

Memorial of a Sudanese Scholar

Prof .Malik Badri (1932-2021)

Editor – Dr Mohammed Elhassan Altikena

Associate Professor, Napata College

Professor Dr .Malik Babiker Badri was born in the city of Rufaa, on the banks of the blue Nile, on February 14,1932. He was the son of the respected Scholar Sheikh Babiker Badri, who left influential imprints in the history of Sudan with his pioneering of women’s education and the establishment of Ahfad Schools for girls education as early as 1940, which continued progressing till the establishment of Alahfad University for Women in 1980.

Professor Malik Badri earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the American University of Beirut in 1956, a Master,s degree at the University of Leicester in 1958. and a PhD degree in 1961, in addition to a specialization certificate in Clinical Psychology in 1967 .Dr. Badri presented distinguished scientific research after obtaining his PhD in the department of Psychiatry and Neurology, Middlesex Hospital, London. He was elected a Fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1977 and was awarded the title of Chartered Psychologist from there. He held several positions including Assistant Professor at the American University of Beirut from 1962 to 1964, Visiting Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Jordon in 1965, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Education and Director of the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Unit at Omdurman Islamic University from 1967 to 1971, Distinguished Professor of Ibn Khaldun Chair at the International Islamic University in Malaysia, and Founder and President of the International Association of Islamic Psychology(IAIP).

Professor Malik, who was affectionately called “Baba Malik”, was unanimously known throughout the world as the father of Islamic Psychology. His pioneering and visionary work in developing this field was unsurpassed by another other. He went beyond the narrow borders of his home country of Sudan to global horizons, with his books, research and theories in psychology being admired and appreciated by major international universities and research

centers. He will always be remembered for his brilliant mind and his incredible insights and contributions to the study of psychology in general. For those who knew him personally know that beyond his public work his real legacy is his benign heart and good nature. Not only did he teach about Islamic Psychology being the purification of heart and soul, he was a living example of a pure soul.

Professor Malik dedicated his life to the development of Islamic Psychology. At 89 years old he continued to give lectures, give counsel and work on his last book all the way up until his final few months. His legacy will live on in his foundational publications, in his mission and work of the IAIP which was his final vision for continuing the work that he started in pioneering the field of Islamic Psychology.

He founded The International Association of Islamic Psychology (IAIP) in 2017 to expand Islamic role in the advancement of health and human understanding and increasing the recognition of Islamic Psychology as a theoretical orientation to understanding the human being and in approachment to clinical Psychology. In 2016 He was awarded the Association of Muslim Social Scientists United Kingdom Life time Achievement Award (AMSS U.K.) in recognition for his profound contributions to the field of Psychology, Psychotherapy, Islamic Psychology and Clinical Psychology. Professor Malik Badri had a long held relationship with the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and AMSS U.K.

Professor Malik Babiker Badri was a man who not only innovated and developed novel ideas within his own area of expertise, but whose ideas had ripple effects well beyond the boundaries of his field of knowledge. Known to the academic and professional world as the “father of modern Islamic Psychology,” he also played a part in shaping massive cultural transformations that changed the world. These include the Black American experience, the epidemic of alcoholism, and the global AIDS crisis. Professor Badri brought to the world a cultural and spiritual revolution in the way many reviewed their relationship to themselves, their societies, and their spirituality. Although several of his works have become seminal reads in the field of Islamic Psychology, and Islamic thought more generally, much of his great works remain unrecognized, perhaps because of his humility and lack of self-promotion. The time has come for the recognition of the significance of this man’s contributions which position him among the great thinkers in human history.

While Professor Badri's writing and thought spanned several different areas, the majority of his work fell into two major categories: 1) The Indigenization of psychology (making psychology culturally relevant to Arabs and beyond); and 2) The Islamization of psychology. Within these two categories, further distinctions can be made within Badri's lifetime of academic and professional contributions. These are: 1a) the globalization of indigenous psychology and 2a) indigenous Islamic Psychology.

In 1959 Badri met Malcolm X who was on his first trip to the continent of Africa, at the height of his controversial fame in America. Malik and Malcolm became instant companions, as Badri introduced X to his first experience of a society of all black people with their culture, history, and self-worth intact. This auspicious encounter went on to develop into a sustained friendship that would become the impetus for Malcolm X embracing traditional Islam, transforming into Hajj Malik Shabazz, and ultimately transforming a nation of Afro Americans and the world at large .

The year 1966 marked the beginning of his ingenuity and innovation as he developed into an active contributor to the development of psychological understanding. He published a paper which presented "a new, more flexible technique for systematic desensitization at the imaginary level, in which the patient takes a more active role in the therapeutic process."

