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Looking for Leadership: Discovering American Islam in the Muslim Chaplaincy

Stark, Harvey Ronald

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Looking for Leadership: Discovering American Islam in the Muslim Chaplaincy

Harvey Ronald Stark

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of Princeton University

in Candidacy for the Degree

of Doctor of Philosophy

Recommended for Acceptance

By the Department of

Religion

Advisor: Shaun Marmon

January 2015

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Dedicated to the memory of

Morris Stark (1930-1994)

&

Shaira Yasmin Ali (1996-2012)

Abstract

American Muslim chaplains represent a new type of leadership for American Islam and Muslims living in the United States. Through their institutional work and the fundamental aspects of their profession, which emphasizes pastoral care and healing in a variety of forms, these chaplains are engaged in a dynamic process of interpretation, reinterpretation, and negotiation of tradition. Be it the hospitals, universities, military, or prisons, chaplains interact with American Muslims and non-Muslims on diverse issues of concern to the institutions in which they work, the community they serve within those institutions, and the other communities of which they are a part, be they local, national, or global. Through the stories and lives of the American Muslim chaplains contained within its pages, this dissertation examines the ways American Muslim chaplains perform and articulate their engagement with conceptions of leadership and Islamic tradition. Although the American Muslim chaplaincy is a relatively new profession, it is fundamentally built on the assumption that Islam is an American religion, that there is a dialogic translation happening adapting Islam to the chaplaincy, and the chaplaincy to Islam. In this way, while Islamic concepts are being translated in and for an American context, these translations are being used to frame the chaplaincy for Muslim professionals. As a result, the American Muslim chaplaincy connotes a fluid process of interpretation, going beyond questions of identity and inclusion, to inquiries examining the ways that religious leaders understand their roles and develop news tropes in the communication of ideas.

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of religious professionals, who in the formative stages of their professional development would invite someone from the outside into their meetings and forums. I can only express incredulity, when I reflect upon all those moments in which different members of the chaplaincy community showed care and concern for my project.

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Introduction

Serendipity is an odd and wonderful thing. As fate would have it, I happened upon my father's personal papers and reflections on his religious experiences in the U.S. Army just as I began writing about the American Muslim military chaplaincy. In 1953, six years after arriving in the United States, my father was inducted and sworn into the United States Armed Forces. After 16 weeks of basic training at Fort Dix he was stationed in Heilbronn, Germany with the 60th infantry – Wharton barracks. It was only eight years since the United States Army had liberated him from the Gunskirchen Lager concentration camp.[1] His time in the army was punctuated by his attempts to practice Judaism in what was then and still is a significantly Christian institution; albeit one with a history of accommodation to the religious diversity found in American society more broadly. As he recounts: "Two days before *Erev Rosh Hashanah*...I went to see the chief chaplain and…expressed my wish to attend high-holiday services. The chaplain didn't know about the Jewish high holiday, however after some prodding…I [eventually] received my three-day pass…and I drove to Heidelberg."

He continued to pursue the issue, this time with an eye to creating a congregational service at the base, and was eventually granted permission to check personnel files in order to ascertain how many Jewish soldiers there were in the barracks. He found that there were 35. He then arranged for Friday night services at which 33 soldiers were in attendance. Eventually he arranged for a Rabbi from Stuttgart to come once a month to attend services. Prior to leaving the

[1] My father, Morris Stark's, time in the army as well as his internment in the concentration camps is documented in the archives of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC.

army, my father "ensured that the Catholic chaplain in charge requested an order, and a Jewish chaplain's assistant was assigned permanently."[2]

Although it may seem a stretch from the experience of a Jewish American soldier in the 1950's to the experience and stories told by contemporary American Muslim[3] chaplains, there are several important points of concurrence. First, is the comparative nature of Judaism and Islam's struggle for religious representation, status, and recognition in the United States, second it serves as an example of the relatively ad hoc nature of chaplaincy for religious minorities, and lastly, it is indicative of the vision of the chaplaincy as an interfaith vocation. Thus my father's struggles to attain recognition, his role as an unofficial if somewhat self-appointed lay religious leader, and his reliance upon someone, the Catholic chaplain, to continue his efforts upon completing his service, all point to the ways the chaplaincy is made manifest for minority religious groups in America. [4]

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[2] Ibid. The chaplain's assistant assigned was another soldier by the name of Mel (no last name was supplied) who had served as the prayer leader. Mel was knowledgeable in Judaism, but had not received any formal chaplaincy training. The military occupation specialty (MOS) of chaplain's assistant was established through General Order No. 253 by the War Department on 28 December 1909. Paragraph 1 read "One enlisted man will be detailed on special duty, by the commanding officer of any organization to which a chaplain is assigned for duty, for the purpose of assisting the chaplain in the performance of his official duties." For a detailed description of the development of the chaplain's assistant from its early history to its current status as a "stand alone" position see http://www.usachcs.army.mil/history_museum.html (last accessed July 3, 2014).

[3] Despite it limitations the composite term American Muslim is used throughout this dissertation. First, the incredible diversity of Islam in America means that one must always qualify who one is speaking about so as not to assume some monolithic identity. Second, I acknowledge that the term American encompasses a range of potential citizen groups from both North and South America the descriptor American Muslim will be used in this study to refer exclusively to those Muslims living in the United States. Third, it must be stressed that when speaking about the American Muslim community, the label Muslim is as much a religious as an ethnic identity. Muslim includes both those who see their religious practice and belief system as important and/or those who identify as Muslim from a purely cultural standpoint. This includes what is often referred to as the "mosqued" and "unmosqued." See Jane I. Smith, "Islam in America," in *Muslims in the West after 9/11: Religion, Politics, and Law*, ed. Jocelyne Cesari(London ; New York: Routledge, 2010). Smith notes that as with other religions in America "Muslims locate themselves on a continuum of secular…to very observant," 32-3. Lastly, the choice of American Muslim over Muslim American is one of convention and not of substance, as I see them as interchangeable and have not been convinced of the utility of the one over the other. For a brief discussion see http://www.scpr.org/blogs/multiamerican/2011/05/09/7661/american-muslim-or-muslim-american/ (last accessed July 18, 2014).

[4] For a discussion of the similar trajectories for Judaism, Catholicism, and Islam in America, see Jose Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European/United States Comparison," in *Secularism, Religion*

However, once these comparisons are placed under the microscope of further investigation, general likenesses loose their efficacy and fail to relate the true nature of the struggles and stories specific to the case of the American Muslim chaplaincy. The comparisons do tell us about struggle for identity and recognition for religious minorities in America, as well as the fluid nature of religious leadership for these groups, and the opportunities the chaplaincy creates as they seek entry into the American religious and political landscape. Nonetheless, the political, social, and cultural differences of each religious group's experience can only surface through a more intricate examination of the stories and experiences of the individuals and communities involved in the process of acculturation.

This is the journey of this dissertation, to understand the experience of Islam in America through the stories, observations, beliefs, practices, and experiences of the Muslim chaplains that I have been fortunate enough to meet. The depth of these stories help to relay the American Muslim experience and frame it within the American religious landscape. The interviews and meetings that follow are part of a larger intellectual exploration which began with an attempt to better understand the place of the American Muslim religious leadership within American history, culture and politics. To investigate religious leadership, by all accounts an elusive and multifaceted process, and frame it with an eye to the ways that it is similar to and distinct from other forms of minority religious leadership in the United States.

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and Multicultural Citizenship, ed. Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood(Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). This phenomenon would be familiar to many religious minorities in the U.S. Armed Forces. Despite the incredibly formalized nature of the chaplaincy in the U.S. military, throughout the history of army chaplaincy, minority religious groups have been forced to perform a good deal of self advocacy when it came to their own religious representation. The process of approving and assigning chaplains from "new" religious groups can be slow and tedious. In addition, the force of numbers makes a story like my father's not uncommon. It is often up to the will of an individual soldier to create a religious community, when no leadership specific to that community exists. These difficulties notwithstanding, many argue that the type of ecumenicism bred in the military through the institution of the chaplaincy has been fodder for "the future of interfaith programs in the larger society." See Albert Isaac Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis : Jewish Military Chaplains and American History*(New York: New York University Press, 1999), 2.

In the midst of this exploration, I came upon the American Muslim chaplaincy. I say came upon, because I cannot remember exactly how my first entry into the field began. Not unlike finding my father's papers, the Muslim chaplaincy presented itself serendipitously. As a form of leadership for Muslims in the United States with many of the challenges I had been exploring up until that point; i.e., how are American Muslim leaders addressing the history, practices, and basic needs of their community? What if anything defines and determines the authority of that leadership? Not to mention what does the name "American Muslim" mean, whom does it include, and can we assume any cohesive sense of identity, whether Muslim or American?

As I embarked upon the research, which frames this dissertation, my own understanding of what a chaplain or institutional clergyperson is and does, came primarily from two sites of popular culture. The relevance of these moments is not just personal, but important in that they inform conceptions of what a chaplain does. Whether real or imagined, these notions rely on both the actual work of chaplains and some of the relevant tensions that exist when chaplains attempt to realize their "calling."[5]

When I describe my research to anyone willing to listen, the first question I often receive is, "what is a chaplain?" I begin by indicating that a chaplain is a religious professional who works in an institutional setting, such as hospitals, universities, the military, prisons, etc., and is commissioned to work with all faiths, but typically focuses on members of their own religious community.[6] A concrete if limited description, but still one met by quizzical glances. At this

[5] Most of the chaplains I have spoken to reflect on their profession as a "calling," in terms of service to their notion of god or spirituality and in service to those that they care for.

[6] For more detailed description of the role of a chaplains, see: Rodney J. Hunter and Nancy J. Ramsay, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Expanded ed.(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005). Reverend Jennifer Block, "Chaplaincy: A Brief Introduction for the Called and Curious Last Accessed on July 4, 2014," http://chaplaincyinstitute.org/files/2413/4365/5631/Chaplaincy-A_Brief_Intro.pdf. See also:

point, using poetic license and the story telling to create a more vivid image, I refer to two moments, one from television and the other from film.

The first, formative to my early teens, is Father Mulcahy from the television show *MASH*.[7] Father Mulcahy was the Catholic chaplain for a mobile army surgical hospital during the Korean War.[8] As the unit's only chaplain in a predominantly Protestant military establishment, Father Mulcahy on the one hand represents the vision of the writers and directors and on the other is indicative of the multifaith dimension of the chaplaincy in the United States Armed Forces; both in terms of the chaplains ethic to serving as a spiritual guide for anyone of any faith and in terms of the Army's commitment to the First Amendment's concept of religious freedom.[9]

One episode is particularly memorable and indicative of the interfaith nature of the chaplaincy. The episode, "Life with Father," features Father Mulcahy performing the Jewish *Halakhic* rites of circumcision on the son of a Jewish soldier and Korean women, while a hospital surgeon performs the circumcision itself.[10] As there is no rabbi or Jewish chaplain present, Radar, the hospital operator contacts a naval vessel at sea, and receives instructions from a rabbi on board. Although in normal circumstances it is unlikely that a rabbi would allow for someone non-Jewish to perform a circumcision, the immediacy of this circumstance and the

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professionalchaplains.org/content.asp?contentid=254, "The Association of American Pastoral Care Counsellors, Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy Web Page."

[7] Larry Gelbart, "Life with Father," in *M*A*S*H*(September 1972 – February 1983).The film and television series are based on the novel by Richard Hooker, *Mash: A Novel About Three Army Doctors*(New York,: Morrow, 1968).

[8] It should be noted that the original film and book from which the television series was derived featured a protestant chaplain as well.

[9] The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Although the constitutionality of the military chaplaincy has been questioned over the years, these two aspects of the First Amendment, the Establishment and Free Exercise Clause, have meant that the military through the chaplaincy may not force a specific faith upon members of other groups and that all religious groups shall be given the freedom to practice, which has resulted in chaplaincy representation for minority faith groups.

[10] Larry Gelbart, "Life with Father, *M*A*S*H*, 20th Century Fox Television, October 29, 1974.

missing presence of a Jewish chaplain or layperson accurately portray the role of an army chaplain, making this type of transfer of religious authority acceptable. As Buddhist chaplain Reverend Jennifer Block comments: ”Chaplaincy is a ministry of presence and availability.”[11] In fact, in the stories that fill this dissertation, there are several examples in which immediate life and death situations require chaplains to perform ritual tasks outside of their own traditions.

The second instance is from Malcolm X’s autobiography, and mirrored in the 1993 Spike Lee movie *Malcolm X*.[12] In his autobiography Malcolm X recounts what reads as a formative prison interaction he had with a seminary student[13] in a Bible study class at Charlestown prison. In the autobiography, the encounter takes place during a religious lesson’s question and answer period. In it, Malcolm X challenges a seminary student on the color of Jesus: “What color was Paul?” Malcolm X asks. “He had to be Black…because he was a Hebrew…What color was Jesus?...he was a Hebrew too…wasn’t he?” Malcolm X then proffers, “I don’t care how tough the convict, be he a brainwashed black Christian, or a “devil” white Christian, neither of them is ready to hear anybody saying Jesus wasn’t white.” [14] Although he never explicitly refers to him

[11] Reverend Jennifer Block, “Chaplaincy: A brief introduction for the called and curious.”
[12] Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1st Ballantine Books ed.(New York: Ballantine Books, 1992). Spike Lee et al., "Malcolm X,"(United States: Warner Bros., 1992). It is important to note that the autobiography itself and the film have had a significant impact on bringing Malcolm X’s persona into the public eye. In addition the film and Malcolm X’s writings have had an influence and a direct impact on American conversion to Islam. As Michael Muhammad Knight, author of *Taqwacores,* commented: “It [African American Islam] was the entire reason…I didn’t convert from having met Muslims. It was entirely Malcolm’s narrative... It was Malcolm and the movie” (Interview with Michael Muhammad Knight on December 19, 2013). Similarly, Imam Suhaib Webb, currently the Imam of the Islamic Society of Boston’s Cultural Center (ISBCC), when asked in a 2007 interview, which books have most influenced him, responded by beginning with the Qur’an and then listing a number of books on jurisprudence and exegesis. His first, if only mention of an American Muslim were the writings of Malcolm X: See ummah.com, "Interview with Imam Suhaib Webb Currently Studying in Al-Nasser's Country," http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?52491-Interview-with-Imam-Suhaib-Webb-currently-studying-in-Al-Nasser-s-country.
[13] Although the seminary student in this scene is not a formal chaplain, he represents the often-informal nature and presence of non-inmate based religious authority, performing what is part of the chaplain’s role, i.e. religious instruction.
[14] See X and Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 218-19.

as a chaplain the significance of the interaction is clear. It sets the stage for Christianity's institutional import in general, but in the prison system in particular.

Although extremely distinct in their messages both instances represent something significant about the chaplaincy in the United States. "Life with Father" reiterates a common trope for the chaplaincy as interfaith and religiously pluralist. The *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and subsequent scene from the Spike Lee movie, *Malcolm X,* show another side to religion as experienced in these institutions. This is the dynamic of religious and racial competition for power, which belies the more pluralist official message one finds contained within and among the pages and policies of chaplaincy organizations. Viewed together these two instances are indicative of the complex interactions between religious groups in these institutions and the gap often separating a will to religious pluralism from reluctance toward or even denial of that pluralism.

Of course these examples are only effective if the listener has the appropriate frame of reference. In addition, the message attached to each of these two cases varies widely based on the design and political outlook of the writers, producers, and directors. However, in as much as popular culture can inform us about the public's knowledge of certain religious trends, *MASH* is a rare example of a chaplain appearing in a network television show, not to mention as a main character. A fact that hospital chaplain, Abbas Chinoy, made me acutely aware of: "I wish there were more in *House* or *ER*. I mean, come on! Where's the chaplain. I'm telling you, there could really be some potential for plot lines here and there. Appearance by the chaplain, as the main scene rolls in, and you see the chaplain finishing their thing walking out. I would love to see little sprinkles of spiritual care in those shows."[15]

[15] Abbas Chinoy, telephone interview with the author, December 27, 2011.

In the attempt to make the chaplaincy more accessible to an unfamiliar audience, the next step, explaining what a Muslim chaplain is, is that much more involved. It is not that this is a difficult concept in and of itself; it is no more than a composite of terms. However, the relative newness of the term and the sense for many Americans that Islam is still a foreign religion, means that these two terms do not go together naturally. In fact, if for no other reason than the title chaplain originally referred to a Christian clergyperson, Muslim chaplains encounter similar resistance to their title from Muslims, especially those who are new to or do not reside in the United States.[16] However, despite this resistance Muslim chaplains are changing the landscape of Islam in America and are making significant contributions to Islamic American leadership.

One of the main goals of this dissertation is to explore the history and development of the chaplaincy through the stories of the women and men who serve as Muslim chaplains, and through this history tell the story of Islam in America. The American Muslim chaplaincy affords a window into the place of Muslims in American society. This history reflects the complex nature of the American Muslim experience and the ways that it is similar and different from the experience of other religious groups in the United States. It opens a window into the community and its perspective on theology, gender, race, and leadership. What language do chaplains use to discuss Islam, America, and American Islam? What is their hermeneutic? To what extent is their experience a moving lens with a rolling aperture and shifting focus?

As the chaplaincy is part of the American experiment with democracy, pluralism, and religion, its study helps elucidate the ways in which Muslims are part of that equation. In addition, documenting the voices of American Muslim chaplains, helps to deepen the conversation and complicate what we mean when we use the moniker "American Muslim;" this

[16] It should be noted that there are Muslim chaplains in countries with significant Muslim minority populations, for instance in parts of Western Europe, the Philippines, and India, among others.

means asking questions such as - whom do we include, whom do we exclude, and how do we validate these choices? A large part of this is building an understanding of who and what a chaplain represents in and for the Muslim community. As I intend to show, given that that the chaplaincy is part and parcel of the leadership equation for Muslims in the United States, it can provide answers to these questions. If we understand religious leadership as representative of the wills, desires, self-identification, and religious beliefs of its constituents, then a study of chaplains, in what they say and do, can establish a window into the ways that American Muslims view the communities to which they belong and the issues those communities are facing.

Of course it is not as simple as this. These are individual voices with specific communities and institutions to which they are responsible. In addition, the connection between the rhetoric of leadership and its constituency is not as linear as all of this. As Carolyn Moxley Rouse points out in her study of African American women converting to Sunni Islam, there is often a disconnect between what a religious leader says and what the community in turn does: "The problem with accepting the rhetoric of Muslim leadership as fact, is that discourse is not always congruous with deeply held social dispositions and practices."[17] Although well advised to keep Rouse's warning in mind as we proceed, given that chaplains are intimately involved with the lives and everyday crises of their constituencies, their voices can connect us to the communities they serve more directly than other American Muslim leaders.

This being said chaplains' constituencies are often more connected to the services chaplains provide than to the message they deliver. As the chaplains I have interviewed are quick to remind me, the chaplaincy is deeply contingent, and if accepted as a form of leadership, the

[17] Carolyn Moxley Rouse, *Engaged Surrender : African American Women and Islam*, George Gund Foundation Imprint in African American Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 16. In Rouse's study her concern is the disconnect between "official gender ideology" and "practical gender organization."

solutions and methods they employ are institutionally specific. In this way, the concerns they voice are real and reflective of their constituents' concerns, but their worldview and opinions on these matters are not always representative of those they serve. Despite the institutionally contingent nature of what they do, and as we shall see sometimes because of it, their voices are contributing to American Muslim interpretations of Islam, leadership, faith, and religious pluralism in the United States.

Sources and Methodology

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise -- with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."[18]

When studying a new and evolving phenomenon, it is comforting to reflect on the above address, given by Abraham Lincoln in his annual message to Congress on December 1, 1862. Unlike Lincoln's present, the study undertaken here is stormy only in that the object of study moves and undulates, at times more intensely than others. What this means is that as I have questioned, listened to, transcribed, edited, and commented on the words of the chaplains who take center stage in this dissertation, I have been acutely aware of my responsibility. It is my hope that I have stayed true to their words and allowed their voices and visions to come through the pages of this dissertation. To this end, where possible I have reviewed interviews and conversations that I have quoted with the chaplains themselves so as to make certain that my redactions are as close to the speakers' intention as possible. The editing and interpretive process is of course mine and so I take full responsibility for the way the chaplains are herein represented.

[18] Abraham Lincoln et al., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. Second Supplement, 1848-1865*(New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

As the American Muslim chaplaincy is a relatively nascent field, its study has required that the chaplains themselves become the archives and primary sources for this study. This means that the primary resources have been interviews, casual conversations, and conference sessions with chaplains and chaplain administrators. I have often quoted the chaplains at length and as often as possible I have unearthed and requested from them articles they have written and speeches they have given. I have also on more than one occasion used their Hartford chaplaincy theses to further inform the ways in which they have written about the chaplaincy and their vision of Islam's encounter with the chaplaincy, just as they themselves have encountered it in their studies and research.

Where appropriate, I have supplemented an understanding of the words and work of these chaplains with investigations into the facets and history of the chaplaincy in the United States. This includes reports from the Board of Prisons, Congressional hearings on the chaplaincy in the military, university newspapers, campus offices of religious life newsletters, the publications of faith-based organizations, such as ISNA's monthly publication, *Horizons,* and Black Muslim newspapers, such as *Muhammad Speaks* and the *Bilalian News*. With regard to education and the development of the Muslim American chaplaincy, I use the preceding materials as well as chaplaincy program curricula and publications (particularly those from the Hartford Theological Seminary Chaplaincy Program), notes and information on national chaplaincy meetings and conferences, the publications and institutional histories of national chaplaincy organizations, as well as their websites and publically disseminated materials, such as brochures and event descriptions. Finally all of these sources are supplemented by current quantitative studies of the

Muslim American community, such as the CAIR Mosque Studies[19] and the Muslim Education Council on Clergy in America (M.E.C.C.A) project on Muslim clergy in America.[20]

Outside of articles and pieces written by chaplains themselves the current secondary source literature on the American Muslim chaplaincy is scant at best. One notable study has been undertaken by Chaplain Mumina Kowalski in her Hartford Master's Degree Thesis, *A New Profession: Muslim chaplains in American public life*, where she details specifics with regard to the development of the American Muslim chaplaincy and has created a job survey which further illuminates what chaplains do and how they measure success.[21] Several reports exist which explore the American Muslim chaplaincy with the intention of assessing challenges, needs, and community responses. They include, two reports from Faith Matters, *Leadership through the Chaplaincy* and *The Role of Chaplains in Public Sector Institutions*, an Institute for Social Policy and Understanding report, *Chaplaincy Services for Muslim Patients in New York City Hospitals*, and a Pluralism Project Report, *An Emerging Model of Muslim Leadership: Chaplaincy on University Campuses.*[22] Finally two dissertations are either completed or in process respectively. The first by Aly Kassam-Remtulla entitled, *Muslim Chaplaincy on Campus: Case studies of two American universities* and the second by Sajida Jalalzai, a study of Muslim chaplaincy education

[19] See Council on American-Islamic Relations, "The American Mosque 2011: Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque, Attitudes of Mosque Leaders,"(https://www.cair.com/the-american-mosque-2011.html2011); Paul M. Perl Ihsan Bagby, and Bryan T. Froehle, "The Mosque in America: A National Portrait," ed. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Mosque Study in 2001(2001).

[20] The study is outlined in John H. Morgan, *Muslim Clergy in America : Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community*, Expanded 2nd ed.(Lima, OH: Wyndham Hall Press, 2010).

[21] Mumina Kowalski in her Hartford Master's Degree Thesis, "A New Profession: Muslim Chaplains in American Public Life" (Hartford Theological Seminary, 2011).

[22] Faith Matters, "Faith Leadership through Chaplaincy: Experiences from Muslim Communities: Summary of Issues and Recommendations from Consultations with Chaplains, Sector Leaders and Communities,"(http://faith-matters.org/images/stories/fm-reports/faith_matters_chaplaincy_report.pdf2010). Shenila S. Khoja-Moolji, "An Emerging Model of Muslim Leadership: Chaplaincy on University Campuses," in *Pluralism Project Report*(http://www.pluralism.org/affiliates/student/khoja-moolji/Muslim_Chaplaincy_2011.pdf2011).

in the United States and Canada.[23]

The published and more comprehensive qualitative research that has been done is on Muslim chaplains in Europe, specifically in the United Kingdom, in the work of Sophie Gilliat Ray & James Beckford.[24] The European case is instructive as a reference point for a Muslim minority chaplaincy in an entirely distinct context. This work is instructive in both its similarities and differences. There are two competing notions; the first, which relates very closely to happening for American Muslim Chaplains and the second, which indicates a strong variance between Muslims chaplains in different cultural contexts. Similar to the case of the American Muslim chaplains surveyed here, Gilliat Ray and Beckford argue "that institutional chaplaincy is a prism through which we can better understand a wide range of contemporary social and religious issues, such as the relative power and resources of different faith groups…the changing role of religious professionals, and the relationship between faith communities and public institutions."[25] Where their work differs and is less applicable to the American context is in the focus that "Muslim involvement in institutional chaplaincy provides a framework and an opportunity for the growing inclusion of Muslims in the public life of our society.[26] While there is some element of this perspective when studying the American Muslim chaplaincy, the focus on the chaplaincy as a "framework for inclusion" does not fully resonate. The American Muslim chaplaincy and many of its chaplains see themselves as part of a relatively new and somewhat embattled, but already "included" religious group.

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[23] Aly Kassam-Remtulla, "Muslim Chaplaincy on Campus: Case Studies of Two American Universities " (Oxford University, Unpublished).
[24] Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Stephen Pattison, and Mansur Ali, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*, Ashgate Ahrc/Esrc Religion and Society Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2013); James A. Beckford and Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Religion in Prison : Equal Rites in a Multi-Faith Society*(Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[25] From 'Visiting Minister to 'Muslim Chaplain' by Sophie Gilliat-Ray (In The Centrality of Religion in Social Life), 155
[26] Ibid, 152.

So in the case of the United States, the framework of the chaplaincy allows Muslims in America to think through American Islam in new and innovative ways and to understand how Muslims are actualizing themselves as American, where American can pertain to a variety of identities and cultural norms. Since the chaplaincy as described here is framed within the American context, it is distinct from other country or region specific chaplains. Understanding the differences that are based in context helps to comprehend how the Muslim chaplains discussed here are creating a leadership structure, particularly responsive to certain American notions of the place of religion in society, whether public or private. However, acknowledging the American context, does not preclude the understanding that there is a concept of community or *ummah* essential to Muslim visions of Islam, and that moving forward the question regarding what religious leadership means for the *ummah* is essential to analyzing the saliency that the chaplaincy will have for Islam in a variety of contexts.

Although the primary sources for this dissertation are the chaplains themselves, this is not an ethnographic study in a strict sense. This dissertation does not discuss chaplains as they dialogue with one another at meetings, conferences, or training sessions. In addition, I have not made it my point to shadow chaplains as they go about their daily lives and interactions with people in the institutions in which they work. It is not that this is not a valuable undertaking, but rather it is beyond the scope of the present study. Rather this dissertation is an attempt to understand the way that American Muslim chaplains see their roles as religious leaders. This includes how they view their relationship to the American chaplaincy community, to other types of American Muslim leaders, to Islam, to those they serve on a daily basis, and to themselves as they introspect upon their daily work. In this way, I give voice to their concerns and the ways they use language and conceptualize the ideas that are important to them as chaplains. In this

sense Lincoln's address can also be taken as a warning. A warning to appreciate the vicissitudes of the present and the difficulty of analyzing and critiquing it while it is happening.

This does not mean that we are paralyzed, but rather that when critiquing the narrative being told, it is crucial to consider context and the fact that the chaplains themselves are unsure of the direction in which the profession is going. This involves avoiding the temptation to predict the future and maintaining sensitivity to their process. This makes it difficult to establish a fully critical eye, a task that scholarship is charged with occasionally too zealously. In consideration of this fact much of the analysis in the pages that follow is descriptive of how the American Muslim chaplaincy has evolved. This means that when a chaplain uses a term, like multifaith, pluralist, or traditional, I have done my best to understand how they use the term and the ways these terms translate and are uniform from one chaplain to another. At times, the way these chaplains use these terms is general and at others they mean something much more specific, and it is the job of this study to understand how these uses are important within the context of explanation.

For example, when discussing the accusations connecting Imam and Chaplain Salahuddin Muhammad in chapter four to radicalism and anti-Shiite rhetoric, it is not my aim to substantiate these charges or to find evidence exonerating Salahuddin, but to recognize the ways that he views these charges and how they have effected his understanding of his profession. There is no dearth of studies on Islam and radicalization, and a study of chaplains and radicalism may have merit, but that is not the objective of this dissertation. Similarly, when chaplains discuss religious pluralism as exemplary of the United States, it is my goal to understand how chaplains are using this term and what it means for the way they envision the chaplaincy. It is important but still more difficult to interrogate how their understanding of religious pluralism overshadows the issue of race within the American Muslim community. The way that chaplains are engaging with

race is an extremely valuable project and an important subject for future research. Where I have engaged with the subject of race is in the way that African American Islam has been fundamental and instrumental to the development of the American Muslim chaplaincy. A final example is the way that Muslim chaplains have engaged with the concept of patriotism. The extent to which this engagement is conditional on many other variables is part of the present analysis, but more important to the subject of this dissertation is the way that American Muslim chaplains and their forebears have understood the term and its persistence as a trope for many chaplains, particularly those in the military.

This is not to say that there is no critique within these pages, but it is critique with an eye to creating explanatory models that are in constant flux. In addition, given the primary sources are the voices of the chaplains themselves, they are more dynamic and less contained than those that are written and archival. Using the chaplains' voices in this way makes the source material of this dissertation lie somewhere between archival and ethnographic. They have dynamism akin to the ethnographic, but move around less and share something with the written, especially considering the use of chaplains' written words as a supplement to those they have spoken. Finally, given that the interviews contained herein are dialogues between two persons, myself, the interviewer, and the interviewee, there is more potential to go back to the interviewees to review and interrogate further, smoothing out the rough edges.

This is all to say that using the chaplains' voices as primary sources can be problematic. To what extent is their testimony purely anecdotal, and when it is, is there documentation and quantitative data to back up their claims? The quick answer is not always. This is also why it is important to understand their voices and delve into the ways that their claims reflect upon how their perceptions of events, verifiable or not, frame their professional lives.

To accomplish this task I have created a hybrid narrative. This means recreating scenarios in the present tense to expose the reader to my interview process and make the voice of the chaplains the living, breathing, and moving source that it is. Michel de Certeau in his essay, *Walking in the City* warns of the danger of distance when viewing city streets from atop a skyscraper, "The everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface."[27] In this way, I invite the reader to drop from their perch and join the conversation.

At other times, I have kept the chaplains' words in the past tense and used their voices as supporting evidence for claims about how they are actualizing and transforming the profession. This can entail bringing the words of the chaplains with whom I have met separately into conversation with one another, using multiple voices to describe similar scenarios indicating variation and sameness. The construction is one of a guidebook which contains two maps, a two dimensional one and one three dimensional one. Two-dimensional maps are incredibly useful for understanding the lay of the land, but they can hide the "in-between spaces" and leave the reader transfixed; never looking up to see what's around.[28]

There are several recent models that have encouraged me to partake in this hybrid format, authors who have successfully alternated a narrative style with the voices of their informants in order to enhance their work. Although there is a list of authors from whose work I can find comparisons, I wish to draw attention to three in particular. These are authors whose work intersects with my own on various levels, whether because they study religion in America, Islam in America, or contemporary Islam. There are certainly other studies that have engaged in similar types of practices, but these are ones that accomplish the goal quite successfully and have had a particular influence on my own work. These authors have managed to study the present with a

[27] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 122.
[28] Ibid.

robust honesty, allowing their informants to come off the pages and be present, all the while moving through the pages of their narratives seamlessly, not hiding their presence, but also not making themselves so obvious as to scream here I am, this is about me. All these authors allow themselves to be vulnerable and exposed, just as much if not more than the people they study.

Joshua Dubler's study, *Down in the Chapel: Religious life in an American prison,* explores a week in Pennsylvania's Graterford Prison chapel, intersperses scenes from the chapel with his own analysis, peppering descriptions of events in real time with his own reflections of what has transpired.[29] As Dubler has written, his work is an exploration of religion in America, but also "a chronicle of the tangled process by which one comes to know things through dialogue with other people."[30] Dubler is both present and absent from the narrative. It is the voices of the inmates who explain the way religion manifests for them, who inform the reader's understanding of what is at stake, while throughout Dubler allows the prison a voice in the dialogue. Jamillah Karim's work, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating race, class, and gender within the ummah,* using the voices of her informants and putting them into conversation with one another, builds a picture of a diverse American Muslim community.[31] Karim uses the voices of the American Muslim women she has spoken with to support her argument regarding the interactions between race and ethnicity in the American Muslim community, creating a composite picture of the different ways that African American Muslim women and South Asian women view race relations within the *ummah.* Karim investigates the voices of these women in two primary settings, Chicago and Atlanta. She acknowledges that each city forms a distinct *ummah*, but despite their difference she is able to link the two cities through the common themes of race,

[29] Joshua Dubler, *Down in the Chapel : Religious Life in an American Prison*, First edition. ed., text.
[30] Ibid, xiv.
[31] Jamillah Ashira Karim, *American Muslim Women : Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*, Religion, Race, and Ethnicity Series (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

gender, and class. The way Karim uses the words of her informants to illustrate the interactions between Muslims across the racial and class lines, while acknowledging individual variance is particularly instructive to this study. Karim acknowledges that her "representation of the American *ummah* is neither comprehensive or final."[32] This connects directly to the way in which Karim uses multiple voices to tell her story and in the way that she sees her own voice as telling "one of several versions of the same story."[33] Karim motions to Karen McCarthy Brown's *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*, when referencing "the chorus of voices." In the preface to the 2001 edition of *Mama Lola,* McCarthy Brown writes, "Once I had the chorus of voices, it became evident that my role was to be the conductor. It was my job to see that each voice got heard."[34] I make no illusion to replicating the style of *Mama Lola,* but I see it and the way Karim has engaged with its method, as a useful way of understanding how to be the conductor of many voices. I do this in an attempt to allow solo performances and orchestral performances to coexist, while acknowledging that the story I am telling is one among many. Finally, Zain Abdullah's *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem*, acknowledges the difficulty of bringing together multiple voices to create a composite sketch: "The story I am attempting to tell is necessarily a compilation of multiple narratives. This text is…a patchwork quilt…it endeavors to weave together a number of sketches spread across cultural terrain, religious orientation, and social groupings."[35] Abdullah's work gives the reader insight into the thought, beliefs, and interactions of residents of Harlem in the hopes of creating a sketch, which will inform the reader as to how African Muslims are perceived and perceive other Harlem

[32] Ibid, 18-19.
[33] Ibid, 18.
[34] Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola : A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*, Comparative Studies in Religion and Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), ix.
[35] Zain Abdullah, *Black Mecca : The African Muslims of Harlem*(Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9.

residents. What these works share and what I have tried to garner from each, is the way they use the voices of their informants to present a descriptive of how they view the concepts and ideals that frame their daily lives.

Bringing together a diversity of contexts and voices

> There is an Indian story…about an Englishman, who having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which in turn rested on a turtle, asked…what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? 'Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down.'[36]

Clifford Geertz's retelling of the above story in his essay, "Thick Description: "Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," is of particular use when I conceptualize the mode of this dissertation. What this story of turtles all the way down tells us is that no matter how much we try to define and categorize, the possibilities are infinite and the categories are always flawed.

One of the main things I have struggled with in this study is delineating who should I speak to as representative voices for the American Muslim chaplaincy and how to make a discussion of these chaplains across institutions a useful project. While it is true that a study of the chaplaincy could easily be specific to institutional setting and even more so specific to one institution and further specific to a single chaplain, the question at hand is, whether or not it is instructive to look at the American Muslim chaplaincy as a larger phenomenon across institutions? The usefulness in such an approach is a goal in and of itself, which is to show variance across institutions while at the same time indicating themes and tropes that are common to many if not all chaplains. As Bowen et al have noted in their study of Muslims in European institutions, "Even within a single institution, we do not find a set of global rules, from

[36] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays*(New York,: Basic Books, 1973), 28-29.

which we could deduce the practices likely to be observed, say in a school or on a shop floor, but rather a set of relevant practices, specific rules and roles, and grammars of justification"[37] Thus, although certain contexts lend themselves to particular approaches, those approaches cross contexts and can differ within one context or for a single chaplain. In this way there is utility in the examination of the chaplaincy in ever-smaller pieces, where the choice of turtle can be illuminative whether closer or further away from the elephant and the platform. Referencing Bertossi and Bowen in their study of Muslims in France:

> Regarding the issues of variation and change. Our studies illustrate internal variation in institutions that derives from two processes. First, actors do not follow institution-wide rules or scripts but respond to specific challenges and perceptions. These vary with the roles and tasks faced by a particular actor within an institution, and with the specific constraints and opportunities appearing at any one moment: what we have called social location and conjunctures. Secondly, actors may hold multiple practical schemas, each of which receives greater or lesser weight in response to events.[38]

The various levels at which individuals interact with formal and informal institutions allows for the chorus of voices to serve as indicative of extremely variant trends, trends which allow for comparative study. Given these factors, I look at chaplains and the ways that they interact within multiple discourses and institutions, which are often grounded in similar conceptual frameworks. As Talal Asad has written discourse can be understood from "within semantic and institutional networks that define and make possible particular ways of relating to people things and oneself."[39] Thus the institutions in which they work determine many of a chaplain's decisions, but they still have a degree of autonomy, not all coming to the same resolutions. However, their resolutions can often be similar in that many of these chaplains

[37] John R. Bowen, *European States and Their Muslim Citizens : The Impact of Institutions on Perceptions and Boundaries*, Cambridge Studies in Law and Society (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 12.
[38] Ibid., 104.
[39] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular : Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 78.

reference the same network of Muslim scholars and leaders such as, Ingrid Mattson, W.D. Mohammed, Taha Jabir al-Alwani, Abdallah Bin Bayya, Hamza Yusuf, Suhaib Webb, and Tariq Ramadan to name just a few. These leaders are part of a tradition and a discourse on Muslims living in non-Muslim majority countries that chaplains access when discussing how to view Islamic jurisprudence and the objectives of *shari'ah* in a variety of contexts. Chaplains' intellectual and educational frame of reference can then be determinative of inherent uniformity. In order to bring further diversity to these moments, I have, whenever possible, brought in other voices to show that the greatest common denominator is diversity of action, opinion, and situation. In this way, the turtles are precarious but nonetheless important. They deliver new and enlightening answers as we continually ascend and descend. In the final equation Geertz said of the journey, "Nor have I ever gotten anywhere near to the bottom of anything I have ever written about," a pleasurable journey indeed.[40]

This journey through the variance within chaplains' lives, words, and work is further exemplary of my premise that no one theoretical perspective on the study of religion informs this work. What this implies is that there is inevitably a chorus of theoretical perspectives that work in tandem to help explain the phenomenon contained in the coming pages. My approach to theoretical frameworks is to use theoretical resources and ideas as appropriate to understanding the relationship between individuals, professionals, and institutions in forming the way that religion is made manifest in society. It is up to scholars of religion to determine which theoretical lenses help define religion best and if no one theory is satisfactory then to either enhance existing models or combine multiple theories. This is an eclectic approach to theory. Eclectic does not in

[40] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays*, 27.

this case mean undecided or non-committal, but committed to the understanding that no one theory will sufficiently answer or model all situations accurately.

In fact it is an eclecticism that is reflective of the approach to Islam many of the chaplains in this dissertation and the chaplaincy as a profession espouse. It is the way that many Muslim chaplains view their roles as different from an imam; that a chaplain's role is not to spread a dogma, but to provide the student with all of the available Muslim opinions on an issue so as to come to an informed decision. This eclecticism is part of a personal ethos to preserve multiple, often conflicting perspectives, while still searching for concrete and reasoned arguments about the subject of study and analysis being addressed. It is in this sense that I can at one and the same time be informed by Clifford Geertz's sense of many "Islams" and Talal Asad's ability to complicate Geertz's categorizations by reassessing the divide between tradition and modernity. [41]

It is my contention that both these theorists provide models from which to learn. The strength of creating a composite is that Asad's understanding of power, agency, and history enhances Geertz's focus on normalizing Islam. So that while Geertz makes it possible to argue that the members of the Nation of Islam are in fact Muslims, Asad makes it possible to see chaplains as engaged in a specific discursive practice. Where Geertz presents the diversity of Islam, Asad makes us aware of the ways that Geertz reifies Muslim practice.

However, more important than any one theoretical model is the question of how I have positioned myself within this dissertation. To begin with there is a question of my status as an outsider looking in. I am certainly an outsider as I am studying Muslim chaplains, but am neither a Muslim nor a chaplain. However, the idea of the insider/outsider dichotomy is problematic in itself, as it assumes a clear line of delineation and suggests that those considered insiders do not

[41] One example of the dual and conflicting nature of Geertz's work can be seen in Edward Said's approval of his methodology and Asad's rejection of it.

traverse the outside or vice a versa.[42] What is most useful is acknowledging one's place in the politics of discourse. How does my role as an interviewer and author make the questions I ask and my use of interviews belie certain agenda?

As I conducted and then edited interviews it became clear that as much as I wanted to make the process about the chaplains, I was inevitably injecting, inflecting, and removing my voice at different times for different purposes. I recognized that the questions I was asking had built in assumptions. For example, my vision of chaplains as American Muslim religious leaders has been met with resistance by the chaplains I interviewed, as many of them are reluctant to present themselves as leaders. This is not to say that I abandoned the premise that they are in fact religious leaders, but rather that I acknowledge that this is a title they have difficulty accepting and that the more relevant question was why and how does this frame their place within the larger leadership community.

Other agenda necessarily arise. For example, there is a tension between trying to normalize Islam as just another American religion and politicizing Islam as foreign and mistrusted. Both of these tendencies can dumb down the study of Islam in America by placing focus on contemporary political concerns and the scholarly explanatory models that they engender. As Edmund Burke III has noted in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* "…it is perilous to advance an explication of the so called Islamic revival without reproducing the concerns of ambient political culture of our own society…with its fears of Islamic social movements."[43] Although, I do not lay claim to being able to remove politics from my inquiry, I

[42] Daniel L. Pals, "Reductionism and Belief: An Appraisal of Recent Attacks on the Doctrine of Irreducible Religion," in *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*, ed. Russell T. McCutcheon(London ; New York: Cassell, 1999).

[43] Edmund Burke, Ira M. Lapidus, and Ervand Abrahamian, *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 18.

have tried as best as possible to explain all phenomenon within this dissertation as part of a discourse of, by, and between chaplains.

Defining American Muslims through Community and Identity

There are several problems which arise when using the composite term "American Muslim;" the least of which is that it masks the diversity of a community which is perhaps the most diverse Muslim community since the formation of the nation state. A 2005 study listed the demographics of the American Muslim community as follows: "South Asians (34 percent, including 19 percent from Pakistan and 9 percent from India), Arabs (26 percent), African Americans (20 percent), and Africans (seven percent)."[44] In addition, many of the Muslims in America that chaplains - particularly college and university chaplains - serve are international students and are not "American" per se.[45] For this reason, it is occasionally more accurate to make reference to "Muslims in America" than "American Muslims." Regardless of its flaws the composite American Muslim is useful in this study, because it is this group, whom chaplains see themselves as serving. So in general I use the term American Muslim to refer to Muslims living in the United States, whether citizens or not, the main criterion being that they are either potential constituents of chaplains or potential chaplains themselves. In this sense I include any individuals who consider themselves Muslim, as these are the people American Muslim chaplains are expected to be responsible to.

Despite these caveats, it is important to acknowledge the danger, inherent in this composite, of reifying already flawed categories by blurring the significant distinctions that exist.

[44] Philippa Strum, "Muslims in the United States: Identity, Influence, Innovation," ed. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars(2003), 1.
[45] A good example of this is Shamshad Sheikh who in a June 15, 2014 interview informed me that "recently [at Quinnipiac College 90% of my students are Saudi students."

When we discuss the American Muslim community we have to acknowledge its cultural and ethnic diversity, the differences between first, second, or third generation Muslims, American born versus immigrant Muslims, converts versus those born Muslim, and the distinctive elements and social issues relevant to the African American Muslims, which all complicate an examination of religious authority and identity.[46] In addition, defining American Muslims as a monolithic religious group invites its own problems, as groups such as Sunni, Shiite, Sufi, Nation of Islam,[47] etc., although often overlapping, are quite distinct. Finally, the question arises as to whether or not being part of the American Muslim community requires that the individual be a practicing or believing Muslim at all.

However, there has been a degree of homogenization as the result of being a religious minority, to some extent blurring denominational lines; for example, a Pew 2007 study indicates "30% of American Muslims see themselves as "Muslim" without specifying a tradition."[48] This being said, one cannot discount the affects of socio-economics, which helps to homogenize some groups and segregate others; as has been seen in the relationship between immigrant and African American Muslims.[49] The homogenization described above is in part a result of the dynamics of a minority group searching for those with common if not identical identities and a result of the political pressure being levied on American Muslims.

The above discussion is further complicated in this study by the fact that the same term, American Muslim, is ascribed to chaplains. There are two main levels worthy of exploration here.

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[46] See Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam*(New York: Routledge, 1995).
[47] Although many Muslims outside of the Nation of Islam do not consider Nation of Islam members as "true" Muslims, they are nonetheless a crucial part of Muslim American history in the United States. For an in depth discussion see Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican : Looking toward the Third Resurrection*(Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 47-48.
[48] Pew Research Center, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,"(http://www.pewresearch.org/2007/05/22/muslim-americans-middle-class-and-mostly-mainstream/2007), 21.
[49] See Karim, *American Muslim Women : Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*.

The first is ascertaining, who the moniker "American Muslim chaplain" refers to. The chaplains in this dissertation are a diverse group comprised of those born in the United States and those born elsewhere. The second point relates to the type of confessional or sectarian vision one has of a Muslim chaplain. Up until now, the vast majority of Muslim chaplains have been Sunni Muslims.[50] If there is an attempt to standardize the education and professionalization of the field, how do the training organizations, institutions, and constituents of these chaplains interpret the "Muslim" in American Muslim chaplain? Is there a confessional standard or expectation for these chaplains? For example, do Shiites, Ahmadiyya, members of the Nation of Islam, and others fall under this moniker? Or is it necessary to lengthen the professional distinction to include these differences, i.e. American Muslim Shiite chaplain or American Muslim Sunni chaplain?

Given that the formulation "American Muslim chaplain" assumes monolithic professional and communal identities, it is important to investigate whether or not educational programs are developing a chaplaincy for all Muslims, regardless of sectarian or interpretive difference. For the Muslim chaplaincy, this means ascertaining who is a chaplain, what version of American Islam they represent, what if any specific community they serve, how they engage these issues with their constituencies, and what type of leadership model, if any, they choose to emulate. Indeed there is a particularly significant difference between the religious leadership model in the Shiite Muslim community and that in the Sunni one; the level of hierarchy in each being the most significant difference.

In addition, among Sunni Muslims in America, leadership in the African American community tends to be more singular and rivals the more flat nature of leadership in immigrant

[50] There have been two self-identified Shiite Muslims seeking the Graduate Certificate in Muslim Chaplaincy at the Hartford Theological Seminary.

mosques. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Mosque Study in 2001 indicated that in a majority of immigrant mosques, final decision-making authority rests not with the leader but with a *Majlis ash-Shura* (executive committee or board of directors), whereas this is not as often the case in predominantly African American mosques.[51] As Jocelyn Cesari points out "It is within the African American community that the function of the imam and director are most often combined." Should their be a true desire for a uniform American Muslim chaplaincy across sectarian divides, these differences make it more difficult for the American Muslim chaplaincy to create this type of model. Nonetheless, chaplains have already established some precedence for representing a diverse array of American Muslims under one umbrella.

The second important factor of dissecting the term "American Muslim chaplain" is to question what the word "American" means in the composite forms American Islam and American Muslim chaplain. In terms of the composite American Islam, Timur Yuskaev's discussion of an American Qur'an is particularly instructive.[52] In his dissertation Yuskaev discusses the ways in which different Muslim religious leaders in America discuss and exegize the Qur'an in an American context: "Qur'an emerges as an American sacred text when it becomes a locally resonant spoken word."[53] In his examination Yuskaev takes care to look at the ways social and political context adjusts understandings of Islam. So the American in American Islam makes no valuation as to the end result of the encounter or assumptions regarding what Islam will gain or loose from its interaction with the American context. The American in the American Muslim chaplaincy performs some of this same work, in that understandings of Islamic leadership become locally resonant through the American Muslim chaplaincy.

[51] Ihsan Bagby, "The Mosque in America: A National Portrait."
[52] Timur Raufovich Yuskaev, "The Qur'an Comes to America: Pedagogies of Muslim Collective Memory" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010).
[53] Ibid., iii.

On another level the American Muslim chaplaincy is adjusting an inherently American profession and a historically Protestant American one at that. In this way, the American Muslim chaplaincy is a transformative and transformed phenomenon. The primary difference then is that the thing that is American was originally American and did not become "Americanized." What this means is that American Muslim chaplains have chosen a type of chaplaincy that originates with a specific vision of what America is and what it allows for institutionally and legally when religion is involved.

The primary element of this vision is the idea that America is an inherently religiously pluralist country, where freedom to practice is intended for all faiths. That this pluralism may be imperfect does not preclude the fact that chaplains view it as both a constitutional and social accretion of American religious freedom and the separation of church and state. In turn this cultural, legal, and political pluralism makes the American Muslim chaplaincy possible. To the extent that minority religions are marginalized in the United States Muslim chaplains see the potential of their profession to break through that marginalization. Where there is a strong trust in American religious pluralism, there is also a sense that there are dominant tropes in American society that can alienate Muslims. These tropes are both fixed and malleable and combine conceptions of America as a Protestant Christian or Judeo-Christian country, both religious and secular. American Muslim chaplains see America in all of these forms, perceiving that each institution, group and individual encounters these tropes in different ways, defining what they mean in each specific situation and appropriating "American" through their own specific lens.[54] In this way the American Muslim chaplaincy embraces the label "American" as an expression of

[54] Stanley Fish has a good discussion of this principle and its political dimension in the ways that the Right has adopted and the words and tropes of freedom and equality to express the idea that Caucasians and Christians are a minority comparable to African Americans (see Sullivan page 9). See Stanley Eugene Fish, *The Trouble with Principle*(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

place elevated by the mores of religious pluralism and freedom of religion. Finally, the way that American Muslim chaplains view the chaplaincy is directly related to this vision of American. This implies the import they give to interfaith and intrafaith dialogue and multifaith care. It also includes a vision of the chaplaincy as non-proselytizing and based in a pastoral care of compassion and introspection. Finally, American Muslim chaplains see the American chaplaincy as compatible with Islam, adjusting Islamic tradition when necessary and transforming the chaplaincy when possible.

The Chaplains

In the text of this dissertation, I have chosen to refer to those chaplains whom I have interviewed by their full names with titles upon first mention and by first names thereafter. If several pages have passed, I refer to these chaplains by first and last name for clarification sake and then by first name thereafter. As for those chaplains with whom I have had no personal interaction, I use full names and title upon first mention and last names thereafter. Below are short biographical sketches of the nine chaplains most discussed in the pages that follow:

Abbas Chinoy (Abbas)

Abbas is an American born hospital chaplain, who grew up in the Shiite tradition, but maintains a relatively monist perspective on faith, where his Islam is peripheral to his identity as a multifaith chaplain. When I first spoke to Abbas Chinoy on December 27, 2011, he was a first year Master's of Divinity student at the University of Chicago Divinity School working at Rush University Medical Center with the intention of becoming a board certified chaplain. After his first year of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Rush he did three units of CPE in the form of a residency at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, a trauma one facility. When we followed up on June 21, 2014 Abbas was still at the University of Chicago at the tail end of his Master's of Divinity. Over the two and a half years since our first conversation Abbas had served as the "Chaplain in-Residence" at the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel and had started working at Lurie Children's hospital in downtown Chicago in December of 2013. Abbas noted that the time had come when he would need to ask for a denominational endorsement for future job

applications and the board certification process. The last time we spoke he had not decided from whom he would seek endorsement.

Abdullah Antepli (Abdullah)

Abdullah Antepli, a university chaplain, is currently the Chief Representative of Muslim Affairs at Duke University, a position he took in 2014, after having served as the Duke University Muslim chaplain starting in 2008. Abdullah grew up in Turkey where he had a formal madrassa education. He immigrated to the United States with his family in 2003. He is an executive board member of the Muslim Chaplains Association and a member of the National Association of College and University Chaplains. From 2003 to 2005 he served as the first Muslim chaplain at Wesleyan University. He then moved to Hartford Seminary in Connecticut as the associate director of the Islamic Chaplaincy Program & Interfaith Relations. He received a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations from Hartford Seminary. In February of 2010 he gave the opening prayer for the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

Bilal Ansari (Bilal)

Bilal is an African American chaplain who converted to Islam from Christianity on his twenty-first birthday on January 12, 1993. Prior to converting his father had been the Imam of the San Francisco mosque under W.D. Mohammed. Bilal is a Hartford Seminary graduate having received a Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy in 2009 and a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations in 2011. He has primarily served as a prison and college chaplain. He was a faith leader at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut from 2009-2011 and chaplain at Tunxis Community College as an at risk student academic counselor from 2008-2011. When we spoke in June and July of 2014, Bilal was the Muslim Chaplain and Associate Coordinator of Community Engagement at Williams College, a post he had held since August of 2011. Bilal with the collaboration of Chaplains Abdullah Antepli and Sohaib Sultan is the founder of the Muslim Chaplain Association and was its first president. He has authored several articles on his experiences as a Muslim chaplain and was featured in the documentary, "The Calling." In June of 2014 he left Williams College to become the Dean of Students at Zaytuna College, a position he now holds.

Omer Bajwa (Omer)

Omer is the "Coordinator of Muslim Life" in the Chaplain's Office at Yale University. He was born in Pakistan, but immigrated to the United States when he was three, growing up in Binghamton, New York. He has commented: "I consider myself an American-Muslim in that sense, with overseas ethnic roots." He earned his Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary. Before Yale, he served as the Interim Muslim Chaplain at Cornell University from 2007-2008. He received his MA in Near Eastern Studies from Cornell University in 2006, with a specialization in Islamic Studies. He also earned an MS in Communication from Cornell, and a BA in English Literature Binghamton University. Omer has

also studied classical Islamic sciences with traditional *ulama* from Pakistan, England, and the United States.

Rabia Terri Harris (Rabia)

A hospital chaplain, Rabia converted to Islam in 1978, having grown up the child of a Christian mother and Jewish father. She is currently training to be a CPE Supervisor at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ and is adjunct professor of Intellectual Heritage at Temple University and of Islamic Studies at Ursinus College. She was the first president of the Association of Muslim Chaplains and Founder/Director of the Muslim Peace Fellowship and on the advisory board of the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice. Rabia is author of *Supporting Your Muslim Students: A Guide for CPE Supervisors*. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Princeton University in the field of Religion, a Master's from Columbia University in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary. Rabia is also a senior member of the Jerrahi Sufi Order of America.

Salahuddin Muhammad (Salahuddin)

Salahuddin Muhammad's first experience with Islam was with the Fiver Percenters at the age of thirteen in 1964, then joining the Nation of Islam, and then finally becoming a member of the W.D. Mohammed community. In 1985 after having been incarcerated for twelve years, Salahuddin began working as a prison chaplain for the New York State Department of Corrections. In 1996, he was the first Muslim chaplain ever to be hired by a college or university in the United States when Bard College hired him part-time. He was the Imam of *Masjid al-Ikhlas* in Newburgh New York and is currently the President of the Association of Muslim chaplains. He has a Doctoral degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim relations from Hartford Seminary, a Masters degree in Theology and Counseling from New York Theological Seminary, and a Bachelor's degree in the Social Sciences from SUNY at New Paltz. He has also received a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary.

Shamshad Sheikh (Shamshad)

Shamshad, a college chaplain, was originally born in Karachi, Pakistan and came to the United States in 1981. In 1997 she was hired by Mount Holyoke College as the first female Muslim chaplain at any college in the Northeast, eventually sharing her time as a chaplain between Mount Holyoke, Amherst, Springfield, and Hampshire colleges. During her time as chaplain at these four colleges Shamshad became an executive board member of the National Association of College and University Chaplains (NACUC) and in 2007 the vice president for the organization; at the time she was the only Muslim chaplain in the NACUC. Shamshad worked as an associate university chaplain at Yale University and then was hired as the Muslim chaplain at Quinnipiac College, where she now works. Before coming to the United States, Shamshad obtained the

equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Studies and Islamic Education and degree in Islamic Law in Pakistan. She also holds a Master's Degree in Accounting.

Shareda Hosein (Shareda)

Shareda, a community and college chaplain, as well as a lay leader/associate chaplain in the military, was originally born in Trinidad. She became a United States citizen in 1987, and joined the Army in 1980, where she now serves as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Reserves. She was the first woman to register for the Hartford Seminary chaplaincy program in 2001 and received her Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy and MA in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations in 2007, after her mobilization in 2004 to Kuwait delayed her graduation. Shareda is a founding member of the Association of Muslim Chaplains and is now its Treasurer. In 2008 Shareda served as the chaplain at Tufts University and co-hosted a weekly radio program on WRKO in Boston called "Talking Religion" from 2006-2008. Shareda has received endorsement to become a military chaplain, but has thus far been refused a commission by the United States Army.

Sohaib Sultan (Sohaib)

Sohaib is the first full-time Muslim Life Coordinator and Chaplain at Princeton University. He is a first generation American born in North Carolina, whose mother is from India and father is from Pakistan. He graduated from the Hartford Theological Seminary in 2010 with a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy. Sohaib was one of the founding members of the Muslim Chaplains Association. He has served as a chaplain at several colleges including Trinity and Wesleyan, as well as Yale University. His first post at Trinity was during the field educational part of his degree requirements. While there, Trinity and Wesleyan joined forces to create a full-time chaplaincy position. Sohaib has written two books, *The Koran for Dummies* and *The Qur'an and Sayings of Prophet Muhammad: Selection Annotated and Explained*.

Chapters

The chapters and the themes within them are connected through the history of the American Muslim chaplaincy and the chaplains who are its storytellers. Although the chaplains represented here come from a variety of institutions, mainly hospitals, universities, prisons, and the armed forces, the chapters that follow are not separated institutionally. Rather the structure of this dissertation flows thematically, acknowledging the fluid relationship between institutions as well as the movement of chaplains between and within these institutional settings. Despite this

fluidity, the settings are in fact distinct, and so the following analysis takes this into account when appropriate, but as the objective of this dissertation is to investigate the chaplaincy and its relevance to American Muslims, the institutional differences are not the focal point of this study. What should become evident, however, is that certain themes have more or less saliency depending upon a given institutional setting. So for example the issue of theology and multifaith care, although important to the chaplaincy on all institutional levels, is particularly evident when examining the hospital setting. Similarly, when examining the issues of patriotism and constitutionality the military provides the most material for insight. So while it is clear that chaplains, as is the case with any religious leaders, are framed and molded by the institution they work within and the specific community they serve, in this dissertation, these factors provide a loose skeletal framework through which the themes of theology, law, pluralism, race and ethnicity, gender, and identity formation all permeate. As a result the chaplains and their stories are not confined to single chapters, but move throughout the dissertation in an equally fluid manner.

