



A Truly Noble Soul: Suleman Lockhat (1953-2016)

It is hard to believe that two years have already passed since we lost our dear brother Suleman, an unassuming man who was a trailblazer in many respects and a pillar of strength in the numerous organisations he served with such great distinction.

One of the most important lessons from his life, and one that he was keen to emphasise at every turn, was that Islam is a complete way of life and professionals should be encouraged and emboldened to be outstanding professionals while also being outstanding activist Muslims. By the time Suleman qualified as a lawyer in the 1970s, the South African Muslim population was represented in increasing numbers among professions, such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, economists, and chartered accountants, and the likes of Suleman were keen to emphasise that professionals had a duty to offer their expertise and represent Muslims' interests and needs in public life.

Suleman Lockhat was born on 3 March 1953 to Amina and Ebrahim Lockhat in North Street in what became known as

Suleman's father ran a retail store in Umgeni Road, a short distance from where the family lived. Suleman was the youngest in the family of 3 boys and 2 girls. The family suffered a tragedy when the eldest, Goolam Hoosen, was killed at the age of nineteen when he and his father were returning home from the shop. Suleman, who was twelve at the time, was devastated by his brother's death. It made him appreciate the value of life and he became ever more determined to serve the community, especially the less privileged. The family was severely affected by the tragedy and moved to Redhill and then to Overport, close to the Sparks Road Mosque.

Suleman's values and outlook towards the less privileged were also shaped by witnessing firsthand the poverty in the Magazine Barracks, which was home to Durban's municipal workers, and his attitude towards the apartheid regime was shaped by personal loss resulting from the loss of the family businesses in Umgeni Road to the Group Areas Act.

Suleman attended the Orient Islamic School and received his formative Islamic

and instead continued with Latin. They paid for their protest by having to take private lessons. Suleman's eventual choice of law did not surprise his classmates, for he played a starring role in the school's debating events and was cast as the Duke of Venice, the presiding officer in court, in a school production of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. His leadership skills stood out and he was rewarded with being appointed the Head Prefect in his matric year.

Suleman once related that he was attracted to the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) and the Muslim Students Association (MSA) whilst a student at the University of Durban-Westville (UD-W). Nazeer Jhaveri was one of those who were instrumental in attracting Suleman to the MYM, by pushing him and others to read the movement's Islamic literature. The MYM, he later recounted, initially attracted students, academics, business people, and intellectuals, with the broader masses joining later. Both the MYM and MSA were active on campus. Suleman attended the MYM's Easter camps and was



Suleman as an activist took part in many rallies and was called upon many times to act as chair. Seen here with his wife Hajira whose support he enjoyed and who accompanied him regularly on many of these protests watching his back, as always.

Block AK in Greyville, Durban, where the Independent Newspapers building currently stands. This area was home to several thousand Indians, mainly Muslims, who were removed under the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. What really irks Indians is that Block AK was abandoned after the evictions. Suleman's maternal (E.G. Paruk) and paternal (A.M. Lockhat) families were involved in retail businesses from the 1880s, and in manufacturing from the mid-twentieth century, as well as in political organisations like the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the Natal Indian Organisations (NIO), and various educational, religious, and social welfare bodies.

education from Hafez Noorbhai at his home-based madressa in the then Mitchell Road, Greyville. His matric classmates recall that Suleman was part of the protest against a new requirement for all state-schools to assemble learners for apartheid's flag raising, forcing them to stand and sing the anthem. Protesting students would turn their backs and refuse to sing! When Suleman was in standard eight (grade ten), the Department of Indian Education imposed Afrikaans as a second language (in place of Latin which was offered at Orient to that time). Suleman and a few others, including Yusuf Bassa, Saber Moola, and Abu-Bakr Asmal, refused to take Afrikaans

inspired by international speakers such as Jamal Badawi and the Islamic Tarbiyah Programme. He rose to be vice-president of the MYM and later recounted:

"The MYM had a tremendous impact. It changed the course of my life in the sense that before I joined the MYM, I was a nominal Muslim who would go to mosque, with the rest of my life like that of everybody else. Once we joined the MYM, we had to slowly cut off all the other things that we were doing and make our life Islamic.

