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The Radical Middle Way

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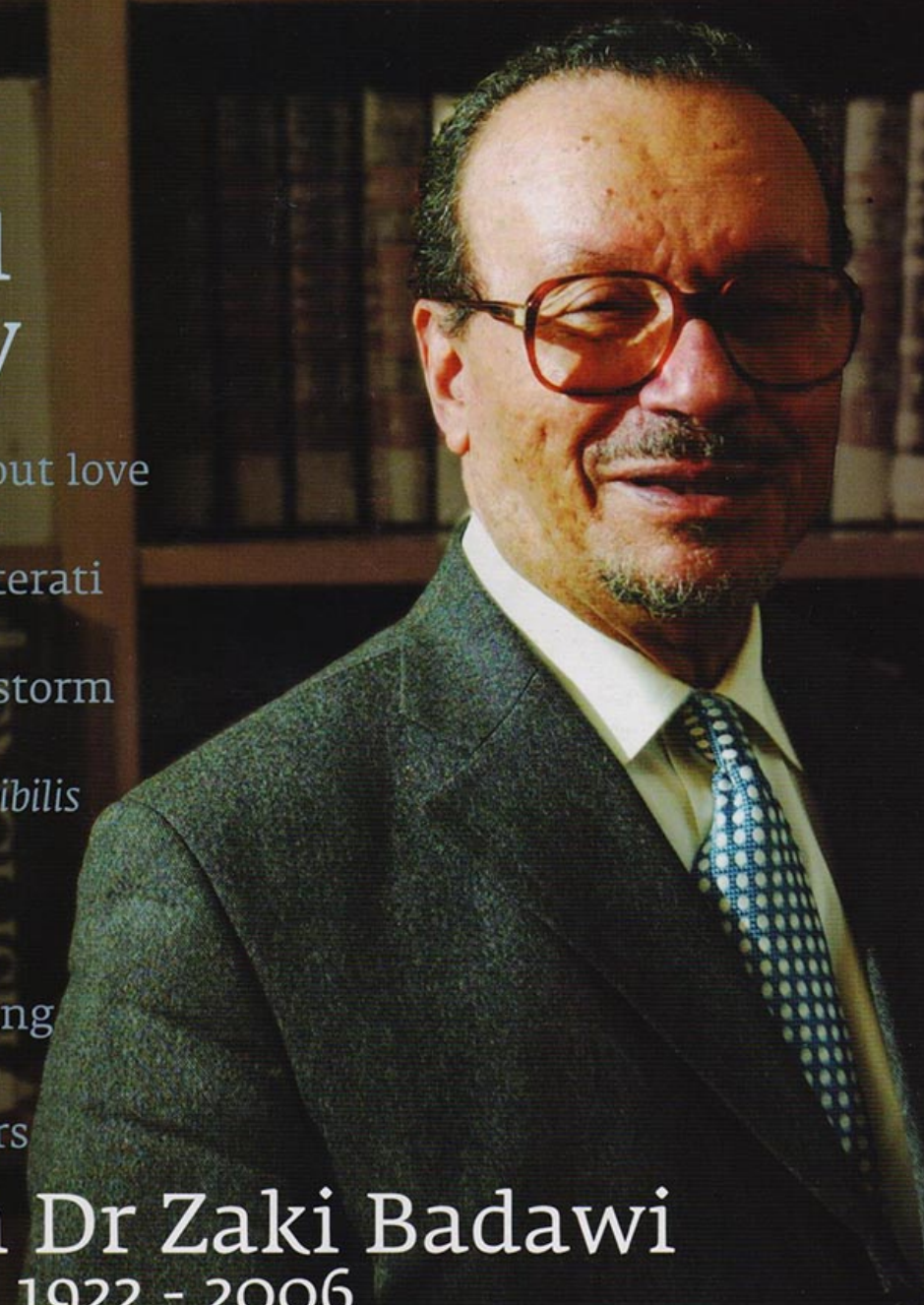
France's Banlieue Uprising

PLUS

The Qalam Prize Winners

Shaykh Dr Zaki Badawi 1922 - 2006

Abdal Hakim Murad, Ayisha Ali, Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, Rev Marcus Braybrooke, Shareefa Fulat, Nureen Shah-Kazemi, Fuad Nahdi and others remember a man whose "daily effort was for God"



REMEMBERING SHAYKH MOHAMED ABOUL-KHAIR ZAKI BADAWI

1922 - 2006



On Friday, 27th January 2006, Britain Muslims buried an institution. Mohamed Aboul-Khair Zaki Badawi was a special man: a creator of institutions himself, a combative scholar, a warm human being and a very good teacher.

Of the many things I learnt from him is the qualities of leadership in Islam. Leadership, he once told me, is not 'about being popular or bending to ignorance: it is about doing the right thing - strategically.'

He loved *Q-News* as both an idea and a venture: a community publication which is robust, engaging and dynamic was also part of his dream. But he did not endorse the magazine totally. For years he kept saying that 'it was not witty or humorous enough'. Of course he was one of the legions of people who could never come to terms with the sad demise of *Muslimwise*, *Q-News*' predecessor.

His support towards our work was unparalleled: from editorial contributions to efforts at fund-raising. Here I have to remark that Shaykh Badawi was good in everything he ever attempted to do but fund-raising. He was ever prepared to use his good offices, his influence and contacts but never his integrity or that of the project in question. 'Better a struggling entity that is full of dignity than a prosperous one without.'

Whenever the Muslim College had a bit of resources *Q-News* would know: he would call and say 'I have some money. Let us find something to advertise.' No other organisation or individual has extended us such generosity or care. For that we salute him.

