



Death and Dying

An Islamic Perspective



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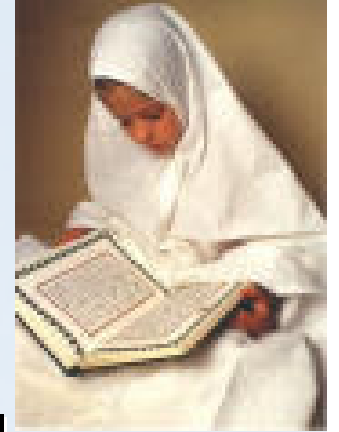
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**In The Name of God,
The Most Kind
The Most Compassionate.**

WHY I CHOSE THIS SUBJECT

- Muslims are living as large or small minorities in almost all non-Islamic countries.
- It has been reported that minority groups may be at increased risk of receiving suboptimal healthcare.
- I believe that we need to improve our awareness of the cultural background of various minority groups who may need our specialized palliative care.

QURA'N



- The Qur'an is the sacred book of Islam.
- It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel on numerous occasions between the years 610 and Muhammad's death in 632.
- It is the same as that revealed to Prophet Muhammad, 1400+ years ago.

WHO IS MUHAMMAD?



- Muhammad was chosen by God to deliver His Message of Peace, namely Islam.
- He was born in 570 C.E. (Common Era) in Makkah, Arabia.
- He was entrusted with the Message of Islam when he was forty years old.

MUSLIM VIEW OF LIFE

- Muslims consider themselves on a mission in this earth, and are committed to this mission by their belief in their Creator. They have responsibilities to fulfill and have trusts that they must maintain.
- One main trust that each one has to take seriously is the commitment to life. It is their responsibility to care for life in all possible ways:
 - Physically by keeping themselves as well as others out of dangers, and by caring for health and fitness.
 - Spiritually by maintaining their faith. Worshipping Allah sincerely is guaranteed to purify the soul and to secure spiritual tranquility and satisfaction

MUSLIM FAMILY



- It is a very important part of the Muslim's expression of faith.
- Making end of life decision for the patient is a responsibility of the family (DNR)
- Caregivers to be sensitive to this issue and provide facility for the same.

MUSLIM CONCEPT OF DEATH

- For the Muslim, the whole of this life constitutes a trial and a test for the human by means of which his final destiny is determined.
- For him, death is the return of the spirit to the Creator, God, and the inevitability of death and the Hereafter is never far from his consciousness.
- This serves to keep all of his life and deeds in perspective as he tries to live in preparedness for what is to come.

CARE FOR THE DYING

- When a Muslim is near death, those around him or her are called upon to give comfort, and remind him of God's mercy and forgiveness.
- They may recite verses from the Qur'an, give physical comfort, and encourage the dying one to recite words of remembrance and prayer.
- It is recommended, if at all possible, for a Muslim's last words to be the declaration of faith: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

CARE FOR THE DYING

- Upon death, those with the deceased are encouraged to remain calm, pray for the departed, and begin preparations for burial.
- The eyes and mouth of the deceased be closed, and the body covered temporarily with a clean sheet.
- Grief is normal when one has lost a loved one, and it is natural and permitted to cry.
- One should strive to be patient, and remember that Allah is the One who gives life and takes it away, at a time appointed by Him. It is not for us to question His wisdom or decision.

THE DYING PROCESS

- Terminal illnesses and life-threatening situations are considered tests from Allah.
- Muslims believe that Allah determines the time and place of death.
- Suicide, euthanasia, and the denial of nutrition or hydration are prohibited.

DEATH

" Indeed, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. And He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. "
Quran 31:34

DYING

- The process of dying is never easy for the patients or their families, no matter what the ethnic or faith group. Sensitivity and particular care need to be taken to prevent additional pain, grief or even offence to those involved.
- The basis of the Islamic faith is the total submission of the self to the will of Allah. Only Allah (God) can decide when someone is to die, and medical support must be given for as long as possible.