"The members of the MYM in each area would come home and take you with them to salah and, it had a tremendous impact because it helped you in establishing your

salah, it helped you in developing yourself as a personality, it helped you in gaining information and education on Islam and one of the other great advantages was the types of (Islamically conscious) people you met – Farouk Amod, Mohammed Amra, Ahmed Sayeed Moolla, Suleman Dangor, Baboo (Ebrahim) Jadwat, Ebrahim Rasool, Fariel Choonara, Hafez Rashied Omar, Dr Tokan, and others.”

Many of the Muslim students who came from outside of Durban to study at UD-W in the early 1970s lived in the Overport area and engaged in intense political discussion. They also met in mosques and homes where they discussed Islam, South African politics and developments in the global Islamic world. These “Overport days” were formative for these young people who got involved in activities no one else had undertaken previously, such as Operation Qurbani, Operation Winter Warm, Youth Camps, Halaqas, and so on, many of which were subsequently embraced by other Islamic organisations.

It was around this time that an MYM member, Dawood Kadwa, challenged Suleman that the true test of being a Muslim in South Africa was to get involved in the “townships” that the apartheid regime had established for Africans, and

which so fundamentally divided South Africans by race. Suleman began to accompany MYM members on Sundays to KwaMashu, Ntuzuma, Duff's Road, and Inanda, where the bulk of the da'wah work was done by Cassim Ntombela, while the other members visited local Muslims and did social work. This Islamic work set the foundation for the KwaMashu Masjid, then an elementary structure where a mosque, an Islamic centre, and a madrassah stand today. A mosque and madrassah were also established in Ntuzuma. In Nkandla, Cassim Ntombela's hometown, Durban's Muslims established a high school for the general community. Suleman assisted in organising ifthaar, the nightly taraweeh prayer, and Islamic talks in these areas during the month of Ramadan in particular.

In 1976 Suleman and other members of the MYM facilitated the first visit of King Goodwill Zwelithini to the Grey Street Masjid.

Suleman also played a key role in establishing and serving as a trustee of the Islamic Society of Rydalvale in Phoenix, with local resident Abdul Wahab Khan and Haroon Yusuf.

He was also involved in and served as trustee of the South African Dawah Network (SADN).

Professionally, Suleman started studying for his BCom Law degree at UD-W in 1973, and subsequently completed the BProc degree through UNISA in 1977. He often spoke of the difficulties of qualifying and working as a lawyer during the height of apartheid. It was tough finding a place to serve articles (he had to wait a year for the opportunity) as there were few Indian legal firms and white firms were reluctant to employ Blacks, while in court, magistrates had an air of superiority, stifled Black lawyers and threatened to report them to the Law Society over the most mundane issues.

After serving his articles, Suleman opened a practice with his good friend Omar Farouk Sayed Ali, called Sayed and Lockhat in Nedbank House in Queen Street, Durban, where many legal firms were based. Suleman is remembered for his level headedness and conflict resolution skills when seeking to resolve legal disputes. On one occasion, Ahmed Deedat was assaulted in Port Elizabeth where he was giving a lecture, and Suleman, who had just graduated, won the case. He would remind his friends that this was the first time he had put his gown on. On another occasion, Mrs Poovalingam, then principal of the Durban Indian Girls High School, had started a defamation case against the MYM, and Suleman, through his tactful approach, negotiated an out-of-court settlement. When the MYM's newspaper, Al-Qalam, was banned in the mid-1980s, Suleman led the fight against the banning order. Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL) was also involved when the late Chief Justice of South Africa, Ismail Mohammed, challenged the Jewish Board of Deputies who had asked for a publication of the Islamic Propagation Centre to be banned. They successfully appealed to the Publications Appeal Board.

After Suleman had been in practice for a few years, he and Fuad Hendricks went into real estate, forming a company called Multiprop, and each subsequently branched out on their own. Suleman constantly evolved as a professional. From the early 2000s, he began to concentrate on immigration matters. This came about when, one day, during the month of Ramadan, he was called to the Brighton Beach Police Station where many African Muslim migrants and refugees had been arrested. He went to the station with his long-time friend Shabbir Banoobhai, and they established that the detainees were being held under the so-called Aliens Control Act. Although he was no expert on the Act, being the diligent person he was, Suleman familiarised himself with the law and its implications and succeeded in getting a number of detainees released, while others were deported.

