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*THE BRAIN AND THE LAST
HOUR JOURNEY OF THE
MOTHER AND ROAMING OF
THE SPIRIT:*



*A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE JOURNEY OF
MY MOTHER, SANIA FOUAD MIKHAEL
A TRIBUTE TO THE LAST HOUR
JOURNEYS OF ALL MOTHERS*



I loved my mother, Sania Fouad Mikhael, so much. She taught me so much. She made me Ramsis, the person, Ramsis the man and Ramsis the doctor in Christ. She did not have an academic career, nor could she write clearly, yet she was so knowledgeable and wise to the degree that with my father she raised to adulthood 9 highly educated children. One child died at the age of one year old.

She gave us love, care, health and wisdom. She chose to live in poverty to raise us, rather than to go to a luxurious environment. She sacrificed herself to all of us. She chose to eat half a meal per day to feed her kids. Everyone else came first, except herself. Days and nights of tireless work with thankfulness to the Lord was the routine. She accomplished so much in each day to the degree that it was clear to us that God's blessing was on the house all the time. She never stopped praying for each one and asking the Lord "please put good people in their way and let me be safe".

We, Sania's children, felt every day her blessing on us. My father was outside the house working all the time to make money to support the household. Whatever, the mother can give her children, she had done far more. Ten people lived in one and a half bedrooms. We tried to use the day well. At any given time of the day or night, a child was studying or in need of something. There was no second of rest for her. The house was like a 24 hour library, kitchen and bedroom.

Jesus my Lord, because of my father, Farid Fahmy Ghaly, and my mother, Sania Fouad Michael, You have blessed our small apartment in a village-like area with not much resources to become the house that graduated eight children with the best career and future security that anyone could ask for. She was a mother, sister and brother to all of us. She never complained, even once.

Her father prevented her from getting an education, yet she made it clear that all of us would get the highest education possible: we became four physicians and surgeons and others with business degrees. She was strong and lived with peace and faith. Sania was able to face all the challenges, even when she was left by herself to raise the children during the time that my father was a prisoner of war. In a persecuted and poor environment, she protected each child and cared for us so much.

We were the only highly educated children in the community. My parent's faith and wisdom carried us through to the shining careers we currently have. In my mother, you see a genuine heart. God does not need wealth or knowledge, God wants the heart of the person. Even when my mother had no money or education, her heart was enough. She was never afraid of the truth or honesty. Every obstacle she faced with courage and hope. Even if she heard the bombs exploding

outside the house in 1967 while she took us under her wings in the corner of the house, my mother was strong.

She always said: “Live with hope as long as you are living. Life with no hope is considered no life” “Why do you sleep when you see the sun outside? Wake-up so that I can open the window so the sun can enter the house and the light and fresh air exchange occurs”

Whenever there was any dispute between my mother or father or others, she always chose what was good for her kids and what was beneficial, regardless.

“The sun comes to lighten our day and be active” “Laugh to the world regardless of the struggle, the world will give you the smile back”. She was proud of all of us, yet she was worried about the least successful child. He had dreams above his head and immigration problems. To the lost sheep, she placed her worry and prayer until the end.

Because of you, my beautiful and wonderful mother, I am who I am. My brothers and sisters will attest to that. Every Sunday, she went to church and never ate or drank until the mass was over. She believed in blind faith and left everything in the hands of the Lord.

She was born in Sohag in upper Egypt where the earlier native Christians grew-up. The Christian Orthodox church where she was raised is called Saint George Church and now it is a huge Cathedral. In the same area there is an ancient Monastery, called Saint Shenouda Monastery of Upper Egypt. The monastery is where Saint Shenouda lived in the third century. He is called the miracle worker and teacher and raised and established monasticism in the region.

To date he and the virgin Mary perform daily miracles. Over the generations, Christian faith was incorporated one to one with each person in daily life. Anything, sickness, need, hunger or daily crises, the first thing to be called for was the Lord Jesus and His saints. Faith is blind and alive and gets stronger by the everyday story and miracles.

My mother’s family name was Mikhael, which is the same as the Archangel Michael. Many ethics and values were reinforced with social ties. For instance; “A woman should get married only once, even if anything happens to her husband” “The primary responsibility of the wife and mother is her family and everything should be resolved within the walls of that house, complaints outside will not help” “You get what you deserve and what is meant for you you will get. You can run like a horse but you will not get anymore”.

She said about dishonesty; “You can run but you can not hide. The lies have no feet to stand on”. She also said about not fearing death: “Do not be afraid from death. No one dies before his or her time. We will go to rest with our family

in the midst of the Lord. We all are going to die. It will happen. No one takes anything with him or her. The box is small and will contain one inch of the skeleton. Nothing you can do that can bring the dead back. Life will keep going but the loss causes grief and is difficult” and “No one dies before his or her time. You will die when your moment comes, not before and not after. We all die only once”.

Whenever we came to her and said we were afraid if she even felt that there were some concerns; she would appear strong and say “Say Father, the Almighty and take your thumb and index finger of your right hand and place it on the forehead, then the low middle chest, then the left side of chest and finally to the right side of chest while saying ‘In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.’ You should follow this up with “Our Father who art in heaven—”. Say Hail to you Saint George, Hail to you Saint Mary”.

My parents had placed the Christian faith and the orthodox belief as central to our life. It was not just a religion, but it represents life and fellowship with Jesus. She taught me the word of Love, to her “Love was everything, Love and love and keep in loving”

About material jealousy; she always said; “Be content and confident and not jealous, material jealousy destroys himself or herself”. She said; “If you surrender to fear, fear will be over you. Be faithful and confident, otherwise you will fear even your own shadow”. She raised us above material things; “Life is more than your stomach. Do not just care about your food and keeping the stomach full”.

She described the intimate ties with relatives as very strong; “Blood inheritance never gets dissolved over time regardless of any conflicts. It will always be there, it is running through the blood. Nothing can overcome it.”

In regard to the disobedience of kids to parents, she said; “If the son or daughter failed to listen to their parents, the lessons of their days and nights will discipline them. Time when they leave the parents will be the difficult teacher”. She also said; “If you do not desire what is in the hands of people, people will come closer to you.”. She said; “The loyalty with your friends will be started once you sit at one table with them, eating or drinking the basic cup of tea or bread and salt.” She said about friends: “Your genuine friend will forgive you and swallow even the stones for you, but your enemy will be waiting for any small mistake.”

She never encouraged; “winning and keep complaining”. She always said; “all these complaints will lessen your dignity and put you down, put all your needs and complaints on God’s shoulder”. She also said; “If you respect yourself, others will respect you and if you are considerate, you will be considered”. She said; “Your utmost respect is at your own home even if in front of your door rather

than being in a luxury home with inconsiderate friends” and “He who lives outside his home he will reduce his respect.”

She was very decisive and goal oriented, she said; “Indecisiveness will hurt its person, make him lose opportunities, it is a killer”. She had no fear or concerns to say the truth and taught us to do so as well. She asked of us to have a strong personality; “the politically correct go with waves and are weak people and wimps”. She always said; “Be tolerant to others and forgiving”, “Do not get mad, look at your face is red and your blood vessels are congested, you will rupture your vessels like that”, “Be thoughtful, analytical and believing.”

She was a hard-working woman and did not believe in excuses. She could easily see through any excuse and taught us to be determined in achieving our goals. Success can be obtained by following a focused path, perseverance and determination, and using time right. She warned us repeatedly when we did things that were unproductive and said; “Do not live to just eat, be lazy, reckless and lack vocation in your hands”. She said; “The money that comes after working hard, it will come with blessing. The money that comes easily goes easily.” She always advised us; “Stand on your feet and be independent of others.”. She asked all of her kids, boys and girls, to be independent”.

