a symbolic story about a guy who entered the place of worship and started praying and he was so involved in his prayer that people around him started to comment about his devotion, sincerity and all kinds of praise. He heard this and felt very happy and became proud of himself and in the middle of his prayer he turned his head to them and said “I am fasting too!”

**Host: Is it *reya'a* if someone does a deed with good intentions but was seen and felt good about it?**

Jamal Badawi:

If the deed was not done so that people would admire but it happened by chance that someone saw the act and one controlled their feelings as not to become overly proud then this is not considered *reya'a*. In fact a similar question was raised by one of the close companions of the Prophet (PBUH) Abu Hurairah. Abu Hurairah asked "Oh Prophet of Allah what happens if when I was in my own home doing my prayers somebody came and saw me which made me feel good about it?" The Prophet said as narrated in Tirmithi said "May God have mercy on you Abu Hurairah. You received two rewards, that of doing the action in secret and in public."

Similarly in the collection of Hadith by Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) was asked whether it was bad for a person who does good deeds to be loved or admired for it. He replied "No, this is a kind of early glad tidings that is given to the believer."

**Host: What happens in a situation where one intends to do good but for some unforeseen reason/circumstance it was not carried out?**

Jamal Badawi:

If something happened that one could not control which prevented one from carrying out the deed then one is rewarded for it anyways. On the authority of the Prophet (PBUH) as narrated in both Muslim and Bukhari one time he was going on a campaign against the unbelievers and some people came to offer their services to defend and participate but the Prophet could not accommodate them so they went back crying and very sad (the Quran alludes to this in (9:92)). Later the Prophet mentioned that there were some people whom were left behind in Medina who were with them even though they were not physically present. He said that whatever they were doing and wherever they went the people who were left behind shared the reward because they were kept behind for a legitimate reason.

**Host: What if someone intended to do something wrong but never got around to doing it, is the person still punished for the intention?**

Jamal Badawi:

Out of the generosity of God it is not exactly the same situation as above. There is a beautiful saying of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that shows the grace of God. It is narrated in several books of Hadith that the Prophet (PBUH) said that whomever intended to do something good but could not, would find it written in his record as one good deed; if the person had the intention to do a good deed and was able to carry it out he would get a reward of 10 to 700 times its worth. On the other hand if



someone had the intention of doing something evil and one changes their mind this person is not punished but rewarded for not doing it as one reward. If one has the intention of doing something wrong and is able to carry it out it is written as one negative point.

**Host: How can one improve on the question of purity?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, one has to make sure that their action is legitimate and not forbidden. There are however no good intentions in doing bad things. Noble intentions should also have noble objections. Ends do not justify means in accordance to Islam. Second, one has to realize that God is present at all times and that whatever we do or think He is aware of them. An example is found in (3:29) "Whether ye hide what is in your hearts or reveal it, Allah knows it all: He knows what is in the heavens, and what is on earth. And Allah has power over all things." Thirdly, we should develop a habit of giving thought to what we are doing before we do it. The Prophet (PBUH) indicated that if a person is seeking knowledge to please God or to achieve his mission on earth then he is rewarded for it. Whenever we do acts of cherty we have to remember that it is not people's approval or pleasure that we are seeking but rather the pleasure of God. The Quran refers to this in (76:9). More particularly people who are engaged in religious education should remember the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) that in the latter days there will be three types of people: those who appear to be pious for the sake of God and people who appear to be pious in order to show off and people who appear to be pious only to get money from others. He said all of these will be in hell fire except for those who do it sincerely and with good intentions.

## 6.23 Moral Teachings of Islam- Trustworthiness

### 6.23 Trustworthiness

**Host: What is the meaning and translation of the term *amaneh*?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, the common usage of the term *amaneh* in Arabic by an Arabic speaker is used to refer to honesty but as an Islamic term it carries more meaning. The term *amaneh* has a number of meanings which all rotate around the basic concept of accountability before God for any of our actions. This is why fulfillment of trust seems to be the closest meaning to the term *amaneh*. In the Quran there is reference to this in (17:34) "fulfill (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)." To go back on one's promise was likened in the

Quran to a woman who knits a garment and after spending so many hours on it and then unravels it. To renege on one's promise is just like undoing a knitted garment which is found in the Quran in (16:92). So the meaning is actually closer to trust than just honesty.

**Host: Usually when we talk of trust we refer to people who are in positions of leadership but it seems that this interpretation of *amanah* is not limited to people with responsibility.**

Jamal Badawi:

This statement is correct and in fact in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which is narrated in Bukhari he says that "Each one of you is a Sheppard (leader or trustee) and each one of you is answerable to God for the trust that was given to you." He continues to say that "a ruler is a trustee and is responsible for the people he leads, a man is responsible for taking care of his family, a woman is a trustee and is responsible for her household and even a servant is a trustee and is responsible for the property of the person whom he is serving. Each and every person carries a part of the trust.

In another *Hadith* of the Prophet (PBUH) he says "there is no faith for a person who is dishonest and there is no religion for a person who deliberately fails to fulfill his promise."

**Host: Can you elaborate more on the issue of trust at an individual level?**

Jamal Badawi:

The most important aspect of trust at an individual level is to live a meaningful life in a way which achieves God's purpose for creating human beings here on earth. Constantly struggle against the forces of evil, oppression and injustice that are within ourselves or that are at a universal level (Jihad as Islam calls it) is a manifestation of the obedience to God. Obedience to God doesn't mean following rituals but following His way of life. Each person has a contract with God which is inherent in our creation, inherent in our nature as humans and which is manifested in our spirituality which is a universal character that God has endowed us with. Islam sees the human being as a trustee of God on earth; it doesn't regard the human being as a sinful being with sin as the center of his life. Sin is present in human life but trust and responsibility is the concept that supersedes all other things.

In order for a human being to truly be the trustee of God on earth they must have a great deal of determination as it is not an easy trust. The Quran in (33:72) describes

this trust as a responsibility which the earth, mountains and seas could not undertake but the human must carry this challenging responsibility. This responsibility was also expressed in the Quran in (36:60-61) “Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed? And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?” This shows that worshipping Satan doesn’t mean bowing to him but rather being obedient to the Satanic systems which is contrary to the way of life as ordained by God. The Quran makes it clear that this kind of divine contract is a prerequisite that we fulfill our part before we ask God about the promise that He made us. When addressing the children of Israel we find in (2:40) “fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.”

In brief the most important application of the concept of fulfillment of trust on the individual is to select the way of life that was ordained by God.

### **Host: How is trust related to ones social life?**

Jamal Badawi:

In regards to the most intimate type of relationship found in the family circle we find again that the text of the Quran and sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) emphasizes the nature of this trust. For example at the time of marriage whenever a commitment is made by the future husband to his future wife it becomes a commitment that must be fulfilled. In Bukhari and Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) was quoted as saying that the most important conditions or promises that are worthy of fulfillment are those related to marital relationships. Another Hadith refers to the private and intimate relationship between husband and wife as it says that the secrets that relate to this relationship should never be unnecessarily divulged to others. This restriction deals with decency and preservation of privacy within the family circle.

In regards to friends, if one friend tells another something confidential while the other promises not to tell anyone else then as a Muslim this friend should keep the promise. Even if one has a difference of opinion with the person or get angry with him one should always respect this particular commitment. In fact in Abu Dawood the Prophet (PBUH) says if a person tells you something in confidence and turns his face then this is a trust (*amanah*). Similarly, if someone has a confidential meeting for a job or an organization the information should be kept confidential and not divulged to others.

The payment of one’s debts is also regarded as another form of fulfillment of trust because when one borrows a certain amount of money it is also considered as a commitment. In the collection of Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) warns us that a martyr

(a person who offers his life for God) would be forgiven all of his sins except for debt. Also, if someone leaves money with someone as a trust, one should give it back when they want it back. In fact the Quran is very strict and clear about this in (4:58) “Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth and seeth all things.”

**Host: How does trust relate to job responsibilities and other contractual relationships?**

Jamal Badawi:

The basic principle with respect to jobs is that a person must do their utmost to it perfectly. The Prophet (PBUH) said God loves it if one takes charge of any particular job it should be done in a complete and thorough manner. In regards to contractual arrangements which do not have to be in written form but a word is just as good. Islam was actually the oldest legal system (1400 years ago) that require in its scripture the writing of debts in order to avoid disputes. But still if the means of writing it are not present word of mouth is accepted.

In regards to contractual agreements the Quran says in (5:1) “O ye who believe! fulfill (all) obligations.” Also, the Quran describes true believers as those who fulfill trusts in (23:8) “Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants”. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized that Muslims should be bound by their own conditions that they agreed to except under the condition that makes something unlawful lawful and which makes something lawful unlawful which was narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim. All of these measures are very essential to establish a sense of trust in dealings in the civil, commercial and other levels.

**Host: Does the topic of trust relate to government?**

Jamal Badawi:

Islam doesn't separate between religion and state. Religion in Islam is a way of life which includes all aspects of an individual's social and what people call political life. This whole concept which is common in the western world is totally alien to the Muslim way of life. Verse (23:8) which I quoted above does not only apply to money but goes beyond that in referring to any trust such as appointing someone for a job, position or responsibility. The Prophet (PBUH) warns people, particularly those in power, that they must be very careful not to betray the trust placed on them. In one saying of the Prophet (PBUH) narrated in Muslim he says “On the Day of Judgment people who betray this trust will have flags behind them” as identifiers and a way of humiliation. He also says that the worst of the people who betray trusts are rulers who betray their own people.

