

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“REMINISCING MY *SHAIKH*, MY *GURU*: THE BELOVED
PROFESSOR MALIK BADRI (*rahimahu’Llāh*)”

M. Kamal Hassan, 23 March 2021

Innaa li’Llaahi wa innaa ilaihi raaji`uun. I have to mention at the outset that, as far as the issue of the **right** or the **wrong** way of **understanding** knowledge, **producing** it, **developing** it, **constructing** it and **utilizing** it is concerned, Professor Malik Badri was my 20th and 21st century *Shaikh* and *Guru*. Divine revelation (*al-wahy*) as contained in *Al-Qur’an al-Karim* is, of course, my first and last *Maha Guru*, and the beloved Messenger of Allah SWT, Muhammad (s.a.w.) is my permanent Spiritual Guide whose intercession I look forward to on the Day of Judgement. Let me now share with you the reasons why I considered him as my *Shaikh* and *Guru* until he returned to Allah SWT on 8th February 2012.

1). His paper entitled “Muslim psychologists in the lizard’s hole” which he presented in the late 70s in Indianapolis (if I am not mistaken) at the annual conference of Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), [which was formed in 1972 of which I was a member. I attended three of the annual conferences and presented a paper in 1977] had a powerful impact on the audience. It shook them intellectually and emotionally. It also ignited my intellectual imagination as never before and sparked my fledgeling interest in the new intellectual discourse on Islamicisation of social sciences which AMSS and its president Prof. Isma`il Al Faruqi were propagating.

The metaphor of the “lizard’s hole” was most apt because it was used by the Prophet (s.a.w.) in his foreboding prophesy that in the future, Muslims were going to blindly emulate the ways of life of the Jews and Christians, to the point that they would be following them even if they got themselves into a lizard’s hole. His widely distributed and well-known book *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists* was an expanded form of his “lizard’s hole” paper. But to me the paper and the book were the most convincing treatise, following the book *Islamisation of Knowledge : General Principles and Workplan* (Isma`il Al Faruqi, 1982) on the negative impact of secularised Western social sciences on Muslim thought, society and culture, which originated as part of the colonialization agenda of European imperialism. This imperialist agenda and the scholarship it spawned was deconstructed and masterly exposed by Edward Said in his classic and master piece, *Orientalism* (1978).

Prof. Malik Badri's other work, on *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, is an excellent psychological penetration and extrapolation into the rich Islamic religio-spiritual legacy, which has also had a great spiritual and intellectual influence on my intellectual growth. His latest book which I have yet to see in Arabic on the emotional dimension in the lives of Prophets and Messengers, which is an important psycho-spiritual study and interpretation of Prophetic emotional intelligence would be most useful for me as his *murīd* because he told me a couple of times, about a decade ago, that he would be concentrating his research on this topic towards the end of his earthly sojourn. The community of scholars of psychology in the world should be grateful to Prof. Malik for his translation and commentary in *Abu Zaid al-Balkhi's Sustenance of the Soul: The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy of a Ninth Century Physician* which radically changed the date of the origins and the originator of modern psychology -- a Muslim physician of the 9th century -- several centuries before the Western originator of the discipline.

2). On the subject of the origin of the intellectual discourse of Islamicisation of human knowledge – a subject that became contentious for some Muslim scholars, most unfortunately -- I am most grateful to *al-Marhum* Prof. Malik for informing me that among the earliest Muslim scholars to initiate the intellectual task of Islamicisation of human knowledge was al-Imam al-Ghazali who died 910 years ago. I told him that in the modern period I thought it was Muhammad Iqbal and then Abu'l-A`la Maududi who were the first to raise the alarm; in the case of Iqbal, that the scientific and technological knowledge of the modern secular West needed to be Islamicised; otherwise it could become a tool for evil purposes, and in the case of Maududi he came up with his 1945-60 writings on the need to develop the worldview, social sciences and education for Muslim societies based on the norms and values of Islam.

When I looked into the writings of al-Ghazali, especially his *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah* (Objectives of the Philosophers), *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) and his monumental magnum opus, *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences), I agreed with him that not only al-Ghazali took up the task of understanding, analysing, mastering, filtering, adapting Greek philosophy and rejecting some of its theological premises using the criterion of Islam and Divine revelation, but he showed the proper way to Islamicise, i.e. one needs to understand fully and objectively the alien sciences before one embarks on critique, deconstruction or refutation of the intellectually constructed knowledges or disciplines.