Badri not only innovated culturally informed, alternative approaches but he was also an active social scientist who strove to enhance the developments of the mainstream field. Throughout his career, Badri was strict to ensure that his work was grounded in scientific knowledge, even when he integrated psychology with religion and spirituality. He subscribed to every peer-reviewed, scientific journal in psychology and his home was always overflowing with journals and papers from all over the world, some in Arabic, but mostly in English. He was a man who would make use of every single minute of his life, never wasting time. Badri was committed to conveying the knowledge he received from participating in the global development of the field of psychology and making it beneficial to the Arab world. From the late 1960s onward, Badri's work began to take shape and magnified the scope of his major contributions to the field of psychology.

Malik Badri's first area of focus in his contributions to the field of psychology was on topics related to the impact of culturally specific assumptions within the scientific theories and approaches originating in Western countries. He used his own experience and access to Sudan and Sudanese culture as case studies to exemplify the different ways of thinking and being in

non-Western countries, demonstrating that these factors impact assessments and outcomes. Badri's first paper, written in 1963, expressed his criticism of so-called "scientific measures," which failed to recognize the impact of Western cultural bias on results. He not only wrote about his criticisms of the IQ test and its use of images of exclusively Westernized people and scenarios but acted by replacing them with images with Sudanese children and by tailoring the questions to fit the environment and sentiments of the local people. This extensive and well-researched work was published in Badri's first book, entitled *The Psychology of Arab Children's Drawings*. The book began as an analysis of drawings of Sudanese children, but he later broadened it and included children from other Arab countries. In the same year, he published a book on his study of how local cultural proverbs affect the direction of society. Badri was constantly engaged in research, looking into cultural phenomena, and applying his psychological training and critical mind. As Badri engaged in publications and public discourse in the field, he was called upon throughout the Arab world and the international scene to apply and develop his unique perspective and voice outside of the Western academy. In 1971 Badri established the Psychological Clinic of the University of Riyadh and wrote a syllabus for psychology from an Islamic perspective. This syllabus was instituted as a mandatory curriculum at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU). During this period he also worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Ethiopia and other countries and published a book about how to organize mental health services for resource-poor countries.

Badri remained focused on his native country of Sudan and began writing about traditional folkloric psychotherapy treatments. In 1972 he published "Customs, Traditions, and Psychopathology," an article documenting his research on the cultural tradition of dhar, or traditional spiritual healing, which uses amulets, herbs, ruqiya (Qur'anic recitation) and other psycho-spiritual remedies. His research was largely experimental as he invested much time collecting data and making his own observations within local Sudanese communities. Badri would spend time with traditional healers, conducting experiments and interviewing patients, in order to discover if the ailments and treatments were real or cultural fictions. While continuing his work in indigenization, in 1974, Badri's developing thoughts reflected a shift in the focus of his writing. His focus turned to Islamic conceptualizations of psychology and psychotherapy, marking what would become the crux of his life's work. In 1977 he became a Chartered

Psychologist, Fellow of the British Psychological Society, and joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Khartoum as a professor.

Professor Badri encouraged his students to read Freud's original writing instead of merely relying on secondary sources. He devised innovative ways to avail students with the experience of obtaining knowledge from original sources; he would do this by arranging visits for outstanding scientists of psychology from Germany and the UK. These visits gave Sudanese students, the opportunity to learn directly from highly qualified psychologists.

Professor Badri proved to be extremely loyal to his students; not only would he eagerly share his travel experiences, but he would also return with books for his students which he would buy for himself.

Professor Badri designed his curriculum to begin by presenting conventional, secular theories of psychology such as human development, personality, and social psychology. He would then criticize these theories by demonstrating how they misaligned with indigenous and Islamic values.

Professor Badri integrated his students into his quest to explore and develop new ideas in the field. His engaging teaching style and sincere passion for the subject was infectious. Badri's students reflected his love for Islamic psychology and would actively share new ideas they discovered with their peers both in the dorms and on campus. Students began teaching one another within other fields of study (such as science and social studies) about using critical thinking skills in the face of Western thought and questioning its epistemological paradigms. Badri's students described the campus as an "electric environment" sparked by his passion and ingenuity.

Even though Badri taught clinical psychology in a major university, he never shied away from emphasizing the fact that they were in Sudan, in a completely different cultural context than the Western academy. In fact, he proved to be brilliant at indigenizing the knowledge, making it culturally relevant and acceptable. He not only presented indigenized Psychology to the Sudanese people but also applied that knowledge to inform the greater field of psychology.

