

# Muslim Beliefs

## 4.1 Muslim Beliefs- Angels

### Summary

**Hamad Rasheed (host):** In today's program we begin our fourth series in our Islam in Focus program. This series will deal with Muslim Beliefs. Today's program is the first in the series and deals with belief in the angels of God.

**To begin could you comment on this series of Muslim Beliefs and the last three series that we have produced on the Islam in Focus program?**

Jamal Badawi:

In fact all four series are related in one way or another to Muslim beliefs. In the first series on monotheism the focus was on Muslim belief in God. We tried to explore in what sense Islam insists on pure monotheistic faith. We discussed the various aspects the Quran negates concerning erroneous beliefs about God. We also discussed some of the basic attributes of divinity. This took us eight programs.

In the second program was still related to the belief because once you believe in God you also have to believe in the prophets of God who taught us about God. This took about ten programs in which we explored the nature of prophethood, the characteristics of the prophets, and how Prophet Muhammad fit as the last in a series of all prophets to unify all believers in God under one last revelation. We allocated three sessions to discuss the story of one great prophet, Jesus, as narrated in the Quran. Then in the last two sessions of the series we discussed the implication of belief in prophethood and that is the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims as provided in the Quran.

In the third series, we could say it is related to prophethood, it focused on Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) prophethood with the title 'Muhammad in the Bible.' We tried to see through the canonized accepted Bible, The Old and New Testaments that there is a great deal of evidence that shows a clear connection between all Israelite prophets of the past, Jesus and finally Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as all links in the same chain bringing the message of God to humanity.

These discussions in the last three series which took about 26 programs did not even touch on some additional beliefs that are regarded as basic articles of faith for the Muslim like the belief in the angels of God, in the Books or scriptures of God, in the

life hereafter, what happens to us after death, what happens between death and resurrection, signs of the last hour, what is in heaven and belief in *qadaar* (a concept we will come to). So there are still additional beliefs besides believing in God and his prophets that were mainly covered in the last three series.

## 4.1 Angels

**Host: What is the basis for the Muslim's belief in angels?**

Jamal Badawi:

To begin with we have to realize that God's creation is not limited by the physical world that we can perceive. We realize our existence as humans but there are lots of beings that have been created by God. There is also the world of the unseen. Our knowledge and our perception ability are quite limited as it doesn't enable us to explore the world of the unseen as fully as we would wish.

This curiosity on the parts of the human to understand the mysteries of the universe and the unseen world can't be totally satisfied by known scientific methods or by mystical experiences. If you recall we almost allocated a whole program in the beginning of the series on prophethood to discuss the pros and cons of using scientific approach or having a mystical experience. We said that both fall short of providing full information about aspects that transcend scientific methods and individual mystical experiences. It follows then that we have to depend on a higher source of information and that can't be anything but direct revelation of God as has been revealed to His prophets through authoritative scriptures. For the Muslim it boils down as a basis for belief in angels or other similar beliefs. The authority being the Quran which Muslims accept as the last word of God, which has been protected and preserved in its original form, in addition of course to the sayings and elaborations of the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Anything beyond these two authoritative sources can not be but sheer speculation. Basically the Quran and the explanation of Prophet Muhammad are what we have to use for the discussion of this topic.

**Host: What do these sources have to say about the nature of angels and what they are created from?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is summarized in one Hadith or saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that "angels are created from light and Jinn, another spirit, were created from fire and the

human is created with what has been described to you.” He means what has been described in the that humans were created from clay. In fact this saying of Prophet Muhammad is quite consistent with what also appears in the Quran in (32:7) “He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay.” Clay here has two meanings. It could be interpreted as literally from clay or it could also mean from the same basic elements that are on earth. It has been proven that we as humans have the same elements that are found on earth such as Carbon, Potassium and others.

In the same chapter also it talks about Jinn being created from fire without flame. For example this is also mentioned in chapter in (55:15) about the nature of Jinn. We don’t know exactly what that nature of the light or fire. All we can infer from this is that if angels are created from light they are not physical beings they don’t have the same carnal desires that we have, they are not subject to being male or female but they may appear in human form. Also, light refers to purity as angels are pure and absolutely sinless creatures of God. Light also give the impression that they have certain capabilities which are not imaginable by us, just like we can’t imagine that light can travel at a speed of 186,000 miles per second. We can infer from this that angels have certain capacities that are not restricted by our physical understanding. Indeed to prove this point of the absolute sinlessness of angels we find that in the Quran (66:6) describes angels “who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded.” Also in (16:50) “They all revere their Lord, high above them, and they do all that they are commanded.”

The Arabs used to uphold a strange belief that the angels were the daughters of God and we find a categorical rejection of that in (21:26-29) “And they say: “((Allah)) Most Gracious has begotten offspring.” Glory to Him! they are (but) servants raised to honour. They speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His Command. He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His (Glory). If any of them should say, “I am a god besides Him”, such a one We should reward with Hell: thus do We reward those who do wrong.” From this it is quite obvious that the Quran doesn’t only reject attributing offspring to God in a sense of other human beings but even the superstitions claim by the Arabs that angels are daughters of God. Actually in another chapter of the Quran (7:206) it shows again that angels never hesitate in worshipping God and carrying out his commands in humility and full submission. This is as much as we can tell about the nature of angels and the implication of the fact that they are created from light. Beyond this we don’t know what don’t know the nature of this creation.

**Host: What indications in the Quran do we have as to when the angels were created?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is an indication that they had been created before human kind. For example 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." So from this it is quite clear that the announcement of God's plan to create human beings on earth was told to the angels and this indicates that angels were created before humans.

**Host: Usually the term angels, suggests to most people, the concept of perfection. Does this mean that angels are superior to man kind?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is not necessarily the way it is as it depends on human behavior. First of all angels are good despite themselves. They are created good, they don't have carnal desires and they don't face the temptations that we as humans face. It's not a big thing for them to be good because they are created good.

As to the human being who is created by God with the inclination towards good and evil. We find that the human is in a unique position to make the good in himself subdue the evil, which requires a great deal of struggle which angels are not required to do. In that sense a human who is able to capitalize the goodness that is created in him can actually be superior to angels.

This may be surprising but this is not a personal interpretation of mine but in fact I'll refer to the same chapter I was reading (2:31-34) which will give a full implication of superiority of the human if he is righteous "And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell me the nature of these if ye are right." They said: "Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom." He said: "O Adam! Tell them their natures." When he had told them, Allah said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?" And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith."

From these verse, I know the translation don't always reflect the beauty and clarity of the original Arabic, there are two implications; one the human has been given certain types of knowledge which exceeds the knowledge given to the angels. The second point is that the most conclusive was the last verse I sighted in which God commanded the angels to bow down to Adam. This shows that the human being as a species especially those who are righteous were so high and honored in the sight of God that He ordered angels who are purer creators to bow down to the first man created, Adam.

**Host: This raises another interesting question from the verse you just cited. It says that when God commanded the angels to bow down to Adam Satan disobeyed God and refused to do so. Was Satan one of the angels and if so how could he disobey God if by definition angels are totally obedient to God as we mentioned earlier.**

Jamal Badawi:

I realize that some people tend to have the belief that Satan was an angel or even that he was the chief of angels. This is not so in the case of the Muslim belief at all. Indeed according to Muslim belief Satan belongs to Jinn which another type of spirit that are not angels. And when we mention the verse some people confuse it because it says that when He ordered the angels they bowed down but no Satan. So they infer from that that Satan was one of the angels. But the implication of the verse is that he was not of the angels but he was with the angels. Like if one address a hundred students and one person was not a student; the students were addressed because they were the overwhelming majority. So it doesn't mean that Satan was of the angels.

Let me give conclusive evidence that Satan according to the Quran is not an angel let alone a chief of angels. This appears in the Quran in (18:50)\* "Behold! We said to the angels, "Bow down to Adam": They bowed down except Iblis. He was one of the Jinns, and he broke the Command of his Lord." This is very conclusive evidence that Satan was not really an angel or else it would be a contradiction of terms. He was a different species of creators which we can discuss at a different time.

**Host: Why were angels created in the first place? What function do they have? Do they have any valuable function to perform?**

Jamal Badawi:

Well in addition to the obvious thing that most of us know that they constantly worship God, that they glorify his Holy name they also have other functions that affect our life. This more particularly is their historical role in bringing revelation to the prophets, which ended with the coming of the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). To give documentation from the Quran (26:192-193)\*\* it talks about the Quran having been sent by the Honest Spirit “Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth.” This is understood by Muslims to refer to angel Gabriel who is the chief of angels.

Also we find that in the Quran in (16:102) it describes the Quran as having been revealed through the Holy Spirit. “Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims.” Holy Spirit here has nothing to do with the notion of Holy Spirit having anything to do with divinity. Holy Spirit to the Muslim is simply the archangel Gabriel the angel of revelation.

**Host: What is the form of angels and is it possible for them to appear in human form?**

Jamal Badawi:

Again I have to restrict my remarks to what one can find in authoritative references for example the Quran or the sayings of the Prophet. Yes we do find evidence of angels at times appearing for special purpose in the form of humans but it is very rare. For example in the Quran (11:69-73) it discusses the angels of God coming to Prophet Abraham before they went to destroy the people of Lute and they not only told him of their plans but they also brought him the glad tiding of the birth of a son, Isaac, from his first wife Sarah who was barren. There is an incident also in the Quran in (19:16-17) when it talks about the Holy Spirit, as the Muslim understand it, coming to Mary the mother of Jesus (PBUH) to give her the glad tiding of the birth of her son Prophet Jesus (PBUH). Also there are lots of evidence that angel Gabriel came in human form to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) several times. The first time he came was when Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation in the cave of Hira’a. So in this sense and in limited rare cases angels did appear in the form of man. I have no knowledge of their appearance after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

**Host: Besides these contacts that angels have had with prophets in the past how do angels relate to other humans like you and I? What is the relationship between ourselves and angels?**

Jamal Badawi:

We can't just think of angels as they relate to prophets alone in fact could give you at least five areas in the Quran or the sayings of the Prophet that indicates the involvement of angels. In one saying of Prophet Muhammad he said that "you have angels who are constantly with you, they do not leave except in the most private functions." In other words they are with us at all times and he said one should really be generous to them, generous here in a sense of doing good things because those angels would definitely feel very happy when we are doing the right things.

In another Hadith (saying of Prophet Muhammad) he indicated that one of the functions of these angels is to prompt us to do good. It is not necessary that we hear sound but sometimes one feels something from inside as if something is whispering 'do this it is a good thing to do' just as Satan or devils prompt one to do things that are wrong. So the angels balance the effect of evil prompting.

Secondly, in the Quran there is indication that the angels also take care of recording our deeds. They keep a very accurate record of what we do. We don't know exactly how they record it computer, tape only Allah knows. In the past we did not know that information could be stored in a magnetic tape. They have their ways of keeping track of our deeds whether good or evil we find reference to this in the Quran in (82:10-12), (43:79-80), (50:16), and in (17:13-14).

In addition to this we find that there is reference to angels having special relationship with pious people. For example, Prophet Muhammad indicated that whenever a group of people meet to recite the word of God (Quran) as an act of worship or make supplication and praise God that the angels would surround them and feel very happy. The Quran in (17:87) talks about the special value of reciting Quran in the late hours of the night near dawn time and that the Angels come in great numbers to listen to the recitation of the Quran.

Fourthly, we find that the Quran refers to angels as providing support and aid to the believers at the time of stress and adversity. We find reference to this in (58:22) and (8:10-12). Also we find that angels pray to God for forgiveness of those who are believers and we find that in (40:7)\*\*\* "Those who sustain the Throne (of Allah) and those around it Sing Glory and Praise to their Lord; believe in Him; and implore Forgiveness for those who believe: "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!" Another very impressive citation in the Quran in (33:43) it also talks about the angels praying for forgiveness and the welfare of humans in general and more specifically those who are pious.

**Host: Does the Muslim belief in angels have any practical implications for us and does our relationship with angels end with our deaths?**

Jamal Badawi:

The questions are actually composed in two parts. For the first part the belief in angels is not just a matter of dogma or something to accept as an article of faith but it does have practical applications just like we discussed in previous series the implication of belief in the oneness of God or belief in prophets. If we realize that angels are with us and they are watching us (we should also keep in mind that God is also with us and is watching us) would provide us with some inducement to do what is good in an effort to please them and to avoid doing evil because we feel ashamed not only before God but before the angels surrounding us. This is why we find in the Quran that belief in angels is a part of righteousness. Examples are found in (2:77) and (2:285). This is a method used to help awaken our moral consciousness.

As far as the second part this is a whole issue of itself.

~

\*The verse is not (18:80) as quoted in the lecture.

\*\*The verses are not (29:193-194) as quoted in the lecture.

\*\*\*The verses are not (40:97) as quoted in the lecture.

## 4.2 Muslim Beliefs- Jinn

### Summary of 4.1 "Angels"

One of the fundamental articles of faith in Islam that the Quran mentions is the belief in angels. Angels are creatures that are not seen by us and they were created from light (we don't know for sure what the nature of the light is). The fact that God created them from light signifies not only the fact that they are non-material even though they may appear in physical form but also signifies that they are totally pure and absolutely sinless creatures. We also mentioned that the position of the status of human beings could be higher than that of angels. In fact we quoted the Quran where angels were commanded by God to bow down to the first human Adam. We indicated from that,



since angels are pure by their nature and don't have free will, they are good despite themselves where as a righteous human being could be better than angels because they have temptation and the evil inclination within himself and has got to struggle against the evil forces.

We also indicated in terms of the functions of angels that their basic and most historical role was to bring revelation to different prophets throughout history a function which ended with the mission of the last prophet, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the revelation of the last Holy Book the Quran. Despite this we indicate that angels still relate to our daily life. We said that God has assigned angels to keep track our deeds, by recording them whether good or bad, which is part of our account on the Day of Judgment. They are also particularly interested in keeping company of the pious when they supplicate, pray or recite the Quran they listen to them and enjoy it. We also indicated that angels provide support and help believers at times of adversity and difficulty. In fact they are constantly praying for the welfare of the believers and above all they constantly encourage us to do good things that would please God.

Finally, we ended by saying that the practical implication of belief in angels is that when we feel the company of those pure sinless creators it is encouragement to us to do good and it reminds us of our duty and awakens our moral consciousness.

## 4.2 Jinn

**Host: What about the question of other unseen creators? Do Muslims believe that there are other unseen creators beside angels?**

Jamal Badawi:

Oh yes, first of all when we talk about God's creators perhaps we can classify them into two main groups, the seen and the un-seen. Now the creators that are seen can be classified into two major groups, humans and others. By others we mean animals, animate and inanimate objects. The humans are of course the most important creator of God according to the Quran can be divided into two basic groups, believers and unbelievers.

For the unseen creators there are again two basic groups that the Quran mentions. One is the angels and this we covered in the first program of this new series and the second which are today's topic are the Jinn. Some people may wonder what the word Jinn means and if it has an equivalent in English. To my

understanding there is no single word in English that would give the proper and complete meaning of Jinn as understood by Muslims except to say that they are unseen creators. However to understand it better in English we can subdivide Jinn into two main groups, believers and unbelievers.

Believing Jinn would be just as good as angels or as good as human believers. In that sense we can make an analogy between believing Jinn and believing human beings. The unbelieving Jinn however, are the ones that we usually refer to as Satan and also a term that appears in the Quran about the first of those unbelieving Jinn, *Ibleese*. The word Satan is also used in the Quran and the Arabic equivalent is *shaitan*. When we use Satan or Ibleese we are talking particularly about the first Satan, the one who tempted Adam and Eve in Paradise. Now, the league of Satan his decedents and helpers until today are called Satans or devils. Here there is a dotted line under unbelieving humans. The reason being is that the word Satan (devil) in Arabic means anyone who is rebellious against God. And as we know there are human beings who are rebellious against God. As such *shaitan* or devils are rebellious creators whether they are of the unseen world like Jinn or from among human beings. This perhaps I hope would clarify some of the confusion that sometimes arises with respect to the term used about what Jinn really means. Jinn means believing and unbelieving spirits.

**Host: Perhaps it would be helpful if you talk more about the nature of Jinn and what they are created from?**

Jamal Badawi:

Jinn are created from smokeless fire according to the Quran and it appears in (15:26-27). When we talk about smokeless fire, no body knows what the exact nature of this fire is, as we don't know the exact nature of light from which angels are created. But of course it signifies the fact that they are non-material and that they have capacities and abilities which far exceed those given to humans in terms of the speed of their movements etc. just like angels have. In fact the Quran indicates that like human beings the Jinn, both believing and unbelieving, have free choice. They can choose to obey God or to rebel and in that sense they are similar to human beings except for the fact that they are non-material.

**Host: Can we conclude from this that because they have freedom of choice that the Jinn are not all evil sprits as some people might think?**

Jamal Badawi:

That is absolutely correct. In fact like you said if they have free will then some might turn out to be good and some might be evil. Jinn are not evil by definition it is what they make of themselves. In fact we find that in the Quran (6:130) it talks about the Jinn receiving messengers coming to guide them just like human beings also received prophets. Yes, you are right in this that they are not all absolutely evil.

Maybe if I quote one part of the Quran that might clarify the issue in (46:29-32) “Behold, We turned towards thee a company of Jinns (quietly) listening to the Qur'an: when they stood in the presence thereof, they said, “Listen in silence!” When the (reading) was finished, they returned to their people, to warn (them of their sins). They said, “O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Moses, confirming what came before it: it guides (men) to the Truth and to a Straight Path. O our people, hearken to the one who invites (you) to Allah, and believe in him: He will forgive you your faults, and deliver you from a Penalty Grievous. If any does not hearken to the one who invites (us) to Allah, he cannot frustrate ((Allah)'s Plan) on earth, and no protectors can he have besides Allah. such men (wander) in manifest error.”” So in that sense one can say they are just like humans in a sense of being warned and urged to use their free will in the right direction.

### **Host: How does Satan relate to our daily life?**

Jamal Badawi:

He does relate to our lives the opposite way that angels relate to our lives. We said last time that angels are the forces of good. They are the pure sinless spirits that are encouraging us to do what is good and to avoid what is evil. Satan relates to our life in a sense that he is doing the opposite job. He is trying to destroy what the angels are urging us to do. He is constantly urging us to do commit evil and to sins to violate the teachings of God. In that sense we can say that the unbelieving Jinn are relevant to our lives not only as individuals but to the history of the entire human beings. If one look in the history of human beings one finds that the basic struggle by individuals, groups, nations and civilizations has constantly been this countervailing forces; the forces of good and forces of evil. Which one predominates at a given time, all the ups and downs, all the achievements as well as cruelty, all the good and the evil acts are all related again to which of these forces have the upper hand at one time or the other.

The Quran makes it clear for example in (7:20-21) that from the very beginning even after the creation of Adam and Eve Satan played a major role in trying to dissuade them from obeying God. But even when mankind came on earth we don't live on earth as a punishment, because there is no concept of original sin in Islam, but it was simply a lesson to Adam and Eve before coming to earth where they were destined to live. Satan does not stop. Satan as well as his legions from among humans and unseen creators keep pushing and imploring humans to destroy themselves and to commit all kinds of acts.

We find examples of that in the Quran in (2:268), (8:18) and (16:63). I'll pick one to give an indication about the role that Satan plays. The first one 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." So there is a clear warning to us here that the role played by Satan is very dangerous and we really have to beware and take all kinds of precautions against his evil prompting.