When we were approached last year to be involved in the *Radical Middle Way Project* I went, as usual, to seek his advice. He was not only supportive but terribly excited. Only two days before he passed away I had a long telephone conversation in which he came out with some brilliant ideas and suggestions. Like always, his underlying message was: if it is right and appropriate, do it. 'What we need to survive in this society,' he said, 'is knowledge and wisdom - and appreciation of the universal attributes of humanity; love, tolerance and compassion. We should not expect people to love us just like that: we should earn that love and respect by being good people through our actions.'

Essentially his message was that we need to take responsibility for the affairs of our communities. As the struggle for his legacy resumes it would be wise for all those who would want to claim it to remember the kind professor's adage in a long and fulsome life: delivery is everything.

We at *Q-News* are going to seriously miss Shaykh Badawi's inspiration, humour and encouragement. We pray for his soul and for patience for his family, relatives and friends across the world - from all faiths and those with none. ■

Fuad Nahdi



A LIFE LIVED WELL

Shaykh Mohamed Aboul-Khair Zaki Badawi, PhD, OBE, KBE was born in Sharkia, a small town outside Cairo, Egypt, 14 January 1922 and passed away on 24 January 2006

EDUCATION

Attended Al-Azhar Primary and Secondary Institutions before joining Al-Azhar University where he obtained from the Faculty of Theology the degree of Al-A'liyah (equivalent to BA First Class): he was awarded the King Fuad First Prize for the best graduate of the year in 1945. In 1947 he obtained from the Faculty of Arabic Studies the degree of Al-Alimiyah (MA) and received the King Farouk First Prize for the best post-graduate student of the year. He was chosen to pursue further studies in Britain. He joined the University of London in 1951 and chose to study Psychology at University College London where he was awarded a BA Hons Degree in 1954. Later he obtained a Ph D from London University in Modern Muslim Thought.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

On his return to Egypt he resumed his post at Al-Azhar

University to teach Muslim Thought and Scientific Research Methods. He was delegated by Al-Azhar University to Malaya to establish the Muslim College of Malaya. From there he joined the University of Malaya in Singapore to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies. Later he moved to the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur in the same capacity.

In 1964 he was appointed Professor of Islamic Studies in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Northern Nigeria. He then moved to Bayero College (later Bayero University) as Professor of Islamic Studies and Dean of Arts where he stayed until 1975. In 1976 he was appointed research

Professor at the Hajj Research Centre of King Abdul University, Saudi Arabia. He was stationed in London.

From 1978-1981 inclusive he was appointed Director and Chief Imam of the Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque, Regents Park, London.

In 1982 he was appointed a non-executive director of the Islamic banking system in Luxembourg and joined its delegation in the negotiation with the Bank of England. A licence was obtained for the first Islamic financial institution The Islamic

Finance House in 1983. He was in charge of it until 1986. In 1987 he was consulted by the Malaysia Securities Commission with regard to dealing with the then financial crisis. His suggestions coincided with the policy successfully followed by the Malaysian Government. Since 1995 he has been a member of the Shariah Board of FAIM, ANZ Bank. From 1998 till now he advises the Badr Bank, the first Islamic Bank in Russia.

In 1984 a National Conference of Imams and Mosque Officials of the UK held in Wembley elected him Chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council UK, a post he holds to this day. In 1986 he established the Muslim College in London following a unanimous decision taken by a full Council session of the Tripoli-based World Islamic Call Society (WICS). For more than two decades - until his death - he was a key member of the Council and represented it in different national and international forums.

The Council envisaged the College as a postgraduate seminary to train imams and religious leaders for the West and also to encourage intra- and inter-faith dialogue. The College began to function fully in 1989. The Council appointed Dr Badawi as the Principal of the College. In the last two decades the College has worked and cooperated with numerous similar academic institutions across the world including the University of London.

During his period of work at the Islamic Cultural Centre he established also the Muslim Law (Shariah) Council UK to resolve conflicts of law between Muslim and the Civil Code. When he left the Islamic Cultural Centre he transferred this Council under the auspices of the Imams and Mosques Council UK. The Muslim Law (Shariah) Council consists of twelve Muslim scholars of different Schools of Muslim Law and three practicing lawyers. They elected him Chairman.

PUBLICATIONS

Dr Badawi was the author of numerous articles in scores of publications across the world. For four years he was the editor the Islamic Quarterly. He published books on the Islamic Background to Malaya Culture, the Muslim Reformers of Egypt and co-edited a special issue of Encounter Magazine that included proceedings of an inter-faith conversation he had with the Archbishop of York and the Chief Rabbi. He also co-edited a book on the Hajj.

For many years he wrote a regular weekly column for the London-based Al Arab. He also wrote a monthly article for the Islamic Banker, a magazine that specializes in Islamic financial affairs. He participated in many conferences dealing with topics as varied as Islam, Interfaith, Business Ethics, Medical Ethics, Economics and Finance.

Dr Badawi contributed to work at Duke University in North Carolina, USA and he was the author of many fatwas (religious edicts) concerning issues affecting Muslims in Britain. He was the first to respond to the fatwa of the Ayatollah Khomeini on Salman Rushdie, proving it to be illegal under Muslim Law. His reply was issued the day after the Fatwa and published thirteen days later in the Guardian Newspaper.

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

Since his student days he has been interested in the issues of relationships between different faiths. He participated in Egypt as an undergraduate with meetings between Muslims and Christians, which were arranged informally by his French teacher.

In Malaysia he formed with Swami Satyananda the Interfaith Council of Malaya that brought together Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians of all denominations. This was a unique venture in

Malaysia where people of different religions experienced led a parallel existence, coexisting peacefully but with little contact. In Britain he joined the World Congress of Faiths for which he gave the Younghusband Lecture in 1964.

When Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre he instituted dialogue between Christians, Muslim and Jews with Rabbi Goldberg and Rev John Wales. It was this and subsequent initiatives that established interfaith dialogue as an orthodoxy rather than a heterodoxy in the Muslim community. He has participated in numerous dialogue meetings: in Spain in 1986 between Muslim; Christians and Jews to discuss peace in the Middle East; in Istanbul several times between Muslims and Christians; and in London in 1993 a conference between Muslims and the Orthodox Christian Church. The Muslim College holds regular interfaith meetings with Leo Baeck College. It also participates in the Westminster Interfaith Initiative between Muslims, Christians and Jews for which he puts forward Muslim nominees. The College also participates from time to time in annual residential interfaith seminars in Bendorf, Germany.

AWARDS

Dr Badawi was awarded OBE in 1998 and on 7 April 2004 was awarded an Honorary KBE. On 6 July 2005 he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Law from Glasgow Caledonian University.

MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS

- Member of High Council of Islamic Affairs, Egypt
- Member of the World Islamic Congress, Pakistan
- Member of the Board of Religious Advisors to the Malaysian Government
- Vice Chairman World Congress of Faiths
- Patron of the Institute of Business Ethics
- Patron of Prisoners of Conscience
- Patron of the International Sacred Literature Trust
- Advisor, John Templeton Foundation
- Member of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Hajj Advisory Group (advises organization of the annual Pilgrimage to Mecca)
- Member of Council of St. George's House, Windsor
- Visiting Professor of the newly established Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Member of Unite for the Future - post September 11th American initiative to further better understanding between people of different cultures in UK
- Member of CRAC (Central Religious Advisory Committee) which monitors BBC and the ITC
- Trustee of UNICEF (UK)
- Trustee of Muslim Social Scientists Association

CHAIRMANSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS

- Chairman of Imams and Mosques Council (UK)
- Chairman The Muslim, Law (Shariah) Council
- Chairman The Abrahamic Forum (an international organization)
- Chairman The Islamic Religious Council
- Co-Chairman - The Three Faiths Forum
- Chairman of the Shariah (Muslim Law)
- Chairman of FAIR (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism).■

UNIQUE MAN FOR DIFFICULT TIMES

ABDAL HAKIM MURAD



Massively out of place in an age of conformity, Shaykh Zaki resisted all categorisation. He wasn't an Islamist, a secularist, a typical Egyptian, or a typical integrated migrant. Not fanatically opposed to serving religion in an official capacity, he nonetheless would resign rather than obey the unreasonable demands of the Arab embassies. Sympathetic to Sufism, he nonetheless advocated reform on many social issues. In short, there is no adjective which really fitted the man. He charted his own, unique path through life.

I remember how, in 1982, he graciously gave a profound lecture to a group of only three Muslim students in Cambridge. A much larger number had been expected. His presence, as a witness to an older, more forgiving style of Islam, was in the background whenever students flirted with radicalism, since his personal qualities, and his scholarship, could not reasonably be doubted by anyone. He was never shy of confronting extremists: on a live Al-Jazeera broadcast he demolished the self-taught Jordanian preacher Abu Qatadah, on the basis of impeccable scholarship. The resulting threats from Abu Qatadah's disciples he dismissed with hardly a second thought.

Last year I walked around Sarajevo in his company, and we visited the graves of some of its scholars and martyrs. In that city full of monuments to Muslim reasonableness and the fanaticism of neighbours, his conversation was neither triumphalist nor aggrieved: he simply took the city's history for granted, and passed lightly over the offenses of enemies who, only ten years before, were carving crosses on the chests of their victims. Such a city needed such men who, unlike many other Muslims today, recall steadfastly the lesson of the conquest of Mecca: reconciliation, forgiveness, a new beginning.

Shaykh Zaki was more interested, religiously, in collective Muslim self-criticism than in listing the faults of non-Muslim rivals. This traditionalist turn of mind irked many younger

Muslims, who saw the tragedies of the modern Muslim world as the doing of wicked unbelievers, rather than the consequence of Muslim sin and foolishness. He understood that mentality well; indeed, he was full of anecdotes about his encounters with the Egyptian extremist Sayyid Qutb, and of Qutb's arrogance towards Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim

Brotherhood (he had been the go-between between the two men on several crucial issues). He rejected it out of hand as un-Qur'anic, and rooted in a psychological weakness unworthy of Muslim believers. In its place, he recommended self-scrutiny, and a respectful engagement with representatives of the dominant civilisation. Only thus, he explained, could the word of God be made available to those who would be only repelled by abrasiveness.

Hence his extraordinary energy, maintained long after most men have retired, in the field of inter-religious encounter. 'Wisdom and goodly exhortation' is the Qur'anically-mandated style for dealing with the People of the Book; and he sought to obey this divine commandment in every way he could, in engagement with the Three Faiths Forum, the Maimonides Foundation, the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'Building Bridges' seminars, and many other platforms both humble and distinguished.

Prince Charles' various interventions on behalf of Islamic civilisation owe much to his encounters with Shaykh Zaki ('Zaki's a very nice chap', as the Prince once remarked, 'but you can never get a word in edgeways!'); and it is probably fair to say that wherever there is a positive view of Islam in the British establishment, and willingness to concede to Muslim needs, the Shaykh's influence is somewhere in the background.

