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Centre for the  
Study of Islam in the UK

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## **Muslim Chaplaincy: Practice, Research and Recognition**

June 24th-26th 2025, Fribourg Switzerland

University of Fribourg, Bd. de Pérolles 90, 1700 Fribourg, Switzerland

**Abstract Booklet**

## List of Contributors and abstracts

Abdul-Majid, Samsiah	1
Akhtar, Ruqiyah & Beth Muehlhausen	2
Alhabshi, Sakinah	4
Ali, Mansur	6
Ansari, Bilal	7
Arfaoui, Ahmed	8
Aydinli, Fatma	10
Aysel, Aslıgöl	11
Baig, Naveed	12
Basher, Hanan with Mansur Ali and Sophie Gilliat-Ray	13
Béraud, Céline	14
Bin Jamil, Khairil Husaini	15
Bozkurt, Beyhan	17
Dakri, Ferzana	18
Erdem, Gülbahar	19
de Galembert, Claire	20
Gilliat-Ray, Sophie & Ameira Bahadur-Kutkut	22
Hibell, Ruqaiyah	23
Inniger, Matthias	24
Isgandarova, Nazila	25
Isis-Arnautovic, Esma	26
Ismail, Iman A.	27
Jamal, Sadaf	29
Karacan, Durali	31
Kasai, Kenta & Sachiko Hosoya	32
Khechaf, Driss	33
Kholaki, Sondos	34
Mattson, Ingrid	36
Nuzum, Daniel, Sabia Rehman & Aziz Patel	37
Nuzum, Daniel, Sabia Rehman, Aziz Patel & Mark Newitt	39
Razeek, Safra	41
Schmid, Hansjörg	43
Shafiq, Haroon & Saqib Hussain	44
Shafiq, Maysoon	45
Stark, Harvey	46

Conference: Muslim Chaplaincy. Practice, Research and Recognition  
Swiss Centre for Islam and Society & Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK  
June 24th-26th 2025, Fribourg Switzerland

Starr, Jaye _____	47
Sulaiman, Khadija _____	48
Świecińska, Ayishah J. _____	49
Todd, Andrew _____	50
Turner, Mahshid _____	51
Uçak-Ekinci, Dilek _____	52
Yakubovych, Mykhaylo _____	53

**Associations between religious and social characteristics and the importance of Muslim chaplain presence at the end of life:  
Insights from a national survey of American Muslims**

Abdul-Majid, Samsiah<sup>1</sup>

(Westchester Medical Center / Association of Muslim Chaplains, USA)

*Abstract*

Many individuals, including American Muslims value the presence of chaplains as part of the end-of-life healthcare provision. Yet, there are few Muslim chaplains in the United States and access to them is poor. This unmet need may lead to ethical conflicts and cultural challenges, as well as poor perceptions of the healthcare received.

As part of a research project on unmet Muslim American Health & Spiritual Needs (MAHSN) led by the Initiative on Islam & Medicine, our study investigates the associations between religiosity and sociodemographic characteristics, and views on the importance of having a Muslim chaplain at the end of life. A convenience sample of adult, English-speaking, Muslim Americans completed an online survey containing measures of religiosity, conventional socio-demographic descriptors, and the importance and availability of specific religious/spiritual resources in healthcare. Study data was collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture software.

While 93.3% (n=1230) of respondents thought it very important or somewhat important to have a Muslim chaplain during end-of-life healthcare, only 7.3% (n=49) had access to a Muslim chaplain during their most recent hospital stay. Multivariate logistic regression models showed that participants who more frequently attended religious services (OR=1.18; p<.1), practiced positive religious coping mechanisms (OR=1.08; p<.05), and experienced everyday discrimination (OR=1.08; p<.1) had higher odds of believing Muslim chaplain presence to be important during end-of-life healthcare than those that did not. Conversely, male participants (OR=0.57; p<.05) and those with increased duration in the United States (OR=0.98; p<.05) had lower odds of believing such presence to be important compared to female participants and those who spent less time in the United States.

Unmet needs may lead to ethical conflicts, cultural challenges, and poor perceptions of care. Greater research is needed to delineate patient expectations of Muslim chaplains in end-of-life care, the reasons behind unmet needs, and how hospitals can better effect higher-quality, culturally-sensitive, and religiously-concordant end-of-life healthcare.

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## Islam and Human Organ Transplant: A Scoping Literature Review

Akhtar, Ruqiaya<sup>1</sup> & Beth Muehlhausen<sup>2</sup>

(Houston Methodist Hospital, USA)

### *Abstract*

Houston Methodist Health System includes a leading academic medical center in the Texas Medical Center and six community hospitals in the Greater Houston area. The system's values - integrity, compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence - guide its commitment to patient safety, quality, and service.

Houston Methodist Hospital's Global Health Care Services, Research Institute, and Spiritual Care Department provide care in diverse settings, including countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Houston itself is one of the most diverse U.S. cities, with a significant number of Muslim patients treated at the hospital. The hospital has three Muslim chaplains, and its Muslim Prayer Center was donated by Saudi Arabia and dedicated to Sheik Abdulkader Mohamed Alfadl.

Approximately one-third of the hospital's patients are transplant-related, requiring chaplains to address their unique spiritual needs. The role of religion, particularly Islam, in organ transplantation has gained attention due to recent theological changes. Sharia's stance on living and deceased organ donation has evolved, creating differences in understanding between Muslim leaders and laypeople. Research shows many Muslims remain unaware of current Fatwas permitting organ donation to save lives.

A scoping review<sup>3</sup> explores the ethical and religious challenges Muslims face in organ donation. The findings aim to enhance understanding and care for Muslim transplant patients. Focusing on PubMed, SCOPUS, and Web Science for studies from 2019 to 2024, the search included English articles that were 1) addressing attitudes of Muslims/Islamic leaders or Sharia, or 2) focusing on human organ donation, including ethical considerations of brain death, or 3) being original research or descriptions of Sharia. The review examined attitudes, beliefs, and values related to

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<sup>2</sup> **Beth Muehlhausen** is a spiritual care researcher and author of numerous published articles related to spirituality and spiritual care. She has conducted many webinars and workshops for the Association of Professional Chaplains. Her doctorate is in social work, and she is a certified chaplain.

<sup>3</sup> The literature review team was composed of Charles Abuyeka (M.Div., BCC), Narjess Kardan (M.Div., ACPE Certified Educator), Collin Powell (M.Div., BCC), Amy Taylor (MLS, AHIP), and the two workshop presenters mentioned above, Ruqiaya Akhtar & Beth Muehlhausen.

Islam in the context of organ transplants, covering perspectives of donors, families, recipients, and Islamic leaders.

In this workshop, the participants will be given a brief overview of how to conduct a formal, publishable literature review. They will understand the results of the literature review in terms of key religious and ethical themes that evolved from the articles that were included. Participants will also understand the implication of the findings for Islamic leaders and chaplains in working with Muslim organ recipients, living organ donors or families of deceased organ donors.

## **Integrating Islamic Perspectives in Advance Care Planning: A Chaplain's Approach to Compassionate Care**

Alhabshi, Sakinah<sup>1</sup>

(St. Luke University Health Network, USA)

### *Abstract*

Patients and families need effective and compassionate support in navigating complex medical decisions, often in the context of serious or terminal illness. This workshop is based on the chapter "*Spirituality and Religion in Advance Care Planning: Islamic Perspectives*"<sup>2</sup> co-authored by the presenter. It aims to provide participants with theological and practical frameworks to understand and approach Advance Care Planning (ACP) processes and conversations in ways that honor Islamic beliefs and values.

Participants will examine three key Islamic values related to ACP: (1) Planning and Predestination (*Qadr*), emphasizing alignment between future care planning and God's will; (2) Autonomy and Consultation (*Istishara/Shura*), promoting informed decision-making and agency alongside consultation with trusted parties; and (3) Documentation, encouraged in Islam to ensure clarity and prevent conflict. By framing ACP as a spiritually supportive means and ethically sound process, the workshop helps chaplains address ACP as more than a procedural task, rather a meaningful spiritual exercise.

We will employ a combination of theoretical exploration, reflective discussion, case study analysis/role-play that illustrate the ethical, emotional, and spiritual complexities Muslim patients and their families face in ACP conversations. Through this, we aim to empower participants to advocate for faith-based needs in healthcare, enhance ACP facilitation skills, and promote a deeper understanding /dialog within multidisciplinary teams towards honoring the spiritual/religious needs of Muslim patients.

### Discussion Prompts

1. What are potential conflicts that may arise between Islamic values and normative practices in ACP; what strategies can Muslim chaplains use to mediate these differences

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<sup>2</sup> Alhabshi, Sakina & Abdul-Majid, Samsiah (2024). Spirituality and Religion in Advance Care Planning: Islamic Perspectives. In Raymond Han Lip Ng, Diah Martina, Cheng-Pei Lin & Masanori Mori (eds.), *Advance Care Planning in the Asia Pacific* (pp. 43-52). World Scientific Publishing Co.

especially in healthcare settings that may not be familiar with or prioritize faith-based considerations?

2. How does the process of documenting ACP preferences align with or challenge Islamic teachings, and how can chaplains present this to patients as a means of protecting family harmony?
3. How can Muslim chaplains support families who are experiencing emotional distress due to ACP discussions, especially if the topic is perceived as culturally/religiously sensitive?



**Bodies of text: British Muslim hospital chaplains negotiating text and context to provide organ transplantation care**

Ali, Mansur<sup>1</sup>

(Cardiff University, UK)

*Abstract*

Muslim chaplains who work on the frontline in hospitals are confronted with providing quick solutions to morally challenging questions on abortion, organ donation, switching off clinically assisted nutrition and hydration and ventilators. They are interdisciplinary and cross different knowledge domain. They have hands-on experience of the ethical dilemmas that hospital staff, Muslim families and themselves face. Research by Gilliat-Ray, Ali, and Pattison (2013) on Muslim chaplains has identified that they are often highly trained in Islamic law, but have adopted new skills in order to provide pastoral support in hospital contexts. This presentation will explore for the first time data gleaned from an 18-month project - funded by the Centre for Islam and Medicine - titled UNDERSTANDING BRITISH MUSLIM RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTION OF THE ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION PROCESS. The presentation will particularly highlight how Muslim chaplains negotiate institutional policy, patient and family sensitivity, medical advice and Islamic pastoral jurisprudence to provide tailored advice to clients on the specific issue of organ transplantation. In the process, I will highlight, how Muslim chaplains are developing a practical theology which is initially modelled on Christian practical theology but highly distinctive from it.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Mansur Ali** ([Alimm1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Alimm1@cardiff.ac.uk)) is a Senior lecturer in Islamic studies at Cardiff University where he teaches Islam and ethics, and Islam in Britain. He has multiple research interests including Hadith studies, Islamic legal theory, Muslim chaplaincy, and Islam and bioethics. Currently he is writing his book on Islam an organ donation. In addition to his post at the University, he is also an Imam in the local mosque.

## Shepherding the Islamic Secular: Hadith-Based Principles for Evaluating Muslim Chaplains

Ansari, Bilal<sup>1</sup>

(Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, USA)

### *Abstract*

This paper explores the potential for integrating hadith sciences (*'ulūm al-ḥadīth*) with contemporary practices of certifying and endorsing Muslim chaplains. Drawing upon the rich history of hadith criticism and authentication, which seeks to preserve the integrity of the Prophet's legacy, this study proposes an innovative framework for evaluating Muslim chaplains' credibility and communal endorsement.

The research employs a comparative analysis methodology, examining case studies from classical hadith scholarship and contemporary chaplaincy practices. By bridging these two domains, the study identifies five critical principles for Muslim chaplaincy institutions and endorsing agencies to adopt: (1) academic and clinical integration, (2) critique and validation of professional competence, (3) avoidance of fabrication and distortion, (4) Islamic secular understanding and application of hadith sciences, and (5) adherence to scholarly consensus of secular professional norms.

