

IN MEMORIAM

﴿١٦٩﴾ وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

Think not of those who are slain in God's way as Dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord;

Holy Qur'an III:169



Isma'il al Faruqi



Lamyā' al Faruqi

The Muslim World and the academic community in the United States were shocked on the nineteenth day of Ramadan (Tuesday, May 27, 1986) when news reached them that Professor Ismail al Faruqi and his beloved wife, Lamyah, were assassinated by an intruder who broke into their home in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. This couple, whose dedication to the Islamic message is widely known among scholars and others working in the Muslim community, played an important role in the dissemination of correct knowledge about Islam in the United States.

A Palestinian by origin, Professor al Faruqi was born on January 21, 1921. He attended elementary and secondary school in his native land of Palestine during the British Mandate. After obtaining a first degree in Philosophy at the American University in Beirut, he served as the last Palestinian governor of Galilee during 1945-1948. After the creation of Israel, he migrated to the United States where he did graduate studies at Harvard and at Indiana University. His intellectual development later led him to al-Azhar and McGill University.

During his early years in the United States, Professor al Faruqi engaged in research on the Arab experience. One of his first books dealt with this. In the 1960s when the Muslim student population began to swell significantly and a Muslim Student Association was formed by some dedicated young Muslims who wanted to retain their cultural identity in the face of strong Western cultural influences, Professor al Faruqi became one of the counsellors to these young men and women searching for roots and trying not to be seduced from the *sirat al-Mustaqim* (the path of righteousness). This involvement with the MSA was destined to be a lifelong engagement. During this period he addressed many MSA gatherings and attended many seminars organized by the student leadership.

As the number of Muslim professionals increased, Professor al-Faruqi and others began to think about Muslim professional organizations. One of these groups that received the attention of al Faruqi was the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, which was founded in 1972. The founders elected al Faruqi as the first president. This organization soon emerged as the primary intellectual vehicle in the social sciences for those Muslim scholars and graduate students working in the American universities and colleges who were committed to developing contemporary intellectual thought within the paradigm of Islam.

By the late 1970s, Professor al-Faruqi, who had by this time earned an international reputation among young Muslims around the world, began to work with the MSA and AMSS intellectual leaders on the idea of setting up an Islamic college or university. Thinking along this line led to two important developments in his life. The first was the founding of the American Islamic College in Chicago which he headed but resigned from just before

his death. The second was the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought. This organization which is designed to serve as a major research center for Muslim thought in North America was established in 1981. He talked about this institute with great hope for its leadership in the "Islamization of knowledge." To achieve this goal the institute started a series of conferences on the Islamization of knowledge in several parts of the Muslim World.

As a result of his activities Professor al Faruqi gained a large following among young Muslims who left their home countries purposely to study under his feet at Temple University. At the time of his death a large group of international Muslim students circled around him, seeking his guidance and hoping that his watchful eyes would see them through the ordeals of doctoral dissertation or Master's-thesis writing. While helping and guiding these students, al Faruqi was invited to many parts of the world either as a guest lecturer or as a consultant to a host of governments and universities.

But while all these activities were going on, the man from Palestine was also making adequate use of his pen. He wrote more than 25 books and many more articles for scholarly journals. He was not only a writer on Muslim themes, but his familiarity with Christian and Jewish thought and his work on dialogue among leaders of the Abrahamic faiths earned him wide recognition as a true Islamic scholar.

Ever determined to make his point clear and known to those unfamiliar with the Islamic worldview, Professor al Faruqi participated actively in American scholarly gatherings where religions were discussed. His involvement in these activities brought him into contact with many scholars from other religious backgrounds. Some liked his positions but others disputed his claims and challenged his formulations. Regardless of their views on the slain scholar from Temple University, the fact remains that he was America's best known Muslim religious scholar. It was his persistence and assertiveness that led to the creation of a space for the effective participation of Muslim scholars in the annual gatherings of American students of religion.

Those who knew Dr. al Faruqi also mourn his brilliant wife, Lamyā', whom he met at Syracuse University where she was completing her doctoral on "The Nature of the Musical Art of Islamic Culture." The two Faruqi's, husband and wife, were inseparable.

In addition to bearing and educating their five children, Dr. Lamyā' Faruqi found the time to become one of the world's foremost musicologists and a renowned expert in Islamic architecture. She lectured widely throughout the world and both organized and contributed to numerous symposia in her work as a Da'iya or missionary of Islam. Her publications rivaled in both quantity and quality those of her prolific husband. Her contributions ranged from a presentation on "God: The Contemporary

Discussion," in Maui, Hawaii, and scholarly addresses at the Tenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, Seoul, Korea, and at the Symposium on the History and Philosophy of Science in Commemoration of the 1000th Anniversary of Ibn Sina, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to a talk at Manhattan College on "Education for Moral Development."

Like her husband, Dr. Lamyā' was an activist in a large number of organizations in many parts of the world.

In mourning our dear colleagues, the al Faruqi team, we pray that Allah will give them peace and due rewards for their labors here below. Ameen.

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Editor-in-Chief