She said; “Always have skills in your hands and be independent, you never know the days what they will bring. Do not depend on others. Work hard with your own hands”. If she saw us questioning the spending of money that belonged to others, she would stop us and said; “It is not injustice to spend the money you own the way you choose.” She taught us the truth and she hated manipulative or opportunistic behavior. She always said; “Be generous, a cheer giver, do not be greedy and God will give you more and more”. She also said; “You do good, if you spend your money on the living souls and the needy rather than in the memories and places of the dead.”

In regard to money, she believed in; “Money is made for the man and not the man for the money.” She always advised against being superficial and caring much about material goods and food; “Do not care only about your stomach, meals and food. I know that starvation is intolerable and a killer. Be thankful when you eat and do not forget about who worked for the food and do not be unthankful and blaming and say after you are full “Oh your food was not adequate and your honey is not sweet. Pray before you eat and be content. Eat healthy food and do not give your stomach fast food just to fill it up, be selective”

If anything appeared that went wrong, she would never get mad and instead would smile and said; “It took the devil with it, It had prevented worse things from happening”. She was always concerned about our friends and we could not

hide anything from her. She believed in; “Show me your friends, I will tell you who you are. From your friends, people can tell who you are.” She said; “A good friend is the person who makes you cry in your mistakes because he cries over you. The unwanted friend is the person who misleads you and makes you laugh with him and makes people laugh at you without identifying your mistakes”.

She believed this quotation especially for women and people in prominent positions; “The reputation is like a transparent glass; as if any small scratch affects the transparency and cannot be fixed, so the reputation of the person, if it got affected, it will always leave a scar.”

She loved people and said; “Life with no people is dead”. She always said; “I am your mother, I know you inside out”. She believed that kids in the mother’s eye will never change or decrease in goodness and said; “The kids are like the Giraffe in their mother’s eyes even if they look ugly to others”.

She was able to give attention to each child as if he or she was her only child. My mother used to look at me from far, with her head turning to the degree that I imitate her today when I go to a thoughtful state of mind, my head will turn and look at the side. She is my pride and love. Each one of us she called “Iziak (means Hi) My heart”.

Her face was the pure face of a baby and an angel and the first response you would get from her was a smile integrated with pure love and respect. She loved so much all the others. She believed in; “You should keep your head high, dignity and respect to the end regardless of the sufferings and what you are going through.” Not only the insiders of the family and friends, but also the outsiders had respected her for the woman she was.

Father John, a long term Priest for the family said at her funeral: She was a saint, sacrificed her entire life for the family and her sainthood can be seen through the great success of her kids and their strong Christian faith.” Despite her illness and physical limitations, her load on others was light. It was her unseen angels that were caring for the heavy load. She loved Saint George and she departed to be with him to celebrate the new Coptic year of the Martyrs in heaven September 11, 2005.

She was very curious and liked to learn new things. She believed that we would be great doctors. She always said: “Doctors have to study every day. They are students until they die. They have to read updated weekly medical news” She would listen to the radio to well-know authorities and successful people and select the words of wisdom and tell us about them. She also liked to listen to various types of channels and tried to keep herself well informed Every day she would know something new and taught it to us.

She also believed in keeping us in harmony, especially with the high competition level of children with age differences of about one year apart. It was a difficult job, the competition ranged from clothes, food, books, study time and many more. She was always checking in us with her kind eyes and came to sit and open a distractive subject and would say; “It is not good to study hours with no break, it will make you crazy. I am here to give you a break.”

It was usually a non-medical subject she had to discuss. She would come with coffee or tea and say; “I thought that this you need.” She was able to read our minds like an open book. We used to study for days straight, with only meal breaks. We got the highest scholarship grades in school. When we did not take enough breaks, she would laugh and say; “Stop studying, your eye glasses are getting thick.”

During the time of studying for examinations, she was very accommodating. Each one of us would have a different time to eat, drink or sleep. She was able to provide all to everyone of us. Yet I remember my mother rarely sat and ate a full meal. She had given to us all to the maximum. She used to sit on the floor or on her knees to perform all the house-hold activities. There was no abundance of table or chairs. There were steps, tanks and vessels that you sat on, or on the floor to carry out the tasks of cleaning, washing the floor, cooking, and so forth. The challenge was to do it without producing noise or voice. We used to study in complete silence. We needed to memorize volumes and books in minutes. Any interruption or noise would drive us mad. Yet, she was tolerant and understanding,

Yet, when it was the right thing to do, she would come with her beautiful face and kind voice and knock on the door and enter our tiny studying room or space. She would be by herself, usually staying outside, leaving us alone in silence for studying, yet she would never leave her sight stray far from us. She tolerated days and nights of hard work all year around for each child in order to provide us the certificate of education and career that we needed to secure our future. She would always tell us boys and girls; “Education is your security for the future”. She would give us examples of people who had made it through poverty and become successful and well-known. She was an inspiration to each one of us. The successful person could be an Egyptian figure or western figure.

She would respect each of our gifts and our ways of conducting our daily schedule. Some of us liked to sleep after school and be up all night studying and another might be studying after school and sleeping at night. In the limited space of our small house and with eight children, my mother and the blessing of God that made it happen. My dad used to be outside the house working and he would

come home in time to go to bed. He would not tolerate the kids arguing, disputing or being preoccupied in many activities in our small house. My mother was able to put up with us for all her life, depriving herself from her own needs. What a Saint! What a martyr without shedding blood! The only thing she was allowed to do was to look from the window while drinking dark tea in the afternoon. She was not allowed to turn the light on in the room because the outside people would see her. My father thought that this was against the rules of the culture.

In a community with limited hygienic and other resources, my mother believed in restricted hygiene and cleanness. There was epidemic in our area of bacterial Typhoid gastroenteritis, Cholera, a deadly gastroenteritis that took thousands of lives. We also had to deal with Bilharzias worms that penetrate through the skin and live in the liver, bladder and brain. Children get the worms from swimming in the public lakes and Egyptian Nile River. The public uses these waters because the lake provides a good water supply. My mother believed in the prevention of illness and always said; "Prevention is far effective than taking drugs".

She would wash by her own hands at the end of the day, and all the cloths, one by one, laundry and linen, and hang them over a rope in the sun to be dried and then she ironed them. How many times, we would get angry if our school clothes were not ready! There was no automatic cleaner, dryer or ironing services; everything was done manually. You have to heat the water and place it in a large vessel made of copper. She would sit on the floor and wash items, one by one. The electricity in the house was never reliable and she had to live with candles or kerosene lamps. The house had only one window that looked over a street filled with some mechanic shops and always filled with people with loud voices.

This was the only window for her to see the world. Even with that, she had to restrict the time she would look because of either too much dust or inappropriate words on the street or jealousy from my dad. The house had one living room where my mother placed expensive furniture that was given to her by her parents. The kitchen had no automatic stove or oven. My mother did all her cooking over kerosene. It was so unreliable that every week it needed a repair. It would take a day or so before it got fixed. It was a nightmare to make the primitive house utilities work properly. It was a relief for my mother when my father bought a new kerosene stove or heater or another new utility. Unfortunately, it was not often.

She had stand many physical struggles and slams in silence for the sake of raising her kids the right way. She never lost her love toward her physical abusers. My mother was courageous and a risk taker; my dad was not. My mother had a business mind which she learned from her dad and brothers and she wanted to do

more in order to increase revenue and have a better standard of living. My dad was not easy to convince. My mother believed what the Bible said: that the husband is the head of the family and she had to maintain the family. She always said: the kids needed the father and having the father regardless is a blessing.

There was only one restroom for our ten family members. There was no bath top. We had to wait in line to go to the restroom. The soap and tissue used to shower with was expensive. The water was cold. My mother had to heat the water in a vessel and deliver it to the restroom and used a cup to pour the water while washing us with soap and tissue. The water pipes were usually plugged and needed regular repair and tune-up. There was only one exit door and another window that looked at a remote space.