**Host: Given the evil nature of *shaitan* or Satan and the fact that we are warned in the Quran to be careful, are there any directions in the Quran that we can turn to that might be able to show us how to be successful or what precautions we should take to protect ourselves?**

Jamal Badawi:

I think the first thing we have to keep in mind is that he, his associates and allegiants are our enemy. One should know his friends from his enemies from the beginning. That is why we find that the Quran puts it very clearly in (35:6) "Verily Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy." This enmity has been expressed quoting *shaitan* for example as it appears in the Quran in (7:16) and (4:117) that after *shaitan* was cast out of paradise he was quoted as saying "Because thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way." So he has already undertaken it to sway humans from following the path of God. That is why the Quran warns us that we should not obey him. For example in (7:27) "O ye Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without faith."

It is not only that we have to take these precautions but we have to be aware of all the tricks played by Satan. Seldom does Satan come to one and say alright this is an evil thing 'do it!' He always tries to present it in a way that looks attractive and somehow seductive. This is why we find in some in some verses in the Quran in (6:142) and (24:21) we find that there is a constant reminder not to follow the footsteps of Satan. This means he tries to draw us in bit by bit.

The other thing that the Quran implores us to understand is to know that obedience to Satan at the expense of obedience to God is tantamount to actually worshipping Satan. I am not talking about worship in a ritual sense. Of course I heard recently about the Church of Satan in Toronto and there are other places where they actually have rights to worship Satan. But in the broad Islamic meaning of worship it does not just mean ritual but obedience and submission to Satan. One of the very interesting

quotations I find in the Quran about Satan worship in its variety of forms (36:60-64) “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? But he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did ye not, then, understand? This is the Hell of which ye were (repeatedly) warned! Embrace ye the (fire) this Day, for that ye (persistently) rejected (Truth).” So obedience to Satan is tantamount to rejection of the truth. These are some of the precautions that the Quran provides for us as humans as to how we can resist those evil promptings.

**Host: What about the power of Satan and all the other Satans that work along with him? Is it fair to say they have no authority over us and they can't force us to do things against our will?**

Jamal Badawi:

Absolutely! In the Quran in verse (91:7-8) “By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right.” This means that God has created the human being in the most perfect and complete form and he inspired into him the knowledge of guidance and the knowledge of the wrong path without even being guided by prophets or scriptures. Each human being has the potential for belief or not believing. In that sense then we could say that Satan has power and authority over those who obey him and those who give him the opportunity to dominate them. If we are capable as humans to disregard the commands of God and to obey Satan we can for sure as capable of disobeying Satan and following the path of God and submitting to Him which is the meaning of the word Islam.

Now the Quran says that we should not have any notion of saying ‘Oh I couldn’t do good cause the devil made me do it.’ No Satan didn’t make you do it, you let him cause you to do it. Let me quote from the Quran for example in (16:98-100) “When thou dost read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the rejected one. No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over those only, who take him as patron and who join partners with Allah.” In that sense then it is up to us whether we give him (Satan) this authority or not. In fact there is a verse in the Quran (72:6) which indicates that in the past some of the humans who used to think that Satans have tremendous powers and they tried to go to the devils for help or support, those devils only increased their folly. As the Quran says they started dominating them more and making them more dependent on them. This might relate to another issue that perhaps we can come to in the next series which would be the whole issue of magic and sorcery, evil spirits and spells.

Finally, I would like to add one more thing. In case we sin or disobey God or follow the footsteps of Satan as the Quran puts it we still should not throw our hands up in the air and say there is no hope. The Quran says that we should always keep remembering God and try to correct ourselves. Even the first mistake done by Adam and Eve according to the Quran it has already been forgiven and that is why there is no original sin. The Quran for example in (3:37) and (20:120-121) indicate that both Adam and Eve repented to God and both of their repentance was accepted. Whenever we fall we have to remember that we should not be more dominated and give up any hope of ridding ourselves from the control of these evil forces.

**Host: I'd like to have you comment on some of the conditions that we may create or may exist that provide more opportunity for Satan to exercise some kind of influence or control of our life.**

Jamal Badawi:

The first thing of course is disbelief in God. The lack of belief in God, the rejection of his existence, rejection of his divine attributes, unthankful and disgraceful attitudes towards his bounty and blessing he has endowed upon humans in all forms are ways of really getting the domination of Satan. We find reference to this in the Quran in Chapter Mary (19:83) there is a similar statement also in (59:16) that disbelief in God is one way of making friends Satan.

The second thing to keep in mind is that by having close friendship with those on whom there is God's wrath is one way for Satan to have more influence on us. This appears for example in (58:19 and on). This of course is a reference to the bad influence that we get when we get too close to people who are un-Godly in their attitudes.

The third thing that the Quran reminds us of is to forget God, in fact nowadays it seems that people have time for every conceivable type of activity but to remember God and follow his path. For example in (43:36-37) "If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of ((Allah)) Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him. Such (evil ones) really hinder them from the Path, but they think that they are being guided aright!" This is one of the things that we have to keep in mind.

Finally the Quran itself provides a blueprint as to how to respond to this kind of prompting that we should always remember God in (7:201) and in (23:98). They implore us that whenever we feel there is any evil prompting we should seek refuge in God and remember Him and that it would be enough to rid ourselves from the pressure if we have the determination to do it.

## **Host: Why were Jinn created in the first place?**

Jamal Badawi:

They were created for the same reason as the creation of angels. As human beings we are both material and spirit, we have the capability to be good or bad. The angels are doing their jobs, they are prompting us towards good without the Jinn, Satan or evil creatures in particular because not all Jinn are bad we would not be tested, we would not have any challenge. If we are always prompted to do good there is no challenge there is no fun in life. Ultimately it is our decisions as human beings to use our God given choice and God given spirituality to overcome the evil promptings and follow the right path.

## 4.3 Muslim Beliefs- Divination, Astrology, & Magic

### **Summary of 4.2 "Jinn"**

Among God's creators there are two basic types the seen and the unseen. We said that among the seen creators we have the humans and others. And we said that among humans we have the believers and the unbelievers. Among the unseen creators there are the angels as one category, the subject of our first program in this series, and there are also the Jinn. Jinn is an Arabic term that I could not find an exact English equivalent. We can perhaps best understand it by thinking of Jinn as unseen creators which are different from angels in a sense that they have free choice like humans. In other words they are not created good by definition like angels are but rather they have the same freedom of choice as humans to be either believers or unbelievers.

We mentioned also that the father of unbelieving Jinn is Satan or Ibleese as the Quran calls him is the very first Satan who tempted Adam and Eve in Paradise. And we indicated that Satan or Ibleese was not of the angels because angels by definition can't disobey God according to the Quran. He was of the Jinn who have the freedom of choice to obey or disobey and he chose to disobey God. We also indicated that the term devil or satan actually refers to the decedents or legion of the father of devils as well as all to human beings who are unbelievers. Both groups operate for evil or corruption.

We indicated last time that as a principle a believer or Muslim should not think in any way that Satan or devils have any control or authority over them. It is up to us to use the freedom of choice that God has given us to decide between right and wrong and to stand in the face of deceptive techniques used by devils or Satan.

### 4.3 Divination, Astrology and Magic

#### **Host: Do Muslims believe in magic and sorcery?**

Jamal Badawi:

I think we have to make one distinction when using the term ‘believe.’ When we say a Muslim believes in God, prophets or angels it carries a lot more weight than saying for example a Muslim believes in the existence of magic. I prefer to say that the Muslim believes in the existence of something called magic but not necessarily the belief in magic because it is a different category all together from something a Muslim is required to believe in like God, prophets and angels.

With this observation in mind I would say that there are different meanings to magic and perhaps when we define it in our terms it will be easier to expose the Islamic point of view on this. Usually the word magic or the equivalent in Arabic which is the word *sihr* can have at least three basic meanings.

One meaning of magic doesn’t necessarily refer to sorcery. It could simply mean enchantment, attraction, or charm. For example when one says ‘he used words that were so effective they were like magic.’ This could be one meaning and in this sense there is no problem. Actually the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) was quoted as saying that some truths if presented properly have the effect of magic.

Sometimes we talk about magic in a sense of having some kind of trick or illusion. If this is used for entertainment of children or adults it is fine. Pulling a rabbit out of a hat and all that if done for the purpose of entertainment is fine and there are actually books that can teach one how to play these tricks. Basically, there is nothing wrong with it.

However, when these same kinds of tricks are used to exploit people or strike terror in their heart or to give the illusion that a human being has some kind of super power then it is wrong and is condemned. In fact we find reference to this in the Quran about the magicians in the time of Prophet Moses (PBUH) and the Pharaoh. In (7:116) the Quran says that when the magicians challenged Prophet Moses (PBUH) they started demonstrating their magic work to see if he can match them. It says “So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them: for they showed a great (feat of) magic.” So the idea was to impress people or to claim this kind of superpowers. This is something that is condemned. In fact the Quran explains this type of magic as a skill in illusion. For example refereeing to the



same situation elsewhere in the Quran (20:66) it says that when the magicians threw “their ropes and their rods-so it seemed to him on account of their magic - began to be in lively motion!” So they threw sticks and ropes and because of certain tricks they used it gave the illusion that they were serpents. This is the Quranic explanation of this particular type of illusion which is superstitious.

However, we find reference in the Quran to a third type of magic which perhaps would be equivalent to the word sorcery. This is magic that is used for a sinister purpose and at times possibly by invoking evil spirits. Like we said earlier among the unseen creators like the Jinn, there are those who are unbelievers, who might cooperate with some unholy people in giving illusions or trying to exploit people. Now there is reference in the Quran to this in chapter 113 where it says that a believer should always seek refuge in God and His power against those who blow on the knots which is part of witchcraft. It doesn’t say that they can harm one out of their own will but it simply says invoke the name God and his protection against these kinds of evil deeds. In fact there is reference in (2:102) which indicates that people who are learning this sometimes through various magical formulas how to “sow discord between a man and wife.” I know some interpreters who interpret this in various ways, not necessarily through magic but through evil deeds or prompting but there are those who believe that it may be possible that with the use of evil spirits some attempt to do harm. Some people know this as black magic.

**Host: Leaving aside magic in the form of enchantment what does Islam say about the other forms of magic especially sorcery?**

Jamal Badawi:

The position of Islam on this is very clear in fact a different part of the same verse in (2:102) it says that “the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter.” Sorcery is a very strongly condemned type of action. We find that the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has indicated in one Hadith that among the seven greatest sins which destroy a person’s welfare in the hereafter is magic. In fact it comes immediately after associating others with God which the greatest sin. The position of Islam is quite clear on this point and that it is absolutely condemned.

**Host: We talked about the use of magic for wrong purposes what about learning magic without necessarily using it?**

Jamal Badawi:

In fact we find a reference to this in the very same verse. In (2:102) it talks about people who learned magic in the past and that “they learned what harmed them not what profited them.” Obviously when the Quran says that if something is learned it

harms, then one better keep away from it. Indeed one can't really separate learning magic from using magic. Learning magic or sorcery makes it very tempting for the person to use it. When the temptation is there it can be tempting to use it for evil because we are human we might get angry with someone or be envious. In order to cut the evil tree from the roots Islam also prohibited learning the evil of magic.

In fact if I may add to this, people reported to me who have heard of these cases that many of the people who tried to practice sorcery or get into this very slippery road end up going crazy. They go crazy because they get some sort of domination by the evil spirit or by imagination. In the end it is a very dangerous area to get into so it is better stay away from it.

**Host: What if someone goes to a magician or sorcerer to ask for a solution to a problem?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is just as condemned as the position of magic itself. Some evidence of this is in one of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about certain the categories that will never enter paradise. One of those categories is a person who believes in magic. Of course when one goes to a sorcerer it means that one believes in him and some power that can profit you or harm you. This is totally against Islamic belief because God alone has the absolute power and that nobody human or unseen creator can inflict any harm unto one against the will of God. In that sense it is a question of methodology in Islamic jurisprudence that when something is forbidden then learning it, believing in it or even resorting to someone who uses it is evil. In that sense an ideal society in the view of Islam is a society that is free of sorcery witchcraft or wizardry.

**Host: If we accept the fact that seeking the aid of a magician is forbidden what should a person do when faced with a very serious problem?**

Jamal Badawi:

I suggest four basic points that one should keep in mind. Whenever one faces a difficult problem Islam says that one should have a very firm unshaken belief that there is nobody who shares in the divine attributes of God, in His power, His authority and His control of this universe. Like I said before nothing can ever happen in this universe against His will. There is no competing power with God He is the sovereign of the universe. So this of course includes human beings, Jinn, diviners, sorcerers, magicians or any other creator there is only one creator and everyone else is a creator of God.

A second point that we should keep in mind is to believe in magic to help one resolve a particular problem carries an implicit hidden assumption that somebody else can benefit you or harm you. This is a kind of *shirk* as we call it in Islamic terminology which means associating other powers with God which is regarded as blasphemy.

A third point is that Islam provides a more constructive and positive way of dealing with difficult problems in that a person should try to depend on God, this doesn't mean a fatalistic attitude, one does what they can and ultimately believe in the final authority of God, one petitions to Him and pray to Him to guide and help in the matter at hand.

Fourthly, this is not necessarily contradictory with doing your best. So whenever one has a problem try to use your God given rationality, your God given mind, this may not be enough so one seeks the help of other human beings and people who are sincere in giving advice. But like I said when problems really get complex one could invoke the name of God and ask for his guidance because the mind and intelligence alone may not necessarily resolve all problems. First one does what they are supposed to do and then they can leave the rest to God.

**Host: Could you expand on the issue of divination and fortune tellers?**

Jamal Badawi:

The term used for the unseen in Quran is *ghaib*, or something that is absent from us or beyond our knowledge. One could divide the unseen or unknown or things that might fall in the future into three categories.

There is one category of information we only do not have access to. For example if we talk about something that happened during the days of previous prophets or prior to that or about something that has not been documented in history. Then we can say we don't know what really happened in that particular period of time because we were not there but there were other humans who were there who knew of it.

A second type of unseen is not accessible to any human being. For example what happened on earth before the human being lived on it. No human was there so humans make theories based on whatever facts are available but still it is not that certain.

Thirdly there is other information, which relates more to the question, which is impossible for any human being to know without revelation. This includes knowledge about God, what will happen to us after death and the life hereafter. This is all information that one can't just go and read about it as it has to be revealed through revelation. It is impossible for any human being to sit down and say in x year y things will happen. So the basic rule according to the Quran is that the knowledge of the all categories lies exclusively with God. One documentation on this is found in the Quran in (27:65) "Say. None in the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows what is hidden." Even the messengers of God were instructed not to claim that they had any knowledge of the future. For example in (6:50) it says about Prophet Noah in particular "Say: "I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor do I know what is hidden, nor do I tell you I am an angel." The same thing also was directed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in (7:188) "Say: 'I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah willeth. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me: I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith.'" In fact there was a little story that is narrated in Termithi a collection of the Prophet's sayings in which it is said that some people came to the Prophet (PBUH) and they hid something in their hand and then they asked him to tell them what they had. His answer this was "I am not a diviner and divination and diviners are all in the hell fire." The message of the prophet was to guide people not to play games. There are other evidences in the Quran for example in (34:14) it is mentioned that the Jinn, spirits, not knowing about the death of Prophet Solomon (PBUH). So there is plenty of evidence in the Quran that shows that the basic rule is that the knowledge of the future is the exclusive domain of God

**Host: In our previous discussions about prophets being able to foretell which actually happened at some subsequent time based on what you just said this is not an exception to the rule? Prophets are not able to tell the future.**

Jamal Badawi:

It is not an exception if we are talking about divination but it could be admissible if we look at it as prophecy. I think the distinction could clarify this point. When we talk about divination we are talking about people who claim that they have certain supernatural powers. Sometimes divination is based on the false claim of contact with supernatural beings or spirits or devils and this is definitely wrong. In that sense there is no exception, divination is wrong for everybody as well as prophets.

When we talk about prophets and the chosen messengers of God whatever they foretold about the future is not divination. I am glad that this issue was raised. What they talked about was prophecy. Prophecy is not a prophet claiming to know the future by himself he simply claims that God has revealed certain information to him. This is why one may not in the last part of my answer to the previous question I said that the basic rule is that the knowledge of the unseen is the exclusive domain of God unless by his explicit will He gives information to a particular prophet. There is

one interesting verse about this in the Quran in (72:26-27) “He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make any one acquainted with His Mysteries, except an apostle whom He has chosen.” In fact this could be regarded as one explicit thing that the Quran mentions when specific information is conveyed to the prophet. But of course if a prophet is a true one he would not boast this he would simply humbly admit that this is something that God has blessed him with.

**Host: There are three areas I would like to get into if we have time. What about astrology and the stars and people who use them as a source of information about the future?**

Jamal Badawi:

You’r talking about astrology and palm reading- from a Muslim point of view most of these things are superstition and exploitation of people. At times it is commercialized type of activities, it sells lots of books but it doesn’t necessarily tell a whole lot and some times things might happen by way of coincidence. One opens the paper and reads all kinds of things about the horoscope and one thinks that it tells one exactly what’s going to happen because one was born in that particular month or period of time. But we forget that we are talking about 4 billion people who are in the world today perhaps you will find a few million who are born in the same period. How is it that those people have the same personality and the same events that happened or likely to happen in their lives. It is just incomprehensible.

The Quran does mention something about the stars but not astrology or horoscope. It mentions something about the stars in (15:16) that God created the stars as a sort of beautification of the skies. Beauty, to be observe and awed and remember the bounty and power of God. In (6:97) the Quran mentions something about the stars in terms of their positive benefit as guidance to people in darkness. It guides people traveling in the sea or on land. Thirdly, in (25:61) it talks about God making lanterns in the skies. In an interesting verse in (10:15) it talks about the sun and the moon. The sun is described as shining glory and the moon as light. This is quite interesting because the words used in the Quran is that the sun is a source of light but the moon is regarded as only light or reflection.

## 4.4 Muslim Beliefs- Dreams, Omens, Envy & Charms

### Summary of 4.3 "Divination, Astrology, & Magic"

We started by explaining the various meanings of magic. We said that could mean simply enchantment or attraction and it could also mean playing a little trick just like bringing a rabbit out of a hat which is ok if used for entertainment. We talked about another type of tricks which is used to strike terror into people’s hearts or used to exploit them. We gave examples about the magicians during the time of Prophet

Moses (PBUH) and how they tried to deceive people. Of course Moses was not a magician; we should make it clear that when he threw his staff it became a real snake that ate all the trivial magical deeds that the magicians were using. This was how he proved his prophethood.

We also talked about another meaning of magic and that is sorcery or the use of magic, witchcraft wizardry used for a sinister or bad purpose and to hurt people. We indicated that Islam is very clear on the question of magic and that Islam the use of magic, learning of magic or resorting to a magician to help in solving any problems. Actually we indicated that whenever a Muslim person is faced with a problem they should depend upon God and realize that the final authority lies in His hands. A Muslim should use their God given minds, the help and advice of others to solve their problems and after all they have to constantly petition God and pray to Him for guidance.

Then we touched on the question of divination and people who claim to tell the future, fortune tellers. We said that Islam forbade this and again the knowledge of the unseen belongs only to God with the exception of what He reveals to some people, prophets and messengers. We also indicated that this basic principal applies to all other forms of telling the future whether it is palm reading, astrology or horoscope. All of these things are at times exploitation of people. We indicated that whenever the Quran mentions anything about the stars it doesn't talk about in terms of fortune telling but as beautification in the sky as light and guidance.