Given the Arab embassies' support for more intolerant voices, and the confusion in our communities, it is unlikely that we will see his like again, though we must pray that God wills otherwise. ■

"TO ME HE WAS GOOD, OLD DR ZEE"

AYISHA ALI

To most he was Dr Badawi, Shaykh Zaki, or Sir Zaki. To me, he was good old Dr Zee - the man who shared my love of sweeties, smoked salmon, and most of all, perfectly ripe bananas (and anyone who knew him well, knew about the bananas). Through the grief and tears at the hospital on Tuesday, we couldn't help but laugh when his daughter-in-law reached into her pocket for a tissue, and pulled out a banana he'd given her the night before.

His presence was magical and a blessing. Although 57 years my senior, I never got bored of his company, or his endless religious, intellectual and worldly insight and knowledge. When the mundane drone and constant lecturing of other adults made me want to whack my head (and theirs) through several walls, Dr Zee's company was never repelling. He had an amazingly sharp and witty sense of humour, and was constantly on a roll with it. He was immensely fun to be around, and he forever wore a genuinely happy and magnetising smile.

His ability to draw people towards him was effortless, and many adored him. The gob-smacking, national and international outpouring of grief, pays tribute to this. Genuine and personal condolences have come from, not only Muslims across the board, but also (amongst others), from liberal and orthodox Christians and Jews, and atheists. He has deeply touched, not only the communities he served, and those he lived around, but also royalty, politicians, bankers, academics, religious leaders, and ambassadors, world-wide.

He could interact with anybody, irrespective of their age, gender, background, status, or beliefs. He didn't patronise, judge or preach at people. He didn't need to. He led by example, and his example glowed. He portrayed Islam so perfectly, peacefully and appealingly - like no-one else I've ever come across. He was my religious source, and my parental defence shield. If I disagreed with mum and dad on something, I would turn to Dr Zee for back-up: "Dr Zee, sort my parents out, they are being unreasonable." He would then turn to them with a mock scowl on his face, and defend me: "Stop harassing this poor girl. She is right and you are wrong, so let her do what she wants." Go Dr Zee!

I never heard him utter any unkind word about anyone. Not even those who used to maliciously and jealously back-bite against him, and then fire daggers at him through their fake smiles and sickening lies. Had the same hypocrites knocked at his door, he would have genuinely welcomed them with the same innate warmth and politeness that was part of his nature - and then offered them a cup of tea.

His overwhelmingly humble character meant he didn't sit on a throne of self-love, and even when knighted in 2004, he didn't insist upon the title of Sir. Others in his place would have ordered golden plaques, tattooed SIR on their foreheads, and taken out a double spread in a national paper. I would teasingly call him Sir. Dr Zee. "Ayisha, stop this nonsense of yours," he would say, "you don't need to call me Sir."

He was also amazingly humble as a host. He forever fussed over



people, making them tea and coffee, bringing them fruit, dried nuts, and biscuits. During a particularly rough patch, he would always phone me to ask if I was alright, and then invite me to the college for lunch: "My dear, I've just bought smoked salmon. Come and let me make you a sandwich. I can also offer you cheese!" And make the sandwiches he would - then forget to eat his own because of how busy he was.

There wasn't anything I couldn't talk to him about - from the super-serious and contentious, to the embarrassing or the insignificant. Whether it was dream psychology, Islamic history, diet and weight loss (his, not mine!), or my personal issues, he was the man. With the exception of when he spoke in his Egyptian-Arabic (which I can't understand), everything he said made sense. I think he's the only man on the planet I haven't been able to argue with on a difference of opinion. But then again, it wasn't always easy to get a word in edgeways!

We once even conversed over the agonising dilemma of having to wet my hair for wudu, after having spent ages blow-drying it straight to remove the frizz. Thank God for Dr Zee. He saved the

day on this one too! And before anyone mocks my wudu/hair query, he told me that many women had asked him the same question. Whereas others would have lectured airily on the sins of vanity, the supreme authority of hijab, and the necessity of Muslim women to look as unattractive as possible, he didn't.

When people scorned me for wearing outfits they deemed "not appropriate" or "too colourful", he would tell me how lovely he thought I looked. Women felt comfortable talking to him on many levels, and he never criticised or judged on the basis of what they wore or didn't wear. He was adamant that young Muslim women needed to engage more within the social and political life of the country, and always encouraged me to partake in conferences and projects.

I know he would have done anything for me (as he would have for many). Even with the tightest of schedules, he would always slot me in. I could call him up at home, at the office or on his cell, at any time of night or day, and he would always be happy to talk. One of his amazing qualities was that he never said no to people, whether he knew them well or not. No matter how exhausted or busy he was, he made time for all. I used to call him my fatwa-on-tap. But in hind-sight, I acknowledge that I, like many, must have taken liberties with his time and generosity.

I once needed to speak to him, and he insisted on treating me to dinner at his gentleman's club whilst we chatted. He was very excited about it. I however, brainlessly turned up wearing jeans and sneakers (forgetting the dress code), and was thus not permitted access. He jokingly scolded me and laughed it off, not in the least bit bothered that, because of me, he was subjected to bitter coffee and bad food elsewhere. He was beyond easy-going and always went with the flow.

I adored him, and his simple, yet meaningful "hello my dear how are you today?" was enough to cheer me up no matter how down I felt. He was like the grandfather I never really knew, and would always greet me with a warm hug. I joked this would result in a barrage of criticism from many a Muslim. His response was typical of him: "Frankly my dear, let them say what they want. I'm ancient. I'm not doing anything wrong." He didn't seek to impress and he didn't put on pretences.

The main visual image I hold of Dr Zee, nurtured by years of close family friendship, is that of an adorable old man, wearing thick rimmed glasses, and walking down the road towards the bus stop. In one hand he is carrying his briefcase, and in the other, a shopping bag filled with nuts and dried fruits.

