

**Norman Calder**, who died on 13 February 1998, was a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Manchester from 1980 to 1997. Born in Buckie, Scotland in 1950, Calder went to Wadham College, Oxford, in 1979 to read Oriental Studies. He graduated with a First in Arabic and Persian and went on to teach in Tehran and Dammam. During 1976-1979, he completed a brilliant dissertation on *The Structure of Authority in Imami Shi'i Jurisprudence* under the supervision of John Wansbrough at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His monograph, *Studies in Early Islamic Jurisprudence*, published by Clarendon Press in 1993 and over 20 profound articles on both Sunni and Shi'i thought continue to influence new and innovative approaches to Islamic Studies.

One knew after an initial meeting with him that being his student would not just be a privilege but a turning point in life. At least that is how I felt when I approached him to do a Master's in Middle Eastern Studies in 1988. My "interview" with him consisted of one or two detailed questions of Islamic law followed by a lengthy discussion as to what was driving me to pursue postgraduate studies. I remember thinking what a challenge it would be to learn from Norman Calder, whose acute perception and rather unnerving wit had left me feeling less than confident about my own knowledge and learning. In the months that followed, I was to realise that almost every student he taught, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, was in awe of his learning. This was not simply because of his immense competence in Arabic and Persian literature, his insight into Qur'anic studies and the discipline of *tafsir*, his interest in *tabaqat* literature, or even his ingenious and brilliant approach to the world of Muslim classical law and the juristic tradition—it was because of the way he managed to portray this world of piety in his own inimitable and witty manner.

He had many international Muslim postgraduate students who, despite their varying fields of research, all agreed that Norman pushed everyone to their limits. The student was constantly guided towards extensive reading, every sentence had to mean something, every idea had to be fully explored, every generality challenged. If you were fortunate, you ended up not just being taught by him, but actually thinking like him. By the end of my Ph.D., I felt that I had discovered a little about classical family law, but infinitely more about how to read works of literature and how to find truths in fiction. I suppose that this was his legacy to his students—the world of books is the world of knowledge and wisdom. Many of his students, including myself, have continued to pursue an academic career in Islamic Studies because of his efforts. I am sure that his colleagues and friends knew far more about all the other dimensions to his work and personality. Norman's death is a significant loss for anyone who knew him. In the academic world, his thinking was both innovative and provocative. However, the compassion he displayed towards his students, the charm and wit with which he taught, and his amazing intellect made the whole learning process one of the most rewarding experiences for the privileged few.

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