This period was witness to a tremendous influx of refugees and asylum seekers from Southern African countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and Tanzania, many of them Muslims, to South Africa, with most coming from very indigent communities. Suleman realised that most would be deported as they



Top: Suleman, Zeinoul Cajee, Maulana Abbas Mlatywayo and AK Lockhat - Bottom: Suleman with Ahmed Saeed Maola and Maulana Rafiq Shah





Yasin Mohamed, Farouk Amod, Suleman Lockhat, Riaaz Jamal and Cassim Ntombela

did not have the means and resources to fight the state. When anyone asked why he took up this cause, he would remind them of the verse in the Qur'an that says, 'perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not' (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:216). Professionally, it did not seem a good move because immigrants were frowned upon by the wider community, with xenophobia being rampant, but, Alhamdulillah, he said that this experience awoke a deeper social consciousness in him.

The MYM gave birth to organisations like South African National Zakaat Fund (SANZAF), AMAL and the Islamic Medical Association (IMA). In recounting the establishment of AMAL, Suleman recalled that the MYM attracted the support of many professionals, and, at the Islamic Tarbiyah Programmes (ITP), they would always be thinking of ways to attract more professionals into institutional and organisational Islam, so that Muslims could make Islam a meaningful part of their everyday lives. Suleman was directly involved in the formation of AMAL in 1984, with the likes of Zein-ul-Abidin Kajee, Iqbal Kolia, Abdul Sathar Gani, and others like Ibrahim Vawda, Dawood Kadwa, Anwar Ballim, and Hoosen Agjee. He was AMAL's first chairperson, a position he held until 2011.

The viewpoint of the MYM, and its members who formed various professional organisations, was that it needed more Muslims to believe and act as Muslims in every facet of their lives. Professionals had to realise that they were part of a greater ummah and see what they could do as Muslim lawyers for Muslim clients. As Suleman explained:

"Our perspective was that, within our fold, we needed people to come in, join us as Muslims, strengthen the Islamic teachings and to conscientize our people about Islam and Islamic law in the professions. For example, a Mr Cassim may be a lawyer: we are saying to him, brother, you are a lawyer, we know that, but we

are saying is that, you as part of a greater ummah, please sit with us and we are going to now talk to you about the things you can do as a Muslim lawyer for Muslim clients. Then, for example, when the time comes for him to draw a will, he can do a will according to South African law but if he had that Islamic consciousness, he will know how to prepare a will according to Islamic law. So that was the idea behind it, that let's gravitate people towards the organisation and then conscientize them Islamically so that the will would not contradict the tenets of Islam."

The initiative came under attack from Indian political activists who felt that at a time when Indians should be uniting and pooling their resources to defeat the apartheid regime, these organisations were fostering religious divisions. A Black Lawyers organisation, NADAL, was already in existence, and they did not want a different organisation. They were also attacked by Ulema who were wary of non-Ulema segments of the community taking such initiatives amongst Muslims. Muslim professionals had to show great strength and resolve to overcome criticisms from within and outside the community.

AMAL, Suleman explained, was formed with the intention of attracting Muslim lawyers but many non-Muslim lawyers, accountants and business people attended its workshops because they wanted to understand Islam, its values, ethics and interaction in daily life in order to facilitate dealing with their Muslim clients. Suleman was convinced that AMAL was successful in conscientising both the legal and accounting professions. AMAL hosted the first ever Islamic Economics Conference in South Africa, with Professor Khurshid Ahmed as keynote speaker. It was this conference that convinced Muslims that Islamic Banking and Finance were achievable in the South African context. While AMAL as an organisation still in its formative years, and trying to attract membership, did not get directly involved in anti-apartheid activism, many of its members did, and they also provided



Suleman's son, Yasser at the opening of the SLA

assistance to victims of apartheid.

Suleman was also a founding member of the Islamic Forum and Vision 20/20, Muslim think-tanks of professionals, businesspeople and academics, seeking ways for Muslims to play an active role in the post-apartheid context of a rapidly changing South Africa. His high level input was appreciated by members. He was also a member of the Minara Chamber of Commerce, and trustee and founding member of The Islamic Centre Trust (ICT), Vision 20/20, Islamic Forum and AMAL's second chairperson after Anwar Ballim. Suleman was a trustee of the Verulam Islamic Dawah Centre (VIDC)/Masakhane School, based just outside Verulam en route to Hazelmerre Dam, which is involved primarily in education among the indigenous population. VIDC was formed in 1979 and Suleman was intimately involved from the very beginning, especially in the building of the hostel. To recognize his contribution to the Centre, a plaque was placed there in May 2016 / Shabaaan 1437 in his honour.