#### 4.4 Dreams, Omens, Envy and Charms

**Host: Are there specific areas of the unseen or things about the future which Islam emphasizes that particularly belong to Allah?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are five areas that are actually summarized in one verse in the Quran and also repeated in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This appears in (31:34) "Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does any one know what it is that he will earn on the morrow: Nor does any one know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things)." There are five basic areas that are emphasized in this passage of the Quran.

First, the knowledge of the hour or The Day of Judgment, knowledge of the rain fall, what is in the wombs of mothers, what a person is going to earn in the future and where and how a person is going to die.

**Host: Some people might argue that some of these things like rain fall can be predicted by a forecast and other things that you mentioned might be predicted by scientific means. What would be your response to this?**

Jamal Badawi:

I think that in raising this argument they seem to be mixing between two things. They are mixing between the absolute and complete knowledge of God that is with complete certitude without any doubt as to its exactitude and the human effort to try and predict and forecast something that may happen on the basis of some partial evidence that is available.

Let's take each of these five areas briefly. First of all I don't think that people who raise these questions raise it about the hour that is The Day of Judgment. There may be signs of the approach of The Day of Judgment or great havoc in the universe but nobody can say for sure when it will happen.

The second issue is the question of rain fall. When the weather person makes any forecast about rainfall it is based on certain information and study of the patterns of wind speed and direction and of clouds. This is facilitated by information that could be obtained by satellites. So we are not really getting information of hidden things but from things that God has already created in the universe. Things that have already started by way of wind movement according to certain laws that God created in nature. In that sense it is not encroachment on the domain of God to make these kinds of forecasts because God according to the Quran encourages us to try and learn what is in the universe and to harness them for human benefit.

Take the third issue of the knowledge of what is in the wombs of mothers. Some people would say that refers to the sex of the fetus. We can use medical means now like taking some of the fluid from the uterus and analyze it and they come up with a prediction of the sex of the fetus. What is forgotten here is the verse that I sighted as it did not say the sex of the fetus it says only God what is in the wombs. What is in the womb is not necessarily if the person is going to be male or female but rather what kind of person it is, their character, how long he or she will live, what kind of destiny the person would have after death. This is a very embractive knowledge that only God would know for sure and in full details.

The fourth area that says that no person knows what he or she is going to earn tomorrow. It doesn't mean the salary because for example I work on a fixed salary so I know how much I am going to make tomorrow. Earn here is used for deeds. Again nobody knows for sure because nobody knows if they are going to be alive tomorrow.

Finally in which land a person is going to die. I think all of us can attest to the fact that medical doctors can sometimes predict that this person might die within so many days or months. But the exact moment and date is something that is reserved with the knowledge of God.

In other words the main issue here is the distinction between the full and certain knowledge of God and between God permitting us to forecast certain natural phenomena. The Quran takes a very open attitude towards the understanding of the universe and the various laws. To the Muslim these laws are created by God and we have to understand them and harness them for our benefit.

**Host: Lets turn to the aspect of knowledge of the future related to dreams. Sometimes people have dreams which eventually come true. Does this kind of situation contradict the Islamic understanding of the unseen?**

Jamal Badawi:

Not necessarily, to remind you of one verse we quoted from the Quran in the last program that the knowledge of the unseen is reserved to God except as He permits. So there is a possibility of God allowing some of this information or giving them to prophets or even to people through dreams. In fact I have a reference to this particular point in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which is narrated in Sahih Muslim one of the authentic collections of prophetic sayings in which the Prophet (PBUH) divides dreams into three types. He says there are good dreams and they come from God, there are bad dreams that come from Satan and there are dreams that are basically ones own thoughts or something that emanates from ones own mind or thoughts or worries.

Now as far as the first category, dreams that come from God, it could be a kind of warning of something wrong that one might be tempted to do or it could be foretelling something that is going to happen to very soon. This is coming from God and could be like a gift and is one aspect of prophesy. In fact in one saying of Prophet Muhammad he says that if a person is gifted with dreams that come true then it constitutes one part of forty five portions of prophecy. It is like two percent or so of prophecy but one is not a prophet. So there is nothing wrong with this.



The second type of dream which the prophet calls dreams from Satan with evil suggestions or scary things like nightmares. Again he explains a variety of ways to deal with it when one wakes up scared or with a bad dream. One is not to tell people about it and should invoke the name of God by saying 'I seek refuge in the name of God most beneficent most merciful.' He also recommended that one changes the side one is sleeping on. If one is sleeping on their right side they should turn to their left side. An even better way is to raise up make ablution and perform prayers and then go back to bed and this would drive away the evil spirits or evil suggestions and one can sleep again securely.

The third type of dreams is something that perhaps many psychiatrists will be interested in as it is a reflection of some of ones thoughts, prior experiences, knowledge, worries, desires or whatever the case may be. This could be neutral and may not necessarily cause any particular harm as it reflects ones own thought. A dream in the case of a prophet or what he sees in his dream becomes compulsory and is regarded as a direct command from God just as when God sends the revelation to instruct him to do certain things. We find evidence in the Quran about this in the story of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) when he was commanded by God in his dream to sacrifice his only son Ishmael. This story is found in (37:100-113). This again is something that applies exclusively to a prophet or messenger.

### **Host: Does the Quran have anything to say about bad luck or bad omens?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a term which is used in the Quran which approximates the meaning of bad omen it is called in Arabic *tatiyor*.. Tatiyor is believing that somebody brings bad luck. We find that this is quite common in a variety of cultures one example would be people having certain hang up with the number 13. I even heard that when people build high rises they have floor number 12 then floor number 14 because the number 13 is a no no. Some people feel bad luck if a black cat passes in front of them or if they pass next to a ladder (which might be understandable because the ladder might fall on them). Some people might have bad omen from certain objects or people they see or from animals they encounter. The Quran indicates that in the past many people have fallen prey to these kinds of superstition and this is not acceptable to the Muslim.

Indeed the Quran mentions by way of ridiculing some of the unbelievers who used to accuse the prophets in the past of bringing bad luck. This accusation for example appears in the Quran (36:18) and it is denied that Prophets do not bring bad luck. In the case of Prophet Saleh in (27:47) it talks about accusations made against him. Even in the case of one of the great prophets Prophet Moses (PBUH) we find that his people, the Egyptians at that time, felt that Prophet Moses and his followers brought bad luck to them. This would be interesting to quote as it talks about the Egyptians in (7:131) "But when good (times) came, they said, "This is due to us;"

When gripped by calamity, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him! Behold! in truth the omens of evil are theirs in Allah's sight, but most of them do not understand!" In other words Islam came to change the whole notion of bad omens and that it is not necessarily a person or event that bring bad luck but what truly brings bad luck are the evil deeds.

There are some sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he used that term and he changes the usage from believing in it as a superstition into objective and rational evil. For example when one says a bad omen is connected with a home it could just be a bad neighborhood or an omen involved in an animal that one uses like a horse could be because it is a troublesome animal. In this case the whole meaning is changed from superstitious and supernatural belief to actual reasons why things are the way they are. It is not unusual that because of some peoples involvement in the belief in bad omens that they tend to become self fulfilling prophecies. For example some one who is leaving their home and sees a black cat or crow pass in front of them will cause them to keep thinking about it with all the anxiety that it arouses might cause them to get in an accident on the way. Then they blame it on the crow- what does the crow have to do with it? This is a self fulfilling type of prophecy. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says in one of his sayings 'it is not of us (it is not a Muslim) he who believes in bad omens or goes to someone else who tells about these omens, a person who practices divination or foretelling of the future or goes to someone who practices divination, a person who practices sorcery or even resorts to someone who practices sorcery.' All of these types of situations are included in this saying.

**Host: What is the Muslim position on the belief in charms and other things that protect from evil or bring good fortune?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is very surprising that even among cultures where there is a very high degree of education and rationality that many of these things are persist. In some places they hang horns, hand, eye or something of that sort. The basic rule in terms of these things is, and it relates to one basic principle that we discussed in the last program, that this kind of belief reflects the belief in another power beside the power of God as a rival power. As such it is just as rejected in Islam as bad omens.

Indeed there are two sayings of Prophet Muhammad that we will refer to. One is narrated in Ahmad in which he says "that if a person has a necklace or hangs something believing that this protects him, then he is associating other deities with God." In another saying in the collection of Tirmithy he says that "a person who hangs something believing in its protection, God will leave him so the object may protect him." This means of course that that thing has no power to protect the individuals. So in this sense a true Muslim would not believe in it. It is unfortunate that we find some Muslims who still hang these things out of imitation to

others. Even in the case of illness for example Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught and I quote him again in a saying narrated in Ahmad. “Seek remedy for your disease because he who created disease also created the cure.” So one should not have superstitious thoughts about either good or bad omens as one has to apply rational means and seek remedy. Of course this does not contradict what is beyond rational as the attitude of praying to God, invocation of His name and the belief that God can cure one without the agency of medicine. What Islam provides is that one has got to try first and do their best and then leave the rest to God. One should always feel that it is ultimately His authority.

One of the interesting practices of the Prophet (PBUH) was that when he visited someone who is sick he used to do *ruqya* or make prayer for his cure. He puts his hand on the persons forehead and says “relieve the suffering oh Lord of mankind, cure you are the Curer, there is no cure but yours, cure which leaves no trace of illness.” This however doesn’t say don’t take medicine in addition to seeking the proper cure. This is where one finds that the attitude of Islam is to combine between rational ways of looking for solutions to ones problems while always believing that everything is contingent on the power and will of God.

**Host: Can we discuss the bad eye, envy, voodoo or spells and how they can or can’t cause harm to a person?**

Jamal Badawi:

This reminds me of a story a friend was tell me the other day that there were two people who were believed to have a bad eye. Whenever they looked at someone or something, something bad happens to it. And he said that they started competing and one looked at a mountain and the mountain evaporated so the other person looked at him and said my goodness what kind of an eye have got. So the other person became blind.

The question of envy has been mentioned in the Quran in more than one place but perhaps more specifically in (113:5) in which a believer is told to seek the protection of God from the evil of an envious person when he or she envies. Now what exactly is the bad eye or spell? One possibility would be the fact that an envious person, which is by definition someone who does not wish that any blessings happen to another, is driven by extreme jealousy to try and partake in extreme actions that may harm another. This is one possible meaning. On the other hand we should not try to approach the subject in a way that is overly rational and forget the fact that in human history and the experience of many people there have been many cases where this envious eye did actually result, not cause, in some harm. Not necessarily mountains dissipating but there maybe something of that sort. How do we explain it? We do not know. There is no text that I know of for sure in the Quran or Sunnah which gives a clear explanation as to how this happens. Is it a kind of thing that emanates from the

person that is unseen that might cause this harm? We don't know. I don't want to make guesses on this issue. What the Quran says, however, that we should not be over anxious about the bad eye and the Prophet of Islam the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has taught us to recite three times each the last three chapters of the Quran. Two of them chapters 113 and 114 involve all kinds of invocation of the name of God for protection. They should be read by the person at the time when he or she goes to bed but after all the person should keep his trust in God and should not have undue anxiety.

## 4.5 Muslim Beliefs- The Soul

### **Summary of 4.4 "Dreams, Omens, Envy & Charms"**

I would summarize it in four basic points. First of all we discussed the difference between the ability of human beings using partial evidence that is available to them and using God given understanding of the laws in nature, created by God, in order to forecast or predict certain things like earthquakes or rain. We said this is quite different from complete, full and exact knowledge of things that are going to happen in the future which are in the exclusive domain of God except what He chooses to communicate or let be known.

The second basic point was the question of dreams that come true. We discussed how Islam divided into dreams as that emanates from God, which are good dreams, dreams that are there to scare one which hark from the devil and we suggested what measures to use to get away from these kinds of scary feelings and to get back to sleep comfortably.

We also discussed the belief that people have in the bad eye that brings evil to them. We said that one should depend upon God and not to worry much about it while still taking precautions and to recite certain verses in the Quran especially the last three chapters of the Quran in the morning and evening.

We also indicated that the belief that certain things bring good luck or bad luck are not necessarily true and causes people to have many superstitious thoughts that might at times be self fulfilling prophecies.

## 4.5 The Soul

**Host: Do Muslims belief in life after death and if so what is the basis for this belief?**

Jamal Badawi:

The first thing we should realize is belief in life after death is part and partial of the Muslim belief. Indeed one can't be regarded as a Muslim if he rejects the belief in the life hereafter. Let me give specific documentation of this particular issue. We will focus on how much importance Islam gives this particular belief. Let's look at the human being as a material. What is the human being composed of? A few gallons of water some carbon some magnesium, potassium, sodium and other elements in the earth. What does this mean? In itself it means nothing I remember reading a while back somebody made statistical study about how many pencils can be made out of the carbon of the human body, how many nails one can make from the iron in the human body, how many boxes of matches one can make from the phosphorus in the human body. All of these elements would be worth a few dollars. When we talk about the human being we are talking about a special class of the creations of God which is worth more than the few dollars that the basic elements that one finds in the human body. Not even six million dollars as some say is the price of man. One can't put a price tag on this miraculous and special creation of God. To the Muslim the human being is the crown of creation. Now if a Muslim believes in a world beyond the world of matter then what is the thing that really makes a difference between a few gallons of water and some basic elements, who has intellect, who has free will and above all who has the spirituality to know God and to strive to please Him? With this understanding then if the value of the human being doesn't reside in this matter then where does it reside. From here comes the belief that the human being is not just matter and is not even just a biological life like any other life but has a soul which makes the difference between humans and other creatures.

**Host: How would you define the soul and is it the same as spirit?**

Jamal Badawi:

I have to give as closely as possible the equivalent Quranic terminology used for this. The word spirit in my understanding approximates the Arabic term *rooh*, where as the term soul, approximates the Arabic term *nafs*. To put it in a nutshell the *rooh* or the spirit is a term which is to the Muslim more general and more embracing than the term soul. When we talk about spirit as used in the Quran we find that that term is used in three or four different meanings. First of all it used to refer to divine revelation given to prophets. For example in (42:52) it says a spirit from the command of God or "We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee."

A second meaning that is used for the term spirit in the Quran is the spirit that God provides for the believers to give them the comfort, trust in Him, confidence and to support them in their difficulties. This is documented in the Quran in (58:22) but of

course it doesn't mean that this spirit that God uses to support the believers through is part of divinity but it is simply His help and support of the believers.

A third meaning of spirit as used in the Quran is in reference to Archangel Gabriel. He is regarded in the Quran as Holy Spirit as trustworthy or honest spirit. But I should again indicate that this has no connotation of the term spirit being connected with the term divinity. The Muslim belief is that the Holy Spirit is one of the creations of God as he is an archangel.

There is also another meaning that could be derived from the term spirit. The spirit is from God and was breathed into us to make us human beings. We find reference in the Quran particularly about the creation of Prophet Jesus (PBUH) and that he is a spirit from God which appears in (4:171). The exact same term appears in different ways in (32:9) and in (15:28-29)\*. Both of these quotations talk about God creating the human being in the best possible fashion and then "breathed into him of My spirit." When the Quran uses this terminology it means that the spirit of God that is breathed into us is the spirit of the knowledge of God and the intuitive feeling of contact or need for the creator. This is the meaning of spirit.

The term soul however or the word *nafs* in Arabic is perhaps a little bit more limited. This is the thing that I mentioned before as the thing that distinguishes between a simple biological life and a human being who has the powers of reason, intellect and above all the spirituality which connects him with his creator. In that sense it can be similar to the term spirit in a very narrow sense. The term spirit is broader than the term soul and yet they are similar in one sense.

**Host: Where do we develop our understanding and how do we come to know about the soul? How much is it possible for us to know about the soul.**

Jamal Badawi:

By definition when we talk about the soul we are not really talking about something that is material or tangible. As such the sources of knowledge can't be totally material sources. In other words no amount of human intellect, no amount of experimental ability and no amount of experiential ability that is a mystical experience where people feel under certain spiritual exercises can provide a sufficient and authentic source of knowledge as to what the soul is, its nature and what happens to it.

This leads us to one conclusion which we discussed in the series on prophethood in Islam. The description for an unseen or intangible type of thing like the soul would have to be understood through direct revelation and communicated by God through His prophets via Holy Books. For the Muslim this would be the Quran. Even then the Quran makes it clear that the information given within revelation is limited. One key verse in the Quran in (17:85) "They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: 'The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!).'" So we can only proceed with the very little information that the divine revelation gives us about the soul. We can't hope to have full or complete knowledge about the soul like we have about the eye or ear as it is something that is beyond our comprehension.

**Host: Is there any particular place in the individual's body in which the soul resides?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is no evidence that I know of in the Quran or the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that implies in any way that the soul resides in any special part of the human body. Now mind you I am aware of some notions that exist among other people but not necessarily among Muslims the belief that the soul resides in the blood, the heart or the mind. All of these notions seem to mix between soul and biological life. Of course without blood, heart or brains one can't function. One would be dead or one's soul would not be united with the body. So in that sense there is relation but it is still quite different from the soul and how we described it before as a source of intellect and most importantly spirituality.

There are some Muslim scholars, however like Ibn-Alkim who in his own interpretation feels that the soul is a body of light or a body within our body. The soul is something that is totally infused in the body in a way like the water is infused in a flower. But again we have to be careful as this is not based on any text in the Quran or sayings of the Prophet. Through the research in this area I could not find a common belief in this area among Muslim jurists and scholars that the soul resides in any particular part of the body. It seems that the more acceptable view is that it is perhaps infused in the whole body even though we don't know this exactly what shape or nature it takes. After all it is a non-material and is of the unseen.

**Host: In response to an earlier question you indicated that the soul has its origins from God. We know that God is eternal does this mean that our souls are also eternal? Do our souls perish when we die? Before we are born do our souls exist?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is just like some ideas that since the word of God proceeds from God then it should be eternal. I think in regards to the question of the soul there is a mix up between two things. On one hand we have the prior knowledge of God and of everything that is going to happen on this earth. By default the complete and perfect knowledge of God is that He knew everything before the earth was created. On the other hand this is quite different from the actual creation of the soul or its uniting with the physical body. These are two different issues. God's knowledge is always complete and perfect and the creation of the soul is something that took place later on. In other words the soul is not eternal.

Perhaps one way of explaining it is that the soul uses the body as a garment. The soul may take different forms, it may transform from one stage to another while using the body. So the body is a garment which is shed at the time of death. There is one saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which confirms further that the soul is created and is not eternal. In one of those sayings he says that in the beginning of the fifth month of pregnancy that God ordains the soul to be breathed into the fetus. Again this is not biological life because some studies show that the ovum, the fertilized egg, it has biological life it has the ingredients of life but when we talk of the soul from a spiritual sense it comes into being in the fifth month of pregnancy.

As far as the destructibility of the soul, it is indestructible once it is created. There are four stages the soul goes through. In the first stage the soul is united with the body as a fetus beginning in the fifth month. Secondly the soul is united with the body after birth or from the period after birth and before death. The third stage is the soul departing from the physical body between burial or death and resurrection on the Day of Judgment. The fourth and perhaps more eternal or lasting form of the soul is when it reunites with the body on the Day of Resurrection. It dwells with the body either in paradise or in the hell fire. These are the various stages which show that the soul will never perish but that it actually starts or is created while we are still in the womb.

