

Original address: <http://www.tariqramadan.com/4th-August-16-years.html>

In this text published on August 4, 2011, Tariq Ramadan claimed that his father Said played a decisive role in Syed Maududi's life: "Mawdudi even thanked him for having awakened him from his unconsciousness."

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the article "4th August... 16 years" on the Tariq Ramadan website. The page features a blue header with a quote in French: "Il y a dans la création des cieux et de la terre et dans la succession de la nuit et du jour, des signes pour ceux qui sont doués d'intelligence." Below the quote is the text "Sourate 3 [La Famille d'Imrân] verset 190" and the Tariq Ramadan logo. The main content area has a light purple background and contains the article title "4th August... 16 years" and the date "jeudi 4 août 2011, par Tariq Ramadan". The article title is followed by social media sharing icons. The main text begins with the heading "Not to forget... and keeping moving on, on the Path" and the first paragraph: "I still have the intimate memory of his presence and of his silences. Sometimes, long silences sunk in memory and thoughts and, often, in bitterness. He had a keen eye and a penetrating, profound look that now carried his warmth, kindness and tears, and now armed his determination, commitment and anger. How many times was it difficult for me to cross the expression of his big open, powerful, suggestive and interpolator eyes which accompanied his words up to my heart, that they awakened, troubled and shook. All those who have met him were struck by this trouble, this inward trembling. He had learned the essential and called for the same without re-routing. This, always, with a heart and with such intelligence. He was so afraid of causing harm, wounding or hurting someone's ear. His kindness was behind his hesitations and, sometimes, clumsiness." The second paragraph starts with "Very early, I learned at his side how much the world is nourished by lies, rumours and scandal mongering. When men loose morality they find the jungle and become wolves. Of this kind there were many around him; those who fought and sullied him for political profit, those who forgot him for professional profit and those who betrayed him for financial profit. So much was said, written and lied about: that he has met him who he never saw, that he spoke to him but he never listened and that he was involved in secret plots which he never dreamt of. In my memory resounds the words of one of his brothers of the road: "He could have been a millionaire, not by flattering kings, but by simply accepting to be quiet and keep silent about what goes on. He refused; he said the truth and re-said it, before God, without fear of loosing everything." The third paragraph begins with "I also remember the following story, repeated a thousand times by my elder brother Aymen, a story that made him shed so many tears. He was then 15 years old when he heard it during a travel that found him in the presence of wealthy princes: "The money that you want to give me is put on the palm of my hand; as to myself, by God's command, I do not work except for that which is posited in and penetrates hearts..." Despite his material difficulties, he rejected exorbitant amounts of money in the name of his faith in God, of his exactness of truth and of his love for justice. Aymen has never forgotten the lesson; it has fashioned him and he transmitted it." The website layout includes a left sidebar with a navigation menu (ACCUEIL, ACTUALITÉ, ARTICLES, CHRONIQUES, etc.), an "AUDIO et VIDEO" section, and logos for various institutions like the University of Oxford and Erasmus University. The right sidebar features a "NEWSLETTER" sign-up, a "manifeste pour un NOUVEAU « NOUS »", "Chroniques du Ramadan", and an "APPEL INTERNATIONAL" section with a photo of Tariq Ramadan and an agenda for 07-Sep-2011.

He learnt everything from a man who gave him so much, offered him so much and who, from a very early age, trained and protected him. On his subject he was inexhaustible. Hasan al-Banna, through his total devotion to God and His teachings, put light in his heart and showed him the way of his commitment. To those who criticised him, spoke without having even met or heard him, or those who had simply read him, he reminded them how much he had learnt at his side of spirituality, love, fraternity and humility. For hours on end, he brought out of his memory the events and instants that had marked him when he was just like his son; and when he was respectfully called, in the whole of Egypt, "the little Hasan al-Banna". The profound faith of his master, his devotion, intelligence, his knowledge and open mindedness, his goodness and kindness were all qualities that emanated in a permanent fashion from his description.

Often, he spoke of the determination in his commitment, at all moments, against colonialism and injustice and for the sake of Islam. This determination was though never a sanction for violence, for he rejected violence just as he rejected the idea of "an Islamic revolution". The only exception was Palestine. On this, the message of al-Banna was clear. Armed resistance was incumbent so that the plans of the terrorists of Irgun and of all Zionist colonisers would be faced up to. He had learnt from Hasan al-Banna, as he said it one day: "to put one's forehead on the ground." The real meaning of prayer being giving strength, in humility, to the meaning of an entire life. He also learnt love in God, patience, the importance of work in-depth, education and solidarity. Finally, he learnt to give everything. After the assassination of his master, in 1949, he retained the lesson and sacrificed all in order to make everyone hear the liberating message of Islam. History is written by the powerful; the worst calumnies were said about Imam Hasan al-Banna. He never ceased to write about and say the truths from which he was nourished. But the despots' love of power caused death and spread much blood as well as so much torture.