Suleman married Hajira Paruk in 1982 and they have five children, who have followed in their parents' footsteps in terms of excelling educationally and professionally, as well as in their outstanding Taqwa. Irfana is a homeopath; Nabila is a haafiza who holds a Business Science degree; Yahya is a quantity surveyor; Suhail is becoming a civil engineer; and Yaasir is following in his father's footsteps in pursuing a legal career. They have big shoes to fill but all are certainly doing their best to do just that. Suleman's family spoke lovingly of him as the family man, and commented on the many hours he spent nursing his ill mother.

Despite the many problems facing South Africa and the Muslim community, Suleman was optimistic about the future of Islam. He felt that, while there was great enthusiasm for Islam amongst the youth, there was a lack of depth in their understanding, and that a special effort had to be made to consolidate that interest and young Muslims' knowledge and

understanding of Islam. His wish was that more Ulema would direct their efforts at the youth and provide the right kind of inspiring leadership for the present age.

Whilst South African Muslims are a highly divided group, with many Ulema at odds with each other as well as with organisations such as the MYM, it should be mentioned that Suleman had the greatest respect for the likes of Mawlana Ansari, a pivotal figure in our community from the 1960s to the 1980s as Imam of the West Street Masjid, and Mawlana Yunus Patel, who was such an influential figure for so many Muslims from the early 1990s, when he was based at the Masjid-E-Noor in Mallinson Road, Asherville. He held both Mawlanas in the highest regard and recalled in an interview the 'positive interaction' that the MYM enjoyed with them. Suleman also derived great spiritual succour from the dhikr programmes that he attended regularly at the Mallinson Road Mosque.

Speaking at an annual meeting of Islamic Forum after he had been diagnosed with cancer in January 2015, Suleman bravely confronted the reality of his situation and proffered some sage advice to the young and the healthy.

"I have suffered a tumour in my liver and it has been very challenging. Challenging with a lot of reflection, reflections on what I have done with my journey this far, where I am going, how I am going to meet my Lord

and have I succeeded in that journey thus far? Of course when you look at it, you have many regrets, regrets about why you didn't do this earlier and why you didn't do that, but nevertheless it is a time to get closer to Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w.). When we hear about the examples of the Prophet's reactions to people, the faith he displayed, the forgiveness he gave, the sincerity with which he received people, that he didn't just reject them; these are morals that we cherish and how good it would be if we could practice these examples.

"To everyone here, I am saying that you are fortunate. You are fortunate that you've got time on your side, you've got energy on your side, you've got opportunity on your side and many of you have got youth on your side and you cannot be on a better journey than the one you are on now. Make the best of it. Educate yourselves, inspire yourselves and practice what you can. All of us, we have this opportunity now to get closer to Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w.) as much as we can so that when our time comes we will be able to say: "Ya Allah, I am ready if I serve no purpose in this world anymore. I am ready to go. And many of us, myself included, haven't reached that stage yet, and I'm asking Allah to give me time so that I can reach that stage.

"The experience has taught me a lot and I must thank Allah for a very supportive family, very supportive brothers

from the movement who care and keep in contact, and give us the support that we need at this time because it's not easy but you make me capable of living through it. Praise be to God, "We surely belong to God and to Him we shall return" and Allah knows best. And I am hoping that when we return, the angels will be able to declare: "To the righteous it will be said: 'O reassured soul, come back to the Lord - well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing (unto Him). Enter you, then, among my honoured slaves. And enter My paradise' (Qur'an 89: 27-30)."

These are lessons we could all benefit from taking heed of. When Suleman passed away on 6 August 2016, Ebrahim Jadwat, his neighbour in Greyville who knew him all his life, stated that 'an Oak has fallen'. This was an apt metaphor. The oak tree, which is the national tree of countries like the United States, Germany, France, and England, primarily symbolizes strength and endurance but is also associated with protection and stability. These are qualities that one readily associated with brother Suleman. Ebrahim Jadwat told Al-Qalam newspaper (issue August 2016): 'Despite running a busy practice, his (Suleman's) doors were always open to all and sundry. He had a heart of gold, and was always ready to assist and offer advice. He truly embodied the Islamic spirit and the word "NO" was never on his lips.'