My father was a teacher of art; a job that did not make enough money and it was not in demand, especially in a third world country. My mother stood by my father to find ways to make himself in demand. He started to learn how to teach blind students. He studied how to be an inspector for school examinations and to work in the control office. She stood by him as he continued to move from one village to another in order to increase his seniority at work. The family moved from one remote city to another, but never made it to a big city. My father used some of the money to help his own brother and sisters. He came from a poor status. His dad and mom died when he was in the Gaza strip. He felt obligated to spend money on his two brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, it felt that he was doing more for them than he should do for us. My mother was always standing firm, directing him toward the path of caring for his kids. Our uncle, Anwar, God repose his soul, used to come and gave us some money, fruits, or toys, especially when my dad was a prisoner of war. He was the oldest of my mother's family. He was rich and comfortable. All my mother's family could not believe the place that she was living and the treatment that she was receiving. Yet, she was focused in her destiny, what was put in front of her and her kids. Nothing persuaded her to change her mind over 60 years of her marriage. What kept this beautiful young women going with this severely compromised environment? The answer was always, the kids, love and faith. My mother carried the cross to the end and sacrificed very much.

My father, Farid Fahmy Ghaly, was born in Assiut in upper Egypt from a poor family. He had to work when he was a child to support his parents. He was raised in strong Christian faith. He was able at a young age to memorize the all the psalms of David. He believed that the psalms of David are so strong that they would save him from any work of darkness or accidents. Every morning we would walk while he was singing the psalm of David. He knew many verses of the

Bible, the liturgy, church songs and hymns. His parents also sang to us some church songs. I remember my dad loved the psalm of “God is my Shepard—” and his dad liked to sing to me the song of the Virgin Mary.

He believed there were the acts of unclean spirits around us. My mother believed no unclean spirit could be around you if you armed yourself with strong faith. Apparently, my grandfather was not as successful in maintaining the finances needed for basic daily living, like food and a place to stay. My father was not able to continue his education and he was pulled out to work in mechanics and other jobs to bring in money. He was also responsible for caring for his siblings. The situation was so poor that sanitation and the basics of life were compromised. My father had typhoid fever, a salmonella infectious bacteria that poisoned the food and he was placed on the floor for 40 days. There was no treatment, and patients were usually isolated and struggled with their own immune system as to whether to live or die.

In fact, my parents’ second born daughter, Isis, died from gastroenteritis after living for only a year. At that time, they were told to give her no water and no food and the child died from simple dehydration and starvation. Since these occasions, my parents would always use their common sense and the blessing of God and the saints and did not have blind faith in doctors and hospitals at the time.

At the age of twenty two years, my father met my mother and got married after they had many disputes regarding life style and the nature of living. My father was a teacher, hard working, and learned to support two families at the same time; his own kids and his siblings and parents. His sister, Farida (passed away), was married to a Greek man and had 6 children. They lived in Greece. Fozia, another sister, was married to a medical assistant. They lived in Cairo and had five children. Fiahka, another sister, was fortunate and worked in Kuwait and made money for twelve years. Unfortunately she died during her first pregnancy and the money was wasted in the court system. Faiz (deceased), a brother, worked in mechanics, was married and had two children and lived next door to our home in another apartment. Farouk, the last brother, worked as an electrician and lived in Cairo. He was married and had two children.

My dad, because of the poverty level his family endured, was pulled out of school to support himself and his parents. He gave each of his children only one chance in school. There was no private tutoring or additional help. If anyone of us failed, he made it clear that he or she would leave school and work in mechanics to help support him. He was outside the house most of the time between working and completing his personal requirements from 7am to 9-10 at night,

and sometimes even to midnight daily. My mother was always trying to explain to us his personal hardship and we should not take it personally that he was not there for us. He believed in saving money, even if we were in need. My mother did not. My father very much admired Egyptian history and he was an excellent teacher. He named four of us with Egyptian historic names; Gamal, Ramsis, Ahmos and Isis. He named two with Christian historic names; Abraham and Boutros (Peter). He used to take us to historical sites and talked us to about history, the Pharos, wars, geography and many other topics. We used to watch him when he drew pictures and put his art on a big frame. We visited the Pyramids, the museums, El Gaza, El Luxor and Aswan. The historic places were important to him.

He believed in scolding for training and we were afraid of him. He was a well known authority in school, yet he by no means would that give us extra treatment in school. He believed that we should be treated the same as others. For instance, he would know our scores as he worked for the control center, and he would never tell us. He would know the questions in the examinations and he would never tell us. Furthermore, he would always be vague and you would never be able to know the truth. He was indirect in some aspects and believed in working hard for everything. You had to make a case for anything you asked for, whether books, clothes or other things. He did not believe in “spoiling” his kids. In order to maintain ourselves in medical school, we had to find ways to get money. Thank God for the school stipends that came with scholarships. We journeyed to England and Holland in the summer for the money that we earned. To travel abroad, we used the money that we saved in our bank accounts. My father and mother were different in many ways, but because of their refined characters and blessing, God has sent many opportunities our way.

I cannot help but say that as her children left her and Egypt year by year, it was the reason for my mother’s health deteriorating. Her constant worries increased as she worried about us when we were not there each day. She showed us that we were doing the right thing for our future since there was nothing promising for us in Egypt. She had tried to hide her loneliness and suffering, yet her heart could not hide it. After raising eight children under one roof, now it was only her and the phone and the window looking at a busy street. Only three of her children stayed in Egypt; Adel, a physician who took care of her to the end, Swasen, and Isis, who both got married and started families. She became crippled from severe osteoarthritis from all the household activities and raising her kids, yet she never complained.

In 1992, my mother and father visited Abraham and Ahmos in England. She was shocked about the situation of her two children and this was the beginning of her deterioration. She tried to maintain the love among her children. She always excused them by saying; “they were raised in a poor environment and had to start from zero in a foreign land”. Her worries and prayers increased far more than could be imagined by any mind. She visited Gamal for eight months in San Diego, California and spent one week with me (Ramsis) in Chicago, Illinois. She then went back to Egypt and her worries continued. No immigration papers could be procured for her to United States of America where Gamal and Ramsis live, nor to the Netherlands where Boutros lives, nor to the United Kingdom where Ahmos and Abraham lives. Problems and difficulties continued with the kids abroad.

Adel married Noah and moved to a new house that was larger and he took our mother with him. Gamal started to give away money for Adel to purchase what should have been purchased long ago; a colored TV, hot and cold water, bath top,—etc. Adel, Noah and her sister took complete care of mother. Unfortunately, by that time my mother was wheelchair dependent and two years ago became bed dependent. She visited America again in 1997 and remained for a total of a month. It was surprise trip. Her mental processes, energy and personal health had deteriorated but she was still the angel and caring mother. Her kisses to me and all her children lasted at least 15 minutes, with kisses repeated over and over again. She was so delighted to see her family once more!

My wonderful mother, where I will find such a heart! For eight years before her departure it was a challenge if she wanted to go anyplace. Adel had to put her on a wheelchair and come down from the sixth floor to take her outside the home. My brother, Boutros, visited my mother from Holland and took her to the Red Sea’s beach for a vacation. Gamal was able to my mother a wheelchair. Money for her support started to pour in from Gamal and Boutros. My sisters were busy with their own family and children, but Swasen and Isis did what they were able to do.

My mother became crippled as she worked so hard to keep all of us mobile and healthy. My mother became ill to keep us healthy. My mother was the genuine sacrifice to my entire family. She had carried the harsh cross to the end. She used to communicate with hand signals that were very characteristic. We soon learned those and they became part of us to the degree that you could know from the signals what she was indicating. It was strange to many in the western culture and I had to do some education. For instance, pointing a finger is not an insult or threat, but a meaning of being concise. She was the last person to depart from all

her siblings; Nabil (had two children) died from meningitis at the age of thirty, Mounera (had no children) died at the age of thirty five from rheumatic heart disease, Kamal (had one child) died from cancer, Samy (had no children) died from a stroke at the age of fifty, Adely (had four children) died from a heart attack at the age of seventy, Linda (had three children) died from heart condition at the age of sixty, Anwar (had five children, one son and four daughters) died at age of eighty from old age. My mother lost all her family one by one. Her mother died at the age of ninety and her father died at the age fifty. Her father was a sharp and serious man.