No-one's death has ever affected me like his. I miss him immensely, and I have no doubt that he has forever etched a permanent mark on the hearts and lives of many. I feel a profound sense of loss, not only on a personal level, but also as a Muslim. Amidst the grief of his death, I've heard repetitious ponderings coming from young and old, from those who knew him well and those who knew him briefly, from the religious and the secular: "who are we going to turn to now?" or "what are we going to do without him?" His death is a devastating blow to Muslims everywhere, and more so, to those in the UK. Individually many will suffer through lack of his being, and collectively, many of us are left in a sad disquiet, very anxiously aware of the vacuum that's been left behind.

Dr Zee was extremely unique. Although this is what made him so amazing, it's also the reason why we, as Muslims, will experience severe disadvantages without him.

He was and is, without a doubt, irreplaceable. ■

A PIONEERING VISIONARY

RABBI JONATHAN MAGONET

It is extraordinary how many people speak of Zaki Badawi as a friend. He had a warmth, a mixture of directness and empathy, that won you over. You felt valued and important in his presence.

We first met in the early years of interfaith dialogue. Just as a few rabbis in the UK became increasingly called upon to 'represent' a sympathetic Jewish voice to the outside world, so Zaki became one of the first Muslims to take on that role on behalf of Islam. It is a tricky position. Both Jews and Muslims in Europe feel themselves as minorities under siege and prefer to show an idealised, 'official' version of themselves to others. Those willing to show the complexity of their own community, warts and all, meet suspicion from within, and often disbelief from the outside world that prefers to remain with its stereotypes. Zaki was able to tread that delicate, narrow path because of his wisdom, experience and obvious integrity. He could embrace 'dialogue' with Jews, and enjoy their friendship and love. But at the same time he would be open and challenging in his views on Israel and the desperate plight of the Palestinians.

When we shared a public platform I soon discovered his technique. It was not simply politeness that made him insist that others spoke first. Rather it was his extraordinary ability to think on his feet, to understand the essential features of what others had said and find the words and sources that built upon them, to teach without ever being 'preachy'. Part of his success lay in his wit and humour. Given the reputation of Jewish jokes, we would sometimes tease one another and compete for the last word and the last laugh. He invariably won because it was such a pleasure to yield to him.

We compared notes on our respective roles as heads of seminaries, both beset by financial worries, both trying to raise up new generations of spiritual leaders who could offer a healing role in a society so fragmented and conflicted. He often said the he had tried to model the Muslim College on Leo Baeck College, and that was a source of great personal pride.

There is a line in the Jewish liturgy that would be a fitting epitaph for him. I am sure Zaki could trump it from a Muslim source, but sadly on this occasion I am the one who will have the last word. 'We should be in awe of God in private as well as in public; speak the truth aloud and mean it in our heart.'

*Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet,
Former Principal,
Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education*

A LEADER OF HEARTS

SHAREEFA FULAT

The loss of Dr Badawi is irreplaceable both for the Muslim communities of Britain and wider British society. I have always admired and respected Dr Badawi as one of very few scholars in the west who are able to understand the teachings and spirit of Islam as well as the workings of western secular society. The apparent conflict between the two is something that young Muslims struggle with on a daily basis. And yet Dr Badawi had the unique and rare ability to effortlessly negotiate between the two and communicate the message of Islam in a manner that all could understand.

I first met him whilst working for FAIR, of which he was Chairman. I was initially slightly overwhelmed to have contact with such a reputable figure and someone I had held in high regard for so long. I was surprised to find that he treated me with the same warmth and respect as colleagues he had been working with for many years.

In a community where deference is expected of young people and disagreements often taken to be a sign of disrespect, Dr Badawi was open to hearing the views of all people, young or old. This made him uniquely approachable and no question too small for his attention. His unflinching sense of humour and gentle manner would reach out and warm you at every meeting. Despite all the organisations he was involved with or leading, the pressures on his time, the dignitaries and notables that had his attention, Dr Badawi always had the time for the average young person. Whether it was a brief salaam or a lengthier enquiry about health, family and work, Dr Badawi never failed to notice you as he passed.

Dr Badawi combined a clear pragmatism with unflinching compassion - a rare combination in the best of men. Where a deep and traditional scholarly background led others to be rigid and inflexible in their views, Dr Badawi was always open to questioning and reformulating answers to suit the needs and lives of real people with every day struggles. It was these qualities that led him to challenge the Muslim community on cultural attitudes and behaviours that were at odds with the spirit of Islam and in this, was one of our leading lights.

His unflinching energy in tackling the problems of society was unparalleled and an example for us all. What never failed to impress me was his ability to remain above party politics, and the internal wrangling of the Muslim community and seemed to me to observe them with a smile. At a time when basic etiquette seems to be failing in wider society, Dr Badawi always treated his fellow beings with complete dignity and respect, regardless of whether they agreed with him.

I know that for years to come, I will find myself facing questions that I would have liked to have asked him. May Allah (swt) grant him peace and the best of places in Jannah, and strength to those of us left behind to continue our struggles without his wisdom and kind counsel.

Shareefa Fulat
Director, Muslim Youth Helpline

GREAT FRIEND, GREAT TEACHER

SIDNEY L. SHIPTON

The sudden passing of Shaykh Dr MA Zaki Badawi has come as a great shock. I and indeed all of us who are involved in bringing "The People of the Book" together found his advice and leadership essential and so very apt.