This interdisciplinary approach, situated at the intersection of Islamic Studies and Chaplaincy Studies, aims to enhance the theoretical understanding of Islamic chaplaincy while providing practical guidelines for improving evaluation processes. The study builds upon previous research asserting that authentic Islamic spiritual care must be grounded in traditional sciences and the Prophetic legacy.

By integrating rigorous principles from hadith sciences into the education, training, and endorsement processes for Muslim chaplains, this research argues that the field of Islamic chaplaincy can ensure the preservation of authentic Islamic knowledge while meeting the demands of diverse secular contexts. The paper discusses the potential benefits and challenges of implementing this framework, considering theological, institutional, and practical implications.

This study contributes to the emerging field of Muslim Chaplaincy Studies by offering a novel approach to chaplaincy evaluation rooted in Islamic tradition. It aims to spark further research and dialogue on integrating classical Islamic methodologies with contemporary professional practices in spiritual care.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Bilal Ansari** ([bansari@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:bansari@hartfordinternational.edu)) is the director of the Islamic Chaplaincy Program and co-director of the Master of Arts in Chaplaincy at Hartford International University. His research focuses on Muslim pastoral theology, chaplaincy, and integrating traditional Islamic sciences with contemporary professional practices.

## **Reconciliation: Does It Work with Muslim Prison Chaplaincy in Germany?**

Arfaoui, Ahmed<sup>1</sup>

(JVA-Dresden Prison, Germany)

### *Abstract*

The concept of reconciliation in terms of justice has garnered significant academic attention since at least the 1970s. Emerging as a new paradigm in Western legal culture, reconciliation offers an alternative perspective on the administration of justice. It aims to repair the harm done to victims by holding offenders accountable, encouraging them to understand the consequences of their actions, providing opportunities for redemption, and preventing further harm.

Reconciliation prioritizes the needs of victims, offenders, and the community over the perpetrator's fault. It emphasizes reparation and the strengthening of social ties that the offender has ruptured. In this model, all stakeholders are actively involved. The victim and community play a central role in administering justice, seeking full compensation for the harm caused. The offender is encouraged to take responsibility for repairing the harm in the most thorough way possible, marking the first step toward reintegration into society. In the long term, it is posited that reconciliation can potentially foster tolerance, cooperation, communication and respectful decision-making in addressing severe criminal behavior. It promotes relationships and agreements and ideally is adapting to cultural contexts and community needs, opposing dehumanizing judgments and seeking compensation for both material and emotional losses through compromise and forgiveness.

As the idea of reconciliation has gained recognition in the wider criminal justice sphere, questions have arisen regarding the role of prison chaplains and their spiritual assistance in this process. Recent research, also in the German context, has explored the contribution of Christian prison chaplaincies in the reconciliation process. However, limited attention has been paid to the role of Muslim prison chaplaincies within this framework. Prior studies on Muslim chaplaincy have largely not addressed the concept of reconciliation, as the role of Muslim chaplaincy in German institutions is still in its infancy. Moreover, even scholars who focus on ideas of reconciliation,

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largely in terms of restorative justice—such as Bazemore, Braithwaite, Cooley, Daly, Estrada-Hollenbeck, Hudson, and Pranis—have largely overlooked chaplains and particularly Muslim chaplains as potential partners in the prison setting. Closer examination of Muslim prison chaplains' socio-legal roles in relation to reconciliation could be highly valuable.

Traditionally, prison chaplains' services to prisoners included helping them adjust to prison life, visiting inmates in isolation, assisting with post-release plans, counseling inmates and their families, providing religious education and conducting religious services. The work of chaplains extends beyond the prisoner to include families, victims, and the broader community. In this context, the potential for prison chaplains to act as agents of social change should also be recognized for Muslim prison chaplains, as they may be uniquely positioned to have a significant impact on prisoners and the wider reconciliation process between them, their victims and society in general.

This research explores the principles and methods related to reconciliation and restoration within Islamic theology by seeking to identify Islamic principles that could serve as a foundation for this process. This study also wants to assess whether reconciliation can be promoted and effectively practiced by Muslim prison chaplains in the German context. It will explore the limitations and possibilities within this relatively uncharted area and investigate the potential contributions of Muslim chaplains in the rehabilitation of prisoners within a framework where a process of reconciliation is at the core.

This research method combines an analysis of existing studies with reflections on my own experience as a Muslim prison chaplain at Dresden prison. To further enrich the study, I will engage in discussions with Christian chaplains and other actors in the field of interfaith cooperation to critically examine the role of chaplaincy in the delivery of justice and reconciliation, focusing on its potential to bring hope, healing, repentance, restoration, and restitution to prisoners' lives.

## **Muslim Chaplaincy Baden-Württemberg (MSBW) – Structural and Practical Insights**

Aydinli, Fatma<sup>1</sup>

(University of Erlangen, Germany)

### *Abstract*

The contribution presents an analysis of the structural and practical aspects of the Muslim Chaplaincy Baden-Württemberg, with a particular focus on the issue of professionalization.

The initial focus will be on the structural aspects of Muslim chaplaincy in Baden-Württemberg. The paper will provide insights into the defined organization, which is characterized by well-founded training programs and regular supervision. Furthermore, the profile of Muslim chaplaincy will use the example of hospital chaplaincy to show how flexibly and professionally it responds to the practical demands of everyday hospital life.

The practical aspects will show a more detailed examination of the relationship between the duties of the Muslim chaplaincy and the practical difficulties encountered in everyday clinical practice is provided. A short case study will shed light on the complex role of Muslim chaplaincy, which acts as a bridge between theological principles and practical work in hospitals. It will illustrate how Muslim chaplaincy provides both spiritual support and cultural and religious sensitivity in a medical context. The speech will finally set out the structural framework conditions and visions for the future of this important work. This will demonstrate how Muslim Chaplaincy can be further developed and sustainably anchored in practice, thus professionalizing it.

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## The training of Imams at German universities: Challenges and Perspectives

Aysel, Aslıgül<sup>1</sup>

(University of Innsbruck, Austria)

### *Abstract*

This paper presents the findings of the empirical study “Islamic Theology at German Universities: A Study on Islamic-Religious Expertise in Germany”, funded by the DFG from July 2019 to March 2021. The study examines the progress in the professional training of Islamic theology and analyzes the application of the existing state-church model to Islam, as well as the structural challenges that arise from it. Particularly contentious is the handling of Muslim chaplaincies, who have long been viewed as barriers to integration but increasingly also serve as “integration guides”<sup>2</sup> in mosques and institutions such as hospitals, prisons, the police, and the military.

The study specifically focuses on the current status of the training of Muslim chaplaincies at the centers for Islamic theology at German universities. Through comparative observations of ongoing processes, 29 empirically qualitative interviews, group discussions involving academic staff, additional experts, advisory board members, and a quantitative online survey among students, empirical data were collected.

The results indicate that the centers largely do not offer practice-oriented training for Muslim chaplaincies. The political goal of establishing practice-oriented training at these centers to reduce the reliance on foreign Imams has not yet been achieved. As a solution, a practice-oriented educational institution similar to seminaries and vicariates for priests is proposed. However, students also feel insufficiently prepared for practical professions such as Muslim chaplaincies, as the role of a chaplain is not their primary study motivation.

The paper discusses the implications of these findings for future developments in the training of Muslim chaplaincies and their role in German society. It predicts an increased presence of religious expertise in other societal fields and highlights the necessity for targeted adjustments to the content and methods of education to better meet the challenges of current societal demands and the expectations of chaplains in their role as religious and social leaders.

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<sup>2</sup> Ceylan, Rauf (2014). *Cultural Time Lag. Moscheekatechese und islamischer Religionsunterricht im Kontext von Säkularisierung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, p.189.

KEYNOTE

**The question of ‘wasaa’it’ (intermediaries): Ibn Abbad Al-Rundi, shukr (gratitude) and Muslim patients during times of crisis. An empirical study**

Baig, Naveed<sup>1</sup>

(University of Oslo, Norway)

*Abstract*

With the rise of inquiry surrounding Muslim chaplaincy in increasingly pluralistic Global North societies the need for empirical research becomes evident. What do patients think and need when life becomes unbearable during hospitalization? How do people use and practice their religious resources during tribulations? By learning about patient’s religious and existential thoughts, we may come closer to understanding patient perspectives and how (and if) it influences their well-being, relationships during hospitalization and healthcare decisions. Through an elaboration of the results from my PhD dissertation- a qualitative empirical study of hospitalized Muslim patients during the COVID-19 pandemic- I will delve into one finding from my study, ‘relational gratitude’. For patients, gratitude has different addressees namely hospital staff, family and God. This keynote will reflect on the nature of this type of gratitude, its implications and perspectives for patients’ hospital lives.

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<sup>1</sup> **Naveed Baig** ([naveed.baig@teologi.uio.no](mailto:naveed.baig@teologi.uio.no)) is a PhD Fellow at the University of Oslo. His research focuses on Muslim pastoral care and health. For the past 15 years Naveed Baig has held the position of chaplain at Rigshospitalet (one of the largest hospitals in Denmark) and has taught at The University of Copenhagen and The University of Southern Denmark.

For many years Naveed has participated in the Danish public debate on Islam and Muslims, and in 2021 he co-published "The Danish-Muslim Manifesto". A project that aims to discuss key issues on being Muslim in Denmark and Europe.

**Theoretical and theological models supporting Muslim chaplaincy: practitioner perspectives and experiences'**

Basher, Hanan<sup>1</sup> with Mansur Ali and Sophie Gilliat-Ray

(Cardiff University, UK)

*Abstract*

The development of Muslim chaplaincy has been influenced by the experiences and models of chaplaincy from the Christian and Jewish traditions. However, it has been argued that a distinct Islamic theological framework to guide Muslim chaplaincy is essential to the practice of Muslim chaplains. This is because directly applying models from other religious traditions can be challenging due to the unique nature of the Islamic faith and its approach to spiritual and religious care. Furthermore, the Islamic perspective of service and care such as “*khidmah*” (service to others) and “*islah*” (reformation) can provide basic principles for developing an Islamic approach to chaplaincy. Some literature on Muslim chaplaincy research proposes that Muslim chaplains should actively engage in the Islamic formulation of practical theology and recognise and refine their roles within the evolving landscape of Muslim chaplaincy.

The aim of the workshop is to contribute to a better understanding of current practices by combining practical experiences with theological and theoretical frameworks and to identify key areas for the further development of Islamic approaches to chaplaincy. Through the use of the World Café method, a participatory approach to workshop facilitation, the workshop will explore three questions. These are: 1. What are the existing theoretical and theological models Muslim chaplains utilise in their practice? 2. What factors influence the selection and application of these models? 3. What factors would facilitate the development and implementation of effective Islamic approaches to chaplaincy? The workshop will provide participants with a creative and collaborative space for reflective thinking and knowledge sharing to enable them to identify and develop theological and theoretical models to advance their work as Muslim chaplains.

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## Muslim Chaplaincies in French Public Institutions: An Opportunity for Women?

Béraud, Céline<sup>1</sup>

(EHESS Paris, France)

### *Abstract*

In France, as in other countries, Muslim chaplains have, over the past few decades, assumed a role that originally emerged in a Christian context. This first process has been accompanied by a quieter, second development: the gradual involvement of women in this role. Currently, in France, women account for approximately 11% of Muslim prison chaplains, 13% of Muslim military chaplains and nearly 30% of Muslim hospital chaplains. This feminization process has not sparked controversy or significant demands. It has received little attention from both Muslim authorities and the state. In fact, it has long been an overlooked area of research on religion in public institutions, both in Europe and North America.

Muslim chaplaincies in French public institutions (prisons, hospitals, and the military) provide Muslim women, albeit to varying extents depending on the institution, with a modest but genuine opportunity to exercise religious authority. This development is part of a broader movement in Western and Muslim-majority countries, where women are increasingly gaining access to positions as teachers and, to a lesser extent, as preachers.

