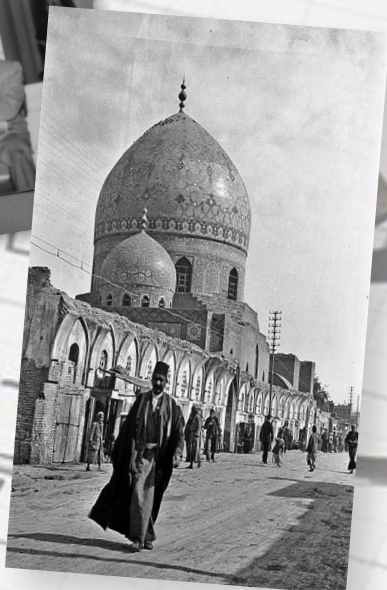


# MEMORY BOOK

STORIES BY SENIOR MEN



ACCT®







The Arab Community Centre of Toronto  
presents:



Liqa'a – Gathering  
Senior Men Memory Book





## The Arab Community Centre of Toronto

### **ABOUT US**

The Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT) was established in 1972, and became a non-for-profit organization in 1974. ACCT's mandate during the early years was to serve all Arab Canadians residing in Canada. However, due to growing needs of vibrant communities for settlement and social services, ACCT expanded its outreach and services in the past two years to include more than 10,718 newcomers of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, 47.5% of which are females.

### **OUR VISION**

We envision a healthy, equitable, inclusive and welcoming society that works together to engage with and integrate newcomers and other community members into the Canadian lifestyle.

### **OUR MISSION**

The ACCT strives to enable and empower individuals, families and communities to lead informed, productive and culturally sensitive lives. As a non-profit model of excellence, we honour our Arab Canadian heritage through community building and service to those in need of every heritage.

### **OUR VALUES**

At ACCT, we are committed to:

- \* Working within a Social Justice / Anti-Oppression framework that demonstrates our respect for newcomers and the broader community of individuals who seek our services.
- \* Recognizing our board, staff, and volunteers as individuals who are Client-Centered and Results-Oriented.
- \* Being accountable
- \* Engaging in continuous learning & improvement to incorporate best practices and remain responsive



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## Liqa'a – Gathering

Liqa'a “gathering” for senior men was originally planned prior to COVID-19. With the onset of the pandemic, Liqa'a was shifted to a virtual platform to ensure the safety of the seniors. The project supported the social participation and inclusion of seniors by creating a space for senior men to virtually meet.

Educational interactive sessions, facilitated by experts, were carried out based on the needs of the seniors themselves. Topics included aging and exercise, health, nutrition, and healthy eating habits, frauds and scams related to banking, loneliness, emotional needs, and staying active by contributing to the community, mental health, key risks for retirement planning and how to avoid them, real estate and mortgage, and will or testament writing.

To create intergenerational connections youths were involved in attending sessions, collecting and documenting seniors' memories to produce a memory book with the help of a visual artist and content developer. The memories highlight the seniors' stories and reflect the tremendous contributions that Canadians of Middle Eastern descent have made and continue to make in Canadian society in all fields of endeavor.



## MEMOIR 1

### 60'S GENERATION...

*In these few lines, I would like to tell the story of my people, who moved in 40 years (1980-2020) from being considered the best country in the region to a country where living is now considered an adventure..*

---

Let's start at the beginning

Majority of the Iraqi people from the sixties generation have similar memories filled with simplicity, safety, stability of life, serenity, and ease of living in their average financial status.

Those days were free of hassle and everything was easy to achieve, like studying, traveling, marriage, even owning a car and a home. Especially the 1970's was the best era of prosperity for the Iraqi people, when the US dollar was worth 290 fils only.

In 1980, Iraq entered a dark tunnel that has continued to our present years. The Iran- Iraq war exhausted both sides and eliminated all the joys of life for the two countries. More than a million casualties on each side, injured soldiers, widows, orphans, bereaved, and the severe economic decline of the two countries.

In 1990, catastrophe struck when the Iraqi army sieged the sisterly State of Kuwait, because the Iraqi government believed this act would solve the country's economic problems. Even though Iraq withdrew a year later, unfortunately it was a great burden paid by the Iraqi people to this day.

The years of the siege created severe financial and emotional drain on the people of Iraq. Business became weak, salaries were meager, homes became empty of most furniture, and life got more difficult. A second decade of gradual economic collapse resulted in loss of values, morals, ethics, generosity, social and family cohesion.

During the third decade the country's balance was upended, this time by the Americans overthrowing corrupt rulers. Iraqi people were surprised by the new power of non-specialists and ill-suited to take over. The country entered the darkest part of the tunnel of misery that began in 1980, turning Iraq away from economic prosperity to that of a country with an annual budget deficit estimated

at tens of billions. People's lives worsened , bloody disputes escalated and armed militias of unknown loyalty and affiliation emerged.

