



DEVELOPING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WHEN  
WORKING WITH MUSLIM AND ORTHODOX  
JEWISH PATIENTS

By Barbara Paris

Masters Project

Gratz College

Dr. Ruth Sandberg

April 9, 2017

## **Introduction**

### **DEVELOPING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WHEN WORKING WITH MUSLIM AND JEWISH ORTHODOX PATIENTS:**

#### **Rationale for Masters Project:**

As a Chaplain at St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport, Connecticut, I minister to patients of all faiths and ethnicities. As a Jewish Chaplain of course my knowledge and comfort level is strongest with Jewish patients. Over the years and working with my Christian colleagues, I have developed competencies in visiting Christian patients of all denominations and while not as comfortable as with the Jewish patients, I enter a room without much hesitation. The same is not true when visiting a Muslim patient. I am not sure how I will be received, what to say and not say that would be appropriate and provide comfort and what prayers or readings to use.

In speaking with my colleagues and in a cursory perusal of the literature it seemed to me that this was a common feeling. With the Muslim population in the US increasing, it seemed to me to be important that Hospital Chaplains become more knowledgeable about Muslim traditions and be able to better serve the spiritual needs of this population in the hospital. It would be ideal if every hospital could have a Muslim Chaplain and a Jewish Chaplain on staff but this is not a reality.

#### **Methodology:**

- Meet with Muslim Chaplains through Hartford Seminary Program and at Choate
- Administer a short questionnaire for non-Muslims chaplains in area hospitals- meet with in person
- Conduct interviews with Muslim patients and local imams

#### **Practical outcomes:**

- To increase my own knowledge to better serve the Muslim patients at St Vincent's Hospital
- To develop resource material to be used in training at area hospitals

#### **Findings:**

I administered questionnaires to Chaplains in Stamford Hospital and St. Vincent's Hospital and followed up with personal and telephone interviews. I also administered the survey to Chaplains at Yale New Haven Hospital and Norwalk Hospital. A total of 15 interviews were conducted. Interestingly, Bridgeport Hospital was the only hospital that did not give me access to their Chaplains after many efforts. I believe it may have been because they do not utilize paid Chaplains and instead use CPE students and residents. Perhaps they felt that their Chaplains would be seen as less well trained. This is only a speculation and it may have been for a totally different reason that was not articulated to me. I was able to contact two Chaplains from there on my own and conducted the survey with them. They were quite happy to be part of the project and very open to learning new skills.

**The results were as follows:**

When asked how comfortable they were visiting with Orthodox Jewish patients, more than 85% said that they were "somewhat comfortable". The remainder was "uncomfortable." This stemmed from not knowing how they would be received, especially a man visiting an Orthodox woman and vice versa. While they all had prayers that they felt were appropriate to offer as comfort, they were not sure if a man could offer these to a woman and a woman to a man. Many felt particularly uncomfortable when there was an Orthodox man present with the patient who they assumed might be their Rabbi due to the black hat and beard. The Chaplains at Stamford Hospital felt that they had been given training on multi-culturalism and in fact had materials to use with patients of various faiths, which gave them good tools. However, these were somewhat superficial as they did not deal with the deeper issues of theology and how this impacted decision making around health care issues. The Chaplains at St Vincents did not feel they were given any specialized training or materials and were happy to have a Jewish Chaplain on staff to confer with. This unfortunately seems not to be uncommon in chaplaincy. All Chaplains seemed to be in agreement that they needed additional training to be more effective at their jobs. It was interesting to note, that it was unanimous across the board that these Chaplains felt very comfortable visiting non Orthodox Jewish patients. Part of the reason they felt was that in their CPE trainings there were Jewish Chaplains and that the training was very much based on a Judeo-Christian model. They also had encountered Jewish people in their personal lives as well.

In terms of their comfort level dealing with Muslim patients, the results were unanimous that they were either “uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable.” They all acknowledged that they had a lack of knowledge about the Muslim culture, of their rituals around prayer, illness and death, and a lack of any information concerning Islam theology and practices at death. None admitted to having a fear of Muslims or negative feelings towards them. These were compassionate, well trained Chaplains who could connect on a human level to people. They however did not want to do anything to offend the Muslim patient or the family. The anecdotal information was similar across the board. The Chaplains felt that they were not sure what to say to a Muslim patient, what prayers to offer and how to deepen the conversations behind the superficial. They were unsure if it would be appropriate to offer a prayer in English and none knew Aramaic. Many noted that language created a great barrier. There was also discomfort expressed among the male Chaplains as to whether a visit to a female Muslim patient would even be appropriate. Several Chaplains were not sure about the role of the Imam and gave anecdotal stories that they called an Imam for assistance, and the Imam was not forthcoming with help. What came across from all the Chaplains was a frustration level. They wanted to be effective Chaplains to all patients in the hospital and felt it was their own limitation not being able to fully connect with a Muslim patient. They were awkward in their dealings, were worried about saying or doing the wrong thing and not coming across as respectful. Some said that they enter a room, say hello and if the patient does not make eye contact, they leave. Many pointed to the fact that their CPE trainings did not cover Islam as well as other religions, but was much more focused on a Judeo-Christian model. Most did not know any Muslims personally.

This information confirmed my original thesis that Muslim patients were most likely being underserved in area hospitals, and that Chaplains did not feel they had adequate training around the Muslim culture and traditions, theology around illness and death and other subjects that were vital in their being able to be effective Chaplains to these patients. The Chaplains at Stamford Hospital seemed to be more comfortable than at the other hospitals and attributed this to the Director of Pastoral Care who provided some training and materials on dealing with patients from other cultures and religions. Even so, these Chaplains still felt they needed a much more in depth understanding and resource material to use to enhance their visits.

I also met with 3 Muslim Chaplains who had been trained at the Hartford Seminary. I spent a day with one woman, Aida Monsoor who was from the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut. She went through training with me and I also attended Friday services at the New Britain mosque. In addition, I attended a week long seminar over the summer at the Hartford Seminary, entitled Building Abrahamic partnerships and got to meet several Muslim men and women and attend services with them. There was a day long training on Islam, its history, and teachings as well as text study. I also have had the privilege of working with two Muslim Chaplains at Choate over the years I have served as the Rabbi there. Both have been instrumental in increasing my understanding and appreciation for Islam. I attended a week long seminar through the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College where 8 Muslim women and 8 Jewish women, studied and prayed together and learned for one another. This perhaps was the beginning of my interest in the Qur'an and its teachings and how to incorporate these into my Chaplaincy work with Muslim patients. As part of my research I contacted Hospital Chaplains Ministry of America, ACPE and Health Care Chaplaincy Network and the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council.

Based on the above findings I have completed a study of issues related to developing cultural sensitivity when working with both Orthodox Jewish and Muslim patients. The format will be as follows:

- Power point on Islam, its theology surrounding wellness and illness, Muslim culture and the implications for Chaplains visiting Muslim patients. The power point includes notes as talking points.
- However, I also felt the need to prepare a more in depth paper to complement the power point on Muslims
- Power point on Judaism, its theology surrounding wellness and illness, Jewish culture and the implications for Chaplains visiting Orthodox Jewish patients. This includes some notes as talking points. I did not prepare an additional paper on Judaism as per our discussion.

## **PAPER TO ACCOMPANY POWER POINT ON MUSLIMS**

### **Demographics:**

#### **As of 2010 – Number of Muslims**

Worldwide- 1.6 billion

America- 2.6 million

New York Metropolitan area- between 400,000 and 800,000

Connecticut- 100,000

As of 2010, according to the Pew Center, there were an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims around the world making Islam the world's second largest religious tradition after Christianity. Muslims make up a majority of the population in 49 countries around the world. The country with the largest number, about 209 million, is Indonesia. India has the world's second largest Muslim population with roughly 176 million. Regional distribution is as follows:

North America-3,480,000

Asia-Pacific-986,420,000

Middle East-North Africa- 317,070,000

Sub-Saharan Africa- 248,420,000

Latin America-Caribbean- 840,000

The Pew Center estimates that by 2050 the number of Muslims worldwide will grow to 2.76 billion and account for 29.7% of the world's population.

The 2010 U.S Religion Census showed Islam as the fastest growing religion in America in the last 10 years. It is estimated that there are 2.6 million Muslims living in the US today, up from 1 million in 2000. The Pew Center estimates that by 2050, the Muslim population in the United States will make up 2.1% of the population up from 0.9% in 2010.

In terms of more local data, it is estimated that in the New York metropolitan area there are between 400,000-800,000 people who identify their religion as Islam. (Journey Data Center) The Connecticut Muslim Coalition reports that there are approximately 100,000 Muslims living in Connecticut. 4,000 live in Bridgeport, Connecticut and that number is growing 15 to 20% a year. These numbers thus indicated that 1 in every 34 residents of Bridgeport, (the city where the hospital I work is in) are Muslim.

### **Islam:**

- In Arabic Islam literally means “submission to the Will of Allah (God)
- It is derived from the three Arabic root letters, sin-lam-mim
- These letters carry multiple meanings including peace, safety, submission and obedience
- A Muslim is someone who follows the Islamic religions
- Islam is outlined in the Holy Qur’an (the words of Allah) and the Sunnah (the practice of Prophet Muhammad) which is outlined in the six doctrines of belief and the five fundamental pillars. These are detailed below.

### **6 Doctrines of Belief:**

- Belief in the Unity of God
- Beliefs in Angels
- Beliefs in the Prophets and Messengers
- Belief in the Revealed Books of God
- Belief in the Day of Judgment
- Belief in the Divine Decree and Destiny

### **Belief in the Unity of God:**

Islam is a monotheistic religion. 5 times daily, Muslims declare their faith. This declaration, called the *shahadah*, states that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

### **Belief in Angels:**

Angels are prevalent in Islam and are believed to be pure creatures, created from light and obedient to God. Each angel has an assigned task, some to praise God, others protect people and others deliver messages. Such a messenger was Gabriel who Muslims believe transmitted the entire Qur'an from God to Muhammad over a 23 year period.

*“A person has hosts of helpers- both such as can be perceived by him and such as are hidden from him- that could preserve him from whatever God may have willed.”* Qur'an 13:11

Interestingly it is believed that every person has two angels who record their deeds starting from puberty until their death. The angel on the right is responsible for keeping track of one's good deeds whereas the person on the left notes a person's bad deeds. On the Day of Judgment, the books are weighed to see which is the heaviest. If the one on the left is heavier, the person is going to Hell but if the one on the right is heavier, the person will go straight to Heaven. This sense of being watched at all times is noted in the following verse:

*“Now, verily, it is We who have created man, and We know what his innermost self whispers within him: for We are closer to him than his neck-vein. And so, whenever the two demands of his nature come face to face, contending from the right and from the left, not even a word can he utter but there is a watcher with him, ever present.”* Qur'an 50:16-18

This concept, that one cannot hide his or her deeds from God, called *taqwa*, reinforces the Muslims awareness of God at all times. It should also be noted that many of the teachings from the Qur'an which will be cited throughout this paper, use the word We. I spoke to several Muslims about this and also read several articles. All indicated that it is just the way God is referred to at times and is not a reference to others working along with God or some kind of a trinity. It is comparable to the creation story in Genesis where God says “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26) But God acts alone in the Torah and in the Qur'an. <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Siddiqi, Muzammil H. “Why does Allah the Lord use the word “We” to refer to Himself?” <http://www.islam101.com/tauheed/AllahWe.htm>



### **Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of God:**

Islam honors the Prophets who came before including Abraham, Moses and Jesus and recognizes that their purpose was to convey God's revelations during their time. They however believe that Muhammad was the final messenger of God, sent by God to proclaim God's unity. (*tawhid*) It should be noted that they do not believe in the divinity of Jesus but see him as a prophet.

*"We believe in God, and in that which has been bestowed from on high upon us, and that which has been bestowed upon Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, and that which has been vouchsafed to Moses and Jesus; and that which has been vouchsafed to all the other prophets by their Sustainer; we make no distinction between any of them. And it is unto Him that we surrender ourselves."* Qur'an 2:136

### **Belief in the Revealed Books of God:**

Muslims believe in the God revealed books of Torah, Psalms, and the Gospel. However, they believe that the Qur'an is the *"purest extant scripture on earth because it has been preserved from tampering."*<sup>2</sup>

*"And unto thee, O Prophet, have We vouchsafed this divine writ, setting forth the truth, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains of earlier revelations and determining what is true therein. Judge, then, between the followers of earlier revelation in accordance."* Qur'an 5:48

The Qur'an was revealed over a period of 23 years and is preserved in its original form in Arabic. It has been translated into many languages. The Qur'an contains guidelines for social welfare, politics and economics in addition to presenting a complete ethic for living a wholesome life.

The *Sunnah* is the sayings, behavior and attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad who lived from 571-632 C.E. which is the application of the Qur'an in a practical way of life. A Muslim endeavors to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

---

<sup>2</sup> Denny, Frederick M. *An Introduction to Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 108

(It should be noted that the translations that are used throughout this paper are mostly taken from a modern translation by Tarif Khalidi.)

### **Belief in the Day of Judgment: (*yawm al-Qiyama*)**

The Day of Judgment occurs at the time of the Darkening. All humans will stand trial on this day and their deeds and actions will be accounted for. They will either go to Heaven (*janna*) or Hell (*jahannam*)

*“When the sun is shrouded in darkness, and when the stars lose their lights, and when the mountains are made to vanish, and when she-camels big with young, about to give birth, are left untended, and when all beast are gathered together, and when the seas boil over, and when all human being are coupled with their deeds, and when the girl-child what was buried alive is made to ask for what crime she had been slain, and when the scrolls of men’s deeds are unfolded, and when heaven is laid bare, and when the blazing fire of hell is kindled bright, and when paradise is brought into view, on that Day every human being will come to know what he has prepared (for himself).” Qur’an 81:1-14*

### **Belief in the Divine Decree and Destiny (*al-qada wa-qadr*)**

There is no one opinion on this topic and Islamic scholars continue to debate the issues. *Al-qada* can be translated as decree or measurement and refers to the belief that God alone was responsible for creation and for endowing all creation with specific characteristics. But *qadar* can also mean destiny, meaning that God knows in advance the fates of all creatures and keeps it with him in the Preserved Book.

*“God recorded the fates of all creatures 50,000 years before creating the heavens and the earth, and His throne was upon the water.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“No calamity can ever befall the earth, and neither your own selves, unless it be laid down in Our decree before we bring it into being; verily, all this is easy for God.” Qur’an 57:22*

So then the question is raised regarding free will. If God gave humans free will but He knows what people are going to do before they do it, this is problematic, as it is in Judaism and Christianity as well. Some

---

<sup>3</sup> Denny, Frederick M. *An Introduction to Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 112

believe the free will comes in choosing our response to the hand we are dealt. Others believe nothing happens but by the will of God.

This is going to be key as we move forward in our discussion of illness and people's response to it.

It should be noted that this whole question of Divine Destiny is one of the major rifts between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. The Shi'a Muslims generally do not believe in divine destiny.

### **Five Pillars of Practicing Islam- *arkan al-din***

- Declaration of Faith (*shahadah*)
- Ritual Prayer (*salah*)
- The Almsgiving (*zakah*)
- The fast (*sawm*)
- The pilgrimage (*hajj*)

#### **Declaration of Faith: (*shahadah*)**

Muslims recite the *shahadah* at least 5 times a day, declaring their faith and the oneness of God. It is the most spoken affirmation of faith. It is also whispered into the ears of a newborn baby and a person who is dying.

The first half of this declaration states: *ash-hadu an la ilaha illa Llah*- I witness that there is no god but God. This verse comes directly from the Qur'an:

*"Say: He is the One God: God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being. He begets not, and neither is He begotten: and there is nothing that could be compared with Him."* Qur'an 1:1-4

The second half of the declaration states: *wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Llah*

I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God

This serves to validate both Muhammad as the transmitter of the word of God and the validity of the Qur'an where the words are recorded.

#### **Ritual Prayer: (*salah*)**

The *salah*, the daily prayers are perhaps the most important and central of all the Islamic rites. Their form was said to be revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad and then taught to the people by him. Men and women (except during menstruation) from the age of puberty until their death are obligated to recite these prayers 5 times a day, determined by the position in the sky that changes throughout the year. (Note: prayer times worldwide can be found at [http://www.islam-icity.com/prayer times](http://www.islam-icity.com/prayer%20times)) The formalized prayers, *salawat*, take place from just before dawn's first light (*fajr*), around noon (*dhuhr*), late afternoon (*asr*), just after sunset (*maghrib*) and any time at night (*isha'*)

*Salah* is purification outwardly and inwardly. A person must be in a state of *ghusl* and *wudhu* before they can perform the *Salah*. A person in *Salah* must not be disturbed. The *Salah* is always performed in Arabic.

Before these prayers are performed, a ritual ablution must be made. (*wudhu*) One must wash the hands, face, arms, feet and the top of the head with clean water. Another ritual is *Istinja*, which means to remove harmful things. This is performed after urinating or defecating and involves using water to clean the anus and male and female genitals. A full ablution is also made after such acts as sexual intercourse, vomiting or bleeding. The Arabic word for this is *ghusl* which literally means "bathing". Importantly, it is not enough to just wash, but this washing must be done with the proper intention (*niyya*) For convenience, Muslims often do *ghusl* in the shower. *Ghusl* is also performed on the body of a deceased person.

If water is not available or is detrimental to someone's health, a form of purification for prayer can be done using dust, earth or stone. This is called *tayammum* and is performed by striking the earth with the palms of the hands and lightly wiping the face, hands and forearms.

Once the ablution is complete, one is to wear clean clothes and stand on clean ground. This is therefore the reason that many Muslims use prayer carpets to ensure there is a clean space wherever they are praying. Men are required to be covered from their navel to their knees. Women must cover everything but their hands, face and feet. Prayers are said facing towards the direction of *Al-Ka'ba*, in the Great Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The prayer service is a combination of recitation of verses of Qur'an as well as bodily movements such as reverently standing, bowing and prostrating, which serve to incorporate one's whole body into prayer.

Women generally stand behind the men at services in a mixed congregation or have their own separate area. This is to ensure their modesty. If one is unable to perform the *Salah* as prescribed due to illness or physical disabilities, it may be performed in a sitting position or lying down. (For more details on the prayer and positions, see [islam1.org/how to pray/salah.htm](http://islam1.org/how-to-pray/salah.htm).)

The practice of facing Mecca can be seen in this Qur'anic verse:

*“We have seen thee (O Prophet) often turn thy face towards heaven (for Guidance) and now we shall indeed make thee turn in prayer in a direction which will fulfill thy desire. Turn then, thy face towards the Inviolable House of Worship and wherever you all may be, turn your faces towards it in prayer.”* Qur'an 2:14

On Fridays there is a major weekly congregational gathering for prayer and a sermon is made by the Imam. (Discussion of role of Imam will follow in a later section) This sermon contains a social, ethical or spiritual message. Special prayers are also recited on other occasions such as eclipse of the sun or moon, funerals and at the three day celebration called the Feast of Fast Breaking or *Id al-Fitr* which ends the month of *Ramadan*. Two other modes of prayer include *Tariqah*, prayers of the heart and *du'a*, individual prayers.

For a good understanding of what is at the heart of *salah*, the following is from the first chapter of the Qur'an referred to as *Surat al-Fatihah*, opening chapter. From this reading one can see the strong message of the relationship between God and humans.<sup>4</sup>

*“Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,*

*The Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful,*

*Master of the Day of Judgment*

*Thee we worship, and in Thee we seek help*

*Guide us upon the straight path,*

*The path of those on whom they Grace is,*

*Not those on whom Thine Anger is,*

---

<sup>4</sup> Nasr, Seyyed H. *The Heart of Islam*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002

*Nor those who are astray.”*

Qur'an 1:2-7

### **The Almsgiving: (zakah)**

Everyone is obligated to pay *zakah*, a percentage of their wealth, on a yearly basis. It is not voluntary, whereas the giving of charity, *sadaqa*, is. The theology behind this giving of alms is that God is ultimately the owner of all wealth. Not giving *zakah* is a sin and sullies a person's wealth, according to Islamic law. It is a complicated system of figuring out what is owned because there are exceptions based on business holdings and retirement plans etc. There are websites to assist in the process.