My mother, Sania, wanted to go school, but her father refused despite the attempt from her mother (my grandmother) to go to school from the back door. They all loved her so much and she always said wonderful things about them and kept everyone's rapt attention with entertaining stories. My mother used to be friendly and social to all the neighbors. Home was an eight floor condominium building. Repeated visits often occurred from the women in each floor. They were helping each other as much as they could. Every apartment in the building was far bigger and more resourceful than our apartment. Yet my mother never complained or shared her troubles with her neighbors. We never had a telephone. We had to go upstairs to Mr. Galal to use his phone. If we wanted to call my mother, we had to call my neighbor and they would call her. The majority of time it did not workout.

I had to go the local shop to use the phone and pay per minute. Our neighbors all had TV in their house. Yet my mother raised us content in what we had and maximizing the limited resources. She tolerated all the physical abuse of different types in order to carry the cross and care for her children. She continued to love, even the abusers. The person that did most was the person that received the least in this world. We did not have a refrigerator. We had to put water outside to get it cold to drink in the harsh weather. She had to keep food very safe from any bacteria while no refrigerator was available. Sleeping on the floor was common. For my mother to buy clothes or to ask for other things was unheard of. Her struggle and arguments were to buy new clothes for her kids, at least for the first day of school and on Ester and Christmas. The kitchen sink did not work and the ground was digging deeper in the middle but even the ceiling was eroding and money was lacking. My mother who lived inside the house 24/7 had to work with the lack of basics. Yet, her blessing, smile and care made life continue. The smell of the house was always beautiful coming from above, despite the filthy environment surrounding the building. She kept us all safe and healthy.

My mother knew we had no future in Egypt, no financial support or assistance. Four sons went to medical school. We used each other's books. Yet, there was not enough money. Gamal went to school on a scholarship, including in-house dormitory. For the first time he slept in a separate bed and had healthy meals. Gamal finished high school with great national scores. He entered medical school and the financial assistance continued. Gamal opened the door for us. Ramsis, Ahmos and Adel also got high national scores and entered medical school. We also received financial assistance. But, again, there was not enough money.

My mother's blessing continued, not only through the assistance we gained from getting scholarships, but also to allow us get Visas to enter the United Kingdom so we could find work with no employment arranged in advance, kind of "under the table". Gamal went first and then each of us followed. We used to split the money; some for schooling and some for buying clothes for the entire family. The first journey of her children that worried my mother was when Gamal went to England and stayed for four months in 1975. From 1975 on, one of us left for abroad. We used to work in restaurants and farms in unskilled jobs to raise money. We always were concerned that the police would catch us working with only a tourist visa, but it never happened.

My mother's blessing continued to provide success to all our endeavors. She had already set her mind that what was best for her kids is what needed to be done. It was painful for her because now she had to pray for our safety in a foreign land. My mother had great vision. She felt that this is what we should do. My father felt that we should be like those living in Egypt and should remain in Egypt. The five sons tried to make it in Egypt, but it was impossible. My mother saw the intelligence in each of her children and could not see that go to waste, without cherishing the gifts that God had blessed her children with.

My mother loved the western world, and traveling. She had wished that for herself many times. She had seen the British and French when they were in Egypt. She spoke little French and only five words in English. But her prayers went across the entire continent to be with her kids. How many times, my mother say by the phone waiting and waiting for a call from her kids.

Once Gamal graduated from medical school, he went to the United States and entered with a non-immigrant visa. We had no relatives in America. Both Gamal and Ramsis passed the American qualifying medical examination to practice medicine. A little money that was saved and plane tickets were bought. President Saddat of Egypt liberalized travel abroad more than president Gamal Naser and this helped. My mother looked at these opportunities with hope that doors

would open for her children. “And what they have not seen or tasted they would be able to see and taste”, she prayed. She also hoped that this in itself would comfort her.

Here is the surprise, every one of her children who traveled abroad struggled with their visas and immigration and had jobs that took more than ten years at least to stand on their feet. Yet, my mother was not able to officially immigrate to the countries where her kids were living. She tried to plan a trip, but found her efforts were stymied at every turn. September 11, 01 came and delayed the process of papers of all the Middle Eastern countries. Until her departure date, she was not accepted yet to enter the USA. In 1992 and 1997 it was not easy to travel, but parents could accompany her kids. Visas were only given to elderly people because the western countries were afraid that young people would go and never come back. After September 11, it was impossible to get visas. My parents had to wait in a long line and were rejected.

That I was able to do miracles to my patients through being a neurosurgeon and anesthesiologist and pain specialist was a blessing, but yet I could not do much to help my mother. I wished that could do knee surgery for replacement for her so she would not have to endure horrible pain or do eye surgery to let her see well. People have no faith in surgeries in Egypt because of the death rate and horrible stories they hear. She continued to suffer. People talked about those noble things that I can do, they thought I could do them for my mother.

God wanted my mother to get no reward from her life on earth, He wanted to hand her with His hands in heaven the crown of eternal life that she deserved. It was her blessings and prayers that carried us through with all the successes and it is still working in us. Every person around looked at the success of Sania’s kids and was surprised and jealous. How can these kids achieve this success and scholarships with almost no resources, yet our kids were not as successful, despite what they had from plentiful things! My parents got concerned about the ongoing talks and tightened the doors more. They talked less about us and our achievements. My father believed that with poverty comes blessing and he was very concerned about changing the status.

My parents did not believe in the use of contraceptive pills and they were ready to raise as many kids as would come. Children were God’s gifts. They believed with each child, God will bring more blessings. The subject opened great dispute with us children. Some of us believed that scientifically, this was not true and my parents should have had only a few children and raised them in a more comfortable environment. Nonetheless, nothing would have changed my parents’ opinion, they strongly believed in their heart that children were a gift from

God. If they could have raised more than nine children, they would have done so. My mother had raised us in poverty and not a resourceful environment, but we were raised to be people sitting with the kings of the earth.

We were raised in the Saint Mary, Christian Orthodox church, in Materia, Cairo, Egypt. It was one of the remote suburban areas of Cairo. To go to Cairo, it will take an hour by train and one and half hours by bus. Taxi-cabs were expensive and outside our budget. We used to read books in the trains and buses. They used to be very busy and you would have to squeeze yourself in with others. The lines were long, the temperature was high, and with the heat the temper of people was limited. The schools were 15-25 minutes walking distance, but traffic was disorganized and we learned to pray every day for safe going and returns.

The holy family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, stopped by a tree in El Materia in their way to Egypt. This is where the Saint Mary church was built. El Zeiton, another suburb of Cairo, is another historic place for the holy family and Saint Mary church was established there, too. El Zeiton was thirty minutes from El Materia and where Saint Mary appeared for the entire year daily in 1967. My parents encouraged us to attend church, Sunday school and to serve God. All our extracurricular activities were done in the Christian churches. The Coptic Christian mass and school weekend is on Friday and not in Sunday, because of the Islamic regimen. We would go to church after passing different homes to pick up their kids and go to church fasting. The Mass took four hours and was followed by Sunday school for another two hours.

Two nights of the week we would go for servant meetings at the church and Pope Shenouda's sermon. We would try to attend other activities in the church during the weekdays. Some of us became Sunday school teachers. The Priests, fathers John and Isaac, knew us very well and knew all of our family. They both became our spiritual fathers. When things got tough at home, they would be the shoulders that we would lean on. In the summer, the Church doors and the playground were open daily and used to be what we looked forward to every year. My mother believed that unmarried virgins are like angels in God's eye, with pure heart and wearing a white garment.

