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[War](#)

[Chronicle](#)

[How to](#)

[Make a](#)

[Difference](#)

[Muhammad:](#)

[The Man &](#)

[the Message](#)

Session Details

Guest Name **Dr. Jamal Badawi**
Profession Famous *Da'iyah* and Member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research

Subject **Martyrdom in Islam: Let's Discuss It**

Date Thursday, Jun 29, 2006

Time

Makkah

From... 09:00...**To...** 16:30

GMT

From... 06:00...**To...**13:30

Name Host -

Profession

Answer

Dear visitors,

The session has just started. Please feel free to join us with your questions.

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Yours,

Living Shari`ah Editing Desk

Name Jacob -

Profession

Question Who is a martyr?

Answer

Defining a martyr is a matter of perspective. In all nations throughout history, a martyr is seen as a person who sacrifices his own life for a worthy cause. From an Islamic perspective, there are important qualifiers for a person to be

a martyr.

First, the intent behind that sacrifice is exclusively for the sake of pleasing God and supporting His cause. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) indicated that a person who fights for the sake of war spoils or fame or for Nero nationalism (may people right or wrong) does not fight for the sake of God.

Second, fighting is allowed only for restricted causes explained in the Qur'an mainly repelling unprovoked aggression or resisting severe oppression.

Third, since fighting and martyrdom for that matter involves loss of life, human suffering, and destruction of property, it is a hated act (Qur'an: 2:16). It should be resorted to until all peaceful and just means have been tried to stop aggression or oppression and restore peace and justice. If this is not possible, then fighting and hence martyrdom may be comparatively a better measure than the continuation of aggression and oppression against the innocent.

Fourth, the ethical behavior of the person must be within the boundaries of Islamic law, including refraining from hurting non-combatant (especial mention was made by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) of children, elderly, women who are not fighting, clergy, and others who are not carrying arms or committing aggression. It also includes refraining from killing the injured, mutilating the body of the dead and mistreating the prisoners of war. Strict regulation is given to avoid cutting down fruitful trees, burning property for no compelling strategic reason or what we call today destroying the infrastructure of the country such as electrical supplies, water supplies, sewage systems, and non-military structures. It even prohibits killing animals except for food.

Name Nasi -

Profession

Question What are the types of martyrs?

Answer Muslim scholars divide martyrs into three categories:

First: those who treated as martyrs in the Hereafter but not in this life, which means that they are endowed with the lowest degree of martyrdom, yet they must be washed and be given funeral prayers like others. Examples of this category are those who die because of a painful and tragic death such as drowning, burning, those who die under collapsed buildings and a woman who dies while giving birth to a baby and because of it.

Second: those who are treated as martyrs in this life (such as not being washed or given funeral prayer). This applies to people who are killed in the battlefield, yet he committed an act of betrayal before his death such as taking for himself part of the war spoils instead of delivering it in full to commander of the army.


Third: those who are treated as martyrs in this life and in the Hereafter. This applies to those who are killed in the battlefield in a legitimate combative Jihad for the sake of Allah, even if he died in an operation that required that he sacrifices his life for the benefit of other vulnerable people.

Name Jewan -

Profession

Question What is the difference between a martyr and suicide bomber?

Answer

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Not every "suicide" bomber is a martyr if that action violates any of the conditions detailed in the answers to the first question (Mr. Jacob). It should be made clear that defense against unprovoked aggression and resistance to reduce oppression are legitimate causes for combative jihad provided that all other conditions, qualifiers and ethics of war are strictly observed. It should also be noted that in all nations and according to the UN charter and international law, the Islamic causes are basically the same. Also, it should also be noted that all nations and peoples have lots of praises for those who not only put their lives on the line but also sacrifice their lives for what they consider as defense for their country or people.

It is known that people from various backgrounds sacrificed their lives in a way that many may classify as "suicidal operations" such as the Japanese pilots in the Second World War. Also operations by some highly courageous western fighters against Nazism.

Name Shera -

Profession

Question In one of Abu Musuab alZarqawi letters published on the net, he referred to the jurisprudence of martyrdom? Is there anything called the jurisprudence of martyrdom?

Answer

There is Islamic Shari`ah law which regulates the actions of committed Muslims on the individual, collective, national, and international levels. Shari`ah embraces all aspects of life, whether worship, family law, measures and guidance in dealing with others, etc. - this is a more accurate depictions of the nature of the Shari`ah and its derived jurisprudence.