### **The Fast: (sawm)**

The fast is spoken about directly in the Qur'an:

*“O you who have attained to faith! Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you so that you might remain conscious of God...” Qur'an 2:183*

The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is the month of Ramadan. This is a time for increased prayer, fasting and performing acts of charity. All Muslims are obligated to observe Ramadan. Fasting is required for anyone beyond the age of puberty, both male and female. Exemptions are made for women who are pregnant, in labor or who have just given birth, as well as during the time they are menstruating. The frail elderly, the sick and travelers are also exempt. The fast begins at the first light of dawn and continues until sunset. During this time there is no eating, drinking, smoking, sexual relations or bad behavior allowed. The purpose of the fast is to purify the human ego and to reinforce the human dependence on God. God forgives the sins of Muslims who fast during Ramadan. <sup>5</sup>

Since Islam follows a lunar calendar it is therefore eleven to twelve days shorter than the solar year. No adjustments are made as they are in the Jewish calendar. Therefore Ramadan can come in different seasons. When it comes in the middle of summer and the days are long and hot, it can be especially difficult. This year Ramadan will begin on May 27<sup>th</sup>. For a complete calendar see <https://www.Islamicfinder.org>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches To Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 21.

There is a special night, *Lailatul Qadr*, which occurs in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. This is thought to be the time when the Angel Gabriel first revealed the words of God to the Prophet Muhammad. It is customary on this night to recite prayers and verses from the Qur'an from sunset to sunrise. At the end of Ramadan there is the Feast of Fast Breaking, *Id al-Fitr*. It is also a tradition to read the entire Qur'an during the month of Ramadan.

### **The Pilgrimage- (Hajj)**

If one is financially and physically able, one is obligated once in their lifetime to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. This occurs during the eighth through the thirteenth days of the last month of the Islamic calendar, *Zul-Hijjah*. It is customary for men to wear an *Ihram*, a ritual white two piece garment. It is said to be a symbol of Islam's unity and egalitarianism.<sup>6</sup> Women wear something similar which covers all but their face, hands and feet and it may be of various colors. During the hajj, one circles the *Al-Ka'ba* 7 times. This structure is believed to originally have been built by Adam and subsequently by Abraham and Ishmael as a house of worship to God. In recognition of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael, there is a Feast of the Sacrifice on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

In 2015 the Hajj was attended by 2 million Muslims around the world, a testimony to the importance of this obligation. Many Muslims save their pilgrimage clothes to be buried in.

### **Sacred Texts:**

The Qur'an and the Sunna are the two definitive sources of Islamic doctrine.

The Qur'an consists of messages which the Prophet Muhammad received from Allah from 610 until his death in 632. He was said to be on spiritual retreat in a desert mountain cave (Mount Hira) near his home in Mecca when he first received the revelation conveyed through the Angel Gabriel from God. He received many more messages and in their entirety constitutes the Qur'an. It is made up of 114 *suras*, or chapters. Interestingly the longest chapters of later origin stand at the beginning and the shorter *suras* which were first to be revealed, appear at the end. The Qur'an is the source from which Muslims have derived their theology, their laws and also principles and institutions of daily life. It is translated in all the major languages of the world.

---

<sup>6</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches To Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 26.

In 615 C.E, the Prophet Muhammad publically began preaching the message of Allah. He called upon the people to worship Allah, the one and only God and to care for the poor, needy and orphans. He warned them that they were accountable for their words and deeds on Judgment Day and that Hell awaited the sinners and Heaven the righteous. He taught that God sent the Qur'an to all humankind to remind them that they are dependent upon God, that God is All Merciful, All Compassionate and All Powerful and that humanity's purpose is to worship and serve God, to care for each other and all creation. A key goal is the establishment of a just and ethical society on earth. <sup>7</sup> While Islam started in Mecca, it really spread when Muhammad left Mecca and went to Medina.

The Sunnah is the second definitive source of Islam and is called the Sunnah of the Prophet. Sunnah means the example or model for others to follow. It is a collection of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad as observed and reported by those who surrounded the Prophet, often referred to as Companions. They are conveyed through Hadiths (narratives) made by eminent Muslim scholars and have been canonized as genuine. The term hadith is derived from the Arabic root h-d-th meaning "to happen." Thus a Hadith is reporting or speaking of something that has happened. It is a record of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and is a major source of religious law and moral guidance. Hadith can be said to be the biographical ground of the law and Sunnah is the system of obligation that is derived from it. (When a Hadith is cited in this paper, the name of the Companion(s) will be noted.)

### **Discussion of Sunnis and Shi'as:**

About 87 percent of all Muslims are Sunnis and the rest are Shi'ite. Most of the Shi'ite population is located almost completely in the area between Egypt and India , Such countries as Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, and Islamic Lebanon have majority Shi'ite populations and India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf State s and East Africa have notable Shi'ite minorities. <sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches To Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: amana publications, 2010. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Nasr, Seyyed H. *The Heart of Islam*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. 65.



There is a great deal of discord between Sunnism and shi'ism in the world today stemming from some basic differences in belief which started rather early in the development of Islam. The word Sunni, comes from the term *ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jama'ah*, meaning those who followed the Sunna of the Prophet and the term in Arabic, *shi'at Ali* means partisans of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Upon the death of the Prophet Muhammad, when his son in law Ali and first cousin were burying him, others gathered in Medina and chose Abu Bakr as the Prophets successor. He was not of the prophetic line and was instead given the title of *khalifah rasul Allah*, or vicegerent of the messenger of God. This title comes from the word *caliph*. Many thought he should be the rightful successor and rallied around him. Ali himself even refused to oppose Abu Bakr and worked closely with him and his two successors. After Ali's death at the hands of a member of an extremist group that rejected the caliphate of and shi'ism became an organized movement in Iraq. Continuing to this day, the Sunnis believe the *caliphs* of Islam should continue to be an elected position. The Shi'ites believe that the leader should be a direct descendant s of the Prophet Muhammad and be someone who carries the Muhammadan Light. (*al-nur al-muhammadi*) They ignore the elected Sunni leaders and follow their own.

Another big difference between Sunnism and Shi'ism today is that Shi'ites do not believe in divine destiny whereas Sunnis do.

There is a great deal more to be said on this topic in terms of history and different divisions within each group but that is beyond the purview of this paper. Please see the bibliography at the end for further resources.

### **Sufism:**

Sufism is sometimes referred to as Islamic mysticism, represents the spiritual manifestation of Islam. Sufis argue that Islam essentially deals with the inner life of man, with the tendencies of the soul.<sup>9</sup> *Zuhd*, detaching ones heart from the temptations of this life's luxuries and devoting oneself entirely to God, is one important goal of a Sufi. From these ascetic beginnings, Sufism developed the practice of *dhikr*, or remembrance of the names of God that is often emphasized in the Qur'an. By continually remembering God, the Sufi seeks to cultivate an ecstatic ideal of love

---

<sup>9</sup> Rahman, Fazlur. *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, Chicago, Illinois: ABC International Group, Inc. 1998. 6.

of God in which the goal is to be at one with God. This state is known as a state of *sukr*. Sufism began to grow over the centuries and from the twelfth century on, Sufism developed the Sufi order or Brotherhoods and Sufi hospices blossomed. Many leaders arose and fundamentalists reactions as well.

Again, there is a great deal more to be learned about the path of Sufism and one can consult the bibliography for books and articles of interest.

### **Diversity among Muslims:**

There is tremendous diversity among the Muslims around the world as well as those living in the United States. Customs and practices will vary depending on what country people are from. There is difference in language, dress, education, economic status, occupations and political viewpoints. This is especially true with the differences between Arab Muslims and African-American Muslims. However, most Muslims are deeply united by their belief in one God, the Prophets and messengers of God, the divinely revealed scripture, the Day of Judgment and angels. They also are united in their adherence to the five pillars of Islam and the doctrines of belief, also called articles of faith. The Sunnis however believe in a sixth article of faith which is destiny or fate. <sup>10</sup>

### **Imams:**

The word *imam* literally means, "the one who stands in front". Sunni imams are males who are usually self-taught, community appointed and are not ordained. They hold only limited religious authority. They do need to have sufficient knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunna, the primary sources of Islamic law (*shari'a*), be able to lead prayers at the mosque and deliver the sermon (*khutba*) at the Friday prayer gathering (*Jum'ah*). Imams can also perform marriages and preside at funerals. In the event that there is not an imam to officiate at services, any mature male who is knowledgeable may do so. Muslims turn to imams with questions and concerns about law or other Islamic related issues but they also often feel comfortable speaking to a wise elder in the community. Some first generation immigrant imams who do not speak English and are not that familiar with the American medical system may be a challenge when working with Muslim

---

<sup>10</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches to Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 11.

patients. One should speak to the family about who they would like to consult with before making any major decisions. This may or may not be their imam. When a group of women are praying without men present, a woman may serve as the imam of that prayer service. In a mixed group, or all men, it must be led by a man.

It should be noted that among Shia Muslims, the imam takes on a more central clerical position. They believe that their specific imams were divinely chosen to be perfect examples for the faithful ones. This belief is rejected by the majority of Sunni Muslims.

### **Wellness and Illness:**

Islamic medicine is based on the concept which views a healthy body and spirit as a gift from God. According to Islam, spiritual diseases of the human being start when he or she forgets the purposes of life which are to inhabit the earth, to worship the one God, to represent God on earth. Islam teaches that when human beings forget these purposes, then the heart becomes corrupted and when the heart is corrupted the physical body cannot operate well. Purification, referred to as *tazkiyah*, then becomes necessary. In Hamzah and Maitafsir, 2012: Shah, 1997 they say that “Muslim spiritual caregivers try to achieve good mental and spiritual health of the individual without natural balance with the individual and the practice of social and religious obligation.”<sup>11</sup>

Prayer and a strong faith in God therefore play a key role in the cure of disease. Muslims believe all comes from God including sickness and healing.

*“It is God who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength, gave you weakness and gray hair. He creates what He wills and He is the all-knowing, all powerful.”* Qur’an 30:54 <sup>12</sup>

Muslim spiritual and religious caregivers do not have sacraments to administer or formal rites to perform. It is the therapeutic relationship between patient and spiritual care givers which becomes key. This is sometimes referred to as “compassionate engagement” which involves showing true companionship and presence, or *sohba*. This involves uplifting, comforting,

---

<sup>11</sup> Isgandarova, Nazila. “The Concept of Compassionate Engagement in Islam.” The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM) (2010)

<sup>12</sup> Matson, Ingrid. “Spirituality, Religious Wisdom, and the Care of the Patient.” The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM) (2003)

inspiring, encouraging the patient through prayer and elevating the names of God. The recitation of the 99 Beautiful names, *dhiker*, encourages the elevation of their spirit as well. Caregivers may also use Sufi techniques. This process is called *Tazkiat Al-nafs* and starts with repentance, *tawba* and the conscious resolve to abandon the worldly life and commit oneself to the service of God.<sup>13</sup> It may start with repenting and retuning from that which is blameworthy to that which is praiseworthy. Unlike in Catholicism, Muslims do not confess their sin to an intermediary, but directly to God. They then work privately to obtain forgiveness. Therefore a Chaplain should not expect that a patient will reveal all their problems and private thoughts to them.

So where does medicine come in? Turkish theologian Badiuzzaman Said Nursi in 1994 noted that medicine is both a science and an art. He contends that the goals of medicine depend on the inclusion of God as the ultimate healer. According to Fethullah Gulen, the perfection of medicine is fulfilled with prayer, because prayer allows the patient to become an active member of the medical team.<sup>14</sup> For him prayer is a “mysterious key to Allah’s everlasting treasures, a point of support for the poor and hurt and the most secure shelter for those in distress.” The one who practices the art of healing does so for the sake of God. Thus, the physician and patient are united through spiritual bond.<sup>15</sup>

In Arabic, the term for spirituality is *ruhaniyyah*. Ruh the root means spirit and constitutes the immortal part of human existence. The Qur’an is often referred to as a book of healing.

### **Importance of Visiting the Sick:**

*“God will say on the Day of Judgment; O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit me. “My Lord, how could I visit you when You are the Lord of the whole world, we will reply. God will say, Did you not know that so and so from among my servants was sick but you never visited him or her? Did you not know that if you had visited, you would have found me there? God says O my servant, Health unites you with yourself but sickness unites you to me. “ Hadith of Abu Huraira, a companion of Prophet Muhammad*

---

<sup>13</sup> Isgandarova, Nazila. “The Concept of Compassionate Engagement in Islam.” The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM) (2010)

<sup>14</sup> Isgandarova, Nazila. “The Concept of Compassionate Engagement in Islam.” The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM) (2010)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

From this beautiful verse, we learn that visiting the sick is an obligation. There are different forms of this.

*Iyadah* is visiting the sick

*Rifq*- showing exemplary kindness and care

*Ihsan*- doing what is beautiful

*Muraqabah*- spiritual awareness.

In Islamic literature the loving engagement of visiting the sick is known as *sohba*. To provide effective *sohba* one uplifts, comforts, inspires, loves, and encourages the other person and strength and healing are achieved. While there is no word in Arabic for Chaplain per se, chaplaincy has its roots in Islamic teachings as seen above.

The sick are happy to receive visitors and family members are encouraged to notify as many people as possible. There is a beautiful teaching that it is a blessing to receive a prayer from someone who is sick, since they are closer to Allah. “Prophet Muhammad encouraged visitors to request the sick person to pray for them because the state of the sick and the helpless is so pure that God hears their prayers.”<sup>16</sup>

Muslims are exhorted by Prophet Muhammad to be of good cheer when visiting the sick: “people visiting the sick are asked to say such things to them as would make them happy.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Suffering:**

Islamic tradition reports that great suffering was experienced by most of the Prophets including Prophet Muhammad himself. He suffered many losses and suffered in his final illness. Therefore one's dignity is not lost by being able to acknowledge one's pain and suffering and in some cases endure it.

---

<sup>16</sup> Rahman, Fazlur. *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, Chicago, Illinois: ABC International Group, Inc. 1998.59.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Many Muslims may feel that they must endure suffering as it is directly from God. They therefore may refuse pain management and even may consider the pain to be spiritually enriching to them.<sup>18</sup>

There is a story related through a *Hadith* that Muhammad was angry when his family tried and force him to drink some medicine as he lay weak on his bed in the last days. When he recovered some of his strength he made his family drink the medicine themselves to see how terrible it is to force a person to do something that they do not want to do.<sup>19</sup>

Islam maintains that illness and suffering have a cleaning and cathartic effect.

*“No fear, it is a catharsis, God willing.”*<sup>20</sup>

The ultimate reward for suffering is thus to increase one’s faith in God.

*“O you who have attained to faith! Seek aid in steadfast patience and prayer: for behold, God is with those who are patient in adversity.”* Further there are teachings that God afflicts one with trials intending to do good for that person, to give them an opportunity for reward. Therefore, the Chaplain visiting should not assume that the patient is upset about being sick, but may see it as something they have to endure and learn from. As in any good pastoral intervention, one should take their cues from the patient and not make any assumptions based on their own feelings about the situation.

### **Modesty and Roles of Men and Women:**

Muslim patients may express strong religious and culturally based concerns about modesty especially being treated by someone of the opposite sex. A Muslim woman may want to cover her body completely and should be given time to do so before someone enters the room. They may also request that a family member be present during the examination and they may want to

---

<sup>18</sup> Ehman, John. *Religious Diversity: Practical Points for Health Care Providers.* Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA. (2007). 5.

<sup>19</sup> Isgandarova, Nazila. “The Concept of Compassionate Engagement in Islam.” *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM)* (2010)

<sup>20</sup> Rahman, Fazlur. *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, Chicago, Illinois: ABC International Group, Inc. 1998.59.

keep their clothes on, if possible. Muslim men find examination by a woman doctor to be challenging. They generally do not even shake hands with a person of the opposite sex. Some Muslims will not share car rides or elevators or attend a gathering of mixed genders.

Many Muslim men and women may be uncomfortable looking directly into the eyes of a person of the opposite gender. This is not a sign of disrespect but instead is the contrary, a sign of respect which comes right from the text of the Qur'an "*Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity: this will be most conducive to their purity and verily, God is aware of all that they do. Tell believing women to avert their eyes, and safeguard their private parts, and not to expose their attractions except what is visible. And let them wrap their shawls around their breast lines and reveal their attractions only before their husbands, or fathers-in-law, or sons or sons of their husbands, or brothers, or sons of brothers, or sons of sisters, or their womenfolk or slaves or male attendants with no sexual desire or children with no intimate knowledge of the private parts of women.*" Qur'an 24:31.

Despite modesty, the "necessity of saving a life supersedes all dictates of modesty and care. During resuscitations or other emergency procedures, any available healthcare provider may examine and perform procedures on a Muslim patient."<sup>21</sup>

### **Clothing:**

As part of the whole issue of modesty, it is important to understand the different clothing that may be worn both by Muslim women and men depending on their country of origin and the norms of their religious community. There has been a lot of misunderstandings about Muslim women's clothes in particular and their implication. The following is a discussion of the various types of coverings as well as other forms of body adornment. It is important for Chaplains to be aware of the various possibilities and to be open minded towards them. In fact, women who wear a *hijab* point out that they feel free, no longer thought of as a sexual object, but desired for their intellect, not only their body shape or looks. Others report there is less sexual harassment in the workplace. They also report that men, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are more inclined to show

---

<sup>21</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches to Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 44.

good manners towards a woman in a scarf offering to give up seats on public transport, open doors and carry groceries.<sup>22</sup>

The types of garments are:

*Hijab* - most commonly worn by Muslims in the West. It is a square scarf that covers the head and neck, but leaves the face clear.

*Shayla* - a long, rectangular scarf that is wrapped loosely around the head and tucked or pinned at the shoulders.

*Khimar*- a long, cape-like scarf wrapped around the head that hangs to the middle of the back. It too covers the head, neck and shoulders but the face is clear.

*Chador* - a long black cloak covering the entire body. It drapes all the way down to the feet

*Niqab*- Covers the mouth and the nose but leaves the eyes clear. It is worn in addition to a *khimar* or other head scarf

*Burqa* - covers the entire face and body leaving only a small mesh screen to see through.

Clothing should not be see-through or tight fitting, nor should it be perfumed or too colorful. Jewelry and makeup should not be on display as they may attract the attention of the opposite gender. It is not permitted to wear clothes that resemble that of a man. Scholars of Islam agree that men should be covered from the navel down to the knees. However, garments should not fall below their ankles. It should not be tight or see-through, not resemble a woman's clothing or western garb. Gold jewelry and silk are not permitted. There is a concept in Islam called *awrah* which refers to what parts of the body should be covered in different situations. When a woman is alone with her husband she may wear anything that pleases him.

*“And among His wonders is that He created for you, from among yourselves, spouses with whom to find comfort, and instilled between you love and mercy. “*

She may also uncover her hair face, arms, hands, legs from below the knee and feet when she is with her *mahrams*. These are her spouse, a close blood relationship, anyone breastfed by the

---

<sup>22</sup> Stacey, Aisha. *“Dress Code of Muslim Women.”* Islamic Information Portal (2013).



same mother or wet nurse, in-laws and others connected by marriage. If the child is unable to understand about sexuality she may uncover herself until the child comes to an age when he knows the difference between a male and a female.

For more information on this topic one can refer to: Islam.ru on the Internet.

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare workers:**

In general it is best practice to have a sign on the hospital room door or some other signal so that male hospital employees or others do not enter a room without first announcing themselves. This will give the patient an opportunity to cover themselves properly. As mentioned, ideally same sex health care professionals should treat the Muslim patient but the necessity of saving a life would supersede this. If a Muslim woman patient is sharing a room with another patient, they should agree to have the curtain drawn around the bed of the Muslim patient to respect her privacy and need for modesty.

When one enters the space of a Muslim patient it would be a nice gesture to offer the greeting of *assalamu 'alaykum, peace be unto you*. If the patient says this first, you may respond by saying *alaykum assalm, and peace be unto you*.

### **Diet:**

*Tayyib*: what is good, pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, pleasant and tasteful.

*Halal*: what is lawful and allowed for Muslims to eat:

Muslims may eat all seafood and dairy products. Foods that are approved have been slaughtered according to Islamic rites and carry the designation *Halal*. Pig and all pork products are forbidden. In addition the following are also not allowed to be eaten:

Wild animals that use their claws or teeth to kill their victims, all birds of prey, reptiles, worms, rodents, dead animals and birds that are not slaughtered properly. Those that are forbidden are designated *Haram*.

*“forbidden to you are: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which is consecrated to other than God; also the flesh of animals strangled, killed violently, killed by a fall, gored to death, mangled by wild beasts-....” Qur’an 5:2*

Interesting this teaching continues by saying, *“the good of the People of the Book is licit to you and your food is licit to them”*. It thus implies that they can eat kosher food and Jews can eat halal. We know that this is not true for religious Jews who will only eat food that has been slaughtered by someone who is Jewish and certifies it to be kosher. All alcohol and other intoxicating substances are forbidden to be consumed by Muslims.

*“O believers, wine and gambling, idols and divining arrows are abhorrence, the work of Satan. So keep away from it, that you may prevail. Satan only desires to arouse discord and hatred among you with wine and gambling, and to deter you from the mention of God and from prayer. Will you desist?” Qur’an 5:90-91*

Gelatin is not allowed. Only vegetable oil is to be used. Any food that is blessed in a name that is not God’s may be forbidden.

