

# ***Palliative Care - A Muslim Perspective***

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# Muslim Beliefs

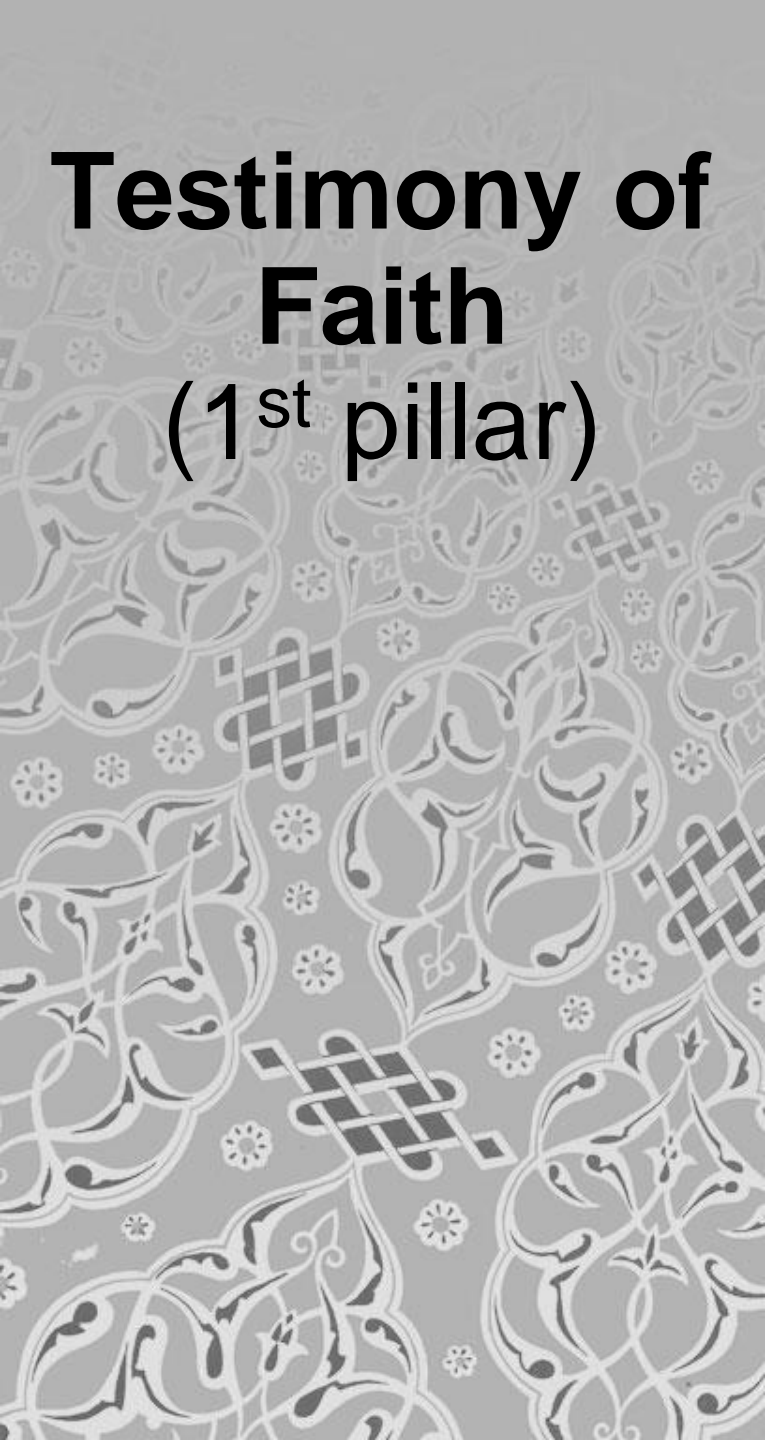
## 6 articles of faith

- Allah – Arabic word for God
- Angels (unseen realm)
- Scriptures/books
- Prophets
- Day of Judgment
- Divine decree (good and bad)



# Five pillars of Islam (actions)

	Arabic	Urdu/Punjabi
Testimony of faith	Shahadah	Shahadat
Prayer	Salah	Namaz
Alms-giving	Zakah	Zakat
Fasting	Siyam	Roza
Pilgrimage	Hajj	Hajj