DYING

- Causing or hastening death is forbidden in the Qur'an; this applies to the giving of treatment and medication as well as withholding it. For example, a Muslim patients have a duty to seek out medical care if they fall ill, but they do not have a duty to accept experimental treatment for terminal conditions.
- For this reason, families of Muslim patients may be distressed by the idea of a 'do not resuscitate' policy, as it implies that not everything is being done to sustain the life of their relative. Wherever possible, seek advice from the local Imam.

DEATH

- ❑ " Everyone shall taste death. And only on the day of resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to paradise, this person is indeed successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception:" (Quran 3:185),
- ❑ " Every soul shall have the taste of death " (Quran 29:57).

DEATH

- Muslims hold death dear and consider it an opportunity of meeting with his Almighty, and they should take lesson from it.
- He should ask forgiveness from Almighty for his sins and tame the rebellious soul (Nafs).
- When the call of his Lord comes, he should welcome it with open arms accepting it to be a blessing from Almighty and be contented with His decree (Qadr).
- He should also rejoice that shortly he would be taken to the presence of Allah, his Lord.
- He should also not be disheartened by the delay in death but should consider it as an opportunity afforded by Almighty for him to repent.
- This delay would give him a chance to gather provisions useful for his journey to the other world, for the journey is tiresome and full of dangerous valleys and difficult paths.

DEATH

- Allah says in the Quran: "**Those who have said 'Our Lord is Allah', and then have become upright, the angels will descend upon them saying 'Do not fear nor be sad, but receive good news of the paradise which you have been promised. We are your protectors in this life and in the hereafter: therein you shall have all that you desire; therein you shall have all that you ask for'**" (Quran 41:30-31).
- Allah also says : "**When the angels take the lives of the righteous, the angels say to them : 'Salaamun Alaikum, (Peace be upon you) enter paradise, because of the good deeds that you used to do'**" (Quran 6:32).

PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

- Euthanasia is not allowed in Islamic Law.
- Mercy killing is also forbidden in Islamic Law.
- Ref: The Islamic Code of Medical Ethics
- Visit <http://www.Islamset.com.ethics>

AUTOPSY

- Autopsies are not usually performed unless specific information is necessary.
- Muslims believe that there is still "an awareness" after death, autopsies are disliked and, if they are necessary, cause great anxiety for the family.

BURIAL PROCEDURE

- Burial takes place as soon as possible after death, to avoid the need for embalming or disturbing the body of the deceased.
- To prepare, the family or other members of the community will wash and shroud the body. The deceased will be washed respectfully, with clean and scented water, in a manner similar to how Muslims make ablutions for prayer. The body will then be wrapped in sheets of clean, white cloth (called the *kafan*).
- The deceased is then transported to the site of the funeral prayers (*salat-l-janazah*). The community gathers, and the *Imam* stands in front of the deceased and leads the congregation.
- The deceased is then taken to the cemetery for burial (*al-dafin*). The deceased is laid in the grave on his or her right side, facing Mecca.

MOURNING

- Loved ones and relatives observe a 3-day mourning period. Mourning is observed in Islam by increased devotion, receiving visitors and condolences. Other Muslims observe for 40 days.
- When one dies, everything in this earthly life is left behind, and there are no more opportunities to perform acts of righteousness and faith.
- The Prophet Muhammad once said that there are three things, which may continue to benefit a person after death:
 - Charity given during life which continues to help others,
 - Knowledge from which people continue to benefit,
 - And a righteous child who prays for him or her.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

- The Quran also states that this worldly life is a preparation for the eternal life after death. Those who deny it become slaves of their passions and desires, and make fun of virtuous and God-conscious persons.
- Such people realize their folly only at the time of their death and wish in vain to be given a further chance in the world.
- The belief in life after death not only guarantees success in the Hereafter, but also makes this world full of peace and happiness.
- This is through making individuals exceedingly responsible and dutiful in their activities due to their awe of God: the fear of His displeasure and hope for His reward.

CONCLUSION

- Islam is a way of life for all Muslims. It is a guide for all aspects of life including religious practices, morality, family, social relationships, marriage, divorce, economics, and politics.
- Healthcare practices flow from this Islamic way of life. It is important for caregivers to ask the patients and families which practices are comforting for them.