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Workers:**

Ideally, halal meals should be made available. If not, the patient should be offered the option of a kosher meal or a vegetarian meal. Some questions have been raised about the use of alcohol based hand rubs but generally they are not considered to be strong enough to be intoxicating. Many Muslims may refuse healthcare products that contain pig including insulin, for example, or capsulated medicines made from pig gelatin. However, since saving a life takes precedence, most will opt to use these if there are not alternatives.

It should be noted that most Muslims eat only with the right hand since the left is used for unclean activities such as cleaning oneself after urinating or defecating.

For more information about the Islamic dietary regulations see <http://www.islamicity.com/food>

### **Fasting during Ramadan:**

As mentioned earlier, Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide and is the holy month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the year. During this month, Muslims are required to fast from before sunrise to after sunset. This means they may not drink any liquids, eat, smoke or have sexual relations. Sick people however are not required to fast but may do so unless it is harmful to their health. The frail elderly, menstruating and pregnant women, children under the age of puberty and travelers are also exempt.

During Ramadan, it would be a good idea to investigate options for pre-dawn meals, providing the patient with dates and spring water in the later afternoon, to break the daily fast, and to delay having their dinner served until after sunset.

### **Prayer:**

As mentioned, Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day. They must be ritually clean before performing the prayers. Prayers are recited in Arabic, facing towards Mecca.

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Providers:**

Healthcare providers should be aware of and sensitive to prayer times and the patient needs. If someone is in the middle of prayer, there should be a sign so that they are not interrupted. A space should be provided either in the chapel or in the room. Most patients will have a prayer rug to create a clean place to pray. If there is a large enough Muslim population in the hospital it might be possible to have some prayer rugs available. Prayers can also be done in the bed. Some patients may ask that they be facing Mecca.

Since ritual purity is required before the prayers are said, there should be access to clean water. A pitcher can also be placed at the bedside if the patient is not ambulatory. Many Muslims have a Qur'an at their bedside. This is a holy book and should not be touched or moved without permission. It may not be placed on the floor or under other everyday items.

### **Sexuality:**

Islam emphasizes discipline in terms of curbing basic drives. Premarital sex and adultery are forbidden. While sex during menstruation is not allowed, there are no limits to sexual enjoyment between a husband and wife. Homosexuality and lesbianism are strictly forbidden.

There are many misconceptions about the role of women in Islam. Contrary to popular belief, in the Qur'an men and women are equal and should be treated this way. Muslim women have the right to choose their own husband who is considered to be her equal partner in life. They have the right to be treated kindly, to participate in decisions and they do not lose their right to their money upon the death of their husband. They also have the right to pursue education and career. (It should be noted that some Muslims follow their cultural practices which may deny women their rights.)

Raising of children is an extremely important value and is usually the role of the wife and mother. Marriage is a solemn and sacred institution, viewed as a contract to which God is the first witness.<sup>23</sup> It is concluded in His name, in obedience to Him and according to His ordinances." Mothers enjoy more recognition and a higher honor in the sight of God than fathers. The parent/ child relationship is complementary. Each is required by God to obey, show love and respect. Muslim men are permitted to have up to four wives but this is not encouraged. Divorce is allowed if there are irreconcilable differences. It is however considered a sin to divorce if there is not a significant reason to do so.

### **Care of the Elderly:**

The elderly are regarded with great respect in the Muslim culture. Prophet Muhammad said that "*Heaven would be found under the feet of one's mother.*" Therefore the care of the elderly is regarded as an avenue to Heaven. If able, parents are very much included in decision making especially in regards to illness and end of life issues.<sup>24</sup>

### **Birth:**

---

<sup>23</sup> Health Care Providers' Handbook on Muslim Patients. Islamic Council of Queensland. (1996)

<sup>24</sup> Health Care Providers' Handbook on Muslim Patients. Islamic Council of Queensland. (1996)

After a child is born it is customary to have the *shahadah* recited in his or her ear. All male children are circumcised before they reach puberty. The timing can vary depending on the particular community and their practices. There also is a tradition by some of removing the hair of the new born soon after birth as was the tradition of Prophet Muhammad. A respected elder of the family may rub a small piece of soft date gently on the baby's palette. Honey may also be used. Some Muslims may place a small pouch around the baby's wrist or neck held by a black string. This pouch contains a prayer for protection. A supplication, (*du'a*) for a life to be lived unto God is made for the baby.

On the seventh day, there is a gathering of family and friends after a child is born and an animal is usually slaughtered, cooked and served to the poor, as well as family and friends. Gifts are given to the baby and family and the child is given a name. Donations are made based on the silver standard and according to the weight of the baby's hair which is shaved off. A baby boy may also be circumcised at this time or at a later date. This is usually performed in a hospital or clinic. The circumciser is not required to be a Muslim and there is no equivalent of a Jewish *mohel* in Islam.

In terms of circumcision (*khitan*), the Qur'an itself does not mention it explicitly but there is evidence of this practice at the time of Prophet Muhammad. Abu Huyayra, a companion of Muhammad said in a hadith, "Five things are *fitra* (acts of a refined person): circumcision, shaving pubic hair, trimming ones mustache, paring one's nails and plucking the hair from ones armpits. Other hadiths however do not name it specifically. Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim also quote from the Prophet Muhammad that Prophet Abraham performed his own circumcision at age eighty. It is also reported by Abu Dawud and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal that Muhammad stated that circumcision was a "*law for men and a preservation of honor for women.*" This brings up the issue of female circumcision which is practiced in some cultures. It is carried out on the prepuce, the foreskin over the clitoris and the clitoris is left untouched. The procedure is not undertaken until after the girl reaches at least the age of seven. This is a very controversial subject and beyond the purview of this paper.

### **Invitro and Artificial Insemination:**

Muslims believe that children are a true gift from God.

*“And God has given you mates of your own kind and has given you, through your mates, children and children’s children and has provided for you sustenance out of the good thing of life.” Qur’an 16:72*

However, couples who are unable to conceive a child can consult with a fertility specialist:

*“bringing about pregnancy by means other than direct sexual contact is not perceived as interference in the Creator’s acts, nor as contesting God’s wish and decree. On the contrary: Islam desires that mankind be happy. Artificial insemination was made possible through knowledge which God has provided. Medicine alone is not capable of producing an egg or semen. It can only improve the way the two unite, after God has created them.”<sup>25</sup>*

There are however strict guidelines in terms of reproductive alternatives. For example, couples can utilize artificial insemination as long as it is the husband’s sperm. In vitro fertilization is allowed including fertilizing the wife’s eggs outside of her womb by her husband’s sperm and transferring it into the woman’s uterus, Surrogacy, using donor sperm or a donor egg are not permitted. This is viewed in the same category as adultery because only contractually married heterosexual couples are allowed to procreate. Additionally it is a belief that the woman, who gives birth to the child, is the child’s mother. This comes from the Qur’anic verse 58:2 which says *“...none are their mothers save those who gave them birth...”*

Of course this then raises the question about adoption which from the above verse would seem to be forbidden. It is further complicated by the belief that inheritance, marriage and other social conventions in Islam are based on blood relationships. The prohibition against adoption therefore protects an orphan’s birth identity and lineage, called *nasab*.

There is a primary source of Islamic law in the Qur’an which says the following:

*“And do not entrust to those who are weak of judgment the possession which God has placed in your charge for support; but let them have their sustenance therefrom, and clothe them, and speak unto them in a kindly way.” Qur’an 4:5*

---

<sup>25</sup> Vardit Rispler-Chaim, *Islamic Medical Ethics in the Twentieth Century* (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1993), 20.

So what happens to children who are orphaned? One is allowed to foster these children. Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger said " *One who looks after the orphan whether he is a relative or not, I and he would be together in Paradise like this.*"

In fact, it is reported that the Prophet himself was orphaned and his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib assumed the role of his guardian (*waliyah*) and after that his uncle Abu Talib.

### **Abortion:**

Abortion is not allowed unless for medical reasons. In the Qur'an it says:

*Do not destroy one another: for, behold, God is indeed a dispense of grace unto you"*

*Qur'an 4:29*

Another teaching: "*whoever deliberately slays another believer, his requital shall be hell, there in to abide; and god will condemn him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him awesome suffering.*" Qur'an 4:93

While neither of these teachings directly refer to abortion, scholars have studied the subject and concluded that it is not permitted except before fetal ensoulment has occurred and only if the mother's life is in jeopardy or the baby will be born with severe deformities. Qur'an 2:233 says "*neither shall a mother be made to suffer because of her child...*"

There is also a maxim in Islam about the lesser of two evils. Thus if two forbidden things come together, then the lesser will be sacrificed for the greater.<sup>26</sup> Thus we can infer that saving the mother's life is more important than the life of the fetus.

Shi'ites are even stricter and do not permit an abortion once the zygote has attached itself to the womb. <sup>27</sup>

Personhood or ensoulment occurs when the *ruh*, the spirit enters the fetus. There are varying opinions about when this happens. Some say it occurs 40 days after conception and others believe it occurs at 120 days. The process of creation is noted in the following verse:

---

<sup>26</sup> Sayyid, Muhammad R., *Marriage and Morals in Islam* (Scarborough, Ontario, Canada: Islamic Education and Information Center, 1990), 111.

<sup>27</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches to Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 59

*“We created man from the essence of clay,  
then made him a sperm in a well guarded cavity,  
The sperm we turned into a blood clot, the blood clot into a morsel  
The morsel into bones,  
The bones We clothed with flesh,  
And then We reared him into another creation.” Qur’an 23:12-14*

And in a Hadith this is clarified even further breaking the process into 40 day increments:

*“every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, and then he becomes a clot for another forty days, and then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Then Allah sends an angel to write four words: He writes his deeds, time of his death, means of his livelihood and whether he will be wretched or blessed. Then the soul is breathed into his body.”* <sup>28</sup>At the point that the soul is breathed into the body, the fetus becomes a “real person.”

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Professionals:**

Dealing with the death of a child no matter at what stage of the pregnancy, is always difficult for the patient and her family. You may want to encourage them to contact their Imam or elder, for support. The chaplain should ask if the patient would like to pray. Find out which verses from the Qur’an would be comforting for them. Ask if you may read them in English or if someone wants to read them in Arabic and you can be a witness. You may suggest that *dhikr* be recited, the 99 names of God. Assure the patient that God’s mercy and love for both her and her fetus or child are unconditional and that she is acting according to Islamic beliefs that the mother’s life takes precedence over a fetus. Some patients may not want a non-Muslim to handle the fetus so check first and of course wear surgical gloves. The family will need to make arrangements for proper management of the fetus and burial if required. Many Muslims know that if the fetus does not have a face or limbs it is not a requirement to say the *janazah*. But if they do want to give the child a name or recite the prayer, it is not prohibited. If washing and shrouding is in order, arrange a private area to do this. While many may want to say the declaration of faith in the

---

<sup>28</sup> Bukhari, Sahih



child's right ear, it is not required. The belief is that this child is already in a state of purity. "Every child formed in a natural condition in his mother's womb is in a state of purity, and is bound for Paradise." (janna) <sup>29</sup>

But if they do want to recite the *shahadah* or the call to prayer, *adhan*, this is permissible.

*Shahadah: ash-hadu an la ilaha illa Llah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Llah- I witness that there is no god but God, and I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God"*

*The adhan: allahu akbar (said 4 times) ash hadu an la ilaha illa Llah (two times, ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Llah (two times, hayya 'ala al salat (2 times), la ilaha illa Llah (1)*

*God is greatest; I bear witness that there is no god but the One God; I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God; come fast to prayer; come fast to success; God is greatest, there is no god but the One God."*

### **Contraception:**

Islam believes that only God has the power to give children to couples. Usage of the pill, iuds, diaphragms, spermicides, condoms are not forbidden but are not encouraged. A couple may practice rhythm and coitus interruptus if by mutual agreement. If a pregnancy is contraindicated due to a particular physical or emotional medical condition, contraception is allowed. Tubal ligations and vasectomies are frowned upon but not forbidden.

### **Withholding or withdrawing Life Support:**

Muslim tradition generally discourages the withholding or withdrawing of life support. These decisions are complex and the family may wish to consult with an experienced imam or elder of the community.

Generally though when treatment is going to prolong the agony of death and does not improve the quality of a person's life, the elimination of suffering becomes the goal. In such a case, the

---

<sup>29</sup> Smith, Jane I. and Haddad, Yvonne Y. *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 172.

person or family may request that treatment be discontinued. This is different than euthanasia which is taking a positive action to hasten death, which is not allowed.

Administering pain relief that may shorten the patient's life is permitted as long as it is meant to bring comfort and not hasten death.

The definition of death according to the Islamic Medical Association of North America, IMANA, is "when a person's cardiopulmonary function has come to a permanent stop and when the function of the brain, including the brain stem, has come to a permanent stop, even if some other organs may continue to show spontaneous activity."<sup>30</sup>

It is suggested that all Muslims have advanced directives and living wills.

(For examples of these see website listed below in footnote 30.)

### **Euthanasia:**

This is forbidden for it is seen as murder by the one who is performing it and a suicide by the person who is choosing to end his or her own life. When someone dies can only be determined by Allah.

*"No human being can die, save by God's leave, at a term pre-ordained."* Qur'an 3:145

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Providers:**

Encourage the family to contact their imam or religious leader for support. Ask the physician to speak to the family and go over options. Determine the family's beliefs about the removal of life support. Help them understand that in Islam the removal of life support in order not to prolong the agony of death when death is inevitable, is permissible. Show that you understand in Islam, death is part of life and it is ultimately determined by God. Ask the family what prayers would be comforting and offer to make them or witness them. Ask if they would like to recite the *dkhikr*. Since there is belief that an unconscious person and someone who has just died can hear, encourage them to offer these prayers and if they also have the practice of reciting Qur'an 36

---

<sup>30</sup> Islamic Society of North America, <http://www.isna.net>

It should be noted that a free internet recording of this sura is available at <http://www.bomb-mps.com/index.php?search=abdul+rahman=al=sudais=036=surah=yasiin>

Encourage family to recite the declaration of faith. A family member or imam or other religious leader should recite the *shahadah* in the right ear of the deceased person

Preparations should begin to prepare for burial. You may provide a list of Muslim funeral homes, Islamic centers or mosques that are geared for preparing a body for burial.

### **Suicide:**

This too is strictly forbidden.

*...do not take any human being's life which God has declared to be sacred otherwise than in the pursuit of justice....." Qur'an 6:151*

Prophet Muhammad also declared that *"if somebody commits suicide with anything in this world, he will be tortured with that very thing on the Day of Resurrection."*<sup>31</sup> This also applies to someone who refuses food or hydration; they would suffer the same fate, according to this Hadith.

In terms of Assisted Suicide, this is also prohibited. Should a physician even prescribe a medication that they do not administer to the patient, but the patient uses it to kill them self, the law says it is as if the Dr. had murdered the patient. The same would also be said of someone who assists someone in committing suicide.

### **Autopsy:**

The practice of autopsy is not discussed in the Qur'an nor did it exist during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Since most of the Islamic laws are based on actions and words of the Prophet, Islamic jurists have studied the issue and have offered legal opinions, called *fatwas* trying to keep true to the underlying principles found both in the Qur'an and the Sunna. The general consensus is that autopsy should be avoided if possible since it is "considered to be a

---

<sup>31</sup> Bukhari, Sahih

desecration of the body.”<sup>32</sup> We know that Muslims bury the body quickly and autopsy would delay this practice. We know from a Hadith “not waiting for morning to bury if the person died at night; and not waiting for nightfall if the person died in the morning. Make haste in taking them to their resting place.”<sup>33</sup>

There however are exceptions made if performing an autopsy is required by law and or if the autopsy would result in medical science that may save other lives in the future.

Islam places a great emphasis on the dignity of human being which most certainly extends to the deceased. The body should not be desecrated by embalming procedures, cosmetic make overs or other funeral procedures which are intrusive.

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Providers:**

You should become familiar with the circumstances of the death. Research the local and state autopsy laws as well as the hospital procedures. Be familiar with funeral and burial practices. Encourage the family to contact their imam or religious leader for support and also determine their beliefs regarding autopsy. Reassure the family that you understand their needs for a quick burial. If autopsy is necessary, reassure the family that it will be done with the utmost respect for their loved one and as quickly as possible. Help them understand that it is doing done to better understand both the death and also help save lives in the future. Explain that most jurists believe there is no pain involved. Chaplains should ask permission to pray for the deceased or to witness their prayers. See suggested Qur’anic verses and supplications. Remember that many Muslims are offended if a non-Muslim reads the Qur’an. They may want to recite the dhiker, names of God so have these available.

Some may recite Qur’an 36, Ya-sin. You can have this available or help the family get a CD of the sura,

### **Organ Transplants:**

---

<sup>32</sup> Tuell, Ra’ufa S. *Islamic Approaches to Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010. 71.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Nothing in the Qur'an or the words or observations of Prophet Muhammad in the Hadith speaks of organ transplants since it did not exist in those times. Therefore the opinions are from later sources and there are some differences of opinions. However, most jurists uphold the opinion that organ transplantation is acceptable as well as blood transfusions under certain conditions which include the following:

The donor must not be at risk while alive i.e. blood transfusion, kidney transplant. The donor or families' permission must be obtained. Organ donations should not be the outcome of financial exploitation or social pressures. No vital organ is to be removed while the person is alive. In heart transplantation, the donor has to be clinically dead before the heart is removed.

There is a doctrine in Islam that addresses the fact that "necessity allows the prohibited." Similar to Judaism, "*if someone saves a life it shall be as though he has saved the lives of all humankind.*" Qur'an 5:32

There is also a principle that the needs of a living person do take precedence over the needs of a dead one.<sup>34</sup>

It should be noted that in general, jurists from Arab countries permit organ transplant as noted above but jurists from South Asia often forbid it totally saying that it is a desecration of the body which is not allowed. They cite a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad saying "*breaking bones of the dead is as offensive as breaking the bones of the living.*"<sup>35</sup>

Jurists from the Indian subcontinent also do not allow it for a slightly different reason cited in the following hadith "*since life is a trust one has no right to donate any part of one's body to someone else.*"<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly those who argue stating that the physical body must stay intact in order to be raised from the dead on the Day of Resurrection, this is not borne out in the Qur'an itself. The following verse would seem to clarify this misconception: "*indeed, We are able to make whole*

---

<sup>34</sup> Tuell, Ra'ufa S. *Islamic Approaches To Patient Care*, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana publications, 2010.124

<sup>35</sup> Ter Haar, G. and Tsuruoka, Y. *Religion and Society: An Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Vol. 5, International Studies in Religion and Society), Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2007. 50.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

*his very finger-tips, does man think that We cannot bring his bones together again?" Qur'an 75:3*

The Islamic Medical Association of North America defines death as follows: when cardiopulmonary function has come to a permanent stop and when the function of the brain, including the brain stem, has come to a permanent stop, even if some of the organs may continue to show spontaneous activity.<sup>37</sup>

### **Implications for Chaplains and Healthcare Providers:**

Same as for other deaths

### **Death:**

In different ways, death is mentioned 164 times in the Qur'an. Muslims believe that no one lives forever and our time here on earth is limited. Death is a natural conclusion of life.

*"Every soul shall taste death." Qur'an 3:185*

*"And it is He who made our generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth." Qur'an 6:165*

The family may request to wash the patient and to position the bed to face Mecca. The patient's head should rest on a pillow. Family members may want to stay with the dying person so as to be able to whisper a proclamation of faith in the patient's right ear right before they die.

A hadith encourages family to utter the words of *Al-Istirja* upon receiving news of a loved one's death.

*Inna Lillahi Wa Inna llayhi Rajoon*

*Verily, we are for Allah and to Him we shall return*

---

<sup>37</sup> Sheikh, A and Gatrad, A. Death and Bereavement: an exploration and a mediation", in *Caring for Muslim Patients*, Oxon, United Kingdom: Radcliffe Publishing, 2009. 111

Allah says, “when I take the prized one from this world of one of my believing worshippers, and when that believing worshipper then seeks reward from me, there is no other reward for him except Paradise.”<sup>38</sup> Ahmad.

There may be a request that amputated limbs be made available for burial. Details should be arranged through the patient’s family/funeral home.

### **Death Practices:**

Death is a painful and emotional time, yet it is also filled with hope and mercy. Muslims believe that death is a departure from this world, but it is not the end of someone's existence. Eternal life is yet to come and Muslims pray that their loved one will find peace and contentment in the life that comes next. Right before someone is dying, family and friends surround the bedside to provide comfort, and they encourage the dying one to recite words of remembrance and prayer if they are able to. Family also may recite appropriate Qur'anic verses. The Declaration of faith should be the last words if at all possible and also can be whispered into the dying person’s ear.