Another aspect which is quite common is people who exploit their position of trust or power to benefit themselves. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that if anyone is appointed to a given position of power and is paid a salary anything that he takes in addition to that is called *ghalul* and a person would be accountable for this on the Day of Judgment. The Quran refers to this in (3:161) “No prophet could (ever) be false to his trust. If any person is so false, He shall, on the Day of Judgment, restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul receive its due,- whatever it earned,- and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”

Some may ask what the case is if a ruler exploits his position to benefit others or his relatives. This was specifically condemned and there many Hadiths on the same subject. There is one saying of the Prophet in Al Hakim which says if a person is responsible for the affairs of people and he appoints someone who doesn't deserve to be appointed out of nepotism or favoritism then he has betrayed God, the messenger of God and the community of believers. This is why the Prophet (PBUH) regarded the betrayal of this responsibility as one of the most dangerous things. He also considered it to be one of the signs of the approach of the Day of Judgment. Once the Prophet was sitting with his companions and was talking about the coming of the hour and some people asked him when the Hour was going to come and he replied “when trust is lost!” Then he was asked “how is trust lost?” He replied “when people are given responsibilities which they are not qualified for.”

### **Host: Are there any exceptions from the fulfillment of promises?**

Jamal Badawi:

I will refer back to the very text that I quoted earlier that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized that Muslims should be bound by their own conditions that they agreed to except under the condition that makes something unlawful lawful and which makes something lawful unlawful which was narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim. This means the condition or promises is only valid so long as it does not contradict the teachings of Islam, moral principals or has been laid down in the Quran or sayings of the Prophet.

Similarly as we mentioned before that if one has a confidential meeting one should not divulge the secrets by respecting that trust. In one saying of found in Abu Dawood the Prophet made an exception for three cases “if the meeting plans unduly bloodshed, plans immoral acts like adultery or fornication or if it plans to take away the property of other people unjustifiably then one is required to warn people who might be subjected to this injustice.

The other exception is if one takes an oath and later finds out that this thing is harmful or bad then they are not bound to fulfill it. In this case the Prophet mentions as narrated in Muslim that if someone swears to do something and finds out that this thing is bad then one should not do it but should participate in an act of atonement in order not to make hasty promises.

**Host: What kind of atonement is there for not fulfilling one's promises?**

Jamal Badawi:

Atonement is called *kafarah* in the Quran. The atonement for not fulfilling a particular oath or promise is to fast three days. This is not just a punishment as it also gives spiritual training. In Islam as a rule one should not swear a lot as found in the Quran in Chapter 68. If a Muslim has to swear for some reason it must only be on the name of God. This kind of atonement is placed so that one does not rush to swear.

## 6.24 Moral Teachings of Islam- Truthfulness

### 6.24 Truthfulness

**Host: Can you explain the meaning of truthfulness as a moral virtue in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

*Alsidque* is the word used for truthfulness. *Alsidque* and its derivatives are found in more than a hundred places in the Quran. In the Quran we find that *alsidque* appears as a command to the believers as found in (9:119) "O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed)." A similar quote in the Quran which is widely quoted is found in (33:70) "O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and (always) say a word directed to the Right." In the Quran one finds that it is one of the characteristics of true believers and particularly the prophets. In the chapter of Mary in the Quran in verses forty and on we find a great deal of praise of the previous prophets. One of the repeated descriptions of the prophets is that they were truthful. Some of the prophets that it refers to are Prophet Abraham, Ishmael, Idrees and Moses. In addition in chapter 12 the term *alsidque* is attributed to Prophet Joseph (PBUH) and in (39:33) it is attributed to last of the prophets, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when it says "And he who brings the Truth (Muhammad) and he who confirms (and supports) it - such are the men who do right."

Truthfulness in the Quran is not only mentioned to praise prophets (the best models of human conduct) but it also appears praising others. For example in (5:78) it says that "Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that

passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. Mary who is not regarded in Islam as a prophet but rather the mother of a holy prophet is described as a woman of truth. The Quran in (3:15-17) describes any sincere believer as having the quality of truthfulness.

Truthful manifested itself in the life and characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that people called him (even before he became a prophet) Al-Ameen meaning the truthful or trustworthy. Even his enemies, such as Abu Sufian (before he became Muslim) was asked by the ruler Hercules what Muhammad teaches them and Abu Sufian answered he teaches us to worship God, to pray, to be truthful, to be chaste and to be kind to our relatives.

### **Host: What does the Quran and Tradition of the Prophet (PBUH) say about untruthfulness?**

Jamal Badawi:

Untruthfulness and lying are both mentioned in the Quran and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as one of the worst vices. Sometimes lying is condemned and at times it is used to contrast truthfulness. Examples of this are found in (40:28) it says that "Truly Allah guides not one who transgresses and lies!" and in (39:3) "But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful." The sayings of the Prophet are plentiful on the subject of truthfulness versus lying. In the collection of Hadith by Ahmad the Prophet (PBUH) said "The worst betrayal is to tell a lie to a brother of yours while he trusts you and believes in you." In the same collection it was narrated that there was no act that the Prophet hated more than the act of being untruthful. In one of the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) he considered lying as one of the three major characteristics of a hypocrite. *"Three are the signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust."* In another famous saying of the Prophet he says "Be truthful because truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise." He also said "a person should tell the truth and keep trying to tell the truth until it is written with God that he is a person of truth." And he said "Beware of lying because it leads to transgression and sinful excess and excess leads to the hell fire and the person who lies and tries deliberately to lie until it is written with God that he is a liar."

We also find that the Prophet (PBUH) considered over praising others as a form of lying. In one of his sayings he said "Throw the dust in the face of those professional praises." When he was on his death bed he insisted that people not over praise or over glorify him after his death and that he was only a servant and messenger of God. He also forbade people from having a mosque directly on his tomb. He said that "The main error of the people before you was that they used the graves of prophets as a place of worship or a place to glorify them."

**Host: Are some lies regarded as being more serious than others?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all the most dangerous and highly condemned act of lying according to the Quran and Sunah is to lie about God and to attribute things to God that He did not reveal. An example is (6:93) "Who can be more wicked than one who inventeth a lie against Allah, or saith, "I have received inspiration," when he hath received none." This is strongly condemned because the harm resulting from false claim of prophethood is perhaps the most misleading, as it could mislead hundreds of millions of people. In addition to this we find also that the Quran mentions in (69:44) about people who accused the Prophet of fabricating the Quran "And if the apostle were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath). But verily this is a Message for the Allah fearing." Also, in (42:24) it repeats that it is impossible that this Quran would come from any other source than God and that the Prophet is simply telling the truth.

The second aspect of lying is that effects and misleads many people by claiming that the Prophet (PBUH) said something that in fact he did not say. The reason for this is that the words of the Prophet are regarded as being one form of revelation. The Prophet said "whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the hell fire." This factor contributed to a great extent to the preservation of the Prophetic tradition because the great majority of people were very careful to communicate the words of the Prophet as was uttered by him. These are the top acts which are condemned in terms of lies.

**Host: What are the implications of truthfulness or the lack of it on a social and political level?**

Jamal Badawi:

The basic rule is that the lie is worst when it harms a greater number of people, which is why the Prophet (PBUH) says that a person who lies and his lies reach all the horizons (spread at a large scale) will be severally punished on the Day of Judgment. This for example applies to politicians or people who have access to the media. If people with this ability to reach large numbers of people spread lies then the harm would be great and as such their punishment will be greater.



Giving false witness is one of the highly condemned act of lying. For example in the Quran in (2:283) it says “Conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it,- His heart is tainted with sin. And Allah Knoweth all that ye do.” One of the worst lies is to give false witness about something that did not happen which may result in a penalty being applied to someone who is innocent.

This also applies to economic life. The Prophet (PBUH) said that if people who buy and sell are truthful God will bless their sale. In the collection of Bukhari the Prophet (PBUH) said it is not legitimate for a believer to sell an item while knowing that it has a defect without telling buyers about it.

### **Host: What about white lies or lies to children?**

Jamal Badawi:

We have to make a distinction between two situations: one is when a small child asks an embarrassing question and the other is when a person lies to the child in order to appease him or her.

In respect to the first situation one might encounter a question from a young child asking where their newborn siblings came from. In a case like this instead of lying and saying that the stork brought him one could say that God put him in the tummy of his mother and when the baby was big enough he came out. This should be explained in a simple enough manner that a child can understand it.

The aspect of lying to appease a child is frowned upon. One time the Prophet (PBUH) was visiting some people, the narrator of this Hadith was a child at the time, and he said “My mother called me over and said “Come here I want to give you something.” and before I went the Prophet (PBUH) asked her “What are you going to give him?” She replied “Truly, I want to give him some dates, for him to eat.” The Prophet replied “If you did not actually want to give him the dates it would have been written as a lie against you.””

In the collection of Hadith by Ahmad the Prophet says “If a person calls his child over in order to give him something and doesn’t it will be written against him as a lie.” This is a very important aspect because many people undermine the inelegance and understanding of a child but I think psychologically and morally it is very important to be truthful with them. Even if parents make mistakes they should admit it in order to build trust and confidence between with the children.

**Host: Is it permissible to tell stories that are not real in order to make a point?**

Jamal Badawi:

Recreation is not frowned upon and there are some stories which carry symbolical meanings. When telling stories to kids one can tell a fictitious story which has a moral lesson. It is preferable (this doesn't mean fictitious stories are not allowed) to refer to actual stories whenever one has access to them. If one tells stories to show moral behavior there are lots of stories with actions on the part of the Prophets (the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham, gentleness of Prophet Jesus, strength of Prophet Moses and the justness and kindness of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)). One can refer to acts and stories about pious people throughout history. If a symbolic story is told then usually everyone knows that it is not true.

However, one should be careful when attributing false things to other people. This is frowned upon because even though it may be entertaining it may hurt the feelings of the person it is being said about. In the collection of Tirmithi the Prophet (PBUH) said "Woe to he who lies just to make people laugh." In another Hadith in Ahmad he says "I am in charge of a mansion in the midst of Paradise for those who refrain from lying even if they are joking."