Of course, al-Ghazālī did not use the term Islamisation of Human Knowledge, or *Islāmiyyah al-Ma`ārif al-Bashāriyyah* (Islamisation of Human Sciences) or *al-Ta`ṣīl al-Islāmī li'l-`Ulūm* (Islamic indigenization of the Sciences), what more Dewesternisation, Indigenisation or Desecularisation of Human Sciences. These are modern or contemporary labels or slogans whose subject matter and the epistemic mission are as old as Islam, namely the responsibility of human beings as Allah's servants, vicegerents and believers to transform *Jāhiliyyah* or positivist human cultures and civilisations built upon false beliefs, knowledge and values, according to the framework or parameters of the Divinely revealed epistemology, theology and ethics of *Tauhīd*.

Therefore, the production, construction, development and utilization of human knowledge must be in accordance with the purposes, the vision and mission, principles and values of the Creator, the Ruler, the Sustainer and the Judge of mankind. It is for this reason that the contemporary Egyptian Islamic thinker and scholar, Dr. Muḥammad `Imarah calls "*Islāmiyyat al-Ma`rifah*" "An new slogan for an ancient cause" (*shi`ār jadīd li-maḍmūn qadīm*) (Muḥammad `Imārah, *Islāmiyyat al-Ma`rifah, madhā ta`nī?* Cairo:?). My *Shaikh* and *Guru*, as one of the pinoneering contemporary Islamiser of human sciences, added another label to the Islamicisation of human knowledge discourse – "Dekufrisation" of human knowledge.

Thanks to his original scholarly works, dedication, guidance and direction in his intellectual and spiritual jihad – with hundreds of students, disciples and supporters around the world -- the discipline of Islamic psychology, or psychology from the paradigm of *Tauhīd*, is growing faster than some other social science disciplines in the Muslim countries and also in some Western countries. He was very concerned about the negative psychological and moral impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic when it started and he proposed that Islamic universities such as IIUM establish new centres or units to manage, handle and assist the potentially exponential increase in cases of mental ailments or cases of psycho-spiritual depressions as a result of the pandemic.

3). The third and last reason why I consider Prof. Malik as my *Shaikh* and *Guru* was his extraordinary personality and spiritually-enlightened character following the model *par excellence* of the Beloved Messenger of Allah SWT – the humility, the sincerity, the integrity, the transparency, the warm brotherly and fatherly manner he treated his colleagues and students. He was the embodiment of the true *Murabbī* (the caring, nurturing and loving moulder of

Islamic personality) and *Murshid* (spiritual guide) -- ever ready to help, ever smiling, ever optimistic, never saying “no” whenever he is invited to give lectures, talks or participate in conferences despite his heavy commitments. He was a seven-day week, 24/7 with no vacations, no Sundays. Every day is a working or community-service day in the service of God. He was a model Sufi *shaikh* (with his *misbahah* beads in his pocket) without claiming to be one, who did not miss his *tahajjud* prayers, his regular nightly vigils of *dhikr* or *munājāt* with his Beloved and Compassionate Master. He was indeed a true living model of the Qur’anic *Ulu’l-Albāb* (possessors of sound, healthy, pure and intuitive intellects), whose personality was a unity and harmony of two fundamental components of true Believers and the true ‘*Ulama*’, i.e. *tafakkur* (contemplation, profound meditation and deep analysis regarding all of Allah’s creations) and *dhikr* of Allah SWT (remembering, recalling to mind and heart, being mindful and conscious of the Omnipresent, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Compassionate and the Beneficent Master, Lord and Sovereign).

I consider myself privileged and fortunate to have him as my intellectual-spiritual icon, and IIUM was fortunate indeed to have him as one of great Islamic scholars to have taught in IIUM, to help strengthen the department in its Islamicisation efforts and to have left behind his priceless legacy of Quranic and Sunnatic driven scholarship and aura which will live on for years to come. I do hope that his students and disciples from IIUM and from several other universities in the world will accelerate the development of the tauhidic school and paradigm of psychology in the Muslim world and in non-Muslim institutions of higher learning just as Islamic finance and banking are becoming promising bodies of contemporary social science.