Upon death, the eyes of the deceased should be closed and the body covered with a clean sheet. In preparation for burial, the family or members of the community will wash (*al-ghusul*) and shroud the body. The washing is done in a respectful manner with clean and scented water and the body is wrapped in sheets of clean, white cloth, called the *kafan*. Only males would wash men and vice versa. For a married person, the spouse may perform the washing. The washing should be done in a clean, secluded and private place where clean water and soap are available. Gloves will be needed. If available, lotus leaves or camphor would be used for the final washing. The washing is done an odd number of times if possible. For more information and a step by step guide to the washing, see Authentic Step by Step Illustrated Janazah Guide. The deceased is then transported to the site of the funeral prayers. This can be outdoors, in a courtyard or public square. They are not performed in a mosque. The community comes together and the imam stands in front, facing away from the worshippers. The prayers are similar to the ones said 5 times a day but at the funeral there is no bowing or prostration and the prayer is said mainly in

---

<sup>38</sup> Levine, S.E. Jihad. *He brings them out from Darkness into Light: a Grief and Bereavement Booklet for Muslims in Hospitals and Healthcare Settings*, Moses Cone Health Systems, Pennsylvania. 2011. 5.  
<http://www.PennsylvaniaPrisonChaplains.com>

silence.

The deceased is then taken to the cemetery for burial (*al-dafin*) Those following on foot should keep behind on either the right or the left of those who are actually carrying the body. They should walk quietly and with a calm manner.

It is said that those who follow until the burial is finished “whoever attends the *Janazah* until it is finished will earn a *Qirat*, and who ever stays until the burial, will earn two *Qirats*. Someone asked” What a *Qirat* means? The Prophet answered: it means rewards a big as a great mountain. (Bukhari and Muslim)

If at all possible it is preferred for a Muslim to be buried where he or she died and not transported, since embalming is not allowed. Burial should be done as soon as possible after the death but the following times should be avoided: from sunrise until the sun is fully risen and when the sun pales before sunset until it has set. Only men are allowed to attend the burial. A female is buried by her husband, her sons, her father, her brothers, or her uncle.

Muslims generally have their own section of the cemetery. There are two types of graves: *Al-Shaqq*: is to made a deep vertical hole in the ground or *Al-Lahed* which is to make a deep vertical hole in the ground, then in the bottom make a side horizontal hole big enough to cover the whole body. If allowed by local ordinance, there is no coffin. The deceased is laid in the grave on his or her right side facing Mecca. A layer of wood or large rocks are put above the body as that the earth will not be put directly on the body. After the body is covered, it is usual to throw three handfuls of soil onto the grave and then fill it up with sand. Tombstones and markers as well as flowers are discouraged. Instead one should pray for the deceased and be thankful to Allah for His mercy. Cremation is prohibited.

### **Grieving**

There is a 3 day mourning period observed when visitors are received and condolences are extended. One usually avoids flashy clothing or jewelry and spends time in prayer and reflection. The Prophet Muhammad said that there are three things that may continue to benefit a person after death: charity given during life which helps others, knowledge from which people continue to benefit, and a righteous child who prays for their parent.

The *Janazah* Prayer for the deceased should be said in Arabic and led by a male if possible. (See appendix)



While reactions like wailing, screaming and tearing of clothing are not allowed in Islam, crying is a healthy and permissible expression of grief. *“Tears are not forbidden in Islam. By the grace of Allah, in the tears are forces that heal both physically and mentally. Tears have a relieving effect on the stress produced by loss and trauma. They really are a gift from Allah.”*<sup>39</sup> Maqsood

Muslims learned how to grieve by the example of Prophet Muhammad. He experienced grief several times when he lost his mother and grandfather, two wives, a son in infancy and he outlived his adult daughters. He also lost many friends. We learn of one such occasion narrated by Abu Hurayrah: The prophet visited the grave of his mother and he wept and caused those around him to weep too.

Upon the death of Ibrahim his son we are told:

*“Anas bin Malik reported that: The Messenger of Allah entered the room and we accompanied him. And Ibrahim breathed his last. They eyes of Allah’s Messenger were filled with tears. Abdur Rehman Ibn Auf said “you are weeping, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: Ibn Auf This is mercy. Then he said Our eyes shed tears and our hearts are filled with grief but we do not say anything except that by which Allah is please. O Ibrahim we are sorrowful due to your separation.”* Bukhari, Muslim and others.

This seems to be teaching us that one can be sad about the loss of the person that they will no longer see, but they are not grieving for the person who is going to a better place. Even when the Messenger himself died, the message was to keep believing, that Islam is greater than just one Messenger and it is ultimately in Allah’s hands.

*“He is no more than a Messenger, and indeed Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed will you then turn back on your heels as disbelievers? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah, and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.”* Qur’an 3:144

---

<sup>39</sup> Levine, S.E. Jihad. *He brings them Out From Darkness Into Light: A Grief and Bereavement Booklet for Muslims in Hospitals and Healthcare Settings*, Moses Cone Health Systems, Pennsylvania. 2011. 5.  
<http://www.PennsylvaniaPrisonChaplains.com>

As mentioned, grieving is allowed for only 3 days. Widows may marry after a period of four months and ten days during which she must have at least one period to ensure that she is not pregnant. A pregnant widow may remarry after 42 days have elapsed since the birth of her child but this child carries the name of the deceased.

There is a difference of opinion regarding visiting the cemetery. Some scholars say that this is allowed only for men and females may not. Others say it is permitted for women if the visit is not frequent and if it is for the sole purpose of remembering death and the hereafter.

These are two prayers often said at the grave.

*“O Allah, grant forgiveness to his our dead loved one; let him arise to the company of those who have followed Your path in righteousness; let him become a guide and helper to those he has left behind. Forgive us and him O Lord of the Universe; Make his grave spacious and grant him light in it.”*

*“To Allah we belong, and to Him we return. My Lord, reward me for my tragedy and compensate me with better than I have lost.”*

### **Deceased Children:**

Islam teaches that young children who die go directly to *Jannah*, to Paradise and even can be guides to Paradise when our time comes.

If a fetus is less than four months old, then the body may not be washed. The fetus is wrapped in a piece of white cloth and buried. No *Janazah* prayer is said. However, if the fetus is more than four months old, then the body is washed and prayers may be said. For children less than the age of puberty, a child may be washed by either a male or female, and shrouding. Over the age of puberty, the same sex does the washing. In terms of a martyr, they should not be washed or shrouded but buried with the same clothes they were found in. There is a strong opinion of scholars not to offer the *Salaat Janazah* since Prophet Muhammad did not offer it for the martyrs of the battle of Uhud. <sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Siala, Mohamed E. *Authentic Step by Step Janazah Guide*, Mission Islam.  
<http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/jamazahstepbystep.htm>

The fetus that dies a neonatal death drags his mother with his umbilical cord in Paradise if she stays patient seeking the reward for this affliction from Allah.<sup>41</sup> Ibn Majah

### **Life After Death:**

Muslims do embrace the concept of life after death and therefore believe that their sense of self is not limited to their physical body. A Muslim's eternal life is determined by the choices and actions they made during their lifetime. As previously mentioned, their souls will go to Heaven or Hell as determined on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet taught that our deeds on earth continue after we die for as long as the earth remains. Therefore even if we had dementia at the end of our lives or our bodies were feeble, an individual cannot be reduced to that after our physical death. What we were and did continues to affect others on earth even animals.<sup>42</sup>

*You shall certainly be paid our wages in full on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever has been dragged away from the Fire and made it enter the Garden has indeed won out. And this present life is but the rapture of delusion.*

What about disbelievers? We learn from Al-Jebaly:

*“Ahl ul-fatrah are those who lived at a time or place or situation that prevented them from receiving a clear and convincing message about Allah. Even though they may have died as disbelievers, Allah out of His perfect justice and mercy, would not admit them to Hell without a fair trial. He will give them a trial that, in His knowledge, will be equivalent to the trials that other people face in this life. Among Ahl ul-Fatrah are those who never received a messenger from Allah, young children of disbelievers who died before reaching puberty, old people who were senile when the message came to them, mentally disabled or deaf people or people who could not communicate at all, and so on.”*

Anas Aboo Sa'eed and others reported that the Prophet said:

---

<sup>41</sup> Levine, S.E. Jihad. *He brings them Out From Darkness Into Light: A Grief and Bereavement Booklet for Muslims in Hospitals and Healthcare Settings*, Moses Cone Health Systems, Pennsylvania. 2011. 5.

<http://www.PennsylvaniaPrisonChaplains.com>

<sup>42</sup> Matson, Ingrid. “Spirituality, Religious Wisdom, and the Care of the Patient.” *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine (YJHM)* (2003)

*“On Resurrection Day, four types of individuals will be brought forward before Allah, each presenting his argument of not receiving the full message. A child who died before puberty, a mad man, a person that no messenger came in his time, and a very old man who became senile. The Lord will command a tongue to come out from the Fire and will then tell them, “I used to send my servants messengers from among themselves and indeed, I am not My own messenger to you. Enter this fire. And for those who will be destined to misery, they will say “O our Lord why should we enter this from which always used to run away? Allah will tell them, if you dare to disobey Me now, you would then show even more denial and disobedience to My messengers” And as for those whom will be destined to happiness. They will go forth and rush and enter that fire. Thus they will enter Jannah, whereas the others will enter Hell. “*

From this story we learn that while we cannot really know who is a disbeliever, family members can say the following on their loved ones behalf:

*O Allah, if you know they are from ahl-ul- fatrah, make them pass the trial successfully.*

### **Prayers to Use with Patients:**

Prayer is an important part of a Muslims faith and in addition to daily required prayers, additional prayers are said at times of illness, joy, thankfulness and life cycle events. These supplications are referred to as *du'a* and can include recitation of verses (*ayat*) from the Qur'an, repetition of sayings from the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad as well as spontaneous prayer from the heart. Most Muslims prefer to recite the prayers in Arabic but transliterations and English translations are often acceptable. Traditions vary depending on culture. It is always best to consult with the patient or family before offering prayer or for help in choosing the appropriate texts.

Some chapters from the Qur'an that are often recited are *Sura al-Fatiha*, *Sura al- Baqarah*, *Sura al-Falaq* and *Sura an-Nas*

*Sura al-Baqarah*, referred to as “the Cow”, is the second and longest chapter of the Qur'an. It is believed to have been revealed mainly in Medina after the Hijra from Mecca. The title refers to the heifer sacrificed by the Israelites. In this *Sura*, the believer is enjoined to fast during the month of Ramadan.

*Sura al-Falaq* is referred to as Dawn or Daybreak and is the 113<sup>th</sup> *Sura* of the Qur'an. It is a brief five verse invocation in which one asks Allah for protection from Satan. This *Sura* and the 114<sup>th</sup> (and last) *Sura* in the Qur'an, are collectively referred to as *al-Mu'awwidhatayn*, or the refugees. Both begin with the words, "I seek refuge." The first asks for refuge from evil from within and the second, *An-Nas*, for refuge from without.

*Sura An-Nas* is the 114<sup>th</sup> and last chapter, of the Qur'an. It is six short verses asking for protection from Satan. There is a tradition of reading this *Sura* over the sick or before going to sleep at night.

*Sura al-Fatihah* is the first chapter of the Qur'an. It asks for the guidance and mercy of God. Referred to as "the Opener" it is the opener of the Book and the first Chapter is recited in full at every prayer cycle as well as used to open many functions in everyday Islamic life. It also is thought to refer to the Qur'an's ability to open one up to have faith in God. 99 Beautiful names of God (*dhikr*) help the Muslim to surrender deeply to God. The recitation of these names can be comforting and healing to the hearts, minds, souls, and bodies of believers.

While the Qur'an contains over 2700 references to God, these 99 are honored by Muslims around the world. The Qur'an says the following:

*"To God belong the names most exalted. Worship Him through them and forsake those who blaspheme His names. They shall be requited for what they committed."* Qur'an 7:180

### CONCLUSIONS:

I have felt so privileged to undertake this study of Islam and its practices and theology surrounding illness and death. As a Jewish Chaplain, I know that what I have learned will greatly enhance my sensitivity and comfort level when working with Muslim patients. I now feel that I have an ability to ask better questions, to be a supportive presence and to provide comfort and prayer in more appropriate ways. I also have a familiarity with prayers that might be offered by me or by a family member. While I in no way feel I am now an expert, I do hope that I can be a resource for other non-Muslim Chaplains. Ideally I would love to partner with a Muslim Chaplain and together we could offer trainings to hospital Chaplains both on working with

Orthodox Jewish patients and Muslim patients. The four hospitals that I interviewed Chaplains from, would like me to come and present my presentations to their Pastoral Care staff.

I was struck by the many similarities of the two traditions. Both are grounded in the importance of prayer, of family, and placing God at the center. Even their *shahadah* and our *Shema* prayers are quite similar, both confirming the oneness of God. There are parallels in terms of modesty, roles of men and women, food and fasting and prayer rituals. There are also similarities in terms of beliefs around the various medical issues like euthanasia, suicide, organ donation, autopsy etc. Both traditions value life and saving a life is of the utmost importance. It overrides everything else. Neither believes in doing anything to hasten death, but both believe in not prolonging a life of suffering. They also both emphasize living a life based on good deeds and giving back to others. Family and children, and respect for elders are emphasized in both faith traditions.

While their texts are different, much of the Qur'an has its basis in the Torah and its teachings. Muslims however believe that the words revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, were the true words and that in some cases were a correction of the Torah. Muslims derive their laws by studying the actions of the Prophet Muhammad in addition to the words in the Qur'an. Orthodox Jews follow the *halacha* as set out by the Rabbis in the Talmud and later in the Shulchan Aruch. They also rely on their Rabbis, who are ordained and have the authority to make decisions in their particular community. In Islam, the *imam* plays a lesser role in many cases, and it is not an ordained position. Orthodox Jewish patients therefore will be more likely to call their Rabbi to come and visit and to be present during important decisions and also for prayer. Some men also will not be open to a woman Rabbi. The Muslim patient may or may not have a relationship with a local imam and may ask advice from an elder family member or someone in the community. There are also many more differences in language, culture, dress, customs etc within the Muslim community. Muslims come from many different countries around the world. The Orthodox Jews that one will encounter mainly are American born or East European and speak English. There are a few sects that live in New York that Yiddish is their primary language.

Perhaps the biggest difference that I was able to discern is in the philosophy around life and death. Jews are much more focused on this life and while there is a belief in the *olam ha ba*, the world to come, it is not the emphasis for most Jews. In Islam, there appears to be more weight

given to doing good deeds on earth to reap the rewards in Paradise. Angels also play a greater role in Islam. In terms of sickness, Muslims seem to have a stronger belief in fate and that sickness is something sent by God to make us stronger. I have however, met Orthodox Jews who also feel this way. Visiting the sick is a commandment in both traditions. There are also many similar practices around death and burial.

As I study Islam and spend time with Muslims, I am always struck by our similarities more than our differences. I so wish that we could as Jews, could see that they are truly our cousins and we need to work to heal the fractures between us, to one day reach a time of peace. I am hopeful that as we reach across the table and show our willingness to dialogue and to learn from one another, that day will be possible. I would like to think that in some small way, this project is a step in the right direction for getting to know one another on a deeper level. I also think that Jews who are not religious could also benefit from learning about Orthodox Jews and vice versa. There are fences that need to be mended in this area as well!

### **Some prayers of Comfort to Offer in English for Muslim Patients:**

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, The Dispenser of Grace- (You can begin the prayers with these words first)

“ O you who have attained to faith! Seek aid in steadfast patience and prayer: for, behold, God is with those who are patient in adversity.” Qur’an 2: 153

*“If My worshippers ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the prayer of him who prays when he prays to Me.” Qur’an 2:186*

*“God- there is no deity save Him, the ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent Fount of All Being. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there could intercede with Him, unless it be by His leave? He knows all that lies open before*

*men and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain to aught of His knowledge save that which He will (them to attain). His eternal power overspreads the heavens and the earth, and their upholding wearies Him not. And he alone is truly exalted, tremendous.” Qur’an 2:255*

*“God does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear: in his favour shall be whatever good he does, and against him whatever evil he does. O our Sustainer! Take us not to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong! O our Sustainer! Lay not upon us a burden such as Thou didst lay upon those who lived before us! O our Sustainer! Make us not bear burdens which we have no strength to bear! And efface Thou our sins, and grant us forgiveness and bestow Thy mercy upon us! Thou art our Lord Supreme...” Qur’an 2:286*

*God loves those who bear in patience.....Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in living. Make firm our feet and grant us victory over the unbelievers. So God granted them the reward of this world and the glorious reward of the hereafter.” Qur’an 3:148*

*“To follow hardship, God brings about ease.” Qur’an 65:7*

*“There shall not touch us except what God has decreed for us’ He is our Protector; in God let the believers trust.” Qur’an 9:51*

*“Indeed in the remembrance of Allah, do hearts find rest.” Qur’an 13:28*

### **At Burial:**

*“Oh Allah, grant forgiveness to our dead loved one; let him arise to the company of those who have followed Your path in righteousness; let him become a guide and a helper to those he has left behind. Forgive us, and him, O Lord of the Universe; make his grave spacious, and grant him light in it.” Muslim*

*“To Allah we belong, and to Him we return. My Lord, reward me for my tragedy and compensate me with better than I have lost.” Ahmad and Muslim*

### **Shahadah**

*ash-hadu an la ilaha illa Llah- I witness that there is no god but God.*



*wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Llah-* I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God

## **Dhikr**

The **99 Names of Allah** (Arabic: أسماء الله الحسنى, translit: 'asmā' u llāhi lḥusnā) also known as The **99 attributes of Allah**, according to Islamic tradition, are the names of Allah revealed by the Creator (Allah) in the Qur'an.