We used to be in the finals especially in the competitive events of volleyball, ping pong, and chess. The Christian atmosphere was incredible. My parents were so pleased at seeing us attached to the church and its activities all year around. As we approached high school, we used to go to the ancient Christian monasteries in the deserts of Egypt and we spent days with the holy Monks and learned more about our Lord Jesus and how to live the ideal Christian life. There was no transportation available and streets were not developed. So we used to walk hours in

the deserts constantly praying until we found the monastery. It was a deeply touching trip and we would do it once a year. It was usual in every youth that we would have the idea to remain unmarried and devoted to be a servant to Christ. Our parents and spiritual fathers used to help us balance all these various ambitious dreams. Our daily life was divided between school, studying and church.

If the kids wanted to go to any trips, it had to be with our family or the church. A full report of the trip had to be discussed with my dad. Approval was needed for every action. Things however relaxed for the younger three kids; Isis, Abraham and Boutros. The church was close to a farm and grocery store. We used to pick up some food with our limited budget. Since my mother was not allowed to go outside by herself, and since we liked to go to places with our own peers, it was not an uncommon habit that we stopped by places where Egyptian appetizers were available such as a grilled corn, or nuts in an envelope or termis in a cane, or mango or sugar cane juice.

When my parents were together in her parent's house, the discrepancy between them in social class was clear, as was the behavior attached to each. She came from a rich family and he did not. My mother's family had made her aware of their disapproval, yet my mother believed that he was the man for her. Subsequently, they offered the least assistance and any complaint about financial shortage, they would say "We told you you are going to live in poverty on the floor, with not much economic class—why do you want to do this to yourself?"

My mother continued her full commitment to her husband her whole life-and beyond. My mother then started to fulfill her commitment as a mother and beyond. Whenever tough days came, she would call her family (her parents) and on some occasions they encouraged her to leave her husband and come back to her childhood home with the life she used to live, but, no matter how hard things had become, my mother never agreed and never abandoned any of her kids or her husband. She continued to live in the suboptimal conditions of her marital family.

In fact it was hard to believe with this poverty, if any one looked at my mother, they could not believe she was living in poverty. She was always so fashionable and some said she was "a model". When she came to the United States for the first time in 1992, she felt connected to many of our American friends.

But living in that poverty affected her children. With the poverty some of the children felt deprived and some felt content. When the kids grew up, some were still cheerful givers and risk takers and some became conservative and closer to their new life, rather flashing back to the difficult days. Saying that, some of my siblings moved on to their new arrangements and the struggle was long for each

of us. No one knows the exact birthday of my mother because in upper Egypt at that time, women's birthdays were not recorded. Therefore my mother had no identity card. When the time came to establish some of her freedom in 1980, I remember that I had to take her to a dentist to give a rough estimate of her birthday and an identity card was produced.

My parents had very different ways of dealing with their children. Dad believed in scolding as a way of raising kids. My mother always freed us and protected us from such a difficult disciplinary action. My mother's love can not be imagined. We always found her beautiful smile, with love and care in her heart.

As was the custom at that time in Egypt, my mother was not allowed to go outside at all, except with my dad. It was probably only few times a year. My mother waited until her kids grew up in order to go out with them. Unfortunately, the kids had to travel and her daughters were busy with their struggle to survive with their own family. Even so, when my mother walked outside with her kids, she was given grief for doing so. My mother had no bank account or cash money. She had no access of any. Every day, she had to request money from my dad to buy some of the necessities for home, such as "what the kids had to eat for today".

It was a daily struggle. She had to wake-up early, otherwise the money would be forgotten. If this occurred, my mother had to come up with ideas to feed her kids. Otherwise we all had to wait until dad came home at midnight and we then would make the request. She tried hard to keep us out of all of that, the best she could.

The next struggle, my mother had to come with ideas to make healthy meals with little Egyptian money. Times were hard and she never had enough money. Her angry children often spoke harshly to their mother: "what kind of food is this!" Sorry mom, that we made all these comments. We did not know any better.

The days passed and my mother had to sell every treasure she had to support her kids. When the purchase of cloth was necessary, each one of us had to take a walking tour around many stores to find the least expensive. We learned from our dad how to always ask around and shop several times before we bought anything. If my mother could give her own eyes to make it easy for us to get what we wanted, she would have done it. What about when my mother wanted to get a dress or a shoe! God only knew the difficulties and the belittling that she would receive. Despite all of that, my mother would be content, peaceful and joyful.

She was generous and got even more generous as the tough days got harder. She was happy to work within the family "budget". My dad used to say "I can

not go outside the budget” but yet she never accepted failing to provide what her children needed. She thought that if we trade gifts appropriately, many blessings will come.

The environment however gave no voice for women. Now my smart mother had to work with these limitations, solely based in her “Being a woman”. Being a woman meant not being given the chance to go school, to have money in her hand, to have a bank account, to walk outside alone, to be outside the home for minutes, to be given keys, to talk to men by herself, given a passport to travel abroad, and many more. Furthermore, with all these sacrifices, the kids were not allowed to carry their mother’s name, only the father’s name. My name Ramsis Farid Fahmy Ghaly. It means my father is Farid, my grandfather was Fahmy, my great-grandfather was Ghaly. My mother’s name remained the same: Sania Fouad Mikhael. No recognition is given to acknowledge the mother’s names. It is the bylaws, if you will, of the government.

Any one who looked at my mother was amazed at her physical beauty. She was pretty inside and out, of model quality and gorgeous. She was tall, with fashionable feminine build. Her hair was red, her eyes were blue, and she had fair skin. These physical attributes made her especially attractive in a culture with a predominance of brown eyes, black hair and dark skin. God had made her special since she was born. Yet, her physical appearance had never made her above any person. She taught us how to be elegant and care for our beauty, inside and outside.

She always said; “Inside the house and the way you are taking care of yourself are reflections of the inside of the person that no one can see. If inside the house is not clean and neat and organized, it will give that reflection about the person and family”.

She was the tortured soul on earth—to the very end in silence and thankfulness. Before any feast, she would dress us in our best and new clothes to go to the midnight Christmas mass and the Easter services. When we went home, we found a tasty meal of homemade food and sweets was ready. She did all of that for the entire family of ten.

There was no heater, air conditioning or dryer in the house. Everything was manual. The water had to be heated under a Kerosene stove in order to avoid washing or showering with cold water. She had to carry heavy tanks with her hands and shoulders to conduct the hygiene needed for cleaning. She had prevented us from getting close to the bad water despite the temptation to play with other kids in the water.

Her tender knees and joints suffered from the long days of hard work. Nonetheless, after all was done, she would wash herself and use the appropriate cream and yoke of the eggs to give nourishment to the skin and overcome the weary effect of the water and the old types of detergent.

She raised chickens at home to and save money, but yet eat healthy food. We were never allowed to eat outside the house or at another's home unless an appropriate invitation was proposed. It was a big struggle for her to find meat, chicken, and turkey for meals. They were expensive. She would go miles to prepare a meal of this type.

At the same time, she never took her eyes away from any one of us. My brother Gamal had a persistent, unexplained fever. She did not sleep a second. She was worried about him around the clock, exhausting every way possible to find a cure. Where we lived was far from the city and did not have much of a healthcare organization. How my parents cared for all of us and made sure everyone of us had no communicable illness or shortage of need was amazing. My mother was like a sponge for knowledge. She would use every method to be informed with the outside world. She was so ambitious that my father would get jealous of her and tried to protect her from the eyes of the outside.

The only thing that was afforded to her was the radio. The radio was on most of the time and she would gather all the information broadcast on it to connect her with the outside world. My uncles and cousins had more luxurious lifestyles, yet she never got jealous and rather spent the available money on her kids rather than buy a television.