**Host: Are there any exceptions to this honorable obligation to be truthful?**

Jamal Badawi:

The purpose of Islamic law is to safeguard faith, life, honor and property and many times the rules are not just there for the sake of having rules but are there under a frame of moral teaching and attitude. There are some cases that have exceptions but these are not of convenience but are based on legitimate legislative law. For example, if someone is threatened with his life he could be a martyr but in some cases it may not be worth telling the truth especially if the person is oppressed by higher powers. Even then we find that the Prophet (PBUH) said that in a situation that it may be dangerous for one to tell the truth, still tell the truth and maybe it would be a way of getting one out of that difficulty. A person would thus have to evaluate it very carefully before deciding to lie.

For example, if there is a situation where the wife is upset with her husband and he asks her if she loves him it is ok for her to say she does even though she may be upset. This applies for him as well. There is no purpose served if one tells the other all the (momentary) negative feelings. Of course this does not apply if they really hate one another.

In some cases if someone is trying to make peace with two people who are fighting and really angry with each other. One might use some methods to convince each of the angry parties that one or the other likes the other and that there is no reason to be angry. In the collection of Bukhari Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said “He is not a lie he who tries to bring peace and reconcile people to each other by communicating only good things to the two parties.” There is also a special case that we find addressed in the Quran in (21:62) when prophet Abraham (PBUH) went into the temple where his people had their idols and broke them all with an axe and put the axe in the hand of their biggest idol. Then the people came and asked him if he destroyed their idols and he replied “No, the biggest idol did it, don’t you see the axe in his hand?” Of course this was a way of taunting them by implying that they worship something that can not help itself or prevent itself from being destroyed.

### **Host: What are the benefits of being truthful?**

Jamal Badawi:

Truthfulness has been mentioned in the Quran as related to *iman* (faith in God). It is mentioned as an attribute which enhances the moral character of the believer. Truthfulness is one of the divine attributes, one of the attributes of God. For example in the Quran in (4:87) “Whose word can be truer than Allah’s.” As the Prophet (PBUH) said we should as believers try to imitate some of the attributes of God. Of course God is the Creator and we can not be creators but we can try to emulate the moral characteristics.

One fruit of truthfulness is revelation which is found in the Quran (17:105) “We sent down the (Qur’an) in Truth, and in Truth has it descended: and We sent thee but to give Glad Tidings and to warn (sinners).” As we mentioned before it is also a characteristics of prophets are pious people. On the Day of Judgment the Quran says (33:24) “That Allah may reward the men of Truth for their Truth.” Forgiveness, which is something that a believer aspires to as it is connected with truthfulness, is mention in (33:35) as it describes the characteristics of the believers and says in the end “for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” Finally, in (4:69) “All who obey Allah and the apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah,- of the prophets (who teach), the sincere (lovers of Truth), the witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! what a beautiful fellowship.”

## 6.25 Moral Teachings of Islam- Humility & Dignity

### 6.25 Humility and Dignity

**Host: Can you explain the meaning of the term humbleness in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

Humbleness can be divided into two basic categories: one is humbleness before God and two, is humbleness with the creators of God. Humbleness with God implies faith in God and submission to His will this allows for one to follow what He ordained. Humbleness with society includes the qualities that make one unassuming, modest, lack of pride, lack of boastfulness or excessive self assertiveness.

In accordance with the Quran the only foundation for varying degrees of honor among people is their piety. An example is found in (49:13) O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” Piety and God consciousness are internal yet modesty and humbleness are observable traits of a believer. The Quran describes the type of people who are loved most by God and who themselves also love God in (5:54) as being humble and lowly with the believers. The Quran addresses the Prophet and says (15:88)”lower thy wing (in gentleness) to the believers.”

The Quran does not only instruct the Prophet but instructs all believers not to over praise ourselves (53:32) “Therefore justify not yourselves: He knows best who it is that guards against evil.” This particular point is at the heart of the malaise that we find in the present civilization. People don’t want to be themselves anymore but always have masks in order to appear different from their reality. People spend so much time trying to be someone else when they could spend a tenth of that time being themselves.

**Host: Are there sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) about humility?**

Jamal Badawi:

According to Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) said “God revealed to me that people should be humble so that no person should boast over another person and that no person would commit an act aggression against another person. A frequently quoted Hadith in the same collection is “No property or money would diminish because of

paying charity, no person forgives another person without God increasing his dignity and status and no person practices humility without God raising him in degrees.

There is a Hadith Qudsi where the Prophet narrates God's words "I accept prayer only from those who humble themselves before My glory, those who spend the day remembering Me, those who do not treat My creators in an arrogant way and those who never sleep the night while disobeying Me." The attitude and personal life of the Prophet (PBUH) were exemplary of this humbleness.

The wife of the Prophet was once asked "What is the Prophet like in his own household?" She replied "He helps and serves his family and when the time for prayer comes he goes to the prayer." When asked a similar question she also said "He is just like the rest of you he sometimes milks his own goat, repairs his shoes or mends his clothing."

In the collection of Bukhari it was mentioned that at times when a little girl would take his hand he would go with her to whatever street of Medina without objecting. One time when he was traveling with his companions they started making food. Everyone started taking charge of doing different things so Prophet Muhammad said he would take charge of collecting and cutting the wood. They said "We can do that for you?" He replied "Yes, I know you can do it for me but I hate to sit and feel distinguished over you." This shows us what the attitude of humility and humbleness should be like.

Whenever the Prophet went to a place he did not try to sit in a position where he would be in the forefront but sat wherever there was space. This attitude towards humility was not only practiced during times of weakness or when Muslims were few but even in some of the most glorious moments like when he reentered Mecca after being driven away with his companions. They were victorious but he did not plunder or show pride but rather he lowered his forehead on his camel in prostration of humility and thanked God.

### **Host: What does Islam say about pride?**

Jamal Badawi:

Many things are mentioned in Islam about pride being a moral vice. Pride is presented as a serious psychological disease that the Quran warns us against. To start with the Quran indicates in (7:11-13) that when God created the first human being He asked the angels to bow down and Satan (who is not an angel) was there and refused

to bow down and said “I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.” Then the Quran says that this was the reason why Satan was ousted out of Paradise when God said to him “Get thee down from this: it is not for thee to be arrogant here: get out, for thou art of the meanest (of creatures).”

The Quran also presents it as an act that is hated by God. We find frequent expressions in the Quran that God doesn't like arrogance. An example of this is (16:23) “Verily He loveth not the arrogant.” In addition there are several stories in the Quran which show the outcome of arrogance. It is mentioned in the story of the Pharaoh and his tyranny in (43:51-52) when he said “O my people! Does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me, (witness) these streams flowing underneath my (palace)? What! see ye not then?” Then he started putting down Prophet Moses by saying “Am I not better than this (Moses), who is a contemptible wretch and can scarcely express himself clearly?” This is the attitude that resulted in the drowning of the Pharaoh and his soldiers.

In a similar story in chapter 28 it talks about Kharoon, whom some believe was Korah in The Book of Numbers chapter 16, a contemporary of Prophet Moses who was rich and arrogant. People would tell him to have moderation and to remember God and he would say he was that way because of his knowledge and intelligence. According to the Quran his punishment was that God ordered the earth to swallow him along with his house and property.

There is a similar story in the Quran in chapter 18 about the people of the Garden. All of these stories take different forms of arrogance and as an outcome their commonality is severe punishment.

Aside from the punishment that may come in this world from boastfulness and arrogance the Quran also addresses pride as something that is punished in the hereafter. For example, in accordance to Quran in (16:29) it says “So enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein. Thus evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant.”

In the collection of Ahmad the Prophet (PBUH) said “Whomever has an atoms weight of pride in his heart will fall on his face in Hell Fire.” In another Hadith narrated by Albi-haki the Prophet says that there are three things redeem a person and three which cause the destruction of a person. The three redeemers include being God conscious in secret and public, to tell the truth all the time and to have moderation whether one is rich or poor. The three things that destroy a person include following one's own whims, stinginess and self admiration (pride) which is considered to be one of the worst traits.

**Host: In our present world what are some common manifestations of pride?**

Jamal Badawi:

The most serious form of pride is rejection of truth, after its manifestation. If a person doesn't accept the truth because he doesn't understand or know that is the truth it is different than pride which is rejecting the truth after one knows it in their heart. In the Quran in (37:35) "For they, when they were told that there is no god except Allah, would puff themselves up with Pride."

Pride manifests itself in the treatment of others. If a person deals with people in contempt, hoity and snobbish way this is a reflection of pride. For example in the Quran in (31:18) quoting Lukman who was wise holy person advising his son "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster." In another verse in (17:37) it addresses mankind in general "Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height." Thus everybody should know their place on earth.

Arrogance may not only show in the way a person walks but in the way they dress. In the series about the Islamic dress code we quoted the Prophet (PBUH) as narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim to have said that "God will not look at one who draws his garment behind him in pride." These are all different forms of psychological weakness that people turn to instead of trying to be good from within.

**Host: Are then any restrictions in Islam regarding dressing nicely?**

Jamal Badawi:

No not at all. A similar question was asked to the Prophet (PBUH) when he told them that "Nobody will enter paradise if they have pride the same weight of a mustard seed in their heart." So one of his companions said "Oh messenger of God, every person likes to have nice clothes and shoes, is that the pride you are talking a bout?" The Prophet replied "No! God is Beautiful and love beauty. Real pride is to reject truth and to belittle other people." The problem has nothing to do with the details of dress as long as they comply with the codes of dress.