Chapter one begins in a coffee shop where I meet with hospital chaplain Rabia Terri Harris. This meeting serves as the basis for a discussion of the ways in which Muslim chaplains are placing the American chaplaincy, a historically Protestant Christian profession, into an Islamic frame of reference. Through an examination of the work that Muslim chaplains are performing in the hospital setting, primarily through their narratives of multifaith care, praying and speaking with non-Muslims, this chapter seeks to understand how chaplains are understanding the "pastoral" in pastoral care and where they see overlap between the Islamic tradition and the pastoral care tradition. Chapter two takes a step back to investigate the place of Muslim chaplains within the larger community of American Muslim leaders. Starting at Yale

University in the office of Chaplain Omer Bajwa, the chapter describes the professional parameters of the chaplaincy and how and whether American Muslim leaders should distinguish between a chaplain and an imam. Important to this discussion is an understanding of the development of training and educational curricula for American Muslim chaplains. Chapter three is an extension of chapter two in that it takes the notion of leadership and asks to what extent is the American Muslim chaplaincy transformative. Institutional setting is a central part of the chapter. This is in part due to the fact that institutional setting is determinative of how chaplains do their jobs and in part because it further defines who they are and what they can do institutionally and in terms of Islam. Chaplains are envisioning the institutions in which they work as new Islamic spaces or third spaces, where they can create communities that are distinct from a traditional mosque setting. In these institutions and third spaces, chaplains are able to discuss issues in new ways and broach taboo subjects by skirting the edges of both Islam and the chaplaincy. The fourth chapter is set in Newburgh, New York at *Masjid al-Ikhlas* where I meet with Imam and Chaplain Salahuddin Muhammad. Through Salahuddin's personal narrative the chapter discusses the prison chaplaincy and the central place that African American Islam has had for the American Muslim chaplaincy. The chapter deals with the difficulties related to sectarian difference in the prisons and the ways that Muslim prison chaplains are addressing issues related to intrafaith relations and as a consequence radicalization. Chapter five continues some of the themes discussed in chapter four, but addresses them primarily through the lens of the military chaplaincy. In this chapter, the history of religion and chaplains in the military is informative of the discourse of patriotism and pluralism within the American Muslim chaplaincy. Here, as in chapter four, the history of African American Islam and especially the transition in the leadership of the Nation of Islam, is pivotal for understanding the historical

trajectory of the American Muslim chaplaincy. In addition, the experience of Catholic and Jewish military chaplains helps to frame the importance Muslim chaplains place on the constitution and freedom of religion. Finally, chapter six discusses Muslim women chaplains. Muslim women serving as chaplains is one of the issues that most distinguishes the Muslim chaplaincy from other forms of Muslim religious leadership in the United States. The chapter addresses, where and how American Muslim women are placing themselves within the chaplaincy and what specific issues they find themselves dealing with. Of specific import is the prohibition against women chaplains delivering sermons and how the institutions and communities they work with view their roles as a result. Finally, the chapter ends by focusing on the ways that college and university chaplains are facilitating the participation of female Muslim students in delivering sermons, reading the Qur'an, and learning about Islam.

Conclusion

When studying religion in American history, seemingly small issues help bring light to larger trends. As the field of Islam in America, goes from its first mostly descriptive phase, to its second more contextual and historical one, scholars are attempting to see Islam as part of the larger American religious story, thus hoping to better understand developments in American Islam over time.[55] The hope is that this approach will not just broaden the field of Islam in America, but enhance the larger fields of which it is part, Islamic Studies and American religions. For Islamic Studies, this means further establishing Islam in America as one of its primary fields of research, as the field itself has become less Middle East centric over time. For

[55] For a good example of this approach to the study of Islam in America see Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America : From the New World to the New World Order*(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

the study of American Religions, this means bringing Islam within its purview and filling essential gaps in scholarship.

Whether as a larger Islamic phenomenon, a crucial part of the development of American Muslim leadership, or a challenge to American notions of religious leadership, the chaplains described in these pages are integrating competing notions of how to represent their religion, its community, and the culture in which they reside. In their struggle to be part of the American political and religious landscape, Muslim chaplains are faced with often-vague moral and cultural expectations of what it means to be an American religious leader. In this way, not only as chaplains, but also as Muslims, they are challenging and being challenged by the intersection of the political and the religious in American public life. In response to the social environment of the institutions in which they serve and the vision of a chaplain as a politically neutral and multifaith religious leader, American Muslim chaplains are addressing the needs of their communities spiritually and practically, while at the same time speaking to the political demands of a non-Muslim majority society.

Although the American Muslim chaplaincy is a relatively new profession, it is fundamentally built on the assumption that Islam is an American religion. That while Islam is still be being translated to an American context, it is not the only focus of the translation happening. Rather there is a dialogic translation adapting Islam to the chaplaincy, and the chaplaincy to Islam. While Islamic concepts are being translated and framed for America, these translations are being used to frame the chaplaincy as a Muslim profession. Thus the chaplaincy connotes a very dynamic process of interpretation, which places Islam in the thick of things and goes beyond the question of identity, i.e. how can one be Muslim and American simultaneously, to a realization that we are all connected to multiple identities which transform over time. The

following pages tell the story of the American Muslim chaplaincy and its chaplains. It examines the ways that American Muslim chaplains are approaching Islamic tradition and American history to address the needs of their communities on issues of citizenship, ritual practice, race, gender, and theology.

Chapter I

An Islamic Theology for Pastoral Care

As I sit in Java's Brewin, a coffee shop in Hackensack, New Jersey I await Chaplain Rabia Harris for what will be the first of many face to face interviews with American Muslim chaplains. I sit nervously, with a good sense of what I hope to get out of our conversation; yet, I am not sure how I will ask my questions or where the conversation will lead. I was certainly not expecting that we would spend more than two hours in conversation with half the questions on my list still unanswered. Over the telephone, Rabia was not quick to divulge her personal history. All I discovered in our first conversation on September 29, 2011 was that in 1994 she had founded the Muslim Peace Fellowship, or *Ansâr as-Salâm* (MPF), which as the website states is:

> …the first Muslim organization specifically devoted to the theory and practice of Islamic nonviolence. We understand unarmed struggle in pursuit of wise, just, and compassionate social transformation to be the original and enduring genius of the Prophetic jihad. Part membership group, part think tank, and part movement builder, MPF is a gathering of peace and justice-oriented Muslims of all backgrounds who are dedicated to making the *beauty* of Islam evident in the world.[56]

I would soon discover that the language of the above statement holds saliency for the American Muslim chaplaincy as it attempts to identify with the larger chaplaincy community. The goal is the creation of a narrative that makes Muslim chaplains, American interfaith chaplains, while at the same time finding an Islamic frame of reference from which to speak. The vision of "prophetic jihad" as "wise, just, and compassionate social transformation" has been a

[56] See http://mpf21.wordpress.com/about-2/ (Last accessed May 23, 2014).

trope emphasized by American Muslims for decades.[57] It was as familiar to MPF as it was to the Hartford Seminary, where Chaplain Harris received a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy. In addition, MPF's self-description as "Part membership group, part think tank, and part movement builder," while not entirely unique, speaks to the vision and passion Rabia brings to her role as a chaplain. This vision is further expressed in the MPF mission statement, which through the Islamic tradition advances themes essential to the American Muslim chaplaincy, such as harmony, interfaith relations, and freedom of religion:

> In the Generous Qur'an, God commands *la ikrâha fîd-dîn*: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." (2:256) We hold that the beauty of Islam can only reach fruition in a conscious and voluntary global harmony – a world worth living in for everyone. We believe this is more than a dream: we have a chance. A chance, not a certainty. Realization rests with Allah, not in human hands. Yet acting with intention is a form of prayer, and prayer may be accepted.

Rabia would often come back to this theme during our conversation: "Having a position should not imply the right to impose your position on anybody else even if your position is correct. That's from Qur'an and fundamental like *la ikrâha fîd-dîn*, let there be no compulsion in religion."[58]

After some time, Rabia enters the coffee shop. She is a slight, caucasian woman who grew up in a Jewish/Catholic home and had converted to Islam years before our meeting. These details, while seemingly cosmetic, are essential to her narrative. First, she is a female American Muslim chaplain, and as will become evident, the ability for Muslim women to join the chaplaincy is one of its distinguishing features. The color of her skin is relatively unimportant, but it is worth noting when considering she does not reflect the racial makeup of most American

[57] One can trace the ubiquity of the term "jihad of words" at least since the 1920s when Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq arrived on US shores. See Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 2nd ed.(Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003), 109-46.
[58] Quran 2:256.

converts to Islam, who are African American.[59] Finally, the fact she is a convert is important as it reflects the influence that American converts have had on the Muslim chaplaincy.

Rabia was the first President of the Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC) and is now part of its advisory board. The AMC is one of the formative sites and networks for American Muslim chaplains. As with the MPF, the AMC has adopted Islamic terminology to express their vision for the chaplaincy:

> Our core values – drawn from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) – are as follows: *Ikhlas* (Sincerity) – our intention is to act with sincere concern for others and *fi sabil Allah* (for the sake of God). *Nasiha* (Good Counsel) – our care for others is predicated upon our religious responsibility to provide *nasiha* (good counsel). *Rahma* (Mercy) – we strive in our conduct to reflect the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was sent as *rahma lil-`alamin* – a mercy to all the worlds. *Haya'* (Dignity) – we strive in our deportment to demonstrate modesty, respect, honor, good morals and humility before Allah and those we serve.[60]

Foregrounding their mission with the Qur'an and *sunnah* comes as no surprise, nor does their use of concepts like *ikhlas* and *rahma.* What is unique is the way they utilize these terms, how they interpret them, and the ways they have put them together. As Salahuddin Muhammad, the current AMC president, noted, together these words have no specific historically or traditionally similar use; together, they are religiously relevant to the chaplaincy's overall mission.[61]

I begin by telling Rabia about the nature of my project. I explain that I'm interested in the ways that Muslims are reacting to the Christian frame of reference of clinical pastoral education

[59] A 2007 Pew report lists all African Americans as making up 60% of the total native born population. Center, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream."
[60] Association of Muslim Chaplains, "Mission Statement," http://associationofmuslimchaplains.com/about/purpose-values/ (last accessed May 23, 2014).
[61] Salahuddin Muhammad, telephone conversation with the author, June 28, 2014.

(CPE),[62] its importance to the chaplaincy in general, the hospital chaplaincy more specifically, and the ways that Muslim chaplains are attempting to put an Islamic voice to it.[63] Historically, CPE has its basis in pastoral care,[64] a Protestant model for hospital chaplaincy patient care, imbued with Christian theology and notions of God's grace and salvation. *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the paradigms* defines pastoral care as "the term Christians most often use to describe as religiously based ministry offered by believers and religious leaders…informed by authoritative sources in Christian tradition and frequently also by resources of social sciences such as developmental theory, grief theory, and gender studies."[65] I mention how I see the American Muslim chaplaincy creating a new or revived form of Islamic theology. I also acknowledge that although there is a word for theology in Islam - *kalam* - there is for some, trepidation in using it.[66]

I reflect on a paper that Rabia sent to me prior to our meeting. It was a presentation that she gave to the National Association of Jewish Chaplains in January of 2010, entitled "Adapting and Adopting the Western Model of Chaplaincy."[67] In it she writes: "The only kind of world view that does the trick for me is a really, really big picture. This is how I ended up as a theologian. Yet I have adopted one of the least theological religions and practiced in a very

[62] CPE is the model for chaplaincy training in the hospitals. It involves training in counseling hospital patients and their families. This includes doing patient write ups and meeting with other chaplains in discussion groups to perform case reviews. CPE involves introspective learning and supervisory support. For detailed information see Glenn H. Asquith, *The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*(Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010); Nancy J. Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling : Redefining the Paradigms*(Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004).

[63] The importance of CPE to the chaplaincy can be evidenced by looking at the Hartford seminary program which requires X number of internship hours. See program catalogues from 1999 to present.

[64] Within this dissertation I will use the terms pastoral care and counseling interchangeably as do many chaplains. The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling states that: "In contemporary American usage pastoral care" usually refers, in a broad and inclusive way, to all pastoral work…"Pastoral Counseling" refers to caring ministries that are more structured…" 22.

[65] Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling : Redefining the Paradigms*, 3.

[66] See Ignác Goldziher and Bernard Lewis, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Modern Classics in near Eastern Studies (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[67] Rabia Terri Harris, "Adapting and Adopting the Western Model of Chaplaincy ", ed. National Association of Jewish Chaplains(January 11, 2010).

traditional way."[68] I am interested to know two things from Rabia. First, exactly where the room for theology is in Islam and second, whether or not the chaplaincy creates a conversation that is mostly theological in orientation:

> HS: What is meant in this context, when we say theology?
>
> RH: I think it reopens a conversation that's been dormant or submerged for a really long time, but I think that there is no religion without theology. Islam is saturated with good theology, but hasn't been explicit. A lot of theological decisions were made in the middle ages and not re-examined since. They have to be re-examined because they are not revelations. They are human wrestling with the meaning of revelation, which worked for a while, decisions that would come to inferences. Ghazali[69] worked brilliantly for the sweeps of problems that he was facing, but there is no point in trying to pretend that our world is identical to the world of the 12th century, it just isn't. There are some parallels but other things that are unprecedented.
>
> Also going all the way back to the era of the *Mu'tazillah* and the High Abbasid period, people got so nervous about, well what's going to be done with this theological speculation. Is it going to be turned to abuse? Then Muslims got allergic to the notion that you might be able to publicly play with ideas about the meaning of religion and just it. In a sense that is really legitimate because the dangerous connection in our history has been between theological positions and the power of coercion embodied in the State, so that powerful people said we have the right position therefore we can make you do this, this or this. That has to be broken, that's the danger.[70]

Rabia's answer to my question and her sense of an opening reflects what many in the American Muslim chaplaincy feel it will take to advance an interfaith and spiritual agenda. It is not that they necessarily advocate an approach to Islam that neglects Islamic law, but in their work, they tend to emphasize the spiritual over the legal. It is difficult to make a hard and fast

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Here Rabia is making reference to the 11-12th Century Muslim philosopher, theologian, jurist, and scholar, Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali is a point of reference for a number of Muslims chaplains, as will become evident later in this chapter. Although, Rabia rejects the notion of applying al-Ghazali's 12th century solutions to today, his approach to Islam as fundamentally limited to monotheism, Muhammad's prophecy, and the Qur'anic descriptions of life after death, allows for expansive notions of what is and is not considered innovation that can be particularly useful for an Islamic approach to chaplaincy theology. In addition, the ways that he reconciled Islamic law and mysticism provides a basis for breaking down perceptions of Sufism as a peripheral to Islam and a negatively innovative practice. For a good discussion see Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazali," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta(http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/al-ghazali/Winter 2014 Edition).

[70] Rabia Harris, interview with the author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011

distinction between the two; as opposed to seeing Islam as an essentially legalistic religion, chaplains take the stance that the legal and theological in Islam are deeply intertwined.[71] What this fact and Rabia's earlier statement indicate is that chaplains are challenging an approach which neglects the spiritual and foregrounds the legal, but not promoting an approach that emphasizes the spiritual in neglect of the legal. In part, this emphasis on the spiritual and the theological is a result of the same tendencies in the history and practice of CPE, as well as a reflection of the emphasis many chaplains place on the historical influence of Sufism as premised on the idea that all religious paths have the same ultimate purpose, i.e. to know God.[72]

These moves are not surprising given the nature of the charge that chaplains - particularly in the hospital setting - are fulfilling. Chaplains provide spiritual care for whomever they serve in a hospital setting, regardless of faith. Two of the most significant elements of their vocation and mission as pastoral care givers are multifaith care and spiritual healing. When the situation allows, they call in a chaplain from another faith group. However in life or death circumstances, when time is not on their side, chaplains may find themselves in situations that their religious traditions have not specifically prepared them for. These circumstances call on Muslim chaplains to act creatively, using the chaplaincy's methodology for pastoral care together with their knowledge of the Islamic tradition and its sources. Thus, the stories told by hospital chaplains are often infused with those moments when they search for the resolve to engage with patients on a patient's own religious terms. In these cases chaplains struggle with their personal vision of Islam in inventive and resourceful ways. This does not necessarily create a new theology, but rather adjusts the frame of reference and shifts the focus. With an eye to CPE, chaplains work

[71] For a discussion of Islam and orthodoxy vs. orthopraxy see John L. Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam*(New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 76.
[72] This focus on Sufi spiritualism can be seen in the large numbers of hospital chaplains who have come to Islam through Sufi *tariqas.*

with their Muslim patients by foregrounding their care with Islamic sources, be it Qur'an, the *sunnah,* or *shari'a*h. In addition, as they minister to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, they may struggle and again engage with these sources as well as acquiring additional support from Sufi sources. These sources reconcile religious care to non-Muslims with the Islamic tradition by accessing elements of that tradition, which provide spiritually useful language.

Despite the success that chaplains have had meshing the Islamic tradition with clinical pastoral care, Rabia acknowledges that chaplains are performing a modern form of Islamic theology that comes with challenges of its own:

> If that principal is reestablished, then the possibility of thinking honestly, even playfully, which is a word that terrifies us - I'm not afraid of it because I'm not one of these weird converts - But Muslims are serious about the significance of religion and the long-term importance of our decisions in terms of our welfare in the afterlife, in terms of what happens in the world, this is serious and is real. There is a real and genuine and important seriousness about action, but the world of thinking is not a world of action and the world of thinking is for examination and trial and reflection and possibility that doesn't have to translate into action. It is for sorting out what works from what doesn't work before you have to take it into action and find out the hard way. I'm with all in favor with playing with ideas.[73]

The balance that Rabia is trying to strike is between her vision of change, the need for open and creative dialogue, and the concerns of Muslims about the dangers of playing with basic Islamic beliefs, such as conceptions of the afterlife. This exemplifies the complexity inherent in the Muslim chaplaincy, which involves the need to respect the boundaries of Islamic foundational beliefs and maintain a connection between Islam and the chaplaincy, all through an Islamic frame of reference.

Chaplains consider that the sources themselves, whether the Qur'an or *sunnah*, have a universal presence as long as there exists the proper intention. There is a relative degree of

[73] Rabia Harris, interview with the author, Hackensack New Jersey, December 13, 2011.

agreement amongst chaplains regarding the ability of these sources to illuminate the efficacy of interfaith work and compassion through the chaplaincy. This is related to the tripartite notion that Islamic sources can provide basis for CPE, that American chaplaincy has the ability to change lives, and that the idea of pastoral care or situational spiritual care is important. The last of these represents the essential understanding that the emphasis a Muslim chaplain places on practice and spirituality or theology are contingent on context. Muslim chaplains stress that these types of decisions and circumstantial reprioritizations are not meant to play with or alter the Islamic tradition; rather, Islam already provides the basis for making these types of decisions. Based on this understanding, there is good cause to see Islam as both a privatized as well as orthopraxic religious expression.[74] This includes where the ideas of faith and spirituality have become synonymous with elements of the Muslim experience in the United States. To this point, the Muslim Chaplains Association's website states that "Chaplaincy is a critical area of American society...As chaplains, Muslims have the opportunity to contribute to the public discourse on ethical and spiritual concerns…"[75]

Despite the above discussion, it is important to question whether or not what chaplains are doing is theology. If it is, can one then understand the process as specific to a given religious tradition, or is it more accurately and generally described as "chaplaincy theology or pastoral theology?" In the case of Muslim chaplains the most useful definition of pastoral theology is "contextual theology that is funded by critical engagement in acts of care or response to needs

[74] For discussions of orthopraxy see Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Occasional Papers Series / Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986). Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety : The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[75] See The Muslim Chaplain's Association website at http://www.muslimchaplains.org, accessed September 14, 2014.

posed for such care."[76] Nonetheless, the "theology" is multifaceted and complicated, for even from the perspective of various Protestant denominations pastoral theology can mean a host of different things.[77] The complicated nature of this discourse is particularly acute when it comes to Muslim chaplains, since theology, or *kalam,* in Islamic history means something quite different from theology in a Christian context.[78] Gilliat Ray, one of the first scholars to look at the Muslim chaplaincy in Britain, describes Muslim chaplains as practitioners of theology. She has noted that chaplains "…are perhaps the most important theologians at the disposal of the Muslim community."[79]

Before moving further with this discussion of theology, it is important to interrogate the notion that chaplains are Muslim "theologians." In my interviews with chaplains, I often discussed the intersection between chaplaincy theology and Islamic theology and whether or not what is happening is actually theology. Although many were comfortable with the term theology for what chaplains are doing, I did not encounter mention of the word "theologian." The difference is not purely a matter of semantics as there is a difference between classifying an activity as theology and labeling a group of leaders as "theologians." One of the dangers is whether the term "theologian" provides a comfortable label rather than one actually grounded in truth. On one hand, it is valuable to ask if using a formatively Christian term for a Muslim religious leader is accurate. On the other hand, it is valuable to ask whether it is possible to make too much out of this type of adaptation.

To express this in slightly different terms, these words are useful, but also politically charged. The desire to see Muslim religious leaders in non-Muslim terms, like "theologian,"

[76] Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling : Redefining the Paradigms*, 5.
[77] Ibid.
[78] For a comprehensive discussion of Islamic theology see Goldziher and Lewis, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*.
[79] Gilliat-Ray, Pattison, and Ali, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*.

makes Islamic leadership more manageable for non-Muslim concepts of leadership. In the case of the chaplaincy, it is important to find identifiers to understand the interpretative moves being made by Muslims. The suggestion is that it is easier for those studying the chaplaincy to understand Muslim chaplains as "reforming" their religion as theologians than as adapting their religion as legal scholars. Finally, is there an overly predictive element in all of this, i.e. isn't it natural for a religious community to be affected by other religious groups within their purview and is that theology in fact an aspect of what Muslim chaplains are doing? The Muslim American chaplaincy certainly exhibits the theological trends described, however regardless of how a religious community is affected by interactions, there are differences in the ways they adapt, consequently creating a language of their own. The question then follows of whether or not Muslim chaplains are indeed "doing" theology and what they mean when they use the term. Perceptions and use of this language is far from apolitical.

Given this discussion, are chaplains in fact "theologians" or pragmatists adopting a contextual language? Is the pastoral or chaplaincy theology that chaplains in general and American Muslim chaplains more specifically speak about code for a generic spiritual based care? Is the label theology a description of the way that American Muslim chaplains are providing new and unique approaches to an Islamic engagement with the chaplaincy? Do these distinctions matter if Muslim chaplains describe what they are doing as theology? Ultimately, is there a flexibility involved in using language that has evolved to mean a variety of things beyond its original intention? Lastly, what do American Muslim chaplains say with regard to Islamic pastoral care and theology?

Abdu al-Salaam Musa, the Muslim chaplain at St. John's Hospital in Queens, NY, discusses Muslim theology in the following terms:

> ASM: A growing number of people, someone when I first came into CPE said that Muslims don't have a theology. That's not true at all.
>
> HS: Do you think that the Muslim theology is comparable to how Christian theology has been formulated - for instance in the way many Christians deal with the text of the New Testament or the Bible in general, the discussions about God?
>
> ASM: I'll give you one of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He said that the Jews had 71 sects of their faith. The Christians had 72 sects of their faith and there will come a time when there will be at least 73 sects of the Islamic faith, but only one of them will be right and that's the one that follows this true faith. I will not dispute what anyone says regarding the ideology unless it's just totally out of kilter with the tenets of Islam. So, if someone shares something which is from their traditional perspective, who I'm I to challenge that? That's how I look at that. I truly believe that *Allah Subhanahu aa ta'ala* is our judge and he judges all according to how we practice.[80]

Here Musa shows both his belief that there is such a thing as Muslim theology and indicates the flexibility he sees in Islam that allows for theology given parameters. He doesn't directly answer my question, but nor does he evade it. He simply leaves the definition of Muslim theology purposefully vague. In essence this view of theology although not fully formed is one that considers diversity of opinion in and of itself a form of Muslim theology. Musa is basically responding to those who claim that Islam has no theology to counter that Islam has a multitude of possible approaches of which theology is one that shouldn't be dismissed. The extent to which a person's relationship to God appears in Musa's version of theology is that in the end only god can decide who follows the "true faith." In this way theology is one of the 73 approaches that searches for the "true faith." Describing that which is "totally out of kilter with Islam" is however a more difficult task for Muslim chaplains. Since the form of pastoral care that American Muslim chaplains are embracing is one that involves an openness and multifaith approach to care that is meant to be all inclusive.

[80] Abdu al-Salam Musa, meeting with the author, St. John's Hospital in Queens, New York, December 12, 2011.

Chaplain Bilal Ansari, who will be discussed in more detail below, gives a more extensive and specific answer regarding Islamic theology. He delves quite deep to find an Islamic language and frame of reference for chaplaincy theology:

> Muslim theology is descriptively about a relationship between humans and God. And it's development formally has had a relational organic growth within Islam…so what I mean, in that organic growth it has been shaped by the history, the society, the culture, the politics, and the geography. Imams of the theological schools that emerged have sometimes blossomed in agreement with each other, sometimes at odds. And so there's basically four dominant schools of Muslim theology operative in the world, but I really, pastorally like the Al-Ghazalian approach where he's identified with universal Ashari thought but his application often falls outside of the box in particulars. Ghazali, as pastor, uses philosophical tools which assists him to wrestle with the realities that he is dealing with in his community, he is employing them in a pastoral way that may be distinct or unique to the environment or the people he's trying to serve, and dealing with in his time.[81]

Through this analysis of Islamic history and society Bilal builds a nuanced and Islamically referential theology. In one sense, this theology is fully grounded in pastoral thinking. In another, it is based on Islamic concepts of contextualized application of pastoral care. In his reference to a "Ghazalian approach," two things are of particular note. First is Bilal's view that al-Ghazali was able to "fall outside of the box in particulars" in his application, and second that Ghazali used "philosophical tools" in his pastoral role. Both of these factors are ultimately related to pastoral care as a contextual enterprise focused on particulars. However, Bilal does something more; by referencing a role model based in the Islamic tradition - namely al-Ghazali - he is able to find pastoral roots within that tradition, specifying pastoral care as an Islamic enterprise. He also uses this model to indicate the importance of thinking outside the box when delivering care from within an Islamic framework. These two factors are an essential part of reiterating that American Muslim chaplains are implementing innovative pastoral care, but are not acting contrary to the fundamental principles of Islam.

[81] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

In addition, his description of Muslim theology and pastoral care as related to "a relationship between humans and God," "organic," and with a strong reliance on the "tools of philosophy" are purposefully general and indicative of the tension inherent in using a term with points of reference that vary based on the experience of a given religious group:

> And so Muslim theology, Ghazali demonstrates that it can be a pastoral theology, and it has always been that way because it was not a dogmatic or revelatory theology; it doesn't have an epistemology that comes from strict literal textual sources. Ghazali doesn't have clear theology; scholars debate where to place him because his application has rounded edges. So you really can't trace it to a dogmatic theology, so you have to trace it rather to a pastoral theology that the imams of our community developed organically.
>
> And the imams, therefore, are seen in their pastoral role and what they were doing to preserve the flock that they were speaking to in history, or their societal, political facts on the ground. And so I employ theology in a similar sense. So in my college chaplaincy, I would not use the same Muslim theology that I used in my prison chaplaincy pastoral theology. It has to be based on the differing pastoral needs of your flock, but it is still Muslim theology. But, I'm able to put text within the context in relation to the particular humanity I serve.[82]

Bilal makes a strong distinction between what he sees as "Muslim theology" and how he views "dogmatic or revelatory theology." His vision of theology is the informal study of God's relationship to the world and the study of faith and religious experience. For him, the tradition of al-Ghazali does not promote a "clear" theology, but rather one which is less formal and more based on context. Bilal also reiterates a theme that he stresses as essential to the chaplaincy many times during our discussions; that a pastoral theology without consideration for the context - institutionally or otherwise - cannot be spoken about in general terms.

Returning to Java's Brewin and my conversation with Rabia - which will serve as the origin and inspiration for the questions I will ask Bilal nearly two and a half years later - we

[82] Ibid.

delve deeper and explore the limits of the American Muslim chaplaincy and its ability to define an expanding approach to Muslim religious discourse:

> HS: You said in your piece that the chaplaincy allows for engagement in social experiment without creating offence. I was wondering if you could expand on this idea.
>
> RH: Sure, chaplaincy doesn't threaten the position of the imam or threaten any of the traditional practices of religion nor should it ever. But a religious discourse is large and complex. It's very easy to draw models, to paint a circular model with the core and the periphery. The people at the core they are only concerned about what happens within that circle. They continue, they are sort of like the driving force of the continuation of the discourse. The people on the periphery are linking up with other circles. This is where the synapses form. Chaplains are doing synaptic connections for the discourse of Islam that has to happen. Not only because we need to accommodate with others but because we are carrying information that other people need and without those synaptic connections it won't be transmitted.[83]

This, in a nutshell, is the delicate balance in which American Muslim chaplains are involved. They have to acknowledge the force of the Islamic tradition while at the same time creating a space for new approaches; these reflect their positions in society and their relationship with the institutions in which they work, as well as ideas and visions grounded in the chaplaincy, CPE, and those they serve, be they Muslim or non-Muslim. On the level of Islamic American leadership, what Rabia's statement alludes to is the delicate balance that exists between the role of a chaplain and an imam, alternative versus traditional forms of Islamic leadership.

However, Rabia is deftly aware of the problems that ensue when categorizing these roles. As she points out "… a religious discourse is large and complex." She is also acutely aware of the temptation to create constructs, which as she says "…paint a circular model with the core and the periphery." Her understanding of the core/periphery model is both accepting and suspicious. She complicates the notion by inserting her idea of synapses - which allow for the periphery such

[83] Rabia Harris, interview with the author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011.

as the work of chaplains - to connect to the center. Finally, she sees the center as a shifting one where "chaplains are doing synaptic connections for the discourse of Islam that has to happen." In other words, she sees chaplains as shaking up the center in necessary and productive ways.

Bilal Ansari's words indicate this same tension with respect to resistance he finds from within the American Muslim community to the American pastoral care tradition. Despite his view that there is a strong pastoral tradition in Islam, Bilal comments: "This resistance perceptively and practically comes from an institutional immaturity of Muslims which perpetuates old world paradigms; that inflexibly blinds them."[84]

This resistance is not restricted to Muslim chaplains in America. This "pushing of the boundaries" has parallels for the formative chaplains of other faith groups. The same phenomenon can be seen, for example, in the Greek Orthodox tradition. As Chaplain Steven Voytovich at St. John's Hospital in Queens, New York, comments:

> To put it in an idiom, which I really work to not use any more because we use it too often, I'm neither a fish nor a fowl. When I go to meetings of my faith tradition, I am seen as somewhat of a heretic in that I'm travelling in the circles with, would you believe, people that have other beliefs beside our own. Somehow that's patently wrong. When I'm in my church community, I'm seen as someone who is really on the edge. Likewise when I'm interacting with people in the greater clinical training community who don't have a level of familiarity with who I am as a person of faith, likewise see me as someone who is not quite in the community. It requires an incredible amount of inner drive, an energy, and a goal and vision and all to kind of keep driving with that reality. For me it's a reality and one that I struggle with.[85]

Rabia's notions of the chaplaincy as dynamic and creative are not the only way of viewing the role of chaplains within the Muslim community. Fiyaz Mughal, the founder and director of Faith Matters, places less emphasis on Muslim chaplains as existing on a periphery and more on their past and continuing role as caregivers at the heart of the Islamic tradition. He

[84] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.
[85] Steven Voytovich, interview with the author, St. John's Hospital, Queens, New York, December 12, 2011.

does, however, acknowledge the import of pastoral care theology in this process. While it may be too early to assess the chaplaincy's role in defining contemporary Islamic theology and law, Mughal makes a strong argument for the fact that the chaplaincy is redefining the way that certain services are being delivered to Muslims:

> The role of a Muslim chaplain is influenced by religious traditions and the theology of pastoral or care specific to Islam. In Muslim traditions, chaplaincy has always been seen as a vocation for all, where pastoral or specific religious care can be carried out by anyone of the Muslim faith and not just an imam or religious leader. In contemporary societies, this tradition is evolving as Muslim chaplains start to take responsibility for pastoral care of a whole community - such as in a university or hospital. Muslim chaplains today work within a multifaith context, providing specialist input to help ensure the spiritual, cultural and religious needs of Muslim communities are met as part of the public sector's commitment to meet the needs of all communities.[86]

Rabia would not disagree with the idea that chaplains are "providing specialist input." In fact, she stresses that chaplains allow for a conversation about Muslim theology- beyond pastoral theology -which others may be reluctant to engage in. The type of open discourse that Rabia encourages unsettles the "center," where others insist on being more steadfast in their views of what Islam is and should be.

The notion that chaplains push the boundaries is not imagined and is facilitated by the fact that in many settings chaplains deal with life and death situations where time is of the essence. As Chaplain Sherry Ra'ufa Tuell, who served at a major level-one trauma hospital in the Midwest, comments regarding non-Muslim patients who ask her to pray with them: "If I am drowning I won't ask what the religion of the person is in the boat."[87]

Although, there are institutions where life and death situations are more regular, such as the military, where the prospect of death is ever present on the battlefield, or in the hospital

[86] See Fiyaz Mughal, Faith Matters, "The Role of Chaplains in Public Sector Institutions,"(http://faith-matters.org/images/stories/21873%20Muslim%20Experience%20in%20the%20Public%20Sector.pdf2010), 8.
[87] Sherry Rau'fa Tuell, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2011.

setting, there are also less obvious situations, such as in the university, where students in crisis require that chaplains deal with suicide prevention and addiction. Given these imminent situations, there is often an understanding among Muslim chaplains that specific Islamic legal restrictions take a backseat to pastoral care and theology; where, as Bilal Ansari expressed earlier, theology is about the relationship between "humans and God." This imminent sense of life and death is the side of the chaplaincy where the spiritual and the practical meet. This is a juncture where the synaptic connections that Rabia speaks about necessarily reside and flourish. Change then happens both by will as well as circumstance. It can be an active project with momentum inspired by individual chaplains or groups of chaplains or a necessary project inspired by the requirements of context.

Bilal Ansari: Actualizing Synaptic Connections

The willed and circumstantial aspects of the American Muslim chaplaincy have promoted a "theological" flexibility, affording Muslim chaplains the opportunity and space to create their own form of leadership grounded in contextual pastoral care as opposed to a universalized legalism.[88] These spaces open up as chaplains face vocational, religious-based decisions on a daily basis, which play out in such a way as to bring up theologically oriented questions. One example of this is in the following story told by Bilal Ansari, who at the time was the chaplain at Tunxis Community College. In Bilal's description, one can see the influence the chaplaincy has on conceptions of interfaith relations and prayer. In the course of an article entitled "Seeing with Bifocals: The Evolution of a Muslim Chaplain," Bilal relates the story of his first encounter using "prayer in the pastoral care of a Christian patient."

[88] Note that pastoral care may be universalized and Islamic law may be contextual, but chaplains often push the boundaries of leadership playing with the more formalized Islamic legal tradition.

Mary, a Catholic patient, is being treated for bipolar disorder and crack cocaine addiction. The following is a small portion of Bilal and Mary's prayer: "Dear God, Mary and I come before you humbly asking for your support. We know with you is all help, and we feel peace in your presence, God…Certainly Mary will rise above these challenges in her life with your support, and we thank You, God, for hearing our prayers…Amen."[89] Understandably, this is a generic prayer and does not delve into the specifics of either Islamic or Catholic doctrine; there are however monotheistic undertones, in this prayer God serves as the one god." The conception of God is also very personal: a God who listens and supports, and most importantly delivers peace. Despite this generalized message, Bilal's decision to pray with Mary required introspection. Bilal is forced to delve into the Islamic tradition to find an example of a similar practice; on the surface, praying with a non-Muslim is not the norm in Islam. In turn, Bilal contemplates the Islamic tradition and his place within it as a chaplain:

> Although it was a simple interaction, I had taken a big leap inwardly in initiating this prayer. In Islamic doctrine as I had learned it, to perform personalized essential ritual worship, such as prayer, that is not prescribed by the legal sources is grave sin. At the core of my own theological presuppositions, which had influenced my ministry…was the concept of *bid`ah*, or blameworthy innovation in religious matters. Ultraconservative Islam warns about innovation in religious matters. However, if I, as a Muslim, don't pray with Christian patients, then I am less compassionate as a pastoral caregiver. The Qur'an tells us that Muslim pastoral care is the best that has evolved for humanity! So how was I going to reconcile my ethical imperative to be a compassionate caregiver with my legal quandary?[90]

Bilal's final question regarding how to reconcile the legal and ethical are at the heart of his deliberation. His perspective on the relationship between theology and law is key to understanding his larger worldview on this matter. On a certain level, he views the law as an

[89] Bilal Ansari, "Seeing with Bifocals:The Evolution of a Muslim Chaplain," *SFU Journals*, http://journals.sfu.ca/rpfs/index.php/rpfs/article/viewFile/233/232. 173 (Last accessed on September 15, 2014).
[90] Ibid.

essential part of his engagement with pastoral care. On an entirely different level, he sees it as non-essential to his ultimate purpose. It can provide a basis for a relationship with God that views the law as a gift for guidance: "I really appreciated the principle that I learned from my teacher Sheikh Yusuf where he said, '"Islamic law was sent to serve us, not us serve it'."[91] This is central to the development of his sense of pastoral theology and how it relates to compassion. That the law is meant to serve means that it should not be rejected, but that it should aide chaplains in developing a useful approach to their profession. As he says: "This principle is the connection between sacred law and pastoral theology which if the chaplain understands and executes wisely will cultivate a perspective and practice of compassion over compulsion."[92]

As the American Muslim chaplaincy is in its formative stages, Bilal and the other chaplains in this dissertation are developing precedents for future chaplains. Bilal's juxtaposition of the legal and the ethical is not a hard and fast one, but it is indicative of the fact that where the legal sources have authority, the ethical resides in an interpretive gray area. The ethical here can be compared to Rabia's synaptic connections, which she says is a place that allows for "Islamic discourse to happen." Bilal, on the other hand, interrogates several ideas to help him come to his final decision to pray with Mary. He mentions the term *bid'ah,* which in this context translates as innovation in religious matters (as opposed to worldly matters, such as technology) and has a profoundly negative connotation in Islam. The decision Bilal makes is whether or not the prayer he plans to partake in is innovative in its most negative sense, such as something without precedent and contradicting the Qur'an or *sunnah.* In turn, this is compounded by the fact that he sees his mission as a pastoral caregiver as

[91] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with author, June 3, 2014.
[92] Ibid.

providing compassion to patients of all faiths. Finally, he alludes to the fact that the Qur'an indicates that there is a tradition of pastoral care, which is quite simply the "best."

To determine whether or not this is *bid'ah*, there are two issues: First, is the Qur'anic notion of pastoral care, similar to the one that Bilal - as an American chaplain - has embraced? Second, if it isn't, is there still enough Islamic ethical ground to suggest that what Bilal is doing is not to be understood as *bid'ah*? One could presume that Bilal would answer "yes" on both counts; however, this is not entirely necessary. Even if the Qur'an does not provide an explicitly multifaith understanding of pastoral care, it still provides the ethical and legal formulation allowing for his prayer with Mary:

> I came to understand that to perform an act of non-essential religious worship with an understanding of its merit, while not believing it to be essential worship, is praiseworthy. Religious novices with a primary theological understanding might never pray with a non-Muslim in the form I used here or if they did, they would be very uncomfortable. I found this experience immensely gratifying for both the patient and myself.[93]

One premise for Bilal is the idea that this prayer is classified as non-essentia religious worship. The other is that he found the ethical ground that sees it as praiseworthy, even if not essential. While there is nothing explicit here about praying with a non-Muslim, the idea of "understanding its merit" is an ethical ground which places the focus of the decision on Bilal's intent rather than the religion of the one he prays with. He is able to find the ethical ground within the legal and doctrinal elements of the tradition. This ethical grounding is enhanced by his deeper experience and not primarily an understanding of pastoral theology. For Bilal, a full understanding of the tradition means that one can look beyond simplistic answers and find ethical space. Once found, Bilal sees the ethical in the context of his own life history:

[93] Ansari, "Seeing with Bifocals," 174.

> The challenges in this encounter for me were more than theological. I was opening a door onto a part of myself that I had left behind many years ago. In my Pentecostal years, prayer or supplication had been a strength. When I was a young minister in my grandfather's church, regardless of time, place, or circumstance, this part of myself would freely open up to God. Somehow I had lost this in Islam. We were taught that supplications in the Qur'an, and those of the Prophet, and some prayers of our righteous predecessors, should be memorized and prayed. A relationship to God that once had been close and near had become far and distant. Despite other reservations about the encounter, I felt empowered through this synthesis in my spiritual identity.[94]

In the hospital setting, Bilal realized the import of compassion through his pastoral care training, connecting to what he calls being "…freely open to God." The challenge, as he articulates it, is how to put a Muslim voice to this training without rejecting its non-Muslim specific elements. Furthermore, through this process he is able to allow these non-Muslim elements to ring experientially true and ultimately embrace them as Islamic. His words show how he deals with the ecumenism attached to pastoral care and being able to counsel those who aren't Muslims. More significantly, he works with the Islamic tradition to perform tasks that may or may not be within the customary practice of Islam, such as praying with someone of a different religion. Lastly, one can see the importance of the language of spirituality in Bilal's decision-making process.

The Story of Abbas Chinoy:

Bilal's experience with Mary indicates the interplay between pastoral care and Islamic law; it is instructive in understanding the ways in which American Muslim chaplains have embraced the multifaith and interfaith elements of the chaplaincy. Multifaith pastoral care in the hospital setting is a function of the chaplaincy mission as well as a function of the environment

[94] Ibid.

and institutional setting. In December 2011, I spoke with Abbas Chinoy about his experience in the hospital setting. Although distinct from Bilal, in that Abbas's Muslim identity is not fundamental to his role as a chaplain, he represents another form of Muslim engagement with the multifaith aspects of the chaplaincy. His identity as a chaplain has little to do with his being Muslim - or even Shiite - and much more to do with what he sees as his professional spiritual responsibility:

> And at times I will be a Muslim chaplain when the time, when it's needed, when it's in need. It's something I think I would more genuinely play that role as opposed to maybe another chaplain in the department who isn't, who doesn't come from an Islamic background. I shouldn't say that my, personally speaking, not even professionally, I really am not that religious. I don't' identify very strongly as a *Shia* or even a Muslim. I am, I've taken the declaration of faith, and that is my theological grounding, and I do know it intimately, and at times I use some of the verses for prayer and things like that.[95]

My interview with Abbas was early and formative to my understanding of the chaplaincy. However, Abbas is unlike most of the Muslim chaplains that I have spoken with in that his primary identity as a chaplain is not framed around Islam. While he says that his "theological grounding" is in his declaration of faith, he is not particularly religious. His theology and his relationship to God or a divine being is one that is premised on a looser sense of attachment to a religious tradition than, for instance, Bilal's. In fact, his theology, although it leads to similar resolutions, as does Bilal's, is more strictly based on a monist principle. It is this monist view that allows Abbas to preform rites for those seated in religious traditions other than his own. The most poignant part of our conversation centers on his experience baptizing a Catholic patient, which inspires further conversation regarding his religious worldview. After he tells me the story of his experience with this baptism – to which I will return later in this chapter - I express my

[95] Abbas Chinoy, telephone interview with the author, December 27, 2011.

amazement at the event and probe further into his personal reflections on how his own beliefs synchronize with his performance of this ritual:

> HS: So let me ask you about the administering of the rites of baptism, both in terms of your own personal viewpoint. I'm assuming you said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."
>
> AC: Yeah, the Holy Spirit I think it was.
>
> HS: So potentially you were saying something that you personally didn't believe, but were administering the rights because of the needs of someone else. So what was your personal experience with that?
>
> AC: I think this would have to go to my conceptions of the divine. When I said I did come from the Islamic tradition, I was raised with the notion of God being omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, the 99 names of Allah for example, all those characteristics. God is everywhere but nowhere, all merciful and is one. So there's this very monotheistic view, fervently monotheistic.
>
> HS: And non-Trinitarian.[96]

Given his performance of the baptism, my last comment to Abbas is meant to bring up the doctrinal Islamic contention that the Trinitarian view of God compromises the Muslim monotheistic view of the nature of God. As his later comments suggest, Abbas clearly knows what I am intimating. In fact, his opening comment with regard to being raised with Islamic notions of the divine suggests the theological opening he turns to next; i.e. his awareness of his upbringing and the limits he sees in the "fervency" of the tradition. He then elaborates on his personal vision of the divine:

> Personally, where I stand with all of that, though, is a very monistic view of things. This emphasis on oneness of God is a really interesting thing. When it comes to me personally, I don't see a difference between the avatars and incarnations in Hinduism; I don't see a difference between if you're going to call it a trinity and you're going to call it Holy Spirit and Father and Son. Okay, good for you, you're still speaking; if you're speaking at divinity, if you're speaking at something divine, then God is God. God is one.

[96] Ibid.

> God is everywhere and everything. And so for me personally, that really didn't scrape against anything. It really didn't rub up against anything.[97]

Abbas expresses a deep flexibility with the Islam he was brought up in. His version of Islam sees nothing problematic with a vision that equates monotheism and monism. There is room here to enquire further; for instance, what if someone does not see himself or herself as either monist or monotheist? Abbas's monism is still expressed in deeply monotheist terms. Yet the fluidity of his personal theology leads one to believe that he can place a vast array of religious worldviews within this monist vision despite protestations. Ultimately, the goal of Abbas's monist theology is to allow him to work with patients on their own terms without compromising his own spiritual needs. As he says, it [the baptism] "really didn't scrape up against anything." In the immediacy of the hospital setting, Abbas's monism is particularly important to his work as a chaplain. This is how he introduces the story of his performance of his first baptism:

> It's amazing the drastic, dramatic reprioritization that occurs in crisis. When we're literally faced with life and death, or sometimes it's just death in the room, it's amazing what truly does go by the wayside. I personally have baptized three people…in three instances in my career I've baptized. Some of the Jesuit priests I know [said] the Catholic Church would certainly hold up and stand behind the baptism I did - one of those people was a Catholic.[98]

At this stage in my research, the idea that the Catholic Church would see baptisms performed by a Muslim chaplain as valid seemed far-fetched even for the chaplaincy. Abbas assures me that various Catholic priests have supported these baptisms as binding. In addition, given the comments made by Rabia Harris just two weeks prior, regarding the synaptic connections that Muslim chaplains are involved with, it was becoming clear that this synaptic

[97] Abbas Chinoy, interview with the author, December 27, 2011.
[98] Ibid.

process is part of a larger vision of the chaplaincy. Held not just by the Muslim chaplains I was speaking with, but with the non-Muslim chaplaincy community as well.[99] The Catholic priests Abbas references are indicative of this fact:

> The Jesuit priest gave me reassurance of that. This occurred at Rush, and this was actually brought up in my interview for residency at Loyola. So there were three people who were sitting in the room interviewing me for Loyola. One of them was a Jesuit priest who was the head supervisor of the CPE program. And then there was the department chair, and then there was also the assistant supervisor at the time; he's now a full supervisor. He was an ex-Franciscan priest, and the woman the department had was a Catholic. And so… I brought this up, you know, and the woman she looked to the priest after I kind of told the story. And she was like, "Jim? That counts, right?" And he looked at her and with a really slow, deep, serious nod he nodded, like up and down, up and down. He said, "Oh yes Marie, oh yes. This is exactly the kind of ministry that the Catholic Church would be fully..." Because when you come down to that, that's the moment of impending death, its emergent, it's urgent. What do you do - hey, the chaplain is a Muslim, so what? Get the holy water, get the towel, get the certificate out, sign it, chart it.[100]

Once again, the circumstance and the institutional context frame the chaplain's interaction and the acceptability and permissibility of the performance of a ritual. It is a process whereby the chaplain becomes a universal administrator of rites. Time and again, the stories told by chaplains attest to the fact that in the absence of religion-specific clergy, when time is of the essence, performance of ritual supersedes the religion of the chaplain. As Abbas so succinctly puts it, "…hey, the chaplain is a Muslim. So what?" I ask Abbas if he can retell the story of the first time he performed a baptism at the hospital:

> Let's see. Yeah, I can. The details are a bit fuzzy because I was on call, a 24-hour on call shift at Rush. And there was some time in the evening, I got a page probably around 10:30 or 11:30. I got a page to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and when I walked in there was, in the room there was a little black girl who was laying on the bed. She was

[99] Here it is important to clarify that this vision of the chaplaincy cannot be generalized to all chaplains or chaplaincy organizations, but does appear as the rule and not the exception.
[100] Abbas Chinoy, interview with the author, December 27, 2011.

> unconscious. She was probably I think 14 or 15 years old, and her head had recently been shaved. You could see the really shortened, trimmed hair, that there was recently surgery done or a procedure done on her head. And so when I walked in and I saw her and then there was an older black lady in the corner kind of sitting down, very quiet, very quiet. I realized, I knew immediately that this was serious, serious situation. Walking onto a Pediatric ICU at 10:30 in the evening, its crunch time now, and you've been paged for need of a chaplain…So I remember feeling the heaviness of those moments, and the woman who was sitting in the corner, she smiled when she saw me. Very kind of slow sort of smile, and she said, "We're Catholic, and we need a baptism"…I don't know where the parents were in the situation. I don't think they really were in the situation. But the auntie was saying that she was Catholic and this is how she'd been raising this girl, and the girl was Catholic and they needed a baptism. And they were asking for a priest.[101]

At this point, Abbas is speaking slowly and deliberately. His voice over the telephone is clear; he doesn't hesitate. Listening intently, I am fully engaged. He is trying to convey the urgency of the situation, and at one point says: "This actually ended up being the end of the little girl." After a brief pause, Abbas continues:

> Now I said, this was either a Friday or a Saturday night on call, because I remember responding to them saying, "You know, there is no priest right now. I'm the only chaplain here, and we'll have a priest on Sunday when he comes to give the Mass, to do the Mass. There's going to be someone at least by then." And she looked at me and she said, "There isn't anything sooner?" And I said, "No, there's not Catholic priest around." And she looked at me and she said, "Well, if the time comes, you'll do." And I really, I honestly didn't know how to respond. I said "I'm here to do anything that I can do." We ended up praying in those moments, we said a little prayer. We stood up, we walked to the bedside. She was on one side, and I was on the other, and her right hand was touching the shoulder and the head of her niece. And I held her left hand with my right hand, and I was on the left side of the bed. And we said a prayer and I left.[102]

Reminiscent of Bilal Ansari's prayer with Mary, Abbas prays with the girl's auntie. His inner conflict or theological process, however, is far different from Bilal's. As Abbas is not concerned with the legal or theological precepts of the Islamic tradition, his guiding principle is his role as a chaplain. In that role he will "do anything [he] can do." This is less a reflection on

[101] Abbas Chinoy, telephone interview with the author, December 27, 2014.
[102] Ibid.

the limits he feels his own tradition places on him and more an understanding of the limits of his knowledge of baptism and an uncertainty about the events that would follow:

> And three or four in the morning...I get a page from a new nurse…"Patient so-and-so is actively dying, and you're needed. You need to come." And so I remember waking up from, I had started my shift the previous day at 8:30 in the morning, and it was a busy shift, so I was rubbing, really trying hard to rub the sleep out of my eyes as I was on the phone in the on-call room talking to this nurse. And as I'm listening I just kind of said, "OK, I understand, I'm on my way"…And so I grabbed holy water, and actually you know what? There was no holy water to grab in the room. There usually was holy water to grab in the room, and there was none…I remember telling the nurse I didn't have any water, so she actually brought a little, like the size of your pinky, a little plastic container that had sterile water in it…
>
> The same black girl, she was essentially in the same position. The only difference now was she was breathing a bit more heavily, you know, laboriously. That's the actively dying part - they call it agonal breathing. And she was doing that, and I remember the moments - they felt very heavy. I don't know if you've ever as a kid or have recently opened your eyes underwater. You can still see; everything's just really blurry and fuzzy. Those moments, being up at four in the morning, being confronted with this actively dying girl, and this duty, this task I had to perform, the baptism... it felt like I was underwater. I remember in one hand I opened, in my left hand I had the binder open to the baptism thing and in my right hand I had already cracked open the little water. And so I read the lines of baptism and I sprinkled the water; I followed the instructions and I left…It was really powerful, really powerful.[103]

When Abbas finishes speaking, we are both silent for several moments; the emotional impact of the retelling is why I decide to quote him at length. Without the details he interjects, it is difficult to appreciate the full weight of the situation. The physical and spiritual are often in tension. Here, Abbas's image of "opening his eyes under water," expresses the combination of the physical difficulty in waking up after a full day's shift and the mental and emotional energy involved with providing spiritual care to a dying patient. While the intellectual and theological projects that chaplains are engaged in are crucial to understand the interplay between the individual responses to a given situation, the details that Abbas provides give a deeper insight

[103] Ibid.

into the process when it is devoid of time to reflect and intellectualize, and is a product of instinctual reaction.

Chaplains have to adjust their theology as a result of life and death situations; they also have to respond to the immediacy of these circumstances and reflect only later on the choices they have made. Abbas's description of rubbing the sleep out of his eyes and opening his eyes underwater are telling of the project chaplains are engaged in. Chaplains like Bilal and Abbas are intimately involved with the life and death of their patients, and thus their own mortality and personal experiences are a necessary part of understanding the chaplaincy. Abbas is not only in the hospital as a chaplain, but as an individual struggling with his own humanity.

I ask Abbas if he had prepared himself for this eventuality: had he already assessed his comfort zone, or did he first confront his comfort level at the moment when he was asked to do the baptism? He makes it clear that although he understood his duties, this was not something he was truly able to prepare for. In fact, he traces his naiveté back to the beginning of his training in the hospital:

> I had no idea that I was going to be called for baptisms, things like that. And so I had no idea how to prepare myself for that. I think part of your question, comfort zone and that, and I just remember waking up at four in the morning, full of sleep after a long shift, that was uncomfortable. Being asked to go back into a room where I know that there's this motionless young girl stricken with something that's going to take her life; that was uncomfortable. All of these, there was a lot of stuff that rubbed up against maybe my comfort zone in the moment. In the moment, and certainly in retrospect, my gosh, it's so important and it was such a gift for me, such a privilege. There was such importance in the moment that it had to be done. Someone had to be there to be present. Someone had to. And that someone just so happened to be me.[104]

There is another aspect of Abbas's narrative that, while mostly procedural, is important to understanding the day-to-day process of chaplains as multifaith providers. In addition to looking

[104] Ibid.

for the holy water that would usually be among the hospital chaplain's supplies, he mentions a book meant to guide chaplains through the rituals and liturgies of various religious traditions. Abbas tells me: "There's usually a little basket that has anointing oils and water in it. I knew that little mini green binder thing that you put in your lab jacket, and it's got laminated sheets in it, some of which have prayers in Spanish and prayers in English. And one was for baptism."[105] By his description, it is a book that gives the chaplain information on the needed rituals and liturgy. Essentially it ordains the chaplain in that moment to perform a ritual from another tradition. The idea is that religion, even when ensconced in ritual and liturgy, is at its heart a spiritual experience. Training and ordination are not necessary for performance in times of need, and religious affiliation takes a backseat to momentary spiritual needs. This notion is central to the ways the chaplains that I have spoken with view their roles and the religious services they provide. In essence, it is the idea that the profession of the chaplaincy has the authority, however amorphous, to provide legitimate religious council. Abbas describes his incredulity at the idea that his performance of these rites was valid:

> …that little booklet that we got at the onset of CPE…In one sense, I saw it there; I really didn't put two and two together and think that I'd be the one doing this. I remember asking one of my group members who was a recently ordained; he was on the ordination track at the time to be a Presbyterian pastor. It was his second unit of CPE during my first unit. So I asked him, "Am I allowed to do this stuff? Like am I allowed to give a blessing? Is that OK? Can I do that with oil?" And he looked at me and kind laughed. He put his hand on my shoulder and said "Yeah, I mean that's OK."

In many ways, the exchange between Abbas and the Presbyterian pastor is indicative of the project that chaplains are engaged with. There is a deep sense of informality built into their professionalism. It is not that they are disengaged from their own traditions. Rather, they perform functions that require a flexible engagement; one, which considers the dictates of the tradition

[105] Ibid.

from which they come, but looks to an interpretive lens that is not always in the center as Rabia has intimated. The specifics of this type of interpretive discourse are dependent both upon a given faith tradition, as in the case of Bilal, and the reprioritization of that tradition, as in the case of Abbas. However, what joins this multitude of voices is the idea that the chaplaincy provides the professional space needed to create a discourse related to acceptable practice, alongside the authoritative space for chaplains to make decisions, whether collectively or individually. Although clearly distinct, given the focus of their religious perspectives, the experiences of Bilal and Abbas inform us regarding the importance of the individual chaplain in determining the ways that traditions and theology are conceptualized in the chaplaincy setting.

Thus engagement happens on multiple levels: within a religious tradition, within an institution based on necessity and institutional culture, and between chaplains and their constituents. In this way, the nature of chaplain-constituent religious interaction is framed by the specific faith tradition of each person and the surrounding institutional culture. However, upon the client's acceptance of the chaplain's authority, it is the personal history and religious viewpoint of the chaplain that determine how the interaction takes place. This is not to say that chaplains are not working within the parameters of these institutions and faith traditions, but rather that the experience they have within these parameters is one determined by human interaction and not doctrinal or institutional formulations.

It is in the moments of reflection that personal history and religious worldviews surface most profoundly to explain a chaplain's ability to act in the moment. While Bilal's personal history as a Christian convert to Islam figures prominently in his developing a full theological explanation and personal understanding of his prayer with Mary, Abbas's religious outlook and professed monism enable him to see a deeper and more universal meaning in his performance of

baptism. Personal history and religious worldview are inseparable elements of a chaplain's decision-making process. For Bilal and Abbas, both these factors decidedly intermix to create a very individual engagement with religious belief.

Finding an Islamic Framework for Pastoral Education and Care:

The experiences shared by Bilal and Abbas provide a concrete application of the multi-faith aspects of pastoral care and one that works for Muslim chaplains, albeit less specifically Islamic in Abbas's case. Despite these examples, there is still a lingering question with regard to CPE as a training model in the American setting as traditionally and historically Protestant.[106] In other words, to what extent are Muslims able to connect with CPE on a theological level that goes beyond the generalizable language of spirituality and introspective education and training?

As the American Muslim experience with CPE is relatively new, as is the CPE world's experience with Islam, there are bound to be moments of disconnect. Part of the mission of CPE training is to teach chaplains to be introspective and to deliver multifaith care and Muslim chaplains, in these formative years, are questioning the applicability of the CPE experience, if not the intentionality of it. As Chaplain Sherry Ra'ufa Tuell explains: "[To me] CPE is invaluable as a residency program…however CPE is not truly interfaith – it is Christian oriented. They want to be interfaith. …to find common ground and extrapolate through each tradition, but [it is] saturated with Christianity, but not acknowledged."[107]

Sherry's frustration is not with CPE as an educational model; in fact, she says that the interfaith approach of CPE is fully compatible with Islam and perspectives from her Sufi

[106] For a comprehensive history of the development of the CPE movement see Charles E. Hall, *Head and Heart : The Story of the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement*(Decatur, Ga.: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1992); Edward E. Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry a History of Clinical Pastoral Education*(Nashville,: Abingdon Press, 1970).
[107] Sherry Ra'ufa Tuell, telephone interview with author, October 11, 2011.

background and education. However, as she sees it CPE has not yet been able to fully integrate chaplains from other religious traditions into its training model. The majority of those involved in CPE training and education come from a frame of reference that use a Christian based vernacular. As a result, Muslim chaplains for whom this vernacular does not resonate may feel alienated or deeply disconnected with elements of CPE training. One aspect of this disconnect is that CPE training groups and methods have not yet learned how to incorporate Muslim chaplains. Another is that Muslim chaplains are still looking to contribute by working within their own tradition to find an Islamic framework for pastoral care and education. As this process moves along, one of the first things that must happen is for American Muslim chaplains to identify what is Christian or Protestant about CPE that specifically unsettles them. This needs to be done with regard to finding appropriate scriptural references and finding an Islamic theological worldview that can help facilitate the training that Muslim chaplains receive.

Returning once again to my conversation with Rabia Harris, we examine theology, but this time Christian theology and its relationship to CPE. Rabia discusses the basic environment that can make the CPE experience alienating for Muslim chaplains:

> Time after time after time they get up there and preach Christian theology and invoke Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and original sin because they don't know. They just don't know that the whole world doesn't take this to be the perfect description of reality. For a while you put up with it – that is just the way it is – but after a while you want to shake somebody, "Will you please pay attention to who is in the room!" It's just rude. There's that dimension of things which gets on people's nerves.[108]

Rabia illuminates the types of language used within CPE training groups,[109] i.e. the frame of reference, at least in terms of liturgy, is specifically Christian and often with little regard for

[108] Rabia Harris, interview with author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011.
[109] Typically CPE training in the hospitals involves chaplains meeting and discussing with one another and discussing the patients they have seen and the issues that have come up since their last meeting.

the non-Christians in the room. However, this frustration is only part of the discussion of CPE training methodology. When creating a Muslim framework for CPE, it isn't sufficient to simply replace lessons from the life of Jesus with those from the life of Muhammad. Rabia delves deeper into what she sees as problematic with regard to the Christian theology she sees embedded in CPE:

> For instance, one of the things that is really essential in Christian envisioning of the drama of life is this notion of redemption and salvation. Well, we don't buy that. Eve time people start a conversation about redemption we could say, well, here is another way to look at this situation. That means that we as Muslims need to get comfortable with stating our own case. A lot of us don't know how to do that. We have a generalized discomfort: "Well gee, I don't know how to work here because I don't know how to say what I believe, I've never done that." Well, that's the good thing about CPE. It pushes you to learn how to articulate what it is that you actually believe.[110]

Rabia identifies two essential aspects of the process that the Muslim chaplaincy is evidencing. The first is to realize those theological concepts being used as part of CPE that don't work for Muslims, be they chaplains or patients. The second is the realization that Muslims are still in the process of learning and defining. What is most hopeful - and what Rabia finds useful - is that CPE has the capacity and infrastructure to support those trying to understand their own needs and realize how their worldview fits into the chaplaincy model. Rabia continues by providing more information regarding what alternatives Islam might provide to the narrative of redemption and salvation.