I remember hearing how she was raised with her family and brother, Anwar, until she was out door. It was the time of British occupancy and free western trade. She loved western movies and knew their names and the names of their stars: "Marilyn Monroe", "River with no return,—etc". She was able to connect very well with all social classes and taught us to keep our heads high. With the poor, she became even poorer, and with the rich, she became richer. In sadness, she became sad with them.

She would dress all in black and drink coffee with no sweet or sugar and no deserts and music. She was sensitive, considerate, compassionate and emotional. I learned to be sensitive to others and to their needs from my mother. My mother was transparent in all things. She was able to know much through her intuition. The Spirit was in her. Her heart was so big that you could put all your problems and other's problems in it, and she would still smile and believed in the Lord.

Once she got married, she became content with the low economic class, which was really below poverty level. How did she do that!. She was able to raise us in a

deprived class to overcome that and move to a non-deprived class. She could not afford to go to movies, have a real house, and many other problems of an unimaginable poverty level, yet she had given us everything we needed. We sometimes would go to my next door cousin to watch a black and white screen TV. My mother, who was very ambitious, energetic and loved being outdoors, accepted with joy to be between four walls of the house to raise her children.

By the time we grew up, her body and joints were weary. We could not repay her back in any appropriate manner. We were struggling, but she always said: “I know my kind-hearted children. You had to start from zero in a foreign land to build yourself”. Because of her unselfishness, she put up with seeing five of her children living for 25 years, thousands of miles away from her; in America, England and Holland. She said; “There are no resources or future for you here. You know I wish you were all by me, but it is OK if it is what is best for you.” None of her five children were able to complete her immigration papers. Each country or family had made it difficult for the immigration process to be completed. There is a law that the husband has to approve granting a passport to his wife. My mother wanted to come and see her grown children, but my dad felt uncomfortable traveling.

My mother was tolerant of all that. How many wishes my mother had to comfort her and to repay her suffering, and they did not go through. The kids were occupied in their upbringing and self promotion in the society, so that many times we ignored our parents. Nonetheless, a phone call from her son or daughter was everything she needed.

We could not afford to go to the cinema. My mother said about etiquette: “Learn all the admirable techniques of etiquette and how to conduct yourself in front of people, eat slow, not as if someone is running after you or will take the food from you. Do not eat with your mouth full”. Since I was a child, she taught me how to dress sharp, with shining shoes and matching clothes. “Everything should match”. She always took pride at having neat and worthy items, like china, marbles,—etc. She always advised to; “look after quality and not quantity, even if it is costly, in the long run it is cost effective”. She said; “A mother will take from herself everything to give to her child. Even a bite of food in her mouth, she will hand it to her child”. She would; “Soften the food in her mouth and take it and give it to the child while others will eat it for themselves”.

Whenever there was a money shortage, she would hand my dad her own treasures of gold and diamonds to sell them and to spend the money on us. She kept few stones, without telling anyone, to be saved for the few kids that were incapable of affording things. She was always kept the gifts from her parents, who were

wealthy and gave diamonds and clothes, in a special place and never hesitated to spend them if her kids had the need of them. She would be the first to be ready to dress us in the morning, and give us breakfast, and be the first to receive us after school. Her kisses were many on each cheek, at each time, to each of us.

She would listen and listen while she was serving lunch and dinner. Her cooking process was special and lengthy; some of our meals took the entire day and night to prepare. My mother dressed so elegantly and beautifully, even if she was only inside the house. How many times while I was studying days and nights, she would sit by me and hand me tea and give all of us her faithful prayer; "Go, God and Saint George are with you." She ranked all of her children above every body else, including her. My dad placed us on the level of his family while she felt that her children were all that she had and she would do everything for them.

Her joy was when her child was joyful. When we were sick, despite her own sickness and tiredness, she stayed awake all day and night. She would never stop worrying, unless she was sure and certain, and saw by her own eyes and heard by her own ear, that everything was OK. Her spirit was connected to us, even when we were thousands of miles away; "My son Gamal did not call, call him, I need to know how he is doing" and sure enough, Gamal was in trouble. She encouraged my sisters, Swasen and Isis, to get the maximum education, to be independent and to be strong to handle what was meant for them to face.

When she was carrying her last two children, she saw a vision asking her to name them Abraham and Boutros (Peter), instead of the Egyptian Pharos names.

My brother, Adel, took care of her, with his wife Noha, and her sister Naglah. The three were able to spare fifteen years to care for her minute-by-minute. Despite, the aging of her body, she still asked about each one of us. Ibrahim was one of her biggest worries. He was struggling in England. Ahmos was an OB/GYN and with his wife had four children. They were blessed with her spirit and lived in the United Kingdom. Swasen has three grown children with her husband, Joseph. Isis had two children with her husband, Nadar. Adel had two children with his wife Noha.

Gamal was the oldest and represented the head of her children. He is an internist in California and has two children. He was the example held up to all of us. Gamal never refused anything to my mother and had given her so much.

Boutros was the last child and had two children and lived in the Netherlands.

My mother's beautiful and caring eyes were always looking at our Father, who art in heaven. She called upon Saint George and Pope Shenouda frequently. She respected all the spiritual rituals, even if she was not in the church. "Children do not do this, or that, the holy Bible is open and being read now". She looked at

the monks and sisters and bishops and deacons and said they are God's angels. The Passion Week was always special for her. She dressed in black and activity at home was directed at nothing except toward the crucified God. All the sweets were created to being served on the Feast of the Resurrection.

Smiles and hope were always on her face. "Ramsis or Isis, do good, and throw it on the ocean. Do not ask for a return". "Do not complain, be thankful and grateful all the time. Whining to other people will not help; look to the Lord and ask" Elegance, respect and listening and professionalism were her essence in social contact. The appearance of each of us, children, and she as our mother were outstanding, no matter what time of the day. Sania had done each task to her best as a mother, wife and person. In an environment with limited resources, she maximized things with every opportunity.

We could not afford a car, television or many news papers. But the Spirit had given her so much. For better opportunity, she encouraged us to leave our home country and five of us immigrated abroad. She said to others when she was asked; "I can not be selfish, my happiness is when they are successful. It is very hard on me not to see my kids and I worry about them all the time and wait for a phone call from each, but I know they are reaching the economic stage and academic stage that I dreamed to be".

To the last minute when we called, she would always say; "My beloved child" and say our name—and she convinced each one of us that she was doing fine, missed us and was not in need of anything, despite that she had no luxurious environment around her" My mother, to the last minute, never complained of pain or said the word "waw" (means pain), despite the arthritis that had destroyed her entire joints.

For my mother, a small thing would please her and give her a smile and energy to overcome every suffering. A simple phone call from Gamal or any of us is all what she wanted. She was content with no single interest or desire of any material goods; "I do not need anything in my heart, just take care of yourself and keep me posted with your safety and well-being".

On her death bed, she asked about each of us and asked us to care for Abraham. She never got angry with anyone who insulted her or did not help her when she needed help. To the last minute, her mind was aware and she prayed that God would continue that. She got upset when someone made remarks of suggesting the decrease her mental capacity. She always prayed that; "God will make all us of slave to any need and He will be the Giver of all goodness" and "Go and God will open all the doors for you and keep bad people away from your ways."

I thought that my mother would live for ever and she would never die in earth. I was so overwhelmed in studying. I felt that God placed for me the mission of being a neurosurgeon, anesthesiologist and pain specialist to serve Him. It was difficult for me to start and accomplish these things but God made it possible for me to accomplish three specialties. It was rough and a difficult road to come from where I started and to become an established American physician and surgeon. My qualifications placed me as the only one in the entire country, and perhaps the world, with these three difficult medical specialties. God had placed merciful and kind people in front of me who made it all possible.