**Host: What is the meaning of humility and dignity? How does dignity differ from pride?**

Jamal Badawi:

The Arabic word that we are referring to is *izzah* which means dignity and honor in English. When we refer to the word *izzah* in Islam usage it refers to dignity which is not only derived from personal ego but dignity which is derived from faith in God. One's dignity in this case is derived from one's belief, knowledge and faith in God. Pride, however, refers to an attitude where one feels that they are better than others who are on a lower level and thus treats them with contempt. Pride in the sense of dignity and honor as derived from faith is not only permissible but is required and encouraged. An example found in the Quran (63:8) "But honour belongs to Allah and His Messenger, and to the Believers; but the Hypocrites know not." When people are proud because God guided them to obey Him and helped them follow the straight path is not egotistic.

### **Host: How can a person achieve dignity?**

Jamal Badawi:

Since we said that dignity is derived from faith in God and obedience to Him it follows then that one can maintain and nourish this dignity by maintaining his obedience to God. In this case the loss of dignity is not loss of money or status but rather the loss of faith. That is why in (35:10) "If any do seek for glory and power,- to Allah belong all glory and power."

One should also not worry about the material things that others use in order to assess dignity. For most people dignity means wealth and power but this is not the case in Islam. A practical example from the life time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is that one time he was sitting with a few people and he asked them what they thought of a specific person who passed by. They replied that he was one of the most rich and honored people. If he were to ask for the hand of their daughter they would marry her gladly and if he intercedes on behalf of anyone they would accept his intercession. The Prophet kept silent. Then after a while another person passed by and he asked what they thought of that person. They replied he is one of those poor people. If he goes to a family to ask for their daughter they would probably not give her to him in marriage and if he intercedes on behalf of someone nobody would listen to him. So the Prophet then intervened and said that the poor person is better than an earth full of the other person (first one that walked by). This means a person could be very simple and poor but in the eyes of God he could be much greater than a bunch of other people who are more arrogant.

True dignity means that one should submit to the will of God while also resisting human tyranny. In the Quran in chapter 4 it talks about people who will be asked on the Day of Judgment why they did not resist tyranny and they would respond that they were weak. Then they would be asked why they did not leave to a place where they



can practice their freedom. Finally, one should keep in mind that God alone controls our destiny and the universe. We should try our best to do a good job so that we are not in a position of humiliation.

## 6.26 Moral Teachings of Islam- Compassion

### 6.26 Compassion

**Host: How does the Quran describe compassion or mercy as a divine attribute?**

Jamal Badawi:

According to the Quran mercy or compassion as a divine attribute is one of the most notable and highly emphasized of the divine attributes. It suffices to say that when one opens the Quran the first line before any of the chapters even begin says “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.” This same phrase is found in the beginning of all *Surhas* save one. Also this same phrase is repeated by Muslims before any act (work, study or any other activity).

In Arabic the phrase is *Bismi Allah Arahman Araheem* which is translated to In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Both words *Arahman* and *Araheem* come from the same Arabic root which is *rahman* which means compassion. *Araheem* means the kind, merciful and the compassionate. This trait can apply to any human being. *Arahman*, however, doesn't really have a word equivalent in English, as it means the absolute source of mercy. Thus, it is erroneous to describe a person as being *rahman*. We can however say that a person is *raheem* which means he is kind, merciful and compassionate but not the source of these attributes. In the Quran in (7:156) it says “My mercy extendeth to all things. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practice regular charity, and those who believe in Our signs.” The Quran also mentions compassion as a divine attribute when it talks about the angels prayers on behalf of the believers in (40:7) when they say “Our Lord! Thy Reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in Repentance, and follow Thy Path; and preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire!

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) described this divine attribute in moving way. According to Bukhari the Prophet said that he saw a woman in captivity who was looking among the people till she found a little infant whom she took in and started compassionately nursing him. He turned to his companions and asked “Would that mother deliberately throw her infant in the fire?” The companions replied “No!” He then replied “You should know that God is more compassionate towards you than that mother is towards her infant.” This is a divine attribute that has been emphasized in the Quran unlike what some may believe.

**Host: Can you tell us about justice? Some say that it is a contradiction between compassion and punishment is this correct?**

Jamal Badawi:

The mercy and compassion of God are there for the taking. There are two basic conditions in order to deserve and receive mercy. One, is the correct belief in God and to accept to be a servant of God. Second, is to do good deeds in ones way of life. Doing good deeds can be implemented in one's way of life in aspects of family, social, political and economic life. When a human being becomes so puffed up with pride becoming arrogant and haughty to the point that they refuse to believe in God then the person is just being unfair to himself. In many places in the Quran it describes many acts which deviate from the truth and it says that the person who does them is being unfair to himself. In other places in the Quran it says "Do not be unfair to yourself." For example if one lays down on rail road tracks and a train comes and hits him, the train can not be blamed for his actions. Islam believes strongly in individual responsibility.

Of course non of us are perfect and we all make mistakes. But if a person sincerely believes and tries their best to implement the will of God in their life when they do make a mistake the door of repentance will always be open. The Quran says in (23:118) "So say: "O my Lord! grant Thou forgiveness and mercy for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy!" In Prophetic sayings we also find a reference to this. One saying is reported in Muslim and is a Hadith Qudsi (word of God through the Prophet) "My mercy overcomes my anger." Thus, there can be mercy and justice at the same time and if the person is trying their best then the mercy of God will outweigh the punishment or strict justice.

The same point was emphasizes by Prophet Muhammd (PBUH). In Bukhari he was quoted to have said "All of my followers will enter Paradise except for those who refuse." People wondered if anyone would refuse to go to Paradise and he replied "Whoever obeys me (in following the teachings revealed by God) will enter Paradise and whoever disobeys me refuses to go to Paradise." The question is not reconciling justice with mercy but rather that we are being unfair to ourselves when we reject God and the right path.

**Host: As a human quality, what should the nature of mercy be like?**

Jamal Badawi:

As a human trait mercy is basically sensitivity towards others. This sensitivity is not only for their pain and suffering but also sensitivity for a person's own spiritual wellbeing. It is not just the physical suffering but also the psychological suffering of those who have been misguided from the path of God that we should have sensitivity

towards. The Quran indicates that compassion in its broader sense is the very essence of the message of all prophets throughout history. The Quran describes Prophet Muhammad's message in (21:107) "We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures." This mercy partly operates by guiding people to the right path and taking them away from false manmade doctrines. It is also a mercy because it relieves the suffering of the oppressed and those who are neglected in society. It is a mercy because it stops human tyranny and exploitation of the rich and powerful.

**Host: What has the Prophet (PBUH) said about mercy as a moral virtue?**

Jamal Badawi:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made a clear connection between belief in God and compassion. In a saying of the Prophet narrated in Al Tabarani he said "You won't be true believers unless you have compassion." When people heard him say this people said "Oh Prophet, we are all merciful." He replied "I am not referring to the mercy that one of you would have towards his companion or close friend but I am referring to mercy or compassion to all." In one of his sayings the Prophet indicated that it is important for one to be compassionate towards other fellow beings in order to receive the compassion and mercy of God. Again in Al Tabrani the Prophet says "Whoever does not show mercy to those on earth will not receive the mercy of He who is in the Heavens."

In another saying narrated in Al Turmithi the Prophet said that "The farthest people from God are the people who are cruel in their hearts." Cruelty takes a person farther away from God. The Prophet even said that we should be merciful even with our enemies. An example of this is found in the collection of Muslim which narrates that some people came to the Prophet (PBUH) who were complaining about persecution of the unbelievers and were asking the Prophet to invoke God's curse against the unbelievers. The Prophet answered "I was sent as mercy and not as a curser."

Another example is when the Prophet (PBUH) and the early followers were being persecuted the Prophet went to Al Taif where people received him very badly by sending their children and others to throw stones at him. His feet were bleeding and while he was being stoned he did not invoke any type of curse on the people. All he said was "Oh my Lord, guide my people to the right path for they know not what they are doing." This is the kind of attitude which does not limit mercy to a certain category but rather extends it to all mankind.

**Host : Is there a special category of people to whom more compassion should be shown?**

Jamal Badawi:

Since people should show compassion to all there is no contradiction in showing extra compassion to certain categories of people. There are eight categories that are emphasized in the Quran. The first category includes compassion towards parents. For example (17:23-24) “Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.” We notice in this verse that kindness to parents was mentioned after the decree to worship God alone which shows its significance and importance.

The second category is compassion towards children. One time the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with some people and he kissed one of his grandchildren (Hassan or Hussein). One of the people sitting with him said “Do you kiss your children? I have ten of them and I never kissed anyone of them.” The Prophet (PBUH) responded “He who doesn’t show mercy shall not receive mercy.” And in another version of this saying he told him “What can I do if God has taken mercy out of your heart.” This shows that we should be kind and merciful towards children.

The third category is compassion towards one’s spouse. In Al Tirmithi the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said “The most perfect believers are those who are best in their character and the best of you are the best to their families.” He particularly referred to being kind to one’s wife. This doesn’t mean that the wife is exempt from showing kindness and compassion to her husband.

The fourth category would be compassion towards relatives. There is a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) as narrated in Al Tirmithi where he says that blood relation is a network of connections which are granted and a blessing from the most Compassionate. Whoever tries to keep this network intact, God will keep his connection with him and whoever tries to break it, God will disassociate Himself from them. One has to perform his duty towards relatives even if they are not believers.

Another category would be compassion towards the orphans. In the Quran in (93:9) “Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness.” On several occasions the Prophet (PBUH) indicated that the best action is to put one’s hand kindly on the head of an orphan child. In the collection of Bukhari the Prophet (PBUH) said “Whoever looks

after an orphan will be like this (he was referring to two of his fingers held out side by side) with me in Paradise.

The sixth category would be compassion to those who are sick and suffering. There are several Hadiths that God regards a person's visit to a sick person like visiting God himself. On one occasion the Prophet (PBUH) showed that this mercy should be shown towards people who are serving or helping one. Once the Prophet (PBUH) passed by a person who was beating his servant he said "No Abu Masud, No Abu Masud" till the man turned his face "know that God is able to punish you more than your ability to punish that little boy (who was a slave at the time)." Abu Masud said "I bear witness that he is free for the sake of God." The Prophet responded "If you had not freed this slave by way of atonement the hellfire would have devoured you!" In another situation the Prophet was asked "How many times should I forgive my servant?" He replied "Seventy times a day."