# Testimony of Faith (1<sup>st</sup> pillar)

## Witnessing (shahadah)

A Muslim is one who believes and declares,

***“There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”***

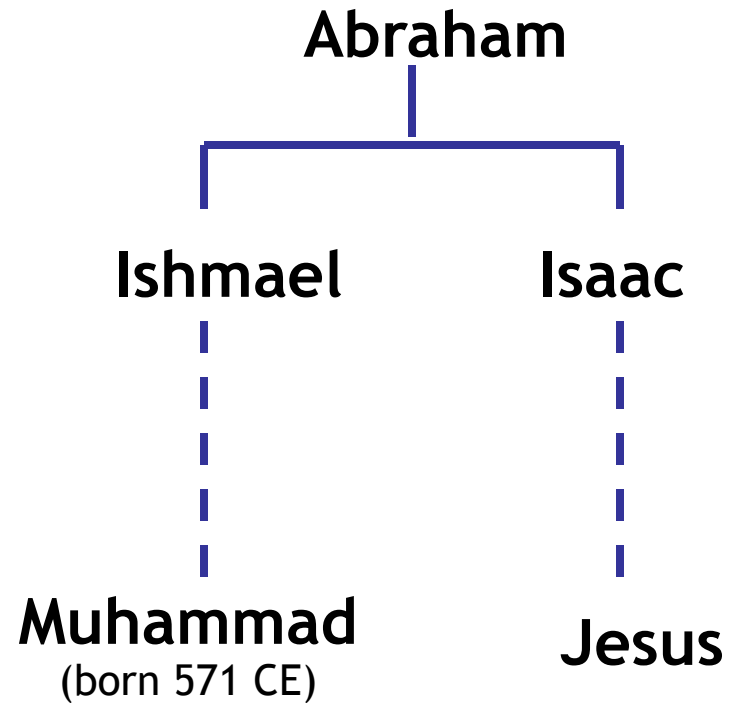
## Muhammad (pbuh)

- Prophet & last messenger
- Role model
- Descendant of Abraham through line of Ishmael



# Testimony of Faith

(1<sup>st</sup> pillar)





# Prayer

## (2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar)

### Obligatory Prayers (*Salah*)

For the practising Muslim,  
ritual prayers are offered at:

- ✧ Dawn
- ✧ Noon
- ✧ Late afternoon
- ✧ Sunset
- ✧ Night

Prayer timetables are easily  
downloaded



# Prayer

## (2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar)

### Location for prayer

- Quiet space/chapel/prayer room (ideally without symbols or icons)
- Room for bowing and prostrating
- Secure space in front
- For women, the backside secured from onlookers
- Depending on a person's degree of incapacity, prayers may be performed sitting or lying down
- *Qiblah* direction marked if possible (South East in UK)

# Prayer (2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar)



## Direction of Makkah (*Qiblah*)

- Qiblah sign
- If possible, the incapacitated patient might require physical assistance in positioning his chair or bed in the right direction





# Prayer

## (2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar)

### Washing for prayer (*Wudu'*)

- The hands, face, arms and feet are washed
- Ambulatory patients may need help to the bathroom for washing for prayer.
- Bedridden patients may request a jug of water and a large bowl
- Dry washing (*tayammum*)
- Women are excused from the ritual *salah* prayer during their periods of menstruation or post-partum bleeding



# Paying Welfare (3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar)

## Alms-giving (*Zakah*)

- 2.5% of excess wealth
- Distributed to the needy, including those in debt



# Fasting (4<sup>th</sup> Pillar)

## Fasting (*Sawm*)

- Abstinence of food, drink, sex between dawn and sunset
- Exemptions: elderly, children, ill, pregnant, those on a journey...
- May also be performed outside of Ramadan



# Pilgrimage to Makkah (5<sup>th</sup> Pillar)

## Pilgrimage to Makkah (*Hajj*)

- Once in a life-time
- Only for those who are able physically, circumstantially, financially ...
- Great physical hardships for many in rites of *Hajj*
- Humility and equality before God

# Sources of Guidance

## The Quran

- Revelations given to Muhammad
- Covers all walks of life; spiritual, social, economical, political
- Builds on previous texts sent before eg. Torah, Psalms, Gospels
- The last testament, the completion



# Sources of Guidance

## The Sunnah

- Way of life of Muhammad
- Prophetic sayings and behaviours (*hadith*)
- Culmination of the previous Prophetic traditions