Already, when he was barely 20 years old, al-Banna had entrusted him with the editorship of his magazine al-Shihab. Then he volunteered to fight in Palestine, at the age of 21, participating in the defence of Jerusalem. In 1948, aged 22, he went to Pakistan where he was approached about taking the post of General Secretary of the World Islamic Congress. His determination scared the "diplomats". He remained in Pakistan for several months. He took part in the debates about constitutional questions and directed a weekly radio programme on Islam and the Muslim world which made him very popular among the youth and intellectuals. Returning to Egypt, he engaged himself in mobilisation for social and political reform. Then he travelled across the country, gave lectures, and directed encounters. In 1952, he launched, on the model of al-Shihab, a monthly magazine called al-Musimun in which were to write some of the greatest Muslim scholars and, which was going to be distributed from Morocco to Indonesia in both Arabic and English. But Hasan al-Banna, well before his assassination, warned them: the road will be long, marked out with pain, sadness and adversity. He knew, himself and all those who accompanied him, that they would be subjected to lies, humiliation, torture, exile and death.

For him it was exile, because Nasser deceived them. He had to leave the country in 1954, and never did return except on this 8th August 1995 in his coffin. 41 years of exile, suffering, commitment and sacrifice for God and justice and against all dictators and hypocrisies. Exile is the exactness of faith. The length of this road, the difficulties and the sorrows were numerous and continuous. This was first experienced in Palestine where he was designated General Secretary of the World Islamic Congress of Jerusalem before being banned from the city by Glob Pasha, himself subjected to American orders. Then, in Damascus were he restarted the diffusion of al-Musimun with Mustafa al-Siba'i. Thereafter in Lebanon, before arriving in Geneva in 1958. He obtained his Doctorate in Cologne in 1959, and published his thesis under the title 'Islamic Law: its Scope and Equity' in which he presented the synthesis of the fundamental positions of Hasan al-Banna on the subject of the Shari'ah, law, political organisation and religious pluralism. This was an essential book, without doubt the first in a European language, on the question of the universal Islamic point of reference. One can find therein conviction and determination and at the same time a manifest and permanent open mindedness; never once the slightest sanction of violence.

He founded the Islamic Centre of Geneva in 1961 with the support and participation of Muhammad Natsir, Muhammad Asad, Muhammad Hamidullah, Zafar Ahmad Ansari and Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi. All symbolic figures and faithful brothers of the same struggle. This Islamic centre was to serve as a model for the creation of other centres in Munich, London, Washington and, in a general fashion, in the West. The objective being to enable the immigrant Muslims in Europe or the USA maintain a link with their religion and find a place of welcome and reflection. It was equally a question of producing an absolutely independent activity in order to present Islam, to carry out works of unimpeded publication, and to analyse current questions without constraint. Numerous books and facsimiles were published from Geneva in Arabic,

English, French and German, along with the re-publication of the magazine al-Muslimun which later ceased in 1967. Meanwhile he thought out the creation of the Islamic World League of which he wrote its first Statutes. His commitment was total and the Saudi funds that he received, through the intermediary of this same Islamic league which at that time was opposed to Nasser's regime, were never subject to particular conditions of commitment or to political silence. When, at the end of the 1960's, the Islamic World League, which had become then too Saudi, put conditions on their financial support, in particular a requirement to take over the Islamic Centre and its activities, he refused. Then in 1971, all incomes were cut off. Thus was preserved independent thought and action. The road would be long and difficult, This he never doubted, as he always knew what the price of independence and what the price of the word of truth was. How many are those who have known and appreciated him during these full years. Travelling to the countries of the entire world ; expressing himself in Malaysia, staying in England, Austria or in the USA, creating links, spreading profound, analytical thought and always nourished by spirituality and love. Mawdudi even thanked him for having awakened him from his unconsciousness. Muhammad Asad was grateful to him for having made him know, or rather profoundly feel the thought of Hasan al-Banna. Malek Shabbaz (Malcolm X) heard in the kitchen of the Islamic Centre of Geneva that no race is chosen and that an Arab, no more than a black person, is not superior to his white brother, if not by piety. Malcom X retained the lesson, loved it profoundly and his last written words, at the eve of his death in February 1965, were addressed to him. Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) paid him numerous visits in his London hostel. He confessed to me of having retained the memory of his fine intelligence and extreme sweetness. In 1993, in Geneva Airport, the scholar Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi showed him the signs of infinite respect, and during a visit to Lucknow, in India, where is found the Nadwat al-[Ulama', al-Nadwi recalled with deep emotion one of his visits and the marks that it left on him. In exile, far from his own, exposed to political and financial harassment, and down in all kinds of problems, he worried and tortured his mind but he preserved the essential : a deep faith, a faithful fraternity, the eyes of kindness and the thirst for exactness.