My special mother was the cause of all my success. For her, I pay tribute and I wish she could come back and hug me and I could congratulate her on all her tireless work for me and my siblings. How stupid I was! I did not have time to have lengthy conversations with her because I was studying or doing some research in animals or getting emotionally entangled with social and material things. In 1992, she stayed with me for a week. During that week, I could not take time off from my practice. Since medical school, my only path that I saw was to do the best in what I do, to serve many, and be genuine about it and go many miles ahead. This is what my mother taught me.

In 1997, my stupidity continued and I never thought my mother would one day depart. She spent two weeks with me. During the two weeks, again, I was entangled in serving and working, but spared few days to spend time with my mother. Oh mother! I deeply regret I did not make frequent phone calls and did not spare enough time to be just with you. In years to come, I continued to be so much involved in my career and serving patients and I ignored my special mother. Even when I wrote this book, I thought it was for my patients, to help them through. I had not thought that it was my mother who would depart. Then, the death of Pope John Paul occurred and I had just completed the chapter on "The moment of departure". Still, I did not wake up to the fact that my mother was old and her time was running out, and hurry-up and be close to my mother. Then it came to the last chapter: "Death is only a moment away" and I thought about my patients. It was then I realized this book is for me and my mother before all others. I wish, I wish and I wish that I had awakened earlier and time to live with her as an adult, accomplished child and to tell her: "These accomplishment are all because of you. Give me again your tender kisses and do not let me go this time. My mother, I love so much and I miss you so much"

It is all because of her that we have come from complete poverty in a small remote community in Cairo, Egypt to where we all are today. Mother, you have done miracles and God has blessed us because of you. Mother, everyone over the

decades of life wonders about you, the angel on earth, and all the blessings that were given because of you. This book and idea was not for anyone except me, but it is meant for me for the departure of my mom.

The mother's heart is so special. It is sacred. It is so big that words can not come even close to describing it. Her kids are part of her, and she is part of them; the blood, water and flesh, they share. The love of our heavenly Father reminds us of a mother's love. **The love of the human mother reminds us of that of the hen to her chicks. It was similar to the love of Christ to Jerusalem and its people, where it was extended to more than 2000 years despite all the deeds of darkness;** *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”* (Matthew 23: 37). The mother's heart will never expect any thing in return. It is indeed unconditional. **God spoke to Isaiah about the special mother's love to her nursed children and how it is similar to God's love for His people;** *“Can a woman forget her nursing child. And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you, See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.”* (Isaiah 49: 15-16).

My mother wanted to see the world and live with each of her children, and grow with them to the end, and raise their grand children. Unfortunately when the time came to achieve some of what she had given in return, she was gone. I am sorry, my mother, I am sorry. Your spirit now is watching us and in eternal joy with your family and Saint George and Pope Shenouda—and soon be, me, I pray to my Lord. I am sure, mother that Jesus is wiping your tears and taking your sadness away. He said; *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”* (Revelation 21: 4). She was the kind shoulder that we leaned on. My mother, we love you forever and thank you. May God repose your soul and may it be rested in His paradise.

The Author

TO MY BELOVED MOTHER

Sania Fouad Mikhael

Departed August 28, 2005





MY MOTHER TWO YEARS OLD CRAWLING WITH HER BROTHER ANWER
AT HER HOME.



THE WEDDING OF MY MOTHER AND FATHER IN 1952.



MY MOTHER AND FATHER AFTER THE FIRST YEAR OF THEIR MARRIAGE.



MY MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN SWASEN, RAMSIS AND ISIS (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT) IN EGYPT, 1962.



MY MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN AHMOS, RAMSIS, GAMAL, SWASEN AND ADEL (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT) IN EGYPT, 1964.



MY MOTHER WITH HER FOUR CHILDREN; AHMOS, SWASEN, GAMAL,
AND RAMSIS (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT) IN EGYPT, 1966.



MY MOTHER AT THE WEDDING OF MY SISTER ISIS AND HER HUSBAND
NADER IN CAIRO, EGYPT, 1985.



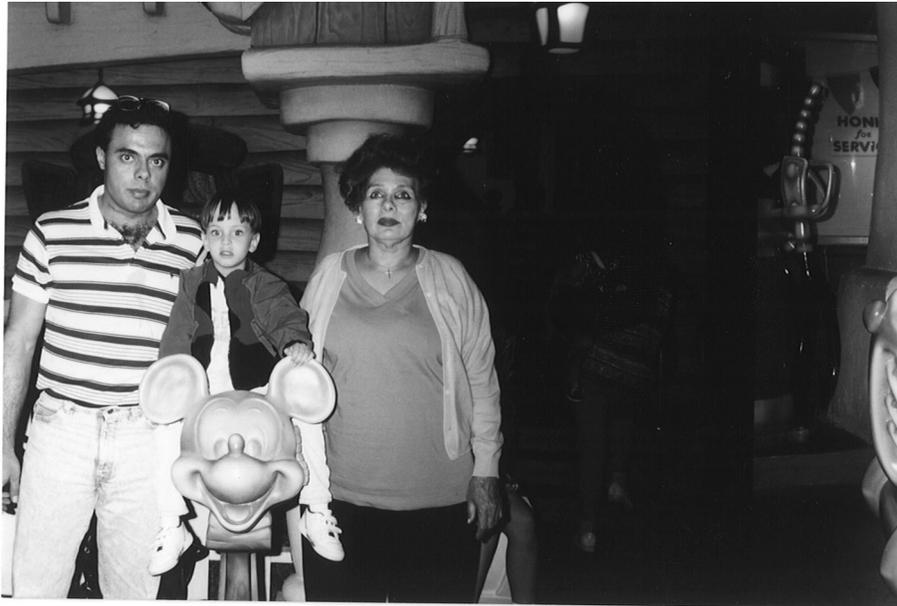
MY MOTHER AND AUTHOR (RAMSIS GHALY) CLOSE TO SEARS TOWER
IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA IN 1992.



MY MOTHER CARING FOR MY DAD DURING HIS ILLNESS WITH MY BROTHER BOUTROS IN 1992.



MY MOTHER WOTH MY TWO BROTHERS AHMOS (LEFT) AND BOUTROS (RIGHT) WHILE VISITING CHICAGO IN 1992.



MY MOTHER WITH MY BROTHER GAMAL AND HIS SON VICTOR IN CALIFORNIA IN 1992.



MY PARENTS MOTHER IN 1975 AND FATHER IN 2001.



MY MOTHER WITH HER TWO GRAND CHILDREN; CAROLINA AND CHRISTINA YOUSSEF IN 2002.



MY MOTHER WHEELCHAIR WITH MY TWO BROTHERS GAMAL (RIGHT)
AND ADEL (LEFT) AT HOME IN CAIRO, EGYPT.



MY MOTHER IN 2004 WITH DEMENTIA.

SPIRITUAL ROAMING

THE VISION OF THE BRAIN BEFORE DEPARTURE

Nine months earlier, before my mother died, I had the intense desire to write my second book and to concentrate on the brain's interaction at the last hour and beyond. The picture was not clear in the beginning and questions were left unanswered. I thought I was writing the book for my patients who have brain tumors and are waiting for their soul to depart. Indeed, I had shown one chapter to one of my patients before she passed away and it strengthened her last hour before she met the Lord. So, I continued to write the second, third and fourth chapters. In my mind, the book was for all my patients and almost certainly was not for myself and my family.

What a mistake! How many times we think that the last hour is for others and not ourselves! What a lesson! It really hit home!. As the write-up continued and the thoughts became overwhelming, the book draft became crystal clear. All of sudden, the speed and seriousness of the book's preparation became apparent, but the reasoning was not. The meeting with the artist was scheduled. Four days earlier, the introduction was written in a special way and the title was chosen; "Death Is A Moment Away". It was completed a day earlier. I thought that I was writing this book for my patients that I loved, while they are struggling with their illness.