**Host: What happens to the soul during and after the death experience? First of all what is the Islamic attitude towards death?**

Jamal Badawi:

I realize that most people do not particularly feel that the subject of death is a very pleasant subject. For the Muslim there is no question about facing the subject of death. There is no attempt to try and repress the subject. There are a number of reasons for this. Perhaps one of the most universal realities in this universe is death. Every second there are several people who are born and others who die. Just as we record this program there are several people all over the world who are dying or have died already since we started. The other thing about it is that it is the most universal experience. Some people may experience some things in their lives others don't but death and birth are the most universal experiences that all human beings



have to go through sooner or later. It follows that it is a mistake to say why talk about such an unpleasant thing. It is very important and deserves some attention.

This is not only the attitude of Muslim but I have noted recently some people who are not necessarily Muslims are starting to realize the importance of this subject. There are literature courses about death and dying and caring for the dying. I was pleased to be invited one time by one of my colleagues at St. Mary's to address his class which was a whole course dealing with the subject of death. I was surprised to find that the enrolment in the course was close to 80 students. This is quite unusual especially with courses about religious studies.

In any case to focus specifically on the Muslim attitude we find that the Quran in (21:35) "Every soul shall have a taste of death." This also appears in (29:57) "Every soul shall have a taste of death in the end to Us shall ye be brought back."

Secondly the Quran makes it clear that no matter what the person does to evade or escape death when it is determined for him to die nothing can prevent that from happening to him. In one moving verse in the Quran in (4:78) "Wherever ye are, death will find you out, even if ye are in towers built up strong and high!"

For a Muslim there isn't much worry as to when the person is going to die. A Muslim should not use the terms 'prolonging the life of an individual' or 'shortening the life of an individual' because before we are created or even become fetuses God has predetermined the exact moment where we are supposed to die. We should not worry about this particular issue. In (16:61) it says for example that when the term of the person comes he will not have one hour more or later. A Muslim believes in the perpetual existence of the life of the soul after death of the physical body. The Muslim looks at death as a shift from one state of existence to another. The same way we move from the state of being asleep to the state of consciousness and back again. Indeed for the Muslim when people die they awaken, people are sleeping when they are physically alive because they get busy with too many of the things that God has created in this universe and many of the mysteries of God. But when the person dies their physical body is no longer there to attract these things such as a job, money, property and all that and then he might awaken to the higher reality of the spiritual existence. So in that sense a Muslim should always be prepared about this shift. A true Muslim should not be worried about that he or she is going of face death. What worries the true Muslim more is whether or not he is doing enough in this earthly life to get ready for the security and for felicity in the life after death because the Muslim believes in punishment and reward after death.

Perhaps I can conclude the answer to this question by referring to one interesting verse in the Quran which give the ideal attitude of how a Muslim should look at death 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.” The whole matter of life and death to the Muslim are nothing but a particular test a stage in his eternal existence and has to harness it to get ready for the more perpetual and eternal life.

**Host: Is there anything in the Quran that explains what a person feels or sees during the experience of death?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are lots of these things but perhaps I can touch on one of these things. One aspect is that usually the person at the time of death hopes to go back to life in order catch up with good deeds. For example we find this in (63:10) “and spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before Death should come to any of you and he should say, "O my Lord! why didst Thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good.” So one feeling at the time of death is some kind of sorrow for not having enough time to do more good in order to prepare for the life hereafter.

\*Says that the quote is from verse 18-19 incorrectly.

\*\* Says that the quote is from chapter 28 incorrectly.

## 4.6 Muslim Beliefs- Death

### Summary of 4.5 "The Soul"

We basically tried to make five points last time. One is the belief in the life here after is one of the basic pillars of Islam. Secondly we tried to make it clear that at the heart of believing in the life hereafter is the belief in the existence of the soul. The soul is not necessarily something that is material and when we talk about the soul we are not talking about the physical life or biological life but really something that is the secret to our creation endowed to us by God that makes us human beings rather than any other type of creator.

The third point was that the only dependable and authentic source for any knowledge about the soul would have to be divine revelation. We also said that intellect, experience or experimentation are areas or tools which may be useful but can't really provide a complete non misleading source for information about the soul.

The fourth point emphasizes that the soul doesn't have any particular place where it resides in the body like blood or the heart or the brain, it is something that is probably fused in the whole body but doesn't have any particular location. We indicated also that according to one of the saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that the soul is created in the beginning of the fifth month of pregnancy. The soul doesn't die with the death of the physical body it continues to live. We talked about the four stages of the soul. First when the soul is created in the womb of mothers, the second stage when the soul unites with the body in the earthly life, thirdly the stage of the soul's existence between burial and the day of resurrection, fourthly when the soul unites again with the body on the day for the eternal reward or punishment.

Finally, since we were talking about the soul it was inevitable to touch upon the subject of death and the attitude of Muslims towards death. We said like any human being no person likes to think much about death. Some people avoid talking about death however we tried to indicate that this is a subject worth looking into because it is a universal experience that everybody has to go through sooner or later. We indicated that for the Muslim death is merely a transition from one state of existence to another and that it is something that no body can interfere with. God has already predetermined when exactly when each person is going to die. There might be a variety of reasons that might appear to us but this is something that is predetermined. The main worry of a true Muslim really is not whether he is going to die but whether his deeds and beliefs in this life would qualify him for felicity in the hereafter. We cited in the end of the program from the beginning of chapter 67 in the Quran that life and death are things that are created by God to test us as to whether we are going to conduct life in accordance his commands or not.

## 4.6 Death

**Host: Could we elaborate on what a person feels or sees during the experience of death?**

Jamal Badawi:

I recall that we first tried to emphasize is that at the time of death a person feels a desire to come back to life in order to catch up with good deeds. Another verse that would bring the topic into focus appears in the Quran in (23:99-100). The verses describe people who do not comply with the commands of God and what happens to them at the time of death. "(In Falsehood will they be) Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord! send me back (to life). In order that I may work

righteousness in the things I neglected.” “By no means! It is but a word he says.” Before them is a Partition till the Day they are raised up.” It is interesting here to note that even a good person has the desire to come back and catch up with good works so they can accumulate more rewards. The interesting thing that perhaps we can come to is when it says there is a partition and that once a person dies it is like a partition between this earthly life and resurrection. It is like a barrier that is impossible to break and come back to this life.

In addition to this, the thing that we couldn't get into last time is that a person's soul is actually taken by angels. Remember a few programs back we talked about angels and we covered many aspects but one aspect that we did not describe really is the relationship between angels and the human at the time of death and there after. We find that the Quran indicates that there are certain angels that are in charge of taking the souls of humans. Just to give a sample of the citations in the Quran in (6:61) “He is the irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers, and He sets guardians over you. At length, when death approaches one of you, Our angels take his soul, and they never fail in their duty.” The other verse that I mentioned earlier that there is a particular angel who would be in charge of taking the soul of any particular human being appears in (32:11) “The Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: then shall ye be brought back to your Lord.” In a sense then the soul is taken by the angels.

One final remark is that the over all experience of death is described in the Quran as *sakrah* which means stupor or unconscious at the time of the exit of the soul. This appears particularly in (50:19).

**Host: At the time a person is dying is there any way they can find out if his or her life in the after life will be a happy or sad one?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes, there are indications in both the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and I can give examples in the time available. If we look into the Quran we find that there are profiles of both states for people who would be happy in the hereafter verses those who would miserable.

Let's take the first and more hopeful profile first. First of all a believer who had the right belief and who has done good deeds in life, the Quran indicates that he would be greeted by the angels of death and he would be assured of his destiny. In the very last moments a person would know for sure where his destiny is going to be. Ill give two citations on that profile in (16:32) “(Namely) those whose lives the angels take in a state of purity, saying (to them), “Peace be on you; enter ye the Garden, because of

(the good) which ye did (in the world).” Not only this in another moving passage in the Quran in (41:30-32) “In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is Allah., and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): “Fear ye not!” (they suggest), “Nor grieve! but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised! We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall ye have all that ye ask for! A hospitable gift from one Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!” I hope that this is the one that most people would focus on achieving.

The picture must be balanced. The Quran also give a profile of those dying in a state of disbelief or confused belief as well as wickedness in terms of wrong doing. The picture is quite difference but to keep it balanced and fair I also selected two citations from the Quran to describe it. Obviously when the person is wicked or an unbeliever at the time of death the soul will not be too anxious to get out because it knows what it’s destiny is going to be. So there will be some reluctance. For example in (8:50) “If thou couldst see, when the angels take the souls of the Unbelievers (at death), (How) they smite their faces and their backs, (saying): "Taste the penalty of the blazing Fire.” Of course this doesn’t mean this is smiting like the physical smiting where you can see the sign on the backs but people do feel that pain at being rebuked at the time of death. In another strong and vivid description also in (6:93) “If thou couldst but see how the wicked (do fare) in the flood of confusion at death! - the angels stretch forth their hands, (saying), “Yield up your souls: this day shall ye receive your reward,- a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against Allah, and scornfully to reject of His signs!” In that sense then the Quran gives both profiles, which give a clear indication that any human before departing this world can get the feel as to where exactly where his or her destiny is likely to be.

**Host: These are very vivid descriptions I am curious to know if there are any additional indications of the kind of things that an individual experiences at the time of death?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a lengthy saying of Prophet Muhammad which appears in the collection of Ahmad ibn Hanbal called Musnad. But we have to be careful when I go through this description that we do not put it exactly in the same material image because the Hadith describes something that is inaccessible for us to understand in it’s fullest sense. It is a description which gives a sense of material punishment but the nature of those punishments is something that could be beyond our understanding. Again in the saying of the Prophet give two profiles.

For the pious, the person who is accepted by God in terms of good deeds, he (the Prophet) says that when the person is just on the verge of departing from this life and starting the life hereafter angels will come to him with shining faces just like the sun

which reflects their joy. They will sit across from his eyes and then the angel of death (the particular angel in charge of taking his soul) will be sitting at his head. Then at the time the soul is coming out the angel will say “come out you good soul, come to forgiveness and pleasure from your lord.” Then he says the soul will leave the body like a drop of water would fall which means it will come out easily and smoothly. He said then that the soul is taken by the angels, again we can think of this as something physical or material but the person perceives what is going on, and they start descending into the heavens. Whenever other angels notice these people passing they say “what is that nice smell” of musk, which is very fragrant. So the angels who are carrying the soul would say this is the soul of so and so the son of so and so he just died. So the angels continue praying on his behalf for forgiveness. Then whenever the angels go from one level of heavens to the other the angels keep coming and participate in praying for the dead soul. He says then that the soul reaches a certain level in heaven where God gives the command to the angels and He says take the book of deeds, as we mentioned before every human being has a book of deeds when we talked about the angels and how they keep our deeds, and put it in the heavens. Then He commands them to return his soul to earth for the accountability immediately after burial.

The second profile is for the wicked or unbeliever. He (the Prophet) says that the person also sees angels coming to take his soul but he sees them with darkened grim faces, which reflects the anger and displeasure of God. Again they will sit or stand across from his eyes and the angel of death will come also to his head but he will say “oh you wicked soul come out to displeasure and anger from God. He described it in such a way that the soul was almost being pulled out rather than flowing smoothly. Then he said the angels would take this soul and the smell of it would stink but again it is not a physical smell because we are talking about a different level of existence. When the soul ascends to the first level of the heavens the angels wonder what the bad smell is and the angels respond that this is the soul of this wicked person who just died. Then it is said in this saying of the prophet that for the wicked soul it is not allowed to keep going up through the heavens like the good soul. In fact when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reached this stage he said that the soul will not be permitted to go any further. He recited one verse in the Quran to prove his point from (7:40) “To those who reject Our signs and treat them with arrogance, no opening will there be of the gates of heaven, nor will they enter the garden, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle: Such is Our reward for those in sin.” Since no camel can get through the eye of a needle it means that the wicked souls would never be permitted to go upward. Then it says that God would give the command to the angels but this time to return the soul back to earth and to put the book in the lowest of the low. Again an expression of what the destiny of the person is going to be. Finally, the Prophet recited on this particular section to show again how the soul is thrown and not permitted to go up 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.” In other words a person is just removed to the earth. This is just part of the Hadith it is actually much lengthier maybe other parts of the saying would come up when we get into what happens after burial. In that sense the Hadith makes it more clear what the sensation of the dying person whether good or bad.

**Host: We hear a lot about near death experiences. I would like to ask about your reaction to these stories? Could you summarize some of these experiences?**

Jamal Badawi:

This is an interesting area. There have been several books written on this subject like *Life After Death*, *Reflection on Life After Death* or *Life After Life*. Basically these are reports by a large number of people who were near death. They have gone through very serious type of operation, or drown or fall but do not actually die. It is reported in this literature the things that those people see are quite similar. For example they say that they hear a kind of uncomfortable buzzing and they feel as if they are moving fast through a dark long tunnel. Some of them reported that it was as if they were outside of their own physical body and watching their body for example on the operation table. Some report seeing the souls of relatives or friends who died before. Some reported that their lives go by very quickly like a whole program or film and that they were asked to evaluate their own lives. They say they had a different vision all together about time and knowledge and had a totally different feeling that could not be described. Some reported that they had seen souls in bodies which are somewhat similar to the bodies that we see here on this earth. Others said that they heard music and there was lots of light, like a city of light, and that there were rivers, mountains and vegetation but quite different from the physical things we see in this life. Some reported seeing souls that were sad and bewildered. Others talked about those who committed suicide as continuing to face the same kinds of problems that caused them to commit suicide in the first place, in other words they haven't solved their problems. This is just a kind of brief summery as I can't do justice as there is lots of literature. I think these are some of the highlights of the common experiences reported by people.

In general sense, before I come to the Muslim perspective there are some methodological problems in looking at these types of reports. I am not saying we are going to dismiss them all together. One problem is that the whole study or studies are based on the statements or reports by people who experienced this so called near death experience. In one of the books one of the authors gave an excuse for not publishing the names of the people and to some this excuse didn't seem to be quite convincing. There is one issue not only from the Muslim perspective but from that of any believer in any divinely revealed faith. In almost all those reports they report unanimously that they had been enjoying themselves and that death looked like a picnic. Some even say that they wished to go back to death because it was a good experience. This really raises a very serious question because in effect it says that everybody can have this enjoyable picnic of death and life after regardless of his or her own belief or deeds in this life. This is contrary to what any belief or messenger has taught. Promotion of this literature could really result in a very serious attitude of indifference towards good deeds and towards doing the right thing or evil thing. It is quite possible just as a hypothesis that some of these might be satanic visions to dope people into believing that it doesn't make much difference. The idea that everybody

is going to the city of lights, rivers and music and all those types of things which like I said is not even logical let alone religious to equate good with evil.

For the Muslim in particular as I said earlier in the program that the only authentic source of knowledge about the unseen is not through speculation, experimentation or intellect but through divine revelation. One final word on this point of near death experience is not death. In other words an experience of someone who is about to die and survived it is totally different from the actual irrevocable death and experience that no one has seen and came back to tell about it. Everybody will have to find out for himself.

## 4.7 Muslim Beliefs- Death Continued

### **Summary of 4.6 "Death"**

There were two basic areas that we covered last time. One was to continue on the experience of death as described in the Quran. We concluded that basically an individual at the time of death usually hopes to come back to life in order to continue good deeds or to make them if he hasn't done enough and that there are certain angels in charge of taking the soul. That person at the time of death can tell what his destiny is going to be like based on the state of the angels that come to take his soul and the way his soul is taken. Also as we indicated last time that for the pious person the angels would be greeting him with "peace be with you." A person who was wicked is usually not greeted in this way and also feels what his destiny is going to be like.

The second basic area that we touched on is the issue that comes in literature especially in recent years about the so called near death experience reported by people who were about to die but did not. We summarized what kind of things they saw, experienced or felt. Then we tried to evaluate that from a Muslim's perspective by indicating that after all near death is not death. The real experience at the time of death is something that nobody has gone through and came back. It is something that is irrevocable and final. A Muslim can look into those reports and study them but after all the ultimate source of authentic information would have to be revelation because this is something which is from the unseen and is not subject to normal tools of research.

## 4.7 Death (Cont.)



**Host: Is it possible that these near death experiences could be explained by scientific analysis?**

Jamal Badawi:

I think that there are certain areas that could be explained by science but again it is a limited area because this is the area of the unseen. For example many scientists tell us that lots of our experiences throughout life are stored in our brain cells. In one famous study that by Dr. Penfield he says that when he was doing brain surgery he stimulated certain areas or points in the brain. As a result of this stimulation he found that people involved started to remember events in their lives that they had totally forgotten. So one of the possible explanations for that could be that neurological explanations. Just like people keep information on tapes one could have a fast rewind. So many of the experiences of people saying that their entire life passed before their eyes is just like we said very quickly rewinding the tape or in this case the information that is stored in the brain. This might be one way of looking in some of the areas. Like I said this is only a glimpse into the unseen but the total picture is hidden from us and we have to depend on divine revelation to get the more vivid and accurate description.

**Host: How does Islam view suicide?**

Jamal Badawi:

In Islam suicide is regarded as one of the major sins. It is a sin for which a person is severely punished in the after life. The main idea behind it is that according to Islam no person owns anything in the absolute sense. We don't own any property in the absolute sense or our own life in the absolute sense because everything is owned by Allah who is the creator of the universe. The fact that we are blessed with certain natural resources, property, health or life doesn't mean that we can dispose of them whichever way we wish. Islam regards the human being on earth as the trustees of God on earth. Our life is a trust in our hands to be used for our benefit, for the benefit of our families and humanity at large. As such if we destroy without any justification this life that we have in our hands we are betraying our trust and not fulfilling the mission for which we were created. In fact when we refer to the Quran for example in (4:29) "Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful!" We find that the same basic principle was reiterated by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in one of his sayings he said that if a person commits suicide he will come back in the Day of Judgment and constantly repeat the same act that he did in a vicious circle. For example he specifically says that if a person throws himself off the side of a mountain he will keep repeating the same thing on the Day of Judgment. If a person poisons himself or uses any other means of destroying himself he will keep repeating the same act.

Even in the case of severe psychological or physical stress the Muslims are taught that one should persevere and ask God to relieve them from this difficulty and never to

despair. In fact the Quran quotes Prophet Jacob the father of Prophet Joseph (PBUT) when he sent his other children to look for Joseph and he said (12:87) “and never give up hope of Allah’s Soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah’s Soothing Mercy.” In the worst circumstances one should always look for this type of soothing mercy by way of belief and conviction. The maximum that a Muslim is permitted to do in case when the suffering is really beyond toleration is to pray as described in Bukhari and Muslim and it goes “Oh God give me life if You feel life is better for me and take me away or give me death if You decide that death is better for me.” But we are never allowed to take things in our own hands.

### **Host: Is mercy killing or euthanasia permissible in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

First of all there is no mercy in killing. The wrong which is done by others is the same as the wrong that is done by ones self. In other words if it is wrong morally to commit suicide it is also wrong to have someone else take your life even if you request him to do so. It is a wrong on both sides just like if one says I am not paying a bribe but someone else is paying it for me. It is quite true that we should feel sympathetic and sensitive towards the suffering of people who are sick especially those who are terminally ill. The Muslim also looks at it from a different perspective. It is quite possible for the person who is suffering to pay for some of the sins with his suffering. Maybe it is a way that God would relieve him from greater and more everlasting suffering that he would have in the life after death. This could be just one way to atone for his sins.

The other thing is that the best thing that one could do for a person who is terminally ill is to provide him with whatever assistance that might be needed to ease his pain. One of the things that should not be forgotten aside from a person’s physical needs in terms of therapeutic treatments is a person’s spiritual. This can be done by reminding him to repent for his mistakes and seek the acceptance of God and to try and make peace with God. The concept of repentance is emphasized very much in Islam. There is no original sin but there is an open door for repentance at any time if a person sincerely directs his feeling towards God.