This presentation aims to examine the conditions that enable the rise of female Muslim leadership within the chaplaincy, while also addressing the limitations of this phenomenon. These limitations include gender segregation within Muslim chaplaincies, as well as the stigmatization and discrimination these women encounter in the institutions where they serve.

The analysis will draw on some thirty life stories gathered from Muslim female chaplains, as well as observations (through shadowing) of several of them. It will also draw more broadly on data collected in three empirical studies - primarily ethnographic - conducted between 2010 and 2021 in various French prisons, hospitals and the military, with a particular focus on gender issues.

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## **Navigating the Dialectics of Spirituality and Care: Islamic Spiritual Care in Muslim-Majority and Minority Contexts**

Bin Jamil, Khairil Husaini<sup>1</sup>

(International Islamic University, Malaysia)

### *Abstract*

This paper examines modern Islamic spiritual care, particularly in institutional settings like hospitals, prisons, and rehabilitation centers, where it is often referred to as chaplaincy, spiritual counseling, or intervention. Rooted in pastoral care traditions, modern spiritual care distinguishes itself through professionalization, regulatory frameworks, and its application in secular and diverse environments. A core challenge lies in adapting the Islamic concept of *al-ri'āyah* (care, guardianship, pastoral care) to contemporary frameworks while preserving its rich, dynamic tradition within professional contexts.

A significant issue is the tension between the expansive nature of *al-ri'āyah* and the narrower scope imposed by professionalization. Traditionally, *al-ri'āyah* embodies holistic care throughout life stages. However, institutionalization risks reducing its scope to meet standards prioritizing efficiency and compliance, potentially diluting its comprehensive nature. This tension highlights the complexity of balancing depth and breadth in Islamic spiritual care within modern institutions.

Standardization in spiritual care further complicates this balance. While necessary for consistency and legal compliance, over-reliance on standard procedures can hinder the flexibility essential for meaningful spiritual interventions. For example, the Sufi tradition emphasizes diversity and imperfection as reflections of divine revelation, challenging the rigidity of institutional frameworks. Balancing regulations with adaptability remains a key concern, as excessive standardization risks limiting spiritual growth and the realization of divine attributes such as beauty (*jamāl*) and majesty (*jalāl*).

Modern Islamic spiritual care often focuses on individuals in crisis - patients, prisoners, or those in rehabilitation - addressing their existential struggles. This reactive approach contrasts with the proactive, continuous spiritual nourishment central to *al-ri'āyah*, which fosters growth across societal sectors, including scholars and leaders. The emphasis on vulnerability raises questions

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about whether modern frameworks adequately address long-term spiritual development alongside crisis intervention.

The context of practice adds another layer of complexity. In Muslim-minority settings, practitioners navigate maintaining Islamic ideals within host countries' legal and cultural frameworks. Conversely, Muslim-majority contexts face integrating traditional Islamic practices with modern institutional demands. Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing the challenges Islamic spiritual care practitioners encounter in diverse settings.

Three dimensions shape the framework for analyzing Islamic spiritual care: philosophical, legal, and socio-cultural. Philosophically, the study explores spirituality through Islamic concepts like *nasīhah* (advice), *al-ri'āyah*, and *ziyādah* (spiritual growth), reconciling Islamic ideals with professional care practices. Legally, it examines how local *fatwās* and regulations define ethical and operational boundaries. Socio-culturally, it considers the roles of community leaders such as imams and mosque managers in shaping grassroots spiritual care.

This qualitative study combines library research and interviews with practitioners, primarily in hospital settings, and aims to expand its scope to other contexts. The research explores the relationship between spirituality and care, addressing tensions between traditional principles and contemporary requirements. By using *al-ri'āyah* as a guiding framework, the study seeks to sustain Islamic spiritual care as both a progressive and adaptable practice in today's diverse environments.

## **Social Suffering and Muslim Chaplaincy: Navigating Racism and Institutional Barriers**

Bozkurt, Beyhan<sup>1</sup>

(Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany)

### *Abstract*

In recent decades, Muslim chaplaincy has gained increased recognition and professionalization in Western countries. Muslim chaplains frequently encounter deeply rooted social challenges shaped by racism, discrimination, and structural barriers. These factors impact their professional practice, theological self-understanding, and resilience. This paper examines how societal factors shape Muslim chaplaincy in Germany and explores strategies developed by chaplains to navigate these challenges. Central to this study is the question of how individual and collective experiences of suffering intersect in chaplaincy work and the role societal challenges play in this process.

Using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, interview data from Muslim chaplains were systematically coded to identify patterns related to racism, discrimination, and structural barriers. The analysis aligns with the frameworks of social suffering and narrative action theory, offering a deeper understanding of these challenges.

Three key themes emerged: First, racism and discrimination significantly shape chaplains' interactions and self-perception. Second, structural barriers in institutions like prisons and hospitals hinder their roles, requiring adaptive strategies rooted in resilience and theological reflection. Third, chaplains employ various strategies, including empathetic engagement, faith-based resilience, and advocating for institutional reforms. These findings highlight the interconnection between personal and collective suffering within the chaplaincy context.

The results emphasize the complex relationship between societal factors and chaplaincy practice. The influence of racism and structural barriers challenges chaplains' religious identity and professional agency. By contextualizing these findings within the framework of social suffering, it becomes clear that chaplains engage in both immediate pastoral care and broader social resilience efforts. This study calls for greater institutional support and professional recognition.

In conclusion, this study reveals the significant impact of societal factors on chaplaincy, showing the complexity of navigating individual and social suffering. Future research could focus on developing training programs that better equip chaplains to address these challenges, enhancing resilience and fostering inclusive institutional cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> **Beyhan Bozkurt** ([Beyhan.Bozkurt@ruhr-uni-bochum.de](mailto:Beyhan.Bozkurt@ruhr-uni-bochum.de)) is a doctoral candidate at the RePliv Research College and a research associate at Ruhr University Bochum. He studied psychology (B.Sc. & M.Sc.) and completed basic training as a Muslim chaplain. His research focuses on chaplaincy, social suffering, and psychoanalysis.

## Experiences, good practice and initiatives for people affected through imprisonment

Dakri, Ferzana<sup>1</sup>

(The Straight Path Project Leicester, UK)

### Abstract

The Straight Path Project Leicester was launched to address the absence of specialist support for those returning to Leicester after imprisonment. Research revealed culturally competent and culturally sensitive interventions were critical for Muslim men and women leaving prison.

Muslims in prison currently stands at 18% (15,909) in prisons across England and Wales.<sup>2</sup> The chaplaincy's primary focus is those of the Muslim faith delivering holistic services supporting on faith, resettlement and families. The chaplaincy conducted case studies to evidence the devastating impact Muslim male imprisonment has on families. The focus was on former prisoners who have been through the criminal justice system and their families.

*'There have never been more families affected through imprisonment on the other sides of the bars. Universally families are the secondary victims of imprisonment. Families go off the radar for fear of repercussions of being outed as being related to a prisoner. They become invisible.'*

Families can access one to one advice, information and guidance sensitive to faith and cultural needs. Female service users have exclusive access to a fully trained family support officer.

The aim is knowledge exchange and sharing best practice between academics and practitioners. To provide a tangible link between theory and practice by enabling collaborative opportunities across multi-disciplinary teams from academia, public sectors and community practitioners.

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<sup>1</sup> As a community chaplain for the project, **Ferzana Dakri** ([thestraightpath@khidmah.org](mailto:thestraightpath@khidmah.org)) has contributed to advisory, forensic, publication and research. Her specialism is working in the criminal justice system in the community, post release and prisons in the UK.

<sup>2</sup> Georgina Sturge & Helena Carthew (2024). 'UK Prison Population Statistics'. *House of Commons Library*, 8 July 2024, p. 16. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/>

## **Talking with children about death: Muslim Chaplaincy in Educational Settings from the Perspective of Islamic Theology and Education**

Erdem, Gülbahar<sup>1</sup>

(Paderborn University, Germany)

### *Abstract*

Talking to children about death is a sensitive but essential aspect of pastoral care in schools. Children may experience the loss of a family member or be confronted with the death of someone important to them at school (loss of a classmate, teacher, etc.). Especially in educational institutions where these children come with their grief, they often need guidance and support to cope with this difficult situation. When working with Muslim students, their cultural and religious needs must be taken into account. This presentation explores how Muslim chaplains in schools can navigate conversations about death, drawing on Islamic theological principles and pedagogical frameworks.

The research takes a multidisciplinary approach, integrating Islamic theology with educational theory to explore how chaplains can provide age-appropriate, faith-sensitive guidance to children. Central to the discussion are Islamic concepts of life, death and the afterlife, as well as methodologies for promoting resilience and emotional well-being in young learners. Through case studies and qualitative interviews with chaplains, educators and parents, the presentation highlights practical strategies for engaging children in meaningful and compassionate discussions about mortality. It also addresses cultural sensitivities and the diverse needs of Muslim students and seeks to bridge the gap between Islamic chaplaincy and educational practice.

This paper seeks to bridge the gap between Islamic chaplaincy and educational practice and advocates for the recognition of Muslim chaplains as essential partners in the holistic education and development of children.

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## **Muslim chaplaincies in France, between appropriation and instrumentalization by public authorities**

de Galembert, Claire<sup>1</sup>

(Ecole normale supérieure Paris-Saclay / CNRS, France)

### *Abstract*

Over the past thirty years or more, Muslim chaplaincies have been institutionalized in France's military, hospital and prison systems. This institutionalization gained momentum from the 2000s onwards. The number of Muslim chaplains has risen sharply since the creation of the French Council of the Muslim Faith, but it is above all the fear of radical Islam that has aroused unprecedented interest in chaplaincy on the part of public authorities.

My paper will explore this institutionalization, its motives and its modalities. I will underline the asymmetry between the interest shown by public authorities in the development of chaplaincies for Islam, on the one hand, and the low level of investment by Muslim communities in an institution with which they are not familiar, on the other. I will show that this institutionalization, which is part of a public policy to organize Islam in France, operates at the crossroads of two framings: a legal framing that places Islam on an equal footing with other religions; and a security framing, particularly evident in the case of prison chaplaincies. In particular, fears of a deregulated Islam have led to new demands for professionalization, which today apply to all chaplains, whatever their religion.

Although this new role is now being taken on by both Muslim communities and the public concerned, internal divisions within Islam in France continue to hinder the emergence of collective players who are independent of the public authorities. This limits the development of a common ethos, and leads Muslim chaplains to see themselves, more than their counterparts of other faiths, as actors in the public service. As a result, they are more vulnerable to attempts at instrumentalization by public authorities, which I will illustrate with a number of examples.

The talk will be based on three surveys carried out since 2009, the first (2008-2012) on religion in prison (2013, 2016), the second (2017-2019) on prison chaplains (2019, to be published in 2025),

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the third (2019-2022) on an inter-institutional comparison, prison, armed forces, hospital (2022, to be published 2024).



## **Breaking Barriers: Muslim Women in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Leadership**

Gilliat-Ray, Sophie<sup>1</sup> & Ameira Bahadur-Kutkut<sup>2</sup>

(Cardiff University & Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK)

### *Abstract*

This paper is concerned with the involvement of Muslim women in professional chaplaincy, and the way in which this arena of religious work offers opportunities for leadership that can be more difficult for women to achieve in Muslim community settings, such as mosques. Some of the most important recent Muslim chaplaincy research indicates how female Muslim chaplains are beginning to disturb prevalent ideas about Islamic religious leadership as an outcome of their chaplaincy experience and practice. The complementary roles of male and female chaplains are now clearly evidenced, alongside the distinction between ritual, religious, and pastoral leadership. However, it would appear that the growing involvement of Muslim women in professional chaplaincy is beginning to shape assumptions within Muslim communities and congregations about the kind of pastoral care and leadership that Muslim organisations now require. More mosques (at least in the UK) are developing into active community centres, and this is raising questions and expectations about access and support for Muslim women. Qualitative social scientific research derived from the 'Imams' project at Cardiff University has indicated a growing demand for the provision of pastoral care in mosque/community settings - delivered by women (who may or may not be religious scholars / *'ālimāt*) – and modelled on the kind of roles undertaken by female Muslim chaplains in prisons, hospitals, educational, and other settings. This paper reflects on these developments and considers their implications for the development of Muslim community leadership and the role of women as religious authority figures in Islam.