The Quran also indicates that kindness is required to those who are not close to a person. In (4:36) "Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious."

### **Host: What does Islam say regarding mercy towards other creators or pets?**

Jamal Badawi:

Lets refer back to the Quran when it refers to Prophet Muhammad's message in (21:107) "We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures." In the original Arabic it text it says mercy for the *alameen*. *Alameen* is a plural of *alam* which means world. So *alameen* means worlds or universe. If it was meant that the prophets mission brought mercy and compassion only to mankind then it would not have said universe. The universe has lots of other creators and the Propeht is mercy to mankind, Jinn, animals and whatever is part of universe.

In the collection of Hadith in Bukhari Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that a woman was destined to go to hellfire because of a cat. The reason is that she imprisoned the cat without feeding it or allowing it to go out and search for food. So the reason she was going to hellfire was her cruelty towards the cat. The Prophet (PBUH) indicated that kindness to animals or pets is one of the ways that one can gain forgiveness for his sins. In the collection by Muslim he said that one time a man was walking who was very thirsty. The man found a well and went down into the well to get a drink. After he quenched his thirst he saw a dog chewing mud out of thirst. He told himself that the dog must be in the same pain he was in before he drank some

water. So he went down the well again, put water in his shoes and gave the dog a drink. The Prophet said that because of this God forgave his sins.

In Islam when people kill an animal for food they should make sure that it is done with as little pain as possible. For example an animal should not be killed in front of another, knife must be very sharp and it must be done quickly. Also, people should be careful when using animals unnecessarily and cruelly for experimentation.

## 6.27 Moral Teachings of Islam- Forgiveness & Purity of Heart

### 6.27 Forgiveness & Purity of Heart

#### **Host: What does the Quran have to say about forgiveness?**

Jamal Badawi:

The first thing that the Quran emphasizes is the relationship between piety (being God conscious) and forgiveness. For example in (3:134) it describes a true believer “Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;- for Allah loves those who do good. The Quran makes a connection between forgiveness (on our part) and our need for God’s forgiveness. For example in (24:22) “Let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that Allah should forgive you?” In other words if one wants God to forgive their sins then they should be understanding to other people’s difficulties and forgive them. The Quran also ties between forgiveness and perseverance. For example we read in the Quran (7:199) “Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant.”

#### **Host: What are some prophetic traditions that deal with this topic?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are several references from the sayings of the Prophet and also examples in his own behavior. First of all, the Prophet indicated that strength is not found in a person’s physical strength but rather in a person’s ability to control himself when he becomes angry. As narrated in Muslim the strong person is not the one who can defeat the other but the one who can truly control himself when he is angry. In a narration by Al Tabarani, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says “Shall I tell you something that will make your palaces in Paradise higher and that would raise you in degrees.” They said “Yes.” He replied “To be forgiving and to control one’s self in the face of someone who provokes you. To forgive a person who was unfair or unjust to you, to

give someone in need who did not give you when you were in need and to keep contact with someone even though they did not reciprocate it.”

An example from the practical side of the prophetic tradition is narrated by Al Tabarani that an Arab Bedouin came to the Prophet and asked for provisions. So Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave him provisions and asked the man if he had been fair to him. The man in arrogance and rudeness replied “No, nor have you been kind nor have you been good to me.” Many of the companions around Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) got provoked and very angry and rushed towards him. The Prophet however restrained them and told them to let him be. The Prophet went to his home and asked sent for the man. Then the Prophet within his home gave the man more provisions and then again asked if he was being fair to the man. The man replied “Certainly, may God bless you and reward you.” The Prophet then told the man that when he had replied in the negative yesterday it had put unease in the hearts of his companions and if he could say what he just said in front of them. The Prophet was more concerned about this person’s relation with the others than about himself.

The following day they went to the Mosque and the Prophet stood and said “That Arab Bedouin fellow claimed yesterday that we were not fair to him and after I gave him more of his needs he claimed that he is now satisfied and he turned to the man and said is that true? The man replied in the affirmative “May God bless you and reward you for your kindness.” Then he turned to his companions and said “The example of this man and myself is like somebody who had a camel, who started rebelling and started running from him. People started running after the camel which increased its excitement and rebelliousness. The man that owned the camel said leave the camel to me I know how to deal with this situation. The man picked some grass and started moving towards the camel slowly till the camel settled down and was very easily controlled. This example is similar to this one. If you got angry with this fellow and you may have killed him in his state of ignorance and he may have gone to the hell fire. But look at the result after we took care of his needs while forgiving his infractions. In the Quran in (60:7) it says “It may be that Allah will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies.” This is the attitude that is found towards this subject in both the sayings and behavior of the Prophet.

### **Host: Isn’t anger just a reaction to stress and isn’t always forgiving beyond human capacity?**

Jamal Badawi:

Islam never asks for anything that is beyond a human’s capacity. The Quran says in (2:286) “On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear” We don’t have to be angels but we must try our best. Anger should always be controlled and should not be a source for rash actions or lead to rage.

We should make a distinction between getting angry for the sake of God or for getting angry for selfish reasons. The first, anger or disappointment towards the disregard for the teachings of God is desirable because it shows the sensitivity of the believer for the teachings of God. The second, selfish anger, can lead to disasters if there it is not controlled. The teachings of the Prophet teach us to control this type of anger so that disasters are prevented. However we are not required to be totally insensitive but rather to channel anger into forgiveness and control. In one saying of the Prophet (PBUH) narrated in Al Tirmithi he said that “People are created in different degrees: people who slowly get angry and forget fast, people who get angry quickly and forgive quickly, people who are slow to get angry and slow to forgive, and people who get angry quickly and slowly forgive.” Then he said “The best of those people are those in the first category and the worst belongs to the last category.”

**Host: Are there certain innate qualities that make them more likely to be forgiving than others?**

Jamal Badawi:

The most innate character that causes people to forgive is the purity of their hearts. These people generally have a heart that is connected with its creator and a heart that tries its best to comply with the will of God. In the Quran in (59:10) it describes the true believers prayers “Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancor (or sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful.” In a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) in Ibn Maja he was asked which type of people are the best. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) answered “A person who is truthful and a person whose heart is (*makhmoom*) clean and pious with no sinful tendencies, no aggression, no grudges nor jealousy.” In the collection of Hadith by Bukhari the Prophet (PBUH) said “Do not cut yourself from one another, do not turn your back on each other, do not hate each other, do not be jealous of each other and be servants of God as brothers.” He continued “It is not legitimate for a Muslim to boycott his brother for more than three days.”

One time the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with his companions and he said that someone who is going to Paradise will pass before you. They looked and saw a very simple person making ablution before the prayer (his beard was wet and there was a light shining from his face). The following day the Prophet repeated the same statement that one of the people who is going to Paradise will pass before you. They all looked and it was the same person. This was repeated on the third day. A companion of the Prophet by the name of Abd Allah wondered what qualities were in this simple person that made him one of the people destined for Paradise as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Abd Allah went to the fellow, told a white lie that he had a dispute with his father and that he swore that he would not stay in the house for three days. He did this so that he could stay in this person’s house and observe his behavior. The man said that Abd Allah was welcome. Abd Allah stayed up all night watching to see what this man did for worship that made him deserve Paradise. He



noted that this man simply prayed and slept and whenever he woke up at night he remembered God (made supplication) and woke up early in the morning for the dawn prayer. He watched him for three nights, and noted the same pattern. So Abd Allah went to him and told him that when they were sitting with the Prophet he said three times that you are among the people who are going to Paradise and I could not find anything unusual about your behavior that would make you deserve that. The man replied that he did nothing other than what Abd Allah had seen. Then when Abd Allah was going away the man called him and said that when he slept he didn't feel any anger, grudge or envy towards anyone. This showed that purity of heart, not holding a grudge combined with the minimum basic acts of worship justified the person going to Paradise.

**Host: Is there any authority that can oblige a person the Muslim to accept an apology in the cases of disputes or misunderstandings?**

Jamal Badawi:

We quoted earlier from the Quran (24:22) "Let them forgive and overlook" which is only one example that addresses this subject. In Ibn Maja where the Prophet is quoted that if a person gives a sincere apology to his brother (for wrong that he has done to him) that is not accepted. The person doesn't accept the apology would have a sin as much as a person who takes people's property away without reason."

In Al Tabarani the Prophet says that whoever received an apology and rejects it will not come to the pond (a pond in Paradise where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will offer drinks to those who enter Paradise). Also, in Al Tabarani the Prophet (PBUH) asked his companions "Do you know who are the most evil amongst people?" They replied "No, do tell us." He said "The person who stays by himself all the time, a person who physically punishes his slave and a person who withholds help when his brethren are in need." Then he said "Should I tell you about someone who is even more evil than that?" They replied "Yes." He said "A person who hates people and who is hated by people." Then he said should I tell you about someone who is even more evil than that?" They replied "Yes." He said "Those who do not accept an apology."

It is quite obvious from these examples that the idea behind an apology is not to humiliate the person but for it to be accepted in good faith. This includes family disputes and that people should not bring up the past and always be overly critical.

**Host: What is Islam's view towards jealousy?**

Jamal Badawi:

Jealousy implies pride and the Quran indicates that one of the reasons that Satan was ousted from Paradise was his attitude of envy. The jealousy in the heart of Satan was one aspect which caused him to deviate and disobey God's command. The result of jealousy is for one to become a looser and harm others in the same way that he harms himself. An Arabic proverb for this says "If I am harmed then let my enemies be harmed too." In the Quran (7:16) when Satan was ousted from Paradise he said that he would try to mislead mankind and take as many people as he could to with him to the Hell Fire because of what happened to him. In authentic sayings in Abu Dawood the Prophet (PBUH) says "Beware of jealousy because it eats away at one's good deeds as fire eats wood." In Al Bihaki the Prophet (PBUH) says "Two things can never combine in one believer's heart: belief and jealousy!"