There are issues that sometimes seem to be mixed with euthanasia or so called mercy killing as some physicians raised the issue of people who have had irrevocable damage in the brain where they have no chance of living. They say that with the development of medical technology it may be possible to hook someone onto the heart lung machine where one has life that is like a vegetable. The brain cells are destroyed they don’t regenerate themselves like other cells in the body. The question arises as to what to do with a case like this. Even then it is not appropriate to give an injection or overdose to let the person die. However, if the physicians are agreed that there is absolutely no change of survival and the EEG (the equipment that detects

brain activity) shows that there is no activity and this continues for a long time it means that the person is practically dead even though the blood can be artificially pumped. This is a sensitive matter that has to be clearly studied both by both Muslim jurists as well as competent physicians in order to establish some kind of guide lines as to in which cases the person can be unhooked. Again this is different from deliberately taking the life of the individual.

**Host: Does Islam give any guidance as to how to care for the terminally ill?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yeah there are certain things that can be done. A sick person should be treated with compassion and kindness. One can give them pain killers but don't turn them into self killers. A person should be reminded of his destiny so as to make peace with God. To carry on from there is what happens when the person really starts to die. One of the things that should be done at that time as taught by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is to recite the testimony in front of him. The testimony which means that there is "I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is his messenger." This will reaffirm his belief in Allah and his acceptance of all prophets as symbolized by the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One need not push the person to say it but simply repeat it in front of him or her and the person would pick it up because it is very important that the person departs this word, no matter how sinful he might have been, with this expression of belief and hope in God.

There are also some sayings of the Prophet in which he says that one chapter of the Quran is desirable to be read at the time when a person is dying. That chapter is called Ya-Sin and is chapter 36 in the Quran. No wonder one should read this chapter because it deals with creation, birth, life, death and resurrection. Once the person actually dies, then his eyes should be closed. One of the sayings of the Prophet which would perhaps be of interest to people who study dreams and what happens to the eyeballs during deep sleep is that once the soul is taken away the sight follows it. We don't fully understand what that means but this is an area of research that could be explored. A person could be kissed by his loved ones if need be as there is no prohibition. People definitely can't resist the feeling of sorrow or tears. However the Prophet recommended that one should not cry in a very loud voice because this could hurt the soul of that individual especially when saying words that show despair towards the mercy of God or express lack of faith. But normal expressions of sorrow are not prohibited. Then according to Islam it is desirable to bury the person as soon as possible.

The first thing that should be done is to give the body a full bath and put camphor oil to give them a nice. Then the body is dried and wrapped in simple white cloth (male

should have at least three layers, female at least five layers) and there is nothing wrong with tying it around the neck waist or feet.

After this a funeral prayer must be conducted on behalf of the person that is a little different from the regular prayers. People stand in lines in front of the casket or the body and they make *takbeer* “AllahuAkbar” means God is Great and they recite the first chapter of the Quran and then again they make takbeer then they recite the second half of *tashahood* which is part of the regular prayers and then they make another takbeer and then they make prayers (*dua 'a*) on behalf of the dead person. After this is finished, takes a few minutes, it is desirable for as many people as possible to follow the funeral but there is no music, singing, fire, loud sounds but solemn sincere silent prayers on the behalf of the deceased.

Once the people reach the grave yard where the grave should be prepared, the body is lowered preferably without a casket but there is nothing wrong if the casket is required and then the people around would carry three handfuls of dust towards his head and the first time they say “from it we created you” the second time “into it we are going to return you” and the third time “from it we you will be resurrected.” This is actually a verse in the Quran in (20:55) God says “From the (earth) did We create you, and into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again.” A person should be buried on his right side facing the *Kaaba (Qibla)* in Mecca which is now in Saudi Arabia. This should be it, the grave should be covered and people keep praying for the deceased.

### **Host: What happens to the soul after the burial and what does it experience?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are several sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which indicates very clearly that after death a person is not just finished and that is it. A person is questioned even in his grave. Of course we don't exactly know how. A person could have been burned or cut into pieces but still God who created him initially is able to bring him forth to answer these questions. We don't know the nature of the questioning but it says that a person would be questioned as to who their Lord is who their prophet is and he may be asked certain things about his faith. According to the sayings of Prophet Muhammad to the believer the answers to these questions would be easy. Actually the Prophet is referring to one verse in the Quran in (14:27) “Allah will establish in strength those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and in the Hereafter.” So it says that Allah will give strength to the believer in this life and the hereafter and of course the hereafter starts immediately after burial. A believer will know how to answer these questions but an unbeliever no matter how much he may know intellectually would be confused.

According to the Prophet every person after death and the questioning will see his position in paradise or hell fire. Not only will the person know his position in the hereafter but the person is either punished or rewarded. Again the 'how' is a matter that is beyond our imagination and understanding because we are talking about a world that is beyond this physical world. There are clear indications there being punishment or reward. It is similar to one aspect that all of us have gone through. Suppose one has a nightmare, one would feel like someone is choking them or that they are drowning or that something is hurting. Anyone who observes the physical body of the person having the nightmare would say that nothing is happening or physically hurting. But to the person experiencing it during sleep during the night mare it is very real and once one wakes up they are thankful they only had a bad nightmare. So here we have punishment or reward even though the physical body is not being affected. So we make this analogy in order to understand that the punishment and reward starts immediately after burial and it is something that is real even though we may not physically be able to prove it or test it.

There is clear evidence, not only in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in the Quran in (40:46) where it talks about the Pharaoh and the people who persecuted Moses and his people "In front of the Fire will they be brought, morning and evening: And (the sentence will be) on the Day that Judgment will be established: "Cast ye the People of Pharaoh into the severest Penalty!" We notice here that there is a very interesting thing in this verse that it talks first about the Pharaohs even though they had already died a long time ago they became dust. Still the verse says that during day and night they are brought in front of the fire and punished. Later also on The Day of Judgment it would not be the end of their suffering but the people of the Pharaoh will be thrown into the severest penalty which is in the hell fire. This is conclusive proof from the Quran that punishment and reward do not really have to wait but start immediately after the person departs from this world. It is like an interim period which the Quran calls *barsakh* and means a partition in Arabic. It is just like a partition between our earthly life and The Day of Judgment. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to always teach people to pray and one of them is "oh God I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, I seek refuge in You from the punishment in the hereafter." Both are areas that one can either enjoy or suffer.

**Host: Is the soul also capable of comprehending what is going on in this physical world after death?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is some evidence to the effect that the soul after death can follow what is going on around it. First of all in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is that after the person is buried at the time when he is questioned it says that he hears the sound of their shoes when they are turning away and leaving him there alone. Of course we are not talking about the physical hearing that we know of in this world. That is why it was the custom of the Prophet to say to the people pray for your

brother or sister because he is being questioned now. Some people recite verses from the Quran hoping that it might be of some benefit to the deceased person.

There are also other sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that again shows that even dead people are aware of what goes on. After the famous battle of Badr when the pagans came to destroy the Muslims and they were defeated and many of their leaders were killed and buried the Prophet stood there and addressed them and asked if they found now that the promise of God was true. He kept repeating this questioning and so one of the companions, Omar was standing there and he said “oh Prophet are you talking to people who have already been decayed?” The answer of the Prophet was “Omar you can’t listen better than they do but they can’t respond. We find evidence that the Prophet (PBUH) says that if the person passes by a grave yard by a brother or friend that he knew in this life and he says to him “*Asalamu Alikum*” or “peace be upon you” that Allah will cause that person to reply but of course we can’t hear it. In fact it is required that if a person passes by a grave yard of believers even though he may not know them he would say *AsalmuAlikum* or *Aslamu Ala Ahli Dar Almu’minean* that is peace be upon the believers who are residence of this particular area.

The Prophet indicated that at times especially on Thursday and Friday night that he would be aware of the deeds of his people and he would definitely be glad if the Muslims behave in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and he feels sad when they deviate from it. Not only this but also the Prophet taught people that if they pray to God for His peace and blessings upon him (the Prophet) that God will cause him to reply even though he died a long time ago.

## 4.8 Muslim Beliefs- After Death

### **Summary of 4.7 "Death Continued"**

On the question of suicide we indicated that this is a sin according to Islam. The reason being is that life is a trust from God and we are not supposed to dispose of it according to our whims. We have to respect that trust and fulfill our mission on earth using that life.

On the question of euthanasia we said that it is regarded as one form of killing and there is no mercy in killing. If the person is desperately ill all he has to do is pray for God’s relief and he should be aided with medications. But to inject the person with something fatal or give him an overdose just to destroy his life is not permissible.

We also talked about the care for the terminally ill and the dying and we indicated that one of the crucial things is to remind the person of his destiny and to allow him to make peace with God and to repent before it is too late. We also described the various processes of a speedy burial after the actual death and the funeral prayer and so on.

Then we touched briefly on what happens to the person in the grave. We said that according to various sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and according to the Quran. The crucial verse we sighted was in (40:46) that describes the punishment day and night of the Pharaoh and his people who persecuted Moses and his followers even before The Day of Judgment has come. So the punishment and reward is there and I tried to explain it by making a remote analogy with nightmares. In a nightmare a person feels enjoyment or suffering without the body actually being affected and this does also happen after death.

Finally, the last point was that the soul even after it departs from the body can still be aware of some of the things that go on in our physical world.

#### 4.8 After Death

**Host: Is it possible for the souls of the dead to contact the souls of the living? What of séance?**

Jamal Badawi:

The possibility is there but not through séance, this is an area that I am quite skeptical about because it gives the impression that someone has these souls under his or her disposal. Many times this is partly superstitious partly exploitation of others people and I don't think that this claim is true. There are so many people who have been involved in this kind of experience who had reported there being some kind of fraud.

However the whole notion of contact between the dead and living could happen. There is one reference in the Quran in (39:42) to this and I have to take it carefully. This is a very interesting verse in a sense of defining the nature of this contact without going through all the gimmicks. The translation is that "It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed verily in

this are Signs for those who reflect.” When it says that Allah takes the soul of those who did not die it has two meanings as to people who did not die in their sleep or that during our sleep our souls are taken. They are not totally taken from the body or else the body would die but that the soul would be connected with the body during sleep in a different way than during the waking hours or during death.

The clear indication from this verse is that during the sleep for example if one has a dream and one sees someone who died in the past is a process of meeting between the souls of the living and the dead for the period of the dream. Before we wake up the souls of those who died are kept away from returning to life and our soul comes back to us in the fullest sense. In a way this reminds me of one aspect that most people don't pay attention to. Everyday we seem to have a rehearsal of coming to life and dying and resurrection. When one wakes up in the morning after sleeping it is almost like a rehearsal of resurrection for The Day of Judgment. When one goes to bed at night it is like a minor death or like someone once put it sleeping is the twin of death. So everyday we repeat something that will eventually really happen to us. In this sense contact between the dead and living souls could be acceptable but not in the commercialized sense.

**Host: Is it possible for the souls of the dead to contact one another?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a very clear indication of that actually in the Quran which have been confirmed and explained in some of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). For example in (3:170) it talks about the souls of the martyrs and it uses the term “*wa yastabshiroona bi alathina lam yalhaku bihim*” and the words in Arabic actually means the souls of the martyrs who dyed for the cause of God carry to each other the good news of other pious people who were left behind. This means that these souls communicate among themselves in regards to what is going on in the physical world that they have left.

Some evidence that may be regarded as indirect but is still on the same line is in the Quran in (4:69) and it describes the reward of those who are obedient to God and his messenger “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!” So here it talks about people who are obedient being in the company Prophets, martyrs and lovers of truth. This could apply to both the company during the interim period between death and resurrection and ultimately on The Day of Judgment. In this sense there could be contact between souls and like I said before



there are various sayings of Prophet Muhammad which give the impression that this kind of contact exists.

**Host: Is there a particular place where the soul resides in the interim period between the time of death and resurrection?**

Jamal Badawi:

Before answering that question we have to be clear that the biggest problem when people try to conceive something about the soul is to try to materialize it, even though it is something beyond our normal understanding of the physical material world. That is why in the previous program we indicated that the soul doesn't reside in any particular part of the body like the heart, brain or blood. Because if it does reside in the blood and someone's leg is amputated then where does that part of the soul go? In case a person bleeds and they need a transfusion does it mean that some of his soul has gone out and he is getting the soul of many people who donated blood. This is the problem of wrong analogy by imagining the soul in a very limited physical sense.

However we find indications in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the narration of Hadith by Ahmad and it is indicated there that the soul is returned immediately after death to face the accountability and initial questioning in the grave. What happens immediately after burial was explained in the previous program but in that sense we can say that the soul may unite in some way that we don't understand with the body immediately after burial. On the other hand we find other narrations like in Muslim for example that the souls of believers will be in paradise. Actually some of the descriptions indicate that they will be in the bellies of green birds in paradise. But again let's not put it in the physical sense. This could also give us an allegory that these souls could be as free as birds would be in paradise but we don't know the exact nature.

There is mention of the souls of wicked people or the unbelievers in some sayings of the Prophet that they are suffering in hell fire. In others it says they would be imprisoned in the lowest layers of earth. Again exactly physically how we can't understand it. But again it shows the notion of suffering or punishment. On the other hand in the previous program we also indicated that when the person passes by a grave yard and greets the people who are dead that God causes the believers among them to respond. Does that mean that the souls are only on earth? If we look at it in a very literal sense it would appear that there is some confusion there. Where are the souls? Are they on earth so that when we pass by the grave yards they reply? Are the souls of wicked people under the earth in hell fire? Are the souls of martyrs and good people in paradise? Does this show any inconsistency? The answer is no, they are

not contradictory if we approach the soul as a different thing from material objects that we think about. Ibn Alkim explains it in a very nice way. He says there is no contradiction between all of this. It is just like the sun and its rays. Physically the sun may be located in the heavens to us meanwhile we can talk about the rays of the sun here on earth as sun and sun shine. In the same way the soul could also be in the heavens or paradise but it still has some type of contact with the burial place and meet with people in dreams without contradiction. Let alone the fact that the soul doesn't need jet airplanes to travel but can travel in a split second between the earth and the heavens.

In that sense we can conclude that the main notion in this totality of sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) is that the souls of believers will be enjoying themselves and would be in paradise in some form or other and the souls of wicked or unbelievers would be suffering.

#### **Host: Do Muslims believe in the reincarnation of the soul?**

Jamal Badawi:

No, my understanding is that reincarnation is part of the Hindu faith and has nothing to do with Islam. I can't pretend to have any authority on that but my understanding on that is basically that the Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates in cycles. So when one dies their soul will reappear in another body of a human or animal. If one's life here was good their soul would be reincarnated into a better life. If a person is wicked then his soul would be reincarnated into another human or animal who suffer. I would like to emphasize again that this has nothing to do whatsoever with the belief of the Muslim. A Muslim doesn't believe in any reincarnation whether it is of God in some form or that of the soul after death in any shape or form.

Actually sometimes the question arises in the mind that if the souls are just reincarnating it may give the impression that the number of souls has been constant throughout history. Whereas we know that the population is increasing so where did these new souls come from? The Muslim belief is quite different in that the number of souls actually increases rather than just coming in cycles. As we indicated in the first program about the soul that according to the saying of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which is based on revelation also that the soul first comes into being when the fetus begins its fifth month gestation. This is an interesting point that has not been researched and some people say that this is the same time that the brain starts developing but we don't know as it is a mystery why the Hadith mentioned specifically the beginning of the fifth month. As we indicated before also that the soul is indestructible and that it lives with the body then it departs from the body but

still lives on after death, then it unites with the body again. So the notion of reincarnation is totally alien thinking.

**Host: Some Muslim writers and indeed some Muslims refer to the three states of the soul can you clarify what is meant by this?**

Jamal Badawi:

They are actually referring to three terms used in the Quran to describe the soul. The three words mean the soul that prompts us to do evil, *amarah*, secondly the soul that is self reproaching and aware of its sin and regret, *lawamah*, and thirdly the soul which is at peace and tranquility, *mutmainah*. This is based on the Quran as each term has been used in the Quran to describe one state of the existence of our soul.

For example in the chapter in the Quran dealing with the story of Prophet Joseph (PBUH) in (12:53) "Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." This shows that one state of the soul is *amarah* which pushes us to do evil which is the bad part in our existence or the animal physical part of us that pulls us to earth away from the path of God and is part of our creation.

The second term is used in the Quran in chapter (75:2) "And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil)." The self-reproaching soul has two meanings actually. It could mean the soul of both unbelievers and believers. The word, *lawamah*, could also mean a soul that doesn't stay in one state as we are always changing moods, attitude, goodness or evil. Some interpreters understand *lawamah* or self-reproaching as a soul who is more aware of its mistakes and sins and tries to correct itself. In psychology they talk about the super ego and what is ideal or appropriate.

The third and ultimate stage of the soul is the peaceful soul. This is also mentioned in the Quran in verse (89:27-30) "(To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! "Come back thou to thy Lord,- well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! . "Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven!" So this is the ultimate and most perfect state of the three states of the soul.

**Host: What is the meaning of The Day of Judgment and what importance does it have to the Muslim?**

Jamal Badawi:

The physical world as we know it will come to an end sometime. Life on earth will not just continue perpetually. Someday there will be upheavals in nature and the whole world as we know it today will be destroyed and all who are alive in that time will eventually die. Then all of those who died from the beginning of creation till The Day of Judgment will be resurrected again and they will face the accountability before God, then they will be rewarded with paradise or hell-fire depending on their belief. Of course the grace of God is given to those who strove in terms of their belief and good deeds to earn it.

The Day of Judgment is very important and any person who claims to be a Muslim who denies or rejects the notion of life after death and the hereafter can't be regarded as a Muslim. This is one of the fundamental pillars of faith. The reason behind it is related to the role of the human on earth. We are created here on earth as responsible beings and the Quran makes it clear that we are not created with no purpose or just for sport. More particularly in the Quran in (23:115-116) "Did ye then think that We had created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)? Therefore exalted be Allah, the King, the Reality: there is no god but He, the Lord of the Throne of Honour!" The whole notion of our mission on earth hinges on this whole notion of punishment and reward.

In fact the Quran, just to complete the answer in a way of indicating what the Muslim understands by the term The Day of Judgment. There are alternatives in the Quran for the term The Day of Judgment such as The Day of Resurrection in (30:56), The Hour in (22:1), The Hereafter (87:17), The Day of Reckoning (17:34), The Day of Accountability (40:27), The Day of Meeting (40:15), The Day of Gathering (64:9), The Day of Coming Out (50:42), The Overwhelming (79:34-35) because it overwhelms everybody because of the horror and fear. It is also called The Deafener in (80:33) because of the blowing of the trumpet, it is called The Revealer because the truth would be revealed on that day, and in (50:34) it is called The Day of Eternity as it is the beginning of eternal life.

**Host: Will the resurrection be just of the soul or of the body alone or a combination?**

Jamal Badawi:

According to the Quran it is both body and soul. This has been emphasized a great deal. In fact the main confusion that arises in the minds of many people is that they

presume that when the Quran talks about the body it is the same body that we had here on earth. In fact we find evidence in the Quran that this may not necessarily be the case as it is a physical existence but it may not be the same type of physical existence. For example in this short citation in (56:60) “We have decreed Death to be your common lot, and We are not to be frustrated from changing your Forms and creating you (again) in (forms) that ye know not.” In other words God is able to recreate us in different physical form than the one that we had here on earth. It is however both physical and spiritual.