Aslam Ismail, who also worked



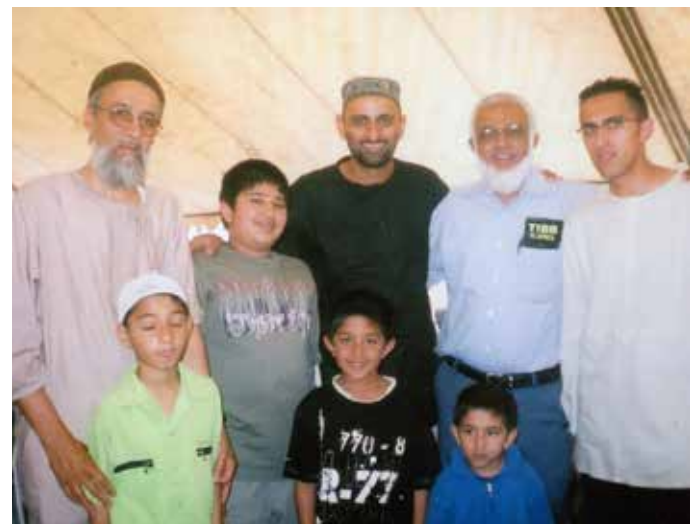
Shabbir Banoobhai, Suleman, Ibrahim Vawda and Ebrahim Ansari



Suleman, ex President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Dr Adam Mohamed



Saber Jazbhai, Shoyeb Omar, Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Suleman and Shabbir Banoobhai



Hajee Bhai Moola, Zain Bhika and Suleman - Uzair Moola, Yasser Lockhat



Yunus Sultan, Sister umm Zakiiyyah, Dr Razia Osman, Mohamed Amra and Dr Yusuf Osman in front of the plaque commemorating the opening of the Suleman Lockhat Auditorium at Mariam Bee Islamic Centre



Sister Umm Zakiiyyah making a presentation to Suleman's wife, Hajira at the official opening of the Suleman Lockhat Auditorium at Mariam Bee Islamic Centre - Mrs Zulekha Mayat in the background



Iqbal Sabat, Dr Yusuf Osman, Nazir Jhovery, Mufti Mustafa Ceric of Bosnia, Ismail Manjira and Suleman



Advocate Muhammad Vahed, Advocate Aslam Motala, Suleman and Imran Bobat

alongside Suleman in several organisations for almost two decades, reflected as follows: "The African philosophy "Ngumuntu umuntu ngabantu" ("A person is a person because of brother Suleman. Suleman, or Solly as we fondly called him, linked me to various organisations when I arrived in Durban almost twenty years ago. A treasure that I count amongst my blessings is serving in two of them with him, together with the many interactions we had over the years. Solly's conduct was a learning school in the practical expression of Akhlaq. He had an unassuming, sincere nature despite the depth of his wisdom and intellect. His personal qualities and demeanour endeared him to everyone. His conduct in meetings was one of quiet observance and intense listening, with his opinion tendered as a suggestion or sometimes coined as a question which very often provided the response to the item being discussed. His views on a topic were advanced with a confident humility that left one questioning why he was almost always the last to speak when he already had a direction. On meeting him he would greet you with great enthusiasm as though he was seeing you after a very long time and held the handshake until you let go of his grasp. One was always sure to learn something new whenever one spoke with him. Truly a giant of a man; whose personality, character and contribution to the community will keep

his memory alive far into the future. I, as would many who knew him and interacted with him, would count as a great blessing that we had the good fortune to have known Suleman Lockhat.

"The various people who knew Suleman intimately over many years spoke of his humbleness, approachability, grace, lack of airs, friendliness to young and old, and being concerned but not intrusive, qualities which endeared him to all and sundry. It is not only what he did (for that his reward is assured, Insha-Allah), but more importantly he was inspired and motivated to serve Allah through, or in spite of, his profession! In other words he held firmly that we can do 'ibaadat through our profession, skill or business as well as through bead-counting and rak'ats on a musalla. He saw this as the thrust of the MYM's approach

to our deen: to harmonise between our mundane and spiritual lives, and not live dichotomously, as was wont at the time."

Suleman was a humble soul who was genuinely inspired to get involved in Islamic work to achieve positive change and never sought accolades. However, in November 2017, during the visit of US author Umm Zakiiyyah, the Islamic Forum named its auditorium at the Mariam Bee Sultan Centre 'The Suleman Lockhat Auditorium' in honour of brother Suleman.

We make dua that Allah Almighty accept all the good deeds of our brother Suleman, a loving son, father, husband, community activist, lawyer, and concerned and dedicated Muslim, and grant him (and all our deceased marhooms) the highest abode in Jannah. Ameen.