> I found it necessary theologically – because I'm a theological thinker – to look at what are the consequences for human suffering once you remove from the picture the assumption of original sin. You don't have to buy original sin: that's the opposite of what the Qur'an teaches. There are forces of evil in the world but they don't work like that. There is nothing wrong with the human being.[111]

[110] Rabia Harris, interview with author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011.
[111] Ibid.

This is an important indicator of one of the ways that Muslim CPE and chaplaincy can distinguish itself and provide a specific framework for Muslim chaplains. What Rabia points to is the importance of how a chaplain views human nature when nurturing a relationship with the patient. Bilal Ansari's earlier ability to find the capacity for multifaith care within Islamic ethics is an extension of Rabia's articulation of how Islam affords Muslim chaplains their own methodology when caring for a patient. Part of the difference that Rabia points to is in the Islamic understanding of human nature. Another significant point of departure for Muslim chaplains is the way that the individual is connected to a larger eschatological narrative:

> One of the ways that chaplains use that Christian theology is to see in the suffering person the sufferings of Christ and then they are accompanying the sufferings of Christ. That's profound but doesn't really work for us. We can respect it, I can respect it. Accompanying the sufferings of anyone is worthy of respect but the whole "people are going to die with Christ and people will be resurrected with Him" – this kind of transformational language which works. It works! – but it doesn't work for us.[112]

It is then not the idea of suffering and accompanying suffering that is problematic for Muslim chaplains, but rather the narrative of Jesus and resurrection. The problem is that the entire basis for much CPE training does not work from a Muslim worldview. The theological reflections on which chaplains are trained and the types of references they are taught to use when dealing with patients are only part of the puzzle for Muslim chaplains. The other is less about religious views of the world and more about the element of CPE which charges chaplains with being self-reflective. This is part of the transformational potential that Rabia sees within the CPE paradigm. It is also the part of the pastoral care and education that the chaplains written about in this dissertation - to one extent or another - have embraced. It is the same self-reflection that

[112] Ibid.

comes through in the stories that Abbas and Bilal tell. This is how Rabia sees the potential of self-reflexivity for Muslim chaplains:

> Muslims are generally trained that to speak about the self is incorrect, but in CPE you have to learn how to talk about yourself. Now that's scary and it involves the risk of being either rude or arrogant or radically self-exposing in a surrounding of strangers who don't understand what your basic religious training is about or what your aim is. That all is hard, but if we do it there are certain very interesting processes that come out in terms of self-awareness by just listening to ourselves talk about ourselves that are really valuable, just as is. That they don't have to play back into the Christian theology, they can play back brilliantly really into Muslim theological thought… but first you have to take the risk.[113]

Engaging Further: Pastoral Theology, Islamic Law, and Teaching Spirituality

Bilal and Abbas present ways for understanding how the chaplaincy and, more specifically, the Muslim chaplaincy provides the means for developing a theology which is focused on a relationship with God that moves beyond the compartmentalization of that relationship into different religious groups. Meanwhile, Rabia takes that multifaith theology and expresses it in terms which, while still allowing for this decompartmentalization, enable Muslim chaplains to develop that theology further, and create a specifically Islamic framework; where the American Muslim chaplaincy can find roots in an Islamic worldview. Together their narratives provide a composite picture of how to begin imagining such a theology. This is the foundational premise upon which the Muslim chaplaincy can move forward.

As both Bilal and Abbas point out, the hospital setting requires answers to immediate and urgent situations. However, there are additional dimensions to imagining these theological developments. The circumstances under which chaplains work are disparate, providing the space for further discussions of theology, spirituality, ethics, and law. For example, how do chaplains make these decisions with more time to reflect? How do they teach this theology or spirituality,

[113] Ibid.

and what role does Islamic law play in the decisions they make? In other words, how, when the immediacy of a life and death situation is not at issue, do they remain on the periphery making synaptic connections? How do they do this without becoming so far from the center that they are no longer able to engage with it?

Chaplain Omer Bajwa is aware of this tension as he expresses the chaplaincy's ability to deal constructively with it: "I believe that there is dynamism [in the chaplaincy] that can adapt to circumstances. That can adapt to young Islam in America. I think the challenge is how do you walk that fine line between maintaining your integrity to the tradition and what you think is right with not being ossified, without being beholden to this."[114] One way Omer facilitates this "fine line" in his capacity as Yale University Muslim chaplain is to provide students with a weekly *halaqah* or study circle. In these *halaqahs*, students discuss issues related to Islamic practice, law, and theology: "…on Monday nights we have a *halaqah*, which I do most of the time. I would say I do 90% of it…consistently we get 15, maybe 20 people out of our community…[whereas] our *jum'ah* is 80 to 90 in a week."[115]

One of the questions I ask Omer is the extent to which these circles involve discussion of *fiqh* or Islamic law. I investigated this theme time and again without much success. Instead I found that the chaplains I have spoken with rarely engage directly with matters of Islamic jurisprudence. When these matters do arise, Muslim chaplains often seek the assistance of those they feel are better versed in this field. Likewise, they do not see the intricacies of the law as the focus of their overall mission as pastoral care givers. Nonetheless, university and college chaplains, in their role as educators, must engage with the specifics of Islamic law from time to time to respond to the needs of the students they work with. This includes interpreting the Qur'an

[114] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.
[115] Ibid.

and/or *hadith* or giving opinions on matters related to everyday life circumstance. The types of *fiqh* related questions that students ask, whether these questions are of primary concern to them, and how chaplains respond are all critical elements of how chaplains approach their roles as Muslim educators.

Sohaib Sultan, the Muslim chaplain at Princeton University, describes the intricate relationship and distinction he attempts to draw between some students' inclination to ask *fiqh* related questions and what is really at the heart of these inquiries. For Sohaib, the process involves getting to the root of the concerns that students have. It is not that he sees *fiqh* as unimportant; rather, his primary role as a pastoral caregiver is to root out the basis of their anxieties:

> [Some] Muslim students…have kind of learned through osmosis to ask their questions in a very *fiqhi* way…But my training as a pastoral caregiver is to always assume, and often rightly so, that there are always layers behind the question…my assumption is that there's always something else going on, so I'll always ask, "Why is this question important to you? When did you start thinking about this question?" So even when it comes to *fiqh* questions I bring more of a pastoral presence to those questions.

Sohaib encounters students who have genuine *fiqh* related questions and in these cases has a network ready to engage with such problems. Part of accessing this network is the self-realization that his legal understanding might be limited: "If I feel like I know the positions on it and I can help them on it, then I'll do so. And if not, then there are certain scholars that I'm very close to that I'll give two or three of them a call and say, 'This issue came up. What do you think?'"[116]

Chaplains either engage with Islamic law – often seeing it as secondary to pastoral concerns - or view it as a model for understanding the basic legal precept of *zaman wa makan*, or

[116] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.

time and context. This is the idea that legal matters and decision-making must take into account the circumstances under which a question or situation occurs. In the case of the chaplaincy, this may apply to a specific institutional context or a given situation. Sohaib makes note of this type of approach by referencing the concept of *maqasid* or "the purpose" of the law.[117] These two legal precepts, *zaman wa makan* and *maqasid,* provide an important basis for understanding the relationship that the American Muslim chaplaincy has to Islamic law. It is one way of understanding the Muslim chaplaincy's ability to negotiate its focus on pastoral care with the modes of Islamic legalism, which don't fully align with the chaplaincy's model of care. Sohaib also reflects upon how this relates to his own educational and spiritual journey:

> For me personally, I find a *maqasid* approach to be very, very helpful…I think a lot of it has to do with my American-ness. A lot of it just has to be with being Muslim in the modern world where we expect everything to make rational sense. But I think the other thing…that people in this day and age, whether it's Muslim or non-Muslim when it comes to things like religious law, for them I think their greatest hesitancy in embracing it is sometimes it seems too willy-nilly. Where did this come from? Why does this exist? Why should I just do it because you're saying that God told me to do it?"

For chaplains, this relationship to Islamic law as based in the *maqasid* is in no way extra-legal.[118] In fact, it is firmly ensconced in the Islamic legal tradition. It does, however, refer back to Rabia Harri's discussion of the center and periphery, which sees the purpose of the law as fluid, moving from one to the other. Still, despite this crucial engagement with Islamic law, in

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[117] The concept of the higher objectives of Islamic law and in particular the trope of Maqasid and ethics is particularly ubiquitous in contemporary Islamic thought. This can be seen in the thought of contemporary Muslim thinkers like Mohammed Hashim Kamali, Muhammad 'Abīd al-Jābirī, Ahmad ar-Rayysūnī, Yūsuf al-Qardāwi, Tariq Ramadan, and Muhammad At-Tāhir Ibn 'Ashūr. For a detailed discussion see Felicitas Opuis, "Maṣlaḥa in Contemporary Islamic Legal Theory," *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 2 (2005); Frederick Mathewson Denny, "Muslim Ethical Trajectories in the Contemporary Period," in *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker(Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

[118] Andrew March provides a useful discussion of a "post-legal Islamic ethics" in Andrew F. March, "Law as a Vanishing Mediator in the Theological Ethics of Tariq Ramadan," *Research Paper Series at New York Law School*(2009), http://ssrn.com/abstract=1478910.Although the idea of a post-legal Islamic ethics is useful when speaking about the American Muslim chaplaincy, it is important to note that chaplains in no way disregard the concerns of Islamic law.

their day-to-day work chaplains are primarily concerned with the spiritual needs of those they serve. This primary concern for spirituality comes through in the substance of Omer Bajwa's *halaqahs*:

> In terms of the *halaqah* - I have spent some of them on what I call basic *fiqh*. Basic *fiqh* is what I think every Muslim, every 18 year old, 20 year old young Muslim should know: the basic fundamentals of purification, their prayer. And not only how to do the prayer ritualistically, but also how to develop a sense of spirituality in their prayer. What are the rules of fasting, etc. I cover that. I think it's really important that those are, for some people it's very rudimentary, but for some people it can be a refresher. For some people a lot of it is new material where they haven't heard it broken down in that way.
> That's one component of what I do. And it's what Sheik Hamza used to call the focusing on the *fard al-'ayn*, the individual obligatory knowledge. That's a big chunk of what I do…[119]

Omer's comments open up an insight into the way he sees his role as a chaplain and as an authority on issues related to Islamic practice. Two issues surface with regard to his approach to Islamic education. The first is that he sees part of his role as teaching students the fundamentals of religious practice. The second is the theme of "developing a sense of spirituality" in prayer. Once again, the theme of spirituality is essential to the job a chaplain performs. Here in the context of the university and these planned *halaqahs,* the urgency that chaplains see in the hospital setting does not exist. When dealing with life and death situations in the hospital setting - as Bilal and Abbas demonstrated - spiritual engagement is of the utmost import.

Nonetheless, the focus on spirituality is ever present. The way a chaplain's engagement with spirituality manifests itself will differ based on the institutional setting, however the understanding that it is an essential part of the job is relatively constant. Understanding this sense of spirituality as a theology - as in Bilal's sense of one's relationship to God - can help us reflect on these chaplains as engaging with a form of theology. This is not to say that they are engaged

[119] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.

in doctrinaire theology, but rather that the authority of their theology resides in helping to develop the individual's relationship with God. Thus, this helps their constituents realize spirituality in their practice, even within fundamental rituals. In this way chaplains become the transmitters of an Islam with a focus on orthopraxy and spirituality in equal measure.

To find the point where practice and spirituality meet, Omer places the majority of his focus on the *sirah,* or biographies, of Muhammad. He uses these biographies to help students deal with "the challenges that we're facing…what would the prophet face, and what issues did he deal with, and what lessons are there from his responses?"[120] Although he does not mention it explicitly, implicit in his discussion of the life of Muhammad is the understanding that the power of Muhammad's persona aids his students in grasping a spiritual engagement with the divine. In fact, he follows up his discussion about the biographies of Muhammad with a further reflection upon his role as a spiritual guide:

> I think the ultimate thing is so much of what I talk about, without even naming it, is I just talk about spiritual consciousness and spiritual development. Very basic things of how do you think about what your purpose for being here is, what your education is, what are your spiritual goals out of your education, out of your life, out of your relationships. What kind of person are you, what kind of person do you want to be? We go over what was traditionally in Sufism, the diseases of the heart, spiritual purification, and how do we, on a day-to-day [basis] struggle with these kinds of things. I think the majority of my *halaqahs* in one way or another, are revolving around that topic: spiritual conscious and spiritual development.[121]

Omer's reflections highlight his understanding of the central role that spirituality plays in his interactions with students at Yale. In addition, by mentioning Sufism he touches upon a theme and resource that is extremely important to the American Muslim chaplaincy and its

[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

discussion of Islamic spirituality.[122] Omer references a part of the Islamic tradition that provides a strong precedent for pastoral care and a focus on one's relationship with God. The theme of Sufism also relates well to the self-reflective nature of the chaplaincy and its emphasis on providing an atmosphere for self-reflection among those whom chaplains serve: "I always make [the *halaqahs*] reflective. It's that, I'm not here to make you feel bad about yourself as a Muslim. But I want you to think about this: what are you and I doing in our lives and in our relationships that needs improvement."[123]

Omer sees this as a simple and straightforward approach that his students can relate to without getting obstructed by doubt. He is aware of the sensitivities that Muslim students come to college with, often the same sensitivities that he expresses to me about his upbringing and his experiences with closed off community imams. His approach is to avoid these types of judgments and follow through on his vision of the chaplaincy as a profession of support and healing. That his students come back time and time again is to him indicative of the fact that they benefit from this approach. Omer expresses humility, but also finds justification in the process and the results: "I could be doing it totally wrong, but my sense is the reason people keep coming back again and again for those is, in a very frank way, it's not like I'm giving them a lot of material or a lot of strange concepts that they have to wrap their heads around or that are going to be contentious."[124]

Finally, teaching spirituality, developing this self-reflective attitude, and reserving judgment are ultimately an exercise in practicality. Omer helps mold students in a college setting who are developing their own sense of self and their relationship with their religion, religious

[122] This is indicative of the large percentage of American Muslim hospital chaplains who are connected to Sufi orders as well as repeated reference that American Muslim chaplains make to a Ghazalian approach to pastoral care, particularly in its reference to discipleship and interpersonal relations. See also note 68.
[123] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.
[124] Ibid.

community, and the larger communities they live in now and will live in once they leave the university setting. Different from the hospital experiences of Bilal and Abbas, this is a theology that comes with both the time and patience available to deal with the everyday circumstances that his students encounter: "I think, my sense, whether it's legal theory or big, deep theological questions that they're grappling with, or historical arguments. I'm just saying, what can you do to try to be a better person at the end of the day, to be a better Muslim at the end of the day?"[125]

Bilal's Explication of the Prophet as an Exemplary Pastoral Caregiver:

Omer's *halaqahs* and his use of the biography of Muhammad to teach his students how to make their engagement with Islam and Islamic practice more spiritual is an application of what Rabia describes as bringing a Muslim theological expression to the chaplaincy. Omer provides a brief prelude into such an engagement when he discusses his use of the biographies of the Muhammad and his venture into Sufism. Considering Omer's methodology as an entry point, Bilal provides a further discussion of how to view Muhammad's place in the Muslim understanding of pastoral care. Bilal's vision for Muhammad as a model for pastoral care is telling of the fact that the more Muslim chaplains engage with the life of the Muhammad, the deeper they develop a theology of pastoral care that has a specifically Islamic frame of reference. This is a frame of reference which requires a thorough engagement with Islamic history. Bilal's master's degree thesis provides a basis for this engagement, as well as for a discussion of Islam and pastoral care.[126]

[125] Ibid.
[126] Bilal Ansari, "The Foundations of Pastoral Care in Islam: Reviving the Pastoral Voice in Islamic Prison Chaplaincy" (Hartford Theological Seminary, 2011). In his Master's thesis Bilal develops an intricate schema for reading pastoral care and CPE into the early history of Islam and the past scriptural and exegetical traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

In his thesis, Bilal writes about Muhammad's role as a pastoral caregiver. Through an examination of the Qur'an, biographies of Muhammad, and other extant sources, Bilal develops an intricate framework for connecting Muhammad to a tradition of pastoral care that has links to Christian and Jewish sources.[127] Bilal makes this link particularly strong by highlighting the experiences of Moses in *Madyan (*Midian*)*[128] seeing it as extending and culminating in the exemplary practices of Muhammad. Bilal emphasizes three of Muhammad's pastoral characteristics: "his other-worldly orientation, his spiritual self-care, and his self-scrutiny." In the Muslim world-view, Muhammad is an exemplary model and in turn an exemplary caregiver; as a prophet, his primary supervisor is God. Thus, Muhammad's primary function is to take the relationship he has with God and use it as a model to serve as a pastoral supervisor and caregiver to the early Muslim community. As Bilal writes: "Muhammad was to them always the arbitrator of the best spiritual conduct."[129]

If Muhammad is the exemplary caregiver and supervisor, it is his early supervisory role and relationship to the first Muslims that provide a reference point for Islamic pastoral care. Bilal discusses prayer as one of these references points and as "intimately central to the pastoral identity of this community."[130] More specifically, he reflects upon the *tahajjud* prayer, a form of prayer performed in the middle of the night by Muslims in Mecca, as indicative of the identity and "for the leaders of the Muslim community…a mandatory spiritual exercise of intimacy and

[127] The Jewish and Christian notions of the shepherd are particularly important to concepts of pastoral care and Bilal's subsequent descriptions of the shepherd as a pastoral care giver. See Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling : Redefining the Paradigms*.
[128] Ibid, 23-4. Here Bilal describes Moses's time spent with his father-in-law Jethro as his "clinical pastoral education," beginning with Moses's intervention in aide of two women and his subsequent discussion of the event with Jethro who would become his "clinical pastoral education supervisor."
[129] Ibid, 21.
[130] Ibid.

discipline."[131] He further describes this as the "clinical education period in Mecca" for early Muslims.[132] I ask Bilal to expand on how the *tahajjud* acted as an important curative at this moment in Muslim history and in what ways Muhammad was actualizing clinical pastoral education at this time.

Bilal takes me through his thought process. He first formulates an approach to CPE framed within the formative period of Islam, something found wanting in the CPE experience of many American Muslim chaplains. There are two significant elements to Bilal's explanation: a refiguring of the Muslim chaplain's relationship to CPE, and a reassessment of the relationship of the formative period of Islamic history to the conceptualization of pastoral care. Bilal begins by describing his own experience with CPE:

> When you look at the aim and objective, *maqasid,* of CPE it is purely about mitigating the relationship between human and God in crisis. [It] intentionally places you in a covenanted interfaith peer group within an institution of hundreds of patients and staff, but it asks you to have laser focus on just your pastoral theology. How your theology and religious understanding as pastor to the many in crisis is informed and performed compassionately. And so you're not in a community; it's you and God and secondarily some stranger who is in need. And then you're writing verbatim every encounter and your peers are critiquing it, and you have a supervisor who's the wise one who's advising you through it all, but yet there's no community. You're hoping to be able to take these skills out to the community but yet you're not in it.[133]

Implicit in Bilal's understanding of CPE is the idea that it begins with a relatively solipsistic encounter with the development of one's own pastoral theology. Despite the training and structure that comes with CPE, Bilal's reflection points to his process of discerning and developing his personal approach to pastoral theology. There is an acute sense that Bilal's experience with CPE is particularly monastic. Devoid of what he calls "a community," he sees

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

one of the central concerns of CPE as understanding his own relationship with God and how that relationship can then help him develop a compassionate and effective methodology for care. It is not that CPE does not provide a methodology, as he says, he is working in a peer group with a supervisor and writing and reflecting on his daily encounters. However, while these are all essential components of CPE, he ultimately has to build his own approach, one he is comfortable with and directly connected to how he envisions the relationship between the person and God. These are essential components in the CPE process, but arguably for Bilal there is an additional component, i.e. further developing the ideas of an Islamic pastoral care theology.

Part of this includes his understanding that if Muhammad is actually a role model for pastoral care, than the community he ministered to is a model for the struggles that chaplains experience during CPE. Throughout his life, Muhammad - as the recipient of a revelation - developed a relationship with God that was intensely personal and intimate. He relayed that message to his followers, and they became a community of believers. By expounding on the import of the *tahajjud* prayer, Bilal views Islam's early years in Mecca as exemplary of the development of pastoral care and CPE in Islam. In other words, those who experienced this spiritual awakening through education without a completely formed community are the most prepared to become pastoral care leaders:

> And so I see Mecca as that, as certain years of hoping for being within a good community, but they're not quite there yet. And they are praying in their homes and they go to the secret place and they share things, and then the prophet advises them on this and don't do that. But it's just clinical and scriptural that is revealed is all written and memorized verbatim. It's really crystal clear on individual personal theology that God pastorally refines and imbeds into the hearts of the believers. And so this is why there's a distinction within the *Muhajirun* (emigrants) and the *Ansar* (helpers),[134] because those who got that early formative clinical pastoral education are able to be leaders.[135]

[134] The *Muhajirun* are the early followers of Muhammad in Mecca, whereas the *Ansar* are those who helped Muhammad in Medina.
[135] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

It is not that the *tahajjud* prayer is entirely exclusive to the early Meccan Muslims; rather, the circumstances under which it was performed and its nature as a mandatory practice for the Muslims in Mecca enables Bilal to see it as an exemplary practice. Muslim chaplains can then relate to it during their CPE training. Bilal reaffirms the notion of Mecca as a formative moment for Muslim pastoral care and CPE and draws an indirect parallel to his own chaplaincy education:

> *Tahajjud* is the only practice of the clinical pastoral formative period other than *i'tikaf*.[136] It's communal practice that remains. So that's what I was referring to. It is the late night prayer in those thirteen years in Mecca what I used as an analogy for the clinical pastoral education in early Islam. I wish I had more of the hospital CPE training, although I think that my 16 years in the prison was a clinical pastoral education and *tahajjud* is always open to me.[137]

Bilal's formulation represents a crucial first engagement with CPE and the potential to develop an educational model that expands upon and joins elements of chaplaincy education with Islamic history. In addition, it provides a rubric for a deeper connection between American Muslim chaplains and their CPE training. This is a type of understanding that reframes CPE without departing from its training methodology.

Looking back on the narratives of Rabia, Abbas, Bilal, and Omer, one can see the development of a pastoral care theology that brings together multifaith care, personal introspection, self-examination, and theology, all within a frame of reference that can work for Muslim chaplains with a variety of religious agenda. It is a picture of the American Muslim chaplaincy, which requires an acknowledgement of diverse voices. Voices that are engaging with Islam on a number of levels and attempting to find points of intersection in the midst of variant

[136] I'tikaf is the practice of going on a retreat, often to a mosque, for a number of days of prayer and reflection. See G. H. Bousquet, "Iʿtikāf " in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Th. Bianquis P. Bearman, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.(Brill Online, 2014).
[137] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

approaches, from Abbas's monism to Bilal's *tahajjud.* This is a work in progress and not yet fully formed or even accepted outside of the American Muslim chaplaincy community. As Bilal notes: "Jews and Christians faced similar resistance in the 1950's by the majority of laity leaders and religious bodies. This was resolved by years of scholarship that was able to shift the paradigm as peer institutions produced ample professional literature and leadership."

The way that American Muslim chaplains will perform this scholarship rests in large measure with the type of leadership model they choose to create; a model that will require them to assess their place among other American Muslim leaders. With this in mind and as we wrap up our discussion, Rabia reiterates her notion that the American Muslim chaplaincy is a transformative form of Islamic leadership trying to define itself as distinctly Islamic and distinctly pastoral. She makes a final plea with regard to Islamic notions of leadership and service: "We have to figure it out for ourselves too. Muslims believe all persons are called to serve God. We don't get ordained. Are we going to have to pretend that we go along with the notion that some of us are specially chosen when we don't actually, seriously believe that?"[138] What Rabia is pointing to is that American Muslim religious leadership is in the process of redefining itself. A process that requires Muslim chaplains to interact and communicate with other American Islamic leaders in order to discern similarities, differences, and points of complementarity. These definitions and distinctions make up the central investigation of the coming two chapters.

[138] Rabia Harris, interview with the author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011.

Chapter II

Defining the Chaplaincy as Leadership

So I always tell people I've never had formal imam training at all. What happened is, I coincidentally look like a Deobandi imam because I'm tanned skinned, I have a big beard, and if I dress up on Juma I have a kufi and a thawb or a salwar kameez, or something like that. And I'm mistaken in many cases for an imam. [139]

Omer Bajwa

Omer Bajwa, the Yale University "Coordinator of Muslim Life,"[140] makes the above comments to me in his office in December of 2011. It is the first of several conversations we will have about the American Muslim chaplaincy, our final conversation coming two and a half years later. Omer and I sit across from each other as he describes his own history and the circumstances that brought him to the chaplaincy. He sees his path as "a meandering route," which, as he tells it, is half accidental and half a planned.

Omer begins by telling me about growing up in Binghamton, New York as the child of Pakistani immigrants; he himself immigrated to the United States at the age of three. Although he was born in Pakistan and grew-up speaking Urdu, he considers himself "an American-Muslim…with overseas ethnic roots."[141] He emphasizes the importance of growing up in Binghamton, at least in part because of how it has framed his experience as an American Muslim with Pakistani parents: "There was a very small Muslim community growing up, and the reason that I mention that is that I felt very acutely aware of, from elementary school to secondary

[139] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011. Omer's reference to the Deobandi's is also part of his narrative as he spent considerable amounts of time studying and observing an imam at a Deobandi Madrassa in Buffalo, NY.
[140] The title "coordinator" has been reserved for the Hindu and Muslim chaplains at Yale University's Chaplain's office. This is an administrative decision, having to do with resource allocation. The title has also been attached to Princeton's Muslim chaplain, Sohaib Sultan. This construct will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.
[141] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

school, of being both a religious and ethnic minority. And so I always knew what it meant to be excluded."

Omer's awareness of being part of a religious and ethnic minority has a double meaning in his narrative. On one level, he is acutely aware that his past is framed in large part by the feeling of being different from most of those around him. The awareness is primarily of having a different life as a Pakistani Muslim living in America, filled with alternate cultural traditions, food, language, and religious practice. On another level, it is an awareness of the fact that his professional path diverged from the one his family expected of him:

> My father's a physician, my elder brother wanted to be a physician, and when I got to college I decided very quickly I didn't like science or medicine and didn't want to be pre-med. Much to my parents' chagrin and disappointment I very quickly, in my first year, abandoned hopes of being pre-med and a science major and actually became an English major. I fell in love with literature and with rhetoric and philosophy, and read a lot of Plato and Aristotle and Nietzsche and read the Beats and Shakespeare and was fascinated by that and the power of language. So then I wanted to be a writer. I had a BA in English, which again my parents scratched their heads and said, "What does a good Pakistani boy do with an English degree? There's not much of an outlook there."[142]

His biography is framed in the first instance as an experience with being a cultural minority with a strong attachment to family, and in the second instance as an experience of rupture from the expectations of that family. In this sense, then, entering the chaplaincy was a form of return as well as the coming together of these two worlds. This theme of tension and reconciliation between culture, family, and religion flows throughout much of Omer's narrative. For example, he sees his life experience as helping him relate to the students he serves, or, more accurately, helping them relate to him. That he can understand what it means to be a Muslim who has grown up in America and has experienced the push and pull between the cultures of the various communities in which he grew up:

[142] Ibid.

> I felt that I was able to bridge that and engage the people that I wanted to: young Muslims, college Muslim kids. Hopefully, I would like to think I model good behavior in some senses, be an inspiration for them, or at least be able to advise them with something useful…To say, "Well, I survived college; I survived graduate school, and all of the perils in terms of the social perils that come along with that." And to be able to translate that into how to maintain a personal sense of propriety and spirituality and how does one navigate these waters and not everything's black and white.[143]

His intellectual and creative trajectory also fit well into this theme of return and/or "calling." For Omer there is a direct line between his fascination with literature and philosophy and his experience with the chaplaincy. When I ask him Omer how he feels about the overtly Christian roots of the chaplaincy, he reflects upon the way that his love of literature allowed him to negotiate the chaplaincy's Christian foundations and how in turn he was able to translate the chaplaincy's notion of pastoral care into a more familiar frame of reference: "What I mean to say is that when I went through CPE,[144] I'd like to think that I was able when I got to some sticky parts, I was like, "I see what they're saying. I kind of in my head do the gymnastics of translation to get it, to Islamicize it, to put an Islamic spin on it. It wasn't perfect, but I think I can make it work." It worked for me, let me put it that way."

After receiving his bachelor's degree, Omer's life and educational trajectory brought him to Cornell University, where he received a Master's Degree in Communication, Communication Theory, and Media and began a PhD in Near Eastern Studies. It was during his master's degree

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[143] Ibid.

[144] Omer's reference to Clinical Pastoral Education [CPE] refers to the credit hours that most graduates of the Hartford University Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy take in order to graduate. See "Hartford Theological Seminary Islamic Chaplaincy Program Information Page," http://www.hartsem.edu/macdonald-center/islamic-chaplaincy/program-information/. In addition, at least one unit of CPE is required to be certified as a Pastoral Care Counselor. See professionalchaplains.org/content.asp?contentid=254, "The Association of American Pastoral Care Counsellors, Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy Web Page." http://www.aapc.org/membership/certifications/certified-pastoral-counselor/ (last accessed July 16, 2014).

studies and after the September 11th attacks that Omer got involved in speaking to local groups about Islam:

> When 9/11 happened, The Near Eastern Studies department was getting all these calls from high schools and churches and colleges saying, "We want someone to come to our campus and talk." The chair of the department called me up and said, "I'm getting all these invitations, and there's one every day in the area. Would you be interested in coming with me?" And so I started apprenticing under the chair on how to go and do these public engagements and do outreach.[145]

This was the beginning of Omer's engagement with an essential aspect of being a university chaplain, representing and explaining Islam to a non-Muslim audience. He found that he enjoyed speaking about Islam to these audiences and developed a growing interest in the study of American Islam.

The final part of his journey was more spiritual and less cerebral. In the summer of 2005 he performed *umrah*[146] with Hamza Yusuf, the well-known American Muslim scholar and leader, and then in the winter of 2005-2006 he performed the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) for the first time:

> I had been to *umrah* before, but I had never been to hajj. I had been the summer before in 2005 with Shaykh Hamza Yusef. I had both a personal as well as an academic kind of connection and interest in Shaykh Hamza. I will say, I was inspired in many ways in my personal life by listening to him speak and meeting with him. I had met with him several times privately. Campus Muslim chaplaincy at that time was, this was five years ago, was still relatively nascent. There were only a handful; I knew Imam Yahya Hendi, Imam Khalid Latif, and that as it. Professor Shawkat Toorawa at Cornell put me in touch with Hartford Seminary and introduced me to Dr. Ingrid Mattson. She told me about Sohaib, she told me about Abdullah, and I met these guys and my eyes were really opened. It was a great experience because I had no idea what a college Muslim chaplain was, what they did, and that brings me to where I am now. So in '07 I started going to the seminary. And in '08 the job at Yale opened up. I still was working, still doing my coursework there, but fortunately I was blessed to apply and get the job at Yale. Now that I'm in the field, I

[145] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.
[146] As with Hajj, *umrah* is a pilgrimage to Mecca, but it can be undertaken at any time during the year and does not involve all the rituals associated with *Hajj*. For more detail see "Umra," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Th. Bianquis P. Bearman, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs(Brill Online, 2014).

> really feel like I've found my niche. This is really where I belong, in campus Muslim chaplaincy.[147]

Omer's personal narrative brings the chaplaincy into focus. As we sit and talk, the confluence of events that led to his decision to become a chaplain hangs in the air. The many aspects of his life - growing up in Buffalo, studying literature, experiencing September 11th as a graduate student, performing *umrah* with Hamza Yusuf, and entering the Hartford Seminary - have all contributed to his understanding of what a chaplain is and does. They also serve as a powerful reminder of how interconnected his biography is with his chosen profession. In addition, his narrative elucidates much regarding what it means to be a chaplain and how and what type of religious leaders chaplains are becoming. Omer's personal and educational trajectories help to develop a picture of what it means to be an American Muslim chaplain.

Similarly, the opening quotation to this chapter, as well as the statements that follow are telling of the ways that chaplains view themselves within the community of Islamic American leadership. The first issue particularly germane to considerations of leadership is the fact that many Muslim chaplains are reluctant to accept the title of "leader," and if they do accept the title, they are quick to distinguish that they are institutionally based leaders and not imams, who are congregational leaders with a broader and less specifically "defined" constituency.

The opening quotation also reflects the fact that the title "imam" has a multitude of meanings in an American context, and while Omer can pass for one he is, in fact, not an imam in any formal sense. Omer's hesitance to take the title imam goes beyond his idea of "formal imam training." Because of their focus on service and counseling above leadership, American Muslim chaplains are reluctant to assume leadership titles, seeing as they have embraced an ethic of

[147] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

pastoral care, grounded in spiritual healing and self-reflective humility. This humility is also how Muslim chaplains view their own relationship to Islam and what they consider the danger of assuming the title "imam." Although Omer had become more confident in his role at Yale during the two and a half year gap between our initial and final conversations, his complicated relationship to leadership remains:

> In that way, I say [I am a] leader of the Muslim community with a lower case "l," because…I think the Muslim community in America is very broad, and I don't want to presume in any way that I can call myself a leader to speak on behalf of all of them, of the entire spectrum. But in my niche and what I do when it comes to the pastoral care of the needs of my community, doing outreach work, I'm happy to, I know that's the mantle I have now as leader…But I know that there's a whole galaxy of other leaders, people who I consider leaders like Imam Majid and Sheikh Hamza Yusuf and Dr. Mattson and Imam Suhaib Webb, that I would call leaders.[148]

Omer's statement is indicative of the way chaplains view their leadership roles. His explanation is fully qualified. There is a leader with a lower case "l" and a leader with an upper case "L," and there is the challenge with regard to defining what the American Muslim community is and, if definable, how it is possible to claim to leadership of it. However, there is also the intimation that there are leaders like Ingrid Mattson and Hamza Yusuf, who exist on an entirely different plane.[149]

Omer's responses to my queries about his role as a leader are quite telling of many of these issues:

> I became a chaplain and I sort of looked the part of an imam. When I started giving *khutbahs* and travelling to different mosques, students would come up to me and ask how to address me and people would just call me *I*mam because they saw me as that. I went to my teacher, that same teacher, and I said, "Look, I'm very uncomfortable asking you this, but I need your approval. If people call me *I*mam is that okay? Or can I ever call myself Imam?" Because I was so afraid of not wearing the title, because Sheikh Hamza once

[148] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17 2014.
[149] The names Omer mention here like Hamza Yusuf and Suhaib Webb appear in several chaplain's testimonials in much the same way.

> said, which has stuck with me, "Be careful of what you claim, because God will test your claim." So if you claim a position of leadership, then God will test you and humiliate you when you fall short because you're not really what you're claiming to be. And so that stuck with me for a while. My teacher said, "No, you can, it's good that you know the difference between Imam with a capital I, like an *alim*. But you're an Imam to your community there. You lead students in prayer. You're a religious advisor to them. You do a lot of outreach work on behalf of the Muslim community with non-Muslims, and they see you speaking on behalf of Islam. You can call yourself Imam with that understanding that it's a lower case I." That's how I interpreted it. And so the reason that I mention all of that backstory and how it connects to a leader is now with my six years at Yale, with so much of what I've done on campus representing and being the voice of Islam in some ways, of the Muslim community, as well as off-campus. The acknowledgement has come, and I think my work has borne out that I am leading my community, and when I represent them to the outside community. And I'm also leading them on campus. When tough issues come up, I'm the one that has to grapple with it and they look to me for answers.[150]

As can be ascertained from his comments, Omer's six years of experience have given him the confidence to assume the title of leader, if only reluctantly and framed institutionally. In addition, he outlines aspects of where the Muslim chaplaincy and Islamic religious leadership intersect: being the voice of Islam and the university Muslim community on and off campus, serving as a source of guidance on religious and social issues, and assuming the full weight and consequence of his actions.

Finally, there is one other issue that comes up both here and in the opening quotation to this chapter. The idea of "looking the part," which, as Omer points out, simultaneously establishes his authority for some Muslims and limits the broader vision of who and what a chaplain is for others. It speaks to the connections between gender and leadership in the chaplaincy, and the role played by certain outward markers of religious leadership. Ostensibly, looking the part can determine a chaplain's legitimacy. However, as Omer points out, "looking the part" can be a double-edged sword because the "part" is not the same for everyone and has

[150] Ibid.

different meaning depending upon the referred constituency. Here, he gives insight into the way that the ethnic and religious diversity among American Muslims can play out, even in the institutional environment of a college or university:

> And with students, and we have a lot of second generation, third generation Pakistani, South Asian immigrant students here. And I think they sort of get why I'm not an imam and why what I do works here. And that's really good. But I think there is some level of it, and from off the top of my head what really jumps out is that we do have a wide spectrum. For example, at Yale we have a lot of Turkish students. And most of the Turkish undergraduates I've met here come from a particular social, cultural, economic, educational background in Turkey. They typically come here from an elite, secular minded background. And they look at me and it's automatically like they make an assessment the second they see me. And that turns them off. Same with some of the Arab students we have here. We have some Arab students from overseas and some Arab Americans, and for a variety of reasons they're just not as involved in Muslim life on campus. I think for them also they think, "Who's this Sheikh who walked in the door? Who's this guy who's going to start giving me religious fatwas and preaching to me and sermonizing and all of this?" And that sort of works against me because they automatically are assuming that I'm going to be judging them, so they're making a judgment and saying, "I'm not very interested in having a relationship with you in my four years here." I think for a variety of reasons I kind of can bridge that in a different way with the South Asian population, both international and second generation. At Yale there's the perception that the Muslim Student's Association (MSA) is basically a South Asian Muslim club, and part of my job is slowly to disentangle that and say, "Well, I'm the Muslim chaplain for the whole Muslim community." And you say it one year; you have to say it the next year because you have a new batch of kids that you're dealing with again and again and again. And you always want to kind to push back on that perception.[151]

Omer's attempts to, as he says "push back on that perception," are indicative of his sense of responsibility to be a chaplain to all Muslims on campus regardless of sectarian, racial, or ethnic background. It is important to him that a chaplain is always self-reflective, especially when assessing what may be his own complicity in perceptions of the Yale Muslim community by those Muslims who consider themselves on the margin. As he relates:

> I'll give you an example: when I came here, I think was like five out of seven of the board members were South Asian and the spoke Urdu. And you get into a comfort zone once

[151] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

> you get to know people and you can make little side commentary and jokes in Urdu or about sort of culturally specific topics. And I was very grateful there was a senior that year who kind of pulled me aside and said, "You've got to understand that some of the students, the non-Pakistani or South Asian students that are involved in MSA, they're a little sensitive about that because they feel like its alienating."[152]

At this point there are several issues to point out and reemphasize. First, here as before, there is Omer's reluctance to assume the title "leader," which is indicative of many, if not all, of the chaplains I have spoken to. Despite my desire to ascribe the label "leader" to these chaplains, their reluctance requires a rethinking and more in depth analysis of what it means to refer to Muslim chaplains as "religious leaders." Second, as a university chaplain Omer engages with the non-Muslim and Muslim communities in a significantly more public way than a prison, military, or hospital chaplain might. As a result, a key understanding of chaplaincy leadership is that it is governed by the institutional setting in which a chaplain resides. Third, as Muslim university chaplains become more seasoned and better positioned, the ascription of "leadership" becomes more relevant and more relatable to many of them. This is a slow and evolving process and does not mean that the chaplains themselves are fully comfortable with the title "leader." However, despite their reluctance these chaplains are willing to ascribe the title to others within their profession. As William's College chaplain Bilal Ansari points out:

> Slowly, we are starting to see the manifestations of that natural organic community growth with leadership of Khalid Latif, as both imam and chaplain in NYC. This manifestation and the signs of this budding possibility come in the version of the scholar-activist more pronounced with him due to his political and societal time and place. Also his longevity and what he's been able to do as chaplain to both NYPD and imam at NYU. And so his leadership is starting to just tease out alternative public narratives of perspectives and modes of practice of pastoral theology. You're starting to see the likes of Abdullah Antepli and his new defined role with the institution of Duke, and yet he's trying to hold on to being called a Muslim chaplain. Yet his role as public intellectual has a morphing pastoral theology into a whole new role at Duke.[153]

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[152] Ibid.
[153] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

The two examples that Bilal points to, Khalid Latif and Abdullah Antepli,[154] are names many chaplains refer to as exemplary of the type of leader that Omer described with a capital "L." As seasoned chaplains in elite universities, who are alternately considered chaplains and imams, both Latif and Antepli have attained relatively large public persona. They have become recognized for their leadership within the American Muslim community both in and outside of the institutions where they work. In their leadership roles they represent Islam and Muslims to non-Muslims in the United States and represent American Islam to Muslims abroad. The same can also be said to a lesser extent of other American Muslim chaplains, but Latif and Antepli are two of the most publically recognizable chaplains and understood as such for those currently involved in the American Muslim chaplaincy.[155]

One of the other significant reflections that we can garner from Bilal's statement is that American Muslim chaplains, like Antepli and Latif, are opening new avenues for leadership and creating new models for how chaplains carry out their roles. Bilal describes Latif as a "scholar activist" and Antepli as a "public intellectual' who, in his role as a chaplain, is resisting the title imam. Nonetheless, these two chaplains are going beyond pastoral care, which is the cornerstone of the chaplaincy. What both Bilal and Omer's words make clear is that although there is a tension between how these individuals see their roles - either as pastoral care givers or religious leaders - and how they are labeled by others - as imams or chaplains - the story of American Muslim chaplains is not one of imams or Muslim clergy filling particular roles in institutions. Rather, it is that of a new and evolving model for Muslim religious leadership.

[154] Although I have interviewed Abdullah Antepli and will discuss him intermittently throughout the dissertation, Khalid Latif while a very important part of the development of American Muslim chaplaincy does not get extensive treatment here.

[155] As with many details in this dissertation, these distinctions are relatively fluid and changing and one could add others to the list, namely Yahya Hendi, the Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, the first American University to hire a full-time Muslim chaplain.

Defining Leadership

The above discussion establishes a main premise of this dissertation, that chaplains are an important and transformative part of American Muslim religious leadership. However, there is, as evidenced by Omer's reluctance to accept the title leader, enough ambiguity in the term leader to merit a discussion of what is meant by leadership in this context. That American Muslim chaplains lead, seems somewhat self-evident. For whether by virtue of institutional mandate or their own personal efforts within a given community, they have a constituency.

However, does a constituency necessarily make chaplains leaders? If so, then to what extent and in what ways does that constituency make them leaders? As Princeton Chaplain Sohaib Sultan explains:

> I always see myself as a leader in the Muslim community. And I say that with great hesitation and enormous feeling of responsibility. And hesitation because it's not a fun role to play. It can be quite stressful, burdensome, to constantly be on your game. But I feel like all the time when I step outside the premises of my home, I am a Muslim leader and that the representation just comes with it because we're always interacting with non-Muslims. Whether it's my neighbor or the students on the university campus. And I think the representation comes not from constantly talking about Islam or having to teach and preach about Islam, but just through etiquettes, manners. You hear someone's sick, you hear someone's dying, you hear someone's going through happiness or joy or sadness, I think there's one very human level, dimension to that. But there is an extra sense of, "I have to do this not only for myself, but to represent my community."[156]

The first time I saw Sohaib in his role as Princeton University chaplain - before ever having interviewed him - he was speaking on a panel in September of 2009 at Princeton with Kurt Westergaard regarding the Danish cartoon affair.[157] In his capacity as Muslim chaplain at

[156] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.
[157] For further details regarding the Danish cartoon affair see Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood, "Liberal Democracy, Multicultural Citizenship and the Danish Cartoon Affair," in *Secularism, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship*, ed. Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood(Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For a brief description of the event at Princeton see David Walter, "Tight Security for Cartoonist: Lecture Marks Anniversary of Controversial Drawing," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* November 4, 2009.https://paw.princeton.edu/issues/2009/11/04/pages/1018/index.xml (last accessed July 29, 2014). For a

Princeton, it was his responsibility to represent the views of his constituency - the Princeton Muslim community and the university at large - as well as present a Muslim voice on a contentious issue of serious importance to the American Muslim community, namely pictorial representations of Muhammad. Speaking with him after the event, he acknowledged that despite what he felt was Westergaard's arrogant dismissal of Islam, it was his role as the Muslim chaplain on campus to approach the issue with as much calm and resolve as possible.

Keeping these accounts of chaplains like Omer Bajwa, Bilal Ansari, and Sohaib Sultan in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to engage questions related to leadership, in order to help define what Muslim chaplains do, how they are distinct from and similar to other American Muslim leaders, and how to view the larger structure of leadership in lieu of the American Muslim chaplaincy. This includes how American Muslim religious leaders are being educated, how they are dealing with diversity (ethnic, racial, sectarian, worldview, etc.), how they are representing their communities, what type of associations are they building, how they are contending with Islam in the American context, and how different forms of leadership relate to each other.

To begin, it is important to ascertain two things: what are the requisite attributes or criterion that should be considered when assessing whether a given individual or professional type can be labeled a leader within the American Muslim community, and who, based on this understanding, make up the cadre of American Muslim leaders. However, before proceeding it is important to acknowledge that none of the forthcoming attributes or categories are all-inclusive, exhaustive, or rigid; they are simply a rubric with which to begin a discussion of where and how

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personal account of the affair and his appearance at Princeton see Kurt Westergaard, "Why I Drew the Cartoon: The "Mohammed Affair" in Retrospect," ed. Gatestone Institute, (October 2, 2009), http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/836/why-i-drew-the-cartoon-the-mohammed-affair-in-retrospect.(last accessed on July 29, 2014).

we can place chaplains within the leadership equation for Islam in America. Without considering these facts it is not only difficult to argue that they are leaders, but more importantly what kind of leaders they are, what their impact might be, and how significant they are to the continuing development and definition of American Muslim leadership. In addition, the fact that not all types of leaders fill the exact same roles helps to distinguish certain leaders from others. However, even when roles are distinct, leadership is relatively fluid and one leader can fill different roles in different contexts. Chaplains, for their part, have the potential to extend the nature of this fluidity and make American Muslim leadership more dynamic.

The leadership standards put forward here are premised upon the roles that chaplains see themselves as filling, the responsibilities they perform, and what makes them think of themselves as leaders or doubt the leadership title. In this way, the criterion being established is first and foremost based on the voices of the chaplains themselves. To this point, the following construction creates a model that fits the leadership perceptions garnered from chaplain interviews.

The attributes that I ascribe here to leadership are based primarily upon the observations and answers that university chaplains have given with regard to their roles and responsibilities. Although similar responsibilities can be found among chaplains within other institutions, university chaplains provide the clearest examples of individuals who have bridged the gap between the institution they work within and Muslims outside of these institutions.

When Omer Bajwa speaks about his chaplaincy responsibilities at Yale University he delineates his role as follows:

> The first category is just general Muslim religious life and pastoral care. And to me that's giving the *khutbahs* and recruiting and training *khatibs*. I am in charge of *khutbahs*, I am in charge of *halaqahs*, I'm there for pastoral care, and counseling. The great thing there is you get a spectrum; I have some students that are coming in for very *fiqh*-type questions,

> really struggling with a faith question of theology or grief and suffering or something like that. "Does God not love me because I'm suffering in my life?" So there's that whole category of what I call Muslim Life. And that relates to the second sphere which is what I call Muslim Life campus wide. Which is that I get to do work with the MSA on programming…I also organize panels…a lot of them now are around Islamophobia, on Islam in the media, Islam in the political discourse…A part of that is that I also give guest talks. I've talked at the Divinity School, at the Law School about Islam and X topic…It's a big part of my outreach. The third category is the inter-faith component. So a big part of my job I see is when there's an inter-faith event, and they want the Muslim voice representing on campus, liaising with other chaplains and other religious groups. But also I take that off campus, because my philosophy is that the chaplain is a real resource for the broader community, just beyond campus…I get a lot of invitations to do Jewish-Muslim dialogue off campus, Christian-Muslim dialogue, invited to churches to talk about what's going on in the Muslim world, etc. And so that's great because in my mind I'm representing Yale in a very good way, I'm taking our resource and offering it to the community, [and as an] institutional liaison.[158]

This description of his roles and responsibilities is not exhaustive, but is similar to many of the roles filled by chaplains in a multitude of settings. Nonetheless, the first thing to be gleaned from the above description is that the totality of Omer's responsibilities is specific to the type of institution he works within and then specific to the Yale University. Chaplains' work is entirely specific to the institutional culture and context in which they work.

Aside from the importance of institutional context, one can take several main components from the above statement which defines the nature of what Omer does. First is his role as a source for religious practice, such as prayer and sermons, and education through *halaqas*, as well as serving as an authority, a teacher, and an organizer. In addition, his role allows him to set the tone for the overall religious environment of the institutional Muslim community. Second, he serves as a pastoral care giver. This means dealing with the queries and concerns of his constituency, whether on issues of religious practice and law (*fiqh)*, spirituality, and everyday social concerns from dating to schoolwork to drug abuse. Third, he aids the campus Muslim

[158] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

Students Association (MSA) with planning events and facilitating their sense of community. This involves assisting them in trying to create an inclusive environment, racially, ethnically, and religiously. Fourth, he serves as a voice for Islam on and off campus, explaining and educating non-Muslims about Islamic history, practice, and politics. Fifth, he works on interfaith issues, building relationships between Islam and other religions in America. Lastly, he serves as an authority or, as he calls it, an "institutional liaison" on issues related to Islam; this can include issues such as *halal* foods in a dining hall, student and faculty needs with regard to the *Eid* holiday, or dealing with specific student cases. For example, he explained the case of a Muslim student at Yale:

> [She]was *muhajaba [wore a veil]*. The letter that was sent to the Dean of Students that then came across my desk was that she was very uncomfortable in the social environment there because there was drinking, and her suitemates were bringing boyfriends over, and [the situation] didn't work well for her values, the way she was raised, and she was applying for a single. She was making a religious argument for why she wanted a single. And, because of Yale's residential college system, they don't like giving out singles and they go case-by-case and kind of vet these things. And they asked for my input; "Is it religiously required? Is it preferred? How do we interpret this?" So for that kind of stuff you're brought in for perspective.[159]

Many of these roles can be understood as indicative of Islamic religious leadership. For instance, his role in organizing and leading prayer, his role in interfaith work, or his role as a voice for Islam to non-Muslims. Thus there are several elements of the work that Omer and many chaplains do which point in the direction of Islamic leadership. The first, from which all others follow, is that he is vested with religious and professional authority, both institutional and communal. The second is that he has an identifiable constituency that recognizes and accepts his religious authority on an array of issues. The third is that this same constituency recognizes his authority as a pastoral care giver. The fourth is that his authority influences decision-making.

[159] Ibid.

The fifth is his function as a teacher. The sixth is his role as a recognized representative of Islam to those within his constituency and those outside of that constituency. Lastly, although not explicitly referenced here, we can add representing American Islam to Muslims in other countries. This is most obviously the case with military chaplains, but often also the case with college chaplains traveling outside the United States. In this way, American Islamic leadership can be extrapolated as exhibiting four necessary and interconnected elements: authority, constituency, influence, and representation.

Authority in relationship to religious leadership can come from a variety of sources and can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. Religious authority as envisioned here is the ability rather than the power to influence thought and behavior. Even when a state-run institution employs a chaplain, religious authority is primarily conferred and legitimized by the lay community, not by a coercive power or by the state. This is distinct from the understanding of authority that Joseph Raz puts forward that is necessitated on some form of coercion where the authority can exhibit control and "...what counts from the point of view of the person in authority, is not what the subject thinks but how he acts."[160] However, the assessment of Islamic religious authority in the United States, and as understood here, is in the influence it has over individual and communal decision-making. This forces American Muslim religious leaders to be concerned with providing workable solutions and methodologies that respond directly to the needs of the lay community; further expanding the prospects of who might serve in a leadership role.

In the *North American Muslim Resource Guide,* Mohamed Nimer reflects upon this notion with respect to the ways that North American Muslims view the authority of their local mosques and imams: **"**Many Muslims in NA do not identify with a particular mosque community or even

[160] Joseph Raz, *Authority*, Readings in Social and Political Theory (Oxford, U.K.: B. Blackwell, 1990), 119.

mode of interpretation…In local mosque communities around the continent, the role of imam is becoming very prominent, albeit circumscribed. While imams and other scholars offer guidance many believers take this advice simply as a religiously informed viewpoint, not as a representation of the will of God."[161]

Omer Bajwa's leadership authority comes from multiple sites: the university, the Muslim students, the local community, his professional qualifications and experience, and the fact that he "looks the part" based on physical traits, clothing, ethnicity, and gender. Nonetheless, all of the sites that confer authority and leadership upon him are contingent upon his ability to respond to the needs of the multiple constituencies that he addresses.[162] It is also the case that a leader's authority will have more or less saliency depending upon each situation and the types of interpretation expected of them. Thus legitimacy and authority can depend upon one's command of Arabic and years of study in one of the traditional centers of Islamic learning, such as al-Azhar. This can be a concern for chaplains, many of whom who have been trained in the United States and do not feel as if they have the requisite training to make certain interpretive moves. Indicative of this concern is Omer's statement that "I always tell people I've never had formal imam training at all…"

Given the preceding discussion, which sees American Islamic religious leadership through

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[161] Mohamed Nimer, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide : Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*(New York: Routledge, 2002), 11.

[162] Another useful way to consider Islamic religious authority in this sense are studies like Lara Deeb's (2006), Saba Mahmood's (2005), and Pieternella van Doorn-Harder's (2006) of women in Lebanon, Egypt, and Indonesia respectively, which highlight the ways in which religious authority works outside the realm of strictly public patriarchal authority. In Doorn-Harder's study of Muslim women in Indonesia, who have "appropriated the authority to interpret the Qur'an," she distinguishes the male arena of being "in authority", thus in a position to enforce rules upon society in the name of Islam, and the female arena, where women are "an Authority" using their influence to change the opinions and consequently the official decisions of those "in authority;" as was the case of the legalization of birth control in Indonesia. See Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern : Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Pieternella van Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam : Indonesian Women Reading the Qur'an*(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Mahmood, *Politics of Piety : The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. This will be further discussed in chapter six.

the elements of authority, constituency, influence, and representation, it is further useful to think of a model of shared leadership among six main overlapping types: local administrative mosque leaders,[163] national administrative leaders, public intellectuals, Islamic legal authorities, imams, and chaplains. [164] This list is by no means an entirely complete picture, and a given individual may inhabit several types at once.[165] However, it is fair to say that these six types serve to set the stage for how chaplains perceive American Muslim leadership. This framework also allows for an understanding of the ways Islam is being represented by Muslims in America from small individual Muslim communities to their non-Muslim neighbors and the nation at large.

In the above framework, national administrative leaders refer to the presidents and boards of directors of national Muslim organizations like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA), or the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Examples of public intellectuals are people such as Sherman Jackson, Hamza Yusuf, Ingrid Mattson, and, although deceased, W.D. Muhammad, among others. The distinction "Islamic legal authority" is perhaps the most difficult and ambiguous type. It is needed to distinguish public intellectuals - who are recognized as voices advocating for Islam nationally - and figures, which are often referred to as *Alims/Alimahs* or *Sheikhs/Sheikahs* and are mostly concerned with giving Islamic legal advice and pronouncements. Mosque administrators, imams, and chaplains represent the Muslim community on a grassroots and local level. Finally, and

[163] This includes mosque boards (MCOs) and mosque presidents.
[164] In a somewhat similar way Amir al-Islam attempts to split American Muslim leadership into the following components: "From our review of the historical development of Islamic institutions and leadership among Muslims in America, four typologies predominate: (1) immigrant Imams, (2) immigrant western-educated professional administrators/managers, (3) African American Imams of the American Muslim Society (AMS), and (4) Historically Sunni African American Muslim Imams (HSAAM)" in Amir al-Islam, " Educating American Muslim Leadership (Men and Women) for the Twenty-First Century," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 9(2006), http://mpf21.wordpress.com/about-2/ (last accessed on May 23, 2014).
[165] For example we can easily consider Ingrid Mattson a public intellectual and a national administrative leader, someone like Khalid Latif is an Imam, a chaplain, and often as a public intellectual, Hamza Yusuf serves as a public intellectual and as a religious authority, etc.

more specifically, chaplains and imams are formative to the development of an American Muslim clergy;[166] imams represent Muslim liturgical religious leadership, while chaplains represent an American contribution to this somewhat more traditional form of leadership.[167] This framework provides a sense of the diffuse nature of Islamic leadership in the United States, where there is no ordination process and no "officially" recognized clergy. As leaders, chaplains come closest to representing an ordained, native-born group with established educational and training requirements, something the community strives to make happen for mosque imams. In fact, the two are inextricably linked. This can be seen through the IIIT Imam Training Program that uses "the term 'imam' for lack of a better word … since [the program] also [caters] to functions like counseling, social services, and chaplaincy."[168]

Ingrid Mattson, the former President of the Islamic Society of North America and one of the founders of the Hartford Seminary Muslim chaplaincy program notes: "Because there is no ordination in Islam and no universally recognized body that legitimizes scholars, scholarly authority is always relational."[169] The relational legitimacy of scholarly authority means that often it is up to local communities to accept an individual as a qualified imam based on his

[166] For a further discussion of the concept of an "American Muslim clergy" and its connection to chaplains and imams see Timur Yuskaev and Harvey Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals," in *Oxford Handbook of American Islam*, ed. Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[167] There are pockets whereby forms of leadership different from those mentioned above exist, such as prisoner elected imams, Dubler, *Down in the Chapel : Religious Life in an American Prison*. SpearIt, "Facts and Fictions About Islam in Prison: Assessing Prisoner Ra Dicalization in Post-9/11 America,"(http://islamicommentary.org/2013/01/ispu-report-facts-and-fictions-about-islam-in-prisons-assessing-prisoner-radicalization-in-post-911-america/: Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2013).

[168] See Muslim Link Staff, "Iiit Pushes New Certified Imam Credential," *Muslimlink.com* March 11, 2010.Available online at http://www.muslimlinkpaper.com/index.php/islam/islam/2081.html?joscclean=1& comment_id=285. (Last accessed October 31, 2014)

[169]Ingrid Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," in *Sisters: Women, Religion and Leadership in Christianity and Islam*(Forthcoming), 7.

merits. [170] Although Mattson is primarily referring to Sunni Islam in the classical tradition,[171] the idea of relational authority is particularly important in the American context. In addition to the lack of a "universally recognized body" there are as of yet no "respected and professional Islamic seminaries or colleges, their credentials are seen as (and in terms of technical ability, often are) inferior to those of immigrant scholars."[172]

Turning again to Mattson, we find a useful example of the ways that these sites work together: "Important decisions relating to theological and legal matters are increasingly made in mosques and Islamic organizations by elective boards or the collective membership."[173] Mattson is commenting on the ability of organizations and mosques to engage in matters of Islamic law, which adds an extra component to the Islamic religious decision making process. She is also reemphasizing the relatively flat hierarchical structure of Islamic religious leadership and authority in general, as well as its specific importance to the American context.[174] Here, it is important to note that as a leader in the American Muslim community Mattson's goal is to understand and articulate a clear notion of Islamic American leadership; it is fluid enough to allow for multiple sites to exist in tandem - including the chaplaincy - with which she is intimately invested:

> I believe it is only proper that religious authority should continually be negotiated (informally and formally) among fellow believers in the Muslim community. I realize that this fluidity makes many people anxious, so they flee to the comfort of a rigidly hierarchical model (usually some form of *bay'ah*—an oath of obedience to a religious

[170] Although there has been considerable debate among American Muslims as to the ability of women to serve as imams, here the male pronoun is used in recognition of the fact the vast majority of imams are male. This will be discussed further in chapter six.
[171] The notion of religious leadership and/or religious authority in mainstream Sunni Islam is difficult to pin down, as there is a presumption of a non-hierarchical structure in Sunni Islam. Traditionally religious leadership was in the hands of the *ulama* (religious scholars trained in the Islamic sciences).
[172] Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," 7.
[173] "American Muslims' Special Obligation," in *Taking Back Islam : American Muslims Reclaim Their Faith*, ed. Michael Wolfe and Beliefnet (Firm)(Emmaus, Penn.: RODALE, 2002), 2.
[174] Note that although generalizations can be made based on the American context, significant differences exist between Shiite and Sunni mosques when it comes to leadership models.