In 2014, Iraq entered a new era of darkness, as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) occupied more than a third of Iraq, killing off the good guys, abducting thousands of Iraqi women, destroying and looting everything they came across. ISIS completely ruined the country after three years of economic collapse and lack of livelihood. The number of Iraqi immigrants increased to more than five million people, most of them skilled and educated.

The country entered the fourth decade in 2020 heavily impacted by the Corona epidemic. This was a new blow to the oil-producing country that exports more than four million barrels of oil per day. Salaries were delayed, the currency lost its value, the health crisis is continuous and increasing, and the citizens are confused about their rights for a simple living where there are no services, water or electricity. What is expected to follow will be even more difficult.

During my second visit to Canada this year, I was tempted to submit a request for admission to stay in this country as an immigrant. I am fully convinced that life in Iraq has become very difficult in this frenzied, recurring, ambiguous affiliation and an incomprehensible policy.

In these few lines, I would like to tell the story of my people, who moved in 40 years (1980-2020) from being considered the best country in the region to a country where living is now considered an adventure.

Pray with me for this country to return to its prosperity, or at least to stop this destruction and collapse in all aspects of life.

Writer,  
A citizen with Iraqi roots

## MY CHILDHOOD AND CITY

*Life brings tears, smiles and memories. The best thing about memories is making them.*

---

Let me start talking about my city and my birth place. It is located on the right bank of the Euphrates River in the central region of Iraq and was a center of culture, literature, religious studies, and science in the past. It was the Islamic capital before Baghdad became the capital later.

I was born into a conservative religious family, but the living conditions of Iraq at the time during the Second World War weighed on everyone and caused instability.

When I was three years old, I used to visit a mosque with other children to learn the fundamentals of religion and life, and to read the Qur'an under the supervision of a cleric.

These lessons lasted for two years, until I entered primary school at the age of five, where I began my formal education stage. From here, I will recall some sporadic events fixed in my mind despite the passage of years. Because of my city's location on the Euphrates River, it enjoys picturesque views and green groves that attract thousands of families to spend quality time on its banks, especially during the spring and summer season. However, every year children drowned in the river, which made the Sheikh (who supervises our teaching in the mosque) put a blue stamp on our leg. We had to show him every morning our stamp to prove that we did not go surreptitiously to swim in the river. When someone took a bath, the parents must inform the Sheikh about that the next morning, to have a new stamp stamped on him.

When I was enrolled in school, I saw a painting in the principals' room and I read its writings to my father. The Arabic language teacher present there asked me if I knew how to read. My father mentioned to him the story of learning how to read through my enrollment in religious lessons for the past two years.



## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS REMEMBERED

**1952:** The Egypt revolution and the creation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, which is the first event that I remember through the massive support demonstrations that pervaded my city and Iraq despite the government repression that caused the closure of schools and shops.

**1956:** The tripartite aggression against the Arab Republic of Egypt. I was ten years old at the time, when we were taken out of schools by the demonstrators to participate with them. We actually condemned the aggression and I cannot forget the amount of violence that took place in those demonstrations.

**1958:** It is the day of salvation from the royal era and Britain's control of the country's economic and political aspects. A period of different ideologies and state interference in the country's affairs began in other ways. From that day forward, Iraq's conditions have not stabilized.

**1967:** The Israeli aggression against the Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Jordan) with the help of Western countries, which led to the displacement of tens of thousands of Quneitra and Sinai. In addition to the occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank from Palestine. I remember that day the Iraqi people rose up with the demonstrations that lasted for days and the participation of the Iraqi army to help Syria.

**1972:** The Watergate scandal and the resignation of the US President after it was proven that he espoused spying on the offices of the rival Democratic Party in the Watergate Building.

**1973:** The time for responding to the Israeli aggression in October of this year came when Egypt and Syria regained their occupied lands and helped some Arab countries. There was great joy in retrieving the Sinai island and signing the disengagement agreement.

In the same year of 1973, Iraq nationalized its oil and a global crisis occurred through the supply of oil, which led to an economic recession in America and other countries.

**1975:** End of the Vietnamese War, under President Carter.

**1978:** The Camp David agreement between the Arab Republic of Egypt, headed by Muhammad Anwar Sadat, and Israel. Thus, Israel succeeded in breaking up the Arab unity, and calls for rejection and demonstrations prevailed at that time.



**1979:** The Iranian revolution and the overthrow of the Shah of Iran under the leadership of Khomeini.

**1980:** The Iran-Iraq War (Violence begets Violence / War is a continuation of politics by other means). Though the war ended in 1988, Iraqi leaders completed the tragedy with another in 1991, which is the occupation of Kuwait after being lured to take this decision by America and its allies with the participation of some Arab countries. The war ended with the destruction of the Iraqi army by America and its allies.

