

## TRIBUTE TO GULAM SHERALI



*By Sajjad Tejani*



If you were to ask anyone in the community about Gulam Sherali, they would relate him to Cricket. It runs in the Sherali family. He continued playing the game in his 50s and 60s as opposed to his siblings and father who retired in their 40s. His friends would always joke that if you would wake him up at midnight and tell him there is a game, he would get changed and be ready to play. He played the game throughout the year. In winters he would either attend the nets or

play indoor Cricket. During Summers, besides playing on the weekends, he would be available to play during the week and evenings for the twenty-twenty tournaments. He always kept fit and was very quick in running between the wickets. If you happened to bat with him, you dare not say no to a short run, 2nd or 3rd one before you would get a loud shout of "COMMON". At the end of the over, you would be told off for refusing his call to run.

He played for Ruislip Manor Cricket Club for many years. This is the club near his home and the Captain of the team was lucky to have Uncle Gulam for two reasons. Firstly, he was always available to play and secondly, a very reliable batsman who wouldn't lose his wicket cheaply. During his tenure at the club, he scored a number of centuries and half centuries. He also was available to field in any position and had very safe hands with catches. He also encouraged his son Mohamed Irfan to play the game who eventually became a good all-rounder of the game. He made sure the legacy of Cricket continued in the Sherali family. Besides Cricket, Uncle Gulam was a good table tennis player which he mostly played in his early days in Peterborough.

The one unique thing about him was that he was always on his feet. Before the game, always available to help prepare for the game if needed. During the game either batting or fielding. If he was out early, he would volunteer to do the scoring or umpiring. After the game, he always volunteered to clean up. He was always a DIY person whether on the Cricket field, Home or at work.

Away from Cricket, he was a very caring and generous person. As a qualified Chartered Accountant who trained with Pricewaterhouse, he managed to secure a good position with a Libyan Oil Company in the UK. It was during this time that he gave the opportunity for people from the community who were looking for jobs and managed to secure them employment or even temporary work. Recently someone mentioned to me that "In my working life, I have never seen a boss like Gulam Sherali." He assisted me in getting a job and guided me in the best way to work efficiently at the same time how to earn bonuses. It is compliments like this that makes you appreciate the man who we are all missing today. There are

so many people he helped but never made a big issue about it. He always believed in giving with the right without the left knowing.

As we have been fasting in the summers for more than a decade now, it did not stop him from playing Cricket. However, he would make sure he was at the Stanmore centre for Quran Darsa at 7.30pm. He would listen to the Quran recited in Bait-us-Salaat and after the Darsa finished, he would help a visually impaired senior slowly to the Seniors area. He would come back to the Bait-us-Salaat to follow the Duas and as soon as they were over, he would make his way home to break his fast with his family. This was his routine throughout the month. Whenever you met him, he had a smile on his face. He also had a good sense of humour. Whether it was the month of Ramadhan or any other occasion, he was there at the centre and you wouldn't leave his company without laughing.

It is difficult to absorb that he is no longer with us today. We have to bow down to the Will of the Almighty and pray that he is met with the smiles of the Angels at every step of the next life. We also pray that the family be granted with patience to bear this great loss. Please join me in blessing his noble soul with a Suratul Fatiha and three Suratul Ikhlas.

**Sajjad Tejani**

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