When I became the Co-ordinator of The Three Faiths Forum, Muslim-Christian-Jewish Dialogue, my knowledge of the Muslim community was superficial (although I had been involved in interfaith work since my student days as a member of the Council of Christians and Jews). It was only since the beginning of 1997, when The Three Faiths Forum was established that I found myself on a learning curve which continues to this day, regarding Islam, the Muslim community in the UK specifically, and the ummah generally. It was Shaykh Dr Zaki Badawi (who I had the privilege of knowing as Zaki) who became my mentor. In constant discussions and conversations with him and whilst travelling with him to national and international conferences, he gave me an insight into Islam, which I would never have obtained anywhere else. Zaki was my inspiration and my "guru".

In life, it is said that no one is indispensable. To me Zaki is the exception that proves the rule. Who will replace him? Who will measure up to his wisdom, his humour and humility?

He was not only the Principal of the Muslim College where he taught his moderate philosophy to so many, but to so many others worldwide he was an example as well as a teacher. Zaki had decided views on many matters, and often disagreed with the so-called "Muslim Establishment". He deplored Salman Rushdie's infamous book, but did not agree with the fatwa that was put upon the author. He felt that Muslims should attend the National Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. He felt that together we must fight Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. He knew that togetherness was the only way forward. He preached understanding and mutual respect. The appreciations and obituaries in the national press and the religious press, together with the flood of condolence messages we have received in The Three Faiths Forum office, are phenomenal. I cannot use the hackneyed expression, "He will be sorely missed," because it is much more than that. Even His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, paid tribute to him when he addressed the conference of the Islamic Development Bank, which I attended in London on Thursday 26 January, a conference that Zaki was to have opened and chaired.

His funeral at the Central London Mosque was overflowing with so many, not only of the leadership of all faiths as well as large numbers of the Muslim community, but also of politicians, government officials, Ambassadors, and members of the Diplomatic Corp. Yes, Zaki touched so many hearts and minds.

Where will we find another Zaki Badawi? At this time, I do not know.

Zaki, we must try to live up to your standards. It will be difficult but I will try.

Sidney L. Shipton OBE
Co-ordinator of The Three Faiths Forum

BEHIND THE PUBLIC MAN

M MAHROOF

Of course they will be many memories of Shaykh Badawi as befitting a person of his stature. But many people like myself will cherish - and sorely miss - the personal touch and meaning the Shaykh gave to our lives. For the most dramatic moments with him were the private and intimate ones. I thank Shaykh Badawi for being there when we needed him most and for his *nasiha* (counsel) which he gave with much gusto and sensitivity. How many times has he helped rescue the weakest of hearts from the brink of insanity in this insane world.

For those of us who are in public office he was indispensable - a leader who provided both spiritual and practical guidance. In my 16 years in public office, nearly every other so-called representative of the Muslim community who walked through the doors did so with petty personal or organisational agendas and with little or no foresight or appreciation of the wider issues facing Muslims. Many have sat through entire meetings with influential, senior officials without uttering a single word, then had their tea and biscuit and left, only to go to another meeting on behalf of you and me! Little did they realise that those of us on the inside took hope in them and expected them to deliver some inspiration to those of us on the inside.

Take some examples of us Muslim employees and the post 9-11 pressures, from within and without, facing many of my own colleagues. Attacked not only by fellow Muslim citizens for merely associating with authority, but also under increased contempt and suspicion from some of their own "friends" at work for being Muslim.

Imagine the intense atmosphere in a lift when a bearded Muslim walks in wishing to ascend to the upper floors of a secure government building, and the looks of contempt and suspicion that arise. The cumulative effect of regular experiences like these often results in a helpless vacuum, devoid of any contextual spiritual guidance. At times like these your average local Imam runs away in case he becomes implicated and does nothing to ease religious, moral, or ethical dilemmas that one can become trapped in at work. Whilst the world continues to go crazy with bombs going off on our own doorsteps, Muslims are busy accosting other Muslims in the streets and urging them to repent for the sin of working in public office. Your average Imam continues to nod in apparent sympathy and shake his head in acknowledgement without a clue of what you are talking about, just like some of the mutes busy drinking tea on the inside whilst claiming to represent you and me.

It is at the most distressing of times that Shaykh Badawi's perceptive assessment of situations and wisdom shone through each time. With the war on terror creeping ever closer to the doorstep of ordinary Muslims in Britain, so-called leaders are busy actively disengaging from dialogue with the police. Shaykh Badawi was one of the few men of any spiritual credibility who encouraged more dialogue not less. Having said that, let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that Shaykh Badawi was no poodle to anyone in authority. He was a diplomat of the highest calibre and in his own style he was equally critical of official policies that ail young Muslims as anyone 60 years his junior. He could articulate the same sentiments as any one of them with only one difference; the Shaykh was on the



inside achieving something whilst the others were busy waving fists and burning flags.

Shaykh Badawi captured the attention of the most senior of audiences and achieved more for the safety and security of ordinary Muslims than entire delegations can show in return for their regular meets and Earl Grey teas.

Having been confronted on many occasions by the brainwashing rhetoric of the radical few who are eager to renew your Shahadah, Shaykh Badawi was one of the few people who you could turn to and bring contextual understanding to your dilemmas. He would quickly neutralise any rhetoric and bring reason to the unreasonable and instil rationale against irrational blurb of the few. Many of our remaining "representatives" who will continue to meet officialdom on behalf of you and me either don't know the meaning of these words or simply can't spell them. Others will continue to nod their heads in acknowledgement without a clue of what's being said. Believe me I know - I've been there at those same meetings!

Without the Shaykh many of the meetings will be devoid of a certain charm and wit, and anyone who knew the work of the Shaykh behind the scenes will know that his departure is the loss of ordinary Muslims.