**1982:** The Lebanon War

**1986:** America bombed Libya.

**1989:** The fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union

**1991:** Occupation of the US embassy in Iran and the taking of dozens of hostages

**1991-2003:**

The plan to destroy Iraq began by accusing it of the possession of weapons of mass destruction. The economic blockade started on the Iraqi people by blocking their exports, especially oil, which led to the death of a million and a half children as a result of starvation, acute shortage of medicine, and people's lack of the simplest means of life.



All this led to the huge inflation of the Iraqi currency. For example, the salary of university professors was not more than ten dollars a month. This is what pushed many Iraqis to migrate to neighboring Arab countries or to countries that accept refugees such as America, Canada, Australia and some European countries.

**2003:** Chaos, sectarian confrontations, and terrorism began, which caused the occupation of a large part of Iraq by extremist organizations who assassinated patriotic scholars and politicians. Most of them were forced to leave Iraq and seek refuge in the countries of immigration and other countries.

## **MY EDUCATION JOURNEY**

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.  
(Nelson Mandela)

1) After completing my primary, middle, and high school studies in my city, I moved to the capital, Baghdad, to enroll in university studies. This was the first time I lived away from my family and started a new independent life, where I relied on myself to manage my daily affairs. My colleagues and I used to help each other to fulfill our routine requirements. I met new friends with different backgrounds which refined my social skills and hobbies. Although my life was organized and under control, my family was concerned about me. So I had to travel to them every weekend in the first months, then every two weeks, and then every other month.

2) After completing my university studies in 1969 with first honors, I was awarded a fellowship from the United Nations to obtain a higher diploma in microbiology from Denmark.

I enrolled in the study there which was my first trip outside my country, and my second time parting from my family. I stayed in Denmark for a year and four months. When I first arrived in Copenhagen, I was amazed by the atmosphere and the new university and social life. As much as I enjoyed this life, I missed my family more than the first parting. After the passage of weeks, I was preoccupied with studying and practicing new activities in the new country.

My studies in Denmark were an important period of my life, in which I refined my personality by getting to know students of other nationalities and integrating with the Scandinavian life. It was one of the most beautiful days of my life in this small, clean, safe, scenic country that enjoys flat lands devoid of mountains and valleys. A country with a great health system, social services, and respected human rights. A country where 70% of its population speak English due to the large number of tourists to the country, and because a large proportion of Danes travel to the south (Italy, Spain, Greece ... ) since their travel costs less than



staying in Denmark. After I graduated, I returned to Iraq in 1971.

### 3) Canada's First Story

In 1974, I was nominated by the Ministry of Higher Education for postgraduate studies to obtain my master's and doctoral degrees. At the time I was more inclined to complete my studies in Canada rather than in America. Nevertheless, I wrote to several universities in both countries, with my preference to travel to Canada.

I received several acceptances at the time, but I was attracted to enroll in the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, which exceeded my imagination. They welcomed me and my family with open arms, since its open society respects new immigrants and foreign students. My family and I got along with Canadians, Arabs, and families of other nationalities.

I participated in an agricultural cooperative organization that gives its members an agricultural piece of land at a small price to plant it during spring and summer seasons with various agricultural crops (corn, potatoes, radishes, squash, peas, onions ...). These crops were enough for us and some of our friends as well. My wife and I had one child during my studies of my masters and doctorate degrees. During our stay in Canada, we visited many places, including beautiful Victoria, northern British Columbia to visit indigenous settlements. I must say that their history and inheritance in general has a great impact on Canadian heritage.

Although we wished to stay in Canada, we returned to our country, Iraq, because of our moral drive to serve the country.

(Life is short, live it, Love is rare, grab it, Anger is bad, dump it, Fear is awful, face it, Memories are sweet, Cherish it.)



## MY JOBS AND TALENTS

(The best thing about memories is making them.)

1) After completing elementary school, I began to participate in many sports including football, basketball, and volleyball. So we started training in school for two years and I suggested to my friends in high school to establish a sports club, especially since my city lacked one during 1962.

After obtaining financial assistance from some contractors in the city, the club was established and funded by utilizing the club's space during the holidays and providing various recreational games for children and youth. Later, the club was developed, and won few championships at the provincial and country levels. The administrative bodies continue to send greeting cards to me on every occasion.

2) Another hobby of mine is calligraphy and drawing, which was discovered by my art teacher in the middle school stage. My classmate and I used to prepare the annual art exhibition for the school by drawing 90% of the oil paintings. We also used to represent the school for the annual art competition in our governorate, which we have won for three consecutive years. I started a commercial project with the art teacher by enlarging personal pictures, especially the old ones, using a charcoal pen, as well as writing billboards for shops and writing political banners. I still yearn to return to practicing these hobbies.