### **Host: How can one deal with anger or jealousy?**

Jamal Badawi:

First, one should ask themselves if it is jealousy or envy. Islam is not against envy in a positive sense. For example if one sees someone who is blessed with certain things, one should not hope for their destruction but one should say "May God bless him and give me also." Second, one should ask himself if he is getting angry for God or for himself. We should remember that the people around the Prophet (PBUH) indicated that he never took revenge for himself unless the boundaries of God were passed.

Another practical recommendation given by the Prophet (PBUH) narrated in Al Tirmithi where he said "Don't you notice that anger has a burning character, when someone is angry one can see the redness in his eye and the swelling in his cheek should stay put (keep close to earth)." This is recommended because if someone who is angry starts doing something it could be disastrous. In another saying he says "If a person becomes angry and he is walking let him stand still, if he is standing let him sit and if he is sitting let him lay down." This allows one to cool down. Another recommendation is to take a cold shower just to take the heat off. Above all however one should learn to be patient and control the anger rather than to curse everything.

## 6.28 Moral Teachings of Islam- Perseverance

### 6.28 Perseverance

#### **Host: What is the English equivalent for the term *sabr* and its explanation?**

Jamal Badawi:

Typically people translate *sabr* as patience, which is an approximate meaning. Patience is not a very good translation because it comes from the Latin origin which means suffering. Thus patience is understood in people's minds as a passive type of suffering. The term *sabr* comes from the verb *sabara* which means to tie or bind. In other words it means to be tied down by uncontrolled fears, weakness and human passion. There is no specific English word that expresses this meaning but some words that are close are perseverance, resolution, fortitude, self-discipline and control. This quality is not passive but more active, determined and dynamic. The term *sabr* (perseverance) in Islam has so many applications that are not limited to perseverance in cases of calamity or disaster. It does include fighting for justice or freedom, demolition of human tyranny unlike the negative passive term, patience.

**Host: What are some of the applications of perseverance in the life of a believer?**

Jamal Badawi:

Perseverance relates to obedience in God, avoiding disobeying God and it relates to perseverance in the face of rejecters of truth. It may also refer to perseverance in terms of company, cases of calamity and even good fortune. The Quran describes *sabr* in relation to obedience of God and worship in (19:65) "Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is between them; so worship Him, and be constant and patient in His worship."

Second, *sabr* is perseverance in terms of keeping away from things that displease God. For example in (113) it describes the believers as those who believe and do good deeds and exhort each other in truth and in perseverance. This is why Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was quoted in Muslim to have said that Paradise is surrounded with things that are trying and difficult Hell Fire is surrounded with things that are more pleasing and glittery.

Third, in the Quran it addresses the Prophet and believers to persevere for God. In (76:24) "Therefore be patient with constancy to the Command of thy Lord, and hearken not to the sinner or the ingrate among them."

Fourthly, perseverance refers to calamity and misfortune. This part is not to be ignored but is only part of the total meaning of *sabr*. For example in (31:17) in the Quran it says "Bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee."

Fifthly, perseverance relates to keeping the company of those who are pious and staying away from the glitter of life. This is found in The Quran in (18:28) "And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His

Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life”

Finally, perseverance also applies in the case of happiness or good fortune. We find an example in Prophet Solomon as the Quran quotes in (27:40) “This is by the Grace of my Lord!- to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful!” In (11:10-11) “But if We give him a taste of (Our) favours after adversity hath touched him, he is sure to say, “All evil has departed from me.” Behold! he falls into exultation and pride. Not so do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward.” Perseverance has a much broader range than the passive, negative acceptance of fate.

**Host: Why do people who are good face trials and have calamities and are not rewarded for being pious immediately?**

Jamal Badawi:

This topic relates to the subject of measure. First of all, we as humans are not qualified to judge the ultimate wisdom of God. Many things might sound paradoxical to us in this life as we forget that beyond our human judgment is a higher order and divine wisdom that we do not fully understand. On the other hand the Quran indicates to us that it is not only the wicked people who are touched with calamities and difficulties. An example is found in (29:2) “Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, “We believe”, and that they will not be tested?” In (3:142) “Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (In His Cause) and remained steadfast?” Trials verify our faith in God. The Prophet (PBUH) said that if God loves people he tests them. In another saying he said that a person might be tested in this life so that his punishment comes earlier (as punishment in this life is much easier to bear than that of the punishment in the hereafter). In another saying he said that people who are tested most in terms of their faith are the prophets and then those close to the prophets. We find that prophets are among those who suffer a great deal not because they are wicked.

It is, however, also possible that the calamities that befall the wicked are a sort of punishment. The Quran indicates that as humans we are tested in bounties as much as we are tested in trials.

**Host: What is the view from a Muslim perspective of people who go to the extremes of patience by neglecting their human needs or even torturing themselves?**

Jamal Badawi:

The fact that the believer regards calamities and difficulties as being tests from God it does not mean that one should seek them out. There is a difference between a person actively seeking out calamities and between persevering when and if a calamity takes place. In the Quran in (4:147) “What can Allah gain by your punishment, if ye are grateful and ye believe? Nay, it is Allah that recogniseth (all good), and knoweth all things.” God does not enjoy punishing people as punishment is only for those who disobey. There is no intrinsic value in people punishing themselves.

On one occasion as narrated in Bukhari Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was in the Pilgrimage and he saw a very old man who was very weak and could barely walk with his two sons helping him. He asked “What is wrong with him?” The replied “This person made a promise that he would go to the Pilgrimage while walking (that going through the difficulty of walking he would get more reward).” Then Prophet (PBUH) then said that God has no need for this fellow to torture himself and ordered him to ride. On more than one occasion people would come to the Prophet and would say that a person is weak and insists on walking for the Pilgrimage and he would command them to ride. In both Bukhari and Muslim Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was reported as saying that even when you go for Jihad (struggle against those who want to destroy you) you should not be too eager to meet the enemy in the battle field and ask God for tranquility, peace and safety. If one has to face the enemy then practice perseverance. A person need not torture his body and actively seek calamities and difficulties to prove his faith.

**Host: How is perseverance and resolution is related to other moral virtues that we talked about?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, perseverance is described in the Quran as one of the characteristics of those who are pious and God conscious. For example in (12:90) “He that is righteous and patient, never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do right.”

Second, it is related to forgiveness as found in (42:43) “But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.” In a beautiful verse in the Quran (16:126) “And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient.” It does not say an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth nor does it say to turn the other cheek in all

situations it simply says that a person has the right to retaliate but if one controls themselves when they are able to take revenge then it is better for them.

Third, the Quran describes perseverance as related to the attitude of being grateful to God as found in (14:5) “Verily in this there are Signs for such as are firmly patient and constant,- grateful and appreciative.” Fourth, it is related to the attitude of trust, confidence and dependence on God.

Fifth, the Quran speaks of perseverance as related to *Jihad* which is a struggle in the path of God. The Quran praises the believers and describes them as those who strive in the path of God and show resolution and constancy. Also, in the Quran we find that perseverance is related to the quality of mercy and compassion. For example in (90:17) “Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion.”

### **Host: What are the benefits and rewards of perseverance?**

Jamal Badawi:

We find that perseverance or *sabr* is mentioned in the Quran as one of the main characteristics of Prophets. For example in (6:34) “Rejected were the apostles before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs.” In addition to perseverance being used to describe the overall characteristic of believers it is a distinct characteristic of the greatest of all prophets, five prophets who showed more determination and constancy than any other. The five prophets are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (PBUT). In (46:35) it addresses the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and says “Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) apostles of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers).” In (38:44) it talks about Prophet Job who was suffering a great deal God says “Truly We found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent in Our service! ever did he turn (to Us)!”

In addition to *sabr* being a characteristic of Prophets we find the Quran says that *sabr* is an over all characteristic found in believers. In the Quran in (33:35) it gives a number of descriptions of the believing men and women “For Muslim men and women,- for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for *men and women who are patient and constant*, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah’s praise,- for them has *Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.*”

In the Quran we also find that constancy is a prerequisite for spiritual leadership. Describing people before Islam who were given leadership in (32:24) it says “And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our Signs.”

The Quran gives good tidings for those who persevere. People may accrue some reward in this life but in the here after the Quran says in (16:96) “And We will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions.” In (25:75) it says that “Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their patient constancy: therein shall they be met with salutations and peace.” It also says they will be given double the reward. In (76:12) it says “And because they were patient and constant, He will reward them with a Garden and (garments of) silk.” In (13:23-24) it says “Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation): “Peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience!” Now how excellent is the final home!”

The Prophetic Tradition is also in line with the verses quoted from the Quran. For example in Muslim the Prophet indicated that perseverance is light for the believer. In another saying in Abu Naim he says that patience and perseverance is half of the faith.

**Host: How can one achieve this quality of *sabr*?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, one should try to strengthen his faith and trust in God. We need to realize that God has wisdom and knowledge that we can not evaluate, that God is the owner and possessor of the entire universe and He gives us everything (children, spouses, property and our lives). Should God decide to take his property back we should have no objection.

Second, we should realize that anything that happens on this earth was decreed by God before the earth was created. So one should not fall into the argument of if I did such and such the result could have been such and such. There is one saying by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that tells us not to have this kind of attitude. In (57:22)

“No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: That is truly easy for Allah.” To remove our unnecessary anxieties and fears Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that if all mankind comes together to do something good for you they will not be able to do it unless God decreed it for you and if all mankind comes together to hurt you no one will be able to hurt you unless God has decreed it.

