

Thought for the day – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

By Ruth Grover

Many thanks to Ruth for sending in this inspiring article, from the Times, by Mike Haines. He relates how this brother David was kidnapped by Isis and murdered 18 months later. The horrific images of it haunted his family. It was those around him who helped him through the pain and suffering, specially his best friend, Shahnawaz, a London-based imam, guided him through his darkest times. He particularly remembers a line Shahnawaz once showed him “Since good and evil cannot be equal, repel thou evil with something that is better”

He writes:

*Last year I travelled to the US to deliver a victim impact statement at the trial of two of my brother’s murderers. I had been wrestling with this scenario for years, but finally to come face to face with them was truly difficult. I feared deep rooted emotions might simmer, but once there, I realised I felt nothing for them. I knew at that moment I was ready to look them in the eye and offer forgiveness.*

*Many do not understand my forgiveness, and I don’t blame them. It was an agonising and exposing process but the outcome has offered me an escape from the nightmare I had been trapped in for years.*

*Just as forgiveness is a choice, the same can be said for hatred. The latter was corrosive, it impacted me in unimaginable ways. The former allowed me to separate the torment from the tormentor and, in doing so, I found a physical and emotional burden lifted from my shoulders.*

*When I speak to young people across the UK, I tell them the future is in their hands; they have the power and potential to create a better world by choosing kindness over hatred.*

*Religious or not, I encourage you to consider this carefully: free your self from anger, look for understanding and tolerance. In memory of David, and the noble view of humankind, choose the spirit of unity.*