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<sup>1</sup> **Sophie Gilliat-Ray** ([Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk)) is Professor of Religious Studies at Cardiff University and the Founding Director of the Islam-UK Centre. She has been undertaking research about chaplaincy since 1994, and most recently with Dr Mansur Ali and Professor Stephen Pattison (*Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*, Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> **Ameira Bahadur-Kutkut** ([ABahadur-Kutkut@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:ABahadur-Kutkut@cardiffmet.ac.uk)) is the Coordinating Chaplain at Cardiff Metropolitan University, with over 20 years of experience working within Muslim communities and engaging in interfaith work. She is a qualified counsellor, trained Islamic scholar (*'ālimah*) and holds an MA in 'Islam in Britain' from Cardiff University. Ameira is currently pursuing doctoral research on 'Women's Wellbeing in Islamic Ethics'.

## **First Steps into Chaplaincy – Themes Arising from Chaplaincy Students' Placement Experiences**

Hibell, Ruqaiyah <sup>1</sup>

(Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK)

### *Abstract*

Most of the available albeit limited research on Muslim chaplains in the UK and British chaplaincy is discussed from the perspective of experienced Muslim chaplains working in a range of institutions. The emphasis here is placed on how novice or inexperienced prospective chaplains encounter chaplaincy within three institutional settings: prisons, hospitals and further/higher education institutions. This learning process takes place whilst on a compulsory chaplaincy student placement which is an integral part of the Certificate in Muslim Chaplaincy course run by Markfield Institute of Higher Education. The aim is to analyse the themes arising from the students' own written placement reports which are compiled following completion of the placement. Thirty student placement reports were reviewed to determine themes. To develop greater comprehension arising from these themes a series of ten semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted via a random sample of the students involved. This sought to determine the experience of undertaking a student chaplaincy placement. From the findings further training needs emerge, alongside the essential support required to help prepare students to undertake these challenges including how to enhance the quality of the placement both from the perspective of students involved and preparatory guidance provided to placement supervisors. The research makes an important contribution to the literature on training Muslim chaplains and provides insight to enhance chaplaincy training programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> **Ruqaiyah Hibell** ([ruqaiyah.hibell@mihe.ac.uk](mailto:ruqaiyah.hibell@mihe.ac.uk)) is a researcher, lecturer, and advanced student in Islamic Studies as well as a trainer in Muslim Chaplaincy. She holds three degrees from Loughborough University in Social Policy, European Studies, and International Security. Currently, Ruqaiyah is the course leader for the Certificate in Muslim Chaplaincy course in Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE). She also oversees the research degree programmes at the Institute and teaches academic writing skills. Ruqaiyah has produced reports on conversion to Islam and regularly writes for The Muslim World Book Review, where she is a member of the editorial team. As part of her current research, she is exploring issues surrounding deconversion from Islam seeking to further examine why some converts lapse from or abandon their faith.

## **Celebrating Faith-Specific Rituals in the Swiss Army: A Call for Balance**

Inniger, Matthias<sup>1</sup>

(Joint Operation Commands Swiss Army, Switzerland)

### *Abstract*

Switzerland's growing religious diversity calls for a multi-faith chaplaincy that includes representatives of all faiths, ensuring spiritual care for all soldiers. The inclusion of Jewish and Muslim chaplains alongside Christian ones in the Swiss Army is a welcome step in this regard.

While in the Swiss Army context individual faith-specific rituals are welcome, and public services for the troops may be necessary during wartime, their observance in peacetime can compromise the inclusivity central to the chaplaincy's mission. In my upcoming conference presentation, I argue against the public celebration of faith-specific rituals during peacetime for a broader audience, stressing the need to maintain unity in the developing multi-faith chaplaincy.

Key points include:

- Soldiers can participate in faith-specific group rituals within their communities during free time; request for leave to attend such services will be authorized.
- Chaplaincy's public messages should reflect inclusivity, embracing all beliefs and worldviews.
- Public faith-specific ceremonies risk causing division, jeopardizing the future of multi-faith chaplaincy.
- Based on my research, not all Muslim soldiers view public displays of Muslim group rituals as helpful for the acceptance of Muslim chaplaincy.

To uphold the integrity of multi-faith chaplaincy, I recommend restricting faith-specific rituals—whether Christian, Jewish, or Muslim—to personal care and to times of deployment or war. This balanced approach ensures the long-term success of multi-faith chaplaincy in the Swiss Army and in other public institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Matthias Inniger** ([info@matthias-inniger.ch](mailto:info@matthias-inniger.ch)), Chief Chaplain, Joint Operation Commands Swiss Army.

## **Aging, Spirituality, and A Guide to Islamic Spiritual Care with Elderly**

Isgandarova, Nazila<sup>1</sup>

(Toronto University, Canada)

### *Abstract*

This paper addresses the lack of understanding among healthcare professionals regarding the spiritual needs of older Muslim patients in Western contexts. Despite their training, many struggle to meet these patients' spiritual and emotional needs, particularly concerning loneliness and cultural differences. The necessity for evidence-based spiritual care (EBSC) is highlighted as a means to enhance support for Muslim seniors.

Introduced in 1998 by chaplain-researchers in Canada, EBSC involves a collaborative process where spiritual care providers engage with patients to identify spiritual concerns and utilize relevant research to address them. This approach promotes research literacy, enabling caregivers to apply findings effectively in their practice.

While spirituality is vital for Muslim adults aged 65 and older, specific research on elderly Muslims remains limited. Much existing literature is Western-centric, overlooking cultural nuances. This paper advocates for further exploration of family support, social dynamics, and healthcare needs of Muslim seniors, as these factors significantly impact their quality of life.

A culturally sensitive approach to spiritual care is essential, incorporating psychotherapeutic techniques and ensuring access to familiar religious practices. This fosters spirituality in older adults, allowing them to act as spiritual mentors to younger generations.

The paper also discusses aging theories, including David Moberg's insights into the spiritual needs of older individuals, integrating Islamic teachings with social science. The role of Muslim spiritual care providers is critical in helping aging clients reflect on existential questions and maintain their spiritual practices.

In conclusion, the paper emphasizes the need for more research to address the complexities of aging and spiritual care among Muslim populations, ultimately aiming to enhance their overall well-being and sense of community.

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<sup>1</sup> **Nazila Isgandarova** ([nazila.isgandarova@utoronto.ca](mailto:nazila.isgandarova@utoronto.ca)) has a PhD from the University of Toronto, a Doctor of Ministry degree in pastoral counselling, marriage and family studies from Wilfred Laurier University, and a Master of Social Work from the University of Windsor. She is a Psychotherapist at the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario and a Registered Social Worker at the Ontario Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Nazila Isgandarova is the recipient of the Order of Vaughan, the Forum for Theological Exploration Research Award for her study on domestic violence against Muslim women, the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care Senior Research Award and the Society for Pastoral Counselling Research Award. Nazila Isgandarova is an Assistant Professor at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto.

## Theological Dimensions in Muslim Chaplaincy – An Attempt at Systematization

Isis-Arnautovic, Esma<sup>1</sup>

(SZIG/CSIS – University of Fribourg, Switzerland)

### Abstract

This contribution addresses the question of what role Islamic theology – in the broader sense of an umbrella discipline that encompasses various sub-disciplines of the Islamic canon of subjects such as *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *kalām*, *taṣawwuf* or ethics – plays in Muslim chaplaincy and what contribution it can make to the professionalisation of chaplaincy. Based on a project called ‘Theology of Chaplaincy’, it reflects on and systematises the form in which different theological dimensions are evident in Muslim chaplaincy practice. Even if conversations between chaplain and chaplaincy-seekers do not always consist of theological content, the term ‘Muslim chaplaincy’ already refers to theological roots. Without a theological dimension and connection, chaplaincy would in fact no longer be chaplaincy, but psychological or social counselling. The need of chaplaincy-seekers for normative guidance in medical ethical decisions often comprises theological components just as much as a request to recite the Qur’an or a conversation about guilt and forgiveness. Accordingly, the theological dimensions can present themselves in different forms, appear explicitly or merely resonate implicitly and claim different relevance depending on the conversation. The implicit theological dimensions in particular – such as the chaplain’s own attitude – which are usually not explicitly verbalised in the encounter, are important influencing factors in chaplaincy that need to be reflected upon. By systematising these various theological dimensions, conclusions can also be drawn about the competencies that professional chaplains need to have and the relationship between chaplaincy and theology. In addition, these dimensions enable a reflection on how theological dimensions – e.g. normative questions of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* – can be dealt with.

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<sup>1</sup> **Esma Isis-Arnautovic** ([esma.isis@unifr.ch](mailto:esma.isis@unifr.ch)) wrote her dissertation on theological anthropology in Islam and holds a double doctorate from the University of Fribourg (CH) and Frankfurt am Main (GER). Her research interests include theological anthropology, Qur’anic studies, in particular models of revelation, and theological aspects of Muslim chaplaincy. She has held various positions at the Swiss Centre for Islam and Society at the University of Fribourg since 2015. She currently coordinates the Master’s programme ‘Islam and Society’ and the profiling of Islamic-theological studies in Fribourg. Since 2020, she has also been responsible for the project ‘Theology of Chaplaincy’, which designs and implements further education programmes for Muslim chaplaincy in collaboration with the association QuaMS. Since 2023, she has also been course director of the CAS ‘Muslim Chaplaincy in Public Institutions’.

## **Al-Mujadilah: Center & Mosque for Women**

Ismail, Iman A.<sup>1</sup>

(Bayan Islamic Graduate School, USA)

### *Abstract*

*Al-Mujadilah: Center & Mosque for Women*, a project of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, opened its doors to the public on February 4, 2024. The name and spirit of *Al-Mujadilah* is inspired by the story of Khawla bint Tha'labah, a female companion of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whose grievances against the improper divorce she was subjected to led to the revelation of the beginning of *Surat Al-Mujadilah*, and significantly shifted the Islamic laws of divorce. Located in Education City in the heart of Doha, Qatar, the Center & Mosque invites women to cultivate a community dedicated to growth and upliftment, to address injustices they face individually and communally in their daily lives, and to “study, dialogue, and worship in a community inspired by the tradition of the Mosque as the axis of society.”<sup>2</sup>

While the Center & Mosque offers numerous programs across its Religious, Developmental, and Social programming streams, it does not currently offer regular one-to-one or group sessions for personalized spiritual care. As a chaplain-in-training and Programming Officer at *Al-Mujadilah*, I have chosen *Al-Mujadilah* as my home for the first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). This has and will continue to allow me to explore the challenges of introducing chaplaincy practices in an environment almost wholly unfamiliar with this concept and with the practice of chaplains. This includes the additional unique challenge of placing chaplaincy in a non-Western context that is already serving a Muslim-majority population, where one's faith is not challenged but upheld and a source of privilege for many.

Between September 2024 to March 2025 throughout the duration of an extended CPE unit, I will investigate how spiritual care is received and responded to in the specific context of *Al-Mujadilah*. This poster presentation will delve into the unique environment of Education City as a microcosm of educational and academic resources, those both secular and Islamic, as a testing ground for spiritual caretaking through the role of a chaplain. I will speak to my personal and professional experience navigating the potential spaces where Islamic chaplaincy could ground itself in this unique innovation-driven environment in the heart of Doha. The expectation is one of initial resistance to seeking aid from an unfamiliar practitioner, but the hope is that by centering my work

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<sup>1</sup> **Iman A. Ismail** ([iaismail@qf.org.qa](mailto:iaismail@qf.org.qa)) is a Sudanese-American Muslim chaplain-in-training, pursuing her Master of Divinity in Islamic Chaplaincy at Bayan Islamic Graduate School. She is also a Programming Officer at *Al-Mujadilah: Center & Mosque for Women* in Doha Qatar, established in February 2024. She facilitates the Center's religious and social programs, selecting and coordinating between local and international instructors who offer programs in Arabic and English, across a number of program cycles annually.