## 4.9 Muslim Beliefs- Resurrection

### **Summary of 4.8 "After Death"**

First of all we referred to the Quran in (39:42) and the illusion that the souls of the dead and living could possibly meet during the time of sleep and then when a person awakens God sends back those people's souls to live further and keeps back the souls of those who have died.

We also said that the whole issue of séance is shrouded with lots of mystery and superstition. From a Muslim perspective it should be approached with a great deal of caution because the souls of people are not toys in their hands. There are incidents of fake exercises which depend on darkness, sounds and the use of things to impress people but souls are not subject to play and can't be called upon at any time.

We also mentioned references to the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that the souls of those who are dead meet among each other in the same way that they do in this life.

We discussed where souls go after death. There is clear indications from the sayings of the Prophet that souls will be in paradise; but we also find references that give the impression that these souls will also be connected with earth. We said that there is no contradiction between both. There is a similitude used by Ibn Alkim that says that the souls are just like the sun and its rays. The sun is up there in the heavens and its rays are connected and felt on earth. So the soul can also have impact on different areas as it is not limited. The main thing that we indicated is that the soul of the good and righteous will be in a state of felicity and enjoyment and the souls of the wicked and the unbelievers would be in a state of suffering.

There was a question of reincarnation and we said that the Muslim doesn't believe in it in any shape or form. The soul is created in the womb and survives until The Day of Judgment and thereafter. It is eternal existence after being created.

According to the Quran there are three states of the soul the soul that pushes us towards evil the soul that is self reproaching and the soul that is in perfect peace and tranquility which is the ultimate state which people should strive for.

As for resurrection the Quran indicates that it will be both in body and soul. I quoted a verse from the Quran in (56:60) that God is able to raise us in our physical body that is different from the physical body we know now. It is not necessarily the same physical existence but it is both physical and spiritual.

#### 4.9 Resurrection

##### **Host: How is the body resurrected when it decomposes after death?**

Jamal Badawi:

In fact this is not a new argument as it has been raised in the past by many people. In fact the Quran makes reference to that (45:34-36) it quotes the unbelievers as saying that it is only our earthly life here that we live and die and nothing destroys us but time. The Quran makes rebuttal of this kind of argument and says that those people are saying this out of conjecture but they have no way of proving that there is nothing beyond this life.

As far as a specific response to the question of their return being a hard thing to imagine we find beautiful examples in the Quran. One example in (36:77-79) describes people who made the previous argument and says "Doth not man see that it is We Who created him from sperm? yet behold! he (stands forth) as an open adversary! And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) Creation: He says, "Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?" Say, "He will give them life Who created them for the first time! for He is Well-versed in every kind of creation!"

In other words what people tend to ignore when they think about resurrection and The Day of Judgment is their original creation and how we were created from a microscopic sperm and ovum. This in itself is a miracle. The fact of our initial creation in itself evidence that He who created is able to return us to life again. The Quran also appeals to our limited understanding by showing us that to bring

something back is easier than crating it to start with. An example can be found in (50:15) where God says “Were We then weary with the first Creation, that they should be in confused doubt about a new Creation?” God did not get tired from the original creation and as we indicated in a previous program God doesn’t need rest so a new creation would be easy. It is put in an even more clear term in (30:27) “It is He Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy.”

In addition to that another aspect is the analogy between giving life to the barren earth and giving life to decomposed bones. This analogy is very significant because when one looks at the earth when it is barren in the grip of winter or drought one never expects that beautiful plantation or vegetation is ever going to grow out of that land. When water falls on that land and the circumstances are ripe then one finds all kinds of lovely creations. We find an example of this in (41:39) “And among His Signs in this: thou seest the earth barren and desolate; but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred to life and yields increase. Truly, He Who gives life to the (dead) earth can surely give life to (men) who are dead. For He has power over all things.” The same thing is repeated in (5:22) using the analogy of plantation and resurrection.

**Host: What is Islam’s view on the notion that only the righteous will be resurrected and the wicked will not?**

Jamal Badawi:

From the Muslim point of perspective this is contrary to the Quran and to justice also. It is contrary to the Quran because we have indicated before that everybody will resurrected whether believer or unbeliever because everybody has to be recompensed for his life on earth. It is also contrary to justice because if one says that the punishment for the wicked is simply that he or she will not be resurrected then we will find many who say ‘let me enjoy myself in this life as I don’t care to be resurrected again.’ There would then be no motive for anyone one to be good. It is also contrary to justice because if somebody conducts a life of wickedness, crime and evil deeds it is not enough compensation to simply let them die and not rise again. It is the wisdom of God that everybody will be brought before him for their accountability where both positive and negative deeds are covered.

An example from the Quran in (36:12) “Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).” Also in (39:70) “And to every soul will be paid in full (the fruit) of its Deeds; and ((Allah)) knoweth best all that they do.” The rudimentary principle of justice requires that everyone be resurrected just like everyone has to find out the results of their tests. The life here is the test and everybody will be brought forth to get the results and consequences of this life.

**Host: When will The Day of Judgment come?**

Jamal Badawi:

The Quran is very clear that the knowledge of The Hour is only in the hands of God. One such verse is in (31:34) "Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone)." In another such verse in (41:47) "To Him is referred the Knowledge of the Hour (of Judgment: He knows all)." There is indication however the hour would come suddenly and no body will expect it and this is documented in more than one place in the Quran. For example we find reference to this in (7:187) "They ask thee about the (final) Hour - when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth. Only, all of a sudden will it come to you." They ask thee as if thou wert eager in search thereof: Say: "The knowledge thereof is with Allah (alone), but most men know not."

In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he described the coming of the hour and that people would be selling material and the hour would come before they fulfill the transaction or a person would be milking his goat and he would not be able to carry it through to the end, a person would be holding a morsel of bread and it would not reach his mouth. The main issue then about the exact coming of The Hour is that one should not busy himself talking about the exact time it will come but rather take the lesson as to how one can prepare for The Hour. A quote from the Quran that implants the attitude of a Muslim is in (79:42-46) "They ask thee about the Hour,- 'When will be its appointed time? Wherein art thou (concerned) with the declaration thereof? With thy Lord in the Limit fixed therefor. Thou art but a Warner for such as fear it. The Day they see it, (It will be) as if they had tarried but a single evening, or (at most till) the following morn!" It will come sooner or later and when it does most of us will feel that our entire life of fifty or a hundred years would appear to us as if it were all one evening. In one verse in the Quran it says that our whole life would appear as one hour in our eyes.

**Host: If there is no indication of the specific hour surely there are signs of its approach.**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes there are signs that vary. There are signs that some jurists call The Minor Signs which could extend over hundreds of years and then there are The Major signs which will come when The Day of Judgment is eminent within a few years. There are also the descriptions of what actually happens when The Day of Judgment starts.

When we talk about signs of the approaching of The Day of Judgment we have to keep in mind that it is relevant. For example Prophet Muhammad was once quoted as saying "I was sent as a prophet and the difference between my coming and The Hour is like this" as he pointed with his fingers to show that it is close. Now we know that



he died almost 1,400 years ago. Again we are talking about relative closeness because if we talk about hundreds or even thousands of years compared to the age of the earth or the age of human life it becomes miniscule. When we talk about the approaching we can look at rough signs of the coming of The Hour.

There are many Minor Signs some relating to technology, to the state of economy, to the spread of certain disease, to a change in the moral standards on an individual and social level.

**Host: What is the relationship between technology and The Day of Judgment?**

Jamal Badawi:

We have to keep in mind that when we talk about technology and the approaching of The Day of Judgment we should not imply from this that technology in itself is bad. The attitude of the Muslim towards science and technology is quite open and the Quran urges the Muslim to learn and to use technology and science in a fruitful way for the benefit of humanity at large. There are however, very interesting prophecies made by Prophet Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago. The Quran indicates in (10:24) that when the earth becomes very adorned or advanced and the people become arrogant and they think they can do anything they want could be a sign that The Hour could come at any time. The Quran describes this not as a negative thing but as something that could cause people to deviate more from the path of God to being overly materialistic.

In addition to that some of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad also touch on this. For example in a Hadith narrated in Al Tabarani he said that there would be many strange and amazing things that would take place before The Day of Judgment in terms of inventions. More specifically there were specific prophecies narrated for example in the collections of Hadith by Muslim, Ahmad, Al Hakim and Al Tabarani all point out that there would be great development in the means of communication and particularly transportation. For example the Prophet said that the camels would no longer be used as means of transportation. More specifically in one saying he said that people would ride on things that look like saddles but they are not saddles. This means that it would be something that resembles a saddle but that it is not put on an animal. Is that an indication of the seat of a car? It looks like a saddle but is fixed on metal instead of a horse or camel. He also mentioned that when the false messiah comes he will travel at a speed that is similar to the speed of the clouds, think now of missiles and jet airplanes. More specifically even he says that the earth would become smaller and the distances will become very short.

From all of these things that were said 1400 years ago it appears that what was foretold is in line with what is taking place now. One of the things that we can't understand now is that animals will talk to humans. Whether he meant that they

literally would talk which is quite possible as Prophet Solomon could communicate with the ants and other animals, or whether it was a reference to the fact that animals would be able to communicate with human beings we do not know. An example would be the police dogs or the animals at the circus where they learn to communicate and listen and receive commands from humans we don't really know.

Another very interesting thing is that it was narrated that the Prophet said that inanimate objects would speak. More specifically in one Hadith he says that a person's whip or shoes would talk. We think today about radios, T.V. and spying equipment where one can listen to what is going on in different places. I want to emphasize what I said before that it doesn't mean that this technology is bad but it is simply shown as a sign of the approach of The Day of Judgment.

**Host: What about signs of the economy?**

Jamal Badawi:

In Al Tabarani it was narrated that the Prophet said that lots of metals (wealth) would be discovered and the people who would control it would be among the most unscrupulous. Again if that has been realized or will be realized I don't know. Also in another Hadith in Nasai and Ahmad it mentions the expansion of trade and the participation of women in this progress. In another Hadith in Abu Da'ud he talked about the spread of usury or interest as we call it to the point that everybody would be effected by it. Of course we look today in terms of all the credit through banks, the use of interest and the use of charge cards. He also talked about the fact that some of the spots on earth which were desolate will have lots of construction and areas that had lots of construction would be deserted. Sometimes I wonder about the building of suburbs and people leaving down town areas building new cities while other cities are dying. He also mentioned something very fascinating about people who used to be ship herders building sky scrapers and again I wonder about what is going on in the Gulf. For example people who were really ship herders are now building sky scrapers. In general there is also mention of the spread of luxury in houses and the use of fine materials symbolized by the use of silk. As one saying of the Prophet put it there would be lots of progress in material parts of the world but lots of destruction in terms of the heart.

**Host: Can we touch on the topic of health conditions?**

Jamal Badawi:

One of the things that is very clear from the sayings of the Prophet is the spread of drinking. But in another Hadith he made a prophecy about the spread of other things that affect the body in the same way as drinking like drugs. For example he said some people will be intoxicated or in the exact words "drink wine" but of course wine or *khamr* in Islam means something that beclouds the mind would be called by different names. He also mentioned in a number of sayings about the spread of serious diseases, either diseases that were not known before or that were not wide spread. Now the question arises with respect to VD and the spread of cancer much

more than any other time. Finally something that is very interesting that he described that would be very common is that people would die suddenly which could be a reference to heart attacks.

## 4.10 Muslim Beliefs- Signs of the Hour

### **Summary of 4.9 "Resurrection"**

First we addressed a common question as to how we can come back to life after we turn to dust. We indicated how the Quran responds to this question that after all it is He, God, who created us from virtually nothing to start with and it is He who has the ability to that is able to return us. It even emphasizes further that returning things is easier than creating it in the first place. The analogy is given in the Quran between giving life to barren earth and giving life to bones that has decomposed.

We addressed the issue of whether the punishment of the wicked and unbeliever is simply that he will not be resurrected. We said that according to the Quran and Muslim understanding of justice that this is not the case and that everybody good and bad, believer or unbeliever, righteous or wicked will all rise so that they all get their reward or punishment. This life is not long enough to get the full compensation for ones own deeds and attitudes.

Then we started addressing The Minor Signs that signals the approaching of The Day of Judgment. We discussed some of Prophet Muhammad's prophecies from 1400 years ago which have already been fulfilled in terms of technological change, spread of new means of transportation, about objects speaking referring to the media that we know of today and we discussed about the spread of economic life. We discussed the discovery of resources in the earth and we talked about the spread of sky scrapers especially ones built by those who used to be sheep herders.

The last question that we raised was the question of health conditions. We said again that there was a prophecy of the spread of drinking and similar intoxicating items. Also we talked about the spread of mysterious diseases and sudden death which is a possible reference to heart attacks and strokes which are becoming more frequent and common.

#### 4.10 Signs of The “Hour”

**Host: To continue with The Minor Signs is there anything in the individual and collective moral situation that might give us a clue as to the approach of The Day of Judgment?**

Jamal Badawi:

The sayings of the Prophet on this issue are very clear and quite numerous. In terms of individual morality one of the things that he professed is that there would be a spread of provocative clothing especially among females. In one of the sayings he says people would be clothed but unclothed. This means that the material and design would be so provocative that the body appears as if it is not covered at all. An example would be really tight fitted clothes and bikinis.

A second prophecy that he made is that women would imitate men and men would imitate women. This could mean imitation in terms of behavior, appearance or way of dressing. I won't make a lengthy commentary on this because I think we see some of this in our day and age.

A third sign that the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned is that there would be a spread of homosexuality both among males and females. Actually in his own terms he said that every sex would feel more self sufficient in terms of sexual life. More specifically even he described a state where adultery and fornication would be so wide spread that it will no longer be a private issue as it almost becomes exposed. In one of the sayings for example it is almost like people are doing it in the street. When I think about that I think of X rated movies and how one can go to any drive in and watch things that used to be very private and only part of the domain of marital relationships. Actually in one of the sayings of the Prophet he said it would be almost like animals happening wherever, whenever and however a person pleases to do it.

In terms of social morality there were also a number of signs. One sign is the lack of care and attention to relatives like parents and close relatives. In another Hadith he even specified that sometimes people would be more obedient and listen to their wives and disregard their mothers and a person would be quite generous with his friends but doesn't provide any help to his father especially if his father is old and unable to earn a living. I wonder in my mind about people who send their elderly to nursing homes because they don't want to take the trouble of taking care of them and just wanting to get rid of them. The attitude of people not even asking about their parents or relatives is wide spread; as they move to far away lands and don't contact one another. There are lots of programs on T.V. that show the type of cruelty that is being perpetrated on the elderly and the lack of concern for relatives. This was all predicted 1400 years ago.

Secondly an interesting thing that the Prophet mentioned is that people would hate to raise children. In one specific Hadith he says there will come a time where a person would prefer to bring up a dog in his house rather than a child.

A third sign is the wide spread of hypocrisy as expressed in one of his sayings that people would say good words but their deeds are quite evil. I wonder whether this has to do with the promises made by politicians as we hear lots of good words about human rights and other things but the actual practice sometimes don't measure up.

Another sign that has been repeated in more than one collection of Hadith is the spread of killing. In one Hadith he says that there would be so much killing that a person would not know why he killed his brother. This again could be reference to despotic rulers who for their own selfish reasons desire to take someone else's land or source of wealth or try to push their people into fights where they kill each other without realizing that this is not a just cause. The spread of the wars in our century have been phenomenal, many of which have no reason.

Another sign is that people would not be as charitable. There would always be people who are charitable but he says that for some people charity would be a burden on them. Actually he made a prophecy in one Hadith about rulers and how there would be many rulers or people with political power but very few would be honest.

Finally one of the signs is that there would be a time where a person (this could be an individual or an entity like a nation) would be respected only because of its sheer brutal power not because of justice.

**Host: Are there any other Minor Signs that we should touch on before looking at The Major Signs?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are a few interesting and revealing signs that do not fall under any of the previous categories. This includes the fact that there would be too many false teachers and false prophets teaching and misleading people. As we know that to a Muslim all prophets were prophets of God prior to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and that Muhammad was the last of those prophets. In fact in one of the sayings of the Prophet he indicated that there would be close to thirty people each of whom will come and claim to be a new prophet and try to mislead people.

It also indicates that people who used to be believers will no longer believe. People would leave faith and in one specific Hadith he says that they would trade their faith for material benefits. He also indicated that the social values would undergo certain changes and that a person who is pious and tries to follow the path of God would be belittled and slighted by others. In other words instead of people praising goodness the opposite would be true. In fact in one of his sayings Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says that a person at one time would be belittled because of his prayer the same way that one could belittle or tease a prostitute. There is a total reversal of the values of goodness and purity. Like now people tease others for not having boy friends or for being virgins.

There is indication also that in the same family there would be people following different faiths. This shows that there would be lots of people moving around trying to discover the truth or untruth. Also, people would not take positive steps to stop evil in Quranic terminology it is “ordaining all that is good and forbid all that is evil.” It is interesting how we hear stories about people being killed in the street and others watching from their bedroom windows not even caring to call the police. Thus apathy would become a part of society which would give more room for the spread of evil.

There was a prophecy about the spread of ignorance and literacy side by side. There would be literacy in terms of technical and scientific knowledge but a lack of knowledge that is more important and is relates to faith and the relationship between mankind and the creator and between mankind and other human beings. In fact in one saying he said that even religious leaders and scholars will be unscrupulous and that despite their knowledge they are crooked in their behavior. This may point to people who use religion as a means of obtaining funds or wealth for themselves or for obtaining position. We find people all over the world who use their authority to get people to obey and support despotic rulers. There was a prophecy that some Muslims will imitate those who were before them and instead of following heritage, scripture and revelation they try to imitate this and that. At the same time the prophet also indicated that among Muslims there would be people who will keep steadfast on the true path regardless of whomever differs with them or condemns them for their steadfastness. On the whole one could say that there will be lots of commotion and temptation for people to deviate from the path of truth and not to follow the divine guidance. People will follow all kinds of life and philosophies and materialism will be quite rampant.

**Host: Can you give us some indication of what the major signs are?**

Jamal Badawi:

Some of the major signs are mentioned in the Quran and some are mentioned in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). There are a total of ten signs. These are rather difficult to interpret and understand because we don't know whether the words are literal or if they might be allegorical.

First of all, three of the signs relate to three major eclipses one eclipse in Arabia one to the east and one to the west of Arabia. Another sign would be the appearance of a lot of smoke in the sky. Whether that literally means smoke or if it is a reference to smog or pollution. This appears in a chapter in the Quran that is called *Al Dukhan* or Smoke or (44:10-11) "Then watch thou for the Day that the sky will bring forth a kind of smoke (or mist) plainly visible, enveloping the people: this will be a Penalty Grievous." One of the meanings could be that it will be close to The Day of Judgment and it could also be reference to pollution and the suffering that results from it.

A fifth sign is that fire will come out of the bottom of the earth in the Arabian Peninsula in the area of Aden. I read one time that Aden is actually located on top of a volcano but again this may or may not be a reference to that. A sixth sign would be that the sun will rise from the west instead of the east. This could signify and disturbance in the cosmic order or the axis of the earth.

The seventh would be that an animal will come out and speak to people. Again we don't know if this is literal or allegorical in that people will be so ignorant in terms of wisdom that even animals can show them that they are not prudent enough in their actions. This appears in the Quran in (27:82) "And when the Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), we shall produce from the earth a beast to (face) them: He will speak to them, for that mankind did not believe with assurance in Our Signs."

Another sign that might be familiar to many of our viewers appears in the Quran in (21:96-97) and it talks about the coming of Gog and Magog and how they will destroy everything that they can lay their hands on. Again there are lots of discussions and interpretations as to what that refers to but there will be destruction or people who engage in great commotion.