I will also miss his chastisements for not referring to myself as a "Moulana". Whenever and wherever we met he would call out "Moulana!" and greet me with a hug and chastise me for not taking the title! I would beg him not to bestow on me an honour that this "faqir" did not deserve but he would still take my hand and announce to those that were present "this man is a Moulana". This is testimony of the great individual that he was. That a man of his spiritual stature never once felt a superiority complex, even when amongst mere "faqirs".

May Allah grant him Jannat-ul-Firdous.

*M Mahroof
Secretary General
Association of Muslim Police*

GREAT LOSS TO ALL

REV DR MARCUS BRAYBROOKE



Earlier on the evening when we heard the sad news of Dr Zaki Badawi's sudden death, Mary and I had been looking through our Christmas cards. Among them was one from Z. and M. Badawi - and it was a Christmas card. Zaki was so confident in his own faith, that he could treat the faith of his friends with complete respect. He was, for example, prepared to participate in Holocaust Memorial day.

Friendship is at the heart of the growing interfaith movement. Zaki was an interfaith pioneer and like many other pioneers he faced sharp criticism from some in his own community, but this did not deter him and he developed a great circle of friends from many faiths, who will miss him sorely.

Mary and I first got to know Zaki and Mavis nearly thirty years ago, when we invited him to speak at a conference of the World Congress of Faiths, of which later he became a Vice-President. I also asked him to preach at Christ Church, Bath, where I was vicar. Zaki was the first Muslim to preach there. Subsequently, the Mayor of Bath asked Zaki to speak at the city's annual 'Call to Prayer.' As a result some Christians boycotted the event, but those who came were deeply moved by his charm and his words of peace.

Zaki soon realised that if Muslims were to feel at home in Britain, they needed leaders who understood the culture of the country. He established the Muslim College, so that imams could train in Britain. Zaki also insisted that they should learn something about other religions and I count it a privilege to have been asked to lecture on Christianity at the college. Zaki was also gracious enough to write preface for my book *What Can We (Christians)*

Learn from Islam.

Indeed I have learned much about Islam from Zaki, especially at many meetings of the Three Faiths Forum, which with Sir Sigmund Sternberg and myself he helped to found. Interfaith dialogue takes many forms. Sometimes it is good if members of all religions meet together - for example for the annual Week of Prayer for World Peace. Sometimes members of two faiths - perhaps Christians and Muslims or Christians and Jews need to speak together. It is, however, particularly important today that the three faiths, which honour Abraham, should understand each other and by dispelling ignorance and prejudice help to ensure that members of each faith community contribute to the well being of this country. I found it very moving after the London bombs that Jews, Christians and Muslims, came together in synagogues, mosques and churches, to share their grief and to pray for the bereaved and injured.

That this was possible is because Zaki and others have had the courage to offer the hand of friendship to people of other faiths. We shall best honour Zaki's memory by reaching out our hands in friendship and ensuring that no one in our society feels marginalised or undervalued.

I pray that Mavis Badawi will find comfort in her sorrow from the knowledge that friends around the world share a sense of loss and hold her in their prayers.

*Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke,
President of the World Congress of Faiths
Co-Founder of the Three Faiths Forum.*

AN AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MIDDLE WAY

JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

I had the enormous privilege to work with Dr Zaki Badawi through various organisations with which we were both involved, notably FAIR and the AMSS. In a way, it was fitting that I heard about his passing on my way to London last week to meet with Dr Anas al Shaikh-Ali, for it was through the AMSS that I also first met the man whom I came to love and respect as a living embodiment of so much that had first drawn me to Islam.

The occasion was the AMSS Muslims in Europe Conference in London in 2000, and Zaki had chaired the final session at which I had been asked to deliver the concluding remarks. I was struck not only by his immense authority and presence, so firmly rooted in knowledge, but even more so by his warmth, approachability, humanity and humour, his respect for the rights of women, his sheer good sense, balance, fairness, and fiercely intelligent and refreshing dismissal of pomposity, arid formalisms, rigid authoritarianism and parochial intolerance.

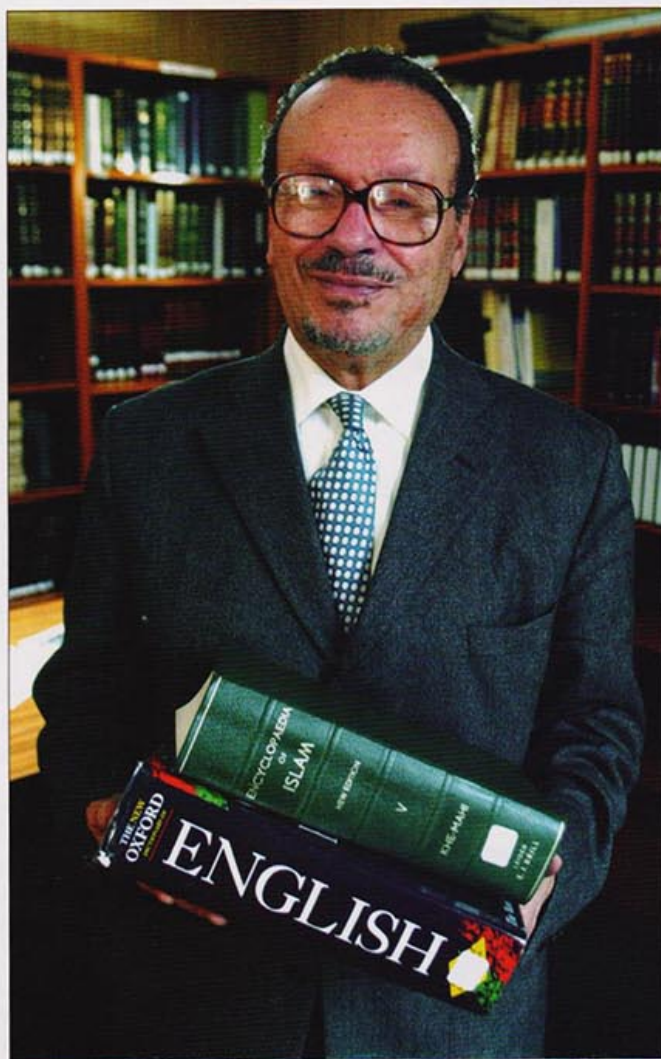
I will leave it to others more qualified than me to chronicle Zaki's matchless record in the field of public discourse as an authentic representative of the "community of the Middle Way" and as an exemplar of the finest expression of the Qur'anic spirit of pluralism which enabled him to bridge so many divides and find a place in the hearts of so many people, irrespective of their faith or culture.