In 1976 Badri produced two journal articles that became highly influential internationally: the first was on the treatment of alcoholism and the other on the Islamization of psychology. In his treatment of the topic of alcoholism, he drew on Islamic values and focused on the impact of alcoholism on societal norms and health safety he later delved deeper into this topic in his AIDS

book. Badri's ideas and insights from his work were directly relevant to major issues of the time and thus proved to be beneficial to non-Muslim psychologists as well. He was especially helpful to his Western colleagues at international conferences as he shared his knowledge of the non-Western world. During this time, researchers were beginning to explore the role of religion and spirituality in the clinical setting. Badri's views and ideas were incorporated into the development of these researchers' works as he engaged in discussions at major conferences.

As a result, Badri contributed to the 12 steps approach for the treatment of alcoholism with a spiritual focus on the need for reliance on God. His views on the role of modernity and its problems, although foreign to the secular field, were well received due to his intelligent and scientifically sound approach. For this reason, Badri's approach and ideas started appearing in curricula and therapy models well beyond the Islamic world.

The Islamization of psychology became a growing focus of Badri's that grew with and out of his earlier work with the indigenization of psychology. For many years, he pursued both paths alongside each other; the first path focused on contextualizing psychology within culture, whereas the second reflected a vast sea of the Islamic tradition.

As a Sudanese, Arabic-speaking, practicing Muslim who had trained within the Western academy of psychology, Badri recognized the problematic dichotomy between his own faith-centered worldview and his professional career that required him to reject the underlying philosophical assumptions of his religious beliefs. At the time, in the 1960s, the field of psychology was dominated by Freudian theory, which had an inherently negative view of religion and rejected the notion of God as the fundamental factor in the reality of the human psyche. Badri began to develop his own ideas which embraced an inherently Islamic paradigm of psychology based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Badri's Western academic training in the UK, ability to read and write in English, his extensive travels and international career facilitated the spread of his work's widespread, and attained global exposure that greatly influenced development of the field of Islamic Psychology.

In his first public lecture at the University of Jordan in 1963, Professor Badri criticized the adoption of the Western framework for Muslim patients and practitioners. The Muslim psychologists attending the lecture were outraged at his assertions and argued that psychology is a pure science and there is no place for religion. He continued to be met with resistance and anger from his psychologist colleagues in the Muslim world, who were threatened by what they

saw. They viewed his ideas as a regression from the advances made by Muslims who were accepted as legitimate academics in the idealized Western academy. Meanwhile, developments in the field of Western psychology—with the decline of Freudian analysis and the advent of cognitive therapies—included a return to the acceptance of belief and philosophy in psychology. This paved the way for Professor Badri’s message of a unique paradigm of Islamic Psychology to be appreciated, a full decade after his first lecture in Jordan. Ironically, it was in the United States in 1976 when his ideas were first embraced; Badri delivered a lecture titled “Muslim Psychologists in the Lizard’s Hole” at the annual conference of the Association of Islamic Social Scientists in Indianapolis. The positive reception of that lecture prompted him to develop the conference paper into a published book in 1979, by the title of “The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists”. This was a watershed moment in the development of Islamic Psychology as a field.

Professor Malik Badri was the first psychologist to receive international attention for speaking out against the blind following of the secular paradigm of psychology among Muslim academics and scientists.

In his 1979 book, Badri argued that Western psychology contained elements antagonistic to Islamic perspectives which, if not challenged, would result in a “colonization of the mind”; that, if Muslim psychologists blindly accepted un-Islamic assumptions and theories found in Western Psychology, they would become ensnared in the “lizard’s hole”

Badri argued that contemporary schools of psychology have either failed, or are doomed to failure, in meeting the most significant human needs. This failure is attributed to a basic error in the fundamental approach of such schools in “blurring their boundaries with materialistic philosophical speculations and atheistic arm-chair theories” that foster a distorted image of humans. Badri asserted that detaching psychology from its spiritual aspect would amount to depriving humans from an utmost basic need in life. Furthermore, there is a crucial religious and spiritual component to life, without which our entire existence becomes shallow and futile. Spirituality must be integrated into our total welfare.