The 99 Names of Allah according to the tradition of Islam are:

Name-English Name: Arabic

1. Ar Rahman (الرحمن) The All Merciful
2. Ar Rahim (الرحيم) The Most Merciful
3. Al Malik (الملك) The King, The Sovereign
4. Al Quddus (القدوس) The Most Holy
5. As Salam (السلام) Peace and Blessing
6. Al Mu'min (المؤمن) The Guarantor
7. Al Muhaymin (المهيمن) The Guardian, the Preserver
8. Al Aziz (العزيز) The Almighty, the Self Sufficient
9. Al Jabbaar (الجبار) The Powerful, the Irresistible
10. Al Mutakabbir (المتكبر) The Greatest
11. Al Khaaliq (الخالق) The Creator
12. Al Baari (البارئ) The Maker
13. Al Musawwir (المصور) The Fashioner of Forms
14. Al Ghaffaar (الغفار) The Ever Forgiving
15. Al Qahhaar (القهار) The All Compelling Subduer
16. Al Wahhaab (الوهاب) The Bestower
17. Ar Razzaaq (الرزاق) The Ever Providing
18. Al Fattaah (الفتاح) The Opener, the Victory Giver
19. Al Alim (العليم) The All Knowing, the Omniscient
20. Al Qaabid (القابض) The Restrainer, the Straightener
21. Al Baasit (الباسط) The Expander, the Munificent
22. Al Khaafid (الخافض) The Abaser
23. Ar Raafi' (الرافع) The Exalter
24. Al Mu'izz (المعز) The Giver of Honor
25. Al Muzil (المدل) The Humiliator

26. Al Sami' (السميع) The All Hearing
27. Al Basir (البصير) The All Seeing
28. Al Hakam (الحكم) The Judge, the Arbitrator
29. Al 'Adl (العدل) The Utterly Just
30. Al Latif (اللطيف) The Subtly Kind
31. Al Khabir (الخبير) The All Aware
32. Al Halim (الحليم) The Forbearing, the Indulgent
33. Al 'Azim (العظيم) The Magnificent, the Infinite
34. Al Ghafur (الغفور) The All Forgiving
35. Ash Shakur (الشكور) The Grateful
36. Al Ali (العلي) The Sublimely Exalted
37. Al Kabir (الكبير) The Great
38. Al Hafiz (الحفيظ) The Preserver
39. Al Muqit (المقيت) The Nourisher
40. Al Hasib (الحسب) The Reckoner
41. Al Jalil (الجليل) The Majestic
42. Al Karim (الكريم) The Bountiful, the Generous
43. Ar Raqib (الراقيب) The Watchful
44. Al Mujib (المجيب) The Responsive, the Answerer
45. Al Wasi' (الواسع) The Vast, the All Encompassing
46. Al Hakim (الحكيم) The Wise
47. Al Wadud (الودود) The Loving, the Kind One
48. Al Majid (المجيد) The All Glorious
49. Al Ba'ith (الباعث) The Raiser of the Dead
50. Ash Shahid (الشهيد) The Witness
51. Al Haqq (الحق) The Truth, the Real
52. Al Wakil (الوكيل) The Trustee, the Dependable
53. Al Qawiyy (القوي) The Strong
54. Al Matin (المتين) The Firm, the Steadfast
55. Al Wali (الولي) The Protecting Friend, Patron, and Helper
56. Al Hamid (الحميد) The All Praiseworthy
57. Al Muhsi (المحصي) The Accounter, the Numberer of All
58. Al Mubdi (المبدئ) The Producer, Originator, and Initiator of all
59. Al Mu'id (المعيد) The Reinstater Who Brings Back All
60. Al Muhyi (المحيي) The Giver of Life
61. Al Mumit (المميت) The Bringer of Death, the Destroyer

62. Al Hayy (الحي) The Ever Living
63. Al Qayyum (القيوم) The Self Subsisting Sustainer of All
64. Al Waajid (الواجد) The Perceiver, the Finder, the Unfailing
65. Al Maajid (الماجد) The Illustrious, the Magnificent
66. Al Waahid (الواحد) The One, the All Inclusive, the Indivisible
67. Al Ahad (الاحد) The Unity, The indivisible
68. As Samad (الصمد) The Long, the Impregnable, the Everlasting
69. Al Qadir (القادر) The All Able
70. Al Muqtadir (المقتدر) The All Determiner, the Dominant
71. Al Muqaddim (المقدم) The Expediter, He who brings forward
72. Al Mu'akhhir (المؤخر) The Delayer, He who puts far away
73. Al Awwal (الأول) The First
74. Al Aakhir (الآخر) The Last
75. Az Zaahir (الظاهر) The Manifest; the All Victorious
76. Al Baatin (الباطن) The Hidden; the All Encompassing
77. Al Waali (الوالي) The Patron
78. Al Muta'al (المتعالي) The Self Exalted
79. Al Barr (البر) The Most Kind and Righteous
80. At Tawwaab (التواب) The Ever Returning, Ever Relenting
81. Al Muntaqim (المنتقم) The Avenger
82. Al 'Afuww (العفو) The Pardoner, the Effacer of Sins
83. Ar Ra'uf (الرؤوف) The Compassionate, the All Pitying
84. Malik al Mulk (مالك الملك) The Owner of All Sovereignty
85. Dhu al Jalal wa al Ikram (ذو الجلال و الإكرام) The Lord of Majesty and Generosity
86. Al Muqsit (المقسط) The Equitable, the Requirer
87. Al Jaami' (الجامع) The Gatherer, the Unifier
88. Al Ghani (الغني) The All Rich, the Independent
89. Al Mughni (المغني) The Enricher, the Emancipator
90. Al Mani' (المانع) The Withholder, the Shielder, the Defender
91. Ad Dharr (الضار) The Distresser
92. An Nafi' (النافع) The Propitious, the Benefactor
93. An Nur (النور) The Light
94. Al Hadi (الهادي) The Guide
95. Al Badi (البيدع) Incomparable, the Originator
96. Al Baaqi (الباقى) The Ever Enduring and Immutable
97. Al Waarith (الوارث) The Heir, the Inheritor of All

98. Ar Rashid (الرشيد) The Guide, Infallible Teacher, and Knower

99. As Sabur (الصبور) The Patient, the Timeless

## Sura Ya-sin

036.001 Ya Sin.

*Yā -Sīn*

036.002 By the Qur'an, full of Wisdom,-

*Wa Al-Qur'āni Al-Ĥakīmi*

036.003 Thou art indeed one of the messengers,

*'Innaka Lamīna Al-Mursalīna*

036.004 On a Straight Way.

*`Alā Ṣirāṭin Mustaqīmīn*

036.005 It is a Revelation sent down by (Him), the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

*Tanzīla Al-`Azīzi Ar-Raḥīmī*

036.006 In order that thou mayest admonish a people, whose fathers had received no admonition, and who therefore remain heedless (of the Signs of God).

*Litundhira Qawmāan Mā 'Undhira 'Ābā'uuhum  
Fahum Ghāfilūna*

036.007 The Word is proved true against the greater part of them: for they do not believe.

*Laqad Ḥaqqā Al-Qawlu `Alā 'Akḥarīhim Fahum Lā  
Yu'uminūna*

036.008 We have put yokes round their necks right up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up (and they cannot see).

*'Innā Ja`alnā Fī 'A`nāqīhim 'Aghlālāan Fahiya 'Ilā Al-  
'Adhqāni Fahum Muqmaḥūna*

036.009 And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see.

*Wa Ja`alnā Miṅ Bayni 'Aydīhim Saddāan Wa  
Min Khalfīhim Saddāan Fa'aghshaynāhum Fahum Lā  
Yubṣirūna*

036.010 The same is it to them whether thou admonish them or thou do not admonish them: they will not believe.

*Wa Sawā'un `Alayhim 'A'andhartahum 'Am Lam  
Tundhirhum Lā Yu'uminūna*

036.011 Thou canst but admonish such a one as follows the Message and fears the (Lord) Most Gracious, unseen: give such a one, therefore, good tidings, of Forgiveness and a Reward most generous.

*'Innamā Tundhiru Mani Attaba`a Adh-Dhikra  
Wa Khashiya Ar-Rahmana Bil-Ghaybi Fabashshirhu  
Bimaghfiratin Wa 'Ajrin Karīmin*

036.012 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).

*'Innā Nahnu Nuhyi Al-Mawtā Wa Naktubu Mā  
Qaddamū Wa 'Athārahum Wa Kulla Shay'in 'Hşaynāhu  
Fī 'Imāmin Mubīnin*

036.013 Set forth to them, by way of a parable, the (story of) the Companions of the City. Behold!, there came apostles to it.

*Wa Adrib Lahum Mathalāan 'Aşhāba Al-Qaryati  
'Idh Jā'ahā Al-Mursalūna*

036.014 When We (first) sent to them two apostles, they rejected them: But We strengthened them with a third: they said, "Truly, we have been sent on a mission to you."

*'Idh 'Arsalnā 'Ilayhimu Athnayni Fakadhdhabūhumā  
Fa`azzaznā Bithāliithin Faqālū 'Innā 'Ilaykum  
Mursalūna*

036.015 The (people) said: "Ye are only men like ourselves; and (God) Most Gracious sends no sort of revelation: ye do nothing but lie."

*Qālū Mā 'Antum 'Illā Basharun Mithlunā Wa Mā  
'Anzala Ar-Rahmānu Min Shay'in In 'Antum 'Illā  
Takdhībūna*

036.016 They said: "Our Lord doth know that we have been sent on a mission to you:

*Qālū Rabbunā Ya`lamu 'Innā 'Ilaykum Lamursalūna*

036.017 "And our duty is only to proclaim the clear Message."

*Wa Mā `Alaynā 'Illā Al-Balāghu Al-Mubīnu*

036.018 The (people) said: "for us, we augur an evil omen from you: if ye desist not, we will certainly stone you. And a grievous punishment indeed will be inflicted on you by us."

*Qālū 'Innā Taṭayyarnā Bikum La'in Lam Tantahū  
Lanarjumannakum Wa Layamassannakum Minnā  
'Adhābun 'Alīmūn*

036.019 They said: "Your evil omens are with yourselves: (deem ye this an evil omen). If ye are admonished? Nay, but ye are a people transgressing all bounds!"

*Qālū Ṭā'irukum Ma`akum 'A'in Dhukkirtum Bal 'Antum  
Qawmun Musrifūna*

036.020 Then there came running, from the farthest part of the City, a man, saying, "O my people! Obey the apostles:

*Wa Jā'a Min 'Aqṣá Al-Madīnati Rajulun Yas`á Qāla Yā QawmiAttabi`ū Al-Mursalīna*

036.021 "Obey those who ask no reward of you (for themselves), and who have themselves received Guidance.

*Attabi`ū Man Lā Yas'alukum 'Ajrāan Wa Hum Muhtadūna*

036.022 "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back.

*Wa Mā Liya Lā 'A`budu Al-Ladhī Faṭaranī Wa 'Ilayhi Turja`ūna*

036.023 "Shall I take (other) gods besides Him? If (God) Most Gracious should intend some adversity for me, of no use whatever will be their intercession for me, nor can they deliver me.

*'A'attakhidhu Min Dūnihi 'Ālihatan 'In Yuridni Ar-Rahmānu Bidurrin Lā Tughni`Annī Shafā`atuhum Shay`āan Wa Lā Yunqidhūni*

036.024 "I would indeed, if I were to do so, be in manifest Error.

*'Innī 'Idhāan Lafī Dalālin Mubīnin*

036.025 "For me, I have faith in the Lord of you (all): listen, then, to me!"

*'Innī 'Āmantu Birabbikum Fāsma`ūni*

036.026 It was said: "Enter thou the Garden." He said: "Ah me! Would that my People knew (what I know)!-

*Qāla Adkhuli Al-Jannata Qāla Yā Layta Qawmī Ya`lamūna*

036.027 "For that my Lord has granted me Forgiveness and has enrolled me among those held in honour!"

*Bimā Ghafara Lī Rabbī Wa Ja`alanī Mina Al-Mukramīna*

036.028 And We sent not down against his People, after him, any hosts from heaven, nor was it needful for Us so to do.

*Wa Mā 'Anzalnā `Alá Qawmihi Min Ba`dihī Min Jundīn Mina As-Samā'i Wa Mā Kunnā Munzilīna*

036.029 It was no more than a single mighty Blast, and behold! they were (like ashes) quenched and silent.

*'In Kānat 'Illā Ṣayhātan Wāhīdatan Fa'idhā Hum Khāmidūna*

036.030 Ah! Alas for (My) Servants! There comes not an apostle to them but they mock him!

*Yā Ḥasratan `Alá Al-`Ibādi Mā Ya'tīhim Min Rasūlin 'Illā Kānū Bihi Yastahzi'ūn*

036.031 See they not how many generations before them we destroyed? Not to them will they return:

*'Alam Yaraw Kam 'Ahlaknā Qablahum Mina Al-Qurūni 'Annahum 'Ilayhim Lā Yarji`ūna*

036.032 But each one of them all - will be brought before Us (for judgment).

*Wa 'In Kullun Lammā Jamī`un Ladaynā Muḥḍarūna*

036.033 A Sign for them is the earth that is dead: We do give it life, and produce grain therefrom, of which ye do eat.

*Wa 'Āyatun Lahumu Al-'Arḍu Al-Maytatu 'Aḥyaynāhā  
Wa 'Akhrajnā Minhā Ḥabbāan Faminhu Ya'kulūna*

036.034 And We produce therein orchard with date-palms and vines, and We cause springs to gush forth therein:

*Wa Ja`alnā Fīhā Jannātin Min Nakḥīlin Wa 'A`nābin  
Wa Fajjarnā Fīhā Mina Al-'Uyūni*

036.035 That they may enjoy the fruits of this (artistry): It was not their hands that made this: will they not then give thanks?

*Liya'kulū Min Thamarihi Wa Mā `Amilat/hu 'Aydīhim  
'Afalā Yashkurūna*

036.036 Glory to God, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.

*Subḥāna Al-Ladhī Khalaqa Al-'Azwāja Kullahā Mimmā  
Tunbitu Al-'Arḍu Wa Min 'Anfusihim Wa Mimmā Lā  
Ya`lamūna*

036.037 And a Sign for them is the Night: We withdraw therefrom the Day, and behold they are plunged in darkness;

*Wa 'Āyatun Lahumu Al-Laylu Naslakhu Minhu An-  
Nahāra Fa'idhā Hum Muḥlimūna*

036.038 And the sun runs his course for a period determined for him: that is the decree of (Him), the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.

*Wa Ash-Shamsu Tajrī Limustaqarrin Lahā Dhālika  
Taqḍīru Al-'Azīzi Al-'Alīmi*

036.039 And the Moon,- We have measured for her mansions (to traverse) till she returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk.

*Wa Al-Qamara Qaddarnāhu Manāzila Ḥattā `Āda  
Kāl`urjūni Al-Qadīmi*

036.040 It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: Each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law).

*Lā Ash-Shamsu Yanbaghī Lahā 'An Tudrika Al-Qamara  
Wa Lā Al-Laylu Sābiqū An-Nahāri Wa Kullun Fī  
Falakin Yasbahūna*

036.041 And a Sign for them is that We bore their race (through the Flood) in the loaded Ark;

*Wa 'Āyatun Lahum 'Annā Ḥamalnā Dhurriyatahum Fī  
Al-Fulki Al-Mashḥūni*

036.042 And We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride.

*Wa Khalaqnā Lahum Min Mithlihi Mā Yarkabūna*

036.043 If it were Our Will, We could drown them: then would there be no helper (to hear their cry), nor could they be delivered,

*Wa 'In Nasha' Nughriqhum Falā Şarīkha Lahum Wa Lā Hum Yunqadhūna*

036.044 Except by way of Mercy from Us, and by way of (world) convenience (to serve them) for a time.

*'Illā Raĥmatan Minnā Wa Matā`āan 'Ilā Ĥīnin*

036.045 When they are told, "Fear ye that which is before you and that which will be after you, in order that ye may receive Mercy," (they turn back).

*Wa 'Idhā Qīla Lahumu Attaqū Mā Bayna 'Aydīkum Wa MāKhalfakum La`allakum Turĥamūna*

036.046 Not a Sign comes to them from among the Signs of their Lord, but they turn away therefrom.

*Wa Mā Ta'tīhim Min 'Āyatin Min 'Āyāti Rabbihim 'Illā Kānū `Anhā Mu`riđīna*

036.047 And when they are told, "Spend ye of (the bounties) with which God has provided you," the Unbelievers say to those who believe: "Shall we then feed those whom, if God had so willed, He would have fed, (Himself)?- Ye are in nothing but manifest error."

*Wa 'Idhā Qīla Lahum 'Anfiqū Mimmā Razaqakumu Allāhu Qāla Al-Ladhīna Kafarū Lilladhīna 'Āmanū 'Anuṭ`imu Man Law Yashā'u Allāhu 'Aṭ`amahū 'In 'Antum 'Illā Fī Ḍalālin Mubīnin*

036.048 Further, they say, "When will this promise (come to pass), if what ye say is true?"

*Wa Yaqūlūna Matá Hādhā Al-Wa`du 'In Kuntum Şādiqīna*

036.049 They will not (have to) wait for aught but a single Blast: it will seize them while they are yet disputing among themselves!

*Mā Yanżurūna 'Illā Şayĥatan Wāĥīdatan Ta'khudhuhum Wa Hum Yakĥişşimūna*

036.050 No (chance) will they then have, by will, to dispose (of their affairs), nor to return to their own people!

*Falā Yastaṭī`ūna Tawşiyatan Wa Lā 'Ilā 'Aĥlihīm Yarjī`ūna*

036.051 The trumpet shall be sounded, when behold! from the sepulchres (men) will rush forth to their Lord!

*Wa Nufikha Fī Aş-Şūri Fa'idhā Hum Mina Al-'Ajdāthi 'Ilā Rabbihim Yansilūna*

036.052 They will say: "Ah! Woe unto us! Who hath raised us up from our beds of repose?"... (A voice will say:) "This is what (God) Most Gracious had promised. And true was the word of the apostles!"

*Qālū Yā Waylanā Maṅ Ba`athanā Min Marqadinā Hādhā Mā Wa`ada Ar-Raĥmānu Wa Şadaqa Al-Mursalūna*



036.053 It will be no more than a single Blast, when lo! they will all be brought up before Us!

*'In Kānat 'Illā Ṣayḥatan Wāḥidatan Fa'idhā Hum  
Jamī'un Ladaynā Muḥḍarūna*

036.054 Then, on that Day, not a soul will be wronged in the least, and ye shall but be repaid the meeds of your past Deeds.

*Fālyawma Lā Tuḏlamu Nafsun Ṣhay'āan Wa Lā  
Tujzawna 'Illā Mā Kuntum Ta`malūna*

036.055 Verily the Companions of the Garden shall that Day have joy in all that they do;

*'Inna 'Aṣḥāba Al-Jannati Al-Yawma Fī Ṣhughulin  
Fākihūna*

036.056 They and their associates will be in groves of (cool) shade, reclining on Thrones (of dignity);

*Hum Wa 'Azwājuhum Fī Ḍilālin `Alā Al-'Arā'iki  
Muttaki'ūna*

036.057 (Every) fruit (enjoyment) will be there for them; they shall have whatever they call for;

*Lahum Fīhā Fākihatun Wa Lahum Mā Yadda`ūna*

036.058 "Peace!" - a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful!

*Salāmun Qawlāan Min Rabbin Raḥīmīn*

036.059 "And O ye in sin! Get ye apart this Day!

*Wa Amtāzū Al-Yawma 'Ayyuhā Al-Mujrimūna*

036.060 "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?-

*'Alam 'A`had 'Ilaykum Yā Banī 'Ādama 'An Lā Ta`budū  
Aṣh-Ṣhayṭāna 'Innahu Lakum `Adūwun Mubīnun*

036.061 "And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?

*Wa 'Ani A`budūnī Hādhā Ṣirāṭun Mustaqīmūn*

036.062 "But he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did ye not, then, understand?

*Wa Laqad 'Aḍalla Minkum Jibillāan Kathīrāan 'Afalām  
Takūnū Ta`qilūna*

036.063 "This is the Hell of which ye were (repeatedly) warned!

*Hadhihi Jahannamu Allatī Kuntum Tū`adūna*

036.064 "Embrace ye the (fire) this Day, for that ye (persistently) rejected (Truth)."

*Aṣlawhā Al-Yawma Bimā Kuntum Takfurūna*

036.065 That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did.

*Al-Yawma Nakhtimu `Alā 'Afwāhihim Wa Tukallimūnā  
'Aydihim Wa Taṣh/hadu 'Arjuluhum Bimā Kānū  
Yaksibūna*

036.066 If it had been our Will, We could surely have blotted out their eyes; then should they have run about groping for the Path, but how could they have seen?

*Wa Law Nashā'u Laṭamasnā `Alá 'A`yunihim  
Fāstabaqū Aṣ-Ṣirāṭa Fa'anná Yubṣirūna*

036.067 And if it had been Our Will, We could have transformed them (to remain) in their places; then should they have been unable to move about, nor could they have returned (after error).

*Wa Law Nashā'u Lamasakḥnāhum `Alá Makānatihim  
Famā Aṣtaṭā`ū Muḏṭyāan Wa Lā Yarji`ūna*

036.068 If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature: Will they not then understand?

*Wa Man Nu`ammirhu Nunakkis/hu Fī Al-Khalqi 'Afalā  
Ya`qilūna*

036.069 We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, nor is it meet for him: this is no less than a Message and a Qur'an making things clear:

*Wa Mā `Allamnāhu Ash-Shi`ra Wa Mā Yanbaghī Lahu  
'In Huwa 'IllāDhikrun Wa Qur'ānun Mubīnun*

036.070 That it may give admonition to any (who are) alive, and that the charge may be proved against those who reject (Truth).

*Liyundhira Man Kāna Ḥayyāan Wa Yahiqqa Al-Qawlu  
`Alá Al-Kāfirīna*

036.071 See they not that it is We Who have created for them - among the things which Our hands have fashioned - cattle, which are under their dominion?-

*'Awalam Yaraw 'Annā Khalaqnā Lahum Mimmā  
'Amilat 'Aydīnā 'An`āmāan Fahum Lahā Mālikūna*

036.072 And that We have subjected them to their (use)? of them some do carry them and some they eat:

*Wa Dhallalnāhā Lahum Faminhā Rakūbuhum Wa  
Minhā Ya'kulūna*

036.073 And they have (other) profits from them (besides), and they get (milk) to drink. Will they not then be grateful?

*Wa Lahum Fīhā Manāfi`u Wa Mashāribu 'Afalā  
Yashkurūna*

036.074 Yet they take (for worship) gods other than God, (hoping) that they might be helped!

*Wa Attakhadhū Min Dūni Allāhi 'Ālihatan La`allahum  
Yunṣarūna*

036.075 They have not the power to help them: but they will be brought up (before Our Judgment-seat) as a troop (to be condemned).

*Lā Yastaṭī`ūna Naṣrahum Wa Hum Lahum Jundun  
Muḥḏarūna*

036.076 Let not their speech, then,  
grieve thee. Verily We know what they  
hide as well as what they disclose.

*Falā Yahzunka Qawluhum 'Innā Na`lamu Mā Yusirrūna  
Wa Mā Yu`linūna*

036.077 Doth not man see that it is We  
Who created him from sperm? yet  
behold! he (stands forth) as an open  
adversary!

*'Awalam Yara Al-'Insānu 'Annā Khalaqnāhu Min  
Nuḡfatin Fa'idhā Huwa Khaṣīmun Mubīnun*

036.078 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)?"