> leader)…In many American faith traditions, "lay" leaders can serve in public and private institutions on ethics boards, as chaplains and as student leaders. In Islam, there should be no distinction between lay and clergy and these new opportunities for religious leadership should not be neglected or marginalized by the Muslim community.[175]

Interestingly, Mattson's conceptual engagement is in part with Islamic leadership for Muslims in America and in part with religious leadership as she sees it exemplified in American religion more generally. In her estimation, the "fluidity" of American Muslim religious leadership is both natural to Islam and potentially enhanced by the American environment. In addition, the evening out of authority between lay leaders and clergy allows for a more expansive concept of leadership, opening up the field to a multitude of forms.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the way this distinction between lay and clergy is perceived has consequences for the professionalization of Islamic American leadership and the chaplaincy's role within it. This consideration concerns the usefulness of professionalization, ordination, and formalization in the American context and the way that American Muslims consider their leaders in comparison with other American faith groups. Several important issues stem from this discussion and the place of chaplains within it: Including, what does professionalization of American religious leadership look like, what role do chaplains play in this process, what is the relationship of chaplains to imams in the process of professionalization, how are imams perceived in an American context, how can one distinguish chaplains from imams, and in what sense might we say these two types of leadership make up the basis for an American Muslim clergy?

[175] Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," 18-20.

Professionalization and Leadership

When discussing American Islamic leadership the term clergy, while not universally applicable to Islam, is a useful construct for several reasons. First, its use as a comparative model acknowledges the many roles undertaken by clergy in America and the ways that American Islam conforms to these models, whether by necessity or utility. Second, it speaks to the uncertain nature of Islamic leadership in America. Third, if we think about clergy as encompassing different aspects of religious leadership – religious professionals, local pastoral care, and national networks - it helps us understand the transformations taking place within American Muslim leadership. Lastly, it helps reflect upon the ways that chaplains are contributing to the development of that leadership.

To begin with, what does "clergy" in this context mean? Although each religious community in the United States envisions what defines a clergy person in a different way, there are perhaps certain commonalties which distinguish ad hoc and lay religious leaders from professional ones. This construction envisions clergy as a professional and salaried class of religious leaders who perform liturgical, administrative, and pastoral functions for their local community of lay believers. One can question whether or not the formation of a clergy in this sense is an attainable or desirable goal for the Muslim community in the United States. Certainly, the way religious communities in the US envision their clergy is distinct from various Muslim conceptions of religious leadership. For example, in his 1961 article on imams, Albert Sadler indicates that:

> One rarely finds a book on the Muslim religion which does not at some point declare "there is no clergy in Islam…[The imam] is not fully a clerical office, however, in that the imam is an imam only during the time he is actually engaged in leading prayers; that is to say he is in no sense a pastor to the lay community, but only a salaried functionary within the mosque, not paid by the congregation but from endowments…Is it true that "there is no

> clergy in Islam?" There is no single pastoral office…yet it is obvious that there is a "parish situation" for each community of Muslim laymen.[176]

As Sadler sees it, although there is no "formal" clergy in Islam there is invariably a parish situation, where Muslims look "to someone to direct the corporate religious life."[177] Sadler's frame of reference is the sense that although the imam is often purely a functionary with no role beyond the liturgical functions of prayer, imams inevitably end up servicing various other communal needs by virtue of what he calls the individual need for "pageantry and for fellowship" within the community. Similarly, Abdelkader Tayob remarks: "It is often said that there is no clergy in Islam, and up to a point this is true, mainly because Islam's religious specialists exercise no sacramental or priestly functions."[178]

What both Sadler and Tayob are alluding to is the idea that although there is the typically stated notion that "there is no clergy in Islam," there are grounds for comparison. In addition, Muslims in many non-Muslim majority countries are expecting similar qualities in their religious leaders as they see exhibited in the leadership of other faith groups. This furthers the idea that the term "clergy" is simultaneously problematic historically and useful conceptually. In addition, there is a utility for Muslim leaders in being considered as a clergy and conforming to some of its requisite forms and qualities. For religious minorities in the United States, a clear definition of who their leadership is, how they are trained, and what qualifies them to speak on behalf of the community can be instrumental to the way that a community is politically and culturally

[176] A.W. Sadler, "Islam: The Parish Situation and the Virtuoso Community," *The Muslim World* 51(1961): 198-200.
[177] Ibid., 199.
[178] Abdulkader Tayob, *Islam in South Africa : Mosques, Imams, and Sermons*, Religion in Africa (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1999).

represented both locally and nationally.[179] Because of this, American Muslims and non-Muslims alike are making a natural comparison between *imams* and other religious leaders. As Ingrid Mattson has noted about imam's in America: "No doubt this is because the leader of a local congregation—the priest, minister or rabbi—appears to be the most familiar and influential religious authority in the lives of Americans who attend religious services. The imam—the leader of Islamic congregational prayers—is the closest Muslim counterpart to the clergy of American Christianity and Judaism."[180]

This comparison goes beyond simple "counterpart" association based on the fact that these individuals lead religious services. It is also indicative of the fact that local communities expect imams to serve the varied needs of their communities; imams are responding to these needs with various degrees of success. As Earle Waugh noted in his study of American imams: "He (the imam) is beginning to exhibit the diversity expected of the Christian clergy."[181]

The "Christian clergy" that Waugh refers to is best understood as a model, which ascribes multiple roles to the leader of a local religious community. Jews and Catholics experienced a similar process of adaptation to this model of clergy, creating their own religious leadership that was American both culturally and professionally. These same challenges are now concerns for American Muslims. For many years, mosque communities have recognized the need for their imams to respond to the conditions of life in America. The conflict between traditional notions of Muslim leadership and American Islam is a key part of the debate on how to adapt religious leadership to an American model. The multiple roles played by clergy in the United States –

[179] For Islam in America this fact has become particularly important after September 11, 2001, when Islam's public image has declined. For chaplains this is particularly important given their increasingly public involvement in interfaith coalition building.
[180] Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," 8.
[181] Earle H. Waugh, "Imam in the New World," in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions : Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa*, ed. Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, Frank Reynolds, and Theodore M. Ludwig(Leiden: Brill, 1980), 144.

counseling, administration, and interfaith relations, among others - combined with the need to understand American culture place significant demands on American Muslim religious leaders.

The uncertain and often underdeveloped nature of indigenous forms of Islamic leadership is deeply connected to the utility of these comparisons. Given the relatively disjointed state of leadership in the Muslim community - mostly in the form of imams - as well as the lack of an "ecclesiastical chain of command," and the relative independence of Mosques and Muslim Communal Organizations (MCOs),[182] there is still a real need to develop an indigenous religious leadership; specifically, one that is not solely dependent upon foreign-born imams and which can respond to the needs of a Muslim community living in the American context. As Ihsan Bagby has noted: "Almost all paid imams in this country were trained overseas and are recent arrivals to the US…Most of these imams were brought to the US to serve in the traditional roles of imams, which entails leading the prayers and conducting educational programs in the mosque –not doing outreach activities."[183] Baghby's concern, like many others attempting to build a strong American born Islamic leadership, is with the dependence upon a foreign Islam that cannot relate to American youth and have consequently alienated much of the American Muslim community.

Finally, this challenge is coupled with a lack of concern regarding training and compensating imams. Dr. Iqbal Unus, Director the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and one of the lead organizers of the short lived IIIT-Hartford Seminary Imam certification program - the first of its kind in the United States - remarked that the "Muslim community doesn't take the imam role seriously, and that's reflected in how imams and Islamic social

[182] Iqbal J. Unus, "Governance in Muslim Community Organizations," in *Muslims' Space in the American Public Square*, ed. Ahmad Nyang Bukhari, and Esposito (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004).
[183] Ihsan Bagby, "The Mosque and the American Public Square," in *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square : Hope, Fears, and Aspirations*, ed. Zahid Hussain Bukhari(Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 344.

workers are compensated...This is the first step in creating an honorable profession."[184]

What does it take to respond to the concerns voiced leaders like by Baghby and Unus? Dr. John Morgan, president of the Graduate Theological Foundation, has presented one approach in response to what he sees as a lack of clarity in American Muslim religious leadership: "There is a great deal of equivocating, vacillating, and waffling on the part of the American Islamic religious leaders. Their lack of vision and clarity of direction is exacerbated by their lack of unity amongst themselves in determining to create a training program for young American imams to serve the growing American population of Muslims."[185] To address this concern Morgan applies what he considers the five necessary parts of professionalization to clergy in America.[186] According to Morgan, this requires the minister and ministry to have: 1) a required body of theoretical knowledge; 2) the ability to respond to the demands for dedicated service in the community and society, 3) the creation of national professional organizations requiring membership of these professionals, 4) a licensure process empowering the professional; and 5) an explication of the "symbols of leadership" required of any profession. Morgan's worry and the focus of his study are concerned with the missing components needed to empower and clarify American Muslim religious leadership. He understands the professionalization of clergy in America similarly to the professionalization of any field, such as medicine or law. Thus much of Morgan's idea of professionalization highlights the ways in which Islamic leadership has not been able to conform to a strictly professional model, exacerbated by the fact that Islam in

[184] The Muslim Link, "Pilot Program Aims to Qualify Imams Who Can Succeed in the American Context."http://www.muslimlinkpaper.com/index.php/community-news/community-news/2081.html?joscclean=1&comment_id=285 (last accessed on July 23, 2014).
[185] John H. Morgan, "Lessons from the American Rabbinic Experience: What Muslim Clergy Need to Know!," *Journal of religion & society* 12(2010).
[186] *Muslim Clergy in America : Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community*.

America does not easily lend itself to a single standard of practice given its ethnic, religious, and sectarian diversity.

Morgan's first and fourth criterion - the need for a required body of theoretical knowledge and the need for a licensure process - are directly related to the establishment of an educational curriculum and some loose sense of ordination along with Muslim American seminaries. This reflects one of the major challenges to educating native-born American imams in that thus far there is no Muslim-run seminary based in America. While there is some formal seminary training, it is as of yet only for chaplains. These programs are typically housed in non-Muslim institutions of learning well suited for the task, as they combine Islamic specific coursework with experience in pastoral care training. To respond to this situation, many leaders in the American Muslim community place strong import on the formation of an American Muslim seminary. This includes debate as to what an American Muslim-run seminary would look like, how it would train imams as generalists to respond to the various needs of the community, and how it would be defined along sectarian lines. Ordination in its formal sense does not exist in Islam, but the establishment of educational parameters and infrastructure may be a first step to the licensure process that Morgan describes.

His second criterion - "the ability to respond to the demands for dedicated service in the community and society," - has much to do with the lack of sustained resources being dedicated to building a professional ministry and services within the American Muslim community. With specific reference to imams, this is indicative of the fact that many imams are either part-time or full-time and underpaid, as mentioned by Iqbal Unus above. Likewise, many mosques lack the funds to provide necessary social services. For example, according to the CAIR 2011 Mosque study, "Mosques are not staffed well. The majority (55%) of mosques have no paid full-time

staff. Only 10% have more than two paid staff."[187] This lack of cohesive resources has also affected chaplains, particularly in the university setting.

A good example of this phenomenon is Chaplain Shamshad Sheikh, likely the first Muslim woman to be given a chaplaincy post in the Northeast region of the United States, who reflects upon her current position at Quinnipiac College and the way that her position is funded relative to other faith groups:

> Really there is no difference between rabbis and pastors on the campus. However, one thing I did notice at my current campus - Protestant chaplains, they come from their organization and are supported by them, and get paid by their church or organization. The rabbis also come from the bigger Jewish Hillel organization. At Yale this was the way it worked. All these ministers are coming from their own organizations, and they practice their religion on campus with the students supported by their organization. But Muslims do not have any support. We have to be hired by the university or college wherever you work. Some colleges support them, some don't. So you have to explain that "Muslims are still new, they're still trying to establish, they're still trying to get the recognition." And so this has been a huge struggle.[188]

Sheikh's experience is not isolated to Quinnipiac College as most Muslim chaplaincy positions are funded by the colleges and universities at which they reside. The one notable exception is Chaplain Mohammad Tayssir Safi, who was appointed at the University of Michigan in 2012. The University of Michigan does not fund Safi's position, which is fully supported by the Michigan Muslim Alumni Association (MMAA). As Chris Abdur-Rahman Blauvelt notes: "The Board of Trustees [of the Alumni Association] is part of a larger organizational structure that involves the Muslim Student Association and Alumni Association. The Board of Trustees figures out what are the long term objectives that we want for the

[187] Relations, "The American Mosque 2011: Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque, Attitudes of Mosque Leaders."
[188] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.

students, that the alumni can raise funds for, such as a chaplaincy."[189] Safi's position is the first endowed Muslim chaplaincy at a public university. Given that it is a state run institution, the University of Michigan does not donate funds to chaplaincy from any faith group. The MMAA raised funds for Safi's position from the University of Michigan Muslim community - namely alumni and parents - and proves an important exception to the general trend.[190]

With respect to Morgan's third criterion regarding the utility of professional associations - where members of the clergy can convene and discuss issues of theological and social significance - he is specifically referencing the fact that Muslim clergy have yet to form professional organizations with the reach and support that exist in other American religious groups. He makes this clear in his comparative study dealing with similar experiences in the American Jewish community:

> Under the leadership of Imam Dr. Omar Shahin, Executive Director of the North American Imams Federation (NAIF), there is a fledgling organization for American imams, but with a membership of 150 in a field of 1,500 immigrant imams, the organization has a long way to go before it can claim either to speak for American imams or represent them to the country and to the Islamic community. Whereas the Rabbinical Assembly carries a great deal of weight with both Conservative rabbis as professional clergy and with the Conservative congregations being served by and in need of Conservative rabbinic ministration, NAIF has neither power nor representation yet.[191]

In a different respect, one could point to the lack of strong national level membership organizations for mosques. The 2011 CAIR Mosque found that "Twenty-seven percent of all mosques are associated with the Islamic Society of North America. (Forty-nine percent of mosques affiliated with a national or international organization have affiliation with the ISNA).

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[189]Muslim Students' Association at U-M, "Muslim Chaplain: A Documentary." Muslim Students' Association at U-M, "Muslim Chaplain: A Documentary," https://www.facebook.com/umichmsa (last Accessed on September 12, 2014).
[190] Beenish Ahmed, "Milestone at University of Michigan: Muslim Chaplain," National Public Radio, http://www.npr.org/2012/02/08/145986436/milestone-at-university-of-michigan-muslim-chaplain.
[191] Morgan, "Lessons from the American Rabbinic Experience: What Muslim Clergy Need to Know!."

That percentage has decreased from 1994 when 39% of mosques were affiliated with ISNA."[192] This drop in membership from 39% to 27% over a seventeen-year period indicates that even ISNA, arguably the largest national Muslim organization in the United States, has not been able to form fully cohesive ties across mosque communities.[193]

Finally, when examining Morgan's fifth criterion - "the symbols of leadership" - it is useful to think back to the way in which Omer Bajwa described himself and the fact that he "looks the part." Here, Morgan is thinking that in order for someone to be recognized as a member of a particular religious group's clergy, there are identifiable items of clothing that can help a member of that faith community or another faith community recognize someone as an imam.

Although the idea of physical identifiers may seem superficial, Morgan's point - as Omer Bajwa's experience attests - is that the way a clergyperson looks can give his or her station authority. What this means for American Muslim religious leaders is difficult to pin down; what an imam or other religious leader wears can vary from ethnicity to ethnicity and from sectarian group to sectarian group. Where one imam wears a *kufi,* another may wear a Western-style suit. In addition, this leads to the question of what type of identifiers or symbols should be used in the case of female religious leaders.[194]

Although the relative importance of each of the five elements that Morgan outlines above are open to debate, there is nonetheless quite a good deal that can be gained from his examination. The needs for an established educational curriculum, some loose sense of

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[192] Relations, "The American Mosque 2011: Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque, Attitudes of Mosque Leaders."
[193] This drop can in part be attributed to the rapid increase of the number of mosques over the same time period.
[194] For an interesting discussion of the role that dress plays in women's religious authority see Kecia Ali, "Acting on a Frontier of Religious Ceremony: With Questions and Quiet Resolve, a Woman Officiates at a Muslim Wedding," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 32:4 (Fall-Winter)(2004).

ordination, American Muslim run seminaries and colleges,[195] and professional organizations where members of the clergy can convene and discuss issues of theological and social significance are important issues facing and being addressed by the leadership and lay community of American Islam.[196] One specific area where the American Muslim chaplaincy is making headway is in training and educating American Muslim leaders.

Leadership Education & Training:

The issues surrounding the educating, training and endorsement of American Muslim chaplains have been a learning process for American Muslim leaders. Where Catholic and Jewish chaplains were primarily ordained and trained priests and rabbis, who had decided to serve in an institutional setting, Muslim chaplains have been at an educational disadvantage. Because there is no American based form of imam ordination, these chaplains originally came to the chaplaincy with no established training network. However, in response to the qualifications and educational requirements demanded of chaplains, which emphasize the importance of areas such as pastoral care and interfaith relations alongside specific liturgical duties, American Muslim chaplains are fast becoming professionals, who can respond to both the needs of the institutions in which they work and those of the larger Muslim community.

Since the 1990s, different attempts at training American Muslim religious leaders have been made, starting with the American Open University and the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) in 1996 and moving to programs like the Zaytuna Institute, the UAE leadership program, and the Hartford Theological Seminary and its partnership with IIIT, and,

[195] The Zaytuna Institute (http://www.zaytunacollege.org/) is one such attempt to create a Muslim College in the United States.
[196] Morgan, *Muslim Clergy in America : Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community*.

most recently, the Claremont Theological Institute. These programs are important not only with regard to the educational curricula they develop, but also to the growing institutional links and national leadership organizations that have formed, connecting chaplaincy programs to organizations like ISNA, IIIT and GSISS. For these schools and programs, establishing a legitimate curriculum involves connections with US institutions such as the Armed Forces and the Federal Board of Prisons, as well as educational institutions in Muslim majority countries; this was the case with the Claremont Seminary program seeking accreditation from al-Azhar.[197] In addition, The Hartford Seminary program is accredited as part of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and also boasts the first American seminary with full-time Muslim faculty. At Hartford, future Muslim chaplains can receive a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations as well as a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy.

These types of programs are one of the most significant and tangible contributions that the chaplaincy has made to the professionalization of American Muslim religious leadership. The first thing to recognize with regard to the chaplaincy's contribution to American Muslim religious leadership education is that the non-formalized nature of imam education has meant that educational criteria have developed first and primarily for chaplains. Thus far chaplains have served as a testing ground for training, including helping make determinations regarding what roles an imam needs to fulfill and who can shoulder the burden of social work oriented community needs. Chaplains come closest to representing an ordained, native-born group with established educational and training requirements.

As the Muslim American chaplaincy is a relatively new field, this was not the case with

[197] As of the writing of this dissertation Claremont has not yet received this accreditation.

early, formative chaplains. However, formal training is fast becoming the norm for chaplains, as institutions from prisons to universities are asking for formal educational degrees and certificates.[198] In general, this has not been the case with imams, as there has been no formal training or ordination system for them in the United States. Given this situation, the educational guidelines and curricula that have been established for chaplains are aiding similar processes for imams. Organizations like the Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC) are spearheading programs,[199] which cater to both imams and chaplains, responding to the overlapping needs of each profession. In this way, the chaplaincy has made the first moves toward formalizing education and training for religious leaders in the American Muslim community, a move that, given the lack of an American Muslim seminary, has been happening much slower for imams.

Building off the existing curricula of programs like the one at Hartford Seminary, leadership groups are beginning to use the experience of training chaplains in pastoral and social care to train imams in these same skills. In addition, chaplains themselves have spearheaded and developed this type of training for imams and mosque communities around the United States. Crossover programs in leadership, which are applicable to imams and chaplains, have also come out of chaplaincy networks. A good example of this cross over is the 2014 in-service training program for "chaplains, imams, and other service providers to the Muslim community," sponsored by the Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut (MECC), an organization with the basic mission of supporting Muslim chaplains and their endorsement.[200]

Muslim chaplaincy programs have the momentum to train imams in areas which they have

[198] For some examples and analysis of chaplaincy and imam job announcement see Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."
[199] Such as "Islamic Counseling 101" and "In-service Training for Imams and Chaplains."
[200] See http://mecct.org, last accessed August 27, 2014.

little to no experience, such as marriage counseling and domestic violence.[201] The 2001 study by Osman Ali, Glen Milstein, and Peter Marzuk regarding imams and the counseling needs of the communities they serve shows this to be the case. Their study found that "imams are asked to address counseling issues in their communities that reach beyond religious and spiritual concerns and include family problems, social needs, and psychiatric symptoms." Further they found that "imams are less likely than other clergy to have formal comprehensive counseling training that might help them to effectively address their communities' multidimensional needs."[202]

Thus, despite moves toward formalized education and training for imams challenges remain. For instance, given the increasing expectations being put on imams and the lack of American born and trained leaders, how does the American Muslim leadership community proceed? As mentioned above, the development of American Muslim chaplaincy programs has been an important step in establishing a professional religious leadership and helping to influence the definition of imams and the education of Muslim leaders in America. Considering these factors and the closely developing relationship between chaplains and imams, it is imperative to better understand that relationship and to further ascertain the way in which chaplains are contributing and helping to transform Muslim leadership in America.

Imams and Chaplains

Several important factors about the ways that imams are viewed in the United States effect the role chaplains play in the makeup of American Muslim leadership. All of these factors reflect those roles that imams are unable to fill or the ambiguities inherent in the way that imams are

[201] Glen Milstein Osman Ali, and Peter Marzuk "The Imam's Role in Meeting the Counseling Needs of Muslim Communities in the United States," *Psychiatric Services* 56(February 2005): 206.
[202] Ibid.

viewed in the United States. The interconnectedness of the following elements contributes in large part to this dynamic: 1) the fact that there are expectations being placed on imams to fulfill multiple tasks which they have not typically performed; 2) specifically, that imams are ill equipped to perform counseling roles or social work; 3) that their office has been restricted to men; 4) that the role of imam and chaplain are often ill-defined and fused; and 5) that there is an informality in the appointment of imams, including the lack of ordination or formalized education standards. These have all left an open space for chaplains, who are filling this void and becoming important partners to imams in creating an American Muslim clergy. As a consequence, the two vocations are connected and distinct in significant ways. The distinctions are relatively clear, but there is significant overlap.

To begin with, what beyond terminology separates imams and chaplains in America? One of the central distinctions between chaplains and imams is setting and population. As Chaplain SE Jihad Levine said, "Muslim chaplains, who offer spiritual advice and care to all faiths within their area of service, are different from imams, who serve specific liturgical needs within the Muslim community."[203] What Chaplain Jihad Levine is pointing to is the fact that the role of an imam is confessional and denominational, while a chaplain's role is not necessarily either of these. Chaplains typically serve within secular institutional settings while imams serve in a congregational setting, typically in a mosque. However, there are still strong points of connection and even this distinction isn't a hard and fast one considering current trends within the American Muslim community, where university chaplains may run prayer services attended by the greater Muslim community in their area.

A second important distinction that Levine points to is that Muslim chaplains are trained as

[203] S.E. Jihad Levine, "Muslim Chaplains in America: Voices from the First Wave," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 29(2009): 143.

interfaith providers, often ministering to all religions within an institution. This doesn't preclude the fact that they are also hired to specifically respond to the growing number of Muslims within their area of service. For instance, university centers for religious life are increasingly recognizing the need to respond specifically to the large Muslim student populations by hiring full-time Muslim chaplains. Likewise, some mosques have or are considering placing chaplains or counselors under their employ further connecting the two vocations.[204] This comes in an official capacity as well as a more informal one as we can see from Chaplain Shamshad Sheikh's experience with a local mosque:

> SS: I'm very active with the mosque as well. And at the mosque sometimes women come to me for help on religious issues, especially new converts, need help.
>
> HS: What kind of work do you do in the mosque?
>
> SS: Volunteering in different activities, for weekly Qur'an study, Ramadan activities, Eid celebration, visiting sick people at the hospital, supporting people in the community, and helping them in whichever way they need. Recently the mosque leader asked me to serve on the executive board.[205]

Where chaplains are trained to specifically serve a social work type function - whether clinical pastoral care or spiritual counseling - imams have traditionally not filled this role. However, this distinction is now being narrowed as well, as chaplains often serve outside their institutional settings as imams and imams have begun realizing the importance of counseling to their work within local Muslim communities. As Ihsan Bagby commented: "Counseling, especially marital counseling, is a regular duty (burden, many imams would say) of mosque leaders – over three-fourths of mosques do some form of counseling."[206]

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[204] This has been discussed as a model at The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC), which provides a variety of counseling services to its community members, including marriage and personal counseling from a "Muslim licensed counselor. See http://isbcc.org/health-and-counseling/ (last accessed on July 27, 2014).
[205] Shamshad Sheikh, interview with the author, June 15, 2014.
[206] Bagby, "The Mosque and the American Public Square," 331.

Ostensibly, both chaplains and imams serve the spiritual needs of the community. Although chaplains and imams are inextricably linked, they are distinct vocationally and historically. There are chaplains who are also imams and imams who are also chaplains; nonetheless, an imam cannot necessarily be a chaplain nor can a chaplain necessarily be an imam. It should be noted, however, that imams have moved more freely between the two roles and are often accepted as chaplains without the requisite training. This blurring of the lines is expressed succinctly in the following statement in *Faith Matters'* report on Muslim chaplains: "A clear distinction needs to be made between an imam and a chaplain. An imam is a recognized leader or a religious teacher who is able to lead prayers in a mosque. Imams can serve as chaplains within institutions, but chaplains are not always qualified to be imams. This distinction is important since some sectors employ chaplains who are not imams."[207]

Certainly there have been imams in America as long as there have been Muslims in America, but it is not until relatively recently that the questions of native training and professionalization have come to the forefront. Imams in the United States have to serve many roles they would otherwise not have to fill in a Muslim majority country. Although what an imam does varies based on region and sectarian difference, there is a growing sense of the multiple roles that an American imam must fill and how an imam in America might differ from an imam in another country. Traditionally, most Sunni imams were merely expected to lead prayer, give the Friday sermon, and occasionally run a Qur'anic school; the most comprehensive term for these duties being imam *khatib*.

This includes a vision that sees the imam as a traditional form of religious leadership and

[207] Fiyaz Mughal, "The Role of Muslim Chaplains in the Public Sector," in *Experiences from Muslim Communities*, ed. Faith Matters(London: Faith Matters, 2010). See also Mumina Kowalski, "A New Profession: Muslim Chaplains in American Public Life" (Hartford Seminary, 2011), 13.

the chaplain as a newer and specifically American form that relies on its place within the institutions of a non-Muslim majority society. Despite this relatively ubiquitous idea, it is not necessarily a fully accurate picture of an imam or a Muslim chaplain in the American context. In fact, the imam is evolving into a comprehensive religious leader whose responsibilities go beyond leading prayer and giving the Friday sermon, and many chaplains are both institutional and congregational leaders. More and more imams in the United States are expected to resemble American style congregational leaders with the host of responsibilities and professional expectations that come with it.[208]

As many male chaplains are imams and vice a versa, the relationship between these two roles is sometimes fluid to the point of becoming synonymous. When I ask Omer Bajwa about whether or not there is a conflict between what he does at Yale University and his participation in mosque settings outside of Yale, he comments:

> And if it hypothetically if it even came up, politely I would just say to them that, "Yale is not a mosque. What I'm doing on campus is part of promoting Muslim student life on campus." If it ever came up, I'd say, "You know, obviously I'd do things differently if it were in a mosque, given the dynamics of that community." Having said all of that, maybe, maybe when I sort of self-reflect on this, maybe what helps me get away with it in addition to all that other stuff is, because I look the part, quote unquote, because I look like an Imam. When I give the *khutbah* I'll dress "the way the Imam normally dresses" when they give the Friday *khutbah*. For all intents and purposes, to the majority of the people in that congregation, I get the role that they need me to fit. They put me in that role. They're like, "Oh wow, he's at Yale. And here he's giving the *khutbah*. He's sort of what I expect to see on Friday." Therefore it's never been an issue.[209]

Ultimately, the ad hoc adaptation being done by imams and chaplains, by virtue of social pressure and institutional formalization, can encroach upon the distinction between their roles.

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[208] This is a facet of what R. Stephen Warner means when he discussed the American Protestant congregational model. See R. Stephen Warner, *A Church of Our Own : Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*(New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

[209] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.

This phenomenon can place a variety of responsibilities in one office that were not traditionally performed by a single person. Imams are being expected to serve counseling roles that they are ill equipped to handle and chaplains, who have become institutional professionals, are becoming a model for this type of work within Muslim communities outside of the institutional setting. Despite the expressed need and desire to distinguish these two roles there is a good deal of overlap. Nonetheless, the desire to clearly delineate the two roles remains. Chaplain S.E. Jihad Levine makes some of these distinctions clear: "Although an imam may act as a chaplain, he will likely be in need of chaplaincy education in order to do the job well. Meanwhile, it is not necessary for a chaplain to be an imam in order to work in the field of chaplaincy. Imams are male. Muslim chaplains may be male or female."[210]

As the above statement makes clear, although there is much overlap there is a concerted effort to make chaplains and imams two separate vocations, each a distinct professional endeavor requiring specific skills. In part, this is a reaction to the fact that before there was anything akin to a formally trained American Muslim chaplain, there were chaplains who had the title but little requisite training. In these earlier years, the title Muslim chaplain was reserved primarily for those who served in prisons and whose title as chaplain was often interchangeable with the title imam. This meant that those serving in this role were left to their own intuitive senses when it came to pastoral care. The New York State prison system is a good example of the lack of training that prison chaplains received and the blurred lines between the titles chaplain and imam. As Zain Abdullah, who was a chaplain in the New York and New Jersey prison systems in the 1980s, remarks:

> We were called Muslim Chaplains, but some people would see that as an oxymoron…I received virtually no training. I say virtually because we had an orientation…We

[210] Levine, "Muslim Chaplains in America: Voices from the First Wave," 143.

> received training for about a week, under the guidance of Warith Deen Umar.[211] Talking to us about what were expected to do in the position. But nothing on how to service the Muslim population in prison and how does Islam translate to that kind of confinement, or that kind of institution. For me, my training was pretty traditional in the sense that I studied with some scholars, some scholars here, and one Islamic judge…no actually two.[212]

What Zain is describing was and still is a common phenomenon at the very outset of the hiring of Muslim chaplains, prior to any sense of what training should look like. Typically, what certified someone for work in the prisons as a Muslim chaplain was, first and foremost, being a Muslim, along with having some Islamic training. In addition, early on in the New York State prison system many Muslim chaplains were former inmates with little education, let alone chaplaincy training. Reverend Edwin Muller, who was most recently Chair of The Commission on Chaplains for The New York State Council of Churches and served as a prison chaplain in the New York State Department of Correctional services for thirty-five years alongside Warith Deen Umar, the first paid American Muslim chaplains in the New York State prisons, acknowledges the lack of education and training that the first New York State Muslim chaplains had: "The first ones [NYS Muslim chaplains] were almost all former prisoners. And probably with little or no education. Several of them got education after we hired them. I think Umar [Warith Deen Umar] eventually got fairly well educated. I don't know if he got a master's degree, but I know he had a bachelor's."[213]

In addition to the lack of defined training criteria for chaplains in this formative period, the title imam was ubiquitous and indiscriminately applied to chaplains and inmates alike. Given

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[211] As will discussed in chapter five Warith Deen Umar was the first paid Muslim prison chaplain for the New York State DOC and was responsible for hiring all Muslim chaplains in the New York States prison system from the mid-1970s until the late 1990s.
[212] Zain Abdullah, telephone interview with the author, January 17, 2012. The Muslim chaplaincy in the prison will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.
[213] Reverend Edwin Muller, interview with the author, Poughkeepsie, New York, December 15, 2011.

that there is no formal ordination process in Islam, the requirements for one to be appointed as an imam or to assume the title of imam can be relatively loose. Reverend Muller recounts his time at Greenhaven prison: "The inmate imam was always, the way they selected them, it was always the one who was most knowledgeable about Islam. If there was an imam and somebody new came in who was more knowledge, the [first] imam stepped aside. It was a pretty smooth transition."[214] The inmate Muslim community typically chooses inmate imams, and so Islamic authority in the prison is, as Ingrid Mattson described it more generally, "relational."[215] In this way, the chaplain hired by the Department of Corrections gained authority from the prison administration, but gained legitimacy from the inmate population: "When we hired chaplains, Muslim chaplains, sometimes the inmate imam was more powerful than the chaplain. There were several facilities where the Muslims didn't want the chaplain, and when they were given one they told the chaplain he wasn't the imam."[216]

The two factors, one which conflates the titles imam and chaplain, and the other which involves the non-formalized ascription of the title imam, are important to understanding how these two vocations have been and are being approached in American Muslim communities. Two solutions are possible; one is to clearly delineate the two vocations, and the other is to more closely define a formal ordination or an informal training process for American imams. Both of these are occurring to varying degrees, but the process is fluid and momentum has been in favor of creating two distinct independent but related vocations. One of the elements of this delineation is that since there are no formalized criteria for imams, there is an acknowledgement that they

[214] Ibid.
[215] Ingrid Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," *Sisters, Women, Religion and Leadership in Christianity and Islam*.
[216] Ibid.

are often ill-equipped to perform counseling, be it marriage, youth, or otherwise.[217] Alternatively, chaplains, since they are now being trained in counseling through CPE, are able to provide these types of services. In this way, the distinction is important to those educating chaplains as they do not want imams to move into chaplaincy positions without the experience and training recognized by the affiliated agencies.

In part, this distinction validates the educational institutions and the chaplains that they train. It also guarantees that Muslims and non-Muslims being served by chaplains are receiving appropriate care. Chaplains are meant to have specific training to serve in an institutional setting with knowledge of social work and pastoral care, in addition to a basic understanding of Islam. They are, however, not necessarily meant to have superior skills in the Islamic sciences, leading prayer, giving sermons, or reading Arabic, although some do. These skills are usually expectations of what Muslim leadership - in particular the office of imam - should look like.

The result is that while imams are trained and qualified to serve these liturgical functions, they are not trained to serve in other capacities, although they may be called on to do so. These imams find it difficult to respond to some of the most important needs of their congregants. Thus, they often alienate members of their community. Consequently, they leave a void in services for the local Muslim community, which chaplains can and have been filling. Ingrid Mattson brings these issues together by detailing the ways that American imams are responding to the expectations being placed upon them:

> In recent years, the tendency in American Muslim communities has been to concentrate religious authority in the office of the imam, who is also expected to perform multiple, distinct functions for the community. In addition to leading the daily prayers and giving the Friday sermon, the imam is expected to represent the community to the public, draft marriage contracts, issue judicial divorces, teach children, teach adults and counsel people with all kinds of problems, among other things. In addition, the imam may, whether he is

[217] Morgan, *Muslim Clergy in America : Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community*.

> explicitly authorized to do this or not, make policy decisions for the community, such as what kind of educational gatherings and spiritual practices will be permitted in the building, how the prayer space will be divided between men and women, and how charitable contributions will be spent. It is no wonder that so many American Muslims are dissatisfied with their local religious leadership. No one person could perform all these functions well. Even if he could, given that the imam for the general congregation has to be male, placing all religious authority with the imam means that women will necessarily be excluded from this field. How, then, should we structure the leadership of our communities?[218]

Chaplains serve as one answer to Mattson's question. They have thus far filled the void being left by imams in various ways, from including women in their ranks to formalizing educational criteria to establishing national and local professional organizations. These steps, along with varying levels of knowledge in prayer, practice, and the Islamic sciences, are making chaplains an important and transformative part of the leadership equation for American Muslims.

For instance, when considering the above visions of imams and chaplains and discussing the state of American Muslim religious leadership, a central and formative theme is the lack of indigenously trained leaders and the way chaplains are filling this void. This sense of indigeneity comes as a response to what some American Muslims see as a disconnect between foreign-born imams and their American Muslim congregations; that imams do not understand elements of American life and culture and as a result alienate their congregations. Dr. Unus, IIIT Director, expresses this sentiment when he states, "If Muslims want to be taken seriously in America they need to be able to produce their own imams and scholars in America."[219]

Without a formalized ordination structure that is connected to an Islamic American seminary, either foreign-born imams have to be imported or Americans need to go abroad,

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[218] Mattson, "Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," 17.
[219] Link, "Pilot Program Aims to Qualify Imams Who Can Succeed in the American Context". For a detailed discussion of the life of a foreign born imam in America see Andrea Elliot, "An Imam in America: A Calling Beyond Brooklyn (a Three Part Series) " *New York Times* March 5, 6, 7 2006.

neither of which is a fully satisfactory solution. A good example of the perceived need for American-born imams is Safaa Zarzour's, secretary general of ISNA, reaction to Imam Suhaib Webb: "He's ushering in a new era in the Muslim community of young imams who have knowledge of classical Islamic scholarship, but who are born in America and familiar with American life, and who are able to connect with the youth." Similarly, Nancy Khalil, board member of the ISBCC, said in reference to Webb's hiring: "There's a huge dearth of qualified imams in this country. We wanted somebody who could relate to a diverse congregation."[220] As Ingrid Mattson indicates, the fact that American Muslims tend to "concentrate religious authority in the office of the imam" makes the issue of where the imam comes from and where he is schooled that much more important.

It is in this context that chaplains help throw the idea of an "indigenous" imam into greater relief. This is done first by virtue of their contribution to the nature of American Islamic leadership - which expands and spreads out authority - and second by virtue of the increasing tendency for chaplains to be professionally trained and focused in pastoral care. In the first instance chaplains help to diversify leadership so that even if an imam is foreign-born, the presence of chaplains in the community and in the mosque helps to make for a more accessible environment. In the second instance, the professional training and pastoral orientation allows for foreign-born chaplains to respond to the culturally specific needs of American Muslims. In this way, chaplains allow one to question what is meant by the term indigenous and whether or not indigeneity helps to make an imam more qualified and desirable in the American context.

Conceivably, an imam born abroad who has adapted to life in the United States can cater to the needs of a given mosque community, regardless of demographics. In other words, does

[220]Omar Sacirbey, "With a New Imam, a New Outlook," *Boston Globe* December 3, 2011.

indigeneity mean "born in America" or simply understanding what it means to be born in America? In this sense, the chaplaincy as a model for professionalized leadership allows non-native Muslims the time to develop an understanding of indigeneity or become indigenous. Furthermore, many non-native born chaplains come to the chaplaincy having already developed a notion of pastoral care that fits into the American Muslim chaplaincy mold. A good example of this is Chaplain Shamshad Sheikh. Although born in Pakistan, Shamshad came to the American Muslim chaplaincy with a developed notion of how she wanted to counsel her students, and her own sense of what it means to be a chaplain, despite her not being specifically trained in chaplaincy:

> You know, in Pakistan, it's interesting. For my entry school I went to Catholic school. Catholic schools were known to be the best schools and had the best school system. And we were six brothers and sisters, and all our elementary education was in Catholic school. I used to admire the nuns in my school, and I always wanted to be a Muslim nun. Can you imagine that? And God did bring me to chaplaincy - that's kind of a Muslim nun to me…Can you believe this? I always used to say, "Sister, I want to be Muslim just like her. She's so good and I always admired her. "But Catholic schools in an Islamic country are not required to give religious education to Muslim students. My Islamic education from a Catholic school, the environment I grew up with, my home education, the rich culture and tradition had helped me a lot to in my chaplain's job.[221]

Shamshad's experience growing up in Pakistan gave her an intuitive sense of what it is to be a chaplain. Like many American Muslim chaplains, she hadn't heard of the Muslim chaplaincy and had never thought of it as a profession. However, upon entering it, there is a general feeling that it makes sense as part of their life's trajectory. Shamshad's personal biography helps to blur the indigenous-immigrant distinction and makes the critique of foreign-born imams more of a trope than a truism:

> HS: I'm wondering if the issue of not being an American-born Muslim has ever had an impact on your ability to relate to American Muslim students.

[221] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.

> SS: This question has been raised many times, so I'm not surprised to hear this. They always think that immigrants bring different aspects of Islam than people who were born and grew up here. But I have worked with all kinds of people in my more than 15 years of chaplaincy. You just learn to deal with them. You have to have better understanding of whomever you're working with. You cannot implement your immigrant education, your foreign education on a person who was born and grew up here. Just simple - I cannot even impose it on my daughter. She is my blood, but where they're born and grew up, their environment teaches them much more differently than what we were exposed to in our childhood. You have to respect them, you have to adapt to their culture, and you have to implement it in their way. So that they don't feel that they are so different from you. And I have to tell you, this is a struggle. Not everyone understands this. There has been a big issue. Most of the imams are immigrant and they bring their valuable education. And some imams have understanding, especially when it comes to teach young American Muslims. Finding the way to make Islamic teaching interesting takes some work. I have met many parents who would prefer that the imam is an American rather than an immigrant.[222]

Shamshad shows a thoughtful analysis of the fact that there is a potential variety of styles among the immigrant imams she mentions and that one's birth status does not necessarily correlate to one's ability to relate to the needs of American Muslims. In her own self-assessment she notes that although a struggle, her non-native born status has not had an effect on her ability to counsel American born Muslim students. As a chaplain, her objective to "respect and adapt" is substantively different from the way that some view foreign born imams as judgmental of, out of date, and out of touch with American Muslim youth.

By virtue of her own reflection, she understands the efficacy of these critiques. Although she points out the pitfalls and concerns with preferring only American born imams, she also understands the issues which can develop due to the disconnect between an imam and his constituents, particularly if he lacks understanding or the willingness to adapt. Shamshad, despite being born abroad, approaches her position with an innate desire to counsel and adapt to an American setting. While this desire to give counsel and care is essential to one's connection to

[222] Ibid.

the chaplaincy, it is the development of specific educational forms that extends this individual "calling" into a more formalized and expansive form of professionalization further blurring the immigrant-indigenous divide. This formalized structure can then be utilized to round out the skills of American Muslim religious leaders and help bring the meaning and import of indigeneity into greater relief. In this way the chaplaincy is expanding and clarifying modes of Islamic religious leadership and opening up a place for a discourse, which reimagines what Islamic leadership looks like.

Part of this reimagining of Islamic leadership is due to the fact that traditional models are not working in the American Muslim context. Omer Bajwa puts this into some perspective: "…on that whole road, to me an imam was on such a pedestal. To me it was such a responsibility that you had to A) be qualified and B) to call yourself an imam you had to be the real deal. To me, that's what the leader was of a community. Along the way, when you see it up close, you see the limitations of that model for many communities as well. The mosque model. It works back home but it doesn't work here."[223]

Omer's comments were made on the cusp of my asking him to what extent he sees himself as a leader in the American Muslim community. Much can be gleaned from what he says here. First is the consistent import and care he takes in ascribing the title leadership. Second is his reluctance, once again, to accept the title himself. Third is his acknowledgement that he had placed the title on a "pedestal," turning it into an ideal. Fourth is his indication that the "mosque model" is not the only solution for establishing leadership and community for American Muslims. It is these last two – the imam as an ideal and the desire for an alternate model - that

[223] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

give us a window into the way that chaplains are developing alternate forms of leadership. Forms by which they are attempting to develop a more holistic model for Muslims in America.

In this way, some chaplains resist the title imam and all that it encompasses, viewing it as a stagnant and old world model. Chaplain Abdullah Antepli sees the limits of the imam model from the vantage of his experiences in Turkey:

> I never wanted to work as an imam. I found a way in which the religious leadership in many Muslim majority countries extremely toxic and counterproductive. Because, like in Turkey where I'm originally from, if you become an imam you get all the wonderful education and training, and you end up becoming a civil servant because every single mosque is government property and every imam is a public servant. Once a week you can prove that you have some knowledge and IQ and wisdom and write your own *khutbah*, the government gives you a piece of paper and you basically read a statement given to you by the State. That was why immediately after my madrasa education I left Turkey and lived in Southeast Asia for about eight years.[224]

While Abdullah's experience is specific to the imam position in Turkey, other chaplains reflect on the limits of mosque imam model in different ways. Omer Bajwa has some critical words to say regarding the imam position and how it can play out in particular American Muslim settings:

> For me, at the end of the day the real reason [I didn't want to become an imam]…one of the cautionary things I took away is also partially related to my bio in that I ended up marrying an American convert which caused a lot of problems in my family, because my family, in terms of Pakistani conservatism, and also among all of my Deobandi friends and teachers, this was sort of, you're a cultural sellout if you end up marrying an American convert, because it is so Desi-centric, it is so south Asian centric. And so they were very disappointed. Many of them I think were tremendously disappointed. Some of them said it to me, some of them didn't say it to me, but I knew from our relationships just changed irrevocably. So what I took away from that was this level of judgementalism that comes across in a lot of Deobandi discourse. I can intellectualize that: where it comes from, why it's there, etcetera, but where the rubber meets the road for me is that if I'm living in 21st century America and I'm not unique, there are a lot of kids out there like me. The judgementalism that comes across, I was very disappointed by it. In some ways I was very heartbroken by it, and I said, "I don't know if that's my concept of an imam that

[224] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.

> got built up all this time, and if that's what it takes to be an imam, or it's built into the packaging somehow that you have to make pronouncements and have that authority, then I don't want to have any part of that. I was on the receiving end of that, and it felt horrible to be judged for my failings.[225]

The above statements are not meant to show that Abdullah and Omer reject the imam position wholesale, but rather that they are critical of the authority vested in the imam position and in particular certain types of imams who are either coopted by the state - as is the case with Abdullah in Turkey - or who take on a judgmental preacher's role - as in Omer's case. This second case is a relatively common critique of imams, who are seen as alienating American-born or younger members of the community from going to the mosque. It is in these more negative interstices that chaplains find their niche. As Omer concludes this discussion, he points out what it is he loves about the chaplaincy and why it serves as an attractive alternative to the role of an imam:

> The way I flipped that [the negative vision on the imam] is part of what I really appreciate about chaplaincy and the work that we do as I interpret it. When I meet with students and when I meet with people is I'm supposed to be a non-judgmental, compassionate presence. Someone can come in and they can talk to me. And I love that. That's what, at the end of the day, is the beating heart of chaplaincy, and that's why I love my job and can keep doing what I'm doing is because I don't need to make those pronouncements.[226]

[225] Interview with Omer Bajwa, December 13, 2014.
[226] Ibid.

Chapter III

Transformations, Redefinitions, New Spaces, & Difficult Issue

Abdullah Antepli takes Omer's love and passion for his role as a chaplain one step further. Abdullah envisions the chaplaincy as an entirely new phase in American Muslim leadership. This is a dimension which approaches Islamic issues more broadly than before:

> Chaplaincy provides an avenue of salvation for Muslim religious issues, which is basically stuck, frozen, static. It has become much more became ritualistic, ceremonial than anything else, honestly. I feel in the mosque settings, in the madrassa settings, even if you have seminary's you're not going to be able to solve most of the problems around gender, around sexual orientation, around incredible Muslim diversity, sectarian diversity, ethnic linguistic diversity. This institutional religious leadership called chaplaincy is providing incredible opportunities to redefine the religious authority, redefine the religious values to Muslims outside the mosque space.[227]

Abdullah's vision sees the chaplaincy as having the capacity to deal with some of the most difficult issues facing American Islam. Although he is quick not to make any predictions, Abdullah sees great potential in the chaplaincy's ability to help push American Muslim leadership forward:

> I feel in the mosque settings, in the madrasa settings, even if you have those seminary's you're not going to be able to solve most of the problems around gender, around sexual orientation, around incredible Muslim diversity, sectarian diversity, ethnic diversity. This institutional religious leadership called chaplaincy is providing incredible opportunities to redefine the religious authority, redefine the religious values to Muslims outside the mosque state. It creates basically a space where these kinds of conversations are possible.[228]

As chaplains are helping to form and transform the American Muslim leadership model, they are responding to several different issues related to both leadership and social formation.

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[227] Abdullah Antepli, interview with the author, June 30, 2014.
[228] Ibid.

Chaplains are proving to be models for new conceptions of women's leadership, interfaith work, creating third spaces and alternatives to the mosque model, and thinking through Muslim theology and legal practice. Through these issues, this chapter addresses the way that the chaplaincy is transforming Islamic leadership in America to help it respond to and negotiate the needs of an extremely diverse community.

Developing Creative Support Systems & Third Spaces:

There is a keen acknowledgement among chaplains that financial support for building American Muslim leadership and communal organizations from the American Muslim community lags behind many other faith groups. This is a multidimensional issue that involves demographics, diversity, and, to some extent, the relative youth of the Muslim community in the United States, as compared to other faith communities. Notwithstanding the difficulty of identifying a cohesive singular community considering the extreme diversity among American Muslims, chaplains are in the unique position of leading communities of Muslims that are particularly diverse and have a point of focus - namely the institution in which they work. While it is true that imams and mosque boards can often raise money for the mosque and its administration, the response to these efforts are often inconsistent; this is reflected in the fact that imams are often low paid or merely part time employees of the mosque.[229] On the other hand, chaplains have both the advantage of a captive diverse audience as well as the financial support of the institutions in which they work.

As a result and by virtue of their experience, chaplains are fast becoming voices for change and actively attempting to build new alternatives for fundraising. In their push for greater

[229] For a more detailed discussion see chapter two.

financial support from the American Muslim community, chaplains are no different from other Muslim leaders. However, they do have a unique comparative perspective in that they serve with chaplains from other faith groups, who see more cohesive and greater levels of support for their positions and programs. For Muslim chaplains, the issue of support is more acute than for other chaplains and even for imams. Much of this has to do with the relative newness of the Muslim chaplaincy. Chaplain Rabia Terri Harris provides an example of this phenomenon in her guide for supervisors training Muslim chaplains in pastoral care:[230]

> Islam is not a religion that ordains clergy…Islam has no priesthood, and the pastoral role is not precisely defined…Those Muslims who are now choosing to become chaplains are simply those who take the task of pastoral care most seriously and who have embraced the opportunity of institutional service. There is no Islamic "church" to help them with their vocation. They are taking this on alone, with the guidance of God. There is little formal support structure behind your students. There is even less religious structure to receive them when they complete their training. Muslim chaplains, most of whom have learned what they know in the hardest fashion—on the job, are in the process of creating their own profession. Good supervision can help them to make history.[231]

Harris asks pastoral care supervisors, who are typically non-Muslim and in the hospital setting, to appreciate several aspects of Islamic leadership for their Muslim students. First, she affirms that Islam has no ordination for clergy. This is relevant because supervisors should understand that there are no religious standards for their Muslim students who have decided to become chaplains. Second, she emphasizes the idea that since there is no "Islamic church," Muslim chaplains have to go it alone. This is true to the extent that there is no formal "church;" this is not to say that there is no support system at all. It does, however, mean that the support

[230] Rabia Terri Harris, "Supporting Your Muslim Students: A Guide for Clinical Pastoral Supervisors," *Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Task Force on Islam*(2009), http://journals.sfu.ca/rpfs/index.php/rpfs/article/viewFile/232/231.
[231] Ibid., 168.

system that is developing has taken other forms. For instance, support can come through national and local Muslim organizations such as ISNA or programs like the one at the Hartford Seminary.

What Rabia is primarily emphasizing to these supervisors is that when Muslim chaplains encounter issues involving religious or theological dilemmas, they are "alone, with the guidance of God;" and so they have to create or solicit a community of scholars to help them through these issues. Rabia stresses the fact that Islam does not have formal structures to deal with the chaplaincy, and that the need to develop those structures requires attending to. Relative to the discussion here, the most important facet of her statement is that there is no communal support both while these students are working towards their chaplaincy certification or once they have completed their training. The significance of this second facet of support is crucial; the lack of structure means that even once these students become chaplains, there is the danger of them drifting without communal support or religious guidance. Here, support works on several levels, financial, religious, spiritual, and communal. Finally, Harris's comment that Muslim chaplains are "creating" this profession, acknowledges the creative energy and dynamism that she feels Muslim chaplaincy entails. In this vein, her call to these supervisors to help these chaplains "make history" is a plea that acknowledges the potential she sees in the chaplaincy. It also echoes the fact that the process of creating this new profession and developing the necessary religious support from American Muslims, also entails support from the institutions and the chaplains from other faith traditions, most of which are more deeply entrenched in the chaplaincy and have greater experience in pastoral care. The type of experience required to make the chaplaincy a form of leadership intrinsic to other faith traditions is also required to make it intrinsic to American Islam.

We can see this same type of relationship between chaplains, the Muslim communities they serve, the institutions that employ them, and their colleagues from other faith traditions in a variety of institutional settings. In this regard, the university chaplaincy is of particular interest. Chaplains are keen to acknowledge problems of funding and support and actively look for alternate solutions. As previously discussed, Chaplain Shamshad Sheikh addressed the issue of the relative lack of financial support with regard to her position at Quinnipiac College. Chaplain Mohammad Tayssir Safi at Michigan is an exception- and perhaps a potential model - for addressing the issue; his position is somewhat tenuous in nature as financial support has to come from the University of Michigan alumni rather than a more established American Muslim fund or national or regional organization. However, it does show how a cohesive identity - such as graduates of an institution - can overcome the potential difficulties associated with American Muslim diversity to bring financial support to a religious leadership position. The University of Michigan proves an exceptional example, since as a state-funded institution it is not permitted to give financial support to any religiously oriented activity.

This proves a significant departure from the general university or college model, whereby the institution itself provides support for the position. Two examples of this situation are Yale and Princeton, where the status of institutional support creates interesting situations and responses from the chaplains involved. Both positions are not formally listed as Muslim chaplain, but "Coordinator for Muslim Life;" although both Omer Bajwa at Yale and Sohaib Sultan at Princeton still use the title chaplain on a day-to-day basis.[232] Sohaib explains:

> HS: I see that you're alternately called the Muslim Life Coordinator and then the Muslim chaplain. I'm wondering if there was a logic to that, or is it purely semantics?

[232] See the Yale chaplaincy's office listing for Omer Bajwa at chaplain.yale.edu. Sohaib Sultan is more specifically listed on the Princeton Office of Religious Life's website alternately as "chaplain/advisor or Muslim Chaplain and Coordinator of Muslim Life," see Princeton.edu.

SS: It's a very good question. I think it's a little bit of a mixture between internal politics and difficulty with knowing what terminology to use for the emerging Muslim community. In fact, when I was being hired for the position, my biggest hesitancy in accepting the position was over the title of the position. At Trinity and Wesleyan I was known as, officially my title was the Muslim chaplain. And that's something that I embraced and that I was comfortable with and it's something that I felt I had spent all these years of seminary training and education to be a chaplain. And here I was coming to Princeton, and even though the institution was obviously a higher institution, the position almost sounded like a downgrade. Because Coordinator of Muslim Life…"What is that? Am I going to be a secretary to the students? Am I just going to be organizing programs and events? Because that's not what I see my life's calling about."

And so the biggest issue was the way that it's structured in the Office of Religious Life is that there are all these affiliate chaplains, and none of the affiliate chaplains are paid by the university. But then you have Deans, and the university pays the Deans…So now if you have a group of chaplains, namely the Muslim and Hindu chaplain, who are paid then it…opens the door to the question, "why other chaplains are not paid [for by the university]." So they had to create a position whose name was other than chaplain. Then they thought, "Let's create Dean of Muslim Life and Dean of Hindu Life." Then the Jewish community was saying, "If you have a Dean of Muslim Life and a Dean of Hindu Life, you should have a Dean of Jewish Life." Because Dean is very prestigious and you have a lot of access to different things once you're a Dean. And so that became complicated there. Then it went down to this idea of coordinator.

And so, in accepting the position, I remember talking not only to the administration but also to students and trying to clarify what people saw as my role when I came to the university. Because I very much wanted to play the role of chaplain, which I have always seen as part of organizing programs and events, yes. But at the end of the day I want to be there as a pastoral presence for students. That's where I find my calling, really. And I got a lot of clarification that it was, in fact, what people were looking forward to and what people were expecting. I kind of just swallowed the title, which even to this day I don't like very much.[233]

Sohaib's experience at Princeton is reminiscent of several issues. Given the newness of the Muslim chaplaincy, Princeton as an institution was attempting to figure out where to place him within the existing structure for other chaplains within the institution. A large part of this process has to do with the issue of financial support and the ways that these different chaplains are paid. As Rabia Harris highlighted in her guide for supervisors, there is no formal religious

[233] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.

institutional structure in the American Muslim community to help support and pay for these positions. Thus, Muslim chaplains are at the mercy of the institutions in which they serve. The institutions make decisions on whether or not to hire Muslim chaplains based on a range of decisions - a perceived institutional need, a sense that providing this type of service might make them more competitive relative to other institutions, a legal mandate as in the case of military, or an institutional mission which looks to providing spiritual and interfaith guidance regardless of the size of the specific faith community.

In addition, Princeton's approach and decisionmaking process with regard to Sohaib's position and the needs of Muslim students brought to light some other interesting stratagems. This was particularly the case when it conceptualized institutional financial support, comparing Muslim chaplains to chaplains from other faiths groups on campus. In this regard, Sohaib relates another story about the inception of his position at Princeton:

> …when Islamic chaplaincy was being created here at Princeton and there was a lot of thought behind it…They actually brought in a team of people to offer consultation about what will a Muslim chaplain do, issues surrounding that…At that time I had been a chaplain at Trinity for a few years and so they had invited me to be part of that meeting. And included in that was Dr. Mattson. And I remember that after quite a bit of time the conversation steered towards, "How do we justify the position as a financial matter, because we…don't support other chaplaincies?" And I think Dr. Mattson put it in a way that became helpful for people. She said, "Well, look at it this way. Just by the fact that there's huge, enormous physical structures on this campus that support Christian life and Jewish life. Even if you're not supporting their chaplaincies, just by the fact that they're on this university campus you are putting a lot of money toward supporting those structures. Whether it's maintenance, whether it's taxes, whatever it might be. And we're not asking for a structure nor do we have a structure for you to support, but if you think about it as taking that same amount or a similar amount of money and investing it towards an individual, that's what we're requesting. That's what's on the map." And I remember that moment very clearly because suddenly light bulbs went off. And I think there was a genuine desire to want to financially justify it. So when it was put in that way, I think people were looking for the right way to put it, and that ended up becoming an effective argument that people took.[234]

[234] Ibid.

What is particularly intriguing about the story that Sohaib relates is the way that Ingrid Mattson addresses the issue of what needs the institution is supporting for different faith groups. To a certain extent, this mirrors the phase and stage at which each community resides. For the Muslim community at Princeton - which is less established and smaller in numbers - the issue of physical structures is not, as of yet, an essential concern.[235] In fact how they are framing this debate is part of the way that chaplains, particularly in the university setting, are reimagining space for their communities.

Envisioning Space

The implications of this type of inquiry go far beyond a simple acknowledgement of the fact that the Muslim community at Princeton is at a much earlier stage than other religious communities. More significantly, this type of situation requires - or at least results in - a reassessment of what religious space means for Muslims in the United States. In fact, Mattson's argument brings to light that at this stage, the community's needs require a different conception of where communal resources should be spent. Through the experience with a given institution, community investment can be reassessed beyond physical structures, be they mosques or Islamic cultural centers. Therefore, the desire for physical space over investment in leadership and programming can be premature. This is an idea that Sohaib discusses:

> It's an interesting thing…which is that within our own Muslim community there's a lot of conversation about where the financial priorities should lie. For the longest time we've been a bricks and mortar community when it comes to our projects. That means building mosques and to some extent building Islamic schools. But when it comes to investing in programs and when it comes to investing in personnel, that's something where the

[235] There is a parallel here to how John Morgan has addressed this issue with regard to the physical existence of hospitals and universities and the way that they create public space. His main argument is the existence of such institutions funded and created by the Jewish and Catholic communities has helped to mainstream the presence of these communities in the United States. These institutions become an indelible part of the public landscape. Morgan, *Muslim Clergy in America : Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community*.