# **Culture & Religious Belief**

## **Making assumptions!**

- Not all Muslims practice all aspects of the Islamic faith
- Many have not had the opportunity of increasing their knowledge of Islam
- Some who are aware of Islamic teachings put them into practice, others choose not to



# **Culture & Religious Belief**

## **Misconceptions**

- Some traditions clash with Islamic teachings
- Man-made traditions and superstitions that are confused with religion



# **Culture & Religious Belief**

## **Diversity**

- Many traditions are in line with Islamic teachings and these may vary between groups of people
- Different schools of thought
- Very diverse, both in culture and in religious belief

# Hospice



## Need for greater awareness

- 'Palliative', 'Hospice', 'Chaplain' – not in vocabulary!
- Misconceptions of being a place for Christians exclusively
- Dying at home



# Communication



## Explanation needed

- Patient entitlements
- Provision for religious needs
- Any tests, procedures and treatment needed
- Use of interpreters
- Availability of Muslim Chaplain

# Religious Figures in Islam

**Religious scholar, leader, guide**

**Imam**

**Mawlana**

**Molvi**

**Mufti**

**Mullah**

**Shaykh**

**‘Alim Hafiz**



# Communication

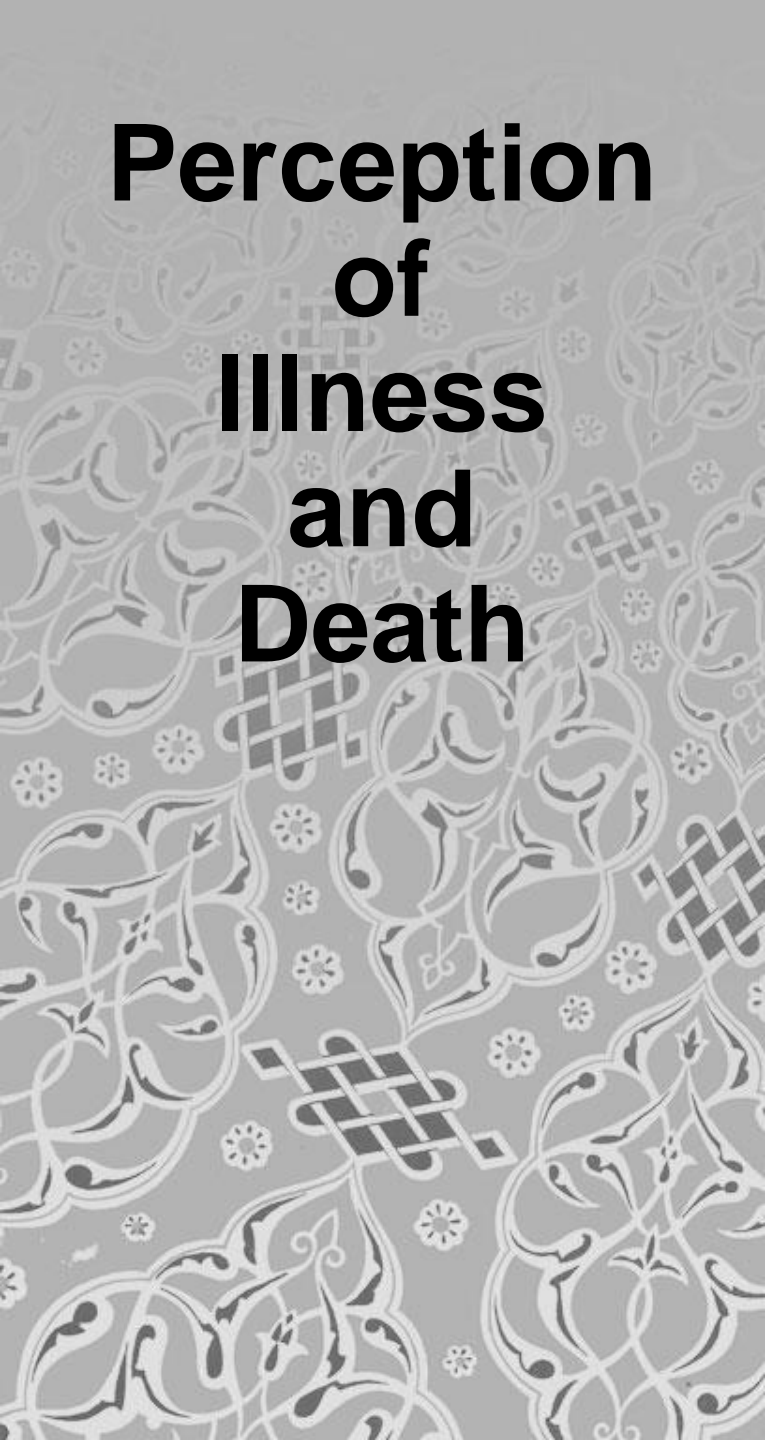
## Acknowledging religious and spiritual needs

