

SECTION III

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES FOR SUPERVISION



In 2004, an ACPE Task Force on Islam was appointed with the goal of “extending to the Islamic community the spirit and practice of inclusivity that characterizes the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education.” This remarkable collection is the result of that initiative. We are grateful to C. George Fitzgerald, chair of the Task Force and director, Spiritual Care Service of Stanford Hospital, and Rabia Terri Harris for fostering and facilitating the essays in this section.

At the center of this collection of essays is a guide written by Rabia Terri Harris for clinical pastoral education with Muslim students. Both theological teachings and obligatory practices from Islam are clearly presented. Each section concludes with supervisory notes. While this manual focuses on issues in supervision, it would be a helpful resource for anyone desiring to understand Islam and to respect its practices. The manual is reprinted here with the permission of the ACPE Task Force on Islam that holds the copyright.

The other essays provide an historical perspective on Muslim chaplains by S. E. Jihad Levine, two accounts of the challenges facing Muslim chaplains in an interreligious context, and a cogent summary of major themes in Islamic theology. Both Bilal Ansari and Mary Lahaj describe how the experience of clinical pastoral supervision deepened their personal appreciation of the Islamic tradition and the importance of “being in the presence of Allah.” From shattering stereotypes to bridging cultural differences, Muslim chaplains, Levine observes, “are obliged to carry heavy social responsibilities beyond those borne by chaplains of other faiths.” It is incumbent on pastoral supervisors to be sensitive to the extra responsibilities Muslim chaplains carry. Mumina Kowalski’s discussion of the “Names of God” points to the enduring paradox of unity in multiplicity. Interreligious dialogue, as Kowalski proposes, “helps to clarify worthwhile convergences as well as distinguishing the defining differences of faith.” For this task, interpretive bifocals are necessary in order to see two realities clearly and respectfully.

Herbert Anderson
Editor