*Wa Ḍaraba Lanā Mathalāan Wa Nasiya Khalqahu  
Qāla Man Yuḡyī Al-'Iẓāma Wa Hiya Ramīmūn*

036.079 Say, "He will give them life  
Who created them for the first time! for  
He is Well-versed in every kind of  
creation!-

*Qul Yuḡyīhā Al-Ladhī 'Ansha'ahā 'Awwala Marratin  
Wa Huwa Bikulli Khalqin `Alīmūn*

036.080 "The same Who produces for  
you fire out of the green tree, when  
behold! ye kindle therewith (your own  
fires)!

*Al-Ladhī Ja`ala Lakum Mīna Ash-Shajari Al-'Akhḏari  
Nārāan Fa'idhā 'Antum Minhu Tūqīdūna*

036.081 "Is not He Who created the  
heavens and the earth able to create  
the like thereof?" - Yea, indeed! for He  
is the Creator Supreme, of skill and  
knowledge (infinite)!

*'Awalaysa Al-Ladhī Khalaqa As-Samāwāti Wa Al-'Arḏa  
Biqādirin `Alā 'An Yakhluqa Mithlahum Balā Wa Huwa  
Al-'Khallāqu Al-'Alīmu*

036.082 Verily, when He intends a  
thing, His Command is, "be", and it is!

*'Innamā 'Amruhu 'Idhā 'Arāda Shay'āan 'An Yaqūla  
Lahu Kun Fayakūnu*

036.083 So glory to Him in Whose  
hands is the dominion of all things: and  
to Him will ye be all brought back.

**Qur'an 36:1-83**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS:**

*adhan*: the call to prayer 5 times a day (salah)

*Ali ibn Abu Talib*: the cousin and son in law of Prophet Muhammad

*'azl*: coitus interruptus

*burqa*: full-body garb worn by some Muslim women

*caliph*: successor to Prophet Muhammad, political leader of the Muslim community

*dhikr*: spiritual practice of reciting the names of Allah

*du'ah*: personal prayers of supplication

*'Id al-Adha*: Feast of sacrifice celebrated towards the end of the annual hajj, commemorating Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il

*'Id al-Fitr*: Three Day Festival at the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan

*fatwa*: a religious opinion of an Islamic jurist

*fitra*: the state of purity that humans are born with

*ghusl*: a process of washing oneself before prayer with clean water

*Hadith*: Sayings or reported actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers (often called Companions) They inform us about the Sunna, the way, of Prophet Muhammad

*Hajj*: Annual pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslims supposed to take once in their lifetime. It occurs during the eighth through the thirteenth days of the final month of the Islamic year.

*Halal*: anything permitted by the Qur'an or the Sunna or the religious legal opinions of Islamic jurists

*hijab*: head covering worn by some Muslim women

*imam*: A leader of the Islamic community. It should be noted that in Shiism, the Imam is divinely inspired and an appointed leader of the Shia community. In sunnism, it is spelled with a small i.

*Islam*: from the root letters slm in Arabic. It means security, safety, freedom, peace, submission, obedience, immunity, escape and gentleness.

*istinja*: using water to clean the anus and genitals after going to the bathroom as a means of ritual purity

*Janna*: Heaven, Paradise or garden

*Janazah*: funeral prayer

*Al-Ka'ba*: The house of worship thought to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael; it is located in Mecca. It is the ancient symbol of monotheism, rededicated to Allah by Muhammad and now the Sacred Mosque that Muslims face toward in prayer

*jinn*: a supernatural being

*kafan*: a funeral shroud

*khafd*: female genital circumcision

*khitan*: male circumcision

*Muslim*: a follower of Islam

*niqab*: a woman's face covering

*qada*: decree

*qadar*: destiny

*Lailtul Qadr*: The night in 610 C.E which Muhammad received the first revelation from the Angel Gabriel. It is a special night during the latter part of Ramadan.

*Qur'an*: the revealed word of God to the Prophet Muhammad through the Prophet Gabriel. It is considered the holy scripture of Islam and the primary source of law

*Ramadan*: the ninth month of the year which Muslims observe by a daily fast from dawn to dusk

*ruh*: spirit

*sadaqa*: charity

*saqt*: abortion

*salah*: a ritual obligatory prayer for all Muslims 5 times a day

*shahadah*: declaration of faith, of the oneness of God

*shari'a*: religious laws of Islam derived from the Qur'an and the Sunna

*Shaytan*: Satan

*Shiism*: founded by the followers of 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, the cousin and son in law of Prophet Muhammad. Its followers are referred to as Shiites.

*Sufism*: the mystical tradition of Islam. Those who practice this tradition are called Sufis.

*Sunna*: The words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad. A Muslim strives to follow the ways of his exemplary life

*Sunnism*: Followers of Sunni are called Sunnis

*tawba*: repentance

*tahir*: ritually pure

*taqwah*: fear of God

*tawhid*: God's oneness

*tayammum*: a ritual purity practice of touching a stone or clean dust over ones hands and then over face, heads and arms

*wudu*: an act of ritual purification before prayer which involves washing with clean water the mouth, nose, face, hands, forearms and feet and wiping the head and ears

*Yawm al-Qiyama*: Final Day of Judgment

*Zakah*: almsgiving to the poor which is an obligation

## **Some prayers of Comfort to Offer in English for Jewish Patients:**

### **Shema:**

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God; the Lord is one.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
יְהוָה אֶחָד:

The practice of many Orthodox Jews is to recite the following chapters of Psalms for someone who is sick.

20, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 49, 55, 56, 69, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 102, 103, 104, 107, 116, 118, 142, 143, and 148.

They also may recite the stanza from Psalm 119 that corresponds to the letters of the sick person's Jewish name.

### **Some other prayers that might be offered:**

I will lift up my eyes to the hills; from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. The Lord will not allow your foot to stumble; Your guardian will not slumber. Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your protection at your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day nor the moon by night. The Lord shall keep you from all evil, And shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall guard your going out and your coming in, from this time forth and forever. Psalm 121

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me and I shall be saved; For Thou art my praise.  
Jer. 17:14

O faithful Healer of the sick, hear my prayer. As I call unto Thee in my hour of need, I put my trust in Thy mercy. Thou who art a loving Parent to all Thy children, Guide my physician and all who are attending me. Endow them with skill and patience; May they be Thy messengers in restoring me to health and purposeful living.

Grant him (her) renewed strength and vigor and the blessings of a confident spirit.

Give wisdom, skill and patience to those who are helping to bring healing. Help all of us who share the anxiety of this illness to be brave, cheerful, and hopeful. Inspire us with courage and faith. And grant Thy blessings to those who call upon Thee in truth.

Praised art Thou, O Lord, Healer of the sick.

**Priestly Blessing:**

May the LORD bless you and guard you –

בְּרִכָּה יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

May the LORD make His face shed light upon you and be gracious unto you

יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנֶּךָ

May the LORD lift up His face unto you and give you peace –

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

It should be noted that this bibliography encompasses books and articles used for the Muslim power point and paper as well as the power point on Jewish Orthodox patients.

Abu-Ras, Wahiba. "Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Services: The Case for Muslim Patients." Topics in Integrative Health Care Vol. 2 (2) (2011)

Ben- Yehuda, E. "Caring for the Jewish Patient and for the Patient's Family." <http://www.benyehuda.us/patient.htm>

Bereavement and Mourning: A Jewish Guide for the Time of Grieving. Jewish Community Center of Harrison, Harrison, New York, 2002.

Berkowitz, Bayla. "Cultural Aspects in the Care of the Orthodox Jewish Woman." American College of Nurse-Midwives Vol. 53, 1 (2008)

Cohen, Martin S. The Observant Life. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2012.

Ehman, John. "Religious Diversity: Practical Points for Health Care Providers." Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. (2012)

Greenberg, Sidney. A Treasury of Comfort. No. Hollywood, California: Melvin Powers, 1954.

"Guidelines for Health Care Providers Interacting with Muslim Patients and their Families." International Strategy and Policy Institute, Chicago, 1999.

Health Care Providers' Handbook on Muslim Patients. Islamic Council of Queensland, Sunnybank, Queensland, 1996.

Huda. "Imam: Meaning and the role of the imam in Islam." About.com. April 23, 2016. (<http://islam.about.com/od/prayer/tp/imam.htm>)

Isgandarova, Nazila. "The Concept of Compassionate Engagement in Islam." The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine. (2010)

"Islam." Healthcare Chaplaincy Network 2014

Khalidi, Tarif. The Qur'an. New York: Viking, 2008.

Klein, Isaac. A Guide To Jewish Religious Practice. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979.

Lahaj, Mary. "End-of-Life Care and the Chaplain's Role on the Medical Team." JIMA Vol. 43 (2011)

Lamm, Maurice. The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning. New York: Jonathan David Publishers Inc., 1969.

Levine, S.E. Jihad. He Brings Them Out From Darkness Into Light. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Prison Chaplains Association, 2010.

Mackler, Aaron L. Life and Death Responsibilities in Jewish Biomedical Ethics. New York, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2000.

Mattson, Ingrid. "Spirituality, Religious Wisdom, and the Care of the Patient." The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine.(2002)

Mattson, Ingrid. The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Nasr, Seyyed H. The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity. New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2004.

Padela, Aasim, Gunter, Katie, and Killawi, Amal. "Meeting the Healthcare Needs of American Muslims." The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding 2011.

Rahman, Fazlur. Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition. Chicago, Illinois: ABC International Group, Inc., 1998.

Seyyedeh, Nahid A."Practical Sufism and Philosophical Sufism." International Association of Sufism. (<https://ias.org/sufism/practical-sufism-philosophical-sufism/>)

Siala, Mohamed E. "Authentic Step by Step Illustrated Janazah Guide." Mission Islam. (<https://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/janazahstepbystep.htm>).

Tuell, Ra'ufa S. Islamic Approaches to Patient Care: Muslim Beliefs and Healthcare Practices for Caregivers. Beltsville, Maryland: amana publications, 2010.

## On Line Resources:

- Muslim Chaplains Association  
<http://muslimchaplains.org>
- Hartford Seminary Islamic Chaplaincy Program  
<http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/chaplaincy/index.htm>
- Muslim Coalition of Connecticut  
<http://www.muslimcoalitionct.org>
- IslamiCity  
[http:// www.islamicity.com/](http://www.islamicity.com/)
- Islamic Medical Association of North America (Imana)  
<http://www.imana.org/education.html>
- Islamic Medicine  
<http://www.islamicmedicine.org/>
- National Association of Jewish Chaplains  
[http:// www.najc.org](http://www.najc.org)
- Healthcare Chaplaincy Network  
<http://www.healthcarechaplaincy.org>
- Jewish Chaplains Council  
<http://www.jcca.org>

## Interview Questions for Chaplains

How comfortable are you visiting with:

Christian patients  
Jewish patients  
Muslim patients  
Other:

Very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable- Choose the one that best fits

**Which answer(s) best describe your feelings if you are answered uncomfortable or very uncomfortable?**

I do not know what to say to them

I do not know what prayers or readings would be appropriate

I am afraid that they will be uncomfortable with me

I am not sure as a woman or man how I will be accepted

**Where does your discomfort come from?**

Lack of knowledge about their culture

Lack of knowledge of rituals

Lack of knowledge about theology concerning illness, death and dying

Fear in general

Other

**Anecdotal:**

What has been your experience, if any when visiting Muslim patients/Jewish patients and working with the families?

Positive- please describe

Negative- please describe

Have you had the need to reach out to an Imam on behalf of a patient? Rabbi?

What tools or understandings would increase your likelihood and comfort level in visiting a Muslim or Jewish patient? Please be specific.

# Range of Jewish Beliefs and Observances

- There is a wide range of beliefs and practices within Judaism
- The main branches of Judaism are Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Reconstructionist and Renewal are becoming more widespread as well.
- Even within these denominations there are differences in levels of observance
- This presentation will focus on Orthodox Jews

# Demographics

- There are 5.3 million Jews in the United States as reported by the Pew research Center in 2013
- They represent 2.2% of the US adult population
- Another 2.4 million adults were raised Jewish or had at least one Jewish parent but now identify with another religion
- There are 1.2million adults who were not raised Jewish but consider themselves to be Jewish



# Orthodox Jews

- Orthodox Jews are Torah based Jews, that is they believe that the 5 Books of Moses, the Hebrew Bible, is the direct word of God given to the Jewish people 4000 years ago.
- Orthodox Judaism follows the *halacha*, the laws of the Torah and Talmud( a Rabbinic interpretation and commentary on the Torah)
- The *halacha* provides direction in most aspects of a personal life.
- Orthodox Jews represent approximately 10% of all Jews in America. They are often concentrated in the major cities.



# Diversity

- There is some diversity among Orthodox Jews in terms of how they dress, their language and culture
- There are groups that identify as Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, and Chassidic. There are also particular sects among these groups
- However, all follow the Torah and the laws set out by the Rabbis. There may be differences in interpretations but all are *halakhic* based



# Prayer

- Prayer is an important part of a traditional Jews life
- Men are obligated to say prayers three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening. Women are permitted to recite prayers privately and are not required to pray in a congregation. There are differences of opinion in terms of what prayers are obligated and how many times a day they are required.
- Some prayers can only be said in the presence of 10 men, a *minyan*
- For morning prayers during the weekday, men wear a kippah, don a tallit (prayer shawl) and put on tefillin (phylacteries). They do not lay tefillin on Shabbat but wear a tallit.
- The prayer book, *siddur*, is written in Hebrew with some Aramaic. Different denominations use different prayer books but the structure of the service and the prayers are the same. Some may have English translations, transliteration or more modern commentaries.
- Each week a portion of the Torah is read and studied. Jews all over the world will read and study this same *parsha*.
- Prayers include praise, thanksgiving, and supplication. There are special prayers for the country, Israel and for those who are in mourning or who are celebrating a *varzhit*, anniversary of a death.

# Modesty- *tzniut*

- It is not considered modest for an Orthodox man to have any physical contact with a woman that is not his spouse or even contact with his spouse, in public
- Shaking hands with a person of the opposite sex or any kind of touching is not permitted
- A female patient would prefer to be examined by someone of the same sex if possible or have a woman in the examining room with her
- Jewish tradition however holds the expertise of medical practitioners in high regard, and this may assuage concerns about treatment by the opposite sex
- Saving a life, *pukuach nefesh*, takes precedence at all times

# Clothing

- Orthodox men usually wear a *kippah/yarmulke* at all times. They may also wear a black hat on the Sabbath. Covering their head is in sign of respect, acknowledging that God is above them, protecting them and observing their conduct. *Yarmulkes* can vary in size and color but the more religious men usually wear a black one.
- They will usually have *tzitzit*, visible strings that are attached to the 4 corners of a garment. These are reminders of God's presence and may be a comfort to a patient in a hospital bed
- Patients may also wear prayer shawls and *tefillin*( two small boxes containing scriptural verses and having leather straps, worn on the forehead and forearm) during prayer.

# Clothing for Women

- Orthodox women wear modest clothing that covers their arms, legs and neckline
- Most wear a head covering which ranges from a scarf, a hat or a wig that covers their hair

# Family

- Many Orthodox families have a large number of children.
- Couples are encouraged to have as many children as possible in order to fulfill the Biblical commandment of “be fruitful and multiply.” (Genesis 1:28)
- Many communities also are committed to rebuilding numbers lost during the Holocaust
- Giving birth and raising children plays a central role in Orthodox families

# Family Purity

- The Torah provides guidelines surrounding menstruation, called the laws of family purity.
- Religious women abstain from physical contact with their husbands from the onset of menses until 7 days after the cessation of menstrual flow. During this time, they are in a state of *niddah*
- They then immerse in a ritual bath, the *mikva* and then may resume physical and sexual relationships with their husbands
- Women are also considered ritually impure after childbirth, and will not come into physical contact with their husbands. This will be further explained in Slide 28.

# Language

- While most younger generations of Jews were born in the United States, older individuals may have come from Eastern Europe and English is their second language.
- They may speak Russian, or Polish, Hungarian or Yiddish. Some may even have Hebrew as their first language, if they are Israeli
- If dealing with a Chassidic Jew from one of the more religious sects, they may only speak Yiddish

# Shabbat

- The Sabbath begins on Friday before sundown with the lighting of at least two candles. This is usually done by the woman but men can light candles as well.
- Since open flames are not permitted in hospitals, patients may bring their own electric candles from home or the hospital may provide them.
- The times for lighting candles varies by location and may be found at the following website:  
[hebcal.com](http://hebcal.com)



# Shabbat

- *“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work...”* Exodus 20:10
- From Friday evening sundown until Saturday after dark, many restrictions apply for observant patients
- The following activities are considered a form of work and therefore are prohibited:
- Traveling , using any form of electricity, writing, tearing, ripping, or any form of work or creating
- Use of cell phone, computer, television or radio are also not permitted
- One is also not allowed to exchange money on Shabbat

# Electricity

- “you will not kindle a fire...on the Sabbath day.” Exodus 35:3 (the use of electricity is considered to be like kindling a flame)
- Observant patients will not use electrical appliances including elevators, call buttons, automatic beds, patient-controlled analgesia pumps, lights, phones, doors that open electronically.
- A patient will not turn on or off a light , raise or lower their own beds or use the call buttons during Shabbat. They may not tear paper so roll toilet paper should be replaced with individual boxes of tissues. This is also true for the patient’s family if they are observant

# Major Holy days with Sabbath-like Restrictions

- Like the Sabbath, many of the Jewish holidays have similar restrictions . Below is a list of the major holidays:
- **Rosh Hashanah**- celebrated for two days in Sept/October – Literally means head of the year
- **Yom Kippur**-also in Sept/October- Day of Atonement
- Fasting is required for all healthy adults from sundown the previous night to sundown the following night. Exemptions are made for the elderly, sick, and pregnant woman
- In addition to fasting ,one refrains from sexual relations, wearing leather clothing and washing or anointing oneself
- It should be noted that Judaism follows a lunar calendar and the exact dates of the holidays vary each year. For a list of the holiday dates please go to [www.hebcal.com](http://www.hebcal.com)



# Holy Days cont.

- **Sukkot**- holiday starting 4 days after Yom Kippur for 9 days. The first two days and last two days are full holy days with restrictions like Shabbat. The middle days do not have restrictions. During Sukkoth it is traditional to eat meals in a Sukkah
- **Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah**- 2 days at the end of Sukkot
- **Passover**-usually comes in March/April and is celebrated for 8 days. The first 2 days and the last 2 days are holy days with all restrictions in place. No bread or leavened products may be eaten during the full 8 days. Only special Passover approved food may be eaten during the holiday and the food must have had no contact with other food products that contain leavening.
- **Shavuot**- 50 days after Passover- 2 day holiday. It is traditional to eat dairy foods during Shavuot
- It should be kept in mind that these holidays may affect the scheduling of medical procedure and may also involve dietary changes

# Holy Days cont.

- When holy days fall on a Thursday and Friday, patients cannot drive or travel and may need to stay until Saturday night when the Sabbath ends
- This would apply to family members as well
- Feel free to ask patients and families about the traditions and observances of the holy days and the implications during their stay
- It should also be noted that saving a life takes precedence over the Sabbath or Holy day and if a procedure is necessary, it must be allowed

# Kosher Food

- Orthodox Jews observe the laws of *Kashrut* and will only eat kosher food
- This is in accordance with religious laws governing the slaughtering and preparation of foods and what foods are permitted
- Many of the laws can be found in Leviticus 11:2 and Deuteronomy 14:4
- Permitted foods are all four footed animals that chew their cud and have split hooves, most poultry, fish with fins and scales and almost all fruits and vegetables
- Pork or pork products are not allowed.
- Other restricted foods are shellfish, animals who kill their prey, gelatin products.
- Meat and milk are never eaten together. After eating a meat product, observant Jews will wait up to 6 hours before eating a milk product.

# Kosher cont.

- Kosher products are identified by their labels. Different communities may prefer certain labels over others, indicating who did the inspection and certification. Seals should be left intact on all containers so that patients can read the labels.
- Kosher for Passover foods are necessary during the Passover holiday and are distinct from foods that are Kosher. They are labeled “kosher for Passover”
- Hand washing before meals is customary and has religious significance. Blessings are also said after eating and should not be interrupted.

# Overdoing Food

- Often patients will have food come in from home, from family members
- Food is a sign of love and not to be wasted
- Therefore food may be left over and not properly disposed of or refrigerated
- Be diplomatic around food issues and offer to help sort out what is still good and what can be thrown away



# Wellness and Illness

- Judaism endorses a preventative approach to healing. One must do whatever is necessary to restore one's health even if it means violating the Shabbat or holiday.
- Life is precious and it is forbidden to deliberately shorten one's life or the life of another person

# Visiting the Sick- Bikkur Cholim

- The Talmud notes (BT Shabbat 127a) that visiting the sick is a mitzvah that is rewarded in this world and in the World to Come
- There is a conviction that visiting the sick, *bikkur cholim* could have real therapeutic benefit
- Talmud (BT N'darim 39b) cites that Rabbi Chanina believed that visitors take one-sixtieth of the patients illness away after a visit
- Visitors should be considerate of the needs of the sick when visiting. Some Rabbis say that one should only visit after 3 days have elapsed unless in cases of grave illnesses.