***“I don’t know if you have any religious needs – but I thought I would let you know...”***

e.g. a copy of the Qur’an

***“If you want some quiet time to yourself – or you want to pray, I can close the curtain around you.”***

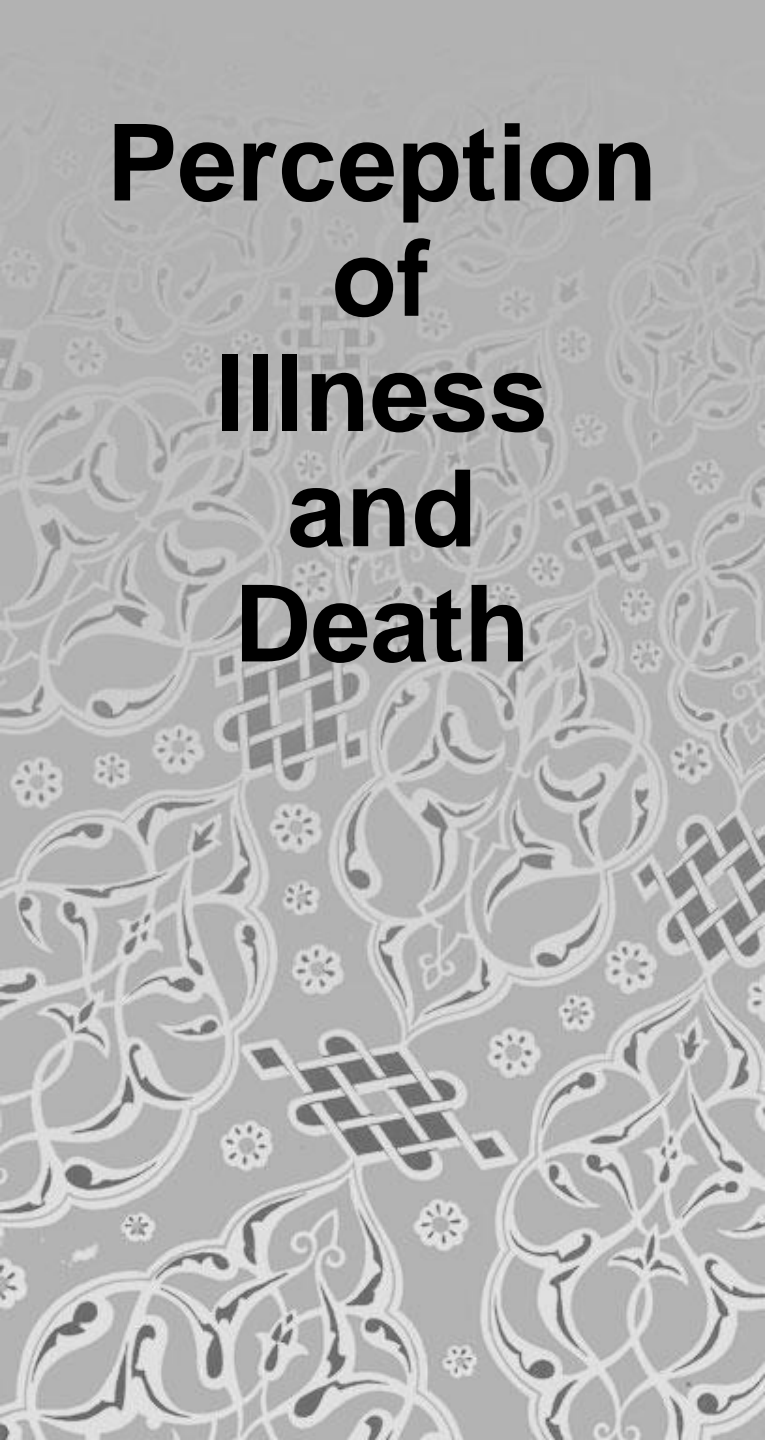
allowing the patient to have that space...