<sup>2</sup> “Home”, *Al-Mujadilah*, <https://almujadilah.qa/en>

on university students and converts, who often sit at an especially vulnerable period of their lives, there will be a gradual acceptance of the utility of spiritual care for Muslims.

## Beyond the Algorithm: Ethical Considerations of AI in Muslim Chaplaincy

Jamal, Sadaf<sup>1</sup>

(University of Toronto, Canada)

### *Abstract*

The ethical considerations of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in culturally and faith-responsive psychotherapy and mental health care present a significant interdisciplinary challenge in an increasingly digital world. Within the context of Muslim chaplaincy, the question arises: can AI facilitate meaningful spiritual care rooted in Islamic tradition, or does it inherently lack the ability to nurture authentic human and spiritual connections essential for pastoral care? While AI enhances accessibility to mental health services, its effectiveness in addressing the complex spiritual and theological concerns of Muslims remain largely unexamined. This research investigates whether AI can serve as a tool for Muslim chaplaincy that honors Islamic principles and the lived experiences of diverse Muslim communities or whether it perpetuates exclusionary biases based on race, gender, culture, and faith.

In Muslim chaplaincy, the pastoral role is deeply intertwined with sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust (*amanah*), and wisdom (*hikmah*), elements that are central to fostering a safe space for healing. The study critically examines whether AI can replicate these essential chaplaincy qualities or whether its inherent artificiality limits its capacity to provide meaningful guidance grounded in Islamic ethics. This study employs a comparative methodology, contrasting AI-driven psychotherapy with Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) to examine the interplay between artificial and natural therapeutic modalities. Drawing inspiration from the sacred Islamic tradition—particularly the Quranic depiction of horses as mirrors of human emotions (Surah Al-Adiyat 100:1-5)—this research leverages the spiritual significance of horses to assess AI's capacity to support spiritual care.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration with the Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto, this research will explore the ethical dimensions of AI algorithm design, including colonial biases embedded in search engines and decision-making systems that impact the accessibility and cultural responsiveness of mental health care for marginalized Muslim communities. The project will analyze how AI systems process and interpret Islamic theological

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<sup>1</sup> **Sadaf Jamal** is a Registered Psychotherapist, Equine-Assisted Psychotherapist, and a PhD Student at the University of Toronto. She is studying the intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Islamic Psychotherapy. Sadaf has a Master of Science from University of Waterloo. She holds a Masters in Psychotherapy and Spiritual Care (MPS) as well as Masters in Theological Studies (MTS) from the University of Toronto – Emmanuel College. She is the founder of Move N Improve Canada - a non-profit organization providing mental health and wellness services to the Muslim community. She has received Leading Women Building Communities Award from the House of Commons of Canada. She is a gold medalist in women's doubles badminton tournament and enjoys playing softball. Connect with Sadaf Jamal on Psychology Today or Instagram @MoveNimprove\_



concepts of Muslim chaplaincy, examining whether these technologies align with or distort Islamic spiritual care practices.

The findings will have extensive implications for AI ethics in the field of Muslim chaplaincy and culturally responsive mental health care. This study urges a reconsideration of regulatory frameworks to ensure that AI-driven systems serve the ethical and spiritual needs of Muslims rather than reinforce hegemonic paradigms that marginalize faith-based healing. Additionally, it will address broader philosophical questions in Muslim chaplaincy: Does AI's increased automation and simulation diminish our reliance on *tawakkul* (trust in God), *tafakkur* (deep reflection), and our inherent human intuition? Can AI uphold the *adab* (etiquette) of sacred pastoral care in Islamic traditions, or does it risk reducing faith-based mental health support to mechanized responses devoid of spiritual depth?

Ultimately, this study illuminates future directions in research for Muslim chaplaincy. For example, in what ways can AI developers and Muslim chaplains collaboratively guide AI-driven technologies that support holistic chaplaincy while upholding the values of *rahma* (compassion) and *ihsan* (excellence), ensuring the dignity, spirituality, and well-being of Muslim communities in an AI-mediated world?

## **Still Challenging: Muslim Women in Chaplaincy in Turkey**

Karacan, Durali<sup>1</sup>

(Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey)

### *Abstract*

The present research examines the role of Muslim women in chaplaincy in Turkey, focusing on the challenges they encounter in their professional practice. In recent decades, Muslim chaplaincy has expanded considerably in Turkey, providing services throughout many institutional environments, such as hospitals, universities, and prisons. Accordingly, the number of theology faculties, including faculties of Islamic education, has significantly increased in the last decades. These faculties are the only authorized educational institutions that train students for chaplaincy services. Currently, it is estimated that there are over 100 faculties and a total of 125,000 students in these faculties. Notably, the majority of both current students and graduates are female students. However, the implementation and structure of Muslim chaplaincy continue to face obstacles, particularly in relation to gender dynamics and the status of women.

The limited representation of women chaplains is one of the most important problems in the development of Muslim chaplaincy in Turkey. Despite the increasing recognition of the necessity for gender-sensitive spiritual care, societal expectations and religious interpretations in Turkey frequently restrict the role that women can assume in formal chaplaincy positions. This qualitative study will involve interviews with 10 Muslim women chaplains in Turkey to explore the challenges that they encounter in their professional roles. The interviews will be held with female spiritual/religious counsellors and female preachers in Turkey. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be applied for analysing the data that will have acquired semi-structured depth interviews. This research seeks to advance the development of women chaplains in Turkey by addressing the issues they encounter that hinder their progress.

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<sup>1</sup> **Durali Karacan** ([durali.karacan@ogu.edu.tr](mailto:durali.karacan@ogu.edu.tr)) is a lecturer in the department of Psychology of Religion at Eskisehir Osmangazi University in Turkey. He had a PhD degree from Brunel University London in the department of Social Work, College of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences. He has been undertaking research about Muslim minorities in the Western world, Muslim chaplaincy, Muslim men, gender roles among Muslim communities, and coping methods.

## **In Search of a Muslim Chaplaincy in Japan: A Study Group Project**

Kasai, Kenta<sup>1</sup> & Sachiko Hosoya<sup>2</sup>

(Sophia University & International University of Health and Welfare, Japan)

### *Abstract*

Our presentation will focus on a chaplaincy study group seeking to update Muslim chaplaincy in Japan. This is also a sociological action research project to monitor its impact.

The Muslim community in Japan is relatively small but growing, consisting of migrants from abroad and converts from within Japan, in addition to international students and business exchanges. It is estimated that there are more than 200,000 Muslims in Japan. There are reportedly more than 200 mosques or places of worship in the country.

The training of chaplains in Japan declined after an attempt was made half a century ago. It was revived in 2005 after a railway accident and in 2011 after the earthquake disaster as an attempt to systematically train interfaith chaplains. Several universities offered clinical pastoral training, including the first Muslim chaplaincy candidate. Muslim chaplaincy is not well known even among Muslims or Islamic scholars in Japan. However, chaplaincy services are needed to meet the spiritual and social needs of Muslims in Japan as a minority, especially in the areas of education and health care.

To raise awareness of the needs and academic importance of Muslim chaplaincy in Japan, we established a chaplaincy study group in 2021 and held seventeen seminars online. Speakers from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Iran were invited to give online lectures on the work of Muslim chaplains. The study group has had interfaith collaborations to invite speakers and audiences from other religious backgrounds. The group is also interdisciplinary and open to health care professionals, scholars of religion, scholars of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, and students of clinical pastoral education. The group has sparked an interest in chaplaincy among some young Muslims and encourages networking with other religious leaders and health care professionals.

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<sup>1</sup> **Kenta Kasai** Ph.D. ([kkasai@sophia.ac.jp](mailto:kkasai@sophia.ac.jp)), is a professor at the Graduate School of Applied Religious Studies, Sophia University. He works as a supervisor for the Japanese non-denominational chaplaincy training education.

<sup>2</sup> **Sachiko Hosoya** is a Professor of International University of Health and Welfare. As a Public Health Nurse with a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Studies, she provides medical/interpreting support to the Middle Eastern diaspora living near Tokyo.

## The Use of the STIV/SDAT Model for Providing Spiritual Care to Muslim Patients

Khechaf, Driss<sup>1</sup>

(Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium)

### *Abstract*

Our workshop delves into the application of the STIV/SDAT model (Sense, Transcendence, Identity, and Values) to provide spiritual support to Muslim patients. This innovative model seeks to integrate the spiritual dimension into a comprehensive care approach, addressing spiritual disturbances that influence patients' overall well-being.

The workshop begins by introducing the context and relevance of the STIV/SDAT model. It highlights the necessity of this method to meet patients' specific spiritual needs, especially in situations of distress or uncertainty. Participants will explore the various steps of spiritual assessment, including the evaluation of sub-dimensions (sense, transcendence, values, and psychosocial aspects of identity) and the classification of disturbance levels.

The workshop adopts an interactive format, featuring a role-play exercise to demonstrate the process of conducting patient interviews and designing a coordinated care plan. Special emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary meetings, which allow for the exchange of professional perspectives, adaptation of recommendations to individual needs and preferences, and collaboration to deliver holistic care.

In conclusion, this workshop provides participants with an in-depth understanding of the practical use of the STIV/SDAT model, supported by validated research findings. By integrating spirituality into healthcare, this model significantly enhances patients' overall well-being and enriches interdisciplinary care practices in healthcare settings.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr **Driss Khechaf** ([driss.khechaf@uclouvain.be](mailto:driss.khechaf@uclouvain.be)) is a religious scholar and a spiritual caregiver at Brugmann hospital in Brussels. Born in 1981 in Morocco, he earned his doctorate in religious studies from the faculty of theology at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) in 2024. Prior to his doctoral studies, Khechaf obtained a master's degree in religious studies and secularism from the Free University of Brussels (ULB) in 2020 and a professional master's in spiritual care from the University of Rotterdam in 2018.

## Intersections between Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology and Islamic teachings

Kholaki, Sondos<sup>1</sup>

(The Majlis, California, USA)

### Abstract

This paper examines the intersections between Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology - central to North American chaplaincy - and Islamic teachings, particularly in relation to self-actualization and personal growth, while highlighting key differences. In North America, Muslim chaplains typically receive comprehensive clinical training through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which is grounded in a Rogerian, non-directive approach. When working with non-religious or non-Muslim clients, Muslim chaplains often adopt this approach due to institutional restrictions against proselytization or related activities. However, challenges arise when Muslim chaplains - particularly those who receive minimal or no formal training in Islamic studies - apply this non-directive model to their work with Muslim clients. This can be problematic, as the non-directive method overlooks the prophetic imperative of "calling to God, with His permission" (Qur'an 33:46), thereby diminishing the religious guidance central to Islamic chaplaincy.

Rogers' holistic understanding of individuals aligns with Islam's view of humans as integrated beings, and his emphasis on self-awareness and growth mirrors Islamic concepts like *tazkiyah* (self-purification) and *muhasabah* (self-reflection). However, Rogers' focus on individual autonomy contrasts with Islam's reliance on divine revelation. While Rogers sees personal experience as the ultimate truth, Islam asserts that divine guidance, through the Qur'an and Sunnah, is the final authority. In comparison, Rogers' client-centered therapy focuses on allowing individuals to explore their own inclinations without external moral guidance. While effective in secular or interfaith contexts, this method may not fully align with Islamic chaplaincy, which integrates faith-based solutions, emphasizing both spiritual and practical counsel. Ideally, a Muslim chaplain moves between directive, coaching, and educating styles, emulating the example of the Prophet Muhammad (s).