Another sign is that the Mahdi a Muslim reformer whose name will either be Muhammad or Ahmad will come towards the end of time and he will establish justice and peace on earth. He will come only as a follower of Islam who will carry the message and try to enforce it.

Another sign is that during the lifetime of the Mahdi or the promised one the false Messiah will come to earth. The description is very difficult to interpret as to whether it is literal or allegorical. The false Messiah will be one eyed and that he will impress people and even invite them to worship him, whether he will impress them with miracles or with technological powers and whether the false Messiah is one person or a group of people we do not know. A lot of people will be misled and will follow him almost to the point of blind worship. Most importantly it says that at this time Jesus (PBUH) who is highly regarded and respected by Muslims as one of the great prophets will come down to earth and join the Muslim ranks and join the Mahdi in fighting the false Messiah and killing him. After this the Mahdi will die and then after that there would be a number of years on earth where there would be perfect peace. In one of the sayings of the Prophet it says that then Prophet Jesus (PBUH) would die and the Muslims would make the funeral prayer on him. Then after that a cool wind will blow and it will not leave any person with the slightest faith in his heart but it will take his soul and only evil people would remain on earth. These are the people will be left at the time when The Day of Judgment actually starts. Something interesting in one of the sayings of the prophet is that the war will take place where the Muslims will be to the east of the bank of the Jordan River and the false Messiah and his legion would be to the west of the Jordan River. The interesting thing is that this Hadith was quoted from the Prophet 1400 years ago and the narrator of that saying says that he even doesn't know where the location of the Jordan River is.

In one chapter in the Quran in (43:61) it says about Jesus being the sign of the hour. "And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment): therefore have no doubt about the (Hour), but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way." This has two meanings. One is that the virgin birth of Jesus is a sign that the hour is true. The second interpretation is that the second coming of Prophet Jesus to join hands with the Muslims would be in itself also a sign that the hour is imminent.

Another controversial verse in the Quran that has been interpreted in a variety of ways appears in (4:158) it says that none of the people of The Book will die until they believe in Jesus. This was interpreted to me in one of two ways. One is that that every Christian before Jesus dies will realize the nature of Jesus and that he was a great messenger and prophet of God and all the things they attributed to him are not true. The second interpretation is that the people of The Book or the Christians who would be living at the time of the second coming of Jesus will at that time believe in Jesus as a prophet and human being.

**Host: What actually happens on The Day of Judgment?**

Jamal Badawi:



The Quran gives us a sketch of what would happen after only evil people are left on earth. First of all the trumpet will be blown and the remaining people on earth will die. Secondly there would be a great change in the cosmic order, a cosmic catalyst, which is something that is terrible and absolutely terrifying. There are lots of chapters that deal with this in the Quran. 75,78, 81, 82, 84, 89 and 99 are only some of the chapters that have lots of vivid description of these cosmic changes that take place on the day of judgment. Just to give a brief notion of what kind of things happen first that the sky would be unveiled and the stars will be dispersed and might crash into each other. The whole order of the universe will totally change. The oceans will burst forth and in one verse in the Quran it gives the impression that it might even ignite. The mountains will become like flakes of teased wool. This shows the balance of the earth will change all together. In one verse in the Quran it actually talks about Mountains vanishing from existence and becoming like a mirage and that the earth would shake to the utmost convulsions. Another verse talks about the earth being pounded and the sun and the moon would combine or come to one place. But above all is the vivid description of people coming out of the earth as it opens. All of the people since the time of Adam will come to face the accountability a day as described in the Quran where every person would only be concerned with his own salvation.

#### 4.11 Muslim Beliefs- Accountability, Paradise, & Hellfire

##### **Summary of 4.10 "Signs of the Hour"**

As far as the final day as we mentioned before the sky would be unveiled or opened, the stars will be dispersed, the oceans will burst into fire, mountains will vanish or be thrown around like flakes of teased wood, the earth will have severe earthquakes but above all, all people who lived on this earth at any point in history will be resurrected. Again like we discussed before, this is not a matter that we can measure materially as God is able to raise all people who lived throughout history. The Quran makes it clear to us for example in (80:34) that this would be a day when everybody would be worried about himself and the terror, fear and apprehension will be so prominent that they won't think much about his closest relatives let alone friends. It will be a very stressful day and in chapter 22 it gives an explanation of that day that even a mother who nurses her baby would forget about her baby. This shows that this is not a picnic and is a day when everybody will be apprehensive as to what their final destiny will look like.

#### 4.11 Accountability, Paradise and Hellfire

##### **Host: How does this come to an end and what marks the beginning of The Day of Judgment?**

Jamal Badawi:

In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad he says that people will be so stressed and worried that they go to some of the prophets and they will ask them to plead with God to get it over with and get it started. They will go to Prophet Moses and other

prophets and each of them even though they are great and respected Prophets the situation is so ominous they would say that they don't feel fit enough to do so. So people end up going to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and they plead with him to plead with God. Prophet Muhammad would then pray to God to get things over and start the accountability. This saying of the Prophet (PBUH) is consistent with one verse in the Quran in (17:79) in which it addresses Prophet Muhammad telling him to wake up and make night prayers (it is very difficult to wake up in the middle of the night to pray) then it says that maybe as a result of this God will raise you up on The Day of Judgment in an honored and high state. Many interpreters explain this high state of that which will allow him to intercede on behalf all of humanity to start the process of judgment.

**Host: Is there anything in the Quran that explains the nature of the judgment and what will happen?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are plenty of references to this in the Quran because of the belief in The Day of Judgment and the belief in the life hereafter is a very integral component in the Muslim belief which tremendously affects his attitude and perspective on life.

The first thing that should be emphasized is that the judgment is done with full justice. We find numerous references in the Quran for example (40:17) "no injustice will there be that Day." In another widely quoted verse in (18:49)\* "And not one will thy Lord treat with injustice." The Quran also says that God would not do the least injustice, not even a portion of an atom of injustice in (4:40)\*\*. We find the same thing in (10:44) which also emphasizes that no injustice will be done to anyone.

In fact things will be so clear on The Day of Judgment that it is possible that a human being would be appointed as his own judge. There is an interesting concept that we find in the Quran about the book of deeds for example in (17:13-14) "Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open.(It will be said to him:) "Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee."

In any judgment there is the question of evidence that will be presented. The evidence is the book of deeds. And if one recalls when we were discussing the topic on angels and that some of the functions of angels is to keep track of our deeds. For example we find in (82:10-12) that God has appointed guardian angels who know everything that one does. In (50:18) it also talks about angels who would not be unaware of a single word that one may utter. In that sense the evidence is that book of deeds. In (18:49)\* it says that the book is put forward and one finds that the

wicked are very apprehensive of what it contains and they say “Ah! woe to us! what a Book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!” So in terms of comprehensive evidence will be presented of both good and evil deeds.

Another interesting thing that we find in the Quran is that there are witnesses and they are ones own organs. Interesting enough we find in (24:24) “On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions.” In other words the tongue would say this fellow who holds me said this and that. This is also confirmed in (36:65) and (41:22) as they clarify that the organs will be witnesses against us. Another thing that is related to the process of judgment is the concept of *mezan* which means scale. This scale is used to weigh our deeds but of course we should not always think that it is a physical scale where our good deeds would be put on one side to see if they outweigh the bad deeds or the reverse. It could be a physical scale but we find that the description in the Quran given to the scale is a process of evaluation of good and bad deeds. For example in (21:47) “We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment.” We also find in chapter 101 and 23 that those whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will go to paradise and the reverse will go to hell fire.

### **Host: What role does grace play in Islam?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is ample room in Islam for grace, but it is grace for those who deserve it. It is grace for people who through their firm belief and whom tried their best to live up to the requirements and the challenges of that belief. Grace is not a loose thing for example if a teacher says that no matter what one does one will pass is not grace but mediocrity. One has to work for that grace that is there for the taking. I think it is important to realize that no matter how many good deeds we may do on earth it by not mean guaranty our salvation.

It's not a matter of being spiritually proud and saying that one will go to paradise if they are good. The point here is that when God holds us accountable it is not a mechanical type of judgment. The Quran says that when a person does an evil deed it is counted as one deed for one action, whereas there are numerous places in the Quran that talk about multiplication of good deeds. In other words if one does one good deed it is counted ten times more or seventy times more. In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad he said it could be counted 700 times more. The Quran says that God can multiply the value of the reward for whomever he pleases! We find also that if a person intends to do something wrong but doesn't actually commit it for any reason it is not counted against him. It is a very generous type of accountability but there must at least be some earned credit to be multiplied.

In this sense we find that Prophet Muhammad has given us very good guidance as he says that if any person is really held accountable in great details he will perish and he would have no chance. This is saying that out of the generosity and grace of God if one is good in terms of belief and tries to do their best then God will not hold one accountable for every little thing but rather forgives one's sins. In a verse in the Quran it says that good deeds wipe out bad deeds.

The Quran also describes people as belonging in different groups a group whom will be given their book of deeds in their right hand, left hand or behind one's back. If one is given their book in their left hand or behind their back it is an indication that he is in trouble or that he was a wicked person. If a person is given the book of deeds in his right hand it is an indication that many of his deeds will be forgiven. For example in (84:7-8) "Then he who is given his Record in his right hand, soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning." Just to clarify Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that when a person is judged if he is basically good God will ask "did you do this and that" and the person would answer "yes" and ask for forgiveness and God will conceal it for him. This doesn't happen to everyone as a person must accept some effort in order to receive this grace from God. Grace is not absent or loose but rather subject to some criteria.

### **Host: How do things proceed after the judgment has taken place?**

Jamal Badawi:

One of the concepts that is quite crucial in Islam is known as *As-Sirat* and it means the path. In fact the first chapter in the Quran which is repeated several times everyday in the prayers says in (1:5) "Show us the straight way." Islam is called the Strait Path and in fact there was a book edited by Morgan called *Islam: The Strait Path*. In fact one can call the whole of Islam as the strait path or the path that helps us reach God. The same concept of path is also repeated in The Day of Judgment. That is to say all human beings after The Day of Reckoning finishes start moving along a path. In some of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he described the path as being a narrow, very delicate path that will pass over hell fire. Whoever was wicked and rejected God would not be able to cross the bridge successfully into paradise and would fall down into hell fire.

This can be taken literally or symbolically that this path is very narrow just like our life here, if we are really trying to follow the path of God then we are walking a narrow path and hell fire is not only underneath us but all around us. All temptations to deviate from the truth, confusion of belief and of deeds are constantly pulling us down. By following the path of God one has to sacrifice, be determinate and have faith to keep doing what is right.

By the same token also we can say that in The Day of Judgment the situation is not a joke and is serious to the point that every person is walking on a narrow path but no skill or acrobat that will allow passage but rather ones deeds that would allow passage. One beautiful explanation of a believer would pass over this path (57:12) "One Day shalt thou see the believing men and the believing women- how their Light runs forward before them and by their right hands: (their greeting will be): "Good News for you this Day! Gardens beneath which flow rivers! to dwell therein for aye! This is indeed the highest Achievement!" In other words their deeds will be like light guiding them through this critical path between accountability and paradise.

**Host: What is the Islamic conception of what hell will be like?**

Jamal Badawi:

The picture as depicted in the Quran (it is mentioned in so many places) is so horrifying that I bet any person would say this is not who knows of it would do anything to stay away from it. The description given is that first the intensity of the fire is very great. The food would be like thorns that would cut a person's intestines and the water would be boiling water. This is mentioned in (47:15) and (18:29). In (22:19)\*\*\* it says that the unbelievers will have clothing of fire. In (7:41) it says in regards to beds that there would be fire underneath and above them so that they are totally engulfed in fire. What is even worst is that they don't die as they don't totally burn as they would in the earthly life. The suffering will not end. In (20:74) and (87:13) it talks about people not really dying when they are in hell fire, they just keep on going. What is even more painful in (4:55) it says that whenever their skins are burned God will replace them with new skins so that they may really experience the punishment. When someone has a third degree burn they don't feel the pain as much afterwards because the nerves are close to the surface. This is an interesting thing having been revealed 1400 years ago and really described in a vivid and accurate way conveying the nature of torture that the most sensitive parts are replaced whenever they are burned so that the person keeps getting the punishment. After all the Quran indicates that this is the just reward for those who rejected God and who ignored the guidance he provided through Adam and ending with the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

**Host: What is the description of paradise?**

Jamal Badawi:

The description of hell fire is beyond imagination even with the picture given just makes it easier to understand but it could be worst. The same thing applies to the description of paradise. This description communicates felicity, enjoyment and pleasure but we can't totally comprehend the real picture of paradise.

The Quran describes things that exist in paradise like fresh milk, fresh sparkling sweet water, delicious honey and all kinds of delicious foods instantaneously available whenever the person wants them. One doesn't even have to make an effort. Clothing is of pure silk, there are beautiful comfortable places to sleep and sit on. There are palaces with rivers flowing underneath them. There are descriptions of gold and precious stones readily available. There will be pure spouses which includes spouses of this life, in other words a good male believer would have his believing spouse with him on The Day of Judgment. One verse in the Quran says "they and their spouses" (husbands or wives). There is also a description of drinks that are pleasing. On that point some people say how come Islam prohibits wine drinking while the Quran mentions people drinking *khamr* wine in paradise. This is a misunderstanding because if one takes the word *khamr* literally it means something fermented or intoxicating but we have evidence from the Quran is the pleasure of the drinks but it is not necessarily something that beclouds the mind. More specifically in (56:19) it talks about pleasurable drinks that don't becloud the mind as it is not champagne, whisky or vodka. Some people think it is too material but what they forget is that this description is of a material nature but different from what we understand. As we find in (2:25) it talks about fruits that look like what we have on earth but it tastes quite different.

Above all we find that the Quran describes different kinds of pleasures for people who have more spiritual inclinations. It talks about the company of pure angels like in (13:24) and it talks about the feeling of God's pleasure in (9:72). But the greatest of all is that the perceptual barriers would be removed in such a way that we would be able to look at God as the Quran says that there would be faces on that day shining with light looking at their Lord. Above all the description of paradise is only something that will make it comprehensible to use because as the Quran says no soul knows what is hidden by way of surprises for them on The Day of Judgment. As the Prophet was quoted as saying that God has prepared for His servants in paradise things that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no thought could have made it imaginable to any human being.

## 4.13 Muslim Beliefs- Al Qadar

### 4.13 Al-Qadar (Measure)

**Host:** Could you give us a brief summery of the nature of the arguments related to this question of free will and predestination?

Jamal Badawi:

Human beings have always faced a very difficult dilemma regarding the questions of having free will, if we really control our destiny or if we just follow a predestined path. If we are truly free agents and we determine our own destiny where does God fit? If we believe in God as any believer would as the soul and ultimate power in this universe and as one who possesses perfect knowledge of the past, present and future then where does He fit if we control our destiny. Again one runs into a dilemma when they take the other assumption.

If we say that we are predestined and that everything we do in this life is something that we are pushed into because God decreed it then why is it that we are held responsible before God in The Day of Judgment? The main point is that any believer accepts the notion that things in this universe don't take place as a coincidence and there is definitely certain plans and wisdom that God has behind the various happenings.

**Host: How have the various philosophers and theologians attempted to answer these questions?**

Jamal Badawi:

Basically there seems to have been two extremes in answering this question. There are those who hold the view that we as human beings are totally free agents and that if God has any knowledge of our deeds it is something that comes after the fact. In other words we make our choice and determine exactly what we want- so God will find out what we do after we do it. We control our destiny and it is up to us to do or not to do certain things.

On the other hand we get another extreme which I call fatalism. This has nothing to do with Islam as some people mistakenly think. That is to adopt exactly the opposite assumption to say that if we truly believe in God then we accept the fact that nothing happens in this universe against His will because he is the supreme power and Sovran of the universe. So whatever happens to us and whatever behavior we chose to do is something that is predestined and that applies not only to believers but non-believers used to hold this kind of approach. For example a person who doesn't believe in God at all would say that time predetermined what I am going to do. Even polytheists had the belief that certain gods determined the destiny in different areas of life. Believers in one God, followers of monotheistic faith, adopted this particular explanation. They all meet fatalistic approach and everything is predestined and everyone is simply doing what they are supposed to do.

**Host: What is the position of Islam on this issue? Some people say that Muslims believe in predestination, what is the actual term used in the Quran to refer to this issue and what does it mean?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a great deal of confusion when people depend on English translations to explain various concepts and principles of Islam. Many times the errors are done by Muslims themselves who are not aware of the full implication of some of the English terms. Most often people talk about predestination as a Muslim belief. Technically this may be correct in one sense. When one talks about predestination most people get the distinct impression of fatalism. Some writers about Islam, especially non Muslims, fall into the error of interpreting this belief as fatalistic. Thus it is very useful to go back to the original term that is used in the Quran.

The Islamic term for this subject is *kadar* and the strict meaning of the word is measure. It means something in due measure or proportion, it also means judgment. If we look at verses in the Quran that use this term we find that it has no connotation as some think with fatalism. An example in one verse in (54:49) of the Quran says "Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure." In another verse in the Quran it talks about God's creation and says God created everything in due proportion. There are plenty of other quotations in the Quran that follow the same explanation of *kadar* for example when it says that "God has ordained the cycle of the moon." This means that God appointed certain laws or cycles for the moon.

When we put all of this together it give a clear understanding that what the Quran means by *kadar* is not predestination but rather that God created this universe in accordance with certain laws or due measure which could apply to physical existence like the laws that control the earths rotation around the sun and the moon. As God created the universe in accordance to these laws there are certain laws in society and behavior which follow certain rules. We find in the Quran the pattern/laws that God created nobody can change. If one asks me to find a word that best describes this article of faith in Islam I find myself hesitant. Some people use the term destiny instead of predestination like a Muslim scholar by the name of Iqbal. There are some who use the term divine decree. I still don't feel comfortable with either translation whether it is predestination, destiny or divine decree; I would rather use the original Arabic term *qadar* and for the purpose of communication I would use due-measure.

**Host: If our destiny is known to God why does he punish us for our deviations?**



Jamal Badawi:

On one hand it is erroneous to say that anything happens on this earth against the will of God or else He would not be God and his omnipresence would be negated. It is also erroneous to blame evil deed that we commit on God by saying it is his will. I think the confusion could be a distinction between two separate aspects in our lives. There are certain aspects in our life for which we have some control and there are some aspects we don't have any control of. This may remove the confusion.

The mere question of whether we are free agents or predestined is a result of our observation as we feel that in some aspects we don't have free will and in others we do have a choice. The distinction can then be made in this way. There are aspects in our life where we don't have any control. Some examples are that we don't control when we are to be born, the color of our complexion, we don't control what our features will look like and we don't control how our heart will beat. Are we held responsible for those things? No. God out of His justice doesn't hold us responsible for any of these things. Actually it is out of the mercy of God that we don't have control over these things. If we control our heart, liver and digestive system then what happens to us when we are asleep? How can we keep our heart pumping? It is out of the mercy of God that He relieved us of having control of these basic natural functions. On the other hand this doesn't negate that there are elements in our lives where we do have control. No body can convince me by any argument that I don't have the choice between taking a gun and committing murdering someone and between taking bread and food to someone who is hungry.