3) After returning home from Canada, as I mentioned earlier, I enrolled to teach at an Iraqi university and was allocated to live in a university housing complex that included a small piece of land. Applying my farming hobby during my studies in Canada, I began to exploit that land by cultivating crops for home consumption. Then, my hobby grew to be used commercially with the help of one of my friends, who specializes in horticulture and agricultural crops. started by obtaining approval for farming a piece of land that is irrigated from well water. With exceptional efforts, the well was dug and the land was rebuilt. We borrowed money to complete its facilities and appointed permanent farmers to start planting it. Our focus was on planting tomato, onion, and garlic crops in the winter season, which is marketed in winter and spring. This experience, irrelevant to my major, had the most impact on me. My partner and I contributed to the agricultural community by introducing new technologies such as drip irrigation with the help of the agricultural association in the governorate. This was used as an example to hundreds of farmers by persuading them to use this irrigation method instead of consuming double the amount of water in sandy soil.

I would like here to urge young people to practice their hobbies and engage in projects of various specializations, disregarding their major, in order to contribute to their country's economy and improve their living status.

4) After obtaining my PhD degree, I started issuing approval to open a special laboratory, which greatly increased my monthly income, especially during the financial crises and economic blockade imposed on the Iraqi people. However, I stopped working in the field after moving to the capital, Baghdad, because of the inflation of the Iraqi dinar, whose value decreased by ten thousand times. Therefore, the money I had became worthless to open a new laboratory in Baghdad.

(The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling but in rising every time we fall)

## **BACK TO CANADA**

After more than twenty-seven years of leaving Canada in 1980, my family and I decided to move from Iraq and immigrate to Canada in 2007 due to general harsh conditions that were plaguing the country and my own circumstances.

Then, we decided to leave the country and resort to Lebanon to apply from there to immigrate to Canada.

We stayed in Lebanon for three years, during which we followed the events of our country, hoping for improvement so that we can return to our homeland, but to no avail. My study period in Canada was the catalyst that made it easy for us to obtain an entry visa to Canada after a quick interview with the immigration officer at the Canadian Embassy in Beirut.

I must mention a brief description of this beautiful country that enjoys charming nature, friendly people, pleasant climate, varied culture and cuisine. It also includes five thousand-year-old monuments, which are considered wonderful tourist destinations. We enjoyed our time in Lebanon and made many new friends who were so helpful. We visited most of Lebanon's tourist and historical attractions. We wish one day to visit Lebanon and our friends, God willing.

Once we arrived in Canada, we were received by my oldest son and his wife, who preceded our immigration to Canada by twelve years. The story of our second visit to Canada began, after a long absence of more than thirty years, but now in a larger city, Toronto. Toronto is known for its harsh climate compared to Vancouver where we were in the seventies.

Here I would like to compare Canada in the seventies and Canada in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Canada's health system, picturesque nature, and cultural diversity is incomparable to any other country I visited. However, I found that it has changed a little over the years, which is summarized in the following points:

- 1) Canadians born in Canada had a better relationship with the newcomers in the 1970s.
- 2) Demographic change and diversity is evident, due to the increase in the number of immigrants to Canada with different races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds.
- 3) The admission of immigrants to Canada regardless of the availability of job opportunities for them, which forces them to resort to applying for government aid that causes a great burden on the country's treasury.
- 4) I noticed the emphasis on the importance of networking to get a job opportunity more than it was previously during the seventies. Employment opportunities were easier, perhaps because of the availability of job opportunities at the time.
- 5) The cultural influence of the Indigenous people in Toronto is very little compared to that in western Canada. This opinion may differ from person to person. All this has to do with the economic recession that prevailed in the world after 2008.

I have to say Canada was and still is among the best countries to settle in because of Canada's global reputation in all fields, including its citizens' high morals who are used to helping strangers. I also commend the Canadian system and laws in terms of imparting justice and human rights, ethnic diversity, wonderful geographical diversity, tourist destinations, and the abundance of lakes. Canadians love spending quality time in the open air on the lakes and parks, and have a strong love for their country (myself included). We prove our loyalty to it by celebrating Canada Day, volunteering, and contributing to the community. What does not kill us, makes us stronger, when the world is running down, you make the best of what is still around. (Vivian Green)

It is not possible to end my talk about memories without mentioning the Corona epidemic and adhering to social distancing and staying away from public gatherings and even family gatherings. In general, living inside the house for days and weeks at a time makes everyone feel suffocated and stressed.

We have only heard about similar epidemics from our ancestors around the world such as plague, smallpox, and malaria. During our generation, the world faced the emergence of new epidemics such as bird flu, swine, immunodeficiency disease, and SARS, which I contracted during my visit to the Grand Mosque in Makkah Al-Mukarramah. However, we did not witness global health measures such as those applied during the Corona epidemic by resorting to emergency laws and restricting public and personal freedoms throughout the universe.

We, praise be to God, live in Canada, a country that enjoys advanced laws to help its citizens whose livelihood have been affected by this epidemic. Canada also has a solid infrastructure for its health institutions and contributed to the completion of the vaccine as soon as possible, which is the only way to break the chain of disease transmission and eliminate it.