The next day, after I completed the book, August 28, 2005, I called to check on my mother and found she had just passed away, thousands of miles away from me, at the age of 73. Tears poured out of my eyes as I found out that I was writing this book for myself-and my mother. The message hit home very hard. Next day, it was clear that the book was written for even more reasons, including for the souls of the deadly hurricane, Katrina, that killed thousands of people in minutes on August 29, 05, in New Orleans and Mississippi.

Two weeks after her departure, on September 11, 2005, the Christian Copts of Egypt celebrate the new year of the Coptic Egyptian Christian calendar of 1722 of AD, pay homage to the Martyrs where the Christians were persecuted and killed in the name of the Lord Jesus in the days of the Roman Empire, Deklad Yanos. Then, I remembered the souls of September 11, 2001 of New York bombing and the Pennsylvania crash to avert more bombing. Then Hurricane Rita hit Texas and New Orleans on the dawn of September 24, 2005. The fortieth day of my mother's departure, October 6, corresponded to one of her son's birthdays. It was too much to be considered just coincidence, and the hand of

God was clearly declaring the departures of His beloved human souls from suffering in earth.

My mother was worried to the last moment about Abraham. In England, thousands of miles away, the clock in Abraham's room had stopped since August and he heard his mother was calling him repeatedly. He said; "I do not know what is happening, and I do not have money to call my mother, but mother keeps calling me." His kids, Paul and Mark, had stayed with my mother from September 92-March, 1993. Carolyn Ghaly, Abraham's wife, an attorney, took the kids and left Abraham. Abraham did not see Carolyn, or Paul or Mark, since October 6, 1993. August 16, 2005, Abraham got the news that he still can not find the kids and his legal case was declined for good. The order from the court was officially approved. On August 30, 2005, Abraham got the miraculous news that they had found his kids and wife. Again, the October 6, September and August, were selected calendar days. The days were connected together to understand the fullness of time. Then, I am astonished on seeing God's hand preparing me about what His children go through during and after departure. The missing link was now found, and the reason for the book became clear. The book now is an inspiration to all living souls on earth to prepare for the life to come with our Lord, and to use every minute on earth as the last hour. The book "THE BRAIN AND LAST HOUR" is dedicated to my special mother, Sania Fouad Mikhael

On Sunday, August 28, 2005 at 10 a.m. when Communion starts in all churches in Cairo, Egypt, my mother's spirit ascended to heaven. It was the feast of the day of the Departure of Saint George and the days following Saint Mary's ascension. My mother, Sania Fouad Mikhael, rested her soul. Ten minutes prior to her departure, Naglah (her daughter-in-law) was asleep and saw in a dream my mother saying "Why you are sleeping? I am going home". Naglah woke-up and found her grasping for her last breath. An hour of resuscitation was unsuccessful and she departed to her real home. Two weeks earlier, she was in the hospital, and my mother answered to her daughter-in-law's question "Are you are going to return home?" My mother said, "yes", then she said after taking a deep breath, "I am going to my rest", "I am going home", "I see my mother" and "I am going to die".

Boutros came from the Netherlands and saw our mother. He stood by her side and started to name each of her children by name, one by one and she would answer, "God place His peace on him or her" and when it came to Abraham, she repeated his name twice (he was the only troubled child). Any time Naglah or Noah started conversation; my mother would talk about her trip to God and being at home with Him. Her kids refused to surrender to the idea of departure

and especially as her condition got better. Her fast heart rate and renal imbalance appeared to be getting better. My mother then left the hospital to come home and then prepared to go to her “real home”. She brightened-up and started to ask about her children as if she was preparing for her departure. Adel, my brother, on the day she died, decided to go to work late and found himself performing resuscitation on his mother. My mother was calling to her mother, Zahia Shenouda Goargy Atia. She kept speaking as if she was seeing her mother all the time. Adel said; “mother let us go to celebrate Saint George festival”. She said “Saint George is coming to take me.” My mother said; “I am going, I am going, please come in, I am going”.

On August 28, two white doves came and stayed in her room. While Adel was doing resuscitation, he saw a spiritual vision of my mother with Jesus, in joy and saying to him; “You do not have to do that, I am going with the Lord for the eternal life”. In her room, there was a great picture of Christ facing her. It appeared that she was allowed to arrange for the time of her departure and to have her immediate family to be around her at her death.

A prayer of burial was smooth, as if the angels made the arrangement and carried the sacrificed body. On the Third Day, the priests came to her home and did the merciful prayers where she used to live. On the Seventh Day, a consolation prayer was performed, to be followed by the Fortieth Day Mass in the church. A religious CD and cassette tapes were distributed to people on the fortieth day of her departure. She was remembered on the Altar in different Masses, requesting from the Lord the repose of her soul in the Paradise of heaven. God allowed her spirit to appear to her children. The spirit is alive forever, strong, with sharp mental senses and full awareness. Once the spirit departed from the flesh, she is free with eternal joy. She is now saying; “to my weary and sick and dead body, Good bye.”, “I will never come back to you, my body”, “I am in a far better place” and “My spirit is rested with the heavenly Jesus and His hosts.” For my mother, it is a time of joy, comfortable and eternal peace with no return. My mother, I and my siblings have to work hard to even deserve the statue and the crown that you are receiving. May Jesus, our Lord, and the intercession of His mother, Mary, and His saint, George, be with you and us forever, and ever more. Amen.

When the time comes for the separation of the spirit from the body, some things can be manifested to God’s elect. We hear many stories about people’s vision before their departure. Some of the observations can be summarized with the following stages and examples:

VISIONARY STAGES THROUGH THE DEPARTURE PROCESS

I have often witnessed the final moment of my beloved patients. During these sacred moments I have observed some universal conditions. These include:

BRAIN SPEAKING: “I want to go home.” “I am going to my rest.” “I am going to die”

BRAIN AT PEACE: A peaceful look overcomes the face and overwhelms the person.

BRAIN’S APPEARANCE: The face becomes angelic and shining.

BRAIN’S SPIRITUAL VISION: Spiritual vision where God and His angels manifest to the brain of the departed. Jesus will come with His angels to pick the departed-elect. He said; “Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Luke 12: 40).

BRAIN’S DEPARTURE: The moment of departure then comes and the body dies (there is no response, movement, breathing or signs of living flesh)

POST DEPARTURE APPEARANCES: God will allow some of the spirits of the departed to appear in a way that is visible and familiar to the human brains of others. They are usually at night while asleep and focused. This usually sends a spiritual message similar to Jesus’ appearance to Mary on the third day after His bodily death, as she was inside the tomb weeping and He said; “*Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?—go to My brethren and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”*” (John 20: 15-17). **The living family and friends are in tears, darkness, gloominess, perplexed, tired, filled with sadness and fear, yet the departed soul is liberated and in joy and singing and dressed in a white garment. Look at this radically different contrast with Jesus’ resurrection between the ascended spirits and the living people left behind;** “*Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!*”

Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying'. The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." (Luke 24: 4-7). **Here, the angel is whispering in your ear and saying the same thing, while you are crying and bringing the spices to the assumed dead; 'Why you are sad and crying! She is ascended to heaven in joy. Remember when she was tolerating the world's tribulations and carrying her cross waiting for the time of departure to receive the heavenly crown. She is waiting for you in the heavenly kingdom with our Father who art in heaven.'** In fact some of the spiritual visions indicated that the departed spirits are in so much joy that when they were asked by the their family if they wished to come back, the answer was always, absolutely no.

You will be asking for your dearly beloved person to your heart as you are about to depart, the person can be a mother, father, or even a saint. My mother was calling repeatedly for her mother. You may see the person and feel comfort and strength while you are departing. The spirit then will leave the flesh and be carried by Jesus' hands to the place of Paradise. Perhaps, the spirit will roam around the earth and visit relatives to tell them the "good bye". The spirit makes departure to heaven smoothly. It spreads peace and patience among the friends and families left behind. The spirit is free and is liberated and has power, sharpness, intelligence, tireless energy and eternity.

"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2: 229-32)