

## Transcript - Short

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Mahmoud, in Islam how do you deal with the problem of evil?

### Mahmoud Ayoub:

Among the monotheistic religions, Islam can be said to be the least dualistic. That is to say, in the end God is responsible for both the good and the evil in the world. However, evil has to be differentiated. Natural disasters, however evil they may be, are seen as part of the human trial, that is, God tests people with good and with evil. And there is a Koranic verse on this which ...gives not so much an answer, a philosophical answer to the problem of evil, but makes evil a divine trial that people should endure with patience and steadfastness. And those who do so will eventually be rewarded by God.

### Robert Lawrence Kuhn:

Other traditions of course would have great difficulty in God having created and caused evil, certainly traditional Christian philosophers are very much desirous of explaining how God did not create evil ...

### Mahmoud Ayoub:

But then who? This is the question... in Christianity, the problem of theodicy becomes in the end a problem without really a final solution, and it sort of is explained somewhat by the idea of original sin and the fall in humanity. This is not in Islam, no. The Koran insists on the human responsibility to enjoin that which is good and to dissuade from that which is indecent or evil. And so in a way one could argue that in the Koran there are verses which make God completely responsible for every good and every evil in creation. But there are verses also which make God the author of good, but human beings are the authors of evil. In the final analysis, I think one would have to say that the Koran, being a book not of theology but of guidance, human beings are co-workers with God, and together they try to make this world a better world. There is one final point. Often natural evils become in the end a source of good. For instance, I try to do the best I can in life with my blindness. Blindness is an evil, I cannot deny it. But people, according to Islam, must thank God for all things, the good and the evil. And I'm often asked, do you thank God for your blindness and I say no, why should I thank God for my blindness? I would like to enjoy... visual art, nature, all these things that remain in the dark for me. But I thank God for the ability to deal with it.