> community has been very hesitant. I think at this point they haven't come to the point of wisdom where they see that as being priority. But I think things are changing, and things are shifting now. And at Princeton, I was [asked by] students and other people who were involved in the Muslim community at Princeton. And I said, "So, if we're successful five years from now, what will that look like?" And without the blink of an eye, just about everyone said, "We're going to have a Muslim life center, just like Jewish life center." And so that's what people had in their minds. And I was like, "No. That's not our priority. Because right now we don't have a community, we don't have events, we don't have programs. What's the building going to do for us?" But it's that mentality, that bricks and mortar mentality. I think part of it is there's a very intricate relationship between space and identity. And if a space has been carved out for you, then that means you're accepted. It means you're accepted and maybe even celebrated. But if a space has not been carved out for you, it means you're on the periphery. It means you're not even welcome. So…there's this very intricate relationship between space and identity and your sense of being. But I think that I'm very happy to say that I personally think we've been able to transcend that insecurity by focusing much more on programming we've been able to build something rather unique. So now even people who belong to full time mosques or live near full time mosques, they prefer to come to our events because they say, "Yeah, we have mosques, but they're not doing any programming. Here there's lectures, there's events, classes, seminars, social events. And at the end of the day what brings life to a community is not bricks and mortar. Its people and programming.[236]

Sohaib is not just describing important facets of the way American religious communities attach identity to physical structures, where more than just prayer takes place, he is reflecting on the stage of development for his particular community, where investment in leadership is still waning while building sacred spaces is the preeminent goal for Muslim communities.[237]

Interestingly, just around the time of Sohaib's comments, a major change occurred to the Muslim chaplaincy at Duke University, which has seen the creation of a Muslim life Center and a change to Abdullah Antepli's position:[238]

> I'm still the Muslim chaplain. I will carry the title Muslim chaplain. I have been somewhat promoted. I took over a University wide position. My title is Chief Representative of Muslim Affairs slash Muslim chaplain. It's a much broader role. My

[236] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.
[237] See Diana Eck regarding the multifunctional church in the American setting: Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America : How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, 1st ed.(San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).
[238] Imam and Chaplain Abdeel Zeb, formerly the chaplain at Trinity and Wesleyan Colleges, has replaced Abdullah Antepli. See the *Duke Chronicle,* August 27, 2014.

> dream was, Harvey, when I first came to the United States 12 years ago, it was to create the Muslim version of Hillel, where every college Muslim community gets a fully funded, with multiple staff, an organized Muslim community. A Muslim version, not identical but very similar to Hillel or the Newman Catholic Center. I thought it was going to take 20 years after coming to the US, but it took 6 years. What in effect this means is they will hire two more people under me. We have already staff; with me it will be five staff. My position will be more overseeing the whole thing and focusing on external relations and my public…role. The people under me, the Center for Muslim Life director and the Assistant Director and the Program Coordinator, they will more focus on the campus Muslim community.[239]

The center that Abdullah describes is funded in large part by Duke and is not unlike the one envisioned in Sohaib's narrative. What Abdullah describes does not cancel out Sohaib's vision, but can help develop a more complex and multifaceted dynamic whereby there are two distinct communities at different stages of development in two distinct institutions, each which foresees different levels of financial support. Nonetheless, both have created a paradigm of engagement that moves away from a typical mosque setting, creating a potential model for other American Muslim communities, whether based in an a non-Muslim institution or a mosque. In addition, Abdullah's surprise with the speed at which this project came to fruition is not necessarily indicative of any one generalizable factor, but does speak to the potential for rapid change. As with the Muslim religious leadership at Princeton, the one at Duke is mainly funded by the university and not by local or national Muslims organizations. Abdullah recognizes the importance of the institutional backing and the relative lack of organizations for such funding within the Muslim community:[240]

> It's 100% funded by Duke. We raised about half a million dollars, but I'm very adamant

[239] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.
[240] It is important to point out that Chaplain Tayssir Safi and the University of Michigan Muslim Alumni Association are envisioning a similar type center funded entirely by the Duke Muslim community. As Safi points out: "They're actually seeking out to build an entire institution. Kind of like the Newman Center's for Catholic students on campuses or the Hillel Center's for Jewish students." See Muslim Students' Association at U-M, "Muslim Chaplain: A Documentary," https://www.facebook.com/umichmsa.

> to make the Muslim Center to be part of Duke University. It's pretty much like the Hillel at Princeton. It's run by a lot of Jewish money, but it's owned by the university, and most of the staff are Princeton employees. At this point, without having the kind of community support that the Jewish community has, and without having the culture of running complex institutions on our own, I think it makes a lot more sense to be under the umbrella of a major university and raise the funds through university. We'll still be functioning as a department, as an organ of the overall body. It makes a lot more sense for us.[241]

In these ways, Muslim chaplains address key issues in the Muslim community, specifically how do Muslims raise funds and what types of institutions can they build at this stage of communal development. In addition, chaplains are creating and imagining different kinds of spaces and places, where community identity is formed and religious leadership is supported. Omer Bajwa provided two other examples of this reimagining of space, the first of is formed primarily around Islamic practice and based on the creation of different notions of the mosque:

> I would like Yale Muslim Life program and the Yale Muslim community to be a third space. Because, you know, day-to-day so much of our work is focused on students the prayer room here and doing events and panel discussions with the MSA. We've had slowly but steadily more and more people coming to attend our *jum'ah* on campus. First of all our *jum'ah*, physically doesn't have a barrier. It's in one big space. It's in the chapel and we just have men in the front, women in the back. It's open; there's not physical barrier. We have a free lunch afterwards, which I believe has a big thing to do with it. People will come, spouses of graduate students or post-docs will come and will bring their kids in strollers, and when people have days off from work they'll bring their older kids on holiday on campus to *jum'ah* to pray. Because the idea is, I like to think that the atmosphere, the ethos of what we're trying to do is appealing to them. And I think something is to be said for the quality and the type of *khutbah's* and sermons that they're getting exposed to are more appealing to them. And I didn't set out to do this. I said, "I just want people to have a good *jum'ah* experience. I want a quality, meaningful *khutbah* that we deliver to the community." But I didn't envision it as this kind of third space place evolving. But what's happened is, you come for *jum'ah* and you leave, you come for an hour and you leave. But it's fostering relationships between graduate students and post-docs and undergrads and some community members and families where people feel this is maybe a little more what they're looking for than another kind of mosque.[242]

[241] Ibid.
[242] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

Here the primary focus is ritual and ritual space, but with a conceptual alteration. Omer is building a space, which provides access to a communal experience that centers on the *jum'ah* experience and the specific needs of a given community. The distinction is that the import of objectives and communal experience equal to purely ritual observance.

Omer's concept of a "third space" extends beyond what he discusses above or the new center that Abdullah Antepli discusses. This is a virtual and far more networking oriented space than the other examples of communal space described thus far. Although still involving ritual elements, considering that the participating American Muslims are both religiously and secular minded, the ritual aspects are voluntary as opposed to central. This type of space builds, in a non-confessionally centered way, professional networks for Muslims in America. It works off of educational identity and a loosely defined sense of the notion of what an "American Muslim" is. This is the type of virtual and professional network that Omer Bajwa described to me. While he labels it a "third space," it can transcend the strictly religious and/or cultural, even if it fails to transcend class. Realizing both spaces as attempts at reinvention, Omer moves from his discussion of the Yale prayer space to this other site of communal development:

> That's A. And then B, (obviously this [the prayer space] only appeals to certain people, right? We've been able to invite what I think are noteworthy and impressive Muslim community leaders and religious scholars and imams and chaplains to campus for events, and we've gotten good turnout. Not just from the campus community, but from the off-campus community. Again, I think if part of the measure of a third space is you're promoting really intensive conversation about these things. Five years ago we developed this thing called the Ivy Muslim Conference. I like to think it's kind of an outgrowth of my chaplain work - a manifestation of it, I should say, of how our philosophy is here…And when we came to Yale, I started thinking more seriously about it. We said,"There's MSA National, there's MSA East Zone, there's MSA West Zone…there's Al-Maghreb, there's all of these other conferences, and institutes have their own gatherings. I said, "That's all fine. I go to half of those already when I get the chance. I'm already speaking at or attending most of these kinds of events." What we said was, "There's something to be said for…the type of students that are coming here. They've followed similar trajectories or tracts to get to college. And the kinds of challenges that they're facing and the opportunities that they have available are more similar amongst the

> Ivies than perhaps they are at other types of schools." The other piece of it also when they leave here, many of them are already, for better or worse, are already on similar trajectories. Where so many of them are going into consulting or finance or going to Wall Street, going into medicine or into law school…Why don't we do something to facilitate getting these young Muslims who have similar backgrounds and/or similar experiences and may potentially have similar careers. Get them together now just to build networks. So you can say, 'Oh, I remember five years ago or ten years ago meeting up at this place, going to that place, and we overlapped when we were in college and we met at the Ivy Muslim Conference'. The whole idea is the more social networking you can promote amongst like-minded people here to the general benefit of the Muslim community.[243]

At this stage in the conversation, Omer is very aware of the potential pitfalls of an Ivy League Muslim conference; specifically, the sense that it might be perceived as elitist or a replacement for other conferences like annual MSA or ISNA conferences. As he makes clear, his goal is to acknowledge shared trajectories in order to create a community that is centered on issues outside questions of Islamic practice. Given that the conference is strictly for Muslims, it intentionally has a spiritual aspect, and invites recognized American Muslim religious leaders to give keynote addresses. Ultimately, it is not his intention to remove the Islamic cultural and ritual aspect of this type of gathering. Yet, since one of the primary goals is about Muslim networking, not Islam, there is the potential for building a new type of cultural space that doesn't replace the mosque, but creates alternate forms of communal gathering. Further, part of the focus is recognition of and reaction to some of the disjointed aspects of American Muslim networks, be they philanthropic, political, or institution building. Omer discusses how a "third space," which is not primarily faith based, provides an alternative and partner to other already established spaces:

> It's not just about networking, although that's a huge part of it. The other is that there are certain issues that if we talk about, if the language of Yale, Harvard, and Princeton is we are preparing the leaders of tomorrow. It's a global university, global education, and we want people who are going to take on these roles as leaders of industry and academia and

[243] Ibid.

> whatever field. I say, "If we take that seriously then we need to be having a different kind of conversation than MSA National is having." Because a lot of the students at the Ivies are already coming from a little more liberal than conservative background, so I don't want to go too heavy on religion for them, but I want to talk about other issues like character building and goal setting and professional mentorship and that kind of stuff.[244]

From the above description, one gets a fuller a sense of the type of "third space" the conference aims to create. It not only considers the economic and social needs of the Muslims in attendance, but also the variety of religious orientations, "conservative and liberal." Implicit is an acknowledgement of the alienation that many Muslims feel with respect to mosque attendance, where large groups of Muslims in the United States are being described as unmosqued. The unmosqued phenomenon concerns American Muslim religious leaders, because they feel it indicates a disjointed community. For them it is nonetheless a community, which still has a common identity, regardless of differing relationships to religious practice.

> So what we did with Ivy Muslims[245] was, we always brought in what we thought were successful Muslims. Successful people in medicine, in science, in academia, in law, and in business and I would bring them as panelists. Then we would always have one very prominent Muslim leader. We brought Dr. Mattson, Imam Majid, Imam Suhaib Webb. This year we brought Usama Canon. And the keynote was always very generally about spirituality and leadership. If you're going to already drink the Kool Aid, and the institution, the ethos is about creating leaders, and Muslims are buying into that, is that how do you then have a spiritual infrastructure or framework behind what it is you want to become a leader in. That's been very successful.[246]

Omer separates out types of leaders and their different approaches to Islam. His keynote speakers are well recognized national American Muslim figures who typically represent a vision of how to interpret and live Islam in an American context. However, the departure is in the conference's focus on Muslims, who are successful professionally and not religiously.

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[244] Ibid.
[245] For more information see http://www.yale.edu/msa/ivymuslims/
[246] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

Omer also anticipates the religious needs of his constituency. By identifying these students and professionals as a "little more liberal than conservative," he acknowledges that a different approach is needed. That approach foregrounds professional leadership. To the extent that it addresses Islam, the focus is more on spirituality and professional ethics than it is on specific Islamic practice. He concludes by highlighting that he wants to bring in Muslims that may only see themselves as "nominally" Muslim. This is done not as an attempt at explicit proselytization of Muslims from within, but rather to avoid communal segmentation, which isolates the community of religious American Muslims from those whose worldview does not bring them to the mosque or any other space to pray. In addition, it allows for a deeper conversation regarding the struggle with faith. Therefore, this "third space" becomes a forum for professional networking, professional ethics, and spirituality, all with an ambiguous but intentional relationship to Islam:

> This is not a religious revival conference in a mosque or in a big convention center. I love MSA National. I speak at MSA National. I attend their events. But the kind of discourse you're going to hear there is different than what we're doing here. So the "third space" here is I want to get Muslims, some of whom are only nominally Muslim, they're more cultural than they are practicing. And I want them to say, "Okay, my Muslim identity means enough to me that I can be in a room listening to someone like Imam Suhaib Webb," but then also listening to someone talking about their failures as a Muslim lawyer and how that evolved. One of our speakers this year was Wajahat Ali, and he ended up becoming a playwright. And he works at Al-Jazeera now. And he talks about the twists and turns his life took. He's still an activist. He happens to be pretty religious himself, but he said that there were times when he struggled with his faith. These are messages I want our students to hear. All of that is to say that's what I envision a little of our third space at Yale to be…and we're having these richer conversations. When it's time to pray we pray and we eat halal food, but the rest of what we're doing is being in fellowship with other Muslims, talking about serious issues.[247]

These new ways in which chaplains are envisioning space is aided by the institutional buffer, mandate, and financial support networks that their positions provide; a luxury that

[247] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

mosques may not have. This institutional buffer creates an opening not just for conceptualizing space, but it also provides a stage for interactions with Islamic tradition which may not be fully available to imams. These new conceptualizations are important to visions of the chaplaincy as a new type of leadership, but they also become the forum for new ideas and new ways of approaching the challenges arise. For chaplains like Abdullah Antepli the mosque setting is not providing the dynamism that he sees developing within the chaplaincy:

> It [the chaplaincy] creates basically a space where these kinds of conversations are possible. If you look at the American Muslim makeup, American Muslim organizations, especially in the mosques, the American Muslim identity is growing the slowest, and almost even regressing. Because most mosque communities are increasingly becoming immigration preservation centers for particular ethnic communities. Whereas, if you look at the various institutional religious leaderships and chaplaincies, the American Muslim identity is thriving.[248]

A Chaplain's Role within the Institution

Abdullah describes a process whereby the institutional setting that defines a chaplain and that distinguishes chaplains from imams is of crucial import to the types of transformative leadership that chaplains are engaged in. The significance of institutional setting to the chaplaincy has three main elements. On one level, it is a question of how chaplains balance the needs and rules of the institution with their understanding of Islam. On another level, is the nature of performing a job where a chaplain's responses need always consider the population and constituency which they serve. Finally, a third aspect -which is often overlooked - is that the institution itself, albeit more or less openly, is looking for the chaplain to be a certain type of religious leader, whether by virtue of their education or their worldview. This works on multiple levels. It can be generalized across one institutional type, such as the prisons or hospitals, as well

[248] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.

as across subsets within that type, such as maximum versus minimum-security prisons. Similarly, it can focus attention on a single institution. An example of this is Shamshad Sheikh's experience at different educational institutions: "Every university has a different culture. You cannot implement one university system in another university. Yale University had a large number of Muslim students, a very established MSA. They were getting a lot of support from the University President's office. But when I came to Quinnipiac University there was a completely different culture."[249]

Given his experience in several different types of institutions, Bilal Ansari's comments were often reflections on a particular institution, thus avoiding any overt generalizations. He distinguished between two levels of contextualization. One, which views Islamic and pastoral theology contextually, and the other which responds to specific individual needs:

> In my college chaplaincy, I would not use the same Muslim theology that I used in my prison chaplaincy pastoral theology. It has to be based on the differing pastoral needs of your flock, but it is still Muslim theology. But, I'm able to put text within the context in relation to the particular humanity I serve. So the approach is more universally focused on the institutional need and particularly on specific individual needs. So chaplains work within institutions that are missioned to do something universal. So for example, the hospital is really short-term compassionate care as opposed to a long-term commitment of rehabilitation that most prisons are missioned to do. Thus, the individual goal is to be present with the individuals through their crisis, regardless the context, but the *context must shape* the textual application. Short-term care, for example, should have focus on theologically transcendent text to get them beyond or through intense suffering. And so, the theology has to be contextualized to the particular need. Prison, however, you can be dealing with somebody for their crisis is prolonged over a 10 to 30 year sentence. They're doing time…so the crisis is over a longer period of time, and so you have to apply the pastoral care and theology almost like you're spreading butter.
>
> This takes a thorough knowledge of the revelatory periods of Meccan and Medina text and context. You have to slowly spread it, similar to the 23 year therapeutic delivery of the Word of God- so it slowly sinks in.[250] But to be in the hospital, at times, you have to give shots right into the muscle, the vein, immediately. Because you have to get them

[249] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.
[250] Here Bilal is referring to the twenty-three year period over which Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad.

> through their pain. If the chaplain is at a small liberal art college, the margin of care is generally four years of leadership development- as youthfulness is the crisis. Moreover, what I give to the freshman I won't give to my seniors; what I give to my sophomores, it may not apply to juniors abroad. So, it's contextualized based on the individual's needs and the institutions time and space that I am charged to serve toward meeting its broader mission.[251]

The institutional environment can have an effect on the way chaplains perform their jobs, beyond the populations they serve and the institutional requirements they are subject to. Zain Abdullah's experience as a chaplain in the prisons is particularly poignant in this regard:

> If it was maximum security - I mean it was rough there, it was rough. One thing I always say to people, you know, we were locked up too! You know what I mean? I mean for eight hours…ideally its eight hours, because you know, you're talking to the guys, you're counseling, so ten, maybe fifteen hours a day, you're incarcerated. You can go home and sleep but you have to come back the next day. So that was rough on a lot of people. For me, I actually kind of allude to it in my book, in Black Mecca,[252] in the chapter "America Dreaming," where I talk about, you know, hearing the gates opening and closing. That can be a hard thing; I had to go to a detention center where these Africans had been rescued at sea. After being rescued, they had commandeered a yacht and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean from Senegal. And they actually made it. And they were…I mean, miraculous journey that I described in the book…That's chapter two, called "America Dreaming." And so I talk about what it's like going back into the prison again. One thing that was hard for me to get around was the shock of hearing those gates open and close. You know it's kind of etched on your mind, on your conscious mind. It's just there, you hear it again and it's like a shock to your nervous system. And so, many people, many chaplains being in that environment had problems. It's not like you can, you know, depending on what your habit is, where you can like drink alcohol and take the edge off, you know.[253]

Finally, there are expectations of what type of chaplain an institution feels is appropriate for a given environment. This goes past being able to serve a given population or conforming to institutional expectations of what qualifications are needed to certify someone for the position.[254] There are also less tangible criteria, which are particularly important in the case of Muslim

[251] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.
[252] Abdullah, *Black Mecca : The African Muslims of Harlem*.
[253] Zain Abdullah, telephone interview with the author, January 17, 2012.
[254] Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."

chaplains. This can manifest in different ways, but it often relates to a chaplain's "religious worldview;" that is, does the chaplain conform to the institution or the individuals within that institution's expectation of flexibility on matters of practice. This is not something that one finds in a job posting, but is much less formalized. A good example is a story Omer Bajwa tells about the Yale University interview process. His narrative shows the different ways that an institution can create formal and informal models of choice for the type of chaplain they want:

> Then they [Yale University] created a position Coordinator of Muslim Life…And so the institution was stepping in, the chaplain's office was stepping in and saying, "We're going to create a job description, and there's parameters on what we're looking for. You're going to be tasked with these specific duties and expectation on what we want you to fulfill." So there's that part of it…They got different kinds of imams that applied, and I think they found them unsatisfactory because they were imams and not really chaplains. And I think they had very few people, from my understanding, that really kind of got the pastoral care part, the chaplaincy component to it…the one thing I will say that may be interesting is that while I was applying, there was a Yale alum who was very, very active in the MSA. She herself was *Shi'ah*, was very active, engaged personally with the whole process, and was a real bridge between the MSA, the Muslim community, and the chaplain's office, whose opinion got considerable weight in the process. And so she was one of the people that interviewed me on behalf of the MSA when I came. When she met me she got up, extended her hand when we walked in, and I shook her hand. And I know that there's different ideas in *fiqh* on, do you do that or not. And plus, I also know looking the way that I do many people assume that I'm not going to shake hands. So much after the fact, I was hired, I was here…And she told me, "I very deliberately extended my hand to you to see if you would shake it." Because her position was, "I wanted to feel comfortable with the person who was coming here, that they could operate at that level, that they would be willing to shake my hand and not have a doctrinal issue with it. And had you had a doctrinal issue with it that would have gone in my report: I think this person's a little too rigid, a little too conservative for this kind of environment" …the way I process all of that is it gave me a little bit of an insight into the Yale community and what their expectations were. They wanted someone who, that had integrity and training, but you could also play well with others, for lack of a better term, who knew how to operate in this environment.[255]

Omer brings to light the challenge of how to define and present oneself as a consequence of institutional expectations. To what extent chaplains are molded by the institution that they

[255] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

serve within is hard to quantify, but it is clear that their approach to the institution, their job, their constituents, and the way they practice Islam as Muslim leaders is determined by the context within which they find themselves. In fact, just as chaplains can mold an institution and their constituents, so too can the institution and its constituents mold the chaplain. This is how Sohaib Sultan reflects on his role as a *khateeb*:[256]

> I don't think that being a *khateeb* is essential to the role of a chaplain. As long as the chaplain, at least in a university setting, has the capacity to offer words of advice and wisdom and instruction in some sort of form. I think that someone can be an awesome chaplain, a very effective chaplain, without giving a *khutbah*. But I think that their fingerprints and their footprints should be on it. Meaning in my own community, I don't give the *khutbah* every Friday by any means. In fact, I try to give it only occasionally. But all the students who give the *khutbah*, I trained them. I sit down with them, and, I try to get young, undergraduate men to give *khutbah* even though they're very hesitant...And sometimes you have to be very careful. I think that sometimes being a *khateeb* or being a preacher can get in the way of chaplaincy.
>
> When we do preach, we have to be very careful about what we say and how we say it, because preaching can sometimes be uplifting and inspiring and encouraging, but it can sometimes really push people away as well. Because part of preaching is to have very strong moral convictions and to come off as, I don't know. There's this thing about preaching; after all, people say, "Don't preach to me." I go into it with some trepidation. In terms of institutionally, absolutely. Because I think a good *khateeb* takes into account their context and every institution has a context. And so if I'm at Princeton, Princeton has a context. The university setting has a context, and I can't ignore that by any means. It's different from preaching at a mosque.

Finally, just as a study of the chaplaincy is incomplete without an understanding of the context in which chaplains do their work, a true understanding also has to consider the individual life histories that chaplains bring to their work. Just as they mold and are molded by the institution in which they serve, they themselves often reflect upon how their own life history has prepared them to be chaplains in a particular institutional setting**.** Bilal Ansari makes the importance of personal narrative clear: "And so is true in my case. I am African American and

[256] One who delivers a sermon.

grew up in the late 80s and early 90s steeped in the drugs and the violence of gangs all around me and the state's war on my community called popularly as the War on Drugs. What I had to go through in the prisons only I could do."[257] Bilal also reflects upon his own interfaith family history and the ways in which it frames his work as a chaplain: "I come from an interfaith home. My mother is Christian; I grew up in a Pentecostal home. My father has always been a Muslim and he is Imam. So interfaith perspective and practice is in my DNA."[258]

Finally given this variety of factors, the institutional environment provides chaplains with the latitude to address issues from a contextual vantage and not from what Omer Bajwa describes as a textbook legal perspective: "So to me, it's like the textbook answers on fiqh issues…versus knowing and being pragmatic. We have people whose needs are not being met…I have the latitude on a college campus to say, "Well, that's not going to work on my college campus, nor should that be applied on my campus."[259] So the latitude that the institution provides is part of the equation, the other part is a chaplain's role as a pastoral caregiver. The pastoral care mandate requires chaplains, in institutional settings, to provide for the unmet needs of their constituents regardless of a chaplain's own understanding of these issues with regard to interpretations of tradition and scripture. These two elements, the institution and the chaplaincy's pastoral care mandate, create a paradigm for how chaplains deal with some of the most contentious issues that the American Muslim chaplaincy faces.

[257] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.

Dealing with Difficult Issues: Islam and the LGBTQ community on campus

> Audience member: The first question is for Professor Binhazim. Given the recent controversies surrounding homosexuals in the military, under Islamic law if a homosexual person began to actually engage in homosexual relations in an ongoing and permanent way with no intention of quitting, than the punishment under Islamic law would be death, unless, you know, he agreed to quit. As a practicing Muslim, do you accept or reject this particular teaching of Islam?
>
> Professor Awadh A. Binhazim: Well, the question of rejecting a certain teaching of Islam… really, I don't have a choice as a Muslim to accept or reject teachings. I go with what Islam teaches. Now, is Islam unique in that regard where the term "alternate lifestyles" is acceptable? No, it is not unique. It is also in the Judeo-Christian understanding as well.[260]

The above dialogue took place during the question and answer period at an event entitled "Common Ground: Being Muslim in the Military" at Vanderbilt University. In chaplaincy circles, the video had a significant impact. Although Awadh A. Binhazim was acting as a volunteer chaplain on campus, this specific incident - which was relatively combative - was known to most of the university chaplains I spoke with. Equally familiar to them was this type of forum that engages the issue of Islam's relationship and approach to LGBTQ communities at colleges and universities. The above exchange, which lasted about three and a half minutes, ended with the questioner asking "Under Islamic law, is it punishable by death if you are a homosexual?" to which Binhazim answered simply "Yes."

As I interview the following four university chaplains about their specific encounters, I introduce the subject of American Muslim interaction with the LGBTQ community by suggesting that there are three hot button issues that on college campuses often provide a "litmus test" of sorts for Islam's compatibility with conceptions of liberal democratic citizenship in the

[260] This dialogue is a transcription of the event recorded in an online video to be found at http://www.com/watch?v=uAW743OXC8o.

United States.[261] These three issues are Muslims and radicalism, Islam's treatment of women, and Islam and LGBTQ rights.[262] Before moving forward, it is important to note that these concerns can often provide a foil for certain political agenda, and their discussion can reify a debate that sees Islam as an intolerant religion. This is not to minimalize the importance of these issues. They are no doubt crucial to the work of American Muslim chaplains as they arise fairly regularly when chaplains engage non-Muslims on and off campus.

The impetus to discuss Islam and gay rights in this chapter about transformative leadership is its place as one of the most difficult issues that chaplains face. As Omer Bajwa comments: "I saw the video from Vanderbilt. It seemed like the video and then the commentary that came out afterward was that he got kind of ambushed on stage where it was a loaded question. That is, I think, a chaplain's worst nightmare to get boxed in to that kind of scenario because there's no way you can talk your way out of that."[263]

The issue of Islam and LGBTQ rights challenges chaplains to balance what they may or may not personally believe with what they should do as representative of a community, particularly one that has not yet vocally or publically endorsed an LGBTQ lifestyle. The nuances are a crucial aspect of the discourse and matter for chaplains as they respond to the challenges, as can be seen from Binhazim's answer above and the dialogue below:

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[261] Although by no means inclusive of all conceptions of Islam's compatibility with life in the United States, there has been considerable discussion regarding Islam and liberal citizenship, see Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship : The Search for an Overlapping Consensus*(New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[262] Tariq Ramadan's statement on Islam and Homosexuality in Europe is instructive here: "The Islamic position on homosexuality has become one of the most sensitive issues facing Muslims living in the West, particularly in Europe. It is being held up as the key to any eventual "integration" of Muslims into Western culture, as if European culture and values could be reduced to the simple fact of accepting homosexuality." See Tariq Ramadan, "Islam and Homosexuality ", *muslimpresence.com*(May 30, 2009).http://muslimpresence.com/?p=2149 (accessed December 2, 2009).

[263] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

> Professor Binhazim: So, which country is that that follows Islamic law? I don't know of any country that follows Islamic law.
>
> Audience member: In Saudi Arabia, if you are a homosexual…
>
> Professor Binhazim: Saudi Arabia is a country that follows a mixture of Islamic laws, among which are Islamic laws and among which are British laws, and among which are Napoleonic laws. There is no country in the world, to the best of my understanding, that follows Islamic law 100%. So unless you have a country, many people will tell you, unless you have a country that exercises Islamic law 100%, no exceptions, not following any other law… if you mix laws with other laws, that doesn't qualify as an Islamic country.[264]

The four voices that follow - Shamshad, Sohaib, Bilal, and Omer - serve as examples of the diversity and similarities of approaches to this issue among university chaplains. Whatever their particular vantage point on the issue of sexual orientation, it is clear from their narratives that the chaplaincy is a place where there is room for a burgeoning dialogue in the face of communal silence or resistance.[265] The chaplaincy and the institutional setting provides for alternative and creative solutions. It is, however, a discussion rooted in a sense of what Islam says about these issues and perceptions regarding how the majority of Muslim communities position themselves with regard to tradition. Here, more than in other instances, the authority of tradition proves of paramount importance. This is an understanding of tradition similar to the way that William Graham discusses it: **"**I use "traditionalism" and "traditionalist" to refer to a person's or a group's strong preference for recourse to tradition (genuine or invented) as the primary source of authority."[266]

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[264] See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAW743OXC8o (last accessed October 30, 2014).
[265] Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*(Oxford: Oneworld,, 2006), 75-96.
[266] William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (Winter, 1993): 499-500.

Shamshad Sheikh

Although brief, my conversation with Shamshad Sheikh illuminates issues regarding how American Muslim chaplains are balancing concerns of pastoral care, community representation, and personal struggle. Shamshad first discusses students' reluctance to ask her about issues related to sex and sexual orientation: "I get male and females asking about these questions. I would say much of my job is spent on relationship issues, including gay and lesbian issues on campus. They don't want this to be open, to have an open discussion on this. But this exists - what do you do? Students don't talk openly about it."[267] Despite this reluctance Shamshad sees the need to have a dialogue with her students:

> That's what I'm trying to create. An environment where we can discuss everything openly. This is the age group, you don't push until they come to you. What you are trying to do is create a comforting environment for them, so they can come and ask you…"What's your opinion?" This is the hard part, I have to tell you. Especially when it comes to gay/lesbian issues.[268]

Shamshad attempts to actualize this aspect of her chaplaincy by positively engaging with organizations on campus. She describes an instance where students were looking to create a forum from which to discuss issues related to Islam and LGBTQ rights. This same situation arises for many Muslim college and university chaplains and often the conversation is political and not explicitly religious. In addition, chaplains describe the engagement itself as somewhat superficial:

> …at a previous campus, one of my previous campuses, students [from the LGBTQ] organization on campus said, "We want to do a conference on gay and lesbian Muslims." And they did. They did. And I said, "I support you for your conference"…So you support them, you stand there because as a human being, I think we all need to have this. Only

[267] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.
[268] Ibid.

> about five people attended and a lot of money was spent. But we never had any discussion from a religious perspective.[269]

Finally, Shamshad expresses the balancing act that she undergoes between her role as a pastoral caregiver and her personal beliefs as a Muslim. This is where a chaplain is required to separate belief from profession. It is the idea that in some situations chaplains compartmentalize the personal and the professional so that they exist simultaneously, but can be made separate when necessary:

> And if you're asking my personal opinion, I do support my gay and lesbian students. But on religious grounds, I have difficultly. And it's not only I am saying that, I heard from Protestants saying the same thing, and I heard Rabbi's saying the same thing. We stand for them on campus because where would they go if they don't go to their advisor? But on religious grounds I really find it hard to, telling you the truth.[270]

Sohaib Sultan

Sohaib Sultan's experiences help to further contextualize Shamshad's words. However, the struggle that Sohaib focuses on is between his dual roles as a representative of a community and as a pastoral caregiver. Sohaib indicates that at Princeton University issues related to sexual orientation have not been a topic of much discussion among the Muslim students he works with. When the issue has arisen, be it in an on campus event or as part of a larger discussion about sexuality, he acknowledges that his role as a chaplain affords him some leeway:

> I think that this is one of those places where there's this fine line or this fine balance that I end up playing between being a chaplain and a religious leader and being in an academic setting. And sometimes I feel like I can use the academic setting to my advantage because a lot of times when it comes to very complicated and complex issues like gender issues, like LGBTQ, I feel like I can offer a broad overview of what the different opinions and perspectives are in the community of Islam or under the umbrella of Islam without offering my own commitments. Because the place that I often worry about is when it comes to the relationship between chaplaincy and teaching, and to some degree even

[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.

> chaplaincy and preaching, is that when you're teaching and when you're preaching you have to put your commitments out there. And sometimes it's easy to be put into a box. Then what happens after that is people are like, "Oh, he believes that or he doesn't believe that. So I can't come to him with this, but I can come to him with that."[271]

The dynamic that Sohaib is describing is quite unique, especially when one considers the idea of a Muslim religious leader who "preaches or teaches" a specific way of interpreting and implementing the Qur'an or Hadith. This is not a dogmatic form of leadership, but rather a form of leadership that provides a multitude of potential answers without, as he says, offering his "own commitments." The challenge lies in how Sohaib can forgo expressing his own commitments without losing himself in the process or compromising his role as a leader. Here, we see that the chaplain's pastoral role makes them a leader of a different sort, a leader whose ethic and calling require that ego does not get in the way of serving one's constituents. Sohaib's legitimacy as a leader is premised upon his ability to quash the need to lead through opinion and personal commitment, and to offer guidance through access to knowledge:

> So even with my students, when we do Qur'anic studies, when they bring up issues that are very complex and there's a lot of discussion, debate over, I'll kind of, instead of saying "This is what it is." I kind of say, "Well, here are the different perspectives on the issue as far as I know." And just kind of leave it out there. Then they'll say, "Oh, but what's your opinion? Tell us what you think." And I always tell them, "It's not important what I think. It's important what you think. Think about these perspectives and come to a conclusion." So when it comes to the gender and LGBTQ issues, I try my best because I think that honesty is a very important policy. If in our teaching, whether it's to Muslims or non-Muslims, if we come off as dishonest, disingenuous, it's not good. So I'm very honest with people when people ask about LGBTQ issues. I say, "Look, 99.9% of our community is not cool with LGBTQ relationships. And that's just how it is. And I'm not going to try to make it seem otherwise." But if you're asking if there's any space for thinking or exploring and openness to LGBTQ relationships, there are these one or two movements that I'll point you to that are trying to make an argument for it. But so far they haven't gone very far. [272]

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[271] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.

[272] For some recent scholarship on the issue, see: Scott Alan Kugle, *Living out Islam : Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*; *Homosexuality in Islam : Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Muslims*(Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2010); Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam Feminist Reflections on Qur'an,*

Sohaib's above statement indicates that part of a chaplain's leadership comes with assessing a community and deciding how to represent it. At the same time that he allows students to weigh the many options and Islamic opinions on the subject of sexual orientation, he still feels responsible to represent what he sees as the majority opinion of the community and to respect the authority of its reading of Islamic tradition. What Sohaib is describing is a two-sided process of holding his ego at bay. On the one hand, he is tasked with having an open approach to questions about LGBTQ rights so that his pastoral door remains open and does not alienate anyone. On the other hand, he does not want this openness to seem disingenuous. He feels a responsibility to make a variety of approaches known, but to also assess what he feels is the community's overall worldview.

Sohaib's approach is common among the chaplains I have met and spoken with. Chaplains often exist in the interstices between a new and open approach to issues of concern to American Muslims and a firm belief in the importance and authority of the Islamic tradition.[273] Sohaib is careful to avoid being disingenuous with his students or the LGBTQ organization on campus when it comes to providing the Muslim view on these issues. In this case he reiterates that there is often a difference between his personal internal struggle and his sense of responsibility attached to being a community representative. That his responsibility to self cannot surmount his responsibility to community:

> One thing I should mention is I think it's been an interesting relationship with the LGBTQ Center. From their perspective I think they would want someone who is much more of an advocate or using their terminology, an ally. You know what I always tell them is, "I'm sorry. I can't do that. I can't do that not just because of my own personal, moral, and religious views, but also because I represent a community. I'm not just my

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Hadith, and Jurisprudence; Intersections International, "Muslim Lgbt Inclusion Project Final Report,"(New York, NY2010).

[273] There is no doubt that what that tradition is and where the community stands on any one issue is a very subjective measure, but there is a shared notion of tradition however contested to which Sohaib and other chaplains are connected to.

> own entity. If my community, not just at Princeton but the larger Muslim community, is 99% one way, I can't just be [something different]". I think what's really important to me is to relay to people that I don't have any authority to speak on behalf of God. I'm not, I don't even claim to be anything near a *mujtahid*, someone who's going to go out and make independent reasoning of Islamic law. There are certain things that I wrestle with, that I continue to wrestle with and I struggle with, but when it comes to representation I can't just go out and offer my own view that has no basis.

Bilal Ansari

During his tenure at Williams College, Bilal Ansari's experiences are somewhat similar to those narrated by Sohaib and Shamshad. However, given his time as a prison chaplain, Bilal is also able to reflect on the differences between these two institutions, making it clear that a chaplain's engagement with Islamic law and practice can change significantly based on institutional context:

> One of my first challenges as a prison chaplain early in my career came when I was [serving] at a medium security prison. The Muslims inside were upset to the brink of ready to inflict violence they called *hadd* punishment on Muslims that were queer and openly gay. These gay inmates were teachers of Arabic and they actually had the most religious knowledge. Their grasp of Arabic was better and their knowledge of the religion was greater than those there that were not gay or queer. And so I had to argue that they were the ones with the most knowledge despite their sexual preferences; that they would continue to lead classes and no one had the right to execute *hadd* punishment in America. I told them if *hadd* punishment were to be equitably implemented in a just way in this prison alone, most of them would either be dead or one handed.[274]

Two things are particularly distinct about Bilal's narrative. The first is the importance of institutional environment, i.e. how different environments require different approaches, and how

[274] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014. The *hadd* or *hudud* (pl.) punishments that Bilal is referring are part of the canon of Muslim criminal law, which entails such things as stoning for illicit sex or falsely accusing someone of adultery, cutting off the hands for theft, etc. The Hudud also require the judges hearing a case provide as much leniency as possible when enforcing the law. Bilal is using this example explicitly to imply that the inmates' crimes would have subjected them to stoning or cutting off of their hands, and implicitly in that enforcing the *hudud* is a serious action and not one to be taken lightly. See B. Carra de Vaux, "Hadd Http://Referenceworks.Brillonline.Com/Entries/Encyclopaedia-of-Islam-1/H-Add-Sim_2571>," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. T.W. Arnold M. Th. Houtsma, R. Basset, R. Hartmann(Brill Online, 2014).

different institutional populations manifest their identities in distinct ways. Second is Bilal's strategy with regard to implementing Islamic legal concepts. Although he acknowledges that he is not a legal scholar, his experience with Islam in the prison setting and with pastoral care in general informs his approach to Muslims who want to impose their vision of Islamic legal precepts on others without a full understanding of the law.[275] He does this by gauging the situation and the context to ascertain where to place emphasis, i.e. Islamic knowledge or sexual orientation.

His experience and approach to Islam and LGBTQ rights at Williams College is necessarily much different, as it does not involve openly gay Muslim students. Rather Bilal's engagement at Williams College is with the LGBTQ campus community and its on campus organizations:

> Before I came they had a painful Muslim-gay experience with the MSA. So there was some fear already with bringing me on. This was one of my first tests as a college chaplain but after 16 years of prison chaplaincy I was ready. I wasn't hired 90 days before a staff person for the LGBTQ community on campus had pushed through a challenging event. It was this play called "Radical Acts of Love - Muslim's Coming Out."[276] And so this staff person had recommended to the QSU to bring this play that got approved for a main stage event and then ask the MSA after flyers were made if they would agree to co-sponsor the event. The MSA was just recovering from their negative experience around these issues just the last term. The MSA had elaborate plans to deal with issues most relevant to its board like drone killing and other close to home concerns. In my experience, I knew this was an intentional trial by fire. I was reading this as a professional merit test of my pastoral theology. I had researched the play, I shared it, and we were able to discuss it. The pros, the cons, what it means to allow for this space and conversation, what it means to have a dialogue about this. And so we got a majority vote, just barely, due to the students feeling strong-armed into this and therefore that this could not be genuinely considered a dialogue. So, the play happened on the main stage on the biggest night of the school year meant to create rich conversations. The play was

[275] For some further details regarding Bilal's engagement with Islamic law in the prison setting see Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."
[276] For information regarding "Radical Acts of Love - Muslims Coming Out" see J Masse III, "Radically Queer Islam: An Interview with the Cast of Coming out Muslim," *Huffington Post* July 2, 2014. "Radically Queer Islam: An Interview with the Cast of Coming out Muslim," *Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/j-mase-iii/queering-islam-an-intervi_b_5549913.html* July 2, 2014. (last accessed September 10, 2014).

> amateurish and a horrible production in general, but it did foster a lot of conversation. We learned a lot, we shared a lot, and we proactively made ties that were strong with QSU [Queer Students Union] and now that fear, that fear factor, is gone and the trust was rebuilt.[277]

Bilal expresses something different from the first two narratives told by Shamshad and Sohaib. He gives insight into the ways in which the MSA's decision making process resulted in useful dialogue. In addition, his understanding that this was a "test" and a "trial by fire," points to the expectations the institution has of its chaplains. The institution wants chaplains to be able to respond to sensitive issues by making a space for dialogue and engagement, regardless of whether or not the religious community prefers to ignore or circumvent these issues.

> HS: To what extent did you have to deal with questions such as "What's the Muslim perspective on these issues?"
>
> BA: After this horrible performance on the main stage where two thirds of the audience left before the play was over I was asked to join a conversation on stage with the staff person for LGBTQ community and the actors of the play. When questions were being fielded from the audience, one outspoken actor would answer all the questions, especially about Islam and this issue of coming out lesbian. This play was about two personal stories of coming out. So this was sensitive and more about two identities then a religious dialogue. Besides, this was not collaboratively created at the outset. Every question asked, this actor eagerly gave her answer anticipating arguments and ready to defend herself. And so I sat there and smiled through the whole conversation. And I answered no questions because the actors or staff person would speak first. I wasn't going to counter anything that could be seen as unsupportive, but nor was I going to be forced to argue.

Bilal manages to avoid being baited at the Williams College event. Given his discussion, there is no way to know how Bilal would have specifically dealt with a question, such as "What is the Muslim attitude toward homosexuality?" Thus instead of being about Islamic approaches to LGBTQ rights, Bilal's story turns in to a reflection on what it means to be a pastoral caregiver and how to heal through silence:

[277] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, July 4, 2014.

> And so my pastoral role was to be chaplain and not the evil imam. Chaplains promote a safe space for all. They dwell where the constitution allows no establishment but rather an open free exercising of all. But if anybody wanted, even those on the stage wanted to hear what I had to say, then I would've spoke openly…but they didn't ask me directly. Some of the students were upset with me they questioned why I didn't speak up on behalf of Islam. But some students said, "Bilal, that was brilliant!" Brilliant that I refused to be baited into some dogmatic hook which seals my fate before I begin my new job. So it was a mixed bag but after three years I know that was the wisest position to take. Overall, there was a sense of healing. Many of the Muslims who were gay and lesbian, I found them that year coming back, actually coming back to the prayers, showing up to *jum'ah*, *Eid*. They felt that I was there to serve them too.[278]

Through this narrative, Bilal reveals the intricacies of his profession in the way chaplaincy makes space for conversations to take place, and for LGBTQ members of the campus Muslim community to feel comfortable in that space. Bilal, like other chaplains, does not want to be painted as an "evil or dogmatic imam." These American Muslim chaplains do not want to fall into the "trap" that Professor Awadh A. Binhazim at Vanderbilt fell into. They are acutely aware of the religious, professional, and institutional stakes at hand. They also understand that this is a transitional moment for LGBTQ Muslims in the United States and that as chaplains their approach can either alienate or include these Muslim voices as part of the larger community dialogue. Finally, Bilal reflects on a chaplain's responsibility to the constitutional concepts of no establishment and free exercise for all. By acknowledging that chaplains "dwell" in this space and have a responsibility to maintain and support this dwelling, he stresses the importance that institutional mandate and freedom of religion have for American Muslim chaplains. These are two precepts that frame much of an American Muslim chaplain's approach to the more difficult issues. They allow chaplains to reflect upon the limits of dogma and provide them with the means to address these issues dispensing with legalistic answers and expanding the gray areas of tradition.

[278] Ibid.

Omer Bajwa

Again, much of Omer Bajwa's interaction with the Yale University LGBTQ community is reminiscent of those told by Bilal, Shamshad, and Sohaib. When he first arrived at Yale, he felt challenged and was nervous to engage with the issues. In our discussion, he indicates the difficulty Muslim chaplains face by referencing the forum at Vanderbilt. His active engagement with these issues was in response to a request by the campus LGBTQ advocacy group, and not primarily from the Muslim students on campus:

> Hopefully this story can be helpful, is that maybe in my second or third year, it's all kind of a blur now. Soon after I got here, there was a group that formed called Bridges. It's no longer around, but the name I think is interesting. They wanted to be a bridge between the LGBTQ community and certain religious communities. The idea was they wanted to say one could be a faithful person or a religiously minded person or be open to religion and spirituality and also be LGBTQ or be an ally to that community. To those communities, I should say.And what happens is they wanted to do an event and have a panel discussion with people talking about this. I think the concept is very interesting. So what they did, they sought students. They had a Jewish representative, one or two Christian representatives, and a Muslim representative. And I had not worked with this group in the past. I was just familiar with them. They invited me, and this was maybe a year after the Vanderbilt episode, and I got very, very nervous. Because the last thing I wanted to do was to get stuck up on stage and to get cornered and not be able to explain myself and contextualize these kinds of conversations.[279]

The next portion of Omer's story gives insight into the way that he engages with chaplains of other faiths on campus. The conversation is not one primarily about theology, but about the expectations of the profession, the institution, and the larger objectives of pastoral care. A primary objective or focus of the chaplaincy is for chaplains to be introspective, self-revelatory, honest, and to avoid being disingenuous. This is an aspect of pastoral training that chaplains make a point of emphasizing. For example, through CPE, chaplains are trained to first

[279] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

know themselves, their own egos, and the expectations they bring to the table before giving counsel:

> I went to my boss, and I said, "I have a lot of anxiety about this. The problem is, if I don't do it I'll look bad, and if I do it, chances are I'm going to get stuck with some really hostile questions, potentially. I'm not going to know how to get out of those. It's going to be a lose-lose." She gave me really good advice. She said, "Obviously it's up to you if you want to do it. There's nothing wrong if you don't want to do it, but if you do it, just be authentic to who you are, to what you believe and what your tradition, where you interpret your tradition as. Be authentic, and talk and personalize the issue if you can." And so I did it, I did the panel, I went up there and I opened up and said, "You know, I'm very nervous to be here. I struggled with the decision to come on the panel." I said, "Thank you for inviting me here. I accepted it because I think it's very important. I appreciate you acknowledging my voice."[280]

The first part of Omer's interaction is on a personal level. As he says, his goal is to "humanize" the Muslim perspective. The second portion of Omer's presentation is to speak directly to the Muslim position on these issues, both in terms of Islamic history and Islamic law:

> What I said was, "Here's Islam's position on this. This is generally Islam's position on same-sex activity." And then you qualify or contextualize and say it in no way condemns people to Hell. You talk about the whole idea that in Islam or the legal-minded religions, there are tendencies - sexual orientation is one thing - then acting out on those religious, sexual impulses is another thing. I said, "That's a differentiation that Islam would make. Throughout Muslim history you have literature, you have poetry, you have homoerotic poetry that talks about it throughout the "classical Muslim period."[281] It's not that the Muslim community hadn't dealt with these things. They just have a different way of understanding."[282]

Finally, the third aspect of Omer's presentation is to discuss his own role as a chaplain and how he would deal with LGBTQ Muslims coming to him for advice. Again, his objective is to humanize the Islamic approach in light of the chaplaincy. In this sense, Omer connects his

[280] Ibid.
[281] For a description of the Sufi poetry to which Omer is referring see Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*, 75-96.
[282] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

personal narrative to the way he as a Muslim and a chaplain actualize his own understanding of Islam:

> So what I basically talked about was, the personalizing aspect was my role as a chaplain here at Yale, and I'm here for anyone who comes to me to be an empathetic and non-judgmental presence. To just give them, to be a good listener to their concerns. I said, "That's what I'm interested in. If anyone came to me, I would listen to them. To what it is that they want to share with me and walk with them through their journey of that to help them deal with the pain, if that's what they want to come to me as." I did the panel, and I didn't expect a huge success of it. I think the takeaway was the organizers appreciated that I was there, I was able to humanize the Muslim approach, hopefully, and that was it.[283]

Omer's case is a good example of how American Muslim chaplains approach their day-to-day interactions. And so, it is useful to think of Omer's description as having four components, beginning and ending with his idea of "humanizing" Islam. They are: 1) Reflecting upon their own vision and insecurities in a given situation; 2) making who they are and what they bring to the table clear from the outset; 3) presenting the diverse Islamic perspectives on an issue, while representing what they see as the Muslim community's beliefs and needs; and 4) presenting how a Muslim chaplain actualizes their profession so that it is no longer about them or Islam, but rather the overarching themes of empathy and support. These elements differ from situation to situation; for example, different situations will require more or less need to "humanize," or the need to "humanize" will take different forms. Addressing an audience of non-Muslims may require dispelling the idea that Islam is a fixed entity without diversity of opinion, as well as providing information on how Islam is a religion experienced and lived in a variety of forms. Engaging Muslims who believe there is a "right" and "wrong" Islam may require a similar process, such as presenting a multitude of Muslim voices and opinions on an issue; in this

[283] Ibid.

case it is not specifically about "humanizing" Islam, but instead complicating Muslim visions of community and tradition.

Finally, toward the end of our conversation Omer expresses his sense that the issues we are discussing are not yet pressing concerns for the Yale Muslim community, even though there is a growing sense regarding the need to engage with the issues:

> I didn't get any hostile questions, but that's been the extent of it here. One last thing is that they did do, they showed the film "Jihad for Love."[284] This group brought the director and showed the film "Jihad for Love." We told people, the MSA knew about it, I attended, many of our students attended. We listened to the discussion afterward. It was very respectful; nothing became uncomfortable in terms of argumentative. I think it just shows that our community can, the questions come up and people talk through these things on their own, but as a community we're not openly struggling with this.[285]

While Omer's narrative is instructive of a chaplain's approach, it doesn't fully address what the day-to-day needs of Muslims on campus are when it comes to LGBTQ issues. Omer's narrative and the others that precede it, still beg the question of the extent to which Muslim chaplains deal with students facing identity crises with respect to sexual orientation. Although, Omer indicates that these are not currently pressing issues in his day-to-day chaplaincy role, he expresses - more explicitly than the others - that Muslim chaplains will have to anticipate a growing openly gay Muslim presence on campus. He says, this will require that chaplains guide and care for these Muslims, giving them a safe environment in which to address their concerns about sexual identity and Islam:

> It's not a challenge that we're facing right now within the Muslim community per say, not that there aren't Muslims struggling with it. But another chaplain, Abdullah Antepli, and I had an interesting conversation about this recently, where he said, "It's only a matter of time before two things happen...One thing is on college campuses, but what's going to happen as Muslims become more politically active? And so much of this becomes where

[284] For details regarding "Jihad for Love," see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0780046/ and http://www.theguardian.com/film/2007/sep/06/gayrights.religion.
[285] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

> do you line up on these social and political issues? And Muslims in prominent positions are going to get asked these questions, first of all. And second of all, we need to get, if possible, we need to come up with a strategy as chaplains, how we're going to respond to this. And related to that, Abdullah also thinks that it's only a matter of time before more and more young Muslims are going to be coming out of the closet and are going to want, not force the issue, I'm trying to think of a better word. They're going to present it to MSA's and slowly to mosques or different kinds of religious places and say, "You need to engage us on this." I think a lot of people just have their head buried in the sand, pretending that it's going to go away for that it doesn't exist.[286]

The Challenges of Sectarian Difference

The same institutional latitude that helps American Muslim chaplains develop and anticipate strategies for addressing the needs of LGBTQ Muslims, also helps them to develop strategies to address the issues of sectarian difference that arise among their constituents. The most difficult issue in this regard is that given the fact that a majority of American Muslim chaplains are Sunni, how do they build a sense of inclusiveness in their presentation of Islam?

For the most part, these chaplains see themselves as American Muslim chaplains from a Sunni background, but they do not identify their chaplaincy in sectarian terms. This does not mean that problems do not arise. For example, in the prison setting, where tensions between different Muslim groups can run high, Shiite inmates have filed complaints against Sunni chaplains for abusive sermonizing and preferential treatment of Sunni inmates.[287] In addition, Sunni oriented Muslim chaplains in the prison setting are called on, as Zain Abdullah noted, to "decide whether or not their ministers [Nation of Islam members and Five-Percenters] could be a legitimate religious figure and thereby be able to visit his laity during the week,"[288] further illustrating the power disparities between Sunni chaplains and non-Sunni Muslims in the prison setting.

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[286] Ibid.
[287] See Liyakat Ali Takim, *Shi'ism in America*(New York: New York University Press, 2009).
[288] Zain Abdullah, telephone interview with the author, January 17, 2012.

Approaches to these tensions vary from simply addressing Islam as universal and based on shared principles, giving sermons without recourse to particular sectarian difference, providing an open and fluid space where individuals choose to come and go as they find necessary, and creating events which deal directly with sectarian difference through education and programming. Although university and college chaplains have developed the most detailed approaches to these issues it is instructive to first look at the prisons setting, where tensions can run particular high. Zain Abdullah describes the type of universal Islam he tried to create for Muslim inmates at Bordentown prison:

> There was a large auditorium, so people could go back and forth; it wasn't like in some prisons, like in Riker's Island. In Bordentown it was a place where you could walk back and forth and listen. You could sit nearby and listen to what the *khutbah* was about. And so I think people kind of appreciated a kind of universalism, or the universalistic message that I had. I had a message that was basically very Qur'anic, it was very inclusive and people felt they could talk to me was a result of that.[289]

To a certain extent, the universalism that Zain speaks about, reflects the sense that one gets from speaking with the majority of seminary-trained Muslim chaplains; the sense that there is more overlap between different sectarian communities than conflict. Mohamed Nimer expresses this sentiment in the *North American Resource Guide,* where he focused on the common needs that Sunnis and Shiites have as religious minority groups in the America:

> The daily life challenges faced by the continent's Muslims seem much more important than the historical splits between Shiism and Sunnism. Thus despite differences in some aspects of devotion and the authority of religious figures, the patterns of activity that define local Muslim community life are not tremendously divergent. Because of a shared destiny in North America, it is no longer uncommon to find Shia and Sunni Muslims worshipping together and attending the same school."[290]

[289] Ibid.
[290] Nimer, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide : Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*, 11.

At Quinnipiac College, Shamshad Sheikh also employs a universal message when addressing issues of sectarian difference. To this however, she adds an active program of trying to bring "Muslims together." She does this with an eye to the common issues facing Muslims as an American religious minority, regardless of sectarian outlook:

> It was a university where I had to start from scratch and get recognition about who Muslims are, what we do, what our activities on campus, and how we do our programming. My goal is to bring all Muslim together. No matter what *fiqh* or sect they're coming from, what your beliefs are, you're *Shi'a* or Sunni, we all come together and pray the way you prefer to pray. So I give them this freedom and I give them the space to pray. I make sure they get to practice their faith independently and freely, not only that. It is important because Islam is different here in the US.[291]

Sohaib Sultan at Princeton University and Omer Bajwa at Yale University are more explicit about the ways they engage their communities on issues of sectarian difference. Both of them reflect upon the sectarian, as well as ethnic dynamics on campus. Sohaib makes it evident that there was no identifiable singular phenomenon; different groups were involved in the larger campus Muslim community based on factors such as ethnicity and religiosity, where individual personalities were often a much more dominant element of division than anything else. Sohaib breaks down the Princeton University Muslim community as follows:

> We have a pretty diverse community. Culturally, my colleagues in the chaplain's office, they always tease me that at *jum'ah* it feels like the United Nations has gathered. We have a lot of cultural and ethnic diversity. I would say that what's interesting is that we have several second generation African students. I don't know if they would identify as African American. Their parents are straight from Sudan or Ethiopia, whatever. Probably their kids would identify as African American, but they don't quite yet identify as that. We do have a few students who identify as African American, of course. Then we have several converts, and we have a South Asians, a lot of Arabs, the usual. We don't have too many Southeast Asians and we don't have too many Latinos. That's kind of the lay of the land. In terms of the sectarian-ness, there's definitely a lot of Shias on this campus. A lot of them come from Iran. A lot of them are so particular about their Shi'ism that they wouldn't come to our *jum'ah* or they're very secular so they don't go to *jum'ah* anywhere. But a lot of them, having said that, a lot of Shia students do come to *jum'ah*, which is

[291] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.

> great. So we have a lot of Shia's that not only come to *jum'ah*, but are an active part of the Muslim community.[292]

Apart from the Sunni-Shiite dynamic, Princeton doesn't afford much greater sectarian difference, such as Nation of Islam or Ahmadiyya. However, it does have a significant number of Ismaili students who are less integrated with the rest of the community:

> And then we have Ismailis, but it's interesting because Ismailis have been a community that I feel, for the most part, they've been hesitant to be involved. I won't completely wash my hands of saying that it's something that I'm doing, but maybe it's something that I'm doing, maybe it's the nature of the community. I feel like we've tried to put our best effort out there.[293]

Sohaib's description of his engagement with the Ismaili community highlights the difficulty connected with trying to bring such diverse religious perspectives together. This difficulty is reflected in the fact that the ambiguous nature of the term "Muslim chaplain" both includes and excludes Muslim students based on how closely they identify with a particular chaplain. Like Shamshad, Sohaib expresses the sentiment that the immediate needs of a small, religious minority community; i.e. the Muslims on campus, can minimize aspects of internal difference. Projecting into the future, Sohaib envisions a community with a "pluralist" outlook that makes sectarian differences secondary:

> I think that the advantage that we have at Princeton is we're a relatively small community, and when you have a relatively small community people overlook differences because they think, "We just need a community. We're too small to have differences." People generally get along pretty well besides personality differences, which are how life is. Even though we are a community that gets along, I'm always thinking about the long term. At one time, Jewish students were only 200, but now they're a large percentage of the campus. That may happen with Muslim students 10, 15, 20, 30 years down the road. For that reason, even though we don't have sectarian issues and things like that, I'm trying to create an ethos from now in which all the seeds for

[292] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 4, 2014.
[293] Ibid.

> pluralism are ripe, so that the larger the community becomes the more people understand what it means to live together.[294]

Sohaib's vision for intra-Muslim pluralism plays out in the types of programs and the religious environment he attempts to foster among the Muslims on campus. Some of these programs have gone beyond the masking of difference through a universalizing of the precepts of Qur'an and the *sunnah*. Through these programs, Sohaib has also made a preliminary attempt to engage with differences in practice:

> So for example, there's no tolerance whatsoever in *khutbahs* being sectarian. It's a big no-no. And then, at *jum'ah* we've had Shia's give *adhan*. I remember the first time we did that people were like, "Whoa, what just happened? I've never heard this before." People were totally confused and I remember afterwards saying, "This is a Shia *adhan*. If you haven't heard it before - people think the *adhan* is very standardized, but there are many occasions when the *adhan* was altered a little bit to accommodate different situations."[295] So those are types of things that bring a little bit of a shockwave to the community, but it is what it is… The other thing that we're going to do, for example, is even though we have a small Shia community, every year we've been building up to this and this year we're hopefully going to do it. We're going to have a commemoration for *Muharram*.[296] The last few years we've done some educational programming around *Muharram* where we've had a Shia Imam or scholar come and talk about the significance of *Muharram* from the Shia community's perspective. That's been good; good, fruitful discussion has come out of that. But there's actually going to be a commemoration of *Muharram* this coming year.[297]

Finally, Sohaib moves from a discussion of sectarian and ethnic difference to the types of relationships and orientations Muslims have to the Islamic tradition. This means that the differences can reside within a particular sectarian community and that sometimes these

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[294] Ibid.
[295] The *adhan* is the Muslim call to prayer. The Sunni and Shiite *adhan* are mostly the same. The primary difference is that the Shiite *adhan* contains the line "I testify that Ali is the guardian of God," as well as a difference in the third to last line. Where Shiites say "Come to the best of deeds," Sunnis say "Prayer is better than sleep."
[296] *Muharram* is the Shiite commemoration of the massacre at Karbala in Iraq, where Husayn and 20 members of the family of Muhammad were killed. The significance of Sohaib commemorating *Muharram* is that it is one of the most important times of year in the Shiite calendar. One on which Sunnis, while acknowledging the event as crucial historically, do not place the same religious weight on it that Shiites do.
[297] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 4, 2014.

differences eclipse sectarian ones. This is in effect the beginning of a discussion about denominationalism, where orientation with regard to Qur'an and *sunnah* can be more divisive than sectarian difference:

> I think personally what I've seen, the differences that we have in our community are not so much Sunni versus *Shi'a*, but people's orientation within their tradition; to what degree they're flexible and to what degree they're not flexible. And that manifests both whether Shia or Sunni or Sufi, and for example, when we have our annual celebration of the prophets life, the *Mawlid*, and as you know *Mawlid* is already controversial. And then on top of that, we bring musicians who use instruments, and there's always some people who are like, "Why are you doing this?" And there are others who say, "This is exactly what you should be doing and I'm so happy." Those types of things are what I tell people, "Look, you don't have to agree with everything that we're doing as a community, and if you feel uncomfortable then you have every right not to come."