The third is that one should have perseverance and not to rush or demand quick solutions. An example is found in (94:6) “Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.” Fourth we need to realize that many of the difficulties we face in life can serve as atonement for our sins. The Prophet likened this to the tree that sheds its leaves. Finally, one should turn to God in times of difficulty, pray to Him and ask for His guidance and support.

## 6.29 Moral Teachings of Islam- Responsibility of Words

### 6.29 Responsibility of Words

**Host: What does the Quran have to say about the use or abuse of speech?**

Jamal Badawi:

The ability to speak, human communication, is regarded in the Quran as one of the greatest bounties of God. In chapter fifty-five it talks about how He created mankind and taught him the power of expression and speech. In itself this is a great bounty of God which makes humans distinct from other levels of creators. The main problem however is whether the power of expression is used effectively and whether it is also abused by the individual. In the Quran we find that the individual’s responsibility is emphasized. Part of the responsibility is the kind of words we utter; if they are useful and meaningful or not. In Quran makes a contrast in (14:24) God says “Seest Thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens,-of its Lord. So, Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.” In (14:26) the opposite is presented “And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree: It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability.” The main problem is not in the power of speech itself but rather if the person properly uses that faculty given by God responsibly or while abusing it.



**Host: Are there any specific measures prescribed by Islam to prevent an individual from abusing speech?**

Jamal Badawi:

We find that it is always recommended that one should avoid idle talk which is not beneficial. It doesn't say "don't talk" but that if there is no reason for a person to speak then it is better for that person not to say anything. For example the Quran describes the believers in (23:3) "Who avoid vain talk" and in (25:72) "If they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable (avoidance). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the same principle in one of his sayings, narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim, he says "He who believes in God and in the hereafter should say a good thing or stay quite." Of course there are no restrictions on speech so long as there is good behind it. The Quran shows in various places the kinds of words one should use. For example in (2:83) "speak fair to the people." Once fairness is added to the quality of speech then it becomes something that is welcome. In (33:32) "speak ye a speech (that is) just." In a narration by Ahmad the Prophet says that "the faith of a believer is not right till his heart is right; no heart is right until his words are also right." So the reflection of faith is purity of heart and purity of heart is reflected in the kind of words that are uttered by the individual. In another saying he says that "a goodly word is like a charity." If someone doesn't have enough for charity then a good word is regarded as the equivalent to charity. Third, one has to be particularly careful about uttering words that could get one into trouble in this life and or in the hereafter. An example of this would be if someone uses words to arouse animosity and conflict. This is beautifully expressed in the Quran in (17:53) "Say to my servants that they should (only) say those things that are best: for Satan doth sow dissensions among them: For Satan is to man an avowed enemy." Once a person says the wrong thing Satan will keep whispering to both sides which will keep escalating the conflict. We find this to be emphasized in the sayings of the Prophet narrated by Albyhaki where he says that the slip of the tongue is worse than the slip of the foot because the slip of the tongue could have consequences in this life and the hereafter.

**Host: Is this responsibility of Muslims only towards other Muslims or is it more universal? Does it apply to speech with non-Muslims?**

It is more universal than that. So long as there is no reason for aggression or hostility shown by people who do not believe in Islam they should be treated the same way. We find in the Quran in (29:46) "And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)." The basic rule is that everyone receives the same treatment so long as there is no aggression or hostility.

**Host: How do we respond to people who adopt a hostile manner?**

It is quite possible to reduce the amount of enmity not by responding to evil with evil but by trying to win the heart of the person who committed that wrong. The Quran alludes to this in a beautiful verse in (41:34) “Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!” This happens, where someone who shows aggression and antagonism to you and through your kindness they may realize that that you are not as bad as they may have thought and they may be ashamed of themselves. It works as it has happened in many situations that I am familiar with. The same thing has been expressed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he said that one can not embrace all people with property or money but you can embrace them all with a cheerful face and decent conduct. This is one way of winning people’s love an effecting which works better than material things. However, if the nature of the discussion is futile it is better to avoid the situation all together. In the Quran in (25:63) it describes the true servants of God “And the servants of ((Allah)) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!" Ignorant here means those who are ignorant and those who can not control aggression or emotions. The same thing is confirmed in chapter (28:55) “And when they hear vain talk, they turn away therefrom and say: “To us our deeds, and to you yours; peace be to you: we seek not the ignorant.” So even in a situation like that it is better to get out of it in a graceful way.

Host: Should one infer from that that it is better to accept humiliation or not to have a response when confronted with hostility?

All of the moral virtues in Islam connect with one another without conflict and we might recall that in one of the programs we discussed dignity in addition to humility. Dignity is a moral virtue; Islam does not ask people to be humiliated but to have humility and humbleness. There are times when one feels that the other person is so ignorant or very angry and if they respond to each of this person’s words or comments they may actually begin to loose their dignity and it may be more graceful not to engage in this type of exchange. A person should try to asses every situation and then decide what approach would deal with it in a more graceful way. An example of a very real situation faced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was when a man asked permission to see the Prophet and while he was waiting he said bad things about the Prophet. The man said something to the effect of what a bad relative he (the Prophet) is! When he entered the prophet met him with cheerful face and talked to him kindly and softly even though he had heard what the man had said. After the man left Aishah (the wife of the Prophet) asked him if he had heard what the man said. The Prophet said “Yes, but when did you know me as an obscene person?” In other-words he said “do you expect me to respond with obscenities with obscenities?” In fact, what he did was simply to apply in his own life what he preached. We find in some sayings of the Prophet that a believer is not a person who injures others, a person who curses others or a person who is obscene.

There may be some situations where one feels that they have been attacked unfairly and their human inclination is to defend one’s self. This is not necessarily bad so long as it is done in a proper way and does not increase the reaction or degree of enmity. This also should not be for revenge.

**Host: What should one do in a situation one is not hostile but is argumentative for the sake of argument: should a Muslim engage in this type of situation?**

The attitude of argument for the sake of argument is called lagho or jadal in the Quran. The use of the term jadal in the Quran is used positively and negatively. For example in the Quran in (16:125) “and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.” Jadal or argument in the positive sense where it has a good purpose and where both sides have open minds and hearts and are willing to accept the truth is not forbidden. The same term is also used to describe argument for the sake of argument, when people close their minds, no pathway to communication, they don't think about what is said and they stick with one position without opening their hearts and minds to discuss other things. In this case it is not recommended for the Muslim. The Prophet (PBUH) said as is narrated in Al-Tirmidhi that there would be no people who are misguided after they have already been guided except for those who start vain and senseless, futile argumentation. In Al-Tabarani he said that he would be in charge of a house in the middle of Paradise for those who leave vain arguments even if they are right. One could be right and is tempted to correct errors, but when it is not productive it is much better to leave it and avoid engaging in it.

**Host: Is there any mention of backbiting in the Quran?**

It is mentioned in the Quran because it is part of our responsibility with words and how God holds us responsible on the Day of Judgment not only for what we do but for what we say too! The equivalent Arabic term for backbiting is khaibah. We find in the Quran in (49:12) “And spy not or backbite on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.” So to speak ill of one's brother in their absence is like eating their flesh, which is a terrible depiction of this common attitude of backbiting. This applies as backbiting even if what one says about the individual is true. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sitting with his companions as narrated in Muslim and he asked “Do you know what is backbiting?” They replied “God and his messenger know best.” They wanted him to answer. He said “backbiting is to mention something about his brother which he hates for you to say.” And they asked him “what if the thing that is being said is true?” His answer was exemplary he said “if what you say about him is true then you are backbiting if it is not true then you are not only backbiting but you are even lying.” This would cause a great deal of injustice and lies to be made against the other person. These kinds of restrictions and discouragement of backbiting are intended to prevent a number of social evils which include publicizing evil. In the Quran in (24:19) “Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not.” This says that God does not like the spreading of evil things about others which may have an exception when the person is oppressed and they have to explain their grievance.

Second, it is also based on the realization of the weakness of the human being. As humans we are weak and none of us are free of them. If I know of the weakness of another and I start talking about it; I would be putting them in a situation where it would be very difficult to correct themselves and they may keep on insisting on the wrong. It is more graceful to realize that I am as weak as others are and to give them a chance to try to correct themselves without publicly embarrassing them by using courteous advice. The resistance of human weakness has certain motives that may include their attitude of revenge, wanting to please their friends or just sheer curiosity and idleness which are all related to social evils which can be reduced by avoiding backbiting.

**Host: Are there any exceptions to the rule of not speaking about people's deficiencies?**

There are certain exemptions which are not arbitrary. A person can not just justify it whenever he likes, one should clearly make sure if the case is really an acceptance for them to say something about someone else's weakness.

Imam Al Nawawi one of the great Muslim scholars who lived in the 13th century gave an example of these cases: one case is when a person is oppressed and injustice has been done to someone and the only way to try to undo it is to speak up about the unjust person. In this case one would have to talk about the weaknesses of the other person but many times one has to tell in order to lift the injustice. In the Quran in (4:148) "Allah loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice hath been done." This is not only true at an individual level but on a social and national level. For example, when there is a ruler who is dictatorial in his approach and is oppressing people, murdering people, torturing people or expropriating properties people can not say don't backbite because this is something which has been done to hurt others and is an injustice and must be revealed in order to be corrected.

A second case is when it is necessary to fight evil and indecency in order to expose certain things. In order to stop these things one must talk about them and even then it is better to advise first in private.

A third case would be if a person is seeking a verdict in a religious matter. One would go to a scholar with a particular matter in order to find out what the rule of Islam with respect to a particular problem. One may have to disclose information about what another person has done to them in order to get this verdict. It is better to not use names in this case.

Another case would be to get legitimate advice. For example a person who is asking for advice before he gives his daughter in marriage or before getting into a business partnership.