Suleman at Minara 2015 Recognition Awards held at NMJ Hall, Overport, Durban



Imam Dr Rashied Omar and Suleman



Sheikh Murshid Davids and Suleman



Na'eem Jeenah, Suleman and Ronnie Kasrils



Dr Mohamed Solwa of IMA and Suleman



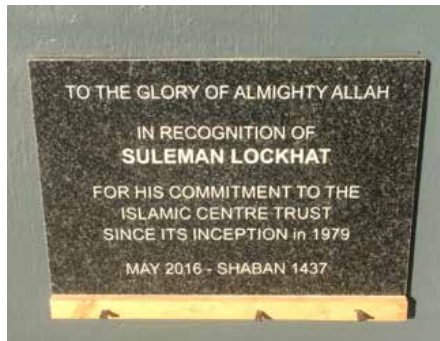
Haroon Yousuf, Suleman and Ebrahim Osman of Vision 2020



Dr Ahmed Shaikh and Suleman



In 2015 Suleman presented the Minara's Professional Achiever Award to Judge Achmat Jappie



Plaque at Verulam Islamic Dawah Centre recognising the effort that Suleman made to the Centre and its development



Botswana: Standing Host, Imam Essa el Sepppe, Yusuf Patel, Ahmed Saeed Moolla - Sitting Sataar Dada and Suleman

for suleman lockhat

against a backdrop of eternity
 what were the chances
 we would find ourselves together
 at the same time
 in this endlessly shifting place?

the answer my mind provides:
 not much more than
 that of two grains of sand
 coming to lie next to each other
 on some ocean's vast shores

ah but our hearts knew better
 knew not just how to get close
 but to live within each other's
 nudging our loved ones a little
 to make room for our love

against a backdrop of eternity
 what is a small journey
 a friendship of forty years
 or even a whole life
 lived to ease someone's pain?

no – it is not nothing – it was everything
 to see you make the load seem lighter
 the heavier it became
 to love you knowing a day was ap-
 proaching
 when nothing would remain the same

shabbir banoobhai
 cape town - 10 september 2016

MYM Stalwart, Suleman Lockhat: In Allah's warm embrace.....

Thousands are reeling from the recent passing of community icon Murhoom Suleman Lockhat who embodied the character of a true Muslim. Stricken with liver cancer, he once delivered a stirring speech advising all to get closer to the Creator while "you still have time on your side."

It is said that heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things. They are not those who are necessarily lauded by society; but rather those who, in their quiet, unassuming and unacknowledged way serve society. They do so not in any dramatic fashion but in their daily interactions, below the radar. Service becomes a habit in a life lived with purpose.

Oftentimes one wonders where such individuals derive their strength, energy and time to engage in so much, for so many, for so little in return. Such was Suleman Lockhat of Durban (03 March 1953 – 06 August 2016) who returned to his Lord earlier this month, after a courageous battle with cancer at the age of 63. A lawyer by vocation, a Muslim in commitment and an activist by passion Suleman combined these attributes to greatly benefit individuals and organisations too numerous to mention.

His formative years were spent in the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), a movement that he identified with for most of his life, recruiting many into its ranks. However his commitment to 'the Movement' did not make him doctrinaire and deter him from drinking from other fountains: he was a regular attendee at the khaanqah of the late Moulana Yunus Patel and other ulama. He was a consistent presence at all MYM meetings and programmes making his contribution as a beacon of calm and rationality even during the most serious crises. He was the calming influence when there were warring factions – between radical youth and traditional grandees and from ideological battles to personality conflicts always respecting the confidence entrusted to him. For the MYM he handled all their legal matter pro deo and was key in the purchase, establishment and registration of key properties including the Islamic Centre Trust and the "Camp Site" in Verulam. He served as trustee on both.

Arising out of his commitment to the 'Movement Project' to establish organisations for various professionals, and tracking the idea of the Islamic Medical Association, he was instrumental in founding the Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL). The idea was first mooted at the MYM Islamic Training Programme (ITP) in Lenasia with MYM President Ahmed Saeed Moolla and Zein-ul-Abedin Kajee. He served AMAL as the second chairperson after taking over from Anwar Ballim, and continued to play a key role until his death, seeing it through challenges but also growth and making a significant contribution to tackling critical issues such as Muslim Personal Law.