Omer Bajwa at Yale University echoes much of what Sohaib said, affirming some of the similar ways that Muslim chaplains are engaging with differences in their specific communities. One thing that Omer adds is the relationship of ethnicity to fostering a level of trust between himself and some groups that may otherwise not engage with him on a religious level:

> At Yale, the vast majority, let me put it this way, let me clarify this: the vast majority of the Muslims I'm aware of are Sunni. I know we have *Shi'a*, I know we have Ismaili students. So what I've found is this: the Ismaili students we have are South Asian, so it's almost like my South Asian-ness, the rapport I built with them just having lunch or dinner or chitchatting about life or that kind of stuff, the way I conceptualize it was this is me doing some chaplaincy work. We're not talking about anything overtly religious; very few of them, if any, came to me. I think I had one or two Ismaili students that came to me with specific issues...But it was just social relationships, and very few religious relationships, and so I thought, "That's fine. If they wanted to, I'd like to think that they know they could come to me."[298]

Based on the above reflections it is clear that no matter how much chaplains create an environment of openness and trust, not all religious divisions can be overcome. One of the possibilities that we can glean from Omer is that constructions of religious community go

[298] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, New Haven, Connecticut, December 13, 2011.

beyond similar visions of practice and tradition. That interpretive lens, be it of how to practice - as with Sohaib's example of *Mawlid* - or how one envisions the tradition - be it Sunni, Shiite, or Sufi - can be a place of division as well as a place for more detailed discourse.

So if concepts of religious community go beyond similar visions of practice and tradition, what does this mean for Muslim chaplains within these communities? Is the moniker "Muslim chaplain" more or less applicable given this diversity? Ultimately, it comes down to a chaplain's ability to be self-reflective and leave the door open for multiple possibilities. This includes appreciating the fluid nature of the experiment they are engaged in and allowing for flexibility in how their role is defined.

Returning to our conversation in his office at Yale University, Omer Bajwa sees this as a continuing and dynamic process of reassessment and a potential arena for an all encompassing leadership:

> We have a few Shia students currently; as far as I know they're all South Asian. And they, this is also part of Sunni-Shia dynamics, is they come to the events that we do, and some of them are very active in MSA. And I've been very; I've tried to be very conscious of never making them feel excluded about watching the way that I frame things and the way that we plan events. For example, we did an event, just recently, on *Muharram*, and I called it the "Sacred Month of *Muharram*." And I talked about, looking back it definitely had a definitely more of a Sunni kind of commentary to it, but we talked about *Ashura*. Why *Ashura*[299] is sacred as a holiday from the Sunni perspective. And I also talked about the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. What I would like to say…I don't know if I can practice this or live this in the best way, but…as a Muslim chaplain you have to be looking out for all, meeting their needs as well. And this goes for without saying, don't just keep planning Sunni type events and overlook those. And even if it pushes you outside your comfort zone, make events available.[300]

[299] *Ashura* is the tenth day of the month of *Muharram* that both Sunni and Shiite Muslims recognize as a historical tragedy, but which is particularly important to Shiites as they commemorate the events through various ritual practices.
[300] Omer Bajwa, interview with the author, December 13, 2011.

Chapter IV

Salahuddin Muhammad: A Narrative of Race, Leadership, & Suspicion

With the many races and religions of America we cherish for all others as for ourselves freedom of religion, the "First Liberty."[301]

- W.D. Muhammad

W.D. Mohammed: Thought, history, and the American Muslim Chaplaincy

Opening my copy of *Al-Islam Unity and Leadership,*[302] I smell its musky perfumed odor mixed with the Brooklyn streets where I purchased it second hand. I'm not sure if it obtained its smell from its owner's practices or from the street vendor who sold it to me. It is a smell familiar to anyone who lives in NYC and is at all interested in Islam and the development of African American Islam in the US. I'm not sure when it was originally purchased as the copyright date is 1991 and I obtained it in 2008. I'm also unsure if the original owner decided to sell the book because they had gotten all they could get out of it, were purging a closet, or had decided that W.D. Mohammed's words and ideas were no longer relevant or valuable to them. This is the beauty and frustration of purchasing a used book that you sense had meaning for someone else, but now has an historical anonymity, something you've taken in with no knowledge of its former life. Nonetheless, I can't seem to shake its history. No matter how much I try to air it out, the smell of musk and incense remains, appearing to get stronger each time I thumb through it.

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[301] The quotation appears in Warith Deen Muhammad, *Al-Islam Unity & Leadership*(Calumet City, Ill.: W. Deen Mohammed, 1991), 7. Originally presented by W. Deen Mohammed at the *Williamsburg Charter Foundation,* "First Liberty" Summit – June 25, 1988. The summit was a collection of 100 leaders in religion, government, business, law and philanthropy who gathered and signed a charter that restated the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Freedom of Religion). As he changed his name several times all citations will reference his name as listed on the source material, however within the text I refer to him as W.D. Mohammed. For more information regarding the changes he made to his name see Edward E. Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, 2 vols., Facts on File Library of American History (New York: Facts on File, 2010), 115.

[302] Muhammad, Al-Islam Unity & Leadership.

Whenever I handle the book I make sure to smell it, just in case somehow, miraculously, its scent has dissipated.

This book *Al-Islam & Unity,* a compilation of talks given by W.D. Mohammed from 1989-1991, is indicative of his emphasis on creating an informed and empowered African American Muslim leadership and his theological approach to American Islam. It is also part of a methodology, beginning soon after his take over of the leadership of the Nation of Islam in 1975, which joins an expressed affirmation of freedom of religion and a conditional patriotism, with his identity as an African American Muslim. Finally, these moves away from isolationism are essential to the way W.D. Mohammed's followers acknowledged the importance of working with government run institutions; particularly those with large African American populations, such as the prisons and military. Over the course of 20 years from 1975-1995, this outlook would set the stage for the creation of a professional and paid American Muslim chaplaincy, beginning with the New York State prisons and culminating with the appointment of the first Muslim chaplain in the U.S. Army in 1994.[303]

The shift in the Nation of Islam from the leadership of Elijah Muhammad to his son W.D. Mohammed marks a significant change to the Muslim population in the New York State prison system. It marks the movement of a vast majority of African American Muslim inmates from followers of the Nation of Islam to followers of W.D. Mohammed. As a result it also points to the beginnings of a significant division within the New York State African American prison population. Understanding the history of this shift is of critical import to understanding the American Muslim chaplaincy and the essential role African American Islam has played in its development.

[303] Although there are now Muslim chaplains in various federal and state prison systems, the New York State Department of Corrections is the first evident example of Muslim chaplains being hired in large numbers.

Whereas for most faith groups, paid American chaplains originated in the military, the paid chaplaincy for American Muslims began in the prisons. The American Muslim chaplaincy began in the prisons as a consequence of the activities of the Nation of Islam. These were primarily volunteer Muslim prison chaplains, some of whom were paid for directly by the Nation of Islam. However, the first American Muslim chaplains hired and paid for with public funds were for the most part members of the W.D. Mohammed community.[304] It was in the New York State Prison system, where the first Muslim chaplain, Imam Warith Deen Umar was hired in 1975.

Warith Deen Umar, originally a member of the Nation of Islam and known by the name Minister Wallace 10X had become part of the W.D. Mohammed community by the time of his hiring.[305] Umar would become responsible for hiring Muslim chaplains for the New York State prison system, who by the mid-1980s numbered around 20. These chaplains were all trained and hired under Umar's tutelage.[306] Zain Abdullah, one of the chaplains hired by Warith Deen Umar in 1985, discusses Umar's autonomy in decision-making: "Warith Deen Umar was given the power to validate us. He was the one who said whether or not we were qualified. He would talk to us, get a sense of our Islamic training, our background, that sort of thing. And then he would place us. You're good, you're good, you know, look at our credentials, where we've been."[307]

This autonomy in decision-making would eventually lead to a complaint filed with The United States District Court of Southern New York by Shiite inmates that Umar exclusively

[304] Given the fact that W.D. Mohammed changed the name of the Nation of Islam, several times I have chosen here to refer to his followers as "the W.D. Mohammed community." For a more in depth discussion see Edward E. Curtis, "African-American Islamization Reconsidered: Black History Narratives and Muslim Identity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, no. 3 (2005).
[305] Paul M. Barrett, "How a Muslim Chaplain Spread Extremism to an Inmate Flock: Radical New York Imam Chose Clerics for Prisons," *Wall Street Journal* February 5, 2003.
[306] Chaplain Edwin Muller, interview with the author, Poughkeepsie, New York, December 15, 2011.
[307] Zain Abdullah, telephone interview with the author, January 17, 2012.

hired Sunni chaplains. The January 18, 2004 complaint read, "During Umar's tenure, he never hired a Shiite chaplain. Instead, Umar used his authority to hire only Sunni Muslims. In particular, Umar hired many extremist Sunni Muslims who share his Wahhabi beliefs, including his religiously based antipathy toward Shiite Muslims."[308]

These sectarian dynamics are also part of the history of transition from the Nation of Islam to forms of Sunni and Shiite Islam. This transition began a tension, which still exists within the prisons between various groups of Muslims. A tension related to claims of heterodoxy versus orthodoxy between Muslim inmates and among prison officials, who often segment different groups into legitimate versus illegitimate religious communities. As a 2013 Institute for Social Policy and Understanding notes:

> Although today most African-American Muslims are Sunni, some of their communities encounter suspicion and accusations of heterodoxy from their Sunni and Shiite co-religionists. In return, other groups respond with their own charges of inauthenticity, such as Five Percent [and] Nation of Islam followers who quip that "Sunni" Muslim stands for "soon to be" Muslim.[309]

In effect charges of inauthenticity extend to Sunni-Shiite relations within the prison, and pose one of the most difficult questions for the American Muslim chaplaincy. It is the fundamental question of what the label American Muslim chaplain means and whom chaplains represent from among that variety of groups. While the American Muslim chaplaincy has been at the forefront of interfaith relations, discussions and solutions to intrafaith relations have been less robust. This is a particularly pressing issue in the prisons. In part the challenge is that in the prisons, the constitutional rites of prisoners are more restricted given institutional and legal

[308] Clay Chatin Thomas Pugh Jr., and Edward Hamil vs. Glenn S. Goord, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, "Second Amendment Complaint," in *00-CV-7279 (GEL)*, ed. United States District Court Southern District of New York(2004). Online at http://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/PC-NY-0056-0001.pdf, (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[309] SpearIt, "Facts and Fictions About Islam in Prison: Assessing Prisoner Ra Dicalization in Post-9/11 America," 8.

mandates, which can preference the institutional needs over that of the inmates. A 2008 New York State court decision indicated that:

> "…because the religious rights of prisoners must be balanced against the interests inherent in prison administration, free exercise claims of prisoners are "judged under a 'reasonableness' test less restrictive than that ordinarily applied to alleged infringements of fundamental constitutional rights…This test is less restrictive than the test ordinarily applied to non-prisoner free exercise claims because, as the Court recognized, "[l]awful incarceration brings about the necessary withdrawal or limitation of many privileges and rights, a retraction justified by the considerations underlying our penal system."[310]

Given these restrictions to the free exercise rights of inmates, in order to fulfill its mission, the chaplaincy has to be proactive in recognizing a multitude of Muslim communities. It is important in these circumstances for chaplains "to resist the temptation to make normative claims about what constitutes Islam, as opposed to counting as Muslim anyone who claims to be one or follows Islam," a difficult and under explored task.[311] An added difficulty is that the institution itself, in order to determine the validity of a particular religious community's claims, will come to their own generic definition of what constitutes a religious group and whether or not to define these groups as distinct. In the case of Islam this has placed considerable power in the hands of Sunni oriented Muslim chaplains. For example, in 2001 the United States District Court of Southern New York issued a decision denying Shiite inmates access to specific services and spaces for practice on the grounds that there wasn't a significant enough distinction between Sunnis and Shiites:

> Affidavit testimony provided in conjunction with the present motion establishes the following essentially undisputed facts. The principal tenets of Islam, regardless of sect, are (1) belief that Allah is God; (2) acceptance that the Qur'an is the book of guidance and contains the words of Allah; (3) acknowledgment of the Prophet Muhammad as the

[310] Ernest W. Vann v. Fischer, "Report and Recommendation," in *09CV385*, ed. United States Western District Court of New York(2008).Available online at https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/new-york/nywdce/1:2009cv00385/73606/30/0.pdf?ts=1377163960 (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[311] Ibid.

> final messenger and Prophet of Allah; (4) acceptance of the "five pillars" of Islam -- Shahada (declaration of faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (Charity), Saum (fasting) and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca); and (5) the practice of Qiblah, or praying facing Mecca. (Cohen Aff. Ex. A P 16.) All Muslims apparently accept these principles, whether they are Sunni, Shi'ite, or belong another of the multiple sects that constitute Islam. (Id.) The principal difference between Sunnis and Shi'ites is the significance which Shi'ites afford the twelve imams, or religious leaders, who came after the Prophet Muhammad. (Cohen Aff. Ex. A at 4, n.2.) Shi'ites consider these twelve imams to be the legitimate successors to Muhammad and divine in nature, while Sunnis do not. (Id.) Despite their distinct clerical traditions, Shi'a and Sunni religious doctrines remain similar though not identical.[312]

These contemporary tensions are directly and indirectly connected to the initial interaction of the W.D. Mohammed community with various U.S. public institutions. This interaction had its basis in both the utility of engagement and varying degrees of trust in institutional mechanisms for redress. The ways these two manifest are significantly different based on institution, but they are nonetheless necessary parts of any interface. For example, as early as August of 1978 the *Bilalian News*, the newspaper of the W.D. Mohammed community, showed an interest in the U.S. Army's advocacy for minority rights and affirmative action.[313] In terms of utility, there was recognition that the vast majority of Muslims in these two institutions were African Americans, who needed the spiritual, ritual, and social support services of a Muslim leadership, recognized by both the Muslim community and the institutions themselves.

The degree to which trust played a part in this relationship has to do with the history of the legal and material rights accorded to African American Muslim by these institutions. In the prisons and military, the manner in which African American Muslims have been afforded their constitutional rights to practice their religion freely has been varied, inconsistent, and often ad hoc, but nonetheless these rights were eventually and officially sanctioned through constitutional

[312] District Judge Gerard E. Lynch, "Thomas Pugh, Jr., Errol Ennis, Edward Hamil and Clay Chatin V. Glenn Goord Commissioner of the New York State Department of Correctional Services," in *00 Civ. 7279 (GEL)*, ed. United States District Court for the Southern District of New York(2002). Available online at http://www.aele.org/law/2002JBJUN/pvg.html (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[313] "Army Affirms Minority Rights," *Bilalian News* August 4, 1978, 9.

mandate.[314] Winnifred Sullivan in her study of religion in prisons points to the inconsistencies, which contrast legal mandate and actual practice. She notes the deep-seated interplay between religion and public institutions when she reflects that there is a "peculiar relationship of religion and law in the United States, one that makes disestablishment virtually impossible."[315] The fact that disestablishment is difficult to enforce does not necessarily mean that practicing freely is not institutionally mandated, but that it can often take a back seat to foundational institutional dogma. She writes:

> Paradoxically, disestablished religion depends on the government for enforcement of moral norms. In a populist democracy, these norms are defined by majoritarian religious prejudices. Whereas countervailing checks exist to the worst excess of this partnership…popular religion and popular justice can reinforce each other in ways, sometimes difficult to detect and almost impossible to eliminate…[316]

The constitutional mandates in place to deal with the "worst excess of religious prejudices" extend from a simple recognition of Islam to the right to pray and fast to providing halal meals to inmates in prison.[317] This doesn't mean that inmates trust the prison infrastructure, but rather that they use and acknowledge a system through which they can have their grievances heard. A good example of this phenomenon is the fact that the creation of an American Muslim chaplaincy involves more than the endorsement of leaders such as W.D. Mohammed. For example, in the prison system maintaining the authority and legitimacy of Muslim chaplains also requires the trust and validation of the Muslim inmates themselves, who were and still are

[314] The inconsistencies involved are two fold. The first is with regard to what the prison authorities recognize and sanction as Islam, i.e. the Nation of Islam has not always been given the same level of recognition as what is deemed mainstream Sunni Islam. The second is with regard to levels of institutional commitment to their constitutional mandate. For a discussion of military chaplains in combat and the evangelizing that occurs on and off the battlefield see the documentary by Chris Rodda and Rev. Dr. Billy Baugham, "Chaplains under Fire,"(2010).
[315] Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Prison Religion : Faith-Based Reform and the Constitution(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3.
[316] Ibid.
[317] The right to practice Islam was sanctioned in the 1962 Fulwood v. Clemmer decision. For more detail see SpearIt, "Facts and Fictions About Islam in Prison: Assessing Prisoner Ra Dicalization in Post-9/11 America."

suspicious of Muslim chaplains as employees of the state as opposed to inmate imams, who are appointed by the inmates themselves.[318]

The trust discussed above is not meant to suggest that there is a cart blanche uncritical acceptance of these institutions, but simply that given the history of Islam in the prison and military establishment, the importance of trust has always been a central issue in how to engage these institutions, and as a consequence central to the American Muslim chaplaincy. In addition, the trust implied here refers to a trust that American Muslim chaplains have for the chaplaincy itself as a vocation, promoting the needs and agenda of American Muslims through the value it places on freedom of religion.

Finally, the current relationship between chaplains and these institutions, while still acknowledging institutional mechanisms for redress, is often tenuous and fraught with mistrust. This is largely connected to the fact that charges of radicalism and the surveillance in both the military and the prisons have become significant parts of the chaplain-institution relationship. This tension between chaplains' belief in their ability to provide representation and advocacy for Muslims, and the mistrust that has grown out of a politically charged environment particularly since September 11, 2001, has created a strong paradox between the chaplaincy's calling and institutional realities. As professionals who believe in the efficacy of the chaplaincy, chaplains confidently see value in their profession and in the multifaith and pastoral nature of their work. However, they have no doubt been affected by the political realities of the relationship between Islam and the United States government that have crept into the institutions in which they work.

[318] This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail in the coming pages.

It is in consideration of the foregoing review of the thought and history of the W.D. Mohammed community, its engagement with the chaplaincy, and these contemporary political realities, that the story of Imam Salahuddin Mohammed is particularly poignant.

Salahuddin Muhammad

In 2009, *Masjid al-Ikhlas* in Upstate New York, made front-page news when four members of the mosque were accused of plotting to fire a Stinger missile at US military planes and plant bombs outside Jewish targets in Riverdale, New York.[319] It is at this mosque, a non-descript building on a side street in the lower middle class town of Newburgh, New York, where I find myself on December 14, 2011. I am waiting to meet Salahuddin Muhammad, who as Imam of *Masjid al-Ikhlas,* was the subject of scrutiny in 2009 after the FBI sting operation, which resulted in the arrest of the men who came to be known of as the "Newburgh Four." After driving up from New York City and making several wrong turns, I walk into the mosque unsure of whether or not I am in the right place. Once inside I find Salahuddin waiting for me with the broad smile that I will become familiar with over the course of the next two and a half years.

At the time of our meeting, in addition to being the Imam of *Masjid al-Ikhlas*, Salahuddin is also a prison chaplain in the New York State prison system, and part-time chaplain at Bard College. He obtained his position at Bard in 1996 as the first paid college chaplain in the United States. After leaving New York he would become president of the Association of Muslim Chaplains. Somewhat unusually, at *Masjid al-Ikhlas,* Salahuddin is an African American imam in what has become a predominantly South Asian mosque, but Salahuddin notes that the new

[319] Paul Harris, "Newburgh Four: Poor, Black, and Jailed under Fbi 'Entrapment' Tactics," *Wall Street Journal* (December 12, 2011).

community has accepted his leadership.[320] This is a reality in Newburgh as the town has seen a rapid increase in its immigrant South Asian Muslim population and a decrease in its African American Muslim population. The overwhelming South Asian majority doesn't pose a problem for Salahuddin, in fact he has written a book entitled, *Bridging The Divide Between Immigrant and African American Muslims by Utilizing the Concept of Tawheed as the Catalyst,* about the ways that he has tried to bring the diverse mosque membership together.[321] He approaches the issue of the mosque's diversity in a very matter of fact way: "It's a mixed congregation. We are in the minority. It's basically a Sunni mosque. We have Pakistani, Bengali, Indian, others: African, Caucasian. But they're in the majority right now."[322]

Although it is only once I push further that Salahuddin discusses sectarian issues at the mosque, it will become clear that the stress that Salahuddin places on the apolitical nature of these relations is in direct contrast to his experience as a chaplain in the prisons, where Shiite-Sunni tensions are more contentious; as complaints are often filed by Shiite prisoners regarding treatment by Muslim chaplains.[323] In fact, in January of 2004 Salahuddin's name was added to a list of Muslim chaplains in a case that Shiite inmates brought against the New State Department of Correctional services in 2004.[324]

After Salahuddin and I exchange greetings, he leads me to his office. The walls are sparsely decorated, a framed picture with Arabic calligraphy is on the wall behind him, and there

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[320] Strum, "Muslims in the United States: Identity, Influence, Innovation." Available on line at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/muslims-the-united-states-identity-influence-innovation (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[321] Salahuddin Mustafa Muhammad, *Bridging the Divide between Immigrant and African-American Muslims by Utilizing the Concept of Tawheed as the Catalyst*(S.l.: Xlibris Corp, 2011).
[322] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011. This type of racial and ethnic diversity is not atypical. For instance the 2001 Mosque in America Report, indicated that "Only 7% of mosques are attended by only one ethnic group. Almost 90% of all mosques have some South Asians, African Americans, and Arabs." Ihsan Bagby, "The Mosque in America: A National Portrait," 19.
[323] For an extensive discussion of the issue of Shiite-Sunni relations in American prisons see Takim, *Shi'ism in America*.
[324] Thomas Pugh Jr., "Second Amendment Complaint," 6.

is a bookshelf with various collections of *hadith* on it. The most imposing structure in the office is the desk that the separates us. Over the course of our afternoon conversation and our various conversations over the next few years, I come to realize that Salahuddin embodies a vast constellation of issues pertinent to the chaplaincy; not only by virtue of his multiple roles, i.e. imam, prison chaplain, and college chaplain, but also by virtue of his personal history. A history, which led him into the Muslim chaplaincy through a deep connection to the transitions experienced in the development in African American Islam, particularly the leadership of W.D. Mohammed. In fact his own life trajectory puts him in a unique place to understand the ways that the American Muslim chaplaincy has developed and evolved since the mid-1970s.

He tells me that from early in his graduate school career he knew that he wanted to serve as a chaplain: "So even when I was writing information on what brought me to the program and what I wanted to do I mentioned that I would really love to be a chaplain, to come back to the prisons to help people get out of prison, really get their lives together and get out of prison."[325] That was in 1983, while Salahuddin was incarcerated at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. The program that he is speaking about is a Master's degree that The New York Theological Seminary offered to inmates in Theology and Pastoral Counseling. That Salahuddin was incarcerated in the same prison system in which he would eventually serve as a chaplain, is important for a host of reasons, not the least of which is his ability to relate to the inmates he works with. Although we do not go into the details of the exact events which lead to his arrest and subsequent incarceration during much of the 1970s and early 1980s, he makes it clear that he was caught up at a young age in an atmosphere of self-exploration: "There was a lot of conflict, a lot of consciousness-raising. But conflict because of me being youthful and also because of what was

325 Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.

going on. Even though it was the 60s and there was consciousness building, it was still a lot of messing around with different elements - drugs and stuff. And of course that led to incarceration, that kind of thing. So I've been through all of it."[326]

Salahuddin's experiences found him moving through different machinations of African American Islam, from the Five Percenters[327] to the Nation of Islam and finally to the W.D. Muhammad community and what he sees as a more mainstream Sunni Islam. For Salahuddin it is a story of personal transition, experimentation, and consciousness-raising. As he moved through these groups and communities, he found the religious path that suited him and gave him the freedom to determine his own professional path and approach to leadership: "My personal history is I started out with a very, very pseudo-type group called The Five Percent in '64. I was right there in the beginning with Clarence. The father. I was 13."[328] Salahuddin's moving from the Five Percenters at such formative moment in the movement's development to the Nation of Islam is indicative of the fluid nature of African American Islam in the 1960s, when ideology, practice, and allegiance were in deep flux.[329] A flux that Clarence 13X, the "father," was himself experiencing as he vacillated between membership in the Nation of Islam and allegiance to Malcolm X. That Salahuddin was thirteen and a Five Percenter in 1964 puts him at the heart of many transitions for Islam in America. It was in 1964 that Malcolm X had separated from the Nation of Islam and the same year that Clarence 13X had started his own offshoot of the Nation of Islam.[330] It is toward the end of our conversation that I ask Salahuddin about how members of

[326] Ibid.
[327] For a detailed discussion of the history and theology of the Five Percenters see Michael Muhammad Knight, "The Five Percenters: Islam, Hiphop, and the Gods of New York," *Booklist* 103, no. 19/20 (2007).
[328] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.
[329] Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 239.
[330] Knight, "The Five Percenters: Islam, Hiphop, and the Gods of New York," 57.

diverse Muslim groups and in particular the Nation of Islam interact with Sunni Muslim inmates who now make up the largest group of Muslims in the New York State prisons.[331]

Salahuddin's trajectory from the Nation of Islam under Elijah Muhammad to W.D. Muhammad's leadership was similar to that of New York State inmates in the 1970s, who had already begun to move away from the separatist ideology of Elijah Muhammad, starting most clearly with the departure of Malcolm X from the Nation of Islam in 1963. By the 1970s the situation in the New York State prisons was rife for the creation of an American Muslim chaplaincy. After the riot in the New York State Attica prison facility in 1971, when "Muslim inmates mitigated violence and deaths," Islam was seen as a stabilizing force.[332] This political and perceptual change was also occurring at the national level, as can be seen in the 1971 appeal ruling, which overturned the 1964 Muhammad Ali court decision.

When in 1964, Muhammad Ali refused the Vietnam War draft and famously remarked, "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights,"[333] his original plea as a "conscientious objector" was denied by the draft board as follows:

> It seems clear that the teachings of the Nation of Islam preclude fighting for the United States not because of objections to participation in war in any form but rather because of political and racial objections to policies of the United States as interpreted by Elijah Muhammad. . . . It is therefore our conclusion that registrant's claimed objections to

[331] ISPU report. SpearIt, "Facts and Fictions About Islam in Prison: Assessing Prisoner Ra Dicalization in Post-9/11 America," 8.
[332] For a full history see New York (State). Special Commission on Attica., *Attica, the Official Report of the New York State Special Commission on Attica*(New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972). SpearIt, "Facts and Fictions About Islam in Prison: Assessing Prisoner Ra Dicalization in Post-9/11 America," 20.
[333] Michael Ezra, *Muhammad Ali : The Making of an Icon*, Sporting (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 124.

> participation in war insofar as they are based upon the teachings of the Nation of Islam, rest on grounds which primarily are political and racial.[334]

The draft board perceived Ali's petition as a political move despite his insistence that he was refusing the draft on religious grounds: "…sincere in every bit of what the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad tell us and it is that we are not to participate in wars on the side of nobody who - on the side of nonbelievers, and this is a Christian country and this is not a Muslim country."[335] However, in 1971 the court decided that Ali's conviction should be overturned on religious grounds. As the court brief stated: "…in this court the government has now fully conceded that the petitioner's beliefs are based upon "religious training and belief."[336] Thus the 1970s were a moment of transition not just for African American Islam, but also for public institutional perceptions of Islam. For members of the Nation of Islam, like Salahuddin Muhammad, this was a mainstreaming on two distinct levels, religiously as leaders like W.D. Mohammed were turning towards what they saw as a universal Sunni Islam and politically in how they viewed their engagement with American society and U.S. institutions.

These trends coincided with the early years of W.D. Mohammed's leadership of what was then still the Nation of Islam and its search for a universal Islam. Mohammed's push toward a universal Islam came relatively early in his leadership and began in stages without an immediate separation from his father's teaching. In his first interview after his father's death in March of 1975, when asked if his policies would be "exactly the same" as his father's, after some posturing W.D. Mohammed said: "The dictates will be exactly the same as those that were

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[334] "Clay V. United States," in *403 U.S. 698* ed. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit(1971). http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?navby=search&court=US&case=/us/403/698.html, (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.

given to my father…They will be exactly the same."[337] However, not much later within the same interview he referred to himself as *mujeddid* as he explained "Reviver; one who renews."[338] Part of this renewal was a push toward mainstreaming members of his community into "American life" so that they no longer "react as outsiders when defending themselves against injustices."[339] Mainstreaming meant more than just with American society at large, but with the global Muslim community.[340] No doubt there were challenges in this attempt to become part of the global Muslim community. As Edward Curtis has discussed, the tension that exists between the idea of a universal Islam with a particularistic Black American Islam is evident from W.D. Mohammed's leadership of the Nation of Islam, if not for his entire career than at least for the first 10 years. This would often take on the guise of pressure from the immigrant Muslim community, which accused him of a "race based Islam" and his attempt at an exegesis of the Muslim sources (Qur'an and Sunnah) as applicable only to African American history and American racism.[341]

The issue of turning away from a particularistic African American Islam to a more global Islam was one that W.D. Mohammed addressed throughout his life, even from before his father died and he was intermittently excommunicated from the Nation of Islam. In an interview with Clifton E. Marsh he indicated that this push began as early as 1964:

[337] "First Official Interview with the Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam, Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad," *Muhammad Speaks* (March 21, 1975): 11.
[338] Ibid.
[339] David Smothers, "Changes Reflect "Real Interest" of Nation of Islam Founder," *Bilalian News* May 27, 1977, 11.
[340] For more on the issue of "mainstreaming" in W.D. Mohammed's ideology shift see Yuskaev, "The Qur'an Comes to America: Pedagogies of Muslim Collective Memory," Ch. 3.
[341] Edward E. Curtis, *Islam in Black America : Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*(Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 108.

> CEM: …you were excommunicated twice?
>
> WDM: No. Many times – at least three or four times and always for the same charge that I was not accepting the God-image given to Fard Muhammad.[342]

It is not that this connection with mainstream Sunni Islam was entirely without precedent. In 1961, the first edition of the Nation of Islam's Newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, featured an article which lauded Elijah Muhammad's son Akbar for studying Arabic at Al-Azhar, recognizing the import of the Arabic language and a respect for Islamic Institutions of higher learning, while emphasizing the central place that black heritage had for the development of Islam: "…Al Azhar University, the oldest and most distinguished school of learning in the world…Many of the so called negroes are unaware that before Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or Yale were schools, Al Azhar University was established by the black man."[343]

Directly after Elijah Muhammad's death W.D. Mohammed acknowledges a two-part relationship to other Muslims, recognizing Black Muslims in the Nation of Islam as part of the world Muslim community, but acknowledging the unique experience of his community: "All Muslims are brothers. Our relationship will be that of one independent community of Muslims with other independent community of Muslims."[344] An image reflective of this element of his approach can be seen on the November 14, 1975 cover of the newly named *Bilalian News,* which pictures African American men stretching their hands over the globe and shaking the hands of *kefiyyah* wearing men, above whom the words "Universal Nation of Islam" appear adorned by a Qur'an pictured in the center of the sun with the word truth written below it.[345]

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[342] Clifton E. Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims : The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930-1980*(Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1984), 203.
[343] "Son of Muhammad Studies in Cairo," *Muhammad Speaks* October-November 1961, 12.
[344] "First Interview," *Muhammad Speaks* 1975, 12.
[345] See front page of Volume 1 No.1, November 14, 1975 of the newly named Bilalian News, formerly known as

Clifton E. Marsh in the 1984 edition of *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America* emphatically expresses his conclusion that by the early 1980s, the former members of the Nation of Islam successfully and totally moved to "Orthodox" Islam:

> Whether the W.C.I.W. [346] will prosper or not is too early to predict. History will record their achievements and generations yet to be born will judge their contributions. However, there are two factors that cannot be debated: It is no longer a Black separatist movement nor are its members Black Muslims. The World Community of Al-Islam in the West is comprised of Muslims who believe in Islam. *The Transition from Black Muslims to Muslims is complete.*[347]

Although Marsh expresses none of the lingering tensions that existed and still exist between the "orthodoxing" of Black Islam and the need to maintain a connection with the specific problems facing African Americans in the United States, his words do exemplify the desire of W.D. Mohammed to turn his movement away from the separatism of the past and toward joining the world Muslim community. This meant not only joining the world Muslim community, but also uniting the local Muslim community in the United States. Reflective of this was his vision in 1979 of the future of his community: "I hope the year 2000 the World Community of Al-Islam in the West will be called American Muslims. I hope Muslims will be so comfortable in America that we won't have to introduce any structure or anything, just be American Muslims."[348]

This is the sea of change that Salahuddin experienced during his incarceration when he met Warith Deen Umar in 1975. From 1975 until his retirement in 2000, Warith Deen Umar

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Muhammad Speaks." Edward Curtis has also pointed to this image in his discussion of W.D. Mohammed's stress on "interracial Muslim unity and the nonracial character of Islam;" Curtis, *Islam in Black America : Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*, 115.

[346] From 1976-1980, under the leadership of W.D. Mohammed, the Nation of Islam's name was changed to the "World Community of Al-Islam in the West (WCIW)." In 1980 the name was changed to the "American Muslim Mission," in 1997 to the "Muslim American Society," and finally in 2002, to the "American Society of Muslims." For a more detailed discussion see the *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History,* "World Community of al-Islam in the West."

[347] Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims : The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930-1980*, 201.

[348] *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*(Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 168.

would be responsible for hiring all Muslim chaplains for the New York State Department of Corrections. The decision to begin hiring full-time paid Muslim chaplains was a transition for the New York State Department of Corrections (DOC). Up until Umar's hiring, Muslim chaplains from diverse communities, including the Nation of Islam, Moorish Science Temple, Dar ul-Islam, Ahmadiyya, etc., were all volunteers, who would visit inmates with the permission of the prison administrators.[349] The most visible and well organized of these was the Nation of Islam Prison Ministries, which began with the incarceration of Elijah Muhammad in the 1940s and had grown into a powerful advocacy group for African American prisoners both Muslim and non-Muslim.[350] Given the fraught relationship between the New York State DOC administration and the Nation of Islam, the DOC never hired members of the Nation of Islam to serve as chaplains. However, at the time of Warith Deen Umar's hiring, the ideological transition implemented by W.D. Mohammed and his followers and the national climate, allowed for a formal détente and an acknowledgement of the need to hire Muslim prison chaplains to serve a large and growing community of inmates.

Ten years later in 1985, after being released from prison, Salahuddin was hired by Warith Deen Umar, as a chaplain for the New York State Department of Corrections: "And then…a job opening came for me to become a chaplain for the Department of Corrections. I was hired on December 5th, 1985 as a chaplain. My pay station was Fishkill Correctional Facility, but then I worked at Downstate and at Beacon, which is a medium, a minimum, and a max."[351] By the time Salahuddin was hired as a prison chaplain, before being released from prison, he had received his Master's degree from the New York Theological Seminary and had served as an inmate leader or

[349] Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*.
[350] Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, 98.
[351] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.

imam: "And inside I had worked before we even had chaplains coming in. They actually called the inmate leader the Imam, so I was in that position. And of course, eventually we were able to get them not to call an inmate an imam, and we were calling him an *amir* or a facilitator or something like that."[352] The issue of inmate imams is one of the first that Salahuddin mentions as he describes his life's trajectory into the chaplaincy. The fact that he served as an inmate imam is significant to his understanding of his role as a prison chaplain and his status as an insider who had to regain legitimacy after leaving prison.

As discussed in earlier chapters, organizations such as the Muslim Chaplains Association and degree granting institutions, like The Hartford Seminary, make a clear distinction between a chaplain and an imam. However, the distinction is not always a hard and fast one and is often particularly difficult to make where male Muslim prison chaplains are concerned. In part this difficulty is determined by the fact that Muslim inmates often choose a religious leader or "imam" from among their own ranks and view chaplains as outsiders who are paid by state and in turn cannot be trusted. In this regard Salahuddin briefly relates one of his encounters: "Once when I came in Fishkill one of the guys said, and I guess they were talking about it, they said, "Well you work for the government. You get paid by the government."[353]

This type of mistrust indicates that prison chaplains are forced into a balancing act between their role as advocates and caregivers and the necessity to establish a level of authority, which places them over the inmate imam.[354] In January of 2012, I interviewed Zain Abdullah, who articulated what had been his own concerns about inmate imams:

> …so for myself as a Muslim Chaplain there was this conflict of power and authority. Whose the real imam? The one who was hired by the State or the inmate could an inmate

[352] Ibid.
[353] Ibid.
[354] Dubler, *Down in the Chapel : Religious Life in an American Prison*, 60-62.

> *be* an Imam, in the real true sense of the word, because if they're in prison this person is incarcerated. So, me being a Chaplain, there was this kind of tension.[355]

Given this potentially contentious relationship between chaplains and inmates and the balance that chaplains have to maintain between their profession and the institution, the title although arbitrary can be a significant indicator of one's authority. The simultaneity of the arbitrary and the weighty comes through when Salahuddin recollects the time when he was hired:

> …we knew that the chaplain position, the title was an occupational title. At one time it meant one thing, but now it's very inclusive. We have all kinds of chaplains now, not just Protestant or Catholic. So, in coming on as a chaplain we were told by Warith Deen Umar, everyone who was hired, we were told, "Do you have a problem with being called an imam? Because it would distinguish you - you're not just a chaplain. You are an imam." And so that was something we all had to agree to and also that we should continue in our education.[356]

There are two main points to emphasize. The first is the view that the title imam is not to be taken lightly and the second is that the title chaplain is not enough to distinguish the individual as religious leader in the prison setting. It is clear from Salahuddin's intonation that Warith Deen Umar's question also had the tenor of a warning and an air of gravity; that Salahuddin himself takes the relationship between the titles of imam and chaplain seriously. The fact that the mention of continuing one's education reads as an afterthought does not reflect a nonchalance about educational requirements, but rather an recognition that in this formative period there was a primary need to establish legitimacy and signs of the profession, before establishing educational requirements. As good example of this is Bilal Ansari who worked in

[355] Zain Abdullah, telephone interview with the author, January 17, 2011.
[356] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.

the Connecticut Department of Corrections for nine years before receiving training at the Hartford Seminary.[357]

Salahuddin's own views on the importance of chaplaincy education and training are indicative of shifting trends. Despite the fact that the educational requirements for American Muslim chaplains have been informal and the educational standards were lower for Muslim chaplains than for other groups, Salahuddin pursued a Graduate certificate in Islamic chaplaincy which included CPE training in 2007 and a Doctorate of Ministry in Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations in 2010:

> What happened, really, with the Muslims, unlike those who have been ordained in the ministry, Maybe some of their training they had to do it, but when they began to hire Muslim chaplains, they say the bar went down in terms of formal education, secular education. So we have chaplains who don't have the degrees. I was one of the ones who came in with a Master's Degree. Most of them didn't have it. Then we have some who came in from other countries that had degrees from those countries. But many of the people that I've come in contact with, even with those degrees, saw how important it was to get the degrees over here, so that's what they're doing.

As with many of the Muslim chaplains I have spoken to, it was with his work in the hospitals, training in CPE that Salahuddin's true passion for the chaplaincy and introspective pastoral care came out. He also expresses the ways in which the ethic of interfaith relations and multifaith care helped him to develop his own understanding of Islam.

> …it made me see things a lot differently…So much so that I dealt with my mother that way. My mother was dying, and we are a religion that proselytizes, so I wanted my mother to become a Muslim. But my training said don't. I let her stay where she was…Had I not gone through that training I probably would have been insisting, "Come on, come on, you don't want to suffer anymore, come on." But I didn't do it.

In other words he was able, through his training, to embrace an approach to care that went beyond certain Islamic prescriptions for behavior with non-Muslims. Proselytization is

[357] Danny Alpert, "The Calling,"(December 20, 2010), Part I, minute 43:10.

often one of the most contentious issues for chaplains whose religious commitments require them to proselytize, but who work in institutions where they are legally bound not to proselytize. In this case Salahuddin took it one step further by internalizing the pastoral elements of his training outside of the institutional setting. In addition to framing his approach to care, CPE reaffirmed his connection to some of the principles he takes from the work and writings of W.D. Muhammad, such as that expressed in the opening quotation to this chapter. Salahuddin says of W.D. Muhammad's teachings that "I still accept and love him because I believe that what he did, in fact with the whole interfaith movement that we see today, he lead that."[358]

Although education is essential to Salahuddin's development as a chaplain, when he started his work in the prisons, there was no replacement for establishing one's authority and legitimacy with the inmates. For Salahuddin that authority came from his intimate knowledge of life in the prison setting. Nonetheless, the issue of the title of imam remains important until today, as some inmate groups still emphasize the idea that a religious leader can only "emerge organically from out of the group itself."[359] As asserting one's title seems like a herculean task, I query Salahuddin more about the ways that prison chaplains adopted the title imam and attempted to change the inmate imam's title to *amir*:

> That happened around, '86, '87, '88, around that time it was changing. But what happened, some of the inmates clung to the title so much. They felt like we're trying to take over, that this is there thing and we're trying to take over, as if we're going to usurp their power or their power of authority to some extent. But, the reality is they're in there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so they're still going to have some power and authority…But the understanding that they have, that the Qur'an says to select one from among you, they said among you meaning them, no: among you meaning among you Muslims, period.[360]

358 Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, New Burgh, New York, December 14, 2011.
359 Joshua Dubler, "Seven Days of Penitentiary Life: An Ethnographic Studys of the Chapel at Pennsylvania's Graterford Prison" (Princeton University, 2008), 120.
360 Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, New York, December 14, 2011.

Salahuddin acknowledges the challenges of dealing with the inmate imam-chaplain power struggle by relating to the practical realities and psychology of the situation. Here he employs two strategies. The first, a pastoral care approach, looks at the situation and those he serves and acknowledges their needs and fears by helping them understand the authority that an inmate imam fears loosing. The other, is an approach to the inmates' reading of the Islamic sources in an attempt to explicate what the Qur'an intends by "selecting one from among you." Salahuddin's intention is not to dismiss the inmate's process of choosing leadership, but to rather add complexity and clarity to their reading of the Qur'an to allow for greater variance. In this way he envisions his role as a chaplain as part pastoral care provider and part Islamic educator.

Zain Abdullah expresses a similar understanding of his role as a chaplain and the type of negotiation that was necessary for working with inmate imams. Zain is more explicit about the ways in which he ameliorated the fears and defensiveness of the inmate imam when he served as a prison chaplain in Upstate New York. Zain also sees his role as two fold, as a pastoral caregiver and as an educator:

> I had to really make sure that the inmate imam knew that…well, couple of things. One, that he knew that I respected his position in the facility, but at the same time, I wanted to bring him in as one of my confidants, right. I had to make sure that he knew that he was part of my inner circle, that there was no competition between us. I think what helped out is to make it clear that I do realize that I'm an outsider, you know. Some people try to come in and try to establish themselves as the sole authority; I'm the imam no matter what. I didn't… I just made sure to make them know that yeah, so both of us can help the community, so to speak. I can help from the outside, you can help from the inside. And also the thing that helped maintain a kind of equitable division between us was the fact that… because I knew Arabic and I could quote from the Qur'an and I could teach the traditional things, I mean, he respected that and the community respected that.[361]

There is an additional component in all of this, and that is the chaplain's frame of reference and personal history. Salahuddin clearly views his life and experiences as an inmate as

[361] Ibid.

essential to his successes as a prison chaplain: "I have to say that I didn't have the problem that some had because of where I came from. And they had a respect for me, and to see me made them see that it was possible to make the change and to do well."[362]

After about an hour and a half Salahuddin steps out for *dhuhr (*mid-day prayer). We have yet to discuss the two central controversies that have followed him for the past few years of his professional life. Before I came to meet with Salahuddin a quick search led me to some of the details of the Newburgh Four case. What however, I hadn't known about were the accusations that he had dealt with at the Fishkill Prison facility.

When Salahuddin returns from prayer, we start where we left off and I ask him more about the intra-Muslim dynamics in the prison setting. This conversation organically leads Salahuddin to a discussion of Fishkill and the Newburgh Four. The incidents are unrelated, but have become intertwined. The press coverage that has surfaced has conflated the two and connected Salahuddin to a purist strain of Wahabi or Saudi Islam -in the case of Fishkill describing him as an intolerant Sunni chaplain and in the case of the Newburgh Four as the spiritual leader of the mosque the Newburgh Four attended.[363]

Both these incidents are a stark reminder of the charged political atmosphere within which Muslim chaplains and imams work. In general Salahuddin's attitude toward these accusations is a resigned annoyance. He is annoyed that these accusations have surfaced in such a way so as to follow him in his professional life and annoyed that he feels these accusations are unsubstantiated. His resignation comes from the fact that his accusers implicate him by virtue of his affiliations with persons whose actions he could not have foreseen. In particular, his

[362] Ibid.
[363] See Barrett, "How a Muslim Chaplain Spread Extremism to an Inmate Flock: Radical New York Imam Chose Clerics for Prisons."; Perry Chiaramonte, "Mosque Imam Is a Prison Chaplain," *New York Post* May 22, 2009.

experiences at Fishkill are reminiscent of much of the institutional tension that exists between Muslim chaplains and the prisons system. In fact, Warith Deen Umar, the man who first employed him, would be accused by prison administrators of promoting radicalization and hate speech. I ask Salahuddin about his current relationship with Umar:

> I see him sometimes when he shows up, but you know I don't know what track he's on. He had that bad experience with Paul Barrett, and it's just been a big, big thing. And so even with these other people, the latest writer Patrick Dunleavy who just wrote a book called *The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Terrorism's Prison Connection*.[364] He has me in there tied to Umar; he says "this is what we do and what we're teaching and its nonsense." However, Umar did not teach us our religion.[365]

Salahuddin's annoyance with this situation is apparent and he mentions Barrett and Dunleavy with palpable derision. Paul Barrett, a *Wall Street Journal* writer, whose 2003 article, "How a Muslim Chaplain Spread Extremism to an Inmate Flock: Radical New York Imam Chose Clerics for Prisons," connects Muslim inmate radicalization in the New York State prisons to Warith Deen Umar and then to Salahuddin by association. Barrett's article suggests the nature of this connection is tangible in the accusations leveled against Salahuddin by Shiite prisoners, who have accused him of calling them "infiltrators and snitches" during Friday sermons. Patrick Dunleavy's book more explicitly connects Salahuddin's associations in the prison system and the accusations of Shiite prisoners, to radicalization and then to the Newburgh Four. Dunleavy's suggestion is that connecting the dots should lead to serious suspicion regarding Salahuddin's teachings. Referring to the Newburgh Four case Dunleavy writes: "When interviewed by reporters after the case broke, Imam Salahuddin Muhammad said he had never heard of any

[364] Patrick T. Dunleavy, *The Fertile Soil of Jihad : Terrorism's Prison Connection*, 1st ed.(Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011).
[365] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011

jihadists in his prison ministries…it would seem that the Imam…just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time - again."[366]

Considering the increased focus on prison radicalization that began with the 2003 Senate Hearings entitled "Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of chaplaincy in the Military and Prisons," I ask Salahuddin if he feels that prisoners are in fact becoming radicalized and how accusations of radicalization are impacting Muslim prison chaplains. Salahuddin explains, "I don't feel prisoners are getting radicalized, but we were impacted." He returns again to Dunleavy who wrote an Op Ed piece "about phone calls being made to Africa and the Middle East [from the prisons]." Salahuddin comments "Do you know the knee jerk reaction was [to have] all of the chaplains submit their phone logs…So for me in terms of my promotion and all because people think a certain way, they're getting this feedback. So yeah, it affected me."[367]

Further in a May 22, 2009 article the New York Post quotes Salahuddin as saying, "This brother [Warith Deen Umar] has his own mind. We're not teaching hatred." However, distancing himself from Umar is not meant to indicate a severed relationship. In fact he is clear that he finds the accusations leveled at Warith Deen Umar manufactured and inaccurate. When Salahuddin states that "Umar did not teach us our religion" or that Umar "has his own mind," Salahuddin is pointing to an important aspect of how he views leadership. A view that brings his respect for the thought of W.D. Muhammad into greater relief:

> Personally, in terms of my own growth and development and my own study, he remains my leader W.D. Mohammed. I've gained so much from him in terms of what I do in my own life, but even with that, even from the very beginning one of the things he said early on in his ministry is that you can question my authority, but you can't question the authority of the Qur'an. That made me love him so much, because I know coming the

[366] Dunleavy, *The Fertile Soil of Jihad : Terrorism's Prison Connection*, 72.
[367] Salahuddin Muhammad, Interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.

> Five Percenters to Elijah Muhammad to him…No, we are human. And we're going to make some mistakes.[368]

Salahuddin is passionate when he speaks about W.D. Mohammed, but what he finds most compelling about Mohammed's message is the break he believes Mohammed made from the former authoritarian structures of the Nation of Islam or the Five Percenters. Salahuddin connects himself to a tradition of leadership established by W.D. Mohammed that values flexibility in thought and that facilitates an open and insightful leadership: "…one of the things that he (W.D. Mohammed) created, that he wanted to develop which I think he did, is independent thinkers. And that's what I am. I'm not locked into anything - the good is the good. I also have a hadith that I love to use that says, "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer."[369]

In large part, this is the way that Salahuddin works through much of his approach to the chaplaincy and his professional life. He expresses the idea that leadership is a personal and evolving process, one that requires a trust in wisdom in a variety of forms, personal intellectual consistency, and irreverence to calls for unquestioned allegiance. It is the way he takes his annoyed resignation and puts it to use. When he speaks about the Newburgh Four he is troubled by the accusations leveled against him, but sees it as an opportunity to express what he truly believes and indicate that despite his many roles in a variety of institutions his fundamental approach to Islam is the same:

> When that thing happened with the Newburgh Four, all the press was out here and I was talking and talking and talking. And they said, "You work at Fishkill...Do you teach radical Islam?" So I was called to Albany and told, "You really can't say what you do inside the prison." So, I said to [the press] "Listen. I cannot speak to you about what I do in the prisons. But I'm not only in the prisons. I'm at the mosque, I teach at the mosque. I'm at Bard College, I teach at Bard College." I said, "Then, if I teach a certain thing at

[368] Ibid.
[369] Ibid.

> Bard College I teach a certain thing at the mosque." And I said, "Unless I'm a chameleon, I teach the same thing wherever else I am."

His approach to leadership grounded in his statements regarding the teaching of W.D. Mohammed is also one of the ways that he counters claims that he is connected to Wahabi or Salafi Islam. As Salahuddin sees it, W.D. Muhammad allowed for the leaders of his community to critique him and perform their own reasoned analysis, as Salahuddin says: "So if he said something or did something and I disagreed with it, I disagree with it. It wasn't uncomfortable to think, "Well, he's no good because he said this and that wasn't correct. But that doesn't mean you have to throw the baby out with the bath water. "[370] This last point is particularly important to Salahuddin's view of Islam and the work of chaplains and imams. The openness to critique and the ability to appreciate what makes sense from within Muslim discourse and to leave aside that which is either inapplicable or simply destructive, is how he views those he describes as religiously intractable: "Some people they put their blinders on and they only take from one stream, and a person made a mistake so they don't take anything from them. For instance, the Salafi's have a problem with those three books." Salahuddin points to the bookshelf in the corner and I ask, "Which ones?" "The brown ones up there, the second shelf…the forty *hadith*. They have a problem just because the author made some statement…[you] can't touch what he did."[371]

In the same fashion he counters claims that he made incendiary comments about Shiites at Fishkill Prison and was spreading Saudi Arabian style Wahabi Islam. In 2004, Salahuddin's name appeared as a "non-party coo-conspirator" on a prisoner complaint alleging that he had spoken out against Shiite Islam and the trustworthiness of Shiite inmates. This, the same 2004 complaint mentioned above, issued to the United States District Court of New York, describes

[370] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh NY, December 14, 2011.
[371] Ibid.

Salahuddin's affiliation as follows: "Although not named as defendants in this lawsuit, the following individuals [one of whom is Salahuddin Muhammad] are Sunni Muslim chaplains hired by Warith Deen Umar and employed by DOCS, who…have conspired to establish extremist Sunni Islam as the official version of Islam within DOCS and to deny Shiites free exercise of religion and equal protection of the laws."[372]

In a paper he wrote, entitled "The history of Muslim Chaplaincy within the New York State Department of Correctional Services" Salahuddin contends that the above accusations were part of a prisoner complaint that he was never told about. He writes that he only heard about them after the original complaint had been filed, never given the opportunity to respond.[373] In the end, the case and complaint were dismissed, but resulted in the hiring of a Shiite chaplain for the New York State DOC. As Salahuddin tells it: "There was a case with a Shiite prisoner…[that] the Imam at Fishkill called them snitches, and hypocrites…it's really something because as you scroll the case you find that someone put my name in the suit…That's not even my attitude. And really, what I used to do was keep the Salafi's off of them because the Salafi's are very hard on them…"[374] This apolitical attitude toward peaceful Sunni-Shiite relations is also part of what Salahuddin emphasizes about *Masjid al-Ikhlas*. In stressing the mosque's diversity, there is an urgency in Salahuddin's voice, as he hopes to temper the seriousness of the prison accusations, which as he sighs, "always come up."

In terms of how he describes the Sunni-Shiite relations at the mosque he says, "we have an understanding and we have people come to the masjid that are *Shi'a*, it's no problem. We don't get into politics about that stuff…We accept them, they feel comfortable coming here for *jum'ah*,

[372] Thomas Pugh Jr., "Second Amendment Complaint," 6.
[373] Salahuddin Muhammad, "The History of Muslim Chaplaincy within the New York State Department of Correctional Services,"(Hartford, CN: Hartford Theological Seminary, 2010), 12.
[374] Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.

and that's the way it should be."[375] Nonetheless Salahuddin thinks it was counterproductive when the New York State DOC decided to appoint the Shiite imam, Abdul Mubdi, as a result of the complaints filed by inmates at Fishkill. For Salahuddin it was counterproductive because he says "we should all be together." Salahuddin proffers that because the Shiite chaplain serves the entire New York State system, he is stretched thin. As a result Salahuddin often has to counsel and work with the Shiite inmates at Fishkill with whom he says he has a great relationship. With regard to religious observance he tells me that Sunni and Shiite inmates pray together, the only difference is that the Shiites have a separate study group on Wednesdays and celebrate expressly Shiite holidays like *Muharram*. In the same way he describes relations with members of the Nation of Islam at Fishkill. He talks about the fact that they have their own chaplains and celebrate their own holidays, i.e. Savior's Day, but he still serves as the "…coordinator over all of them, because the coordinating chaplain is a Catholic and he feels like I know something about it…"[376] Nonetheless, despite some efforts, he views the differences as intractable, enough so that bringing everyone together at all times is unrealistic.

At the tail end of our conversation, I ask him about Louis Farrakhan, the current leader of the Nation of Islam, and whether or Farrakhan's attempts at mainstreaming the Nation of Islam have resulted in members praying with Sunnis and Shiites in the same space.[377] His answer brings the conversation back to that part of the history of American and African American Islam that he has been an intimate part of. Although he is no longer part of their community or belief system, there is a strong sense of nostalgia as he reflects back on his time as a member of the

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[375] Ibid.
376 Salahuddin Muhammad, interview with the author, Newburgh, NY, December 14, 2011.
377 Amy Alexander, *The Farrakhan Factor : African-American Writers on Leadership, Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan*, 1st ed.(New York: Grove Press, 1998), 183.

Nation of Islam, its message of Black uplift, and the changes that it has undergone, since its heyday:

> As for the NOI now, some of them pray, some of them don't. It's really not the same any more. They're there, but it's really not the same. I look at them and I see what they do. It's not the same. We were top notch, the security and all of that. When we were inside as the Nation of Islam you could tell, a distinct look. Sharp look. Now, there's guys smoking, it's something that we never did. It's not the same.[378]

[378] Ibid.

Chapter V

The Meaning of Pluralism: Military Chaplaincy and Muslim Patriotism

This column is not a naïve attempt to glorify U.S. society when it comes to immigration and integration. This is a not a cheap attempt at patriotism. American society is far from perfect and has its own defects and shortcomings…However, I say in full confidence and pride that the secular democracy and civic society that the U.S.A. has produced so far are still the healthiest on earth and the best available attempt to understand God's pluralistic creation of humanity.[379]

- Abdullah Antepli

We say that the war on terror is not a war against Islam, but that's not how it felt most days at Guantanamo.[380]

- James Yee

The above two quotations, the first from an opinion piece written in 2013 by Abdullah Antepli, the Muslim Chaplain at Duke University and a well known leader in the American Muslim community, and the second from the memoire of Chaplain James J Yee, a Muslim chaplain in the United States Army and an important example to Muslim chaplains of the dangers that confront them, speak to some of the most pressing issues facing Muslims in America. They bring to light serious tensions that exist for American Muslim chaplains, as they work in institutions increasingly suspicious of Islam, and are members of a polity with deep military interests in the Muslim majority world.

For American Muslim chaplains the issues are manifest both personally and politically. Abdullah Antepli and James Yee, are both engaged in a discourse about the relationship of their

[379] See Abdullah Antepli's article Abdullah Antepli, "Only in America…," *Huffington Post* 2013. Available online at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-abdullah-antepli/only-in-america_1_b_3872804.html (Last accessed on June 30, 2014). Reprinted from the *Duke Chronicle.* See also http://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-abdullah-antepli/rowan-county-defense-of-religion-act-mixing-religion-with-politics-in-north-carolina_b_3041608.html (Accessed June 30, 2014), where he discusses the separation of church and state in more detail.

[380] James Yee and Aimee Molloy, *For God and Country : Faith and Patriotism under Fire*, 1st ed.(New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 11.

professions to the public face of Islam in the United States. They speak to a language of patriotism and concepts of American religious freedom at significantly different registers. This language involves reluctance, disappointment, and expectation. Abdullah, as a university chaplain, engages with the public and the university community through a contemporary discourse about what it means to be a Muslim and a Muslim chaplain in America. He and his family have benefited from their time in the United States and are grateful. He is also hesitant and cognizant of the problems facing Muslims in America, but is dedicated to his profession and the American institution in which he works. James Yee's story is a bittersweet one, with a patriotism expressed through deep disappointment. His life had been permeated with a strong sense of his love for America, as his graduation from the WestPoint Military Academy attests. He wrote in his memoire that "…in October 2000…as I took that oath, I felt I had finally begun to live an extraordinary life—partly because of the long, proud military tradition I was joining and partly because of the obstacles I had to overcome to get to there."[381]

Yee's deep disappointment came subsequent to his graduation, when during his service as the Muslim Chaplain on the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, he was wrongfully arrested on September 10, 2003 on charges of sedition, aiding the enemy, spying, espionage and failure to obey a general order. Bilal Ansari sums up Yee's struggles as an American Muslim chaplain at Guantanamo as follows:

> …if you look at his background, his father was military, his grandfather too I believe and he's from West Point. Talk about pastoral theology, God couldn't have provided a better pastor for the challenge of time and place…It could not of been successfully argued or believed other than the fact that patriotism was in his very DNA. And so what he had to negotiate, between God and country and what he had to endure, God bless him, is exactly my point of pastoral over personal theology.[382]

[381] Ibid., 15.
[382] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

Yee's story has strong resonance for Bilal, as Bilal experienced accusations and surveillance during his time with the Connecticut Department of Corrections. Bilal describes the environment at the prison as hostile to his religious beliefs, in one instance finding a wall hanging of a *hadith* purposely damaged. In another instance he was investigated for having an audio file on his computer entitled "Jihad or Terrorism," a scholarly examination of the difference between the two words. In this second instance, Ansari's computer was confiscated and his office closed off. However, despite these experiences, Bilal puts a mostly positive spin on what were extremely difficult situations. Where the language of patriotism and disillusionment are important to understanding Yee's struggle, the language of dedication to institution and alienation comes through when Bilal discusses his own.