I prefer simply to try to convey what he exemplified for me in the brief time that I knew him.

I started out with the impression he made on me when I first met him. But his sudden departure from this world affected me even more profoundly.

In the manner of his passing, he exemplified most perfectly the hadith of our beloved Prophet that "Should the last hour fall, and one of you has a date tree in his hand, he should plant it if he can manage to do so before the hour falls."

In the last moments of his life, with his final breaths, Zaki was



busy planting, giving freely and selflessly with an open hand, in the spirit of Qur'an 2:195:

"And spend freely in God's cause, and let not your own hands throw you into destruction; and persevere in doing good: behold, God loves the doers of good."

Zaki embodied for me and so many others that generous perseverance in doing what is good, in acting, interacting, relating, collaborating, consulting, engaging in discourse, participating, finding time for everyone, always ready to urge us to go beyond a narrow identity of exclusivity, withdrawal, isolation, confinement, radical detachment and disenchantment, and to expand beyond an introspective sense of victimisation into that greater identity which enables us to be with the greater community of our fellow human beings, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Above all, to contribute positively to our own society and to the welfare of all mankind. As our Prophet said: "The best one among you is the best one towards people."

He taught me to avoid the trap of what he called "Scripturalism", the study of texts subject to human interpretation

yet divorced from context and circumstance, a process which can shackle us to unbending formalisms and inflexible conservatism, to sterile disputes about the law, its interdictions, prescriptions, prohibitions and rulings, ultimately the reduction of Islam to the beard and the scarf, and to the mountain of details which has been likened to looking at Islam through the wrong end of opera glasses.

The measure of the Zaki was that people loved him. I loved him as a friend, exemplar and mentor, as will so many people from all over the world who will surely throng to remember him. May Allah bless and reward him and bring comfort to his family.

*Jeremy Henzell-Thomas
St. Michel de Montjoie
France*



“HIS DAILY EFFORT WAS FOR GOD”

NUREEN SHAH-KAZEMI

On these pages you will read about Sir Zaki Badawi's many qualities; his sparkling intelligence, his quick wittedness, his tremendous foresight, his political acumen, his compassion, his depth of knowledge: a dazzling array of qualities worthy of praise and rare to find in one man -but what made him almost unique in this country, and in this day and age, was that Dr Badawi placed all these qualities at the service of his Maker. He was a deeply pious man; a man who - you were confident when in his company - never forgot God. And when you understood that, you also understood that Dr Badawi knew that his many talents had to be for the benefit of enabling others to worship God; not for his own selfish or secret worldly ambition. He never lost sight of the fact that his daily effort was for God, and not this or that short-term benefit. Among those mourning him are not only world leaders, religious authorities, but also, without exaggeration, thousands of men and women all over the world who benefited from his actions.

I had the great privilege of almost daily contact with him for three years when I was conducting my research on the Muslim (Law) Shariah Council, (MLSC). I would benefit from his insight into the political events of the day, and his remarkable ability to place them in context, and to understand their far-reaching impact on the Muslim community: his understanding of the potential pitfalls and strengths of our community have not been understood better, and his insights into our community, to which he was utterly devoted, will provide inspiration for many years to come; his reactions were fast and accurate, but not knee-jerk. He could think ahead, whilst taking stock of all the ramifications. But apart from this incisive global intelligence, he manifested a wise compassion, and a deep piety.

The very fact that he was instrumental in setting up the MLSC is one of many examples of the above: in the early 1980s he had the courage to face head on the problem of marriage breakdown in the Muslim community, when to this day imams of many mosques bury their heads in the sand of iniquity. Despite the unpopularity of the issue (from the point of view of denial by the community and disfavour in the eyes of 'sponsors' in particular), Dr Badawi was compelled to do something for these Muslims, and Muslim women in particular; for the sole reason that he knew with a deep certitude that the Almighty God whom he worshipped could not condone such oppression. The seeds of his actions back then are still bearing fruit today at a time when many are waking up-albeit for many through self-interested spin-to the benefits of speaking out for the oppressed of our community. I could read for myself when researching the files of the MLSC, how again and again, women (and men) poured out their hearts to him when faced with the trauma of marriage breakdown, and again and again, he counselled them in such a way as to strengthen their faith by reminding them of the true substance of their religion. He enabled them to benefit from the sunnah of the Prophet, which he knew so well and loved so deeply, by nourishing them with hadith, and was ever reinforcing his opinions by quoting Qur'anic ayah that allowed them to understand the true meaning of that fundamental Muslim description of the qualities of Allah: Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim. He was one man who could help me understand what Sayyiduna Ali wrote : "A true faqih is he who does not make people despair of the mercy of God". ■