Canadians were among the people who gave up their freedom and daily routines to follow precautionary measures, making Canada succeed in managing the crisis. Despite the beginning of giving the Corona vaccine to various segments of Canadian society, we still have to take caution for a period of time by wearing a mask and social distancing.

I conclude by saying, after relying on God's help, we will overcome this difficult period through the wisdom of officials' decisions, where history will record it to be added to the stories of previous epidemics and diseases.

(Things end but memories last forever)

(The strongest drug that exists for human is another human being)

I would like to thank the management of the Arab Community Center in Toronto for adopting this project during these difficult times and thank those who financially sponsored it. I hope they will soon develop it into actual face-to-face meetings, after the end of the epidemic. Finally, I would like to present two experiences that I heard from my elderly friends during their visit to the countries that implement seniors activities.

#### 1)The Netherlands experience

It is summarized by assigning an elderly person and his assistant to gather a number of other elderly people in the area and arrange weekly gatherings in a hall to spend the day, exchange conversations, practice their hobbies, and prepare food on their own before heading home at the end of the day. Additionally, trips are organized for them to visit places inside and outside the Netherlands.

#### 2)The Sweden experience

It may be similar to the Netherlands experience, but the meeting is done by having the elderly groups decide the meeting schedule according to their regions and desires. Then the responsible authorities arrange their transportation to and from one of the elderly's houses to spend the day and enjoy their time.

## MEMOIR 3

### I HAD A PASSION FOR ANYTHING ARTISTIC...

*As per my humble experience as a 65-year-old, I would like to call the next generations' attention to the following:*

*Firstly, fight with all your strength to fulfill your wishes and beliefs.*

---

Greetings to you all,

My parents are cousins (Their fathers are brothers). My great grandfather passed away when his eldest was only 12 years old, and his youngest was 9 years old. They lived in Al Basra and after the death of my great grandfather they moved to Maysan Governorate near their uncle (their mother's brother). My great grandfather used to work in the retail fabric industry. He used to take his eldest son with him to teach him the secrets of the trade, and to pass on the knowledge of how to deal with and attract customers. Our grandfather has once told us how his father used to always emphasize the importance of dealing with customers on the basis of honesty and trust, and to always treat the customer as though you were selling to your own blood relative- and that was the secret of a successful business.

One day, my great grandmother spoke to her eldest son about marrying a girl that lived nearby. Her eldest son agreed, and they had two sons and two daughters together. Their eldest son is my father. He grew up to work with my grandfather in the fabrics industry. His younger brother completed his studies and got a PhD in Petroleum Engineering. Suddenly, my grandmother got sick and passed away in 1941. My grandfather's health also deteriorated, and they decided to leave everything behind and move to Baghdad.

They rented a house in Baghdad downtown, and leased two fabric retail stores at Al-Qahera Street near the Iraq Museum. When my father turned 15, my grandfather decided to leave the retail business to his brother and eldest son and he went on to explore the wholesale business. He met new people and even rented a store in the Market. He formed a strong relationship with the businessmen of the Mhawesh family, and they supported him at the start of his business.

My grandfathers' business flourished and he opened 4 more branches, three in the Allawi Area and one in the Kadhimiya Area at Al- Sharif Al-Radi Street.





They bought a big residential area in Al- Utafiyah near Dijla River. My youngest grandfather married a girl from Baghdad, and they had 2 sons and 7 daughters. His children went on to complete their studies and got PhDs in the fields of Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Education, and History. My eldest grandfather decided to marry again after his first wife passed away, and he married his cousin, and they had 3 boys and 3 girls. They completed their studies in different fields of Math, Economics, Accounting, Psychology, and Technology. Three years passed in Baghdad before my father married his cousin, and they had 4 boys and 5 girls together. I am the second eldest. As usual, the eldest son accompanies his father in his business ventures, and so my father decided to take my older brother with him to help with the fabric business, while I drifted away from the business because I did not like it. I even encouraged my siblings to be independent, and to work and study at the same time. My father saw that I did not like the family business, and he acknowledged my need to be independent. He supported me, and I started working while studying at the same time, trying to graduate high school (scientific sector). I used to work in the morning and study at night. At the beginning, I worked at selling and buying clothes for 3 years. I saved a decent amount of money and I started a small bottling plant with German and French equipment. When my business grew, I partnered with my friend and we started a leather coats factory. Our business grew and we started distributing our products to governorates in the North and South, and to Baghdad. I graduated high school with a GPA that qualified me to study Agriculture Engineering. However, I didn't register in the program because that field was not what I wanted. I really wanted to study Arts because I had passion for anything artistic like acting, music, sculpturing, drawing, singing, and production. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to fulfill my wish because of my father's opposition- may his soul rest in peace.