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<sup>1</sup> **Sondos Kholaki** ([skholaki@gmail.com](mailto:skholaki@gmail.com)) serves as a board-certified hospital and community chaplain in Southern California. She is the author of the award-winning book, "Musings of a Muslim Chaplain" and a co-editor of "Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America."

## **Musings of a Muslim Chaplain**

Kholaki, Sondos<sup>1</sup>

(The Majlis, California, USA)

### *Abstract*

This writing workshop aims to empower Muslim chaplains to transform their daily encounters into compelling narratives that resonate with both diverse Muslim communities as well as society at large. Islamic chaplaincy is an often misunderstood field, and effective storytelling offers a powerful tool to bridge this gap. By learning to capture and reflect upon their experiences in a narrative format, chaplains can both educate diverse Muslim communities about their critical role and spiritual impact and offer valuable contributions to the growing body of knowledge in the field.

The workshop will draw inspiration from my book, "Musings of a Muslim Chaplain," which reflects on the intersection of faith, compassion, and service. The book, while rooted in Islamic principles, speaks to the universal need to be heard, seen, and loved—core tenets that resonate across faiths and cultures. The book is currently a top seller at a local secular bookstore, illustrating how Muslim chaplains can write in a way that is both deeply personal and universally relatable.

In addition to engaging storytelling, this workshop will emphasize the importance of capturing experiences in an accessible narrative format, helping to preserve these encounters for further use such as case studies for academic analysis and rich data for examining methodologies and techniques, facilitating the development of best practices of spiritual care approaches.

Participants in this workshop will explore the power of narrative to highlight the spiritual care they provide, demystify their role, and communicate the ways in which they use their faith to serve others. The workshop will provide hands-on exercises, offer writing prompts, and guide participants through the process of crafting reflective, accessible stories that connect with all audiences, fostering greater understanding of the crucial role they play in spiritual and emotional care while contributing to the academic advancement of Islamic chaplaincy.

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<sup>1</sup> **Sondos Kholaki** ([skholaki@gmail.com](mailto:skholaki@gmail.com)) serves as a board-certified hospital and community chaplain in Southern California. She is the author of the award-winning book, "Musings of a Muslim Chaplain" and a co-editor of "Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America."

## Standards & Accountability for Muslim Chaplains

Mattson, Ingrid<sup>1</sup>

(Huron University, Canada)

### *Abstract*

For many decades, chaplaincy training programs have shared a foundation in established principles of pastoral care which make room for individual and congregational care. Broad social changes in religious identities and sources of funding have created pressures on these programs, with some now putting less emphasis on community care, while placing more emphasis on a “spiritual care,” “wellness,” or therapeutic model of care. In these programs, the chaplain is held accountable primarily to principles and practices shared with other caring professions, and the religious identity of the chaplain becomes less significant to effective job performance. While these programs and chaplain services help support many individual Muslims, there remains a significant demand for chaplains who are capable of supporting congregations and communities. On the institutional level, correctional systems and military services, among other systems with ‘captive’ populations, are legally required to enable access to congregational services. And many North American and European Muslims expect to receive a model of care evidently grounded in a distinctive theological identity or school of thought. In such settings, there is always a need, and often a requirement, that the chaplain secure a form of endorsement from a Muslim religious organization. In some cases, the requirements for Islamic endorsement seem to conflict with the ethical demands of the profession.

In this presentation, Professor Mattson will explore the theological and ethical foundations of this apparent conflict and propose principles for reconciling perceived divergences in views about the role and identities of Muslim chaplains, and the standards to which they should be held accountable. This will include a discussion of the necessity for chaplaincy programs to give sufficient attention to the application of ethical principles in the context of specific cultural and religious communities. To further this goal, Dr. Mattson will identify key theological concepts and ethical practices from the Islamic tradition that should be understood by chaplaincy educators and supervisors for the improvement and integration of Muslim chaplains in the profession, and to ensure better and more professional service to their clients.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Ingrid Mattson** ([imattson@uwo.ca](mailto:imattson@uwo.ca)) has held numerous distinguished academic and leadership positions. From 1998 to 2012 she was Professor of Islamic Studies at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut where she developed and directed the first accredited graduate program for Muslim chaplains in North America and served as Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. Since 2012 she has held the London and Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University College at Western University in London, Canada. From 2001-2010 Dr Mattson served as Vice-president, then as President of the Indiana-based Islamic Society of North America.

## Clinical pastoral education in Muslim chaplaincy education and practice

Nuzum, Daniel<sup>1</sup>, Sabia Rehman<sup>2</sup> & Aziz Patel<sup>3</sup>

(University College Cork, Ireland, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals & Greater Manchester mental health hospitals NHS, UK)

### Abstract

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is the predominant specialised training model for healthcare chaplains in many parts of the world. It is a multi-faith/belief training modality focussing on the development of the person of the chaplain alongside clinical skills development and robust integrative theological reflective practice. In the United Kingdom, previous models of chaplaincy training for Muslim Chaplains have focussed on faith specific training and endorsement. This approach has not provided generic chaplaincy skills thereby limiting opportunities for career progression and leadership roles.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Daniel Nuzum** ([daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie](mailto:daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie)) is a Board-certified Healthcare Chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor & educator based at Cork University Hospital, Ireland. He is also an adjunct lecturer in the College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork and a pastoral carer on the specialist palliative care team at Marymount University Hospital and Hospice, Ireland. Daniel received his PhD from University College Cork in 2016 where his thesis was 'The spiritual and professional impact of stillbirth' and is an active member of the Pregnancy Loss Research Group at University College Cork. Daniel is an editor of Health and Social Care Chaplaincy. Daniel's research interests are in the areas of care following miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal bereavement, spirituality in specialist palliative care, pastoral education, wellbeing and healthcare ethics. Daniel supervised the first pilot units of CPE for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24.

<sup>2</sup> **Sabia Rehman** graduated with a degree in Islamic Theology. She has built a distinguished career teaching Arabic and Religious Education in secondary schools and leading Quranic memorisation classes. In 2008, Sabia was appointed as the first Muslim Chaplain across three NHS trusts, including Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, where she continues to serve. Sabia also holds executive roles in the British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA), she is an executive member of the National Burial Council and plays a key role in community initiatives, particularly in bereavement care for the Muslim community. Sabia was part of the first pilot units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24 and is preparing to continue her CPE journey.

<sup>3</sup> **Aziz Patel** has served as an Imam at different Mosques across Merseyside and Greater Manchester England. He graduated at the Islamic Seminary, Jamia tul ilm wal huda in Blackburn with a Alimiyah degree and now teaches Arabic and Islamic sciences in the north west of England. After spending a few years as the Muslim chaplain at the University of Chester, Aziz was appointed as a mental health chaplain at Greater Manchester mental health hospitals NHS. Aziz was part of the first pilot units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24 and is preparing to continue his CPE journey.



The aim of this project was to introduce CPE into the English context as a pilot programme for training healthcare chaplains. It was established with the intention of being a multi-faith/belief programme. Three units of CPE were successfully run at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and these units included Muslim Chaplains. This study set out to evaluate the impact of CPE for experienced chaplaincy participants in a UK context.

Participants developed increased skills along various pathways: confidence, reflective practice, emotional intelligence, listening and attending skills, diversity in chaplaincy care, and spiritual assessment. Survey results confirmed several themes, indicating gains in chaplaincy capabilities, emotional intelligence, and counselling self-efficacy, in addition to increased confidence in working beyond faith specific limitations and in leadership skills

CPE successfully provided a transformative learning opportunity for Muslim chaplains, training alongside chaplains of other beliefs. The benefits were mutually experienced for Muslim chaplains and those of other faith/belief -religious and non-religious- creating a deeper appreciation for shared practice and a greater appreciation of the distinctiveness of spiritual care in a Muslim context.

## Clinical Pastoral Education as a Methodology in Muslim Chaplaincy Education

Nuzum, Daniel<sup>1</sup>, Sabia Rehman<sup>2</sup>, Aziz Patel<sup>3</sup> & Mark Newitt

(University College Cork, Ireland, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, Greater Manchester mental health hospitals NHS & St. Luke's Hospice, UK)

### Abstract

The development of a chaplain's identity as both an integrated individual and a reflective healthcare professional is central to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). From an Islamic perspective, CPE offers opportunities for critical reflection on key spiritual principles—such as *Rahmah* رحمة - compassion and mercy, *Sabr* الصبر - patience, *Tawakkul* التوكل - trust in God, *Niyah* النية - intention, and *Karamah* كرامة human dignity and how these are cultivated alongside clinical pastoral skills in the formation of Muslim healthcare chaplains.

Moreover, Muslim chaplaincy in healthcare differs from other forms of community service by virtue of its integration within a clinical team, its focus on *islah* إصلاح - the spiritual reformation of

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Daniel Nuzum** ([daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie](mailto:daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie)) is a Board-certified Healthcare Chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor & educator based at Cork University Hospital, Ireland. He is also an adjunct lecturer in the College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork and a pastoral carer on the specialist palliative care team at Marymount University Hospital and Hospice, Ireland. Daniel received his PhD from University College Cork in 2016 where his thesis was 'The spiritual and professional impact of stillbirth' and is an active member of the Pregnancy Loss Research Group at University College Cork. Daniel is an editor of Health and Social Care Chaplaincy. Daniel's research interests are in the areas of care following miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal bereavement, spirituality in specialist palliative care, pastoral education, wellbeing and healthcare ethics. Daniel supervised the first pilot units of CPE for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24.

<sup>2</sup> **Sabia Rehman** graduated with a degree in Islamic Theology. She has built a distinguished career teaching Arabic and Religious Education in secondary schools and leading Quranic memorisation classes. In 2008, Sabia was appointed as the first Muslim Chaplain across three NHS trusts, including Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, where she continues to serve. Sabia also holds executive roles in the British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA), she is an executive member of the National Burial Council and plays a key role in community initiatives, particularly in bereavement care for the Muslim community. Sabia was part of the first pilot units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24 and is preparing to continue her CPE journey.

<sup>3</sup> **Aziz Patel** has served as an Imam at different Mosques across Merseyside and Greater Manchester England. He graduated at the Islamic Seminary, Jamia tul ilm wal huda in Blackburn with a Alimiyah degree and now teaches Arabic and Islamic sciences in the north west of England. After spending a few years as the Muslim chaplain at the University of Chester, Aziz was appointed as a mental health chaplain at Greater Manchester mental health hospitals NHS. Aziz was part of the first pilot units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for NHS England based at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in 2022-24 and is preparing to continue his CPE journey.

the heart and the specialised training it requires, often involving CPE. These chaplains address complex emotional, spiritual, and existential needs, especially in situations involving serious illness or end-of-life concerns, while adhering to professional accreditation standards. Through a combination of theological grounding, reflective practice, and collaboration with clinical teams, Muslim healthcare chaplains provide a distinct level of care that extends beyond general community service. In the United Kingdom, however, previous training models for Muslim chaplains have primarily emphasised faith-specific instruction and endorsement within a predominantly religious framework

The aim of this workshop is to provide an experiential opportunity for participants to engage with two educational methodologies from the CPE process: an interactive/participatory verbatim presentation and a guided reflective exercise exploring the personal, pastoral, and professional identity of the chaplain as a healthcare professional.

In addition, the workshop will integrate Islamic theological and spiritual principles such as *Maghfirah* - forgiveness, *Shukr* gratitude, and *Muraqabah* reflection based on two case studies from Muslim participants in the programme. The content of this workshop is drawn from the established practice and methodology of CPE, as well as from the experience of the pilot programme of three units of CPE in the United Kingdom, in which Muslim chaplains trained alongside chaplains of other religious and non-religious beliefs.