Distinction should be made between Shari`ah (the broad higher objective of Shari`ah and its stable, definitive, and unchangeable provisions, and jurisprudence which refers to interpretation and applications of Shari`ah as it applies to a particular time, place, environment, and sometimes to a particular case or situation. It should be made clear that interpretations may vary as they are fallible human effort that may

be proven erroneous and in some cases contrary to the integrative approach to understand the letter, spirit and higher objectives of Shari`ah.

Name Gomaa - Egypt

Profession

Question How does Islam view rushing to the battlefield for both defending Islam and worldly gain? Another question, does Jihad exist nowadays to involve in ? If yes, what is our prospective role?

Answer Please refer to the qualifiers of Jihad in the first question in this session.

Name muslimah -

Profession

Question Is what the Taliban/ Osama Bin Laden and the guy who got killed recently AlZakawi, doing for Islam. I know the Americans kill millions of Muslim and obviously we have to fight for our brothers and sisters but what about all this stuff is this allowed?

Answer We have already outlined Islam's condemnation of aggression and oppression irrespective of who the culprit or victim may be. We have made clear the conditions and ethics of resistance to aggression and oppression. It should be made clear that legitimacy of the cause (for example fighting back or resisting aggression) does not mean that any means of resistance is acceptable. For example, to victimize the non-combatants whether they are Muslims or others is unacceptable.

Name Magdsa -

Profession

Question Can we consider Abu Musuab Zarqawi a martyr as Ayman Zawahri described him as "the prince of martyrs"?

Answer Please refer to previous answers and qualifiers in previous questions.

Name rasha -

Profession

Question What is the meaning that the martyr is alive even after his death?

Answer "Alive" does not mean physically or biologically but the living spirit of the martyr. It is similar to existence of *ruh* (spirit) after death, its awareness of certain events that take place on earth and the feeling of joy and suffering in the grave.

Name sss -

Profession

Question So anyone who blows himself up will get seventy nice girls who have not been tried before?

Answer First, nowhere in the Qur'an does it mention the number you refer to even though it is mentioned

in Hadith. Secondly, it is a common big mistake to perceive of the nature of life in Paradise in the same sensual restricted meaning we understand in this life. Suffice to refer to the words of a Hadith that may explain all those descriptions that in Paradise they are things that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no thought could have occurred in the mind of any human beings. Then the Hadith continues, "Recite if you will, **"no soul knows what (pleasures) are in store for them (dwellers of paradise) as a reward of their righteous deeds."** (As-Sajdah: 32:17) There is no way to fully understand the nature of life in Paradise with our limited and bounded human perception. The basic message however that they are consequences of our deeds, righteous or otherwise in ways that no one can even think of.

A true believer as indicated in the first question does not strive or sacrifice for the sake of materialistic images of the life in Paradise but as we said earlier a true believer strives for the sake of Allah and in support of causes that center around the restoration and protection of peace, justice and wellbeing of the humankind.

Name concerned Muslim -

Profession

Question

Dear eminent scholar, in light of your definition of martyr and the qualifiers of martyr you mentioned, does anyone of them embrace the category of acts perpetrated by Al-Qaeda? If not, what is accurate explanation for their acts, for which they cite references from the Qur'an and Sunnah....Thanks

Answer

Please refer to my paper on Islamonline about [Muslims/non-Muslims Relations](#) where I dealt with interpretations of verses in the Qur'an on the matter of Jihad and the relationship between Muslims and other faith communities at times of peace as well as conflict of war. Special attention should be given to the textual and historical context of key verses that are commonly misunderstood by some Muslims as well as others.

As for the your question about which category their actions would be classified under, some actions are based on erroneous interpretations and can be classified under *hirabah* or spreading mischief on earth, some may be well-intended but misguided. A classical example of that are the *Khawarj* (dissenters) who were very devout yet tragically erroneous and engaged in illegitimate bloodshed and atrocities even against their fellow Muslims.

Name Editor -

Profession

Answer

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Jamal Badawi for speaking to Islamonline viewers today, and we also thank all those who participated in this dialogue. We apologize for not being able to accommodate all the questions within the time

allocated to this session. We request our readers to join us in the upcoming sessions.

Yours,

Living Shari`ah Editing Desk



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