Bilal's vision of personal verses pastoral theology is a way of saying that the job of a chaplain requires a lifting of one's own ego to see personal narrative as essential to where they are placed. He views a chaplain's calling as connected to God's plan, in that if no one else was right for the job than regardless of the ends, the journey is vital and the chaplain's presence in that setting is crucial for those being served:

> My father was a pioneer chaplain in San Quentin Prison and an officer of the law in San Francisco, thus it was too in my DNA to serve God and state. I was where I needed to be. God put me in that place although it was hard, and oh, I wouldn't wish it on my enemy and my family was a causality. My divorce occurred the year of the false accusations on my character but only I could go through something like that.[383]

The way that Bilal describes his own path has many similarities to how he describes the one that Yee followed, but one difference that stands out is his reference to Yee's patriotism. While there is no necessary prerequisite for a military chaplain to be patriotic - military chaplains are often caught between the army and their faith - there has been a strong history of patriotism

[383] Ibid.

among them. This is a history that has translated into patriotism within the American Muslim military chaplaincy as well. James Yee's disillusionment with the military is a direct result of how Muslim prisoners were treated at Guantanamo. The opening quotation is in direct relation to this mistreatment, as Yee describes how soldiers made a point of insulting Islam by mistreating prisoners' copies of the Qur'an. In his memoire Yee describes his patriotism as in tact, but his conscience as distrustful: "It also didn't matter that I was a loyal soldier who revered this country so much that I committed my life to serving it…I am a soldier, a citizen, and a patriot. But in the eyes of a suspicious, misguided minority who have lost touch with America's national inclusiveness, above all else I am a Muslim."[384]

Yee's experiences as a military chaplain are extremely important to understanding the challenges facing American Muslim chaplains generally and American Muslim military chaplains more specifically. Part of this understanding comes from the fact that it was in the military where the groundwork was laid for the educational formalization of the American Muslim chaplaincy. It is in the military, where many different faith groups developed a model for chaplaincy both functionally and educationally. In this way, through chaplaincy education, the military chaplaincy contributed a great deal to the charge of multifaith care and religious freedom that Muslim chaplains take so seriously.[385]

Despite the fact, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that the first paid chaplains were in the prisons, it was the military that forced formal educational rubrics on the American Muslim chaplains. The clear example of this phenomenon was the creation of the Hartford Muslim Chaplaincy Program, which was a direct outgrowth of a recognized need for military chaplains,

[384] Yee and Molloy, *For God and Country : Faith and Patriotism under Fire*, 224.
[385] This is not to say that all military chaplains have internalized this ethic, but that the ethic has developed in the military and is actualized for many faith groups.

and as a result, the need for educational standardization. In fact, Hartford's program was designed to be the equivalent of a Master's of Divinity Degree, the minimum educational requirement for chaplains in the military as well as the federal prison system.

In addition to educational requirements for chaplains, the military has been an important arena for a variety of issues impacting Muslim chaplains. As is evident in James Yee's memoires, the military is the place where a chaplain's conflict between allegiance to country and allegiance to one's religion intersect most acutely; a fact made particularly relevant for Muslim chaplains given the political environment since September 11, 2001.[386] The military chaplaincy is one of the main sites where issues of state-church separation have been meted out with regard to the use of public funds in the payment of chaplains. This has allowed for a delicate balance between the free exercise and establishment clauses of the United States Constitution. Finally, the military chaplaincy has time and again proven a testing ground for considerations of religious pluralism.

The importance of religious freedom and religious pluralism to the American Muslim chaplaincy and Muslim chaplains in a variety of institutions cannot be overstated. Abdullah Antepli's opinion piece at the beginning of this chapter is a good example. His Op Ed came on the tenth anniversary of his family's emigration to the United States. It is an expression of the gratitude that his family has for a country they call home after less than a generation. He compares his family's life and feelings to those of his relatives in Europe and laments that

[386] Although there is important work to be done in the realm of military chaplains and how they deal with accusations of radicalism, as in the case of Major Nidal Hassan, this is not within the scope of the present project.

despite having lived in these countries for several generations these relatives do not feel British, French, or German.[387]

Abdullah's comments are not without caveats and he acknowledges both implicitly and explicitly, the difficulties with being a Muslim in the United States, who loves his country, but doesn't always agree with what it does. His praise and gratitude acknowledge the extant tensions: "Despite troubling post-911 realities that often make life very unpleasant for Muslims living in the U.S., despite the rise of unwelcoming and discomforting voices of exclusion and deeply puzzling Islamophobia, every member of the Antepli family feels American without doubts, hesitations or confusion."[388] At least in part, Abdullah's family actualizes their Americaness through patriotism. Abdullah writes, "my wife is considering working as a nurse at a Veterans' Affairs Hospital and serving our veterans…and my 9-year-old son is now all set -- at least in his mind -- to be a pilot for the U.S. Air Force."

The tensions and caveats Abdullah and Yee express are indicative, both historically and practically, of those that all American Muslim chaplains face. These are tensions between their dedication to their profession, the constraints of the institutions in which they work, and their visions of American society. As is clear from the opening quotation, Abdullah values the pluralism of "God's creation" and feels the structures of American democracy and civil society are the best for realizing this pluralism. This theme is one, which the American Muslim chaplaincy has adopted nearly wholesale. Given its interfaith oriented focus, indicative of Muslim chaplaincy degree and certificate granting programs like the one at Hartford Seminary, the Muslim chaplaincy and its chaplains have placed an extremely high value on interfaith

[387] Abdullah's comparisons are reminiscent of the distinctions that James Miller makes between Monist and Pluralist societies, suggesting the Monist societies like France have a vision of citizenship which is less likely to allow for cultural and religious diversity than societies like the United States, which are culturally and religiously pluralist. See James Miller, "What Secular Age?," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 21(2008).
[388] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-abdullah-antepli/only-in-america_1_b_3872804.html

dialogue, religious pluralism, and the freedom of religion granted by the United States Constitution. In their view of the profession, American Muslim chaplains see themselves on the precipice of what Diana Eck calls "the gradual civil recognition of the multiplicity of American religious traditions" and the "iconography of inclusion."[389] Chaplains exist in environments, which are meant to promote religious pluralism either by legal or institutional mandate.

Although many Muslim chaplains acknowledge that American society is grappling, often sloppily, with the growing presence of Muslims in the American public sphere, they see the United States as a religiously pluralist country with the potential to fully realize these values. For these chaplains, the issues of religious pluralism, constitutional freedom and church-state separation, multifaith care, and interfaith dialogue all go hand in hand to inform the mission and activation of their profession.

As Imam and chaplain Khalid Latif, who is the Muslim Chaplain at New York University and in 2007 was appointed chaplain for the New York City police department, has commented: "There's a separation between church and state here that I think is a beneficial thing. … In dealing with a diverse society and diverse population, there has to be a freedom for individuals to be able to explore something that is as personal and communal as religion without a government saying you have to do it this way because this is the way."[390] This is what Ashis Nandy sees as the 'accommodative' trend in secularism, which develops "continuous dialogue among religious traditions and between the religious and the secular."[391]

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[389] Eck, *A New Religious America : How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, xvii.
[390] Shamsi Ali Khalid Latif, and Bashar Arafat, "Three Imams: Shamsi Ali, Bashar Arafat, Khalid Latif," http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication 2014/01/20140129291802.html#axzz37TA4IsyY. (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[391] Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: The Insistent Politics of Silent and Evasive Pasts*(Delhi and Bangalore: Permanent Black in association with Ravi Dayal Publisher Distributed by Orient Longman, 2001), xxi.

This focus on religious freedom is not to say that the discourse is primarily about religion. In fact given the racial and ethic diversity of the Muslim community, the focus that Muslim chaplains place on American religious freedom leads to a discussion of the ways that racism has been reinforced in the American Muslim community.[392] However, within the chaplaincy these concerns have thus far taken a back seat to discussions of religious freedom and pluralism. In addition, paradigms of racism and segregation reinforce themselves as chaplains work in American institutions. Imam Frederick Thafur al-Deen, who served as chaplain with State and Federal Prison system and coauthored *A Question of Faith for Muslim Inmates* in 1999,[393] has indicated that after a long history of African American leadership in the American Muslim prison chaplaincy, the tide is shifting: "In the prison, immigrant imams are getting the jobs as a result of the politics of power. African Americans are becoming the outsiders both philosophically and theologically. In the face of the authority of the immigrant chaplains African Americans are loosing legitimacy.[394] These issues are not new. When W.D. Mohammed took over the Nation of Islam, his community faced pressure to redefine itselves as part of the global Muslim community above the concerns of local African American communities.

Although, chaplains are often aware of the dynamics of race within the American Muslim community their ability to effect change is limited in scope. For example, the Muslims that chaplains engage with are in large part separated along racial lines based on the institutions where they work. For example, a vast majority of university chaplains do not serve in institutions with large numbers of African American students, whereas the soldiers and inmates who military

[392] For discussions of the dynamics of race and ethnicity in the Muslim American *ummah* see Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican : Looking toward the Third Resurrection*; Karim, *American Muslim Women : Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*.
[393] Aminah McCloud and Frederick Thaufeer al-Deen, *A Question of Faith for Muslim Inmates*(Chicago, IL: Kazi Publications, 1999).
[394] Frederic Thaufeer al-Deen, telephone conversation with the author, April 23, 2014

and prison chaplains serve are disproportionately African American. This does not however mean that chaplains themselves necessarily divide along racial and institutional lines, but rather that whom those chaplains serve can determine the priorities of their work. As Jose Casanova has noted with regard to religion, race, and immigration: "…religious and racial self-identifications and ascriptions represent parallel, and at times alternative, ways of organizing American multiculturalism."[395] American Muslim chaplains are part of this equation and as the community of American Muslim chaplains grows, contending with the racial elements of leadership will become a greater challenge.[396]

These issues notwithstanding, the charged political environment in the United States has meant that many chaplains have adopted a vernacular that lauds American religious pluralism. To this end, American Muslim chaplains are eager to change negative attitudes towards Islam out of genuine antipathy to the violence they see embedded within Islamic literalism, and out of a desire to establish a reputable public identity for American Muslims as a patriotic community.[397] Considering public comments, like those made by Congressional Representative Peter King in 2011, who has said, "unfortunately, we have too many mosques in the country" and "85% of American Muslim community leaders are an enemy living amongst us,"[398] approaches to interfaith dialogue is a subject that chaplains take very seriously.

When it comes to constitutionally mandated religious freedom and notions of religious

[395] Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European/United States Comparison," 154.
[396] It is not surprising that Imam Thaufeer al-Deen discussed these issues in the state and federal prison systems, which together employ the largest number of Muslim chaplains.
[397] One example of this type of response can be seen in the position paper presented by the Islamic Society of North America entitled "Against Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Muslim Position and Responsibility," http://www.isna.net/assets/FCNA/AT-Fatwa.pdf (accessed July 19, 2010). See also Harvey Stark, "Religious Citizens after September 11th: The Impact of Politics on the Jurisprudence Concerning Muslim American Military Service," *The Muslim World* (2011).
[398] Nihad Awad, "King's Attack on U.S. Muslims: Head of Cair Says Terrorism Hearings Will Stoke Fears," *New York Daily News* February 28, 2011.Available online at http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/king-attack-u-s-muslims-head-cair-terrorism-hearings-stoke-fears-article-1.139303 (last accessed on October 30, 2014).

pluralism, American Muslim chaplains face a good number of challenges. For chaplains in private institutions these challenges take the form of the ways in which their statements as institutional representatives are perceived and whether or not these statements live up to the expectation of institutional boards and constituents. For chaplains in public institutions, like the prisons and the military, the challenges are more acute, as these chaplains have been the subject of inquiries and suspicion on local, state, and federal levels."[399] For Muslim chaplains in public institutions then, discussion of religion in America often conflates religious pluralism, constitutionality, and patriotism, since Muslim chaplains are under pressure to distance themselves from any suggested connection to a radicalized Islam. Nowhere is this conflation more acute than for Muslim chaplains in the military, where both Muslim soldiers and their chaplains are the subject of political and administrative inquiry.

That being said, the military, to the extent that it is a tactical and logistical institution, provides the basis for much multifaith pastoral care, not in small measure as a result of the fact that in combat situations or on small bases, this is often only one chaplain, and that chaplain has to respond to the spiritual needs of all soldiers. With this in mind, Rabbi Resnicoff, a retired Navy Chaplain, questioned the use of religion specific chaplaincy symbols. Resnick writes in favor of a more universal symbol for military chaplains: "In the militaries of other nations, separate symbols are often enough, because in many other militaries chaplains only serve members of their own faiths. But in our military, chaplains do more: they minister to those of

[399] "Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of Chaplaincy in the U.S. Military and Prisons ", in *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Terrorism*, ed. Serial No. J–108–44(United States Congress, October 14, 2003). This congressional hearing connected chaplains and the organizations they are connected with to Wahabi Islam and the Muslim brotherhood. Available online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-108shrg93254/pdf/CHRG-108shrg93254.pdf (last accessed October 30, 2014).

their own faith, to be sure - but they also care for all."[400] This understanding also resonates with American Muslim chaplains, who place a high value on the multifaith aspect of their work.

For instance, ministry to soldiers of other faiths has been a particularly common occurrence for Muslim military chaplains. In September of 2005, at the first annual Conference for Muslim Chaplains hosted by the Islamic society of North America (ISNA), Army Chaplain Abdul-Rashid Muhammad comments were summarized as follows: "He explained that Muslim chaplains in the armed forces have many opportunities to teach non-Muslims the basic tenets of Islam. For example, in his 11 years with the US Department of Defense, most of his service has been to people outside of Islam. Of the 4000 soldiers and 7000 people that he ministers to only fifty are Muslim."[401] Echoing Chaplain Muhammad's words, James J. Yee expressed a similar ecumenical spirit, when he recalled his chaplain's duties at Fort Lewis Army Base:

> "I also ministered to the small but growing population of Muslim personnel stationed at the base. I spent most of my time counseling soldiers of many denominations in the 730-member unit that I was assigned to…They would come to me with a wide array of problems…during marriage and relationship problems, times of grief after the loss of a family member, bouts of depression…when the stresses of military life seemed too much to bear…[402]

The history of the chaplaincy in the military and the military's constitutional mandate, patriotic rhetoric, and institutional secrecy, provide for a situation in which Muslim chaplains are simultaneously encouraged by the military's commitment to their constitutional rights and disappointed by institutional inconsistencies. This institutional mandate and these inconsistencies have meant that the American military chaplaincy has had a strong impact on how Muslim

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[400] Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff, "A New Symbol for America's Military Chaplains," *On Faith* August 10, 2011. Available online at http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/a-new-symbol-for-americas-military-chaplains/2011/08/09/gIQAmvEm5I_blog.html (last accessed on October 30, 2014).
[401] Available online at http://www.isna.net/Leadership/pages/First-Annual-Muslim-ChaplainConference.aspx (last accessed January, 15 2012).
[402] Yee and Molloy, *For God and Country : Faith and Patriotism under Fire*, 36.

chaplains have come to understand their profession and its obligations.

This impact is in part a result of the United States military's creation of a publically funded chaplaincy since before American Independence in 1775. The publically funded chaplaincy has meant that chaplains view the military as endorsing religious pastoral care as essential to its mission. The extension of that mission to Muslims and other minority faith groups has reaffirmed the constitutional protections that American Muslim chaplains feel indebted to and which they actualize in their daily work, regardless of institution. This means that they feel confident to advocate for their own rights and the rights of their constituent communities; and although more complex, it also means that in general they work to defend the rights of smaller communities within that community as well as individuals in the community.[403] In the case of the publically funded chaplaincy, objections that the use of public funds violates the separation of church and state, will for chaplains naturally take a back seat to the constitutional mandates of free exercise and no establishment. Thus tracing this history of the chaplaincy and the history of minority groups in the military helps build an understanding of how American Muslim chaplains have dealt with the pressures they face. In addition, this history puts into strong relief the salience that constitutionality, interfaith relations, and multifaith practice have for American Muslim chaplains, and the ways in which they interact with and relate to patriotism.

Setting the Stage: The History of Chaplains in the United States Military

In both form and function chaplains' work is reflective of the institution in which they serve. As these are American institutions, a chaplain's calling has been informed not just by

[403] By smaller communities, I am thinking about different sectarian groups. By individuals I am thinking about all forms of individual issues, but specifically when an individual voices an opinion that may go against the majority opinion of the larger community, for example women leading prayer.

religious conviction and institutional processes, but also by the mores and expectations of the society at large. This is perhaps no more evident than among U.S. military chaplains. On one significant level this is reflected historically in the assumed need for spiritual guidance during times of war.

The army chaplaincy began prior to the colonies gaining independence from the British. It was in 1775 during the American Revolution when George Washington requested and the Second Constitutional Congress agreed to pay chaplains $20 a month (slightly more than the pay for first lieutenants).[404] George Washington clearly felt the need for spiritual guidance in the military and wrote 50 letters to that affect.[405] His earliest request was to the Virginia legislature. On September 23, 1756 he wrote: "The want of a chaplain does…reflect dishonor upon the regiment…The gentlemen of the corps…did propose to support one at their private expense. But I think it would have a more graceful appearance were he appointed as others have been."[406] Washington envisioned chaplains as serving many different roles - spiritual, moral, pastoral, and as a unifying force to keep harmony among the troops. George Washington's advocacy for military chaplains set the precedent for paying chaplains with public funds and would have constitutional ramifications for the future of the chaplaincy. From early on this issue was part of the discourse on the chaplaincy and extended arguments regarding the nature of church-state relations.

In fact, throughout the history of the United States military chaplaincy, questions have arisen as to its constitutionality. Military chaplains are hired and paid for by tax dollars and not

[404] Lee Lawrence, "Military Chaplains: A Historian's View from the American Revolution to Iraq - an Interview with the Us Army Chaplain Corps Historian, John Brinsfiel," *The Christian Science Monitor* October 30, 2007. Available online at http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1030/p25s02-usmi.html (last accessed October 30, 2014).
[405] Lisa Miller, "The Calm in the Chaos " *Newsweek* May 7, 2007.
[406] Roy J. Honeywell, *Chaplains of the United States Army* ed. Department of the Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), 23.

by individual religious groups. In fact the issue of a potential violation of the establishment clause has "haunted" the chaplaincy since its inception in 1775. James Madison, in his "Detached Memoranda" worried that government funding of military chaplains might violate the Establishment clause.

> Is the appointment of Chaplains to the two Houses of Congress consistent with the Constitution, and with the pure principle of religious freedom? In strictness the answer on both points must be in the negative. The Constitution of the U. S. forbids everything like an establishment of a national religion. The law appointing Chaplains establishes a religious worship for the national representatives, to be performed by Ministers of religion, elected by a majority of them; and these are to be paid out of the national taxes. Does not this involve the principle of a national establishment, applicable to a provision for a religious worship for the Constituent as well as of the representative Body, approved by the majority, and conducted by Ministers of religion paid by the entire nation.[407]

In March of 1850 the issue was once again on the federal governments docket. At the time several petitions were sent to the judiciary committee of the House of Representatives insisting that the office of chaplaincy in the military and in both houses of Congress be abolished.[408] The House responded by citing the constitutionality of congressional authority to raise and support the armed forces, indicating that military chaplains were integral to the institution. Much more recently the issue was brought to the courts in 1986 in the case of *Katcoff v. Marsh.* The court found in favor of the chaplaincy "In holding the chaplaincy did not offend the Constitution" relying upon the "countervailing considerations of judicial deference to Congress in matters concerning the military and soldiers' reliance on the chaplaincy to exercise

[407] James Madison, "Detached Memoranda" ca. 1817.
[408] Israel Drazin and Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country : The History of a Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy*(Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Pub. House, 1995), 25-6.

freely their religions."[409] In this way, Congress had and continues to reaffirm the precedent set by Washington in 1775.

What the preceding issues bring to light are the countervailing forces with regard to the chaplaincy and the constitution. At the same time that congress and the judiciary have made clear that using public funds to pay chaplains is constitutional, they have had to reaffirm the free exercise portion of the first amendment. The free exercise clause has also meant that the government has had to respond to religious diversity, first by hiring chaplains from multiple religious groups,[410] second by exposing evangelizing within the ranks of the chaplaincy, and third by emphasizing the tenants of the "Free Exercise Clause." As the United States Army chaplaincy website training directorate states:

> Providing state-of-the-art Religious Support training to endorsed religious representative officers (Chaplains) and their Enlisted or Noncommissioned Officer team mates (Chaplain Assistants). With this training, the Unit Ministry Team (at least one Chaplain and one Chaplain Assistant) provides or performs religious services and counseling and ensures the free exercise of religion for every United States Army Soldier and his or her family members wherever those Soldiers or family members may be.[411]

In response to the changing religious demographics in the United States, the military chaplaincy today is much more diverse than it was in 1775, when diversity in the chaplaincy referred to the many protestant denominations represented in the military, along with one "unofficial" Roman Catholic chaplain.[412] This was a time when the military chaplaincy was fledging at best. As military Chaplaincy Historian, John W. Brinsfield recounts, "At that time

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[409] See See Richard Rosen, "The Military Chaplaincy and the Separation between Church and State," (2007), http://isme.tamu.edu/ISME07/Rosen07.html.

410 This diversity has opened the door for chaplains of all faiths including Wiccan, Hindu, and Buddhist. One of the largest challenges is coming from Atheist groups, who are now petitioning the military for their own chaplains. See James Dao, "Atheists Seek Chaplain Role in the Military," *The New York Times* April 26, 2011.

411 For complete information on the U.S. Army chaplaincy: http://www.usachcs.army.mil/training_directorate.html

412 Parker Thompson relates that Louis Eustice Lotbiniere, a Canadian National, was the sole Catholic Chaplain. See Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791*, The United States Army Chaplaincy (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Dept. of the Army, 1978).

there was…no doctrine for chaplains. These ministers showed up…and volunteered…Of the 218 that served in the Continental Army, about 25 were killed or died in the revolution."[413] The chaplaincy grew as an institution during each subsequent war. In the period between 1791 and 1849 the number of peacetime chaplains grew from one to thirty.[414] Although there were no established quotas, this was a direct result of the growth of the population, and in particular the church going population. The civil war saw chaplains serving in both the Union and confederate armies, and by the Second World War the wartime chaplaincy population had grown to 9,111.[415] The increase in numbers during World War II meant that an increasingly diverse population would require a more diverse chaplaincy.

Religious Minority Groups and the Chaplaincy

As intimated in the discussion above, the relationship of the chaplaincy to the First Amendment concepts of separation of church and state and freedom of religion is crucial to understanding the way that American religious minorities have engaged with the chaplaincy in the United States. In fact, the history of the military chaplaincy is demonstrative of government responses to religious diversity in the United States. The first true evidence of this was with the entry into the Army of Catholic and soon after Jewish chaplains. The issues surrounding the commissioning of both Catholic and Jewish military chaplains caused conflict and resistance and thus forced a discussion of the First Amendment.

In the 1840's a group of Presbyterians Nativists from Tennessee wrote to the Secretary of

413 Lawrence, "Military Chaplains: A Historian's View from the American Revolution to Iraq - an Interview with the Us Army Chaplain Corps Historian, John Brinsfiel." One hundred and eleven of these chaplains were in the Continental Army during the revolutionary war, see Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791*, xix.
414 Herman A. Norton, *Struggling for Recognition: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1791-1865 Volume II* (Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army: Washington, DC 1977), 167.
415 Lawrence, "Military Chaplains: A Historian's View from the American Revolution to Iraq - an Interview with the Us Army Chaplain Corps Historian, John Brinsfiel."

War indicating that they did not want their tax dollars to pay for a Catholic chaplain.[416] When President Polk appointed two Catholic priests to join the troops in Mexico, the same group railed against the President and threatened to lead the charge against his reelection.[417] Nativists who supported this line of thinking, wrote that these actions were a "flagrant outrage upon the constitution."[418] The issue surfaced when in 1846 US Catholic army troops in Mexico were deserting due to the confluence of several factors: 1) Their commanding officers issued an order requiring all soldiers to attend services, all of which were protestant services and spreading vitriol against the Catholic faith, 2) the history of defacement of Catholic holy places in the United States, and 3) the fact that the US was at war with a Catholic country (Mexico), which Mexican propaganda described as an "unholy war" and US propaganda described as a crusade against "a world-wide Catholic conspiracy for power."[419]

Similarly, the commissioning of a Jewish chaplain brought to the surface anti-Jewish propaganda and harassment. Rabbis were initially "prevented by law from becoming military chaplains."[420] General Orders fifteen and sixteen, issued in 1861 by the war department stated two formal criteria for the commissioning of a chaplain in the military, that he "be approved by the particular state governor and be an ordained minister of some *Christian* denomination (my emphasis)."[421] Although there was some debate regarding the assumptions built into the general

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[416] Charles J. Stewart, "Presidents and Religious Diversity in the 19th Century," in *Who Belongs in America?: Presidents, Rhetoric, and Immigration*, ed. Vanessa B. Beasley(Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 80.
[417] Polk did not specifically call these priests chaplains and later wrote in his diary that they were "not chaplains...but...employees, such as armies often require, who had been sent out for the purposes stated."
[418] Stewart, "Presidents and Religious Diversity in the 19th Century."See also Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860; a Study of the Origins of American Nativism*(New York,: Rinehart, 1952).
[419] Charles J. Stewart, "Presidents and Religious Diversity in the 19th Century," 79.
[420] Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis : Jewish Military Chaplains and American History*, 16.
[421] Herman Albert Norton, *Struggling for Recognition*, The United States Army Chaplaincy (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Dept. of the Army, 1977), 80.

orders in that they presumed the United States was a Christian country, the orders became law in their original form shortly after being issued.[422]

In 1861, one Jewish Officer in particular, Michael Allen, served as a regimental chaplain. As it was illegal for a non-Christian to be an army chaplain, when his position became openly known and a YMCA report listed him among "unfit military chaplains" public outcry ensued.[423] Soon after, Allen resigned his post. The incident also caused Assistant Adjutant General of the Army George D. Ruggles to issue a statement: "Any person mustered into service as a chaplain, who is not a regularly ordained clergyman of a Christian denomination will be at once discharged without pay and allowance."[424]

In response to these events the Jewish American community began to more intensely lobby for the appointment of Jewish chaplains. One newspaper, *The Presbyter,* was particularly vocal in opposition to the commissioning of non-Christian chaplains and feared the appointment of "Jewish Rabbis, Mormon debauchees, Chinese priests, and Indian conjurors."[425] In July of 1862 after much lobbying of Congress and the involvement of President Lincoln, Congress added a clarification to the chaplaincy provision changing the requirement from "some Christian denomination" to "…no person shall be appointed a chaplain in the United States Army who is not a regularly ordained minister of *some* religious denomination" (my emphasis).[426] Although the immediate consequences of this change resulted in the appointment of three Jewish chaplains, the ramifications of this clarification have had far reaching consequences for the diversification of the US military chaplaincy.

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[422] Representative Clement Vallandigham of Ohio attempted unsuccessfully to amend the orders with regard to the requirement that the chaplain be Christian. See Bertrand Korn, "Jewish Chaplains," *Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College* 1, no. 7 (1963): 9.
[423] Ibid., 58.
[424] Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis : Jewish Military Chaplains and American History*, 17.
[425] Korn, "Jewish Chaplains," 64.
[426] Ibid., 65.

The military is an interesting case with regard to the chaplaincy and representation for religious minorities. As different religious communities enter and/or establish themselves in the United States, participation in the draft or elective service reflects these changes. The military then finds itself needing to respond to these demographic shifts by providing a multitude of services to soldiers from religious guidance to provisions for religious practice. In part this responsiveness is due to constitutional mandate, which requires equal representation among faith groups. In addition the pressing life and death nature of wartime activity gives these specific religious accommodations increased saliency and greater utility. As a result the military has become a fertile and unexpected testing ground for the institutional acceptance of new and/or previously marginalized faith groups.

Expanding diversity of the chaplaincy in the military notwithstanding, there have always existed challenges to providing equal chaplaincy representation for all groups. In large part this has resulted from the rarity of finding high concentrations of any single religious minority group at one base. As a result, chaplain services have always been spread thin. A major consequence of this dynamic is that soldiers have had to advocate for themselves, and as a result it is common to find lay and volunteer religious leaders on many bases and in combat situations. [427]

This has been the case and documented since the Civil War, when it was common for priests to work with soldiers as "unofficial" chaplains. Many Catholic priests volunteered as chaplains primarily for the Union Army to fulfill a growing need among the Catholic military community. "Unofficial" Catholic chaplains served both at the behest of their Bishop and the

[427] The same is true for other smaller military religious communities, such as Hindus and Christian Scientists, but the issues are less acute.

government, while some were considered renegade and were made to resign.[428] For the Jewish military community the lack of proper religious leadership was even more pressing. Individual Jews during and after the Civil War would make contact with their coreligionists in the service and local communities in search for religious support. For Example, in 1862, Colonel Marcus Spiegel an officer of an Ohio regiment mentions in letters home, that he attended holiday services in Norfolk Virginia with other Jews he had met in the local community.[429]

Muslims in the Military: Contextualizing Acceptance and Suspicion

To a large extent the experience of Muslim leadership in the military is similar to that of Catholics and Jews. For instance, rhetoric that Catholics faced during the Mexican-American War strongly resonates with the experience of Muslims in the United States, particularly after the start of the first Iraq War.[430] This comparison between formative attitudes to Catholics in the United States and current attitudes to Muslim has been discussed at length by Jose Casanova: "The contemporary global discourse on Islam as a fundamentalist anti-modern and un-democratic religion shows striking similarities with the old discourse on Catholicism that predominated in Anglo-Protestant societies, particularly in the United States, from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century."[431] While this type of rhetoric and suspicion is still extant in the military, when Islam attained recognition as a religion by the armed forces, it was in a much

[428] Two of these chaplains were Father Paul E. Gillen and Father Bernard M. McQaid. See Aidan Henry Germain, *Catholic Military and Naval Chaplains, 1776-1917*(Washington, D.C.,1929), 49.
[429] Marcus M. Spiegel, Jean Powers Soman, and Frank L. Byrne, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War : Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers*(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 163.
[430] This is not to say that there is a full historical comparison to be made, as the context and time are quite different. It is to point out that there are significant challenges for Muslims in a Christian dominated Army, which when combined with a growing anti-Muslim sentiment and the U.S. military presence in Muslim majority countries can become quite acute.
[431] Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European/United States Comparison," 160.

more hospitable environment from that experienced by Catholics and Jews.[432] For example, discussing Muslim co-located prayer services at the Recruit Training Center in Orlando, Florida in 1979 Lieutenant Commander Ruthie Ayesha Muhammad notes that the "struggles of other groups proved to be very beneficial in this area."[433] By the time Muslims became identified as a religious group in the armed forces many of the issues regarding non-protestant affiliated religious groups had already been resolved.

In 1953 a Lebanese American Muslim by the name of Abdallah Igram a World War II Army veteran and first president of the FIA (Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada), lobbied President Dwight D. Eisenhower for a dog tag symbol to designate the Islamic faith; until that time Muslim tags indicated an 'X' for no religion.[434] Eventually, the letter "I" was placed on any soldier's dog tags, who self identified as a Muslim. In a 2007 interview Private Ace Aossey retold his story of joining the Marines in 1955: "Everybody got their dog tags and mine had an 'X' on it. And I came back from boot camp and Abdullah Igram said, "No, you've got to get that changed." And I did."[435]

Even so it took some time for Muslims to realize that they could self identify as such. When Muslim Chaplain and Lieutenant Colonel Shareda Hosein was first stationed in Germany in 1981 she did not realize that she could designate her religion as Islam and began her military service with "no religion" designated on her dog tags: "I was newly enlisted and only a private. I

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[432] The reality of this environment has changed significantly since the Gulf Wars, September 11th, internments at Guantanamo, and recent events involving Muslim servicemen, i.e. the shootings at Fort Hood by Major Nidal Hassan.

[433] Awad, "King's Attack on U.S. Muslims: Head of Cair Says Terrorism Hearings Will Stoke Fears," Available online at: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/king-attack-u-s-muslims-head-cair-terrorism-hearings-stoke-fears-article-1.139303 (last accessed October 30, 2014).

[434] This was a particularly significant concern for Muslim American soldiers, in that they feared without the proper identification, that they would receive an improper burial if killed on the battlefield.

435 Kyle Gassiott, *For Memorial Day: An "I" for Islam"* podcast audio, See Public Radio ExchangeMay 28, 2007. Audio accessible at http://www.prx.org/pieces/18895/transcripts/18895 (last accessed on October 30, 2014). Transcript available at http://www.prx.org/pieces/18895/transcripts/18895 (last accessed on October 30, 2014) .

didn't feel I could question this element of my service."[436] The Muslim military community posits that the majority of Muslim soldiers are still reluctant to state their religion on their enlistment forms and simply indicate "no preference" under the designation for religion. Some put this figure as high as two in every three Muslim soldiers.[437] The *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History* puts the number of Muslim soldiers in the U.S. Armed Forces anywhere from 3,700 to 20,000, attributing this to the fact that the Department of Defense does not publish official numbers and the reluctance of Muslim American soldiers to identify themselves as such.[438] Similarly, whereas the Fiqh Council of North America claimed that there were more than 15,000 Muslim military personnel in the three branches of the US military,[439] "the Defense Department reported 3,409 Muslims on active military duty as of April 2008, [although] officials said the number could be at least three times higher."[440]

Realizing her right to practice Islam while in uniform and designating Islam as her religion, meant that soldiers like Shareda Hosein combine personal sacrifice with accommodation from the Army. In Germany in the 1980s, for example, the only access to Halal food was through kosher MREs (military rations) and so Hosein's personal decision was to accept the Islamic allowance for eating food prepared by "people of the book," namely Jews and Christians. The Army public affairs office found her a Turkish community in Bremen for prayer and holiday observance. She was given the right to take time off during Friday prayers, although based on who the individual commander was, she had to make up the time, as official days off

[436] Shareda Hosein, telephone interview with the author, August 18, 2011.
[437] Ibid.
[438] Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, 562.
[439] For original request and fatwa in Arabic see Charles Kurzman, "Qaradawi Et Al Fatwa on Military Service," www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi_et_al_Arabic.htm. (Last accessed on October 31, 2014)
[440] World Tribune Staff, "Actual Number of Muslims in the Military Believed Much Higher Than Records Show," *World Tribune* November 10, 2009. http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2009/ss_military0876_11_10.asp (accessed on October 31, 2014).

were Saturday and Sunday and there were only officially scheduled services for Sunday. Finally, during Ramadan she was required to do morning fitness formation, but was exempt from participating in other activities.[441]

The process of accommodation based on situation has continued to be the norm in the Army. In an interview in 1994, Gunnery Sargeant Archie Barnes of the Marines, executive director of the Muslim Military Members group, agreed that in general the military has been flexible during Ramadan at for Friday prayers. He echoed Hosein's early experiences, but emphasized that Muslim chaplains were needed to support enlisted personnel, who "...are often uncomfortable asking superiors to meet their religious needs." "If you understand anything about the military structure," he said, "it doesn't come across well."[442]

Similar experiences of accommodation can be seen in other branches of the military. Dr. G. S. Hyder, an officer and pediatrician, who joined the US Navy in 1973 sees the US military as accommodating and "open-minded" with regard to his practice of Islam: "I would look for a local Muslim community, as there were no other Muslim soldiers on base, as far as I knew. The Navy allowed me to go. One commanding officer gave me a hard time, but I spoke to the chief chaplain, who was a Christian. He spoke to the commander, and I was allowed to go pray at the local mosque."[443]

As opposed to Protestant groups, who have relatively comfortably been able to attend services from a variety of denominations, thus increasing their real number of chaplains, religious minorities have not had the same option. As Shareda Hosein has pointed out: "There are many different sects of Christianity and a Christian can go to almost any of a number of

[441] Shareda Hosein, telephone interview with the author, August 18, 2011.
[442] Andrea Stone, "There Is No One Kind of Muslim," *USA Today* January 27, 1994.
[443] Dr. G.S. Hyder, telephone interview with the author, August 19, 2011.

services. However, Muslims are scattered to the wind."[444] Dr. Hyder, served as a volunteer religious leader at the Naval base in Fort Lee. Hyder's experiences, as an ad hoc and unofficial religious military leader, are reminiscent of those of Jews and Catholics since the 1840s. As he told me, at any one time there can be between 25 and 30 Muslim soldiers training at Fort Lee. Although the military requires that all lay leaders receive a letter of endorsement from the local community, it was only in 2009, after five years serving as a lay leader that the head chaplain at Fort Lee requested that Hyder provide a letter from the Islamic Society Richmond recommending him as qualified to serve as an Imam on the base. It is unclear what the impetus was for this move, but Hyder suggests that it was a result of heightened fears in recent years about extremism in the military.[445]

Hyder's service as a lay leader and his, until 2009, unofficial status is indicative of the state of Muslim religious leadership both prior to and after the commissioning of the first official Muslim chaplain in 1993. Since he was not an army chaplain, but served as a religious functionary, Hyder was given the title Imam, seeing as he served as a religious leader for the local Mosque community in Richmond as well. At Fort Lee Hyder's main responsibilities were leading Friday prayers and giving the Friday sermon at the "spiritual fitness center" which is where Muslim as well as some other religious services are conducted. In addition he dealt with the increasing number of soldiers on the base who had converted to Islam after the first Gulf War. His role did not extend to the pastoral care and counseling expected from official military chaplains, and he could not minister to members of other faiths.

[444] Shareda Hosein, telephone interview with the author, August 18, 2011.
[445] Dr. G. S. Hyder, telephone interview with the author, August 19, 2011.

African American Islam: From Evasion to Patriotism

The need for lay religious leaders like Dr. Hyder even after the commissioning of Muslim chaplains is not a surprise. Lay leaders have been serving Muslims in the U.S. military at least since the mid 1970s. Lieutenant Commander Ruthie Ayesha Muhammad in her book *American Muslim Patriots, Islam and U.S. Military History* has chronicled the activity of lay leaders in the military since 1976.[446] She discusses the desire for official Muslim leadership by referencing a request submitted to the Department of Defense in the late 1970s by soldiers in Frankfurt, Germany, who were part of the American Muslim Community in Europe (AMCE). They petitioned for an Imam, in the Chaplain Corps. Imam Karim Ali, in 1979, stated: "We don't have a Muslim Brother in the Chaplain Corps, but I can see a time — maybe within a year — when that will change."[447]

The attitudes and movement for official representation that Muhammad expresses above are do in no small part to the important change in leadership within the African American Muslim community. This shift, discussed in the last chapter, when the leadership of the Nation of Islam changed from Elijah Muhammad to W.D. Mohammed, would have serious implications for Islam and Muslim chaplains in the U.S. military. Whereas this shift had inherent implications for Muslims in the U.S. prisons, it would change the Muslim relationship with the U.S. military more rapidly than could have been predicted. African American Muslim attitudes to the military, particularly from the start of the Vietnam War until the beginning of the first Gulf War, had been anything but clear. For example, nearly 100 members of the Nation of Islam resisted the draft

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[446] *Ruthie Ayesha Muhammad, American Muslim Patriots, Islam and U.S. Military History(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc., 2010), 37.* Lieutenant Commander Muhammad provides archival documentation to this affect; specifically a letter regarding Imam Daniel Tariq Madyun's prayer activities in the military starting in February of 1976.
[447] Ibid., 40.

during the Vietnam War.[448] As is clear from the political and Black Nationalist doctrines of the Nation of Islam, US military service was out of the question.

The shift in leadership and public discourse started by W.D. Mohammed was formative to the development of the American Muslim Chaplaincy. In this regard, W.D. Mohammed would engage with active institutional patriotism through the military and help to grow and formalize the military chaplaincy for Muslims in America. Lieutenant Commander Ayeesha Muhammad expresses this sentiment: "With this new stance and public declaration of commitment to the American flag and country, the door was now open for Muslims to pursue all honorable career fields."[449]

The transition in the public perspective of W.D. Mohammed and his community allowed a cadre of African American Muslims under his leadership to openly announce themselves as soldiers in the United States Armed Forces. When W.D. Mohammed took over the leadership of the Nation of Islam, he began a process of reform,[450] which exhibited three main trends all in conflict with the needs and ideology of the Nation of Islam up until that point. They were 1) patriotism, 2) consultative leadership, and 3) mainstream Islam, or more exactly "unity" with the world Sunni Muslim community.

The previous ideology of separatism was crucial to the Nation of Islam's larger message of uplift and its position among other Black Nationalist movements. Not only was it essential to the basic message propounded by Eljah Muhammad, one that saw the only way to economic growth through Black ownership in all aspects of a separate economy, but it was also a central theme in the Nation of Islam's view of the draft. The Nation of Islam's position on military

[448] Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, 567.
[449] Muhammad, *American Muslim Patriots, Islam and U.S. Military History*, 39.
[450] This is a process, which according to his 1979 interview with Clifton E. Marsh began in 1974 approximately 9 months to a year before he took over leadership of the Nation of Islam. See Marsh, *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*, 162.

service was clear. Refuse the draft at all costs. Refusing the draft and the Nations of Islam's separatist ideology went hand in hand, as Elijah Muhammad wrote:

> We believe that we who declared ourselves to be righteous Muslims should not participate in wars which take the lives of Humans. We do not believe this nation should force us to take part in such wars, for we have nothing to gain from it unless America agrees to give us the necessary territory wherein we may have something to fight for.[451]

This is one of the most compelling and surprising elements of W.D. Mohammed's move to a dogma of patriotism. It was a reversal of the separatist ideology, which was decidedly anti-patriotic and important to the NOI's rejection of the United States as a racist and violent society. W.D. Mohammed acknowledged the intensity of this change himself:

> After I became a leader I lifted the flag in respect, the American flag. And my picture was taken. [But the reaction was] "Hey there is a crazy man!" Most of my own people didn't like it. I hadn't had a single political leader or church leader come and say we're proud of what you did. [audience murmur] Why? Because most of them feel like they are on the outside too. [approving whispers from the audience][452]

One of W.D. Mohammed's first major moves in the direction away from the separatist ideology of the Nation of Islam was to establish "New World Patriotism day."[453] On July 3rd 1977, he addressed a gathering in Chicago, Illinois in conjunction with the performance of a play entitled, "Community of Self."[454] The first mention of "New World Patriotism Day" came in the June 24, 1977 issue of *Bilalian News,* the event was described as drawing "attention to the sound

[451] Muhammad Elijah, *Message to the Blackman in America*(Newport News, Va. (P.O. Box 5368, Newport News 23605): United Brothers Communications Systems, 1991), 164.
[452] This is from W. D. Mohammed's Cleveland speech. Transcribed by Yuskaev, "The Qur'an Comes to America: Pedagogies of Muslim Collective Memory," 103.
[453] It is difficult to say how members of the newly named "World Community of al-Islam in the West" (WCIW) viewed these changes, although the mouthpiece for the community leadership, namely the *Bilalian News,* certainly touted general approval of these moves. Nonetheless there was clearly some who were still closely tied to the separatist ideology of the Nation of Islam. For instance Louis Farrakhan left the WCIW in September of 1977 and resurrected the NOI in February of 1980, although Dawn Marie Gibson suggests "that he did not attempt to entice W.D. Mohammed's followers back to the NOI." See Dawn-Marie Gibson, *A History of the Nation of Islam : Race, Islam, and the Quest for Freedom*(Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), 71-89.
[454] *Bilalian News,* June 24, 1977, p.18.

moral direction being spearheaded by Emam W.D. Mohammed." In the address itself he acknowledged what he felt was a significant change in America, when "former slaves [were] recognized and respected for what they are, and treated equally…I would betray all of my slave parents if I didn't appreciate this America and this change that has taken place here in this America."[455] His focus during this first "New World Patriotism Day" address was on moral foundations connected to the message of the NOI and his father, and on a transition away from a more separatist ideology. He was developing a sense of interracial and perhaps interreligious harmony that would become the cornerstone of much of his activity in the future. "A great change has taken place here in America. People who just a hundred years ago couldn't stomach the sight of each other are now sitting down in the same companies, the same corporations, and working together as equals."[456] This attitude was palpable in the military from early on. Imam Ali Rashed, the Imam for the Malcolm Shabazz Mosque in New York from February 1976 until his death said: "Yes, Imam Mohammed (W.D. Mohammed) is right, go on in the military, we can be everywhere. There are plenty of veterans right here in this *Masjid*. Islam is going to work together with others to make a society that is decent and strong.[457]

Where W.D. Mohammed's first address was meant to explain the premise of this new attitude to American society, his address the following year exhibited in a more overt display of this newfound patriotic spirit. Describing a night meeting prior to the July 4th, 1978 "New World Patriotism Day," the *Bilalian News* indicates that "…Imam Wallace D. Muhammad asked the congregation to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag."[458] The article goes

[455] Wallace D. Muhammad, "New World Patriotism Day Address," *Bilalian News* July 22, 1977.
[456] Ibid.
[457] Muhammad, *American Muslim Patriots, Islam and U.S. Military History*, 25.
[458] "W C I W Reveals Plans for New World Patriotism Day," *Bilalian News* July 7, 1978.

on to acknowledge the extent to which this move indicates the bold changes being instituted under W.D. Mohammed:

> This was another great and significant move in the reformation and transformation of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West's membership into outstanding examples of model American citizens. Not one to go at anything halfheartedly, the WCIW under Imam Muhammad's leadership has taken a bold and forthright stand to uphold the U.S. Constitution and all the good traditions of the American life.[459]

Although, the *Bilalian News* expressed the "total" acceptance of this new found "reverence" for the flag there were still lingering tensions. Imam Ali Rashed of the New York Malcolm Shabazz Mosque is quoted as having remarked, "We dedicate this day for those pioneers gone before us in the evolution of this WCIW…It is a blessing from Allah that we have Imam Wallace D. Muhammad [W.D. Mohammed] to lead us in today's *struggle"* (my emphasis).[460] Although W.D. Mohammed's is a strong visible move in the direction of a newly found patriotism, it is a patriotism with a strong consciousness of the history of racism in the United States. Martha Frances Lee in *The Nation of Islam: A Millenarian Movement,* points out that the Muslims under W.D. Mohammed "remained vocal with regard to issues concerning the Black community as whole…the Muslims have thus maintained a policy of criticism of government and society that is rooted in their religious faith."[461]

However, and at least in the context of New World Patriotism Day there is an allegiance to the flag devoid of much of the anti-American rhetoric which positioned the Nation of Islam and its publications just three years earlier. And although there is still clear evidence that the W.D. Mohammed community concerns itself with critiquing elements of American foreign and

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[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Martha F. Lee, *The Nation of Islam : An American Millenarian Movement*, 1st Syracuse University Press ed.(Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 73.

domestic policy, in the pages of the *Bilalian News* there was not a more nuanced discussion of what patriotism means for African Americans outside of "spiritual and moral uplift in the American way of life."[462]

The developing relationship between the W.D. Mohammed community and the U.S. military was primarily felt in the growing participation of African American Muslims in the armed forces, but there are also indications of a commercial engagement as well. For example, in "January of 1979, a company run by Muslims closely associated with Wallace Muhammad called Salaam International inked a twenty-two million dollar contract with the United States Department of Defense to produce food packs for the military."[463]

As a result of a comprehensive approach to the military - which actively started as early as 1979, when W.D. Mohammed gave a speech on a military base at a Fort Bliss, Texas - members of the W.D. Mohammed community would become essential to the Muslim presence in the military, advocating for Muslims soldiers throughout the 1980s and eventually founding the Muslim Members of the Military (MMM) in the 1990s.[464]

The development of Muslim military advocacy and leadership in the military from the mid-1970s until the early1990s set the stage for the commissioning of the first American Muslim Army chaplain, Abdul Rasheed Muhammad, in 1993. While the event at the Pentagon in 1993 at which Chaplain Muhammad was commissioned is a crucial moment in the history of the American Muslim chaplaincy, it was W.D. Mohammed's speech at the Pentagon one year earlier, which set the stage:

> I thank America many times. I thank you again, I thank the military, I thank the army, I thank all of you. And I told my sons I'd be proud if my sons were in the military. At one

[462] Ibid.
[463] Curtis, *Islam in Black America : Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*, 116.
[464] Chaplain Abdul Rasheed Muhammad, telephone interview with the author, June 2, 2012.

> time I'll let you know something else. At one time I refused the draft because I was of a different mind…I look back at that and I say oh boy I wish circumstances had been different.[465]

This was a watershed moment. The enthusiasm that W.D. Mohammed expressed at the Pentagon that day was a full unwavering endorsement of the U.S. military and Muslim participation and leadership in it. W.D. Mohammed's speech at the Pentagon was an illustration of his support for the first Persian Gulf War and United States military action against Saddam Hussein. His comments were guided by the fact that the United States military was taking action against an aggressor who had offensively attacked a Muslim country. In his support for U.S. military action in Iraq, he was also acknowledging his support of the many American Muslims serving in the military. His short and pointed speech and question answer period which followed, although a culmination of his political and theological thought over the preceding eighteen years, would have been unthinkable in 1975 when he took over the leadership of the Nation of Islam. As he said at the beginning of his speech to the military and Pentagon personnel present, "I never dreamed of receiving such [an] invitation."[466] Not only did he acknowledge the moment in amazement but he was elated: "I'm like floating on air."[467]

Although unwavering, he recognized that his wholesale backing of the U.S. military would not be acceptable to all American Muslims. However, he did not find this problematic:

> Yes, it is a conflict, it is a conflict of emotions; A conflict of conscience for many. But for me it's no conflict of conscience when I know that I'm on the right side. Once I know that I'm on the right side I have no conflict of conscience, and the war with Iraq I had no conflict of conscience at all. I didn't rush into my decision. I thought it out very

[465] This is part of W.D. Mohammed's response to an inaudible question regarding whether or not there is a conflict of conscience for Muslims participating in the war in Iraq. NIACC, "Imam Wd Mohammed Pentagon Luncheon," in *http://archive.org/details/ImamWdMohammedPentagonLuncheon_020592*(Archive.org, 1992). (Last accessed on October 31, 2014)
[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.

> carefully. I looked at his [Saddam Hussein's] behavior. I looked at what he stands for; and said I'm not to see a Muslim when I am looking at this man.[468]

When Mohammed spoke at the Pentagon in 1992 he referenced his incarceration from 1961-1963 for refusing the draft and the regret he felt. His public statements that day, regarding the U.S. military and the importance of Muslim military leadership, are indicative of the shift from refusal to advocacy: [469] "I would like to be in uniform and I'd like to be an officer, just like this officer over here (he puts his hand on Staff Sergeant Lyndon Bilal's[470] shoulder)…We Imams and teachers of the religion, we have to get on our jobs and do more to make sure that the Muslim community is properly informed of just what is Islam.[471]

Members of the military like Staff Sergeant Lyndon Bilal who had, under the tutelage of W.D. Mohammed, joined the service and established a lay and unofficial chaplaincy were eager to develop a Muslim military chaplaincy. These soldiers and officers continue to acknowledge the importance of W.D. Mohammed's emphasis on patriotism to the expanding ranks of Black Muslims in the military. In 2012, Imam Talib Shareef wrote: "Part of the many contributing and continuing benefits to our leader, Imam Mohammed, is the perception he gave us of service to the Nation. It was his wisdom, logic and patriotism that sparked a significant entrance and increase in Muslims joining the military."[472] The praise of W.D. Mohammed's patriotism that Imam Shareef expressed in 2012 was a harkening back to his own time in the military when he was instrumental in advocating for the first American Muslim Army chaplain.

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[468] Ibid.
[469] "First Official Interview," *Muhammad Speaks,* 11.
[470] See reference in muslimjournal.net, "23rd Annual Muslim Convention Highlights Believers in Uniform," *Muslim Journal*(September 28, 2012), http://muslimjournal.net/mymj/?m=201209&feedsort=comment_count. (Last accessed on September 15, 2013): "…Staff Sergeant Lyndon Bilal, veteran of the United States Air Force. He was facilitator for and introduced Imam W. Deen Mohammed during his visit to the Pentagon in 1992."
[471] Pentagon speech.
[472] "23rd annual Muslim Convention Highlights Believers in Uniform."

Commissioning and Educating American Muslim Chaplains

Today there are twelve Muslim chaplains in the U.S. military, who have benefitted from the twenty years since Chaplain Abdul Rasheed Muhammad was commissioned in 1993.[473] At that time, one of the main questions for establishing a Muslim military chaplaincy was education. When Chaplain Muhammad was being considered for the military chaplaincy, he did not hold a degree with a focus in religion, theology, or chaplaincy. He had been an imam for 15 years, held Master's degrees in social work and guidance counseling, had worked since March 1992 as a chaplain at two prisons, and was a former soldier in the Army. Although these credentials seemed more than enough to qualify him for the military chaplaincy, without specific training in religion or theology from an accredited institution there were no guarantees. The Department of Defense does however allow for "Waivers [to be] considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the critical need of the applicant's faith group," which helped him receive approval.[474]

At the time of his commissioning two groups came forward to serve as Muslim endorsing agencies. They were and still are the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veteran's Affairs Council (AMAFVAC), both of which supported Muhammad, although it was ISNA that ultimately served as the official endorser.[475] In his memoire, James Yee, provides a further example of the issue of religious education for Muslims wanting to become chaplains:

> Initially many people told me this was an impossible goal. At the time, there were no Muslim chaplains in the military, and no way to become one. According to military regulations, a chaplain was required to obtain an advanced degree in divinity through a

[473] There are currently 12 Muslim chaplains in the US armed forces – six in the Army, 3 in the Navy, 2 in the Air Force and 1 in the Marine Corps.

[474] National Guard chaplain corps website at http://www.nationalguard.com/careers/chaplain-corps/guard-chaplains. http://www.goarmy.com/chaplain/candidate-program.html.

[475] Although these are currently still the only two endorsing agencies for Muslim chaplains in the military, there are fledgling organizations in formation, such as the Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut (MECC).

> seminary or religious school. There were plenty of schools that trained Christian and Jewish chaplains, but none for Muslims.[476]

The consequence of this missing educational component for Muslims was to search for or create a program that would avoid the need for waivers and train Muslim chaplains in a way that was similar to the educational training for other chaplains. As a result members of the military chaplaincy corps worked with American Muslim leaders to develop the Hartford Seminary program for Muslim chaplains which from 2000 starting offering a combined Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy. It is currently the only degree for Muslim chaplains fully recognized by the Department of Defense.[477] As it is the only accredited program for Muslim Chaplains in the country, most endorsing agencies refer potential candidates for the military chaplaincy to the Hartford Seminary program regardless of their prior qualifications and experience.[478]

Hartford provides courses intended to address important aspects of the chaplaincy including interfaith dialogue, multifaith approaches to care, and intrafaith awareness. Some examples from the 2010-2011 course catalogue are entitled: 1) *Shi'ite Islam: Thought and History*, which describes Islam as "both a belief system and a civilization, therefore all movements, sects and schools of thought will be treated as an integral part of Islam, broadly understood," 2) *Dialogue in a World of Difference*, described in the 2004-5 & 2010-2010 course catalogue, as a required course for all Master of Arts degree students engaging with the "principles and the practice of dialogue in a pluralistic world through dialogical listening and cross-cultural conversations in a context of diversity," and 3) *A Theology of the Other: Interfaith*

[476] Yee and Molloy, *For God and Country : Faith and Patriotism under Fire*, 2.
[477] Timur Yukasev, Director of the Hartford Seminary Islamic Chaplaincy program, telephone interview with the author, April 10, 2011. This remains the case today.
[478] Telephone conversation with Diane Smith, Administator ISNA Leadership Development Center, August 24, 2011.

perspectives on God and Salvation, described as asking questions such as - "Is everyone saved," Do we all worship the same God? Can truth be objective?"[479]

As can be gleaned from these course descriptions, the Hartford Seminary chaplaincy program places strong emphasis on issues of interfaith dialogue and intrafaith relations. In addition, the fact that a Muslim chaplaincy degree is housed in a non-Muslim seminary invariably suggests a value and appreciation for the multifaith and religiously pluralist aspects of the chaplaincy.[480] As the main program for training Muslim chaplains, the Hartford Seminary's curriculum has a strong influence on the training and educating of chaplains. The seminary's methodology inevitably has a great impact on the way that American Muslim chaplains trained under its auspices see their work. Hartford's interfaith focus and its development of a Muslim pastoral approach to the American context have been two of the most important elements of the American Muslim chaplaincy. As Omer Bajwa comments: "What I got most out of Hartford Seminary was the exposure to thinking about the way chaplaincy works in institutionalized settings and the way that it works in American cultural context."

As a response to the military's need for multifaith care and interfaith understanding, the Hartford program has maintained a strong focus on issues pertinent to these two areas. Dr. James Jones, a leading advocate for the American Muslim chaplaincy, who is working to establish a Muslim run seminary has expressed reservations about this aspect of the Hartford program:

> The Hartford Seminary program puts a high value on interfaith relations. Interfaith is important, but it would be one of my top five priorities, not the number one priority,

[479] I have selected these course descriptions as indicative of the types of courses given at The Hartford Theological Seminary, but they are certainly not representative of all Hartford courses taken by students in the MA and Graduate certificate programs, which include many courses on Islamic practice, law, and history. These descriptions come from Hartford Seminary course cataloguesand although this is not intended as a comprehensive study of the Hartford Seminary curriculum, a survey of catalogues from 2003-2011 indicates a good degree of consistency, as many courses are offered from year to year with slight variations in description.

[480] Although the seating of this program in a non-Muslim run seminary is an important facet of the value placed on interfaith care, in the absence of a Muslim run seminary there are few if any other options.

> as it is at Hartford. The focus is more academic than confessional. This is about a shortcoming in the Muslim Community. Muslims must do for themselves. Have our own seminary; teaching the *sira* of Prophet Muhammad. Hartford is a Christian seminary, founded on a Christian model. Somehow there is the underlying notion that if Muslims do it by themselves, there will be no interfaith component.[481]

Jones's statement is reflective of the frustration among American Muslim leadership that there is yet to be a Muslim run seminary in the United States. The primary feeling is that a program like Hartford's will invariably provide training that emphasizes the academic and interfaith nature of the chaplaincy over the confessional needs of Muslims. Jones's critique is less an indictment of the Hartford program and more an indictment of the current state of Muslim leadership. Whether or not the Hartford program can exist alongside a Muslim seminary run chaplaincy program, if one is created, is an important question. The second more significant question for the chaplaincy is would the military accept a Muslim run program. These questions are at the heart of the influence the military has on how Muslim chaplains are being trained and what the focus of that training will be. As Jones has indicated:

> An endorsing agency must have a vision of what a Chaplain is and what qualifies one to be accepted as a Muslim chaplain. Seminary education for Muslims should be fully run by Muslims for Muslims. This type of seminary should educate chaplains and imams in how to facilitate individual and communal prayer, Coordinate religious rites, and protect the religious rites of all.[482]

Whether by nature or design, the military has had a strong history of influence on how the Muslim chaplaincy has developed. As discussed above, there is a strong link between the development of educational curricula and the military's vision of the chaplaincy. The American Muslim chaplaincy through the Hartford Seminary program has responded to that vision by providing chaplains with a degree program that meets the scrutiny of the Department of

[481] Dr. James Jones, Project Director of the MECC initiative, interview with the author, August 18, 2011.
[482] Ibid.

Defense's expectations. Nonetheless, the political climate in the United States since the First Gulf War has placed Muslim chaplains and their endorsers under increasing levels of scrutiny.[483] This has meant that the military chaplaincy, while still an arena for American Muslim communal advocacy and a place to develop educational curricula, is also a place where some of the deeper foundations of what it means to be a American Muslim chaplain and how to negotiate between Islam and patriotism are at play. This is a particularly important issue for Muslim military chaplains as they negotiate the needs of the Muslim soldiers they serve. For instance, when the United States became engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan some U.S. soldiers began asking questions regarding whether or not they could in good conscience fight other Muslims.[484]

As the opening quotation by James Yee attests, the position of American Muslim military chaplain has become particularly tenuous considering the state of U.S. foreign affairs and engagement in Muslim countries. This is particularly the case since September 11th, the opening of Guantanamo, and the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood by Major Nidal Hasan, a Muslim U.S. Army psychiatrist. Muslim chaplains see their roles as both challenging and being challenged. As a result these chaplains have also taken on new responsibilities with regard to teaching non-Muslim soldiers about Islam and being vocal against terrorism. Saif ul-Islam, a Muslim Navy

[483] Questions have surfaced regarding the leadership of AMAFVAC in recent years, but not to the degree that surfaced with regard to ISNA, which was named as a coconspirator in a homeland security trial during the Bush administration. In addition the Graduate School of Islamic Social Sciences (GSISS), which was instrumental in creating a training program for new Muslim chaplains, has lost its accreditation due to terrorist conspiracy charges. The implications of these charges and suspicions can be serious for the American Muslim chaplaincy. For example for most of the early 2000s the Federal Board of Prisons was barred from hiring Muslim chaplains due to these charges. A Federal BOP report sums up the issues: "At this time, the ISNA is the only Islamic organization that has completed the paperwork required by the BOP to endorse chaplain applicants. Other organizations can apply to be endorsers for Muslim chaplains, but none has submitted the requisite paperwork. However, the BOP has not hired a Muslim chaplain since 2001, and in 2003 it stopped accepting ISNA-endorsed chaplain candidates until the FBI provides the BOP with any information on the ISNA. This has resulted in a freeze on hiring Muslim chaplains. The GSISS never has endorsed a Muslim chaplain, contractor, or volunteer for the BOP." Office of the Inspector General, "A Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Selection of Muslim Religious Services Providers,"(U.S.Department of Justice, April 2004), 18-19.