# Perception of Illness and Death

## Generally

- Muslims receive illness and death with patience and prayers
- Illness is considered a purification and may be an atonement for wrong actions
- Reward in the Hereafter
- Death is considered a journey to meet their Creator and a passage into eternal life
- However, to seek treatment and care is strongly encouraged



# Perception of Illness and Death

## When faced with illness

Serious time of deep reflection of the self and meaning of life

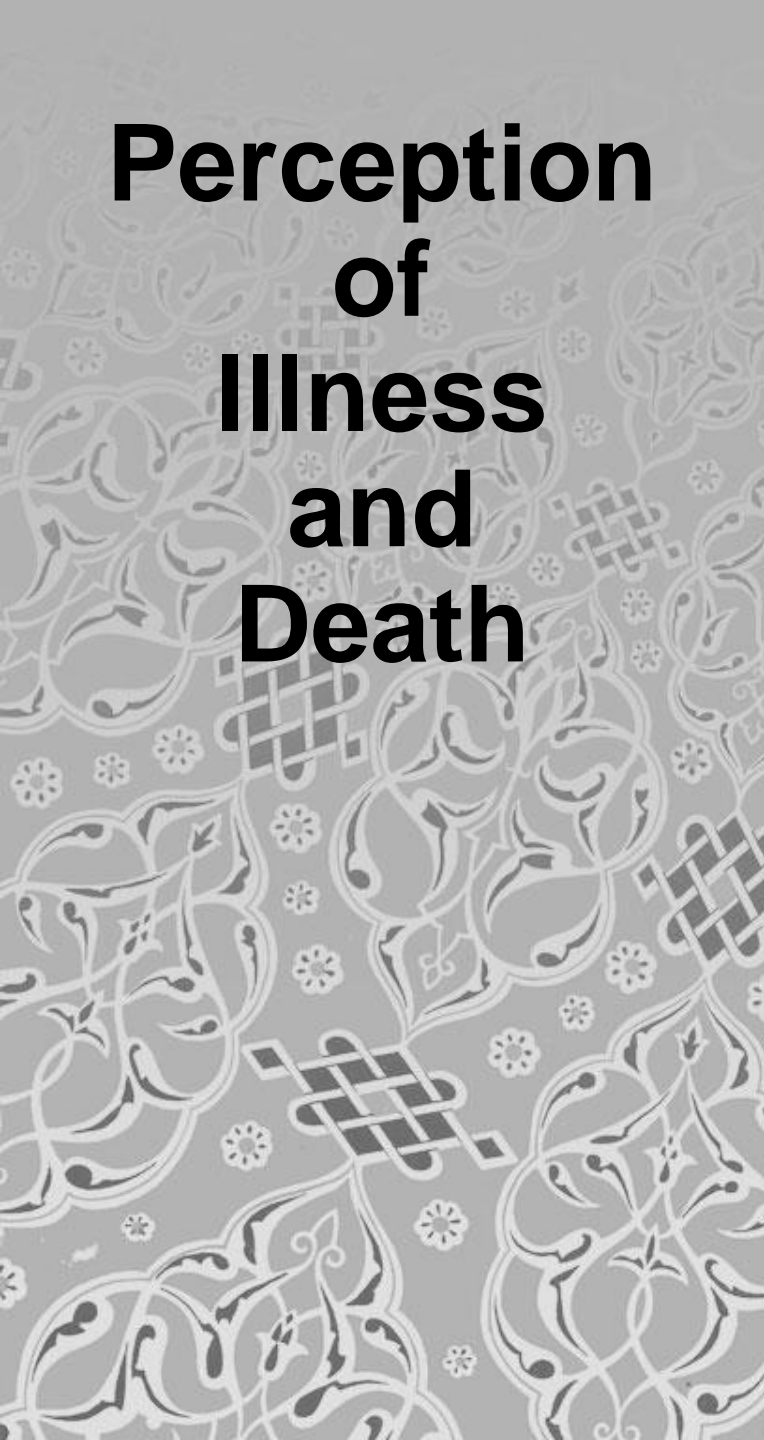
***Qur'an, 32:9***

***'Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit; and appointed for you hearing, and sight and hearts...'***

*... Fitra (innate nature)*

connecting with the self is more important now than ever





# Perception of Illness and Death

**Taking an account of one's  
deeds**

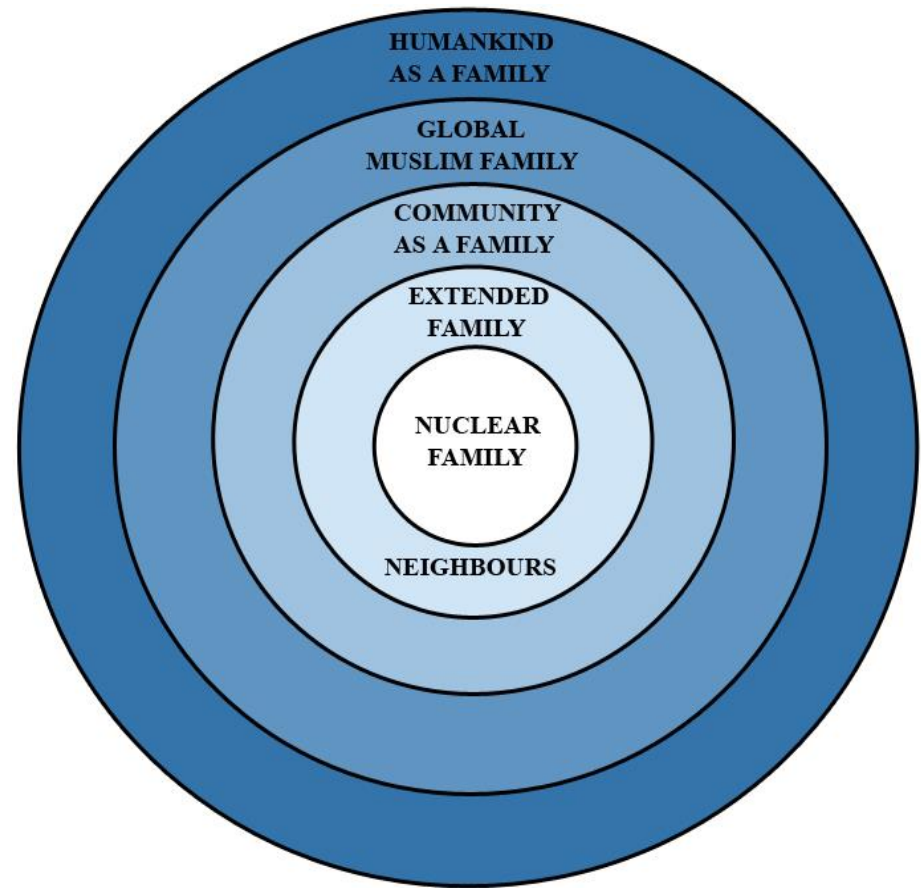
***Qur'an, 74:38***

***'Every soul is a pledge for its  
own deeds'***

Last chance of doing good deeds;  
charity, prayer, forgiveness, Qur'an  
recitation, supplication etc.

# Muslim Family

- Nuclear family
- Extended family and neighbours
- Community as a family
- Global Muslim family
- Humankind as a family





# Muslim Family

## Power relations

- Vary from family to family
- Parents, spouses, elder children in descending order, generally
- Useful for staff to identify who might be the spokesperson for the family

# Treatment

## Refusal to take medication

***“It is God’s will!”***

Treatment is also God’s will...

### ***Hadith***

***“Your body has a right over you, and so seek treatment, servants of God, for every illness God created, He created a treatment for it.”***

# Treatment

## Opioids and Sedatives

- Alleviation of suffering
- Maintaining a level of consciousness



# Visitors

## A religious duty

- Visiting and assisting the indisposed is a basic form of worship to bring one closer to God
- Many visitors, other than family and friends may come to see the patient

# Visitors

## A religious duty

### *Hadith Qudsi*

*‘O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him?...’*



# Provisions for Worship

## Resources

- The Qur'an – provides solace and comfort in reciting or listening to (audio tapes, CD's etc.)
- Availability of copies for personal recital
- Etiquette regarding the Qur'an
- Prayer beads
- Prayer mats

# Diet

## Halal food

- *halal* (lawful)
- *haram* (unlawful)



