



CONDOLENCE LETTER FROM MUFTI OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE ON THE DEATH OF HIS EXCELLENCY, DR SHEIKH MUHAMMAD SAYYID TANTAWI, THE GRAND IMAN OF AL-AZHAR

I am deeply saddened by the demise of His Excellency, Dr Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. His passing is a great loss to all Muslims not just the Egyptian Muslims as he lived much of his life in the service of Islam. For more than 20 years since his appointment as the Mufti of Egypt in 1986, and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, he had given fatwa (religious edicts) that are progressive and in line with changing contexts but yet, never deviating from the principles of Islam.

I had the opportunity to meet Dr Tantawi last month (February 2010) when Egypt hosted an annual Conference on Islamic Law. During the opening of the Conference, he had given the honour to the Patriarch of Egypt from the Coptic Church to give a speech to the Conference delegates before he himself addressed the delegates.

Herein lies another greatest contribution of Dr Tantawi – interfaith dialogue and harmony. As the first Muis Distinguished Visitor in 2006, he was very impressed with the state of racial and religious harmony in Singapore and had “a very high regard for Singapore because of its constructive and forward looking” orientation.

His internationalist posture was shown when on assuming the post of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in 1996, he showed his interest on the works of Al-Azhar graduates worldwide by convening a meeting of Al-Azhar graduates who were working on Muslim management affairs so as to get to know their works better. This meeting has since become an annual affair. I was involved in such meetings and had greatly benefited from his wisdom.

On behalf of Muis and the Muslims of Singapore, I would like to extend my deepest condolence to the people of Egypt. May his soul be blessed by Allah and be placed among the learned and the pious. Ameen.

**SYED ISA SEMAIT
MUFTI
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