I was very frustrated and tried relentlessly to change his mind, but it was useless. I even considered moving out and living on my own, but my uncle counseled me wisely and changed my mind, and I am still very grateful to him for his advice. He suggested that I join the Tourism and Hotels Management Field in Mustansiriyah University. According to him, Iraq needed to build hotels and develop the tourism sector since it has a lot of ancient sites, religious temples and rivers. It has rich cultures like Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian. There is Ur in the south, Nimrod and Urban in the Mossel. Additionally, there are the shrines of the imams of Ahl Al-Bayt-which are Ali bin Abi Talib in Najaf and the sons of Hussein and al-Abbas in Karbala, Musa al-Kadhim and Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Kilani in Baghdad, and the shrines of their grandchildren, with many churches, monasteries, and Mandaean temples.

Since Iraq was getting so much international attention, there was an agreement between Iraq and other Arab and European countries to send students to different countries as a part of an educational fellowships program. One of these student groups were graduates from the Tourism and Hotel Management



Mustansiriya University,  
Baghdad, Iraq, 1977



Mustansiriya University,  
Baghdad, Iraq, 1978

Mustansiriya University,  
Baghdad, Iraq, 1978



Program. These countries included: Switzerland, Belgium, France, New Zealand, Finland, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, and Lebanon. My fellowship was in Switzerland. I completed my studies and started working in the Tourism Ministry under the Department of Tourism Services, and then I became the Head of the Professional Classification Department, where I classified hotels according to their grades and services. Soon I became the Head of Inspection, and after that I was the Manager at the Tourism Development and Education Department. Later I was assigned as the Manager of the Institution of Tourism and Hotel Management in Baghdad. Additionally I was a member of the Board of Directors at the Sheraton, Novotel, and Baghdad hotels.

Unfortunately, after the conditions in Iraq began to deteriorate, we moved to Syria. The conditions of the economy, education and security in Iraq were horrible. Upon arriving in Syria, I made an agreement with some of the Hotel management in Syria to give lectures on different topics like: Hotel Accounting, Reception, Hotel Measures, Etiquette, Marketing, and Management. During our stay in Syria, my family and I applied for asylum to Canada through an immigration organization.



Switzerland, 1979

We got the approval more than 10 years ago, and on our arrival we were given a warm welcome by one of the Immigration officers in Canada. My kids and I noticed a big difference in the Education and Health systems here in Canada, in addition to the financial support provided by the government. We will forever hold love, respect and gratitude for what Canada has provided us with. It is a very diverse country and we feel proud to be Canadian citizens and we will always be proud of our second country Canada.

As per my humble experience as a 65-year-old, I would like to call the next generations' attention to the following:

Firstly, fight with all your strength to fulfill your wishes and beliefs.

Secondly, be a hard and sincere worker in order to achieve higher positions with an experience that puts you above others.

Thirdly, deal with other people on the basis of good-will and forgiveness. As a result, you will have a few, but livelong, friends- they will be your treasure for the rest of your life.

Lastly, don't invest all your money in one place. This way, if one idea fails, the other succeeds, and you stay on the safe side.

## MEMOIR 4

### UNTIL I LEFT THE ARMY...

*I was injured in battlefield several times.*

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Born in 1953 in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. I grew up in a middle-class family, and my father worked in the Iraqi army. As such, we had to relocate frequently and this helped me to learn Arabic. I was the second out of a total of fourteen brothers and a sister. I had to step up and contribute to my family's financial needs after my father's retirement in 1966. I had to drop out of school early, look into the job market, and eventually I served in the Iraqi Army.

I participated in the Iraqi war with Iran and was injured on the battlefield several times until I left the army. I went back to work again, got married and God had blessed me with three children. In 1991, I decided to enter the business world. I sold my home in Sulaymaniyah in order to open a restaurant in Baghdad, which had quickly become one of the most famous restaurants in the capital. God blessed me with abundant goodness from it until Saddam's regime fell, and things turned upside down. The situation changed due to the spread of militias and the difficulty of dealing with them. I was from the northern part of Iraq and not from Baghdad, and people's hopes that the situation would return to its former state, or at least improve was diminishing. I decided to leave Iraq like many others who were unable to continue living there.

I began looking for an opportunity to travel to any country, and after many failed attempts to leave Iraq to one of the Diaspora countries, we started seeking stability again in Iraq. My wife returned to her work as a teacher and I moved between jobs. My children were also working in different jobs and we were able to manage our affairs. Even then, our hopes and dreams were still attached to the idea of immigration.

Given the difficulties that my family has endured, and our insistence on the idea of leaving Iraq to any country that provides us with stability and safety, and that we were not able to all immigrate to one country, every member of the family started striving for the matter with his own efforts but with little success. Unfortunately, in light of this strategy our family was separated across different countries. One of my sons moved to Germany, my other son travelled to the

United States of America, but my eldest son was unable to leave Iraq and stayed there with his family until present days.