## Exploring the Islamic Concept of the *Nafs* and Its Integration into the Practice of Muslim Pastoral Care in the UK

Razeek, Safra<sup>1</sup>

(Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK)

### Abstract

The presentation highlights the concept of the *nafs* (self or soul) within the Islamic framework and explores its potential contributions to the practice of Muslim pastoral care in the UK. Rooted in Qur'anic teachings and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the research examines the holistic nature of human beings, focusing on the interconnections between the *nafs*, *aql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit). As the demand for effective Muslim representation in pastoral care increases in the UK, this study identifies key gaps in current practices, particularly the integration of Islamic theological principles into established professional chaplaincy models. By drawing on Islamic psychology and the science of the *nafs* (*ilm an nafs*), the research underscores the significance of understanding the human being through a theological lens to inform compassionate care strategies. It critiques the limitations of secular psychological approaches, which often fail to address spiritual needs, and proposes the reintegration of Islamic theological frameworks for a more comprehensive and spiritually informed care approach.

The poster highlights the central role of the Qur'an in guiding pastoral care and emphasises the effectiveness of spiritual practices such as *dua* (supplication), *salah* (prayer), and *adhkaar* (remembrance of Allah) in alleviating distress. Findings indicate that Muslim pastoral care is an emerging field, one that requires standardisation, professional development, and closer alignment with Islamic teachings. The research concludes that understanding the *nafs* as a dynamic and reformable aspect of the human being can enable chaplains and pastoral care providers to deliver more effective, ethical, and spiritually relevant support, ultimately fostering peace and contentment in this life and the Hereafter. Recommendations for advancing Muslim pastoral care include collaborative efforts to incorporate spiritual care within broader therapeutic models, along with tailored interventions to address the emotional and spiritual needs of Muslim patients. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge surrounding Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> **Safra Razeek** ([s.z.razeek@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:s.z.razeek@lboro.ac.uk)) has an MA in Islamic Education and is the Head teacher at Markfield Maktab. She completed her BA in Islamic Studies and Pastoral Care in 2022. She was the youngest member ever to be appointed at the Ilma Education Foundation Colombo where she offered her services on an honorary basis for almost a decade. After completing her Diploma in Taleemul Quran she volunteered as a teacher at Al Huda Institute. She is a founder of Angels Academy Colombo, a supplementary Islamic school for children and Wings of Humanity charity foundation that connects donors to empower the underprivileged in Sri Lanka. She enjoys water colour painting and Arabic calligraphy in her free time. She hopes to build a positive mental health culture among Muslims by extracting strategies deeply embedded within the Quran and Sunnah.

pastoral care, aiming to strengthen both its theoretical and practical foundations to better serve the needs of Muslim communities in the UK.

## Trust and Professionalisation. The Case of a Muslim Chaplaincy Organisation

Schmid, Hansjörg<sup>1</sup>

(SZIG/CSIS – University of Fribourg, Switzerland)

### *Abstract*

Chaplaincy is closely linked to trust. This involves systemic trust in chaplaincy as an institution, which is interrelated with personal trust in chaplains. Muslim chaplains act as multiple persons of trust in the relationship with their clients and with other professionals. However, Muslim chaplains still largely have to build up their trust capital in a social context that is characterised by anti-Muslim racism and a struggle for distribution and recognition between different providers of religious, spiritual and social services in public institutions. Following theoretical considerations, the paper is dedicated to the development of Muslim chaplaincy in the canton of Zurich in Switzerland from 2017 to 2024, where the Muslim umbrella organisation VIOZ, together with the canton, has set up its own organisation dedicated to the quality assurance of Muslim chaplaincy, particularly in the hospital and asylum sectors. This case study based on participatory empirical research shows how transparency, institutionalisation and political support enable the development of professionalism and systemic trust for Muslim chaplaincy. In view of the conflictual and context-bound nature of this process, the limitations of a system-theoretical approach with its relatively high degree of abstraction become evident. Finally, the case shows that it must also be critically questioned who sets which standards of professionalism and which power relations are formative in this process.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Hansjörg Schmid** ([hansjoerg.schmid@unifr.ch](mailto:hansjoerg.schmid@unifr.ch)) is Director of the Swiss Centre for Islam and Society (SZIG/CSIS) and Professor of Interreligious Ethics at the University of Fribourg. He has led various projects on Muslim chaplaincy in hospitals and asylum centres and is responsible for the continuing education course (CAS) “Muslim Chaplaincy in Public Institutions” of the SZIG/CSIS. He is principal investigator of a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation on the topic of “Practices of Social Participation and Islamic Social Ethics”. He has published several research reports, journal articles and collections on Muslim chaplaincy in German and English.

## Faith in Action: Chaplaincy and Media Shaping Prison Rehabilitation

Shafiq, Haroon & Saqib Hussain<sup>1</sup>

(HMP Oakwood, UK)

### *Abstract*

This workshop presents innovative, faith-centred rehabilitation efforts designed to support Muslim inmates within the UK's largest prison, HMP Oakwood. With 25% of the prison population identifying as Muslim, these programs address both social and spiritual needs, promoting reformation and reducing recidivism. Project Unite (PU) is a prisoner-led initiative that empowers inmates to mentor peers through mental health support, conflict mediation, and faith-based workshops, fostering a supportive community and aiding rehabilitation. Complementing PU are Oakwood Media (OM) and Faith TV, unique media platforms managed by prisoners. OM and Faith TV broadcast a range of spiritual, educational, and rehabilitative content, supporting positive engagement across various faiths. Together, these initiatives equip inmates with skills and resilience for reintegration, reducing post-release challenges and enhancing personal growth.

The workshop integrates principles from criminology, religious studies, and social work, focusing on the impact of faith-based interventions and media literacy within correctional settings.

Our approach combines qualitative observation and program evaluation. The presentation, in video format, features first-hand testimonials, case studies, and insights into the roles of PU, OM, and Faith TV. The analysis includes engagement levels, inmate feedback, and behavioural outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of peer-led mentoring and faith-centred media in fostering stability and personal change among inmates. This holistic approach highlights how faith-driven, peer-led networks and innovative media support play a pivotal role in reducing recidivism and cultivating a rehabilitative prison culture.

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<sup>1</sup> **Saqib Hussain** ([saqib.hussain@uk.g4s.com](mailto:saqib.hussain@uk.g4s.com)): As a Muslim Chaplain and Senior Manager with over 13 years of experience in the prison system, I specialize in conflict resolution, particularly in mediating disputes among prison gangs. My role involves creating pathways for peace and rehabilitation, supporting inmates through transformative programs. Beyond my work in prisons, I'm actively engaged with the local community, offering guidance and mentorship to youth. I frequently speak at local schools, sharing insights on conflict resolution, personal growth, and community building to inspire the next generation to make positive choices and foster a sense of responsibility and unity in their lives.

**An ethnographic study to explore barriers and facilitators for terminally ill Pakistani Muslims to access palliative care in England through the lens of Chaplaincy**

Shafiq, Maysoon <sup>1</sup>

(Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

*Abstract*

Palliative care aims to help people live as well as possible and help them die with dignity. The Muslim Council of Britain's study (2019) found that most terminally ill Muslim patients do not access palliative treatment for various reasons, particularly social and cultural barriers. There is little research on why Pakistani Muslims do not access palliative care. Thus, the proposed research will explore and examine the wider factors, including familial, sociocultural and religious, that facilitate or hinder terminally ill Muslim Pakistanis living in England from accessing palliative care. It is a unique study because it is looking through the lens of Chaplaincy and determining whether spiritual support is an outlook for accepting the care. It will also investigate and compare the reasons and factors behind their preferences for staying in their home and getting care from family members instead of a hospital or social care setting.

This research will develop a framework for multidisciplinary teams and clinicians to provide culturally appropriate, accessible, and safe end-of-life care to terminally ill Muslim patients.

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<sup>1</sup> Maysoon Shafiq ([maysoon\\_shafiq@hotmail.com](mailto:maysoon_shafiq@hotmail.com)) is a dedicated and active Faith Leader known for her efforts in bridging gaps between different faiths and beliefs. She has played a vital role in fostering understanding and knowledge about Islam among both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Maysoon is currently in the final stages of her PhD at Sheffield Hallam University, where her research focuses on the underutilisation of palliative care services by the Muslim community. Her goal is to educate both community members and medical practitioners on providing culturally competent care.



## **He's a Muslim, a Chaplain, and an American: Is he really an American Muslim Chaplain?**

Stark, Harvey<sup>1</sup>

(California State University, USA)

### *Abstract*

This paper points to the importance of reflexive ethnographic narrative in exploring the limits and expanse of the American Muslim chaplaincy. By examining the narrative of a hospital chaplain and the positionality of the ethnographer, I discuss the intersecting identities that frame a chaplain's decision making in moments of crisis. The case of Abbas Chinoy, an American Muslim hospital chaplain who performed final rites on a dying Catholic child, is a story of the ambiguities connected with in-the-moment crisis decision making. Abbas, an American Shi'a with Monist beliefs, uses the hospital's chaplaincy manual as his guide to performing last rites. His narrative is one that illuminates the ways institutional setting, professional identity, and personal narrative indicate varying approaches to life and death decision making. The details provided through ethnographic narrative give deeper insight into a chaplain's process when the time to reflect and intellectualize is determined by instinctual reaction. While the intellectual and theological projects that chaplains are engaged in are crucial to understanding the interplay between the individual responses to a given situation, without the details an interviewee provides, it is difficult to assess the overlap between one's personal religious identity and their professional commitment. Finally, the lingering question is, how do we understand the process of decision making relative to our expectations of the efficacy of ritual and what are the criteria for proper chaplaincy practice?

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<sup>1</sup> **Harvey Stark** ([harvey.stark@csus.edu](mailto:harvey.stark@csus.edu)) is Associate Professor and Chair of the Humanities and Religious Studies department at CSUS. He has written several articles on the American Muslim chaplaincy and is currently working on an ethnography of American Muslim chaplains.

**Structure for *Shura* & *Suhba*: The Association of Muslim Chaplains and Its Contributions to Islamic Chaplaincy in North America**

Starr, Jaye<sup>1</sup>

(University of Michigan Hospital, USA)

*Abstract*

The Association of Muslim Chaplains, formed in 2011, supports over 240 members working across various chaplaincy sectors in North America providing professional development, resources, and spiritual rejuvenation while working to advance the field of Islamic chaplaincy. One of the most important roles of AMC is the way it puts Muslim chaplains in relationship with each other fostering *suhba* and *shura*. As most AMC members remain the ‘first and only’ Muslim chaplain in their institution, AMC provides important space for them to connect. It is a connection with *suhba* that not only reduces isolation, but also enables collaboration and *shura* with others connected to the *din* who also understand the context of the work.

In this presentation we will provide a snapshot of Muslim chaplains in North America, present the model that AMC uses, speak to how we got there, some of the challenges that AMC has faced, and what paths AMC might evolve to take. We believe that it will benefit chaplains in other locations to see this model while also helping researchers studying Muslim chaplains to see some of the ways that AMC has significantly contributed to the development of Islamic chaplaincy.

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<sup>1</sup> **Jaye Starr** ([jaye.starr.boz@gmail.com](mailto:jaye.starr.boz@gmail.com)) is a graduate of Hartford Seminary’s Islamic Chaplaincy Program and a chaplain at *University of Michigan Hospital*. Co-editor of *Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America*, she also serves on the board of the Association of Muslim Chaplains.