His work place was a room, full of documents and magazines. Here a phone, there a radio and a television, there piled up books, opened or annotated. The world was at the reach of his hand. Whoever entered this universe entered in sympathy with a story, a past, a life, intermingled with sadness and solitude. One thousand and one memories and, at the same time, an incomparable view on the current events of the world. He was in affective contact with the most distant of countries. He knew almost everything that was going on in Tadjikistan, Kashmir, Chechenia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere. He followed the regional current events of Washington, Los Angeles, Harlem, London, Munich, Paris, Geneva, right up to Karachi. A horizon burgeoning with information. He suffered so much and with such intensity in his room, from the state of the world, from the lies, massacres, imprisonings and tortures. His political intuition was fearsome ; one understood why he was feared.

He did not content himself with current events, he was interested in everything including the development of techniques, medicine, sciences and ecology. He knew the requirements of a deep Islamic reform. His curiosity was without limit, always awakened and particularly lucid. He had travelled across the world ; and from then on the world lived in this room. There used to be crowds, scholars, presidents and kings ; there remained, henceforth, nothing but observation, analysis and a deep sadness. In solitude, though, there was the Qur'an ; and in isolation, there were invocations. Invocations and tears. He gave his children symbolic names, names from the history of all persecutions and infinite determinations. With each one, he had the cord of complicity, the space of attention, the sensitivity of relation and love. With Aymen, his success and wounds ; with Bilal, his potential and heartbreak ; with Yasser, his presence, his generous devotion and his waiting ; with Arwa, his complicity and silences ; with Hani, his commitment and determination. To each one, he reminded that he made us a gift of the best of mothers ; She is, with the quality of her heart, his most beautiful present.

After more than 40 years of exile, an entire life for God, faith and justice, he knew that his last hour was coming. In the most profound hours, he spoke and he spoke so much of love, fraternity and affection. A few months before returning to God, he said to me, with the strength of his sad, drowned look : "Our problem is one of spirituality. If a man comes to speak to me about the reforms to be undertaken in the Muslim world, about political strategies and of great geo-strategic plans, my first question to him would be whether he performed the dawn prayer (fajr) in its time." He observed the agitation of each and everyone, including my own. He reminded me so much not to forget the essential, to be with God in order to know how to be with men. An entire life in struggle, the hair turned grey by time, and a reminder : "Power is not our objective ; what have we to do with it ? Our goal is love of the Creator, the fraternity and justice of Islam. This is our message to dictators." Late at night, in that famous

room, he spoke and entreated. The link with God is the way, and spirituality is the light of the road. One day, when having a look at his life, he said to me : "Our ethical behaviour and conscience of good and evil is an arm that is used against us by despots, lovers of titles, power and money. They do that which we cannot do ; they lie as we cannot lie, they betray as we cannot betray and kill as we cannot kill. Our exactness before God is, in their eyes, our weakness. This apparent weakness is our real strength."

This strength was his energy up to his last days. He remained deeply faithful to the message. I owe him the understanding that to speak of God is, before anything else, to speak about love, the heart and fraternity. I owe him my learning that solitude with God is better than neglect with men. I owe him the feeling that deep sadness never exhausts one's faith in God. His generosity, his kindness and knowledge were as many presents. I thank God for giving me the gift that is this father, at whose side I discovered that faith is love. Love of God and men in the face of all trials and adversities.

Hasan al-Banna taught : "Be like a fruit tree. They attack you with stones, and you respond with fruits." This he himself learnt very well ; he made it his own in the most intimate sense of the word. Observer of the world, distant from the crowds, in the solitude of his place, after years of fight without respite for God's sake, against treachery and corruption, his words had the energy of the sources and of the rabbaniyya (of the essential link with the Creator). He never ceased to speak about God, the heart and about the intimacy of this Presence. He had learnt the essential, and he called for the essential without re-routing.

He was layed to rest next to the one who taught him the way, Hasan al-Banna. May God have mercy on them both. A return from exile in death because despots fear the words of the living. The silence of the dead is nonetheless heavy of meaning, just like the supplications of those who are subjected to injustice. One must, nonetheless, say this word of truth even if it is bitter. Thus have we been commanded by the Prophet (pbuh) : "We are to God and to Him we shall return." God called to him a man, on the 4th August 1995, a Friday, just before dusk. A man, a son, a husband, a brother, a father-in-law, a grandfather, my father. The sole merit of those that remain will be to testify, day after day, their faithfulness to his memory and teaching. To love God, respond to His call, accompany men, live and learn how to die, live in order to learn how to die. This against all the odds. Said Ramadan spent 41 years of exile, almost an entire life. What remains are his words, his outlook and his determination.

This life is not the Life. May God receive him in His mercy, forgive him his sins and open for him the gates of Peace in the company of the Prophets, the pious and the just.

I ask God to enable me to be for my children the father my father was for me

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