# Visiting the Sick cont.

- There is a traditional prayer of healing (*mi she-beirakh*) that is said on behalf of the sick. This is usually done in the synagogue during the Torah service.
- Visitors should let the sick person know that these prayers are being offered on their behalf.
- The prayer is offered in the form of the patients Hebrew name which combines their first name and their mother's name. This is because it is traditionally the mother who cares for a sick child.

# Blood and IV's

- Blood is considered holy
- Before removing IV's etc. please consult with the family or Rabbi
- Anything containing the deceased blood is buried with the person including the sheets
- Family may request amputated limbs for burial
- Details should be arranged through the funeral home

# Withholding or Withdrawing Life Support

- These issues are complicated and best to discuss with the family and a Rabbi. Many very religious Orthodox Jews believe it is all in God's hand and will therefore not intervene.
- In general it is forbidden to shorten one's life or the life of another.
- It is permissible to prolong the process of dying
- Patients have the right to die naturally either by declining artificial life support or by disconnecting machinery that is merely preventing death from occurring naturally
- A DNR (do not resuscitate) may be activated if there is no chance for long-term survival. Nutrition and hydration and all other artificial means of keeping a patient alive may be withheld.
- It is permitted to sign a living will should a person not be able to make their wishes clear at the time

# Inducing Labor

- From the Torah viewpoint, God in His wisdom, knows the best time for a baby to be born and therefore we should not intervene unnecessarily by inducing early labor. If the baby is overdue or its life is in jeopardy or that of the mother, it is certainly not forbidden to induce labor.



# Childbirth

- Since labor and delivery are life-endangering states, one may desecrate the Shabbat to ensure a healthy birthing process
- A woman may travel to the hospital on Shabbat if the birth is imminent
- If possible one should arrange a non- Jewish driver who is pre- paid
- Upon arrival, it is better to refrain from writing. If there is no choice, one may sign with one's left hand

# Childbirth cont.

- When a woman delivers naturally, she enters a state of niddah. This lasts for seven days after the birth of a boy and fourteen days after the birth of a girl.
- From the time a woman becomes a niddah her husband may not see the parts of her body that are normally covered. It is therefore improper for a husband to watch the actual birth but if he chooses to be in the delivery room, he may try as much as possible not to look at the intimate parts of her body.
- If a woman has a Caesarean section, she is not rendered a niddah until she bleeds vaginally.
- When this happens, a woman's husband may not touch her or hand her things
- He will not be able to provide physical support. Many women bring a sister, mother, female friend or doula to provide this support.
- The husband can certainly still provide emotional and spiritual support



# Childbirth cont.

- There are special prayers the father should say upon hearing the news of the birth of a child. For a boy, *Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who is good and bestows good*
- For a girl, *Blessed are You, Lord our god, King of the Universe, who has allowed us to live, has preserved us, and has enabled us to reach this season.*

# Circumcision

- A boy is circumcised on the eighth day of life in a ritual ceremony called a *brit milah*.
- The circumcision is performed at home by a rabbi who is specially trained, called a *mohel*
- Circumcision is a biblical commandment from God to Abraham to circumcise all male babies on the eighth day of life. Genesis 17:12
- If there is a health issue such a jaundice or prematurity, the circumcision may be delayed.
- Girls are named by their father in the synagogue and this can be anytime from the day of birth until 7 days later. Until the baby is named, the Hebrew name is not usually divulged

# Contraception/ Infertility

- Contraception is generally not allowed unless it is for health reasons
- Couples may not use any method that interferes with the natural sexual act and causes destruction of seed. This prohibits the withdrawal method, and use of condoms
- The pill and intrauterine devices would be acceptable if permission was given by a religious authority and under specific conditions

# Infertility/ Adoption

- Couples who are unable to conceive are permitted to consult with a fertility specialist
- Opinions about artificial insemination and invitro fertilization are varied.
- Some Rabbis say that IVF is permitted as long as the sperm, eggs, uterus etc. are from the married couple themselves. Others say non Jewish sources may be used. The most stringent opinion is that it violates Torah prohibitions, of wasting a man's seed and may not be used at all.

# Genetic Testing/Abortion

- Jewish law forbids abortion unless carrying the pregnancy or childbirth would endanger the mother's life. In cases of genetic abnormalities there is a range of opinions and a Rabbi should be consulted.
- Once the baby's head or body has been delivered, the baby's life is considered equal to the mother's and we may not choose one life over another.
- Most Orthodox Rabbis forbid abortion in cases of abnormalities or deformities found in a fetus unless the baby would be born with a condition that caused them suffering. Women who were raped may use methods to prevent pregnancy after intercourse.
- Genetic testing is encouraged and it has become standard to perform premarital genetic testing for diseases that are common in the Jewish community. These include Tay-Sachs disease, cystic fibrosis, Canavan disease, and Fanconi anemia type C
- Testing is done in high school and a registry has been created. A dating couple can consult the registry to see if they are compatible, before they decide to marry



# Adoption

- Raising someone else's child is considered a great Mitzvah in Judaism
- If one adopts a child not born from a Jewish mother, the child must be circumcised if it is a male, and both male and female must be converted through a ritual immersion in the *Mikveh*
- At the age of 13, the child is asked if they wish to remain Jewish. When the child says Yes, the conversion process is complete.
- If the child is from a Jewish mother, conversion is not an issue but lineage is. It is crucial to know who the birth parents are so that an adult child does not unwittingly marry a prohibited relative.



# Suicide

- Suicide is prohibited by Jewish law
- Traditionally, suicides have been denied burial rights in a Jewish cemetery
- However Rabbis have made it difficult to confirm as a suicide and afford great leniency to show compassion for the family

# Organ /Tissue Donation

- Most believe that organ donation is a mitzvah or commandment
- Saving a life is more important than any other commandment and this should inform any discussion on organ donation with the family
- Live donor organ donation is permitted
- Many communities will not allow organ donation after death.
- In all cases, organ procurement should be done quickly and should not delay the burial



# Autopsy

- Generally autopsies are not permitted except when required by law
- If they are beneficial for saving lives in the future due to the scientific knowledge that would be gleaned, they may be permitted.
- If there is going to be an autopsy done, it should be performed quickly as not to delay burial

# Death

- Judaism is very life- oriented and does not dwell on matters of death, life after death, or heaven
- Life is seen as a gift and a blessing
- We give thanks to God every day for the gift of life, but recognize that we are mortal and our time in his world is limited
- While death is the end of our life on earth, it is not the end of our existence
- Most religious Jews do believe that after death, the soul is returned to God
- The body which housed the soul, must be returned to the earth from whence it came.
- Death is a great equalizer, striking rich and poor alike
- Therefore it is the tradition to have a plain pine coffin no matter ones financial status

# Death

- Right before death, families may want to gather at the bedside to say final prayer for their loved ones. This usually is done in the presence of a Rabbi, if possible.
- There is no such things as last rights in Judaism but the patient may wish to say the *Vidui*, confessional prayer and also the *Shema*, the declaration of the oneness of God.
- If they are unable to do so, a family member or the Rabbi may do this for them.
- A persons name may also be changed to deter the angel of death from finding them
- Many religious Jews will only do certain prayers in the presence of a gathering of 10 men, a minyan

# Death cont.

- “My God, the soul You have given me is pure. You created it. You fashioned it. You breathed it into me and You keep it alive within me just as surely as it is You who will take it from me on the day of my death, only to return it to me in the distant future. ....”

From Morning Prayers

# Death of a Child

- Traditionally, Jewish law ruled that we do not mourn for fetuses and any baby that does not live for 30 days
- Although the child was buried, there was no funeral, marker or period of mourning. This was out of deference for families who had many losses in the old days and would be in a constant state of mourning
- Today, while it is not obligated, many families do have a burial and memorial service, say kaddish and observe shiva. However, more traditional religious families will still follow the traditional way listed above

# Burial

- Generally a burial occurs as soon as possible after death
- The period from the time of death until burial is known as *aninut*
- If a patient dies on Friday or before a Jewish Holy Day, many families will try and bury before sunset that day. Others will wait until Sunday
- If someone dies on the Sabbath, families may request that the body not be moved until Saturday night after sundown
- If it is not possible for the body to remain in the room, it may be transported to the morgue. Ideally there should be a *shomer*, a person or persons who watches and escorts the body until burial.

# Upon Death

- A body should be transported to the Funeral home after death where washing and shrouding will occur.
- This process is called *Tahara*
- It is performed only by someone of the same sex as the deceased. Family members normally do not perform *tahara* on their loved ones
- In many communities there is a *Chevra Kadisha* to perform this *mitzvah*

# Upon Death cont.

- The body is washed in a ritual purification, shroud, and placed in a wooden coffin
- Cremation is not allowed since desecration of the body is forbidden





# Grieving

- The dead are mourned by their direct relatives: sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and parents
- The mourners rend their clothes
- They sit *shiva*, a 7 day period of mourning
- They restrict their activities to a minimum for thirty days, *shloshim*
- Mourners Kaddish is recited for 11 months in the presence of a *minyan* (10 men in Orthodox tradition) when grieving for a parent.
- The anniversary of the death is remembered by lighting a 24 hour candle and reciting *Kaddish* (mourners prayer) at synagogue

# Afterlife

- Judaism teaches that when a person dies, the soul returns to God.
- Religious Jews believe in *olam haba*, the world to come where there are no earthly limitations
- They believe that *olam haba* is given to those who lived a righteous life. Those who are not deserving simply cease to exist. There is no place of punishment like hell
- There also is a concept of *t'hiyat hametim*, the resurrection of the dead. This will occur in the days of the Messiah where the righteous shall be revived and assume a life free of strife and filled with peace.

# Implications for Chaplains

- The following are suggestions for Chaplains in order to show sensitivity to their patients and to be effective in their ministry
- Since traditions and observances vary greatly even among Orthodox Jews, feel free to ask patients and families how you can help ensure their needs are met during their stay.
- They will appreciate your concern and your interest in respecting their religious practices



# Prayer

- A Hebrew Siddur should be made available
- The hospital should have *yalmulkes*, prayer shawls available for patients that did not bring them from home and have no family to bring them. Patients should be allowed to lay *tefillin* if this is their practice.
- One should not interrupt someone engaged in prayer unless necessary
- Prayers are said facing Jerusalem so patient may ask to have the bed moved or their head facing that direction

# Modesty

- It is important to be respectful of modesty and privacy issues. One should knock before entering the hospital room .
- One should not close doors completely when you are in a room with a person of the opposite sex. This could lead to a perception of immodesty.
- Men and women will generally not shake hands with a person of the opposite sex. This should not be taken as a sign of disrespect
- Female patients will prefer to be examined by someone of the same sex or have a woman in the room with them
- Women will prefer to have their whole bodies covered. Modest gowns can be provided or the woman may wear a robe she has brought from home or a long sleeved shirt under her hospital gown.
- Be aware that when a woman is menstruating or has just given birth, her husband is not allowed to have physical contact with her. This is absolutely no indication of a lack of love or respect for her. He can provide emotional support at all times.



# Kosher

- Kosher meals should be provided when possible. If not, consult with the patient to see if a vegetarian meal or fish entrée would be acceptable.
- Patients should be allowed to bring their own food from home
- They may prefer to eat on paper plates and also to examine the label on the meals. Do not break the seal before the patient or family has looked at it as this verifies the kosher nature of the food.
- Milk and meat should never be served together
- Pork and shellfish are strictly forbidden
- Fasting is done from sunset to sunset the next day on Yom Kippur. A light dairy meal should follow the fast. There are also other fast days that may be observed. The elderly and sick are exempt
- If possible, matzah should be available for the entire 8 days of Passover. Food needs to be labeled Kosher for Passover .



# Shabbat Restrictions

- Non Jewish staff may operate electrical appliances for the benefit of the patient during Shabbat. The patient may not ask you to do this for him/her. It is up to you to take the initiative. This includes turning on and off the lights, raising or lowering the bed, pressing call buttons or adjusting a pain pump.
- Tissues should be provided in the bathroom as an alternative to toilet paper on Shabbat which cannot be torn.
- If there is not a Shabbat elevator in the hospital arrangements should be made for families to either stay over in the hospital during Shabbat or to be able to walk up stairs. In order to carry on Shabbat and bring babies in strollers, it would be advantageous to have an eruv installed.
- If at all possible, discharge should not occur during the Sabbath. If a patient comes to the emergency room on Shabbat but is not admitted, there may be a need to find a place for them or their family to stay in the hospital.
- Patients cannot write on Shabbat so if there is any paperwork to be handled, it should be done before sundown or after sundown the next day.

# Holy Days

- Jewish holidays are significant times for patients and it is difficult for them to be at the hospital during these times
- Major holidays include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the fall and Passover in the spring. All holidays start at sundown and end at sundown. They vary in length of time observed. Some are one day holidays, some are two and some last 8 days.



# Medical Issues

- Blood transfusions are allowed
- Most surgical procedures are permitted but if at all possible should not be scheduled during Shabbat
- Organ donation is allowed in some cases
- Autopsy is not allowed unless required by law
- Questions of withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining therapy are deeply debated and should be discussed with patient and religious authority
- Euthanasia or any attempt to shorten life is prohibited
- Suicide is forbidden

# Visiting

- It is a commandment to visit the sick. Therefore patients will often have many visitors of all generations. Orthodox families also have many children and accommodations should be made for coordinating visits. Visitors should come into the room in small groups and can gather in a communal room on the floor, if possible.

# Death and Dying

- There are no last rites in Judaism
- A patient may want to recite the *Vidui* confessional prayer or have the Chaplain recite it for them
- It is customary to recite the *Shema* right before death. This should be said in Hebrew and is best said by the patient or family member. If not possible, the Chaplain can read the transliterated version in Hebrew
- Psalms of comfort and other prayers may be offered
- The family may wish to recite the Mourners Kaddish after the death
- It should be noted that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is associated with death and should not be recited for patients that are not dying or anywhere near death

# Death and dying cont.

- Upon death, the mouth and eyes should be closed and the patient covered with a sheet
- The funeral home should be contacted and if possible arrangements should be made for someone to stay with the body either in the room or the morgue until the funeral home comes
- All blood must be buried with the patient so IV's should not be removed and bloody sheets kept until instructions are given by the family
- Amputated limbs may be requested for burial

# Burial

- Burial usually occurs within 72 hours or less
- Therefore family should be given privacy to make calls and arrangements as soon as possible
- The body is washed and shrouded at the funeral home
- There is no wake in Judaism nor is there a viewing of the body. All are welcome to attend the funeral which generally takes place at the funeral home or a synagogue. One does not send flowers but often a donation is made to a favorite charity

# Grieving

- Families sit *shiva* for 7 days after the funeral and visitors are welcome at appointed times.
- The mourner observes the death by saying the *Kaddish* prayer daily for 11 months after the death of a parent.
- A gravestone is not placed immediately but there is an unveiling of the stone within a year.
- Jews are buried in specific Jewish cemeteries
- Cremation is prohibited
- Non Jews may not be buried alongside someone who is Jewish

# Call the Rabbi

- Most families will feel comfortable having their own Rabbi visit and be involved in medical decisions. This should be looked at as advantageous, as an addition to the team.
- This is not always possible, especially for patients who are from out of town. Have a list of all area Rabbis who may be consulted.

# Conclusion

- Your job is to make your patients feel comfortable. Cultural awareness of their beliefs and practices will enable them to feel valued and respected.
- The more you know, the better you can participate in the healing process.



- A special thanks to Miriam Herscher, a Chaplain at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, for sharing with me some of their best practices for Orthodox patients. It was interesting to see how a large, city hospital was able to make more accommodations than a local community hospital. For example, they have Shabbos elevators, an eruv and a kosher section of their kitchen.

# ISLAM

- In Arabic, Islam literally means “submission to the Will of Allah (God)”
- It is derived from the three Arabic root letters, sin-lam-mim
- These letters carry multiple meanings including peace, safety, submission and obedience

# Muslim

- A Muslim is someone who follows the Islamic religion
- Islam is outlined in the Holy Qur'an, the words of Allah, and the Sunna, the practice of Prophet Muhammad



# Islamic Sources

- The Qur'an consists of messages which the Prophet Muhammad received from Allah
- They were revealed through the Angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years beginning in 610 C.E
- Prophet Muhammad was said to be on a spiritual retreat near his home in Mecca when he first received the revelation
- In 615 C.E Prophet Muhammad publically began preaching the message of Allah

# Sunnah

- The Sunnah is a collection of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad as observed and reported by those who surrounded him.
- They are conveyed through Hadiths made by eminent Muslim scholars
- Hadith, means “to report” or tell a happening.
- It is a record of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and is revered as a major source of law and moral conduct.



# Sunnis and Shi'ites

- About 87% of all Muslims are Sunnis
- The word Sunni comes from the term *ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jama'ah*, meaning those who follow the Sunna of the Prophet
- The remainder of Muslims are Shi'ites
- Shi'ites are found mainly in the area between Egypt and India



# Discord between Sunnis and Shi'ites

- The Sunnis believe that the *caliphs* of Islam should be an elected position
- The Shi'ites believe that the leaders should be direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. They ignore the elected Sunni leaders and follow their own
- Sunnis believe in Divine destiny, Shi'ites do not



# Sufism

- Sufism is sometimes referred to as Islamic mysticism
- Sufis believe that Islam deals with the inner life of man, detaching oneself from the material world and devoting oneself to God
- Sufism developed the practice of *dhikr*, recitation of the 99 names of God





# Imams

- The word imam literally means “the one who stands in front”
- Sunni imams are males who are usually self taught, community appointed and not ordained
- They have knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunna, Islamic law and are able to lead prayers, deliver sermons, and perform marriages and funerals.
- Shi’ites believe that their specific imams were divinely chosen to be examples.



# A Word About Diversity

- There is tremendous diversity among Muslims both in the US and worldwide
- Customs and practices vary depending on country of origin and religious community
- Variations occur in language, dress, education, economic status and political viewpoints
- However, most Muslims are united in their Doctrines of Belief and the Five Pillars of Islam

# 6 Doctrines of Belief

- Belief in the Unity of God
- Belief in Angels
- Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of God
- Belief in the Revealed Books of God
- Belief in the Day of Judgment
- Belief in the Divine Decree and Destiny



# 6 Doctrines of Belief

- Belief in the Unity of God
- Islam is a monotheistic religion. 5 times daily, Muslims declare their faith. The *shahadah* states that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.



- **Belief in Angels**
- Angels are believed to be pure creatures created from light and obedient to God
- Each angel has an assigned task
- Every person has two angels who record their deeds from puberty to death
- The angel on the right keeps track of good deeds, the angel on the left, of sins

# Angels cont.

- “ a person has hosts of helpers- both such as can be perceived by him and such as are hidden from him- that could preserve him from whatever God may have willed.” Qur’an 13:11
- “We created man and know what his soul murmurs to him, But We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. When the two recording angels begin to record, poised one to the right and one to the left, Not a word escapes him but he has with him a watchman in attendance.” Qur’an 50: 16-18

# Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of God

- Islam honors the Prophets who came before including Abraham, Moses and Jesus
- They believe however that Muhammad was the final messenger sent by God to proclaim God's unity (tawhid)
- “We believe in God, and in what was revealed to us, In what was revealed to Abraham, to Ishmael, to Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, In what was revealed to Moses and Jesus, In what was revealed to prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, And to Him we surrender.”  
Qur'an 2:136



# Belief in the Revealed Books

- Muslims believe in the revealed books of Torah, Psalms and the Gospel.
- They however believe that the Qur'an is the purest extant scripture on earth because it has been free from tampering



# Belief in the Day of Judgment

- Referred to as *yawm al-Qiyama*, it occurs at the time of the Darkening
- All humans will stand on trial and their deeds will be accounted for
- They will either go to *janna* (Heaven) or *jahannam* (Hell)

# Belief in the Day of Judgment cont.

- “ When the sun is rolled up; When the stars are cast adrift; When the mountains are wiped out; When pregnant camels are left unattended; When wild animals are herded together; When seas are filled to overflowing; When souls are pared together; When the newborn girl, buried alive is asked for what crime she was murdered; When scrolls are unfolded; When the sky is scraped away; When hell-fire is kindled; When the Garden is drawn near; Then each soul will know what it has readied.” Qur’an 81:1-14



# Belief in the Divine Decree and Destiny (*al-qada wa-qadr*)

- *Al-qada* refers to the belief that God alone was responsible for creation and endowing all creation with specific characteristics
- *Qadar* can also mean destiny, that God knows in advance the fates of all creatures
- Some believe free will comes in choosing our response to the hand we are dealt
- Others believe nothing happens but by the will of God

# Divine Decree cont.

- “ No calamity strikes on earth, or in yourselves, but was recorded in a Book, before We brought it to pass. Such a matter is easy for God, in order that you do not regret what eluded you nor be overjoyed by what came your way.” Qur’an 57:22

# 5 Pillars of Faith

## **Declaration of Faith (*shahadah*)**

- Muslims recite the *shahadah* at least 5 times a day declaring their faith and the oneness of God.
- It is the most spoken affirmation of faith
- It is also whispered into the ears of a newborn baby and a person who is dying.