## 4.12 Muslim Beliefs- Intercession

### **Summary of 4.11 "Accountability, Paradise & Hellfire"**

We talked about a number of issues in the last series. One was accountability and we mentioned that all human beings will stand before God and will be given their book of deeds. Those who receive it in their right hand are safe and a sign that their good deeds exceed their bad deeds and those who receive their book in their left hand or behind their back it is a sign that their evil deeds are more. There is a kind of scale that will weigh those deeds. We tried to emphasize that this doesn't mean that accountability is that mechanical. We mentioned the various quotations from the Quran indicating that accountability is done with full justice, fairness and generosity. We said that for one evil deed only one is recorded against in the record and for one good deed it is sometimes multiplied by 10, 70 and sometimes 700 depending on ones intentions. So one gets a lot more reward than punishment and we indicated that there is a great deal of room for grace. We don't really enter paradise just because of our deeds. Grace is there for those who seek it.

We mentioned after this that people will pass through *Asserat* which is a kind of narrow path. Some people would fall into hell fire and those with good deeds will be unable to make through without much difficulty.

Then we went on to give a brief description of the two final abodes hell fire and paradise. From what is mentioned about it in the Quran we indicated that it is not the kind of place that is very grim and painful. Worst of all people who go there do not die or live they just continue in this constant state of punishment for rejection of God and ignoring His message sent through his prophets. Then we talked about paradise that everyone should strive to get into. We indicated that the Quran gives descriptions that we as human beings can comprehend and understand. It talks about food, nice clothes, adornment and all kinds of enjoyment and pure spouses.

We indicated that this description vivid and material as it may appear is used to help us appreciate the kind of joy that will be in paradise. We indicated that according to the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) no body can really understand or perceive the extent of joy that one will get in paradise. Just to give us a hint the Quran talks about other rewards that are not material like being in the company of the pure with the angels, the martyrs and pious people. In chapter nine of the Quran it talks about the pleasure of God and above all the climax in paradise according to chapter 75 is the removal of all the human perceptual barriers to the point where we would be able to see God.

#### 4.12 Intercession

**Host: Is there some chance that some people may be taken out of hell after some time?**

Jamal Badawi:

Some but not all people may be taken out of hell. There is reference in the Quran to those who rejected God and who were really wicked and how they would stay there forever. As one verse says they do not die or live there. Other verses in the Quran use the term gives a sense of eternity *khalidena fiha* which means that they will be there forever. However it is quite possible that some people would die with lots of evil deeds and sins but still with some remains of faith or goodness in their hearts. There is a reference to that in one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he says that on The Day of Judgment after these people are purified by going to hell to pay for their sins that Allah will ordain the angels to “take out of hell-fire anyone that believed that there is no deity but Me even if he has an atoms weight of faith or goodness in his heart.” This means that no matter how sinful the person

may be that faith and belief in the ones of God would lead to take them out of the hell fire.

Some people use this in an erroneous sense as someone might say ‘well if I am only going to hell for a couple of days let me enjoy my life here why should I sacrifice.’ What they forget first of all is that no body knows how many days or years this state of punishment will continue for and we know that under severe punishment every second becomes a year. Thirdly in (22:47) it says that “Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning.” This is even a more horrifying figure. In one verse in the Quran it says a day is equivalent to a hundred thousand years, so if one is trying to say let me enjoy my life here its only a couple of days in hell just be careful as to what that day might look like. There is reference in chapter 32 and 70 to this relative counting of days. But on the whole according to the Prophet (PBUH) God will still overshadow with His mercy those people who had a trace of faith and goodness.

**Host: Do Muslims believe in intercession or someone being able to intercede with God on their behalf or for others?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is a concept in Islam of intercession but not intermediary. The equivalent Arabic term is *shafa'a*. The reason I am saying it is not intermediary because this means someone standing between two other people. This is totally alien to Islamic thinking because a Muslim believes that there is no intermediary between man and God. Even messengers and great prophets like Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (PBUH) are not regarded as intermediaries between man and God. The relationship between the human and his creator is direct. Those great prophets came to guide us and establish our personal relationship with God.

Intercession in a sense of pleading with God on behalf of someone who might be sinful is different as the person who intercedes has no authority unlike intermediary who has authority. In this limited sense this is admissible. This again should be put in the proper perspective as it can't contradict one important principle that has been emphasized in the Quran in numerous places that every soul will be held responsible for himself. One can't throw the blame on others as we are given the faculties and guidance through prophets and everyone has to stand on his own merits.

Even if that merit is imperfect with our human deficiencies and shortcomings we find that the Quran the door is wide open for repentance and correcting the situation directly between God and the person without any intermediary without any confession. The Quran makes it clear that everything can be forgiven except for one

thing and that is to associate others with God. Actually one place in the Quran says “God will not forgive anyone who associates others with Him and He forgives anything that is less than that” for whomever He wishes. Another qualification for this intercession is that this can only be granted after God gives permission. For example in chapter 2 in the Quran it says that no body can intercede with God on behalf of anyone else except with His permission.

Finally this intercession can't be for anyone but rather must be on behalf of some that is accepted by God. He could be sinful but he is still accepted by God and that there was some trace of faith and goodness in his heart. We find an example of this in (21:28) that those who intercede can only do it on behalf of people who are accepted by God. Of course the clearest intercessor will be Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He said in one of his sayings that he would be an intercessor but again not on behalf of everybody but on behalf of those who deserve it.

**Host: Can a person know whether or not he or she is going to paradise while they are living their lives here on earth?**

Jamal Badawi:

I will just refer directly to one important saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One time he was telling his companions that “none of you will enter paradise because of your good deeds.” So they looked at him and said “even you oh messenger of Allah?” He said “even me unless God shrouds me with His mercy.” Here we have a man who is not only a prophet but is the final prophet and one of the most loved prophet of God teaching people spiritual humility by telling them that even “I am not guaranteed paradise as I have to depend on the grace or mercy of God.” This is a strong lesson to learn.

A person while he is still living has to struggle against himself and against evil in society. If one knows for sure that he has the ticket this could lead to spiritual arrogance. This could also weaken the tendency to sacrifice and to do good deeds because one has already made it. This could lead to a great deal of danger and of course knowing human nature and the need to stay careful and on guard makes this a dangerous kind of thinking.

In fact this doesn't mean that a person should always have anxiety that no matter how much they believe or how many good deeds they have that they don't know where they are going. Again the Quran makes it clear that the promise of God is true. God is not misleading us to discipline ourselves and conduct a good life as he ordained just to encourage us to do good. We know for sure that his promise will be true. God gave the criteria in the Quran which includes belief, good deeds and praying for the

grace and mercy of God. One may feel in their heart that so long as he or she is following the right path there is a kind of inner peace and tranquility. Also, there is one realistic question that comes up- suppose a person in this particular day is a good, believing and pious person but can anyone know for sure if a person will change towards the end of his life and dies an unbeliever. How can anyone tell that someone who is now wicked and evil might not repent towards the end of his life and be accepted and go to paradise? It is very dangerous to simply start classifying and saying because of paying lip service or because of saying that they believe that they are safe. The Quran says that belief itself has to be confirmed and translated into action. The idea is not to be anxious but to always be on guard.

**Host: What is the Muslim attitude towards the idea that some people will be going to paradise because of their particular beliefs while others who don't share those particular beliefs will be going to the hell fire?**

Jamal Badawi:

I remember being asked myself a very similar question. I was asked "you're a Muslim do you believe that because you are a Muslim that you are going to paradise and those who are not Muslim are going to hell fire?" My first response to him was "who told you that by a person claiming to be a Muslim or by believing in God, His messenger and His books that he has a cart-blanch to paradise?" Then I quoted the Hadith that I quoted above that the Prophet was teaching us humility and that I am not going to paradise just because of my deeds. Anyone who says they are sure they are going to paradise is spiritually arrogant. One can say that they are doing their best to follow the path that God promised would lead to heaven but that they don't know for sure and they will keep trying.

Secondly, what about those who died in the past without hearing about those prophets? Are they to be condemned or is it a judgment that is best to be left to God?

Thirdly, when trying to classify who goes to paradise and hell aren't we then taking for ourselves a power that belongs to God. Aren't we then really associating others with God by claiming this divine attribute of final judgment to ourselves? Who am I as a human being who can't guarantee myself to say that this person goes here and that there. I can give the criteria and path that must be followed to reach a certain point but I can't say where each person is going because I don't know what is in people's hearts. In fact we find evidence in the Quran that only God will decide between the Jews, Christians, those who associated others with God and the Muslims. We are not supposed to judge people but we are supposed to proclaim the truth as we understand it and as we are convinced of it in our hearts. We are not in the position to judge anyone as we are to be judged ourselves by God.

**Host: Are animals resurrected and are they accountable in the same way as mankind?**

Jamal Badawi:

There is one place in the Quran that says initially on The Day of Judgment animals will come to life. In one verse for example it says “when the beasts are collected” while describing the scene on The Day of Judgment. In principle animals are not held accountable in a sense of going to paradise or hell fire for their deeds because they are not responsible beings. Angels for example are created good and they have no choice but being good. Animals are created without intellect, the spirituality that human beings have, and power of reason. So they are not held responsible because God created them as such. Only humans and Jinn, unseen creators who have a choice between good and evil and who have free will, would be held responsible for their actions.

The other thing that one can say by inference is that the description of paradise as indicated in the Quran and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is that a person would get everything that he or she wants; so if pets make them happy they would not be deprived of it in paradise.

**Host: What is the relevance of the belief in the hereafter in our day to day existence? Is it a question of belief or dogma?**

Jamal Badawi:

It is not necessarily a dogma. If one recalls in previous series that even monotheism, belief in prophethood, belief in angels in revelation sounds as if it is something dogmatic or a matter of belief in the unseen but we have shown in the previous how these relate to the day to day life of the individual. First of all belief in The Day of Judgment is related to the understanding and belief in ultimate justice. We find people who are evil and wicked they torture or kill people in large numbers but they may still die rich and powerful without getting their just punishment. They may get some punishment in this life but many times they don't get enough. The opposite is also as we have people who are good, pious, God fearing, they discipline themselves, and offer all kinds of sacrifice in the service of humanity but they may be under oppression from unjust rulers and they suffer all kinds in pain and die in pain without getting compensation. Is that just? In those terms there must be some stage in terms of our logic, our understanding, in the laws of nature that things have to conclude. For example the Quran in (45:21) says “**What!** Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds,- that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make.” In chapter 38 it says we can't equate those who are corrupt with those who are good. It is up to God to fulfill ultimate judgment and ultimate justice.

The second and most important part is that the belief in the life hereafter and ultimate justice gives the individual's life perspective as a person realizes that this life is not aimless. One who believes in this tries to cement our personal relationship with God by being more spiritually oriented. This reminds me of the saying of Rabia' al-Adawiah when she said "Oh my Lord I am not worshipping you just because I am afraid of your hell fire, nor am I doing it because I aspire for your paradise I do it only out of love of Thee and the hope of being close to you in The Day of Judgment."

## 4.14 Muslim Beliefs- Books of Allah

### 4.14 Books of Allah

**Host: Can you explain the belief in genuine prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad and the belief in the Holy Books?**

Jamal Badawi:

If a Muslim believes in all the prophets that were sent throughout history from Adam to Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad then it logically follows that a Muslim must also believe in the original Holy Scriptures or divine revelation given to those prophets. Belief in Holy Books is a logical consequence of the belief in the prophets. This belief is one of the duties of a Muslim and is one of the six Pillars of Faith.

The Quran indicates very clearly that the essential message of all of those prophets had been nothing but one regardless of little differences in small details here and there. For example (21:25) in the Quran says "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 that sense we can say that as prophets taught the same thing the Holy Scriptures through out in their original pristine form has taught nothing but this essential call unto humanity to worship one God. In that sense we can say that this is the same message of Islam because the word Islam means submission to the will of God.

**Host: Is there anything in the Quran which requires Muslims to believe in previous books that were revealed to previous prophets before Prophet Muhammad?**

Jamal Badawi:

Yes, and that is why I mentioned that it is one of the six required pillars of faith like believing in God, the Angels of God, the Prophets, the Books of God, the Day of Judgment and Measure (qadar). There are also some sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that address this issue like in the famous saying when Angel Gabriel came to him as a human being and asked him so many questions. One of those questions was “What is Eman or faith?” And he (Prophet Muhammad) said that faith was to believe in God, His books, His messengers etc.

The Quran has been very explicit with some clarifying quotations. In (2:4) “And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.” We find the Quran also ties between believing in God, believing in the messengers of God, believing in the angels of God and the books revealed by God all in (2:285). It says “The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. “We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles.” And they say: “We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys.” So the belief in the Books is part and parcel to the other articles of faith.

Even more explicitly the Quran directs Muslims, as it is an obligation, to believe in the original versions of these divine revelation in (2:136) “Say ye: “We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma‘il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to Allah (in Islam).”

**Host: Does the Quran mention any Holy Books that were revealed before by name specifically?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are four that have been specifically mentioned in the Quran by name. These include first the Scrolls of Abraham in (87:19) and (53:37), the Psalms of David in (17:55) and (4:163), the Torah given to Moses and is praised as giving guidance and light in (5:47) and (6:91) and the Evangel/Gospel (Ingeal in Arabic) given to Prophet Jesus (PBUH) appears in (5:4). These are of course in addition to the last revelation and that is the Quran. The Quran acknowledge previous revelation as these four are particularly mentioned.



An example of the mention of a Holy Book can be found in (3:1-3) “A.L.M. Allah. There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. It is He who sent down to thee (step by step), the truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).” In the very same verse in the Quran there is mention of three of the major scriptures the Torah, the Gospel and the Quran given to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

**Host: What about the case of scriptures other than the four that are mentioned in the Quran are they accepted and recognized or are they rejected?**

Jamal Badawi:

The fact that not all Holy Books are explicitly mentioned does not necessarily mean that the ones mentioned are the only scriptures. We get this notion by referring to the Quran in (2:213) “Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Books in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed.” So notice here the verse uses the plural to say that messengers were sent with books. It is implied from this verse that the Books are not only the four that are mentioned but all the Books or revelations that were given to messengers.

When we refer to the Quran (5:51) it talks about God sending Books before the Quran again in the plural without specifying the four scriptures. The word kitab or book is not only used in the singular form but also in the plural. Of course as we mentioned before in the series on prophethood that the Quran indicated that in every nation, everywhere in the world, in different points in times there were many messengers and so there must have been several revelations.

**Host: Are the present versions of these books accepted by Muslims as they are without reservation?**

Jamal Badawi:

I used the word original with justification. As the Prophet (PBUH) was asked once as to how the Muslims should approach the available versions of the scriptures prior to the Quran and he said that one can not accept or reject them fully. This is a matter that one has to be fair minded but critical and honest in terms of demanding clear evidence that the scripture represents the exact word of God. What the Quran refers to as an obligation on the Muslim to believe in the original and complete versions of the Holy Books given to previous prophets prior to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is very well known historically that many of the past revelations were totally lost, like

the Quran mentions that the scrolls of Abraham, or partially lost as many previous prophets had been persecuted and their books were destroyed or burned and perhaps many of their followers tried to recollect as much as they could of the teachings of these messengers. The problem is that at times it was not quite clear what were the exact words of the prophets as divine revelation verses the particular theological or philosophical interpretations of the followers. Even if we assume that the disciples tried to keep record of whatever they could recollect of those scriptures, human beings are not beyond error as only the prophets as we mentioned before are protected from error. The communication of these scriptures from the prophets to their people have to be correct. The possibility of keeping them intact without change is something that was beyond the ability of the people because of persecution and mixing of different interpretations.

In addition to this we find evidence not only historically but in the text of previous scriptures which give clear evidence that the word of God is mixed with the interpretation of man. For example it has been widely known that the first five books in The Old Testament in The Bible are called The Books of Moses constituting the Torah (The Book of Genesis, The Book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and The Book of Deuteronomy. To the Muslim the Torah could have been slightly different from these five books because according to Muslims and to some statements in the Bible the Torah was given to Moses on Mount Sinai during his life time. In The Book of Deuteronomy in (34:5) it says Moses died in such and such land. Now we can not say that this particular verse was part of the original Torah given to Moses on Mount Sinai because it talks about his death! Not only this verse but most of the 34<sup>th</sup> chapter in The Book of Deuteronomy, actually four of these books excluding Genesis talk about Moses. This is clear evidence that these five books are not the Torah that the Quran talks about but possibly parts of the Torah, some of the instructions or teachings or codes of law along side with the interpretation of people and biography of the life of Prophet Moses.

**Host: Is there explicit evidence from the Quran to the effect that revelations that proceeded the Quran have been altered?**

Jamal Badawi:

There are several references to this in the Quran that say that some of the revelations were totally lost, there are so many prophets perhaps even prior to Abraham such as Noah that we have no trace of any scriptures given to him, some were forgotten by followers especially in cases where people depended on memory or when the revelation is written many years after the death of the prophet. There is also mention in the Quran that in some cases there were certain portions of the scriptures that were concealed and some that were altered whether with good or bad intention which may have mixed the clear truth of God with human interpretation. The reference to this in the Quran is in (2:75), (4:46), (5:14) and in (6:91). One clear example is in (5:15) "O people of the Book! There hath come to you our Messenger, revealing to you much that ye used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now

unnecessary). There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book.”

To tie this with the previous series about Muhammad in the Bible where we indicated that even in the present version of the Bible there are so many clear signs of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). We notice that the Quran asserts that there were more clear prophecies mentioning him by name and we quoted in (61:6) that Prophet Jesus mentioned Prophet Muhammad by name. The Quran also asserts that the people of The Old Testament knew the advent of that prophet that was not John the Baptist. So from the Muslim point of view there might have been some portions that might have been some portions that may have not stayed intact. But as Prophet Muhammad taught there is no justification for Muslims to say I reject previous Holy Books in total. The Quran provides a solution by being the last revelation of God which is scrupulously preserved in its original form which is not even mixed with the words of Muhammad. The Quran is taken by Muslims as the criterion as it is the latest most up to date, most correct and preserved scripture of God. It is the criterion that distinguishes between right or wrong, original revelation and people own interpretation which might have been erroneous. A crucial verse in the Quran to justify that appears in (5:48) “To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety.” There are phrases crucial words here “confirming past scriptures” and “guarding it in safety.” Confirming in a sense of accepting previous scriptures from the Bible or other scriptures which is consistent with the Quran. For example if a Muslim reads in The Old Testament that our Lord is one God and reads the same thing in the words of Jesus (PBUH) and then the Quran confirms the same statement, then there is no reason for the Muslim to reject this. Also it says very clearly that the Quran is guarded which corrects any misinterpretation that people could fall into by being influenced by philosophy or contemporary thought so that the pure revelation of God can be distinguished from additions.

There is one statement in the Quran that indicates that Quran was sent with the purpose of resolving conflict. In (16:64) it says “And We sent down the Book to thee for the express purpose, that thou shouldst make clear to them those things which they differ, ”

And that it should be a guide and a mercy to those who believe.” One can not accept or reject in total but rather take the Quran as the final criteria and word of God to distinguish between the original revelation and other revelations.

**Host: How do we know that the Quran has remained intact and is exactly the book that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad?**

Jamal Badawi:

In the Quran we find both internal and external evidence. Internal evidence in (15:9) “We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).” In (41:41-42) there is a statement that has a similar effect. This however is not enough as anyone can produce similar statements from any scriptures. In the case of the Quran we find plenty of historical and rational external evidence that show that the Quran was preserved. First of all, the Quran was written down directly from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in full and in its original language during the lifetime of the Prophet. In fact until today there are places in the world like in Tushcon a museum in Istanbul Turkey that have copies of the Quran that date back to a few years after the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and these were copied from the original manuscript that were written under the supervision of the Prophet.