After several years, I was eventually able to obtain a visitor visa to the United States in 2017 and left Iraq with my wife. Our stay in America was temporary. We crossed the border into Canada, where we applied for asylum and were transferred to the court to review our case, but unfortunately the judge who reviewed our case was not convinced.


We presented all evidence that it is unsafe to live in Iraq under the dangerous and unstable security conditions. Our case being rejected was a massive shock to us. We were very disappointed, as we had been placing high hopes on our case being accepted. We started searching for a lawyer to appeal, and our friends referred us to a lawyer who advised us to turn our case into a humanitarian asylum case. Our case has been on hold, due to the epidemic. We are still living in limbo, where the fear and anxiety of being sent back to live under the unpredictable circumstances in Iraq haunts our minds day and night. Having had the experience of what it means to live in safety and peace here, we are holding on to the hope that soon that would be our life, too.



## MEMOIR 5

### I SERVED MY COUNTRY FOR MANY YEARS...

*Health, education, and other service and civil institutions deteriorated causing the country's best competencies and doctors in the educated classes to think about immigration*



I was born to Iraqi parents in one of the cities of Iraq. My father worked as an employee in one of the government departments at the time.

Iraq is a country located in the southwest of Asia, on the northern borders of the Arabian Peninsula. Iraq is not considered a part of the Arabian Peninsula politically, but geographically half of the Iraqi lands are located there, and these lands constitute the southern and southwestern territories of the country. Iraq is bordered from the north by Turkey, from the north-west by Syria, from the west by Jordan, from the west, south and southwest by Saudi Arabia, from the east by Iran, and from the southeast by Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf.

The country of Iraq consists of eighteen governorates, the most important of which are:

#### **BAGHDAD GOVERNORATE**

Baghdad is the capital city of the Iraqi Republic, and according to the population census study, the city's population reached about 6 million in 2013. Baghdad is the largest city in Iraq and the second largest city in the Arab world in terms of population, following Cairo and ranks 35th in the world in terms of percentage of population as well. It is one of the most important economic, financial, educational, and administrative strengths of the country.

The city of Baghdad is an important and essential center ground for a large number of factories and shops in Iraq. It constitutes a linking ground between Turkey, Syria and Southeast Asia and it is the main trade market in the country. In addition to that, it is a prominent tourist attraction, with more than a million tourists visiting it annually.

The city of Baghdad contains a number of archaeological, historical, and touristic attractions. For instance, there are museums that contain human structures,



statues, gems, and coins from prehistoric times until our current century. The city also has prominent Islamic monuments such as the remains of the Baghdad Wall, the Caliphate House, and the Al-Mustansiriya School, in addition to the most important historical mosques such as the Caliphs Mosque, the Ahmadiyya Mosque, the Imam Musa Al-Kadhim Mosque, and the Marjan Mosque.



Modern Freedom Monument, Tahrir Square, 1961.

One of the most important landmarks of Baghdad.

## **BASRA GOVERNORATE**

Basra ranks second in the country in terms of population and economic importance, following the capital city, Baghdad. It remained the only commercial port in Iraq from its early stages to the late sixties, until the port of Umm Qasr was built on the Arabian Gulf. However, the importance of Basra Port continued to increase with the increase in oil revenues until 1980, when all activities of Iraqi ports came to a halt due to the outbreak of the Irani-Iraqi war. Basra is a large and significant city in the southern part of Iraq, and is considered the central city of Basra Governorate, and about 50% of the total population of the governorate resides there.

The city of Basra is located on the western (right) bank of Shatt al-Arab River, which consists of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and flows into the Arabian Gulf. The city of Basra is about 110 km away from this estuary (river mouth).

The city penetrates a network of streams and canals, extending from Shatt al-Arab river moving in towards the city, and it was previously used for irrigation and drainage. Many of these streams and canals are suitable to become waterways (river navigation), and after the expansion of the city, these channels turned into a tourist attraction, and they were developed, organized, and made more suitable for this function in the post-war 1989 City Reconstruction Campaign. The city is located within the area of palm groves, which form a strip 7km wide in average, extending on both sides of Shatt al-Arab river, which is the largest area of palms in the country of Iraq. These groves form the southern borders of the city, and to the west and the southwest side there are saline soil lands.

The city has a large number of hotels, restaurants, cafes, cinemas, night clubs and other entertainment institutions, and most of these institutions and the best of them are concentrated, again, in the city centre. In addition to that, the city has a number of public libraries, theatres, museums, social clubs, and sports stadiums. There is no doubt that the years of the Sanctions against Iraq cast a heavy shadow over the city. It paralyzed its development, stopping its growth and urban expansion.

After the British occupation of Iraq in the twenties of the last century, agriculture expanded and diversified after the completion of some irrigation projects on the Mosul Dam (formerly Saddam Dam) and the Great Zab River.

