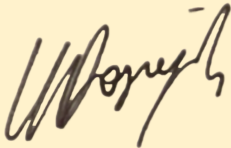


Minutes - Shahbaz Taseer | The Cambridge Majlis 23-24 | Easter Term

On Wednesday 26th April 2023, the Cambridge Majlis hosted Shahbaz Taseer at St. John's Old Divinity School for an evening of storytelling and the first event of the 2023-4 executive committee. The discussion centred around Taseer's experiences of kidnap and torture, as detailed in his memoir *Lost to the World: A Memoir of Faith, Family and Five Years in Terrorist Captivity*, and a shocking reading of an extract detailing Taseer's initial kidnap and first days in captivity provided a moving start to the evening. What followed, prefaced by an apology and warning of the graphic nature of what was to come, was a frank discussion of Taseer's experiences of capture and torture, first by Uzbek extremists and later in Afghanistan. Taseer also fervently discussed the politics of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, his father's assassination in 2011 for defending a Christian woman accused of blasphemy setting in motion the chain of events that led to his son's kidnapping. However, despite the horrors being discussed, Taseer's anecdotes were all shot through with a bolt of humour; indeed, he gave a wry thanks to the Taliban for enabling him to speak at the University of Cambridge, attended by his grandfather and the dream of his late father. The conversation spilled over into John's bar following the event, with conversation spanning the inhumanity of his captors, to the missed weddings of his siblings, to his plans to turn his memoir into a graphic novel - and, to top it all off, our president and external vice president teaching Taseer the marvels of BeReal. It was a poignant, insightful and inspiring event, and one that inspired many further conversations.



Keirit Kaur Dosanjh - Vice-President (Internal)

The Cambridge Majlis 2023-4