# Diet

## Forbidden (*haram*)

- Pork and pig products
- Flesh-eating animals
- Birds of prey
- Carrion
- Blood
- Alcohol and intoxicants
- Food ingredients, e.g. lard, animal fat, gelatine derived from non-halal sources

# Diet

## Lawful (*halal*)

- All other food is lawful
- ***“All things are allowed except that which is specifically forbidden.”***
- If in doubt Muslims would prefer to eat fish, eggs, or dairy products instead of meat
- Any products suitable for vegetarians (and not containing alcohol) will be *halal*
- Family will often bring food if there are no restrictions





# Personal Hygiene

## Keeping Clean

- Cleanliness is considered half of faith!
- Body waste such as urine, stools and menses can make the Muslim body impure preventing them from practicing their religious rituals



# Personal Hygiene

## Clothes

- The patient should not be left in clothes soiled by body waste
- Any clean clothes should conform to the code of dress especially while praying
- For patients who are incontinent pads should be provided and regularly changed especially before prayer times



# Modesty & Etiquette

## *Hijab*

- For men and for women
- '*Mahram*'
- e.g. her father, brother, son, uncle, nephew, grandfather etc. (i.e. the people to whom marriage would be prohibited)



# Modesty & Etiquette

## Social Interaction

- Behaviour and mannerism between men and women who are not 'mahram' to one another
- Being alone in privacy
- Physical contact, e.g. shaking hands
- Exceptions
  - Medical conditions
  - Emergencies



# **Modesty & Etiquette**

## **To allay anxiety**

- Separate ward/bay for female & male patients
- Examinations – only exposing the part to be examined at any one time while keeping the rest of the patient covered
- Preferably by staff of the same sex or if not possible in the presence of a chaperone
- Avoiding affectionate physical contact with members of opposite sex!



# Modesty & Etiquette

## Dignity and privacy

- The *Hijab* can be removed in privacy or in front of *mahram*
- Respect for patient's feelings by keeping hijab on even in theatre unless operation necessitates removal
- Permission should be sought from patient before allowing staff/visitors in, even if they are family members



# Dying

## Longevity of terminally ill

- Usually sceptical about definitive life expectancy responses
- Knowledge of time of death only with God
- However, families still prefer to be informed of imminent death

# Dying

## Hope for the next journey

*Muhammad (pbuh) visited a young man who was dying and asked him, "How do you feel?"*

*The man replied, "By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I have hope in Allah and I fear my sins."*

*to which the Prophet (pbuh) replied, "These two qualities do not dwell together in a person's heart in this situation(of dying) but Allah will grant him what he hopes, and save him from what he fears."*

# Dying

## Hope in the next life

***Qur'an, 39:53***

***'Despair not of the mercy of Allah, Who forgives all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful'***

# Dying

## When death is imminent

- The *shahadah* is recited in the ear of the dying patient to help them say it
- Members of family will keep a vigil by the patient's bed
- Chanting
- Qur'an recitation
- Positioning of bed to face *qiblah*
- Single bed/side room

# Dying



## Issues at Death

- Regard for the sanctity of life is an injunction
- Maintaining terminal patient on artificial life support for prolonged period in vegetative state not encouraged
- Assisted suicide and euthanasia not permitted
- Organ donation is a sensitive issue though allowed by many scholars
- Autopsy is not permitted unless required by law
- Cremation prohibited



# After Death

## Sensitive preparations

- Gender – male carer for male, female carer for female
- Use of gloves
- Removal of all connecting tubes
- Legs together, arms straightened
- Bandage to keep jaw closed
- Covering body e.g. hair on female



# After Death

## Preparation for burial

- The dead body is treated with gentleness, dignity and respect as in life
- Washing of the deceased by member of the same sex
- Wrapping in white shrouds
- Congregational prayer for the deceased
- Expeditious burial



# Death & Bereavement

## Bereavement

- Different generations... a changing culture
- Expressions of grief
- Women attending burials
- Counselling



# Death & Bereavement

## Death and sleep

***Qur'an 39:42***

***'It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect.'***

Connection with those who have passed away...



# Death & Bereavement

## Bereavement

- Family and community support network
- Need to identify families with sub-optimal resources



**And lastly...**

## **Supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)**

***Qur'an, 26:80-82***

***'And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me; Who will cause me to die, and then live (again); And Who, I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.'***