## **West Midlands Police Chaplaincy: Research findings and Strategic Vision**

Sulaiman, Khadija<sup>1</sup>

(West Midlands Police, UK)

### *Abstract*

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFS) report has mandated all Police Forces implement a Multi-Faith provision to staff in 2003. As police chaplaincy is still viewed as a Christian centric service, there is a requirement of development opportunities and an abundance need for Muslim chaplains in the force. This poster outlines the strategic vision for multifaith chaplaincy within West Midlands Police to encourage a space that promotes inclusivity to feel recognised and valued. The barriers which Muslim officers face is the perceived mistrust of Muslims within the police, institutional racism, Islamophobia and a lack of progression. Additionally, it demonstrates the negative view the Muslim community holds towards Muslim officers. Grounded in the three core strands – Our People, Our Partners & Our Communities – the aim is to build a cohesive and respectful environment. Using the guiding principles for multifaith services as a baseline: “Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care”, this strategy is designed to address the organisational needs whilst enhancing collaboration with partners and building trust with the communities.

Data was derived from the National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP) to evaluate the challenges Muslim officers face. Additionally, a series of questionnaires were distributed to twenty members of the Muslim community – 10 males and 10 females.

Findings indicated a poor representation of Muslim chaplains regionally and nationally, distrust between the Muslim community and the police and inconsistency with faith provision and spiritual care.

Recommendations are made to ensure the welfare of Muslim officers by establishing prayer spaces, easy access to faith provision and increase the numbers of Muslim chaplains. Looking ahead, the goal is to share the strategic vision nationwide, create better workplace adjustments to suit spiritual needs and further integrate Muslim chaplaincy nationally into care plans to be recognised as a vital aspect of holistic wellbeing. The aim is to grow and develop Muslim chaplains in UK policing; this will ensure the spiritual needs of officers are met which will then lead to effective policing in the UK.

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<sup>1</sup> **Khadija Sulaiman** ([khadija.sulaiman@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:khadija.sulaiman@westmidlands.police.uk)) is the Multifaith Lead Chaplain for West Midlands Police and the UK's first Muslim to lead a Police chaplaincy team. With 17 years of experience in chaplaincy, she has served in the NHS and the Prison service. An alimiyah graduate, she has also taught Islamic studies.

## **Between Faith and Healing: The Role of Spiritual and Religious Development in Muslim Chaplaincy**

Świecińska, Ayishah J.<sup>1</sup>

(University of Birmingham, UK)

### *Abstract*

This study explores the intersection of Islamic psychology, chaplaincy, and spiritual care, highlighting the impact of religious and spiritual development on mental health. While mainstream psychotherapy often approaches faith-based struggles through a pathologizing lens, Islamic therapeutic models view these crises as essential to self-purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and spiritual growth (Pargament, 2011). This research critically examines how Islamic counsellors integrate Islamic theological principles with psychotherapeutic approaches, offering faith-based counselling that fosters identity stability, emotional resilience, and holistic well-being (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014).

Findings suggest that faith-based interventions enhance psychological well-being by addressing religious struggles as developmental stages rather than pathology (Pargament, 2011; Koenig, 2012; Ok & Gennerich, 2024). However, without adequate training in theological counselling, chaplains may risk either spiritualising mental distress or reinforcing guilt and judgment (Shafranske & Sperry, 2005; Badri, 2018). This study contributes to Islamic chaplaincy and psychotherapy by advocating for a structured framework where spiritual and psychological care are fully integrated (Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). This integrated approach ensures that religious experiences are understood within their developmental context, facilitating a therapeutic model that nurtures spiritual resilience rather than pathologizing faith-based struggles.

Drawing from Islamic epistemology and contemporary psychological frameworks, this study incorporates Islamic Faith Development Theory (Üzeyir Ok & Carsten Gennerich, 2024), Traditional Islamically Integrated Psychotherapy (TIIP) by Keshavarzi & Haque (2014), and the tripartite soul model (*Nafs al-Ammarah*, *Nafs al-Lawwama*, *Nafs al-Mutma'innah*) as outlined by Rothman & Coyle (2018). This poster presents the first stage of my PhD research, a literature review on religious development through Western psychological models and Islamic perspectives. While my broader PhD employs phenomenology and hermeneutics, this stage is theoretical, drawing from Islamic epistemology and a literature review in developmental and spiritual psychology.

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<sup>1</sup> **Ayishah Świecińska** ([ajstherapy@yahoo.com](mailto:ajstherapy@yahoo.com)) is a PhD Candidate in Psychology at the University of Birmingham, specialising in Islamic psychology, psychotherapy, and faith-based counselling. She holds an MSc in Psychology, Diplomas in Psychotherapy and Islamic Counselling, and has authored works on Islamic personal development.

KEYNOTE

## **Chaplaincy and chaplaincy studies as the context for the development and contribution of Muslim Chaplaincy**

Todd, Andrew<sup>1</sup>

(Anglia Ruskin University, UK)

### *Abstract*

This lecture will explore the development of chaplaincy and chaplaincy studies, as the wider context for the development of Muslim Chaplaincy, and its contribution to practice and research.

I will argue that in different geographical settings, to different degrees, chaplaincy has undergone a pluralisation, in regard to religion and belief, that has been accompanied by a wider diversification. Over time this has involved significant, but also contested, changes in chaplaincy identity and practice, to accommodate, respond to and enable this pluralisation. I will also explore how the professionalisation of chaplaincy has been interwoven with its pluralisation.

I will suggest that chaplaincy studies, as a field, has emerged within this changing context. Key features of the field have been, and continue to be: mapping the diversification, and changing identity and framing of chaplaincy; researching changing practice(s), including contested areas; and contributing to practice through professional development in organisational settings and university programmes. I will consider how the development of chaplaincy studies has also represented a professionalisation – of the study of chaplaincy. Earlier models of critical reflection on chaplaincy practice (including theological reflection) have been joined by models of social scientific research. These two strands have together contributed to chaplaincy studies having academic, professional and public credibility.

The lecture will conclude with a case study focusing on the development and study of chaplaincy in prisons in the European context. The case study will offer a particular example of the involvement and contribution of Muslim chaplaincy in/to chaplaincy and chaplaincy studies.

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<sup>1</sup> **Revd Dr Andrew Todd** ([at851@theofed.cam.ac.uk](mailto:at851@theofed.cam.ac.uk)) is Director of the Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, and member of the European Research Institute for Chaplains in Healthcare. Prior to this he established the Cardiff University Centre for Chaplaincy Studies. He is a leading international authority in the field of chaplaincy studies, co-editing *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies* (Ashgate, 2015), and authoring numerous peer-reviewed international journal articles. Andrew was a member of the Steering Group for the research project that underpinned *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* (Gilliat-Ray, Ali, Pattison, Ashgate, 2013). Issues of religious diversity have been a sustained theme in his chaplaincy studies research, as evident in his chapter 'The Public Reconstruction of Religion and Belief in UK Prisons: Negotiating Diversity, Rights and Constraints,' in ed. Julia Martínez-Ariño and Anne-Laure Zwilling, *Religion and Prison: An overview of contemporary Europe* (Springer): 401-420, 2020.

## **A Practical Approach for Muslim Chaplains**

Turner, Mahshid<sup>1</sup>

(Durham University, UK)

### *Abstract*

In the absence of Muslim reflective practice, Muslim chaplains tend to follow either the secular or Christian models. The main aim of this workshop is to introduce and explore a unique six-step model grounded in Muslim theology, designed to assist Muslim chaplains in their roles.

The main commonality between Muslim chaplaincy pastoral care/shepherding and counselling is the attempt to help individuals examine their thought processes and change their behaviours accordingly. Muslim chaplaincy differs in the sense that it suggests lasting solutions to often profound existential problems and questions. This is what sets it apart from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is limited in its scope, with no locus for the offering of solutions which go beyond the material and into the vast and eternal domains of metaphysical and spiritual space. However, CBT is in a sense a Quranic concept by default, revealed over 1400 years ago, since it is concerned with the changing and development of human souls. While CBT encourages individuals to change their thought processes to be able to examine their experiences, it does not offer permanent or foundationally meaningful solutions to human existential problems or crises. By contrast, revelation points both to itself and to the 'book of the cosmos', replete with signs for all to read and to be guided.

Rather than following the secular or Christian models of shepherding, this workshop will introduce the six-step model which is largely based on the Quranic concepts of self-vigilance (*murāqaba*) and self-accounting (*muḥāsaba*). The six-step model will not only serve as an excellent framework for Muslim reflective practice but will also constitute as a conceptual backdrop against which chaplaincy work can be carried out.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dr Mahshid Turner** ([m.f.turner@durham.ac.uk](mailto:m.f.turner@durham.ac.uk)) is an independent researcher and lecturer. Also, Muslim chaplain for Durham University and the Head of Education and Outreach for the International Foundation for Muslim Theology. Dr Turner is involved in organising workshops and lectures at both national and international levels.

**Working with case studies: Organ donation after sudden infant death - challenges and support for the family**

Uçak-Ekinci, Dilek<sup>1</sup>

(SZIG/CSIS – University of Fribourg, Switzerland)

*Abstract*

This workshop offers insights into Muslim hospital chaplaincy practice by using a real case in which the parents of a child who died suddenly were confronted with an organ donation request. The case highlights the different perspectives of the parents and focuses on spiritual care in this difficult decision-making situation. The individual experiences of the participants, who are practitioners and researchers from diverse fields, will enrich the exchange and reflections for everyday professional life of healthcare chaplains. The participants will reflect on the ethical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the case and their significance in stressful crisis and grief situations as well as in sensitive decision-making. Through the systematic analysis of the case, not only specific aspects of spiritual care are discussed, but also the significance of case reports for the practice, teaching, and research of healthcare chaplaincy is highlighted.

The aims of the workshop are:

1. Facilitating a critical exchange on the challenges of Muslim healthcare chaplaincy in ethically demanding decisions and the role of chaplaincy in supporting decision-making skills and religious-spiritual orientation.
2. Illustrating the importance of the case reports for providing valuable insights for practical work while also demonstrating how case reports can be used as empirical material in scientific research.

Based on a detailed case presentation, participants will be invited to analyze the case in a structured interactive discussion to contribute their perspectives and experiences. Finally, the insights gained will be jointly reflected upon and their significance for everyday spiritual care in hospitals will be worked out.

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<sup>1</sup> **Dilek Uçak-Ekinci** ([dilek.ucak-ekinci@unifr.ch](mailto:dilek.ucak-ekinci@unifr.ch)) is working on her doctorate at the Swiss Center for Islam and Society (SZIG) at the University of Fribourg, and at the Chair of Spiritual Care at the University of Zurich on the topic of Muslim healthcare chaplaincy. She is a junior researcher in the project “Islamic Theological Studies: Diversity and Orientation”. She is also working as Head of Clinic and Hospital Chaplaincy at the Muslim Chaplaincy Zurich (QuaMS).

## **Muslim Chaplaincy in Ukraine: Intra-Islamic and Interreligious Experiences Reconsidered**

Yakubovych, Mykhaylo<sup>1</sup>

(University of Freiburg, Germany / Coventry University, UK)

### *Abstract*

Russian invasion into Ukraine posed a great challenge for Muslim community, not only because of the Crimean annexation of 2014 (where most of Ukrainian Muslims live), but also for the South and East of the country, also being “the most Muslim” area of Ukraine. According to the very approximate demographic estimates, up to 2014 most of 500.000-700.000 of Ukrainian Muslims lived in Crimea, Donec’k, Odessa and Kharkiv area. With the many people internally displaced (mostly to the Central-Western Ukraine), Ukrainian Muslim communities reacted to the war events with a different way, starting from active participation and finishing with total isolationism. The study is going to cover growth of Muslim chaplaincy in Ukraine, especially active after 2022, how different translational communities (traditional Sunni-Hanafi, Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi, Sufi) contribute to those developments by their experience of keeping ties with Muslim in army and pastoral care. Apart from theoretical implications, the research is based on the recent interviews conducted with Muslim chaplains in Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> **Mykhaylo Yakubovych** ([ae1004@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ae1004@coventry.ac.uk)), PhD, is a researcher of Muslim intellectual history in the Eastern-Central Europe, currently based in Freiburg, Germany and Coventry, UK. His recent publications include two monographs on Qur’anic hermeneutics in the region (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2024) as well numerous articles on Islam in Ukraine and beyond.