As part of the MYM, Suleman was active in many outreach programmes (Da'wah) into various communities, including Kwa-

Mashu and Phoenix. He was instrumental in institutionalising these programmes. He played a key role in building the first mosque in Kwa-Mashu, one of the first in a South African 'township' and organised taraweeh, iftaar and talks there. With Abdul Wahab Khan he established the Islamic Society of Rydevale in Phoenix. In both these institutions, he not only served as trustee but provided the legal instruments for their establishment. He also served as trustee of the South African Da'wah Network (SADN) which runs many such institutions.

After the period of his active involvement in the MYM, when older members regrouped in other organisations such as Islamic Forum and Vision 2020, Suleman played a key role in their formation and continued his involvement in these and built relationships with fraternal organisations such as Minara Chamber of Commerce and SAMNET. Suleman played a key role in many of these think-tanks in influencing the thinking of young professionals, academics and businessmen and women.

He was committed to a non-racial South Africa and building a new society. In this he saw a key role for the Muslim community. On many occasions he provided legal assistance to activists facing the onslaught of security police during the anti-apartheid struggle. He also played a key supporting role in getting Fawzia Peer elected as an ANC Councillor for Westville and its surrounds by transporting voters and supporting her until the counting was done.

Not widely known is that as an attorney and member of the Immigration Board, Suleman Lockhat rendered yeoman service beyond the call of duty and often well into the night in dealing with the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees, especially from the other parts of the African continent.

In this very busy life, both professional and as an activist, Suleman's commitment to his aged parents was unstinting. He found time to see to their needs and sometimes was late for meetings because he had care for the needs of his parents. He lived a modest life, a regular at the Reservoir Hills mosque and a friend to all. He also saw to the needs of his siblings and his own five children. Suleman will be missed by all – from his family to professionals to refugees who depended upon him for guidance and assistance. He was a friend to most, a confidant to many and an inspiration to all.

A year before his passing he was asked to share some 'wisdom of the elders' with those present at the annual Islamic Forum gathering. His words ring true and will remain an inspiration to all. The following is what he said during his address. "A few months ago I fell seriously ill. I have suffered a tumor in my liver and it has been a very challenging time. Challenging with a lot of reflection, reflections on what I have done with my journey thus far, where I am going, how I am going to meet my Lord and have I succeeded in that journey thus far? Of course when you look at it you have many regrets, regrets about why you didn't do this earlier and why didn't you do that

but nevertheless it is a time to get closer to Allah and the Prophet (saw). When we hear about the examples of the Prophet's reactions to people, the faith he displayed, the forgiveness he gave, the sincerity with which he received people, that he didn't just reject them; these are morals that we cherish and how good would it be if we could practice these examples?

"To everyone here I am saying that you are very fortunate. You are fortunate that you've got time on your side, you've got energy on your side, you've got opportunities on your side and many of you have got youth on your side and you cannot be on a better journey than the one you are on now. Make the best of it. Educate yourselves, inspire yourselves and practice what you can. All of us, we have this opportunity now to get closer to Allah and the Prophet (saw) as much as we can so that when our time comes we will be able to say: Ya Allah, I am ready. If I serve no purpose in this world anymore I am ready to go. And many of us, myself included, haven't reached that stage yet and I'm asking Allah to give me time so that I can reach that stage.

"This experience has taught me a lot and I must thank Allah for a very supportive family from the movement who care and keep in contact and give me the support that I need at this time because it's not easy but you make me capable of living through it. Praise be to God, 'We surely belong to God and to Him we shall return' and Allah knows best. I am hoping that when we return, the angels will be able to declare: "To the righteous it will be said: 'O reassured soul, come back to your Lord, well-pleased yourself and well-pleasing unto Him. Enter you, then, among My honoured slaves, And enter My paradise.'" (Quran 89:27-30)

We pray that the Almighty embrace Marhoom Suleman Lockhat in his mercy, envelope him with his love and grant him the highest abode in Jannah. May his legacy continue to accumulate blessings (Thawabi-Jaariya). Someone wisely said: 'Heroes are made by the paths they choose, not the powers they are graced with.' We all have that choice.