## 6.30 Moral Teachings of Islam- Moderation & Generosity

## 6.30 Moderation & Generosity

### **Host: Could you shed some light on moderation as a moral virtue in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

The issue of moderation as a moral virtue reflects the approach that Islam takes towards life. This approach tries to inculcate a sense of balance in the heart and mind of the believer. Islam condemns and discourages excessive materialism but it also rejects monasticism or seclusion from society.

To start with the Quran regards excessive materialism an animal like behavior. For example in (47:12) it says that “While those who reject Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode.” In other words a person who rejects God and just engages in excessive pleasure does not have the status of a human.

We have also seen in the Quran where it says to seek the pleasure of God but don't forget your share of this life. There is a beautiful verse in the Quran in (2:201) that the Prophet (PBUH) used to repeat in supplication after the prayer “Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!” This verse combines between moderation and benefit in both lives. The ideal situation in Islam is neither deprivation or excessive materialism but moderation and balance.

### **Host: What defines excess and what forms do they take?**

Jamal Badawi:

What determines what is excessive and what is reasonable is partly determined by the customs and by the changes in time and place. There are some very clear cases for example a person eating five chickens for a snack. There are many grey areas when it comes to specifics. In some countries a car is a luxury in other places it is a basic necessity for life.

Moderation as defined in Islamic law is for those things that are permissible, wholesome and pure. Excess can manifest itself in different ways such as excessive eating. The Prophet said that the worst container to fill is one's stomach (relating to the various health problems overeating causes). The Quran also says to eat and drink but not to be wasteful or excessive because God doesn't like those who are

wasteful. It could be excessiveness in matters of clothing; some people are enslaved by fashion (billions of dollars are made by the fashion industry) which plays people. Of course I am not saying that one should not dress gracefully. Indeed one person came to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as narrated in Al Nassai and did not have nice clothes on so the Prophet asked him if he had wealth and the man said he did, so the Prophet said “God would like to see the effect of His blessings on you.” It is important to dress nicely but as long as we stay away from obsession and excessiveness.

Excessiveness also refers to over all adornment whether in homes such as expensive paintings (value could be used better for a more constructive purpose) or excess in make up etc. This is why the prophet said it is prohibited for the Muslim to eat from something made of solid gold or silver because it reflects undue luxury that is not desirable. There are other manifestations as some people are workaholics or obsessed with sports etc. Any excess is not regarded in Islam as a commendable attitude.

**Host: What kind of attitude is inculcated in an individual who practices moderation and avoids excess?**

Jamal Badawi

First, Islam teaches its followers to practice moderation in order to create a sense of balance and equilibrium in the life of the individual. This balances control and deprivation so that there is control without deprivation. A person has joy without excess, grace without pride and humility without humiliation. Moderation is an overall attitude of balance which is one of the basic characteristics of Islamic teachings.

Second, in order to go through life with its trials and tribulations people need to have the solid ability to resist and stand in the face of these troubles. Islam teaches a person to practice Jihad which means to struggle in the path of God and to fight evil on all levels. These are duties that can not be achieved by people who are so obsessed with personal pleasure. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against excessive luxury. He addressed the people 1400 years and said “I am not afraid for you from poverty what I am really afraid of is that the world will open for you and you will have lots of wealth and provisions and that you start competing in it and that it would destroy you as it did people before you!” We can see now in the actions of some who claim to be Muslims how true that prophesy was. Indeed in an even more explicit prophesy of the Prophet as narrated in Al Tabarani he said “In the later days there will be some of my followers who will eat all kinds of food, drink all kinds of drinks, wear all kinds of clothes and speak with pride and vanity: these are the worst of people.” We see the manifestation of this today as there are some who claim to be

Muslim yet they squander money on over luxurious things which is not the attitude of moderation that Islam teaches.

In addition to this moderation allows people to share with others and to show concern for others. If one is so obsessed with achieving the maximum pleasure (hedonistic attitude) one would have nothing left to help the poor and needy.

**Host: How does the Quran depict generosity as a moral virtue?**

Jamal Badawi

To start with the Quran indicates that the property and possession that we have is not absolute, as God alone is the ultimate and only owner of the universe and what it contains. This means that whatever God has blessed us with whether it is property, resources, mental, intellectual, spiritual, physical or otherwise is a trust from God. Thus we can only dispose of this trust at the will of God. When the Quran addresses the obligation to take care of the poor and needy it refers to it as their right as found in the Quran in (17:26) "And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift." When people are generous towards those who are needy it teaches one to be less selfish. Of course God has created us with a love for ourselves as we would not be able to survive without it but sometimes it goes too far. One of the basic morals in Islam is to control excessive self love as found in the Quran in (59:9) "But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)." This verse came as a commentary on a story of a person who entered the mosque and needed someone to host him for a couple of days, so one of the companions of the Prophet offered to do this. He took him to his home even though he did not have much food (only enough for his and his wife's supper). He asked his wife to turn off the light and put the food so his guest would not see that he was not eating and feel embarrassed. The host and his wife went to sleep hungry. Of course one can not expect everybody to act in this noble spirit but it shows the attitude of concern and helpfulness towards those in need.

This also relates to the topic of mercy which is not just a feeling of pity but an act. Generosity does not necessarily mean giving money away. The Prophet (PBUH) once said that "A good word and a cheerful face is a charity towards one's brother." This doesn't mean that one is to only be generous with the poor and needy. One of the sayings of the Prophet is that whomever believes in God and the hereafter should be hospitable or generous to his guest regardless of his status or financial situation.

**Host: Are there some forces that might help someone be less-selfish or more generous?**

Jamal Badawi:

First, the sense of trusteeship instills responsibility which allows one to dispose of their property the way God wills. Second, we must remember that whatever we poses in this life is going to vanish and only the things that we do for charity (out of love for God and fellow humans) is what will remain in our credit. A verse that refers to this is found in (16:96) "What is with you must vanish: what is with Allah will endure."

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) indicated that after all even though we are always obsessed with increasing our wealth and position we take nothing of it with us when we depart from our life on earth to our eternal life. Fore example in one saying as narrated in Muslim he says the servant of God keeps saying "my money" or "my possessions" and in facts he has non of those possessions except for three: what he eats, what he wears till it is worn out and what he pays in charity which remains in his credit. From this we see that the first two, once they are used, are gone and the only things we will take with us to the after life are the acts of kindness. In Bukhari the Prophet once asked "Who among you loves the property of their heir more than their own?" They replied that they love our property first. He replied if you don't try to put something that will be in your credit in the hereafter then in fact you like your heir, because you will be leaving everything to him. This does not mean that one should not leave anything for his heirs but one should always do something that will benefit them in the hereafter.

In Tirmithi there is a noble example of the Prophet (PBUH) once when he had sheep (rare occurrence) to slaughter in his house hold, and his wife Aisha gave almost all meat to the poor and needy except for the shoulder. When the Prophet came back and asked if anything was left of the lamb, she replied that it was all gone except for the shoulder. He replied "No, only the shoulder is gone and all the rest remains."

We should always remember that Satan always tries to inspire us to move away from the obedience of God. One of the techniques used is to tell one that if the are charitable their property will be depleted and that one will be poor. For example in the Quran in (2:268) "The Evil one threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties. And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things." There is also a Hadith by the Prophet in which he said that the property of a believer would not be reduced because of charity. In the Quran it says whatever you spend in the path of God will be replaced in this life and one's possessions will be blessed.



**Host: Is it possible for one to be excessively generous?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes, it is quite possible. There are some parameters that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established to help us avoid going to one extreme or the other. Of course there are some acts of extreme nobility, like we have mentioned, which can be inspiring to all of us. As a basic rule one should not give in charity all that he owns. This actually happened in the time of the Prophet when someone came to him with a piece of gold (size of an egg which was quite valuable) and told him that it was all he owned and that he wanted to give it all to the needy. The Prophet (PBUH) turned his face away because he did not want to accept it, so that man came from the Prophet's left side and kept insisting that the Prophet take it. So the Prophet took it and then gave it back to him again. He says one of you brings all he possesses in charity then he goes and begs people for help! The best kind of charity is to give charity after you have satisfied your needs and are self sufficient.

Of course one trusts in God but at the same time there is no sense in giving away all that one has only to end up needing the charity of others. Another parameter that is established also is that if one really wants to charitable it starts at home. It starts at home either by obligation as one must take care of one's family, children, parents as well as other relatives also. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was very explicit in a Hadith narrated in Al Tabarani where he said "God will not except charity from a person who has needy relatives."

There is a story about a person who came to the Prophet and wanted to donate all of his money for charity and the Prophet said "No." Then the man said that he wanted to donate half of it and the Prophet said "No." Then the man said that he wanted to donate one third of it and then the Prophet agreed but said that even one third is too much. Then the Prophet added that it was better for him to heirs in a comfortable self sufficient position than leaving them to beg. One can give charity in order to have credit but not while forgetting his/her obligations.

**Host: Can you sum up the series of The Moral Teachings of Islam by giving an overview of the topics that we have covered?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is the sixth series in our program which was composed of thirty programs which touched on three basic areas. In the first six programs we addressed the general questions related to the moral theory and what determines morality. Some of the questions were: what is supreme good, how to get information about ultimate good, what kind of sanctions are put forth for doing good and what motivates people to do good. We discussed these topics from the secular point of view, from religious point of view and then we looked at it from the Islamic point of view which has its own unique structure and theory. We also emphasized other aspects such as human nature, how a person relates to the universe and the main characteristics of the Islamic moral system.

In the second part, fourteen programs, we addressed basic objectives of Islamic law mainly: safeguarding faith, life, mind, honor and property. We discussed a whole variety of topics which related to safeguarding these five aspects of Islam law.

In the last ten programs we talked about the various moral virtues of Islam. This part looked at the positive aspect of the moral code in which we covered: piety, sincerity, trustworthiness, humbleness, dignity, mercy, forgiveness, purity of the heart, patients and perseverance and responsibility.