# Shahadah

- The first half states: *ash-hadu an la ilaha Llah-*  
I witness that there is no god but God.
- The second half states: *wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Llah-* I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God



# Pillars cont.

- Ritual Prayer (*salah*)
- The *salah*, daily prayers, are central to Islam. Their form was said to be revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad who then taught them to the people
- Required of all men and women from the age of puberty until death
- Recited 5 times a day before dawn's first light (*fajr*), around noon (*dhuhr*), late afternoon (*asr*), just after sunset (*maghrib*) and any time at night (*isha'*).



# Ritual Prayer cont.

- A person must be in a state of *ghusl* and *wudhu* before they can perform the *Salaat*
- A person in *Salah* must not be disturbed
- The *Salah* is always performed in Arabic
- Before prayer one must wash the hands, face arms, feet and the top of the head with clean water
- One must clean themselves after urinating or defecation
- A full ablation is made after sexual intercourse, vomiting or bleeding.
- All washing must be done with the proper intention (*niyya*)





# Ritual Prayer cont.

- Prayer should be performed wearing clean clothes and standing on clean ground.
- Men must be covered from their navel to their knees and women must cover everything but their hands, face and feet.
- Prayers are said facing Mecca
- It is a combination of recitation of verses from the Qur'an and body movements.
- Women generally stand behind the men in a mixed congregation or have their own area. This is for reasons of modesty.
- On Fridays there is a congregational gathering for prayer and a sermon is given by the imam.
- Special prayers are also recited at eclipse, funerals, and the *Id al-Fitr* which ends the month of Ramadan. There are also other modes of prayer , prayers of the heart (*tariqah*) and individual prayers (*du'a*).



# The Almsgiving (*zakah*)

- Everyone is required to pay *zakah*, a percentage of their wealth on a yearly basis.
- It is not voluntary whereas giving of charity, *sadaqa*, is.
- According to Islamic law, not giving is a sin since God is the owner of all wealth.



# The Fast (*sawm*)

- The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is the month of Ramadan. It is a time for increased prayer, performing acts of charity and fasting.
- All Muslims are obligated to observe Ramadan. Fasting is required for anyone beyond the age of puberty, both male and female
- Exemptions are for women during their menstruation, the sick, the frail elderly, and travels.
- It begins at dawn and continues until sunset. During this time there is no eating, drinking, smoking or sexual relations.
- The purpose is to purify oneself in order to come closer to God.
- At the end of Ramadan there is the Feast of fast Breaking, *Id al-Fitr*



# The Pilgrimage (*hajj*)

- One is obligated once in their lifetime , if physically and financially able, to make a pilgrimage to Mecca
- The *hajj* takes place each year during the eighth through the thirteenth days of the last month of the Islamic calendar, *zul-hijjah*.
- Men wear an *ihram*, a white two piece garment. Women cover their face, hands and feet and wear something similar but it may be of various colors.
- During the *hajj*, one circles the *Al-Ka'ba* 7 times
- This structure is believed to have been built by Adam and subsequently by Abraham and Ishmael as a house of worship

# Modesty and Roles of Men and Women

- Many Muslim men and women may be uncomfortable looking into the eyes of a person of the opposite gender. This is not a sign of disrespect, but in fact a sign of respect.
- Muslims generally do not shake hands with a person of the opposite sex
- Some Muslims will not share car rides or elevators with someone of the opposite sex



# Modesty cont.

- These values about modesty are religiously and culturally based and are informed by the following passage:
- “ Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity; this will be most conducive to their purity and verily, God is aware of all that they do and tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity and not to display their charms beyond what may be apparent thereof.....” Qur’an 24:31



# Clothing

- Different clothing may be worn both by Muslim women and men depending on their country of origin and the norms of their religious community
- The types of garments are:
- *Hijab*- most commonly worn by Muslims in the West. It is a scarf that covers the head and neck but leaves the face clear
- *Shayla*- a long, rectangular scarf that is wrapped loosely around the head and tucked or pinned at the shoulders
- *Khimar*- a long, cape-like scarf wrapped around the head that hangs to the middle of the back. It covers the head, neck and shoulders, but the face is clear
- *Chador*- a long black cloak covering the entire body. It drapes all the way down to the feet.
- *Niqab*- It covers the mouth and the nose but leaves the eyes clear. It is worn in addition to a khimar or hijab
- *Burqa*- it covers the entire face and body leaving only a small mesh screen to see through

# Clothing cont.

- In addition, clothing should not be perfumed or too colorful. Jewelry and makeup should not be on display . It is not permitted to wear clothes that resemble that of a man and visa versa.
- As for the men, they should be covered from the navel down to the knee. Garments should not fall below their ankles. Gold jewelry and silk are not permitted





# Clothing cont.

- There is a concept in Islam called *awrah* referring to what parts of the body should be covered in different situations.
- When a women is alone with her husband she may also uncover her hair, face, arms, legs and feet.

# Sexuality

- Islam emphasizes discipline in curbing basic drives
- Premarital sex and adultery are forbidden
- Sex while menstruating is not allowed
- Homosexuality and lesbianism are forbidden
- However, there are no limits to sexual enjoyment between a husband and a wife



# Women

- Contrary to popular belief, in the Qur'an men and women are equal  
Women have the right to be treated kindly, to participate in decisions and they do not lose their right to their money upon the death of their husband.
- Women have the right to pursue education and career.

# Marriage

- Marriage is a solemn institution viewed as a contract to which God is the first witness
- Mothers enjoy more recognition and a higher honor in the sight of God than fathers
- The parent/ child relationship is complementary. Each is required by God to obey, show love and respect
- Divorce is allowed if there are irreconcilable differences.
- Muslim men are permitted to have up to four wives, but this is not encouraged.

# Contraception

- Islam believes that only God has the power to give children to couples.
- Usage of the birth control pill, iuds, diaphragms, spermicides, and condoms are not forbidden but not encouraged.
- A couple may practice the rhythm method or coitus interruptis if by mutual agreement
- If a pregnancy is contraindicated, contraception is allowed
- Tubal ligations and vasectomies are frowned upon but not forbidden



# Birth

- After a child is born it is customary to recite the declaration of faith in his or her right ear.
- All male children are circumcised before they reach puberty.
- There is a tradition by some of removing the hair of the newborn soon after birth
- A respected elder may rub something sweet on the newborns palate after birth
- Some Muslims place a small pouch around the baby's wrist or neck containing a prayer for protection.



# Birth cont.

- Following the birth, on the seventh day, there is a gathering of family and friends.
- The baby is given a name.
- Donations are made.
- A goat or other animal is slaughtered and served to family as well as the poor



# Artificial Insemination and In Vitro Fertilization

- Muslims believe that children are a true gift from God
- *“And God has given you mates of your own kind and has given you, through your mates, children and children’s children and has provided for you sustenance out of the good things of life.”* Qur’an 16:72
- However, couples who are unable to conceive a child can consult with a fertility specialist





# Adoption

- There is a belief that the woman who gives birth to the child, is the child's mother. "*none are their mothers save those who gave them birth.*" Qur'an 58:2
- While there is a prohibition against adoption called *nasab*, it protects an orphan's birth identity and lineage and ensures an orphan's care. "*and do not entrust to those who are weak of judgment the possession which God has placed in your charge for support, but let them have their sustenance, clothe them and speak unto them in a kindly way.*" Qur'an 4:5
- Therefore one is allowed to foster children and in fact it is reported that Prophet Muhammad himself was orphaned and his grandfather cared for him and then his uncle.



# Abortion

- Abortion is not allowed unless for medical reasons. “*do not destroy one another: for, behold, God is indeed a dispenser of grace unto you.*” Qur’an 4:29
- It is permitted if the mother’s life is in jeopardy or if the baby will be born with severe deformities. “neither shall a mother be made to suffer because of her child.” Qur’an 2:233
- Personhood or ensoulment is believed to occur when the *ruh*, the spirit, enters the fetus. There are differing opinions on when this is. Some say 40 days after conception, others 120 days.



# Halal

- Halal: what is lawful and what Muslims may eat:
- **Allowed:**
  - All seafood
  - All dairy products
  - Foods that have approved and have been slaughtered according to Islamic rites and carry the Halal designation
- **Not allowed:**
  - Pig and all pork products
  - Wild animals that use their claws or teeth to kill
  - All birds of prey, reptiles, worms, rodents dead animals and birds
  - All alcohol and other intoxicating substances



# Halal cont.

- “forbidden to you are: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which is consecrated to other than God; also the flesh of animals strangled, killed violently, killed by fall,, gored to death, mangled by wild beasts...” Qur’an 5:2
- 
- “ O believers, wine and gambling, idols and divining arrows are abhorrence, the work of Satan. So keep away from it, that you may prevail. Satan only desires to arouse discord and hatred among you with wine and gambling, and to deter you from the mention of God and from prayer. Will you desist?” Qur’an 5:90-91
- A Muslim is allowed to eat kosher food. “ the food of the People of the Book is licit to you and your food is licit to them.” ibid



# Fasting

- Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide throughout the ninth month of the year
- Muslims are required to fast from before sunrise to after sunset
- They may not drink any liquids, eat, smoke or have sexual relations
- The frail elderly, menstruating and pregnant women, children under the age of puberty and travelers are exempt

# Wellness and Illness

- Muslims believe that without God nothing can exist or function
- Health is a blessing and sickness is a test
- The body is healthy if the spirit is healthy and the spirit is healthy if it is not in conflict with God
- “It is God who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, than after strength, gave you weakness and gray hair. He creates what He wills and He is the omniscient and Omnipotent.” Qur’an 30:54

# Role of Medicine

- The goal of medicine is to include God as the ultimate healer
- The one who practices the art of healing does so for the sake of God. Thus, the Doctor and patient are united through a spiritual bond.
- The Qur'an is often referred to as the Book of Healing
- Prayer allows the patient and family to become an active member of the medical team

# Importance of Visiting the Sick

- Visiting the sick is an obligation
- *“God will say on the Day of Judgment; O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit me. My Lord, how could I visit you when You are the Lord of the whole world, we will reply. God will say, Did you not know that so and so from among my servants was sick but you never visited him or her? Did you not know that if you had visited, you would have found me there? God say O my servant, health unites you with yourself but sickness unites you to me.”* Hadith of Abu Huraira, a companion of Prophet Muhammad



# Visiting the Sick cont.

- The loving engagement of visiting the sick is known as *sohba*
- To provide effective *sohba* one uplifts, comforts, inspires, loves and encourages the other person in order to achieve healing and strength
- While there is no word in Arabic for Chaplain, chaplaincy has its roots in Islamic teachings



# Visitors

- The sick are happy to receive visitors and family members may notify many people to visit
- Muslims are exhorted by Prophet Muhammad to be of good cheer when visiting the sick
- It is a blessing to receive a prayer from someone who is sick since they are closer to Allah.



# Suffering

- Islamic tradition reports that great suffering was experienced by most of the Prophets including Prophet Muhammad
- Many Muslims may feel that they must endure suffering as it is directly from God
- Some may even refuse pain management
- Islam maintains that illness and suffering have a cathartic effect
- The ultimate reward for suffering is to increase one's faith in God
- *“O believers, seek help in patience and prayer; God stands with those who are patient. We shall be testing you with some fear and famine, with loss of wealth, lives and crops: But give glad tidings to the patient, to those who, when calamity strikes, Say: We belong to God and to Him we shall return.”*  
Qur'an 2:153

# Withholding or withdrawing Life Support

- Muslim tradition generally discourages this
- However, when treatment is going to prolong the agony of death and does not improve the quality of a person's life, the elimination of suffering becomes the goal.
- In such a case, the family can request that treatment be discontinued
- Administering pain medication is permitted as long as it is meant to lessen pain and not hasten death



- Advanced Directives and Living Wills are encouraged
- The definition of death according to the Islamic Medical Association of North America, IMANA, is “when a person’s cardiopulmonary function has come to a permanent stop and when the function of the brain, including the brain stem, has come to a permanent stop, even if some other organs may continue to show spontaneous activity.”

# Euthanasia

- Euthanasia is forbidden
- It is seen as murder by the one performing it, and suicide by the person choosing to end their life
- When someone dies, can only be determined by God
- “No human being can die, save by God’s leave, at a term pre-ordained.” Qur’an 3:145



# Suicide

- Suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam.
- God is the creator of life and only God can end someone's life.
- Someone who refuses food or hydration would be considered as if they committed suicide and would suffer the same fate
- In terms of assisted Suicide this is also not allowed.



# Autopsy

- The practice of autopsy did not exist when the Qur'an was revealed .
- The general consensus of the jurists is that autopsy is considered a desecration of the body, and should be avoided
- Autopsy is permitted if required by law or if it would result in medical science that may save other lives in the future.
- Muslim practice is to bury the dead as quickly as possible and an autopsy would hold this up
- “not waiting for morning to bury if the person died at night, and not waiting for nightfall if the person died in the morning. Make haste in taking them to their resting place.” Abdul Sachedina 176





# Organ Transplants

- Organ transplants are generally acceptable as well as blood transfusions
- The donor must not be at risk while alive
- The donor or families permission must be obtained
- Organ donations should not be the outcome of financial exploitation or social pressures
- No vital organ is to be removed while the person is alive

*“If someone saves a life it shall be as though he has saved the lives of all humankind.” Qur’an 5:32*



# Death

- Death is a part of life. Muslims believe that no one lives forever and our time on this earth is limited.
- “ *Every soul shall taste death.*” Qur’an 3:185
- “*And it is He who made our generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth.*” Qur’an 6:165

# Death cont.

- Muslims believe that death is a departure from this world, but not the end of someone's existence
- Eternal life is yet to come
- Muslims pray that their loved one will find peace and contentment in the world to come
- Right before death, the patient recites words of prayer. The family whispers the Declaration of faith into the dying persons ear if they cannot recite it themselves.



# Upon death

- The eyes and mouth of the deceased should be closed and the body covered with a clean sheet.
- The face of the deceased should be turned to Mecca
- Arrangements should be made for the ritual body wash, shrouding and preparation for burial



# Burial

- Burial usually occurs within 24 hours
- Embalming or cremation are not allowed
- If allowed by local ordinance, there is no coffin.
- The body is placed in the grave on their right side facing Mecca
- A layer of wood is put above the body so that the earth will not be put directly on the body.
- After the body is covered, it is custom to throw 3 handfuls of soil onto the grave
- Tombstones, markers and flowers are discouraged



# Grieving

- There is a 3 day mourning period where visitors are received and condolences are offered
- Flashy clothing or jewelry is avoided by the mourners
- Grief may be expressed by tears but it is forbidden to tear clothes or wail
- The *Janazah Prayer* for the deceased is said in Arabic at the mosque, before the deceased is taken to the cemetery.

# Deceased Children

- Islam teaches that young children who die go directly to *Jannah*, Paradise, and guide others when their time comes
- If a fetus is less than 4 months old, the body need not be washed. No *Janazah* is said
- For children less than the age of puberty, they are washed and shrouded
- Over the age of puberty the same sex does the washing
- In terms of a martyr, they are not washed or shrouded and are buried in the clothes they were found in

# Life After Death

- Muslims believe in the afterlife
- Eternal life is determined by the choices and actions made in this lifetime
- Souls will go to Heaven or Hell as determined on the Day of Judgment
- Prophet Muhammad taught that our deeds on this earth continue after we die through those things that we affected





# Disbelievers

- Muslims believe that everyone has a chance to be saved by accepting Allah
- Even though they may have died as disbelievers, Allah out of His perfect justice and mercy would not admit them to Hell without a fair trial
- They may have been *Ahl-ul-fatr*, those who lived at a time or place or situation that prevented them from receiving Allah's clear message

# Implications for Chaplains

- The following are suggestions for Chaplains in order to show sensitivity to their patients and to be effective in their ministry
- Since traditions and observances vary greatly even among Muslims, feel free to ask patients and families how you can help ensure their needs are met during their stay..
- They will appreciate your concern and your interest in respecting their religious practices



# Prayer

- A Prayer room should be provided that is quiet, clean and carpeted. A space that is inter-religious is ideal
- A Qur'an should be available
- For a bedridden patient, they may still want to engage in prayer 5 times a day
- Ideally the bed or their face should be towards Mecca



# Prayer cont.

- Patient will want to wash their face, hands and feet before prayer
- A pitcher of clean water should be at bedside if unable to ambulate to bathroom
- A patient in prayer should not be interrupted nor should one walk in front of them while praying unless it is an emergency
- Prayers may be said sitting, standing or lying down
- Friday is the holiest day of the week and special prayers are said at noon

# Modesty

- One should knock before entering the room of a Muslim patient
- Ideally a sign should be on the door so that a person of the opposite sex will not enter unannounced
- Eye contact should be limited. Touching is discouraged unless necessary. Many Muslim will not shake hands with someone of the opposite sex

# Modesty cont.

- Some Muslim women may want their bodies completely covered during an exam
- A long sleeve gown should be provided or the patient should be allowed to use their own gown
- If a patient is being treated by a physician or nurse of the opposite sex, a same sex nurse or family member should be present



# Halal Food

- Halal meals should be provided if available
- If not, consult with the patient to see if a kosher or vegetarian meal would be acceptable
- Pork , lard, ham, bacon and alcohol prohibited
- Patients should be allowed to bring food from home if there are no dietary restrictions
- During Ramadan, patients may choose to fast from sunrise to sunset.
- If possible, dinner should be served after sundown.
- Most Muslims do not eat with their left hand since this is the hand they use for cleaning themselves. Keep this in mind if they do not have use of the right hand.

# Medical Issues

- Blood transfusions are allowed
- Most surgical procedures are permitted
- Organ donation is allowed, both donating and receiving under most conditions
- Autopsy is not allowed unless required by law
- End of Life Care- maintaining a terminal patient on life support for a prolonged period of time in a vegetative state is not encouraged
- Euthanasia or any attempt to shorten life is prohibited
- Suicide is strictly forbidden



# Visiting the Sick

- It is a cultural and religious obligation to visit the sick. Therefore the patient may have many visitors.
- During illness. Muslims seek God's help with patience and prayer. They ask forgiveness, give charity and read or listen to passages from the Qur'an
- Patients may wish to recite the 99 names of God.
- Visitors may offer special prayers
- A chaplain should not read from the Qur'an in Arabic or even in transliteration, unless given permission by the patient or family. The Chaplain can ask for a family member to recite prayers while they act as a witness



# Death and Dying Practices

- Muslims believe that death is controlled by God's plan and while it is a departure from his world, it is not the end of someone's existence
- While Many Muslim patients accept their illness as determined by God and that it is sent to be cathartic, they still need support and prayer
- Before making any medical decisions, the family and a religious authority such as an imam should be consulted

# Death and Dying cont

- It is traditional to read Chapter 96 of the Qur'an, *Yasin*, to the sick. Ideally this should be done in Arabic by a family member
- As the moment of death approaches, the Islamic Declaration of Faith should be recited. Confessions of sins and asking for forgiveness should occur in presence of loved ones
- Upon death, the eyes and mouth of the deceased should be closed and the body covered with a clean sheet.
- With minimum delay, the body is removed to the funeral home for washing, shrouding and positioning towards Mecca

# Burial

- Burial occurs within 72 hours of death, if not sooner
- Muslims generally have their own section of the cemetery. If allowed by local ordinance, there is no coffin.
- The deceased is laid in the grave on his or her right side facing Mecca. The body is covered by a layer of wood or rocks and 3 handful of soil are thrown on the grave and then it is filled in with sand.
- Tombstones, markers and flowers are discouraged
- Cremation is prohibited

# Grieving

- It is forbidden to tear garments or to wail
- Tears are welcomed
- The *Janazah prayer* for the deceased is said in Arabic
- Families grieve formally for 3 days and not more

# Conclusion

- Your job is to make your patients feel comfortable. Cultural awareness of their beliefs and practices will enable them to feel valued and respected.
- The more you know, the better you can participate in the healing process.

- A special thank you to Aida Monsoor of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut for her help with this Power Point presentation.