I would like to mention that, before Prof. Malik joined IIUM, the only prominent scholar we had who had a good knowledge of Western psychology and its relevance to the development of educational theories was the late Prof. Hasan Langgulung who was teaching in the then Department of Education. He participated in the 3rd International Conference on Islamisation of Knowledge, organized by IIIT in collaboration with IIUM and held in Kuala Lumpur in 1984. His paper on “Research in psychology: towards an *Ummatic* Paradigm” was a scholarly argument for Muslim psychologists to develop the *Ummatic* Paradigm as a way of overcoming the split between the realists and the idealists, or between the behaviourists and the cognitivists. (*Toward Islamization of Disciplines*, Herndon: IIIT, 1989: 115-129). I think if Prof Malik was around at the

time, he probably would have argued for the promotion of the *Tauhidic* paradigm as the alternative to soulless or secular humanistic psychology without rejecting the positive and Islamically compatible theoretical, methodical, practical, or clinical aspects of the discipline as taught in Western institutions.

I recall, after we established the new and third Kulliyah, the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences in 1990, my sense of desperation and frustration in the first few years when the new Department of Psychology was being run and managed without the wisdom, experience, scholarship and personality of scholars like *al-Marḥūm* Malik Badri. Then, when our *Shaikh* and *Guru* and *Murabbī* joined us in the Gombak campus, it was a great day for IIUM, the department, the Kulliyah and the division of social sciences and humanities in the Kulliyah. However, I learned later that the presence of an eminent and world-class Islamic scholar in a faculty or a department did not mean that the discipline would soon be transformed in accordance with his Islamic vision, and the Muslim scholars and academics in the Department would be developing the social science discipline from the epistemology of Islam. This is one of the challenges faced by IIUM.

We know that it will take some time for the younger academics in the social sciences or the humanities who have obtained their higher degrees in Western or non-Islamic institutions of higher learning to liberate themselves or assert their own perspectives in opposition to the secularized or unislamic schools of thought, theories and paradigms they have been working under and directed by their non-Muslim gurus or supervisors. Prof Malik Badri came across such challenges in the Department of Psychology, but he was hopeful that when these young and not-so-young scholars who remain loyal to the secular conventional knowledge perspectives would eventually realise that they have been learning from the lizard's hole, they would want to discover and benefit from the perennial truths about human beings, human societies, human behaviour and human civilization from the legacy of Islamic knowledge and wisdom and from the paradigm of *Tauhid*, after having studied and learned from the paradigms of materialism, positivism, humanism, atheism, behaviourism, cognitivism, or positive psychology in Western universities.

I believe the sooner they read and study the works of Prof. Malik Badri the better it is for them, because as a fundamental and vital foundation of the social or human sciences, modern psychology which they have studied has to

squarely accept the truth that human beings are essentially spiritual and moral beings created by Allah SWT with the soul, the spirit, the fitrah, and the heart as the spiritual core of human personality and identity. The sooner we know the truths of human nature, behaviour and development as they are and as they ought to be from the Compassionate Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of *homo sapiens* Himself, the closer we get to finding the correct solutions to the global existential crises, the dehumanizing culture, social *fasād* (corruption, decay, mischief, rottenness), meaninglessness and the increase in serious mental illnesses. Is it any wonder that in UK a commission (Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness) has been established three years ago to address the alarming phenomenon of loneliness or depression in their societies. In February 2021, Japan too has appointed a “Minister of Loneliness” as suicide rates spiked and cases of mental health, isolation and loneliness are becoming more serious. (asia.nikkei.com. February 13, www.timeout.com. Accessed on 23 March 2021).

If we Muslim scholars in this Islamic international university fail, after nearly forty years of existence, to build the alternative body of social, psychological and cultural knowledge and wisdom that scholars like al-Ghazali, Ibn Taimiyyah, Malik Bennabi, Abdullah Darraz, Muhammad Iqbal, Abul A`la Maududi, Muhammad al-Mubarak, Isma`il Al Faruqi, Roger Garaudy, Abdul Wahhab el-Masiri, Muhammad Imarah, Muhammad Natsir, Buya Hamka, Sayyid Hussein Alatas, Ungku Aziz, and others, had striven in their own original ways to develop in Muslim or decolonized indigenous societies and civilization not according to Western models of development -- the global civilisation may well be forced to live eventually under the soulless and inhuman regime that the Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari envisages in his American bestseller as *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (2018). To me the Department of Psychology in IIUM, having benefitted directly from the thoughts and wisdom of Prof. Malik Badri, should be the premier department which develops the paradigm of *Tauhid*, in comparison with other paradigms and benefitting from their positive aspects, to become one of the foremost, if not the best, reference centre for the *Tauhidic* paradigm of psychology in the world.`