[484] Stark, "Religious Citizens after September 11th: The Impact of Politics on the Jurisprudence Concerning Muslim American Military Service."

Chaplain, who immigrated to the United States in 1989 from Bangladesh, concluded an interview in 2006 by commenting, "My fight with them is to protect my religion from that type of hijacking."[485]

In its quest for religious freedom and emphasis on interfaith relations and multifaith care, the American Muslim chaplaincy is part of the history of the chaplaincy in the military. In one sense the historical trajectory has been one of inclusion, freedom of religion, and educational development. In another sense it has been indicative of an experiment with patriotism. In the end one of the consequences of American military involvement in Muslim countries is that the goal for Muslim military chaplains, and other Muslim chaplains more generally, has shifted. It now includes the need to show that Muslim men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces and elsewhere are loyal citizens with allegiance to their country of service. Chaplain Abdul Rasheed Muhammad was directly faced with this issue soon after September 11th. When I ask Chaplain Abdul Rasheed Muhammad about a *fatwa* regarding whether or not it is acceptable for American Muslim soldiers to fight and kill other Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq given the Islamic prohibition against killing another Muslim, he comments that "this question is political and is not the real concern. Why aren't we asking this about Muslims killing Muslims in Syria or anywhere else for that matter?"[486]

[485] See the U.S. Department of Defense website at http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=930 (last accessed October 30, 2014).
[486] Abdul Rasheed Muhammad, telephone interview with the author, June 2, 2011.

Chapter VI

A New Model for Muslim Women's Leadership in America

It is at an 11:30AM panel session on July 4th, 2009 in Washington D.C., where I first meet Chaplain Shareda Hosein. Shareda will become one of my closest and most ardent supporters as I begin my research on the chaplaincy. The event is the Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA) 46th Annual Convention entitled, "Life Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness." Shareda is speaking on a panel entitled "Muslim Women leaders – Establishing a New Paradigm." The panel description reads:

> This session will identify the social and psychological dimensions that contribute to the attainment of leadership roles, and determine the level of female participation in leadership positions in major organizations, as well as help establish a community baseline of gender representation in leadership so that changes in representation can be measured and documented.[487]

The above description indicates a moment of recognition and transition for American Muslim women. It is indicative of their presence as leaders in the American Muslim community, the attempt to counter the negative perceptions of American Muslim women outside the American Muslim community, and the tensions that exist in establishing their presence within Muslim and non-Muslim run organizations. The panel is part of the growing acknowledgement that women's leadership is essential for a holistic approach to American Islam. This includes a recognized need for women to minister to other women, but also, specific to the case of the chaplaincy, women ministering to men.

On the panel with Shareda are several women, all leaders both inside and outside the

[487] Islamic Society of America 46th Annual Convention Program, 19.

American Muslim community. Among them are Asma Hanif, the Founder of Al-Nisaa,[488] who speaks about her experience as the first female Chairperson of the Coordinating Council of Muslim Organizations in DC/VA/MD, Hadia Mubarak, who discusses having been elected the first female president of the Muslim Student's Association, National, and Zakia Mahasa, who in Baltimore in 1997 became the first Muslim woman to preside over an American courtroom as a Master in Chancery. Not in attendance, but on the program is Ingrid Mattson, elected the first women president of ISNA in 2006 and at the time, still president.

The four women discuss the many aspects of their leadership from deciding how their vocations may or may be affected by their Islamic beliefs to how their leadership choices may compromise their Islam. Among the more serious discussions is knowing laughter from the audience about the ways that they are perceived, the amazement they encounter from others who find out that there are Muslim women in these positions, and the often comical if frustrating resistance that they encounter from their male colleagues.

Shareda's story is compelling as it brings together the issues of practice, leadership, gender, and authority. She discusses her career as an officer in the military, her decisions regarding whether or not it was acceptable for her to accept the Army's restrictions regarding the wearing of the *hijab*, and her role as an American Muslim chaplain. As Shareda explains during the course of her talk, she has made the decision to abide by the army's rules and only wear the *hijab* when in civilian clothes. In our conversation after the panel discussion Shareda uses formative Islamic jurisprudential concepts to explain her decision. She explains that her decision to accept the Army's restrictions are based on the jurisprudential concept of lesser and greater harm. For Shareda the lesser harm is to her personal needs, in that her decision to go against her

[488] Al-Nisaa is a non-profit organization that provides health, educational, and social services to Muslim women and children - see http://mnisaa.org/about.

belief in the Islamic requirement to wear the *hijab*, denies an important aspect of her practice. However, in this instance the lesser harm is overcome by her vision that her service in the Army is her *da'wa* (calling). For Hosein then, the greater harm is a public harm, as a refusal to abide by the Army's restrictions will mean having to leave the service, thus harming her mission to counsel Muslim soldiers and harming her place as an exemplar of Islam, her gender, and her station as a leader and officer to Muslims and non-Muslims both inside and outside of the armed services:

> There's a war that goes on in my head, because covering is the essence of being private and keeping my beauty for my home life, my family. And when I wear my uniform I can't be covered, because that's for the public," she explains. It's a big part of my journey and my struggle…I want to be true to both my career paths, my personality and my life. And in every way I feel integrated with both, going from one to the other, with the exception of not being able to cover in uniform.[489]

There are a lot of "firsts" on the panel and so it stands to reason that Shareda will also have that title on her list of accolades. In terms of being the "first women to…" Shareda is similar to the other panel members, but only in a proximate fashion. Shareda is a graduate of the Hartford Seminary Chaplaincy program and was the first woman to register for it, but as she humbly informs me in an email correspondence:

> "I was the first female to register but because of my mobilization in 2004 to Kuwait, I couldn't graduate. I probably would have been the first person to graduate from the course, if my life wasn't interrupted because of war. I wasn't planning on being the first ever, but such is the case when one is helping to change a system. There were three of us affiliated with the military attending Hartford seminary chaplaincy program at the beginning hoping to become chaplains in the military. Of the three, only one is working as a military chaplain. I believe Sister Nurah Amatullah from NYC was the first female to graduate the chaplaincy program from Hartford Seminary."[490]

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[489] Interview with *The Washington Post*: Caryle Murphy, "Soldier of Faith," *The Washington Post* January 20, 2008. Availably online at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/16/AR2008011603131.html (last accessed on October, 30 2014).

[490] Shareda Hosein, Email communiqué with the author, April 25, 2011.

However, more important than the delay in her graduation date is the fact that Shareda's desire to be the first female Muslim Army chaplain has been thwarted. Despite being an officer in the U.S. Army officer and an endorsed chaplain by the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Council (AMVAC), Shareda was refused a chaplaincy post by the Army in 2005. The Army's refusal is related to the view that a chaplain should be able to lead prayer and perform any of the functions needed by the faith community. Given the fact that for most of the American Muslim community and as a result for most American Muslim soldiers, women are prohibited from leading prayer services for men, in the Army's estimation, Shareda cannot fulfill all of the functions necessary of a chaplain. This is despite the endorsement of Muslim organizations and the fact that she holds all of the required educational and officer training requirements. At best Shareda has been allowed to serve as a chaplain's assistant.

The two Muslim Endorsing agencies, ISNA and AMVAC, either support and/or endorse Shareda's application for appointment. Shareda informs me that: "Ingrid Mattson and Sheikh Noor wrote letters of support and AMVAC endorsed my application." The *Washington Post* reported in an interview with Hosein that Ingrid Mattson, president of ISNA told the army that Shareda "would be an asset" to the Army.[491] The Army's refusal can be summed up in a conversation Shareda has in Kuwait in 2004 with the aide to the visiting chief of chaplains: "He pretty much said: 'Hey, we'd love to have you. We need you, but you can't lead prayers with men and women. So you can't come onboard.'"[492] However, Shareda contends that she does not have to lead men in prayer. Other options exist like having a male soldier perform the prayers or inviting an outside imam. The alternative for Shareda has been acting as a lay leader: "Beginning

[491] Ibid.
[492] Ibid.

in 2004 I started as a lay leader. I am now a lay leader at the base in Tampa and I report to the base chaplain. At some point I received approval to bring in a local Imam."[493]

Others have also expressed the idea that leading prayer is peripheral to being a Muslim chaplain in the military. For instance Chaplain Adbul Rasheed Muhammad states, "She doesn't have to lead men in prayer to be chaplain. That's the bottom line."[494] Shareda adds that her gender is a potential boon to her role as a chaplain. She comments that as a female chaplain she can "explain to the spouses, the women, the wives, this is what your husband is experiencing because I've lived the life."[495] When I ask her if men were amenable to speaking with a female counselor or chaplain she says that: "Yes, very receptive. In combat situations women can help soldiers through their humanity and ability to comfort. It is rare to find women in combat situations, even female chaplains. There are not even many protestant female chaplains and there is a big gap in the number of women soldiers to female chaplains."

The Army's refusal of Shareda's petition to become a chaplain brings together several issues related to who determines what is necessary for someone to become a chaplain. In the case of Islam, there is a tension between what the Army requires and what the religious group requires. For instance Catholic's have thus far maintained that women cannot serve as chaplains. The reasons that they give are similar to the reasons given to Shareda; that an army chaplain must be able to perform all liturgical functions. In the case of Catholic chaplains both the Army and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese for the Military have agreed that women cannot serve as military chaplains, as they cannot hold Mass or administer sacramental rites.[496] Acknowledging

[493] Shareda Hosein, Telephone interview with the author, August 18, 2011.
[494] Murphy, "Soldier of Faith."
[495] Ibid.
[496] Jennifer S. Bryson, "Allow Nuns as U.S. Military Chaplains," *On Faith*(April 8, 2013). Available online at http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2013/04/08/allow-nuns-as-us-military-chaplains/20312 (last accessed October 30, 2014).

these facts, Sharon Kugler Yale's head chaplain has said: "As a [Catholic] layperson…I'm everyone's chaplain and no one's clergy."[497]

Getting to the bottom of the Army's refusal of Shareda's petition to become a military chaplain is difficult. In my interviews with military personnel it is challenging to get a direct answer to why she has been refused. Jack Williamson, the executive director of NCMAF, an NGO that assists endorsers with putting through the paperwork for military chaplains describes the process for faith group endorsers of chaplains in the following way:

> The military sets the standards for faith group endorsers: Endorsers must be a 501 C3 IRS Corp and must have had a fully qualified candidate accepted. If not, the military sets requirements, for instance the requirement for a chaplain to have a Master's of Divinity. In addition, the individual endorser or faith group can add requirements should they want to, but have to meet the basic military requirements.[498]

So in one sense the military's rules are relatively explicit with regard to who can endorse a chaplain and what the requirements are for a chaplain, however there is a degree of ambiguity as the military reserves the right to deny endorser status to an organization. In a telephone interview when I ask Chaplain Steven Moon, the Chief of Chaplains in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, how his office views the commissioning of Muslim Women chaplains, and if they are being endorsed why the military refuses to commission them, he comments, "Although there are standards that come from the Department of Defense, ultimately decisions are determined by each branch for which there are often no written policies."[499]

In fact, as Jack Williamson noted, the Department of Defense sets the basic criteria for an ecclesiastical endorsing agency. Accordingly, to be a recognized endorser and organization must meet two basic criteria: 1) It must be a 501 C3 IRS Corporation and 2) must have put forward a

[497] Sharon Kugler was appointed Yale's university chaplain in July of 2007.
[498] Jack Williamson, telephone interview with the author, August 17, 2011.
[499] Chaplain Steven Moon, telephone interview with the author, August 24, 2011.

fully qualified candidate. The military also has minimum educational criteria for chaplains, which is uniform over all branches of the military. Any one applying to be a chaplain must "Possess a bachelor's degree (not less than 120 semester hours). Possess an accredited master's degree of not less than 72 semester hours (36 semester hours must be in Religion/Theology or related subjects)."[500] Aside from these basic educational requirements, each branch of the military has its own physical and age requirements, which to some extent may be waived on a case by case basis. Finally, each ecclesiastical endorser can stipulate other requirements above the basic ones put forward by the Department of Defense and the individual branches of the military.

Thus Shareda's case provides a window into the way that the American Muslim chaplaincy is made to conform to an institution's notion of what religious leadership entails. The Army through its implicit vision of religious leadership has defined the parameters for who can serve as a Muslim chaplain. This is where the chaplaincy's attempt to redefine religious leadership meets resistance. While the American Muslim chaplaincy is attempting to redefine Muslim religious leadership by including women, the constraints that do not allow them to perform certain liturgical functions, like leading prayer and giving sermons, can impact their ability to work in various institutions. Some institutions see these liturgical functions and the pastoral care that chaplains provide as separate from one another, where when necessary a man can be brought in to perform the functions that women are not permitted to. Other institutions such as the Army see these functions as two parts of a whole and require that the qualified professional be able to do both. Nonetheless, institutions often default to choosing chaplains who can serve both pastoral and liturgical functions, which places Muslim woman chaplains at a

[500] http://www.nationalguard.com/careers/chaplain-corps/guard-chaplains (last accessed October 30, 2014).

disadvantage. This phenomenon can be seen when one surveys job announcements for chaplains, which often assume that the chaplain will be able to lead prayers by listing leading prayer among the job requirements, thus disqualifying women from receiving the position.[501] Although it is clear that women are at a disadvantage, it is still difficult to fully quantify all of the reasons why employers may choose a man over a woman, given assumptions regarding religious leadership or the fact that a large number of Muslim chaplaincy posts are in male prisons. Nonetheless the numbers do make the seriousness of the situation clear. Chaplain Mumina Kowalski, the first Muslim women to work in the Pennsylvania State prison system starting in 1999 and a graduate of the Hartford Seminary, indicates in a 2010 study that only 20% of all Muslim chaplains are women.[502]

Thus Shareda's case involves a challenge for the American Muslim chaplaincy, institutional expectations of what a chaplain does, and a chaplain's role within their faith community. Further it brings into question the ways in which the American Muslim model of a chaplain conforms to institutional expectations. In part this is an issue of who gets to define religious ritual and practice for a chaplain, i.e. the believer and the faith community or the institution, and in part it is a question of how a religious community chooses to define religious leadership when gender is concerned. While Muslim chaplains and their training institutions believe that Muslim women can be chaplains, the Army's expectation of a chaplain as someone who must be ritually permitted to perform all of the rites and requirements of a religious leader is where the tension arises. So while members of the American Muslim community are attempting

[501] For some examples and analysis see Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."

[502] See Mumina Kowalski in her Hartford Master's Degree Thesis, "A New Profession: Muslim Chaplains in American Public Life." Kowalski indicates that this is due in part to the fact that a large number of chaplaincy posts are in male prison facilities. As of 2013 approximately one-third of all university Muslim chaplains were female, see Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."For Munmina Kowalski's bio see http://www.hartsem.edu/macdonald-center/islamic-chaplaincy/profiles-in-chaplaincy/

to redefine leadership roles so as to be inclusive of women, the U.S. military is resistant to accepting this new leadership model.

These competing notions require chaplains to find creative ways to the pressing question of whether or not a woman can and should be a chaplain if she can't lead prayer. This is a formative issue, not just for the Muslim women serving as chaplains, but also for the institutions in which they serve. Although Muslim women chaplains are forced to work from within a framework that does not allow them to assume all of the leadership roles enjoyed by male chaplains, they have found creative strategies, circumventing these constraints and acting as catalysts for change. In addition, they often have to prove their religious authority and the efficacy of their strategies in response to the expectations of the institutions in which they serve. These strategies along with their status as pastoral care givers are attempts to provide a new place for women's religious authority outside the title of Imam.

How one translates the word chaplain into a gender-neutral profession, can in itself pose a problem. As Chaplain Mary Lahaj recounts her experience as a hospital chaplain, the distinctions she makes and the challenges she faces highlight the complexities facing Muslim women chaplains as they navigate their professions and the expectations of those they serve.

> Presenting myself to Muslim patients as "the chaplain," with no predecessor, role model, or handbook of instructions, gave rise to some embarrassing moments for me. For example, there is no word in Arabic for chaplain. I remember being introduced to a Kuwaiti patient by an Arabic interpreter as "the imam." The look of disbelief on the patient's face was ludicrous. After that, I decided to introduce myself as "a Muslim sister on the staff." Then I would just go into action, ensuring that the patient's religious (and comfort) needs were met." "I had to keep in mind that if this was going to be a legitimate profession in religion for Muslim women, I needed to describe my role and the imam's role as two distinct jobs.[503]

[503] Mary Lahaj, "Making It up as I Go Along: The Formation of a Muslim Chaplain," *SFU Journal* (Spring 2009): 151.

In the above scenario, the Arabic interpreter who introduced Lahaj could not find an Arabic equivalent for the word "chaplain" and so instead turned to a particularly ubiquitous leadership model, the imam. The difficulty is that an imam is always—or almost always—male. Therefore, as Lahaj explains, she has to keep in mind that she "needed to describe and the imam's role as two distinct jobs." At the same time, Lahaj's emphasis on the distinction between chaplains and imams reflects the way in which chaplains are reshaping Muslim and non-Muslim perceptions of the function and gender of Muslim religious leaders.

The fact that Muslim women can be chaplains, but cannot act as imams, adds an important component to understanding the professional distinction between imams and chaplains. It also brings into larger focus the notion that while a chaplain is not an imam and an imam is not a chaplain, an imam with the requisite training can also be a chaplain, but a chaplain cannot necessarily be an imam. Fiyaz Mughal, Director of Faith Matters, in his report on the Muslim chaplaincy, describes the relationship between a chaplain and an imam as follows: "A clear distinction needs to be made between an imam and a chaplain. *An imam is a recognized leader or a religious teacher who is able to lead prayers in a mosque*. Imams can serve as chaplains within institutions, *but chaplains are not always qualified to be imams*. This distinction is important since some sectors employ chaplains who are not imams" (my emphasis).[504] Two things are clear from Mughal's statement. The first is that whether male or female a chaplain does not have to be an imam. The second is that some chaplains cannot be imams by virtue of their gender.

Implicit if not overtly explicit in the distinction made between chaplains and imams is one of the most important facets of the American Muslim chaplaincy, the ability for Muslim

[504] Mughal, "The Role of Muslim Chaplains in the Public Sector," 8.

women to become chaplains, while unable to become imams regardless of training or education. This idea that a chaplain is distinct from an imam also opens the door for women to become Muslim chaplains, while sidestepping issues surrounding the permissibility of women to lead prayer and give sermons. Given that women chaplains are invariably involved in situations where a prayer service or a sermon is required, solutions are necessary to deal with these eventualities. Since a female Muslim chaplain can technically not lead prayer or give a sermon, what often happens is that either she trains a man on how to perform these ritual functions or a man is brought in from outside the institution where she works.

The presence of women in the American Muslim chaplaincy has resulted in two important phenomena both directly related to how the Muslim chaplaincy is framing itself. The first, as mentioned above, is the strident impetus to distinguish between an imam and chaplain. This means placing greater focus on the pastoral role that chaplains perform, whether male of female. For male chaplains this can require a balancing act. For even when men are acting strictly as chaplains or stress to others that they are chaplains and not imams, those they serve often insist on calling them imam. In addition, as was the case with Salahuddin Muhammad and other Muslim chaplains in the New York State prison system, the title of imam serves an important purpose. Some male chaplains assume both titles and others insist on only using the term chaplain. As Abdullah Antepli remarks on how he calls himself a chaplain, despite having been trained as an imam in Turkey: "I will carry the title Muslim chaplain…I was attracted to chaplaincy. I never wanted to work as an Imam."[505] Nonetheless, the title Imam is often given to male chaplains, their protestations notwithstanding.

[505] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.

The other phenomenon directly related to this distinction between an imam and chaplain is the fact that women's inclusion has propelled the Muslim chaplaincy in the direction of a professionalization, which places it outside of the simple purview of mosque imams who may have some rudimentary chaplaincy or social work training. In addition, this has meant that women are central to the establishment of Indigenous leadership programs. As Ingrid Mattson writes, since most women have not been accepted by Islamic seminaries, such as al-Azhar "American Muslim women are perhaps even more eager than men to see the development of professional American Islamic educational programs."

Through their role as chaplains, Muslim women are not only reframing religious leadership, but they are also changing the emphasis and nature of the Muslim chaplaincy itself. This manifests through the issues that chaplains focus on, such as family planning and domestic violence, as well as the creation of non-Institutionally based community chaplaincies, where the chaplaincy can be a platform for community activism. Some examples are organizations like, Muslimat al-Nisaa, which provides health education and shelter to Muslim women and children in need, and the Muslim Women's Institute for Research and Development, a Bronx-based organization pioneered by Chaplain Nurah W. Amat'ullah in 1997, which focuses on emergency hunger relief, health education, and the transitional needs of new immigrants.

Despite the large contribution that women chaplains are making to the American Muslim chaplaincy they still contend with being religious leaders, who cannot lead prayer or give Friday sermons, as they minister and care for Muslim women and men. The question remains as to whether or not these constraints compromise their leadership roles and lessen their religious authority, and if they do not then how do female chaplains deal with these constraints.

Since the first women began serving as chaplains in the 1990s, they have challenged the paradigm for Muslim religious leadership in the United States. Not only have they challenged the American Muslim community to rethink religious leadership, but they have also challenged various American institutions to rethink the way they define the roles and responsibilities of a chaplain. In ways similar to how Rabia Harris describes the synapses created by the chaplaincy, women chaplains are part and parcel of this process by skirting the lines between the center and on the periphery. For example, while they challenge Muslims to rethink religious leadership, they have thus far also remained within a tradition, which prohibits them from leading prayer services or giving a Friday sermon.[506] This places them adjacent to but outside of those few instances of women led prayer. In addition, when chaplains discuss and explore issues related to gender roles, Islamic law and establishing legal precedent become particularly important, further keeping them connected to the same idea of tradition.

When in 1994 in Captown South Africa, Amina Wadud gave a *khutbah* at a *Jum'ah* service, and then in 2005 led a mixed gendered prayer at The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York; she challenged the typical gendered Muslim model for leading a Muslim prayer.[507] Although there is some precedent for women leading men in prayer, particular if they are more learned, the general consensus has been that it is not permissible.[508] Given chaplains' necessary engagement and responsibility as representatives of their constituents and their communities, this

[506] For a comprehensive set of legal opinions that argue that women leading prayer is impermissible see The Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA), "A Collection of Fatwas and Legal Opinions on the Issue of Women Leading Prayers,"(April 5, 2005).
[507] An excellent discussion of women led and mixed gender prayers can be found in Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism : More Than a Prayer*, 1st ed., Louann Atkins Temple Women & Culture Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).
[508] See Khalid Abou El-Fadl, "Fatwa by Dr. Abou El Fadl: On Women Leading Prayer." Where he states: "In my view, I look at the evidence and ask the following question: if a female could better teach and instruct the community about the Islamic faith should she be precluded from doing so because she is a female?" to which he answers, "no" she should be allowed to lead prayer.

has not been an experiment in which chaplains have engaged;[509] thus far I have found no cases, where a chaplain, male or female was willing to condone women led or mixgendered prayer, or a woman giving a *khutbah.* In the university and college setting, however, some chaplains have given women the opportunity to give a form of Friday sermon that is referred to as a *bayan,*[510] and some female chaplains, such as Marwa Aly, have acted out their positions of religious authority by training male students to lead prayer and having men deliver *khutbahs* that they themselves have written. In addition, female chaplains hold *halaqas* as teachers for either gender.[511]

Activities such as these are reminiscent of studies by Laura Deeb (2006), Saba Mahmood (2005) and Pieternella van Doorn-Harder (2006) of women in Lebanon, Egypt and Indonesia respectively, which highlight the ways in which religious authority works outside the realm of strictly public patriarchal authority, further complicating notions of where religious authority resides.[512] In Doorn-Harder's study of Muslim women in Indonesia, who have "appropriated the authority to interpret the Qur'an," she distinguishes the male arena of being "in authority", thus in a position to enforce rules upon society in the name of Islam, and the female arena, where women are "an Authority" using their influence to change the opinions and consequently the official decisions of those "in authority;" as was the case of the legalization of birth control in Indonesia. One of the significant differences for chaplains is that Muslims in the United States do not have the ability to enforce rules upon society and so the overall authority of any American

[509] It is important to note that these are not challenges for American Muslim women as a whole, as the desire to lead prayer is not necessarily the end goal for many. See Yasmin Mogahed, "A Woman's Reflection on Reading Prayer," (December 19, 2010), http://www.suhaibwebb.com/ummah/women/a-woman's-reflection-on-leading-prayer/. (Last accessed, October 14, 2014)
[510] A *bayan* is often given before a *khutbah* particularly when Arabic is not the native language of the congregation.
[511] Ibid.
[512] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety : The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*; Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam : Indonesian Women Reading the Qur'an*; Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern : Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*.

Muslim religious leader is comparatively limited. However, there is still an extent to which a religious community can assign authority to some leaders over others based on gender. Nonetheless, the status of Muslim religious authority in the United States does allow for greater fluidity, so that authority can be assigned to various people at various times for various purposes.

For example, Chaplain Shamshad Sheikh led an all women's *jum'ah* prayer at Mount Holyoke College. Here the question is that even though she is a woman leading other women in *jum'ah* prayer, there are those who will say that this is not permissible.[513] This is where chaplains engage in decisions regarding what they think is permissible and appropriate. There are several approaches to this issue. One is to consult scholars who have knowledge of the opinions of Muslim jurists on these matters, another is to use one's own reasoning and intuition, and the last is to gauge a situation through the chaplaincy, i.e. what does the community and/or the institutional context warrant, what does the context call for, and what types of answers can one get from the tradition of pastoral care, Muslim and non-Muslim. Ultimately no matter what method or combination of methods chaplains choose, the final decision rests on their shoulders. In Shamshad's case although she studied Islamic law in Pakistan, she consulted with Muslim scholars in the United States, most of whom are invariably male:

> I checked with many *ulama* about this before I started, because I did not want to have any conflict. I always thought that I have to bring pleasantness and peace in any kind of work I do. And any conflict leads to discomfort. And I was very careful with what I was doing. When we say *jum'ah*, *jum'ah* means *khutbah* and two *rakat*…Students used to call it *jum'ah* because it's done on Friday. But it was not the complete format as in the mosque. In other words, when I give sermon I call it *bayan*. We never call it a *khutbah,* because a *khutbah* is given by men only.[514]

[513] In this regard see the story of Bilal Ansari leading prayers for women in a prison setting and the debates that in Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals," 1-5. As Ansari's tells his story the following is evident: "But they were female and could not, in their and the predominant Muslim view, lead the Friday congregational prayer for the prison's 70 Muslim women inmates. Ansari was asked to serve specifically as the imam for the women's Friday prayer."

[514] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.

The language that Shamshad uses regarding avoiding conflict is important to American Muslim chaplains. There is an implicit understanding that their authority and roles in the American Muslim community is subject to the dictates of a community of scholars or *ulama*. The degree to which they are considered part of that community of scholars, will become part of that community, and will influence the opinions of that community is uncertain. In the case of female chaplains, there is no gender restriction for being a member of the *ulama* as there is with regard to prayer, although their numbers are currently limited there is much potential for growth.[515] The other thing to note about Shamshad's statement is the importance of words to the discourse on gender. For Shamshad and the scholars she consults a *khutbah* very specifically refers to the sermon a man gives on Fridays, whereas a *bayan* gives her more latitude. In addition Shamshad is clear to distinguish the prayer she led as different from a *jum'ah* service as that also allows her greater latitude when discussing her sermon and position as a prayer leader. A *khutbah* serves as part of the ritual Friday practice and most Muslim scholars believe only a man can deliver it. Here there is precedence for a woman leading other women in prayer, as two of Muhammad's wives led prayer for women and most Islamic juridical schools allow it. So with the caveat that this was not a full *jum'ah* service and thus her sermon was not a *khutbah*, but a *bayan,* Shamshad led prayer at Mount Holyoke: "We all stood in one line. And I did lead the prayer."[516]

Shamshad's decision-making process in this matter was to consult several different scholars and then attempt to come to a final resolution. As Shamshad describes it, "everyone was

[515] Given the flat hierarchical structure of Sunni *ulama,* discerning who belongs to this group can be difficult in any situation, but particularly so in a non-Muslim majority context like the United States. In this context choosing who belongs to the *ulama* can be quite political, as there is the potential to include and/or exclude intrinsically different interpretive modes. For instance, when it comes to considering women who might be part of the American Muslim *ulama,* scholars like Zainab Alwani and Amina Wadud are important examples, but quite distinct in their interpretations of the Qur'an.

[516] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone conversation with the author, June 15, 2014.

giving me their personal opinions," which for her took a while to process. She had access to several different scholars, who told her ""Sister, you are leading ladies. You can do it. You can do anything you want. Just be careful." Despite there being precedent for a women to give a sermon to other women, Shamshad's discernment comes down to the words she uses and this is where she is cautious: "So I said, I would not use the word *khutbah* at all, because *khutbah* is for a mosque or for men only. And we have to be very careful with our words."[517]

There are other ways that women chaplains engage in the giving of *khutbahs*. Shareda Hosein has brought imams onto her base in Tampa for this purpose. Marwa Aly on the other hand facilitated prayer at Trinity-Wesleyan by teaching male students how to lead prayer and give *khutbahs*. As a chaplain, Aly was the most visible representative of the Muslim community on campus and spoke regularly at various events for Muslims and the broader campus community. However, when it came to the *jum'ah,* as opposed to inviting imams, she facilitated the weekly prayer by arranging for a male student to serve as the imam for the occasion.[518] This gave her the authority to go beyond inviting and deciding who would come to speak, but determining content and approach.

Aly has since left her Trinity-Weslyan chaplaincy position, but she has now taken her teaching to the Internet to aide a larger audience. She has provided a template for the liturgical and ritual aspects of the *khutbah*; these are the Arabic portions that are required before giving the actual sermon. Aly sums up her approach as follows:

> When I was given the awesome responsibility of training brothers on how to deliver the *khutba*, I searched…a complete khutba template that would have the proper supplications and verses from the Qur'an. When I couldn't find it, I thought if I could compile one, it

[517] Ibid.
[518] Described further in Yuskaev and Stark, "Imams and Chaplains as American Religious Professionals."

> would be a good resource for chaplains, students, *khateebs*, and aspiring *khateebs*…I pray that it is beneficial to all those who are interested in delivering a *khutba*.[519]

Aly has also used her blog to write her own *khutbahs* in English.[520] In the case of her online *khutbahs* - which are often posted on Fridays when a *khutbah* would normally be given, but not exclusively - since there is no public performance in the mosque, necessary liturgical activity, or prayer, the word *khutbah* takes on a somewhat different meaning. In this case the *khutbah* is much more of a speech with religious content; for example, when Aly quotes the Qur'an. In addition, these *khutbahs* take on a life of their own as Aly could easily sanction them to be read, in a Friday mosque in a *jum'ah* setting, by a man. These types of approaches have the potential to give female chaplains a degree of, although limited, access to the power of public address during *jum'ah*.

Similar to Marwa Aly, Shamshad Sheikh, upon moving from Mount Holyoke to Quinnipiac College, a coeducational institution, helps her male students give *khutbah's* by teaching them the proper steps and determining content. For Shamshad this is one of the biggest challenges moving from an all women's college to a coeducational setting. At Quinnipiac she has to find men to lead prayer. She calls the local mosques asking them to send a qualified person and determine if he is going to give an appropriate *khutbah,* making sure that the person giving the *khutbah* wasn't delivering "negative" messages: "I sit with the person…How is his *khutbah* is going to be, what kind of message he's giving…how long can he talk for…"[521] Shamshad also trains students on how to deliver a *khutbah,* so as not to have to go outside the campus community. She trains male students, highlighting how to present the material and how

[519] For the sample *khutbah* go to Marwa Aly, "Khutbah Template, September 24, 2011," http://www.marwaaly.com/2011/09/khutba-template-scratching-my-own-itch/.
[520] For Marwa Aly's *khutabh* bank see "Marwa Aly Khutbah Bank,"(http://www.marwaaly.com/category/khutbah-bank/). (last accessed on October 31, 2014).
[521] Shamshad Sheikh, telephone interview with the author, June 15, 2014.

to structure their sermons with a focus on breadth and managing what the other students will take away after the *jum'ah* service.

The shift from Mount Holyoke to Quinnipiac has also meant a change in the background of the students she serves. At Quinnipiac many of her students are from Saudi Arabia who she says bring "a very heavy weight of tradition and culture with them." Given this environment, Shamshad does not give a *bayan* on Friday's before the *khutbah.* She again emphasizes the importance of remaining sensitive to her students' needs and the importance of the *jum'ah* service: "I have to be very sensitive about that. *Jum'ah* is a very special gathering, and you really do not want any unpleasantness or conflict there."[522] The difference in her approach from Mount Holyoke to Quinnipiac reinforces the importance of environment and the population that a chaplain serves. Further, it illuminates the communal variety that American Muslim chaplains are contending with.

Shamshad's experiences at Quinnipiac are indicative of the fact that American Muslim chaplains are constrained by a host of factors, which means every situation requires specific solutions. This variety also means that chaplains have to decide when to avoid "unpleasantness and conflict" and when to push the envelope. Finally, Shamshad acknowledges that the issue of women delivering sermons has been a particularly difficult aspect of being a Muslim chaplain. Shamshad's experiences in a variety of college settings point to the *khutbah* as an extremely challenging issue for American Muslim chaplains. Despite their concerns to properly represent the Muslim community and the institution in which they work, chaplains are ultimately forced to inject their own sense of what is appropriate into a variety of situations, some more delicate than others.

[522] Ibid.

For example, on college and university campuses, chaplains, both female and male, are faced with increasing interest from women students about giving *khutbas.* Although, for themselves female chaplains often consider how their actions effect or are viewed by the Muslim community within their institutions and the American Muslim community at large, when a female student wants to give a *khutbah* or for that matter lead prayer, chaplains are obligated to take the individual's needs into consideration. Not only are their own and the community's beliefs part of the equation, but the individual's rights and the institutional mandates have to be taken into consideration as well. If an individual or group of students request a mixed gendered woman led prayer, issues of constitutionality and free practice have to be considered. Thus far there haven't been any overtly public occasions of women led prayers on campus, nonetheless chaplains are finding ways to include women's voices at *jum'ah* services. To this end, during her time as the head chaplain at Yale University, Shamshad worked with a female graduate student and the male Muslim chaplain. The Yale Muslim community, also a coeducational environment, is quite different from Quinnipiac's mostly Saudia Arabian Muslim population. At Yale Shamshad employed a slightly different method. There she split the *khutbah* into two parts, the female graduate student delivered a *bayan* and the male chaplain delivered a *khutbah* in Arabic. However, when describing the situation at Yale, Shamshad expressed a similar refrain: "We had to make sure that nobody had anything to say about it and it was accepted by the community."[523]

[523] Ibid.

***Bayan* & *Khutbas* in the Universities: Male chaplains working with female students**

Not surprisingly, male chaplains are also engaging with these issues. Male chaplains in the university and college settings are concerned about laying the groundwork for female students interested in giving *khutbas*. Omer Bajwa, Sohaib Sultan, and Bilal Ansari have all approached the issue in a variety of ways by accessing both their knowledge of Islamic practice and their understanding of pastoral care. These three chaplains share concerns about avoiding conflict, while still leaving room for creative solutions.[524]

Omer Bajwa:

So as to develop a sense of institutional history, Omer Bajwa references 2007 and the same situation that Shamshad mentions, regarding splitting the *khutbah* into a *bayan* given by a women and the *khutbah* given by the male chaplain at that time. When Omer began working at Yale, he was already aware of this case. Although most students did not know that this had transpired, a few kept the conversation going, leaving enough institutional memory for this to serve as a precedent for future cases. Omer feels that the environment at Yale lends itself to this type of solution. A solution that he indicates has a jurisprudential basis, but is still unpopular in many circles. He comments, "…a lot of other scholars would say, "Once you open that door, you go down a different path."[525]

For Omer the door had been opened and so he leaves it that way. The issue remained dormant for some time when a senior approached him about speaking during *jum'ah*. Omer discussed the possibilities with the student. He told her the jurisprudential views on women

[524] Although, beyond the scope of the research done here, whether or not male chaplains have greater ability/flexibility to challenge some of the norms regarding women giving *khutbas* deserves further investigation.
[525] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2014.

delivering *khutbahs* and they discussed the positive and negative aspects of doing it, mostly related to what it means to contribute to the community discourse. In the end he presented her with two options. Omer told the student, "you can either do *bayan* which would be separate, and we would tell people 'This is a *bayan* not a *khutbah*.' Or you can write the *khutbah*. You write it, you author it completely, and you can have one of your friends…whoever you're comfortable with, he can deliver it for you."[526] Just as with the cases mentioned above, giving a full *jum'ah khutbah* was not presented as an option, another solution had to be found.

Concerns about the community's reaction are important and Omer indicates as much when he acknowledges that the community should be informed about what would transpire and that this is a *bayan* and not a *khutbah*. The understanding being that whereas members of the community are comfortable with a woman delivering a *bayan*, they will object to a woman delivering a *khutbah.* Without Omer saying as much his approach shows that there is a large gap in his community between delivering a sermon in front of the congregation and leading prayer (given the idea that the *khutbah* is part of the prayer), where the first allows for latitude the second is a line that the majority of the community is not willing to cross. The other option that Omer offers the student, to write the *khutbah* and have someone else read it, has the implication that although the student does not publically perform the sermon, the words she has written remain within the full ritual context, potentially making them weightier. Understanding that even if she wanted to there was no way for her to perform all elements of the *khutbah*, on at least one level, the student's choice was between a full actualization of her words outside of the central ritual and a disconnected actualization of her words as part of the central ritual. In the end the student chose to have a close friend give the *khutbah* she had written.

[526] Ibid.

Sohaib Sultan:

> I think in our community we need to create more and more avenues in places where there is common agreement about the place and role of female preachers and teachers…. I think female chaplains need to feel the alliance of their Muslim male chaplain colleagues. And the Muslim men really need to understand the great, great value that female Muslim chaplains bring, and we need to embrace that.[527]

As the above statement makes clear, when Sohaib discusses women's participation at ritual events at Princeton University, such as *jum'ah* and Qur'an study circles, he takes his role as an advocate for women's participation incredibly seriously: "I constantly try to encourage women to recite the Qur'an." He acknowledges that the conversation is still limited and requires more than just individual chaplains advocating for change, but a larger communal discussion and some agreement on developing opportunities for women as religious authorities. In his effort to makes this happen, Sohaib mentions that oftentimes, female students in *halaqas* and Qur'an study circles start off hesitant to make an ending *du'ah* (supplication) when he asks, but that many of them "have really taken to it." He mentions that their hesitance has a lot to do with the fact that these women are not used to performing this type of ritual function in their communities "because it's seen as something exclusively the role of men."[528] He describes the hesitance as even greater when asks women recite the Qur'an before *jum'ah,* which he says is more controversial than giving a *du'ah.* This is a place where Sohaib acknowledges the import of having women chaplains act as role models for these students, in the hopes of building their confidence. Confidence, which in part requires them to overcome their shyness, but more importantly expands their understanding of what is religiously permissible.

[527] Sohaib Sultan, telephone interview with the author, June 16, 2014.
[528] Ibid.

This is his build up to answering the more complicated subject of the *jum'ah khutbah.* When considering whether or not women can give a *khutbah,* Sohaib feels that he has less autonomy. He recognizes the difficult ground that he is standing on when dealing with the issue of prayer in Islam. This is an issue that he personally wrestles with, but which he says is not about him "it's about the community and where the community is."[529] Similar to what other chaplains have said, Sohaib regards the option of using a *bayan* before the *khutbah* as allowing for more flexibility; although, he does not think that the community he serves is ready for this solution just yet. In discussing the jurisprudence of it he says, "I feel like we're on safe ground." This is important, because given the tension between his own advocacy and the fact that he doesn't think his community is ready, he is nonetheless prepared for the eventuality that the scenario will present itself.

Delving more deeply into the issue, Sohaib builds on the notion of "safe ground" and "where the community is." He is conscious of the fact that the college campuses that many Muslim chaplains work on are private liberal arts institutions, and he is concerned about these campuses becoming "bastion[s] of peripheral Islam where they're just completely non-representative of the mainstream Muslim community." Part of Sohaib's concern is that his students will leave the environment at Princeton, and upon finding themselves in Muslim communities that do not share their views on what is acceptable practice, they will become disillusioned. Sohaib is articulating something central to the experiment that chaplains are engaged in, i.e. can they fully control the pace at which change happens?

One way that Sohaib deals with this question is to return to his role as a pastoral caregiver and teacher. He wants his students to struggle with these issues and consider the

[529] Ibid.

communities they will eventually live in before creating a practice that other Muslims are not ready for or cannot relate to, and as a consequence become disassociated. To manage students' expectations, Sohaib thinks that there are two central issues both ultimately connected to the unity of the community. One is culture, or the idea that it is not as easy as giving into the "temptation to do something radical and say, "We're going to show a new way of doing things."[530] Even if you agree on principle about the permissibility of having a women deliver a *bayan* before the *khutbah* in terms of Islamic jurisprudence, Sohaib emphasizes that the "people have to be ready for it."[531]

The other central issue is logistical. Because in Islam logistics are central to the performance of prayer, this is no small matter. Once again Sohaib believes that even if you are on firm jurisprudential ground a lot of thought has to go into the decision making process. He says that setting up a *bayan* that is given by a woman prior to the *khutbah* "can change even the way that you enter into the space and the way you organize the seating arrangement. If a woman is up there does it make sense for men to be in front and women to be in back? You have to really think about that stuff."[532]

Sohaib's consternation for community, questions the assumption that finding support within Islamic law is enough to change practice, i.e. that just because something is jurisprudentially sound it doesn't necessarily make it worth doing. Sohaib concludes by pointing to this principle: "You can argue that part of *maqasid* (intention of the law) is maintaining the unity of the community. So you can be on safe ground *fiqh* wise, but you might be violating a

[530] Ibid.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid.

higher law."[533] The "unity of the community,' then becomes synonymous with "a higher law." The essential part of that higher law is the principle of unity. So that for Sohaib a chaplain has a responsibility to his direct institutional community of Muslims as well as the larger community of Muslims in the United States and then globally. All of these senses of Muslim community interact in different ways at different moments, and finding the proper balance is part of how Sohaib sees his role as a chaplain and a leader. These different levels of community will not and should not be in balance at all times. However, if nothing else, Sohaib wants his students to understand that decisions involving changes to cultural and religious norms should involve a concerted mental and spiritual struggle.

Bilal Ansari:

Finally, Bilal Ansari presents a narrative, which establishes a somewhat different precedent of strengthening community through changing notions of ritual practice. The story Bilal tells revolves around a young woman who had been disconnected from her faith in Islam, because of bad experiences with her mosque community at home. As Bilal explains to some students when they complain about the plan for her to give a sermon: "Do you want to put her back down in the basement? Exactly where she witnessed her mothers and her aunties going? No, no, no, no, that's not going to happen here!"[534]

When Bilal brought the MSA together, this disaffected student had decided to attend. She responded to Bilal's call for his *khutbah* lessons by agreeing to participate. Bilal describes the exchange as follows: "She asked me, "Can women also lead, are we able to do that, or are you only asking the men here?" And I said, "No, I'm asking everybody here." And then she said,

[533] Ibid.
[534] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.

"What do you mean by that?" I said, "I mean what I say! If anybody wants to do a sermon, you let me know!" And she said "Well I want too!"[535]

After this exchange the young woman was the only student, male or female, to attend all of the *khutbah* classes. No one else showed up. When it was time for Bilal to speak to the MSA about who made it through his class and would be giving a sermon, he presented her as the only student who attended his classes and the only one able to deliver a sermon. Bilal responded to the complaints of some of his male students by providing them with a combination of jurisprudential and pastoral reasoning. It terms of his juridical reasoning he told them "…if you have a religious problem there's always a *rukhsa* a dispensation for you. You can at least go there, pray your *dhuhr* and listen to your sister. At least respectfully listen to what she has to say."[536] The concept of *rukhsa* that Bilal employs is related to the idea that special circumstances can make something permissible that might otherwise be impermissible based on necessity or need.[537] Determining necessity is a very gray area, which Bilal fills with his understanding of pastoral care as well as his understanding of the higher good that can come from these actions.

Just as with Sohaib, Bilal has a concern for the community and strengthening its faith in Islam, but in this instance communal unity is accomplished through enacting change. Bilal was strengthening an otherwise apathetic community. Pastorally, Bilal appealed to his students' sense of justice, giving them a small lesson in enacting pastoral care themselves. He challenged them to think and introspect: "Why can't you have it in your heart to want to listen…how do you not

[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid.
[537] A *rukhsa* is a suspension of elements of Islamic law, particularly in times of hardship. It indicates a built in flexibility or purpose to the law, which indicates that should the potential for harm come to the individual believer then the law can be suspended. This can prove of particular use for chaplains for whom the higher intent of Islamic law of *maqasid* can be considered as more important than the strictures of the law itself. See "Rukhṣa." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2014. Reference. Princeton University. 31 October 2014 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rukhs-a-COM_0937>

know this may increase her faith if she's struggling? What if she wants to see if Islam is right for her? So how do you know that this may not be what turns her heart firmly on Islam?"[538] Bilal's questions probe the students' desire to help someone strengthen her own faith and challenge them to think about how to reconcile this aspect of their faith with their understanding of what is proper and appropriate ritual practice. Concluding the story, Bilal says enthusiastically "so they got it, and when she did it, she said she felt empowered…It has also encouraged more men now to give sermons."[539] As if to punctuate the import and connection between strengthening community and pastoral care, Bilal tells me: "Not only did it meet her pastoral needs, but it met the needs of most of my students. They were apathetic, they couldn't have cared less, and now all of a sudden it gives them a reason to care."[540]

To different degrees all three of the above narratives reveal the inherent complexities between managing the expectations of young Muslims, who may expect rapid change, while maintaining a connection to tradition. As Bilal connects the strengthening of one individual's faith to communal unity and Sohaib is careful not make his college campus a bastion of peripheral Islam, I am reminded of something Omer has said: "You have to have pure intentions and know what your own limits are and know what the limits of Islam are."[541]

None of these statements are mutually exclusive and one can imagine any one of these three chaplains saying similar things with different emphasis. What their statements reveal, whether taken separately or as a composite, are questions essential to the American Muslim chaplaincy, i.e. where is the periphery and where is the center? How far are chaplains willing to move away from one and gravitate to the other? Can the entire model be expanded? And perhaps

[538] Bilal Ansari, telephone interview with the author, June 3, 2014.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Ibid.
[541] Omer Bajwa, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2014.

most importantly, to what extent are chaplains comfortable with the rifts and segmentation that may exist or develop within the American Muslim community, particularly when it comes to issues of central import to ritual practice. Finally, these questions relate to something Rabia Harris said to the National Association of Jewish Chaplains. In her presentation paper, she writes that the chaplaincy is an "alternative line of Islamic religious authority that was independent of mosques, and therefore could engage in social experimentation without offending anybody's status sensitivities or loyalty to tradition."[542] While all of these American Muslim chaplains are fully cognizant of the social experiment they are involved in they all have very different notions of where the limits of their religious authority lie.

[542] Harris, "Adapting and Adopting the Western Model of Chaplaincy " 10.

Conclusion

I interviewed Abdullah Antepli on June 30, 2014 more than two years after we had first met. We were introduced in March of 2012 at the annual *Shura* (meeting) of the Association of American Muslim chaplains at Yale University and agreed to make contact regarding my research. Although I told him at the time that I would call to speak with him about my project, I never did. When we finally spoke he had no reason to remember that brief encounter and so we got reacquainted. Aside from logistical concerns, I never called Abdullah due to my reluctance to speak with a "high profile chaplain." I wanted my work to be about chaplains, whose platforms, although public, did not yet get the type of media coverage of a Khalid Latif or an Abdullah Antepli. I was concerned not to let Abdullah's narrative overshadow those of the chaplains who would be formative to my work. These were individuals who in significantly different ways illuminate aspects of the development of the American Muslim chaplaincy. As I have contended, diversity and the "chorus of voices" are keys to understanding the American Muslim chaplaincy. I didn't want any single chaplain's words or actions to take precedence. Nonetheless I decided to contact Abdullah and my concerns were quickly and easily abated. Enough chaplains had mentioned him and his work that I finally decided to speak with Abdullah before finishing my research.

Once I had decided to make contact, it was not easy to get Abdullah on the telephone. When I first emailed him, he was in Israel on a retreat with the Muslim Leadership Initiative (MLI) program, which he founded and ran through the Shalom Hartman Institute (SHI) in Jerusalem. Upon his return to the United States we set up a time to speak and on several occasions had to postpone our appointment. One of these occasions was during the World Cup finals when Germany was playing Algeria. Abdullah and I texted back and forth and he

expressed in a text message his consternation at the fact that Germany was playing Algeria that day, and while he felt some desire to root for Germany given the presence of Turkish players on the team, he had decided to root for Algeria in solidarity with a team that was both representing a Muslim majority country and the economic and competitive underdog. Abdullah asked me to add to the prayers that he and his friends were sending to the Algerian team. "You know Harvey, we need all the help we can get."[543] Amazingly, I didn't even need to interview Abdullah for material to write about, the circumstances of this text conversation were a perfect beginning. Here was a Turkish-American Muslim chaplain, expressing his thoughts on the dynamics of global economics, immigration, and the fluidity of nationalism in the span of a couple of text messages. This was the type of cacophony I had searched for and come to expect from the American Muslim chaplaincy.

Abdullah and I made another appointment, and when we finally spoke it was the beginning of Ramadan. Things at Abdullah's house were obviously busy as the break of the fast and prayers were not far off. Abdullah was exuberant as his son was fasting for the first time. At one point he asked, "Harvey do you have children? It is the most wonderful thing in the world."[544] I quickly sensed that our time would be short, and early on in the conversation we made plans to follow up in the next few days. Unfortunately, our follow up conversation never happened as Abdullah was always on the go. A fact reminiscent of something else Abdullah said to me that day, when I asked him whether or not he thought the American Muslim chaplaincy was a new form of Islamic leadership: "I know that's what we're doing as chaplains, but I'm not sure, it's too soon for us to slow down and reflect on."[545]

[543] Abdullah Antepli, text exchange with the author, June 17, 2014.
[544] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.
[545] Ibid.

The reason that Abdullah and I never got the chance to finish our conversation was that he became embroiled in controversy over his trip to Israel. He had been criticized regarding the MLI program he created, accused of "faithwashing" the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, i.e. exchanging political resistance for interfaith dialogue.[546] The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a significant test for American Muslim chaplains, particularly those on college and university campuses. How American Muslim chaplains simultaneously engage in Muslim-Jewish dialogue and advocate for Palestinian rights is one of the most important challenges they face in relation to interfaith dialogue and the Muslim chaplaincy, and an important subject for future study.

Toward the end of our interview Abdullah reiterated his sense that Muslim chaplains were part of a rapidly changing phenomenon that gave him little time to reflect: "We are so busy in what we do, and we are so boxed in on our personal lives that we are not paying attention in overall big picture. How these various chaplains are redefining religious authority in an American context."[547] Abdullah's statement was a reminder of the air of humility that surrounds the chaplaincy. The desire to make grand claims, but hold back and acknowledge uncertainty. It was an indication that to be a leader and show patience is not an easy task, particularly given the pressures that chaplains deal with. It was also a way of acknowledging that perhaps as an outsider my work could be of use, considering the difficulty involved in seeing where things are and where they are headed.

Dr. James Jones expressed the same sentiment, but in a more cautious manner, when I asked him about the structure of a Muslim run seminary and how it would deal with Muslims

[546] For an article written by Abdullah Antepli on the subject of his MLI program see Abdullah Antepli, "After Abraham, before Peace – Navigating the Divides," *The Islamic Monthly* July 9, 2014. Accessible online at http://www.theislamicmonthly.com/after-abraham-before-peace-navigating-the-divides/ (last accessed October 31, 2014). This article was a response to Sana Saeed, "An Interfaith Trojan Horse: Faithwashing Apartheid and Occupation," ibid. July 1, 2014. Accessible online at http://www.theislamicmonthly.com/an-interfaith-trojan-horse-faithwashing-apartheid-and-occupation/ (last accessed October 31, 2014).
[547] Abdullah Antepli, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2014.

from a non-Sunni background. "We intend to be diverse. Our rubric is the Qur'an and Sunna. I have realized not to take on issues before they come up. What we need is for Muslims to come together and not deal in the hypothetical."[548] The hypothetical is thinking about the future, but it is also a reference to the "stormy present" President Lincoln referred in his address quoted in the introduction. In other words, the present is stormy because it is filled with questions about how we will deal with the future.

If this is the case, then where the issue of diversity is concerned the hypothetical is crucial. It is with the issue of diversity that the American Muslim chaplaincy faces it most difficult internal tests and exhibits its greatest potential. In particular are the challenges of sectarian diversity, racial bias, and women's leadership, all which require proactive and consistent effort. To begin with, problems surrounding sectarian diversity are especially evident, considering that the American Muslim chaplaincy is still a decidedly Sunni enterprise. The Armed Forces is a good example, as there has yet to be a Muslim Chaplain in the military who comes from a Shiite background. In this case, there are two potentialities with regard to the commissioning of a Shiite military chaplain, which, should it arise, will test the foundations of what it means to be an American Muslim chaplain. Either the same Muslim endorsing agencies that have thus far endorsed other military chaplains will endorse a Shiite chaplain making no distinction between Sunni and Shiite or should the Muslim American Shiite community advocate for it, they could create a separate Shiite chaplain-endorsing agency. There is also a degree to which this will be a matter of personal choice and not institution building. For instance, it will be interesting to see, if Chaplain Abbas Chinoy will seek and obtain endorsement from a Shiite organization or mosque community, and if this choice will matter to his identity as a chaplain.

[548] James Jones, telephone interview with the author, August 18, 2011.

In this way, the issue of sectarian difference will be one of the largest question marks for the American Muslim chaplaincy as it evolves. Not just because of the need to define what a Muslim chaplain is, but also because of the need to determine whom Muslim chaplains serve. This is a particularly acute issue in the prison setting where groups compete for the right to have chaplain representation. Whether or not groups will or even should come together under a single umbrella is part of this challenge. At stake is the ability of the Muslim chaplaincy to actualize and advocate for intrafaith alongside interfaith dialogue.

Directly connected to the issue of sectarian difference is the way that the Muslim chaplaincy will address the issue of race, while lauding the importance of religious pluralism. Preliminary evidence suggests that there has been a shift in power. Although African American Muslims were instrumental to the development of the American Muslim chaplaincy they are slowly becoming the exception rather than the rule. There is a good deal of further research, both qualitative and quantitative, to be done in this arena to help determine what the shifts and changes have been over the past 40 years. Questions to be asked are: In what ways is Institutional racism in the United States replicating itself in the American *ummah* and how is this effecting the racial and ethnic makeup of those receiving chaplaincy degrees? To what extent do institutions like the prisons and military favor Arab and South Asian Muslim religious leaders, perceiving them as more representative of traditional forms of Islam? In what ways are calls for religious pluralism within the American Muslim chaplaincy overshadowing the issue of race? Do chaplains in institutions with fewer African American Muslims, such as private college and university chaplains, have a greater voice where Muslim chaplaincy leadership is concerned?

Finally, the future of Muslim women in the chaplaincy brings with it some of the greatest challenges and possibilities for new forms of leadership. One test is the extent to which the

imam-chaplain distinction will continue to be blurred; for it is this distinction that is central to the future of institutional recognition and hiring of female Muslim chaplains. Maintaining the importance of this distinction requires a proactive effort on the part of male chaplains and whether or not they will be able to keep the title of imam in abeyance. It is likely that some men will claim both titles, others only one, and others no matter how much they want to refuse the imam title will have it thrust upon them by default. This is part of the efficacy of the title of imam. It is shot through with a religious authority, which when refused, can weaken a chaplain's ability to perform his job. One way out of this conundrum would be to permit women to lead prayer or give *khutbahs*, thus making the chaplaincy mostly about professional choice as opposed to liturgical function. However, up until now this is not the direction in which the chaplaincy is going or one that female chaplains have publically advocated for.

The challenges that the American Muslim chaplaincy faces are certainly not limited to the above issues. Questions abound as to the path of education and ordination for American Muslim religious leaders, the way chaplains will address LGBTQ issues for Muslims on college campuses, and effective forms political advocacy in the face of public portrayals of Islam. For instance, what is the future of programs like the Hartford Seminary if an American Muslim seminary becomes a reality, what types of advocacy mechanisms will chaplains create for their openly gay Muslim students, and how will chaplains contend with claims of radicalization while remaining committed to social justice?

None of these questions assume a uniform response from Muslim chaplains or that the chaplaincy will not itself rupture into a variety of forms, whether ideologically or in terms of professional rubrics. The American Muslim chaplaincy is likely to grow into a multifaceted profession with a variety of approaches to questions of race, gender, theology, and law to name

just a few. The chaplaincy will likely morph as the American Muslim community morphs. Some of the most recent developments suggest that the Muslim chaplaincy is no longer a purely institutional one. The entrepreneurial spirit among a new form of chaplain, the community chaplain, is inspiring the creation of shelters, clinics, and other community based organizations. These are new and less traditional forms of chaplaincy that Muslim chaplains and in many cases female Muslim chaplains in particular are engaging in. In addition, there is the impetus to create cooperative mosque leadership, where the mosque staff consists of one imam and one chaplain, working in tandem and serving the different religious and social needs of their mosque community.

When Abdullah Antepli says the American Muslim chaplaincy is forming "an alternative denomination" he is indicating that as all of these challenges and potentialities mix, the end result is uncertain, but there is the implication that a positive change is on the horizon. Abdullah's idea of a new denomination puts one in mind of Jose Casanova, who surmised that in an American setting, mosques just like churches and synagogues become "schools of democracy and centers of associational life."[549] In this way, American religion performs "a complex process of mutual accommodation…Like Catholicism and Judaism before, other world religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) are being Americanized, and in the process they are transforming American religion, while the religious diasporas in America are serving as catalysts for the transformation of the old religions in their civilizational homes…"[550] If Casanova is in fact correct, what role, if any, do American Muslim chaplains play in this story of transformation?

The preceding pages have argued that the chaplaincy is an important and flexible staging ground for many of the issues being faced by Muslims in America. Some of these issues appear

[549] Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European/United States Comparison," 158-59.
[550] Ibid.

more divisive than others, but what are divisive issues today may in fact become points of cohesion tomorrow. To what extent Muslims in America will welcome new American forms of communal rupture may well be in the hands of Muslim chaplains and their ability to ease those ruptures through negotiated discourse. Part of that negotiation will be accomplished by their place as leaders at the intersection of change and tradition. Where appeals to tradition, as Muhammad Qasim Zaman has pointed out: "…are not necessarily a way of opposing change but can equally facilitate change; that what passes for tradition is, not infrequently, of quite recent vintage..."[551]

The other part of that negotiation will be the type of leadership model they choose to provide. Rabia Harris and I discussed the issue of where chaplains place themselves in the schema of American Muslim religious leadership, and how well equipped they are to deal with the host of issues they face in their day-to-day professional lives. Rabia was decidedly firm in her response:

> "This whole issue of chaplains feeling that in some cases they can't give certain types of advice…I think it's unfortunate, because they probably can give it just as well as some of these self-proclaimed experts! …that hesitancy is a good quality. I'm happier with people who feel that they are not qualified than with people who are eager to tell you how to run your life, convinced that they are."[552]

The idea that American Muslim chaplains are reluctant leaders is likely the greatest contribution that they can make to American religious leadership and the best way for them to negotiate transformations in American Islam. In the final equation, it is also one of the American Muslim chaplaincy's greatest challenges, as it is for any form of leadership. It is the ability to develop flexible and humble leadership, to find direction while allowing for chaos.

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[551] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam : Custodians of Change*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 3.
[552] Rabia Harris, interview with author, Hackensack, New Jersey, December 13, 2011.

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