***This tribute was written by Shuaib Manjra – assisted by Ahmed Manjra and Ahmed Saeed Moolla an appeared in Al-Qalam as a tribute after his passing.**



Suleman and Br Tahir Sitoto, ex Pres of MYM & current IPCI Trustee

Marhoom Suleman Lockhat: 'An Oak has Fallen'

The passing of community icon, Suleman Lockhat, has left a void that few can fill, writes an Al-Qalam Reporter

Hundreds of people attended the Janaza of Murhoom Suleman (Solly) Lockhat on Saturday 06 August, notably one of the great giants who played a leading role in shaping the community in what it is today.

Attorney Solly Lockhat passed away after battling liver cancer for almost two years. He was 63. His janaza left from the reservoir hills masjid and he was buried at the Brown's Avenue Cemetery in Overport.

Durban businessman and community leader, Ebrahim Jadwat, summed up the passing of Murhoom Solly Lockhat in a few simple words – "An Oak has fallen," he said.

"Despite running a busy practice, his doors were always open to all and sundry. He had a heart of gold, and was always ready to assist and offer advice. He truly embodied the Islamic spirit and the word 'NO' was never on his lips. Murhoom Solly Lockhat was a dedicated activist and participated in numerous Islamic causes. As an executive member of the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM), he played a huge role in building the Cassim Ntombela Masjid in the heartland of Zululand, at Nkandla. He was also instrumental in co-ordinating the first visit of King Goodwill Zwelithini to the Grey Street Mosque in 1976," Jadwat said.

Another community leader and businessman, Solly Suleman, described Murhoom Suleman as a "dedicated community icon" who inspired many to work towards upholding Islamic values. He said service to his deen became a passion in his life.

Murhoom Suleman Lockhat was an active member of the MYM in his youth. He was one of the founding members of AMAL, (Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers), where he sat as its chairman since its inception in 1982. He saw the organization through a number of obstacles and successes. In 2011 he stepped down from his role as chairman in order to open new avenues for this organization, but continued to serve on the Management Committee of AMAL as a key member despite being ill.

Murhoom Suleman Lockhat was a member of a number of organizations such as Muslim Vision 2020, and continued to uphold strong relationships with other organizations such as the Minara Chamber of Commerce and SAMNET.

The head of Vision 2020, Ebrahim Osman, and Enver Mulla of AMAL, paid tribute to Murhoom Suleman Lockhat.

In their tribute they said: "Mr Suleman Lockhat played a role in the history of South Africa whereby senior members of AMAL recall on many occasions when AMAL members were requested to provide assistance against the onslaught of security police against activists. Mr Lockhat was one of those members at the forefront lending support and assistance.

"Mr Suleman Lockhat was also a founding member of both the Islamic

Forum and Muslim Vision 2020. Both these organizations are think-tanks of young professionals, academics and businessmen who have done some significant strategic thinking and planning in addressing local, national and international issues affecting the Ummah. In both organizations Suleman Lockhat made valuable inputs into mapping the road ahead for the Muslim community as an integral component of the new post-apartheid South Africa.

"What is perhaps not widely known is that as an attorney and member of the Immigration Board, Suleman Lockhat rendered service beyond the call of duty and often well into the night in dealing with the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees especially from the other parts of the African continent.

"While he stood as such a well known figure in the professional and social arenas, he was known as the ultimate 'family' role-model, dedicating hours towards the betterment of his family both financially

and emotionally. He spent the last few years personally nursing his mother (who he had recently lost to old age), while trying to be successful in the upbringing of his children.

"Mr Suleman Lockhat will surely be missed and will be remembered by one and all as a role model for his dedication towards uplifting the Islamic community. Mr Lockhat has proven to be a hero in the face of all leadership roles; as a father, a son, a community socialite, a professional, and a Muslim. May Allah Almighty grant Marhoom Suleman Lockhat the highest abode in Jannah, and accept his ibaadah, good deeds and service to Humanity.

"May the family of Marhoom Suleman Lockhat find strength in the legacy that he built and the love he has earned from thousands of people within the Muslim Community and beyond."

Al-Qalam
Southern Africa's Muslim Newspaper



Mohamed Vawda, Yacoob Ballim, Mustafa Darsot, Dr Ahmed Manjra, Suleman and Aslam Mayat



Santha Naidoo, Mayor Obed Mlaba, Suleman and Ebrahim Patel



Ebrahim Rasool, Suleman and Imam Mahmood Khatib



Prof Muhammad Munir, Prof Muhammad Tahir Mansoori & Suleman



Advocate Aslam Motala, Ebrahim Rasool, Suleman and Fazel Bulbulia