In 1992 Professor Badri joined the International Islamic University in Malaysia (IIUM) and began developing and teaching courses on Islamic Psychology. This marked the beginning of the final phase of evolution in Badri’s thought and contributions toward a spiritual and religiously grounded approach to psychology and psychotherapy. The foundation of Islamic sciences and

the cultural positioning of Islam in Malaysian society provided fertile ground for Badri's ideas to take root. At a conference held at IIUM in 1997, there was an increased enthusiasm for the integration of Islam within the discipline of psychology. These advancements in Malaysia arose out of a growing movement in the Islamization of knowledge. Thus, while much progress was seen in the Muslim world in its adoption and acceptance of religion within psychology, these advancements were primarily in the integration of Islamic principles within an otherwise secular paradigm of psychology. This method was unfortunately not the overtly Islamic paradigm which Badri had been calling for. During this time, the International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP) was formed, with Professor Badri as its first president. Through IAMP, several conferences were held around the Muslim world in countries such as Sudan, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

1997 also marked a turning point for a shift in Badri's writing and influence. With the publication of his book, *The AIDS Crisis*, Badri found that his voice in advocating for reason and rational thought pertaining to what indigenous and moreover Islamic frameworks and principles have to offer the otherwise secular world of global health. This is where his impact was really acknowledged on a global scale, even outside the field of psychology, as the secular public health community paid attention to what he had presented. They considered his ideas a viable analysis and solution to the ravaging AIDS epidemic at the time. He made a strong argument that the conservative, non-permissive approach toward sexuality practiced in Muslim countries helped decrease the rate of sexual encounters out of wedlock that, in turn, helped bring down the infection rate. Rather than focusing on clean needles and condoms, like most scientists and scholars at the time, Badri intelligently asserted that the Islamic paradigm offers a health system that is aligned with a natural order (*fitra*) and wisdom (*hikma*). Badri's knowledge and mastery of Qur'an and Hadith sciences not only gave him the opportunity to integrate all of his knowledge and brilliance, but it helped him unleash his bold ideas without worrying about how the secular scientific world would criticize them. This led him into his own personal phase of "emancipation".

During the early 2000s, the field of Islam and psychology gradually leaned more towards the development of an Islamic paradigm of psychology, but the distinction between Muslim psychology or Islamized psychology remained a grey area. By this point in his career, Badri began to move into a phase of emancipation with his own works, even if the larger global field

was not ready to come along with him. This involved highlighting the sources of ‘ilm al-nafs from early Muslim scholars as well as taking a turn toward embracing traditional Islamic spirituality.

This turn is best highlighted in Badri’s book “Contemplation: An Islamic Psycho Spiritual Study” first published in 2000 and subsequently in multiple languages. Badri differentiates Islamic contemplation from forms of meditation popularized by Western psychology. He explains that while popularized meditation is primarily derived from Eastern religions and aims at altering states of consciousness, Islamic contemplation is “derived from Qur’anic injunctions and aims to seek insightful knowledge of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe” He brings to light the inability of different schools of psychology to successfully deal with the inner cognitive thoughts and feelings humans experience.

Badri criticizes modern psychology’s obsession with the “scientific process” that neglects the soul and ignores the human’s spiritual essence, despite mounting evidence of its role in human lives. Another unique feature of this book, and one that foreshadows Badri’s next major work, is pointing out to the reader how much of what modern cognitive science has achieved was already known to early Muslim scholars like al-Balkhi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn al-Qayyim. These scholars described the steps and benefits of contemplation that helps a person reach a state of “spiritual cognition” that magnetizes them towards Alla. A true contemplator, Badri argues, will be able to see how everything in the universe completely submits to God; and it is this perception that will bring them ultimate happiness. Perhaps one of Badri’s best known works is his partial translation and commentary on a ninth-century encyclopedic Muslim scholar’s work, titled Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi’s *Sustenance of the Soul: The Cognitive Behavior*

Therapy of A Ninth Century Physician. In Badri’s words, al-Balkhi was “centuries ahead of his time in realizing the importance of both mental, as well as physical, health for human wellbeing; Al-Balkhi discussed some very modern ideas, in a rather modern, self-help style manual.” Though Al-Balkhi was most famous for his contributions to the field of geography, his masterpiece “*Sustenance of the Body and Soul*” revealed medical and psychotherapeutic information that was far ahead of his time and only discovered more than eleven centuries after his death. Badri asserts that Al-Balkhi was likely the first physician to clearly differentiate between mental and psychological disorders; between neuroses and psychoses.

