

How do al-Qadr and human freedom relate to the Day of Judgement?

Muslims believe that Allah is just (see 1.3) and so will judge everyone fairly in the **akhirah** (see 1.8). For instance, nobody can help the particular circumstances into which they are born or raised. Muslims believe Allah will not punish someone simply for being born into a crime-ridden society, and will take everything into account when he is passing judgement.

However, Muslims believe humans are responsible for anything they do outside of these factors; people are free to make their own decisions, and so should be responsible for their actions – good and bad, right and wrong. These will be judged in the afterlife.

What are the implications of belief in al-Qadr for Muslims today?

- Al-Qadr is one of the six Beliefs of Sunni Muslims and also has importance for Shi'a Muslims, therefore no Muslim's faith is complete without it.
- Believing in al-Qadr means that Muslims trust Allah is in control of everything in the universe.
- Al-Qadr has a close connection with the **akhirah**.
- Muslims are also reminded of Allah's omniscience. This means he knows what has happened, is happening, and will happen. Muslims must therefore be prepared to answer for their deeds in the next life.

CASE STUDY: SHI'A MUSLIMS AND PREDESTINATION

Shi'a Muslims reject total predestination. One of the 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam is **Adalat** (Divine Justice). It is not fair for Allah to punish or reward someone for something he predestined them to do. Therefore, Shi'as believe that it is logically impossible to believe in total predestination and **Mi'ad** (Day of Judgement) at the same time because that is a contradiction. Shi'as believe certain things are predestined by Allah, such as lifespan. However, Allah can change your destiny as a result of your actions. For example, Allah may predestine you to live until you are 70 but, according to the Shi'a Imams, if you do not maintain a good relationship with your family Allah may reduce your lifespan but if you do maintain a good relationship with your family Allah can increase your lifespan. Allah can change your destiny as a result of your good or bad actions. (*Zameer, Shi'a Muslim*)

SUMMARY

- Al-Qadr means predestination and is one of the six Beliefs of Sunni Muslims.
- Muslims believe that there are laws that Allah has determined and fixed in the universe.
- Humans have also been given free will, allowing them to make certain choices which they will be accountable for on the Day of Judgement.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

- Explain two reasons why predestination is an important belief for Muslims. (4)
- 'Al-Qadr and human freedom are incompatible.' Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should:
 - refer to Muslim teachings
 - refer to different Muslim points of view
 - reach a justified conclusion. (15)

BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- Write three important facts about al-Qadr.
- Find and read Hadith Sahih Al-Bukhari 78: 685. What might this Hadith teach Muslims about human freedom and al-Qadr?

1.8 Akhirah

What are Muslim teachings about life after death?

- Muslims believe that our physical life will one day come to an end and that all humans will be raised again in the next life, called **akhirah**.

‘They [non-believers] also say, “What? When we are turned to bones and dust, shall we really be raised up in a new act of creation?” Say, “Yes! even if you were [as hard as] stone, or iron, or any other substance you think hard to bring to life.” Then they will say, “Who will bring us back?” Say, “The One who created you the first time.”’ (*Qur'an, Surah 17: 49–52*)

Some consider this to be a physical **resurrection**, which is why Muslims are buried and not cremated. Other Muslims say that dead bodies are buried out of respect, and it is just the soul that is taken away and given a new form in the **akhirah**.

Muslims believe that the soul is immortal (eternal). After death, the angel of death, **Izrail** (see 1.6), takes the soul to **barzakh**, which is the stage between death and the time of judgement.

What is the nature of judgement, paradise, and hell?

Islam teaches that human life has a purpose. Muslims believe that each person will be responsible for everything they have chosen to do on earth. Their actions will be recorded by angels, known as **kitaman khatir** (see 1.6), and then judged by Allah in the **akhirah**.

If Allah is pleased with a person, they will enter **jannah**, or paradise; if he is not pleased with a person, they may be put in hell, or **jahannam**.

There is a period of waiting before the resurrection and the Day of Judgement. Some Muslims consider resurrection to be physical and spiritual, while others believe it is only spiritual and that souls will be provided with new bodies in the afterlife.

SPECIFICATION FOCUS

Akhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgement, paradise and hell; how they are shown in the Qur'an, including Surah 17: 49–72; divergent ways in which Muslim teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today

USEFUL TERMS

Barzakh: stage between death and the time of judgement
Resurrection: the belief that humans will be raised again in the next life

A Muslim bury their dead in the ground