Badri founded The International Association of Islamic Psychology (IAIP) and considered it as the next step and final phase for Muslim psychologists—what he termed “the phase of emancipation” His vision for the IAIP was that the field stand firm on an Islamic paradigm by building a comprehensive theory and practice for Islamic Psychology grounded in the ontological assumptions and lessons from the Qur’an and Sunnah. The association aims to be a platform and unifying vehicle for the global Islamic Psychology movement that galvanizes its growth into a full-fledged discipline. This includes the development of research, the dissemination of publications, and the training and certification of practitioners and institutions. IAIP is vital to the development of the field on an international scale; it stands as a regulatory body to ensure that theory and practice are grounded in the Islamic tradition and that the ulama (Islamic scholars) work with clinicians to provide integrated, holistic care.

Badri’s final book, “The Emotional Aspects in the Lives of the Prophets”, which he managed to complete just months before his passing in 2021, embodied the integration and evolution of his thought. Originally intended to be focused more exclusively on the emotional life of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), he decided to expand the work to include the lives of the Prophets. The book uses Qur’anic examples to explore the emotional aspects of Prophetic stories and provides inspiration on how to approach our own emotional experiences and challenges.

In the second half of the book, Badri expands on the Prophets’ resilience in the face of emotional challenges and how it prepared them for their relative missions. He explores the impact of heredity (nature) and environment (nurture) in the context of the fitrah and the assertion that although every human being is born pure, it is their upbringing that impacts their relative outcome. He also distills four types of emotional experiences and five types of emotions. The book explores the lessons within the Prophetic stories and infers practical wisdom. Toward the end of his life, Professor Badri was amid designing a global strategy for the Arab world based on what he considered major pitfalls of our time. This endeavor reflected his personal experiences of spiritual openings and his deep dedication to Islamic spiritual practices.

In his final years, Badri continually reminded clinicians to “bring the spiritual into your therapy” and to “look to the example of the Prophet and ask yourself, what would he do?” Badri’s life work culminated in encouraging us to: (1) explore the vast resource of knowledge in psychology that is found in the Islamic tradition, and (2) root ourselves in the spiritual reality of the human experience.

Professor Malik Badri was the catalyst for the global development of the field of Islamic Psychology. While his world travels enabled him to reach a wide audience, he was influential even in countries he never visited. The impact of his work has reverberated throughout the world and brought attention to the discourse on Islam and psychology as well as the general moral and spiritual perspective of humanity. His striking ability to make complex psychological concepts accessible across cultures and generations transformed the lives of many.

It is difficult to conceive where the state of discourse on Islamic Psychology and Muslim Mental Health would be without Professor Malik Badri's outstanding contributions. The strong stance he took on establishing the importance of Islamic Psychology, the significant weight he gave to indigenous approaches to psychology, the qualities of moral and personal excellence he embodied, and his compassionate, impassioned role as an educator, therapist, and a guide will be his legacy for many generations to come. His legacy is founded on a lifetime of service. With this, Badri will be remembered as one of the 20th and 21st centuries' most influential Muslim intellectual thinkers and reformers.

The research areas that Prof. Malik had done an excellent work on included: - social and clinical psychology, cognitive behavior therapy , and Islamic studies . He started research as early 1963 and the first article he published was "The influence of cultural deprivation on the goodenough Quotients of Sudanese children" published in the American Journal of Psychology – He published 27 articles in famous international journals.

He published 19 books during his academic career and these include:-

Contemplation: (An Islamic Psychospiritual Study) Abu Zayd al-Balakhī's (Sustenance of the Soul the Cognitive Behavior Therapy of a Ninth Century Physician.) Culture and Islamic Adaptation. Psychology.Counseling for Muslim Clients: (A Muslim Psychologist Addressing Psychospiritual Problems faced by Muslim.) Islam and AIDS: Between Scorn, Pity and Justice. Islamizing and Indigenizing Psychology. The AIDS crisis a natural product of modernity's sexual revolution.The AIDS Dilemma: A progeny of Modernity. The Wisdom of Islam in Prohibiting Alcohol. Use and abuse of human sciences in Muslim Countries. Tafakkur from perception to insight. Psychology from an Islamic perspective. Islam and Alcoholism. General Psychology. Educational Psychology. The Psychology of Arab Children's Drawings.

Some of the advices given by Prof. Malik Badri to his Students:-

Be critical and view Western theories of Psychology as culture bound and having biases, not all are scientific in nature. If one wants to pursue postgraduate studies, he or she should relate the research with one own's culture and place of living. Emphasize Cross Cultural Psychology so as to develop the ability to differentiate between scientifically proven and culturally proven theories. Read the works of the philosophers of Psychology to understand the impact of different world views towards the development of Psychology. This can help one to identify which theory is science – based and which is a mere theory. Emphasize the study of the character/behavior of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and what we can make use of it. Have a strong reliance towards Allah after putting a lot of effort in our endeavour.

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