The Arabs called Mosul “Al-Hadba” which translates to “the humpback” because one of its famous mosques has a curved minaret, and also because the Tigris River follows a curved path in the city. It was also called “the mother of the two springs” because, according to Professor Ahmad Qasim Al-Jumah, a professor of history at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Mosul, the fall season in it is spring-like and is characterized by the cleanness of its air.

I completed my school studies, including Tawjihi (which is equivalent to grade 12 in the Canadian system) and after that I completed my bachelor’s degree in an Iraqi university. After a while I pursued a postgraduate diploma and got accepted

Shatt al-Arab  
Corniche in Basra





into a European university. I graduated and got my post-graduate diploma and returned to my country, Iraq.

I served my country for many years, but the sanctions imposed on Iraq, the first and second Gulf War, the American-led occupation of Iraq, the fall of the Baath regime in Iraq, the suffering that the Iraqi people went through because of the rule of the corrupt parties that plundered the wealth and goodness of Iraq, caused the loss of security and comfort of the people. Health, education, and other service and civil institutions deteriorated, causing the country's best competencies and doctors in the educated classes to consider immigration and emigration to neighboring countries, such as: Jordan, Syria, Turkey, or to the



Al-Hadba minaret,  
Mosul, Nineveh, Iraq

Gulf countries like: Emirates, Qatar and Oman, or any country that grants them an entrance visa. My family and I were immigrants to one of the neighboring countries and after a few months, I submitted a request to immigrate to Canada.

My family and I arrived at Pearson International Airport in Canada, and the airport immigration department was extremely helpful. They provided me with everything I might need, like all the necessary procedures, papers and addresses needed to apply for a health card, SIN, Child Tax Benefit, and other necessary matters.

My friend greeted me at the airport and took me to an apartment that he had previously rented for me in Mississauga. My family and I were shocked with the cold weather, snowstorms, and rain because it was not something that we are used to. However, after a year we got used to the Canadian climate.

I will admit that I faced some difficulties here in Canada, the most important of which is the difficulty to find a job in your area of specialty. This usually causes a struggle for any person for a certain period of time. This might cause people to show signs of depression, boredom, loneliness, and frustration. This creates a conflict within themselves, they can either give-up, locking themselves in a hopeless situation that leads them to a dead end with no positive consequences or they can choose persistence and challenge themselves to get out of this tragic situation. My advice to everyone is to never surrender, persist in search of a job, meet people with previous experience in Canada, and always avoid people who discourage you. It is sometimes good to try different fields of specialty if necessary, and to participate in courses and volunteer to get the Canadian experience needed, but no matter what, never quit looking for work until you enter the job market and overcome all the difficulties.



## MEMOIR 6

### MY SMALL CITY BEAUTIFULLY DEMONSTRATED DIVERSITY...

*People back then despite the poverty, were content with their modest lives and upheld values that held the society together, away from any political or ethnic differences and sensitivities.*



We are entering the second year of Covid-19, where we all experienced the loss of loyal friends and people who were dear to our hearts. Millions around the world have lost their lives, due to this deadly virus. The wheels of life seemed to have stopped in the socio-economic and cultural fields, everywhere in the world. Even though strict measures were put in place by governments and obeyed by most citizens, to stop the spread of this virus, it continues to spread defiantly. A lot of people have lost their jobs as a result of the lockdowns and have struggled to provide for their families. The financial assistance given out by the government to the unemployed served as much-needed life-support, for without this money a lot of families would have struggled even more to get through these tough times.

On the Brightside, countless scientists and doctors invested a lot of time doing research trying to come up with a vaccine or a treatment for this virus. As the Arabic saying goes, “there is a treatment for every illness”. And thanks to the hard work and dedication of these scientists we now have different vaccines to choose from, to better protect ourselves from the invisible enemy. We hope that people

from around the world, the poor and the rich, the young and elderly could gain equal access to these vaccines. We wish that 2021 would be a year of goodness and fortune to humankind, especially our families in Iraq. We truly hope this year will be kinder to their souls.

Away from Covid-19, my memory takes me back to the days of my childhood and adolescence in one of Iraq's small cities that lie on the shores of the Tigris River and its good people. A city that's known for its date palm groves, wheat, and vegetable farms that sustain the people living there to a great extent.

That's where I grew up and studied before I left to study abroad and only returned to visit family and friends on holidays and special occasions. Here I am now living a million miles away in Canada, my second hometown, having been forced to live far away from my family and my people after chaos erupted in the depth of Iraq and all the rescue ropes leading to safety were cut nationwide. That place where murder happens in the blink of an eye and the sight of corpses on the streets became a familiar scene...I found myself left with no choice at the time, but to leave my dear Iraq to go to Yemen in 1998.

The urge for survival and the pursuit of a safe land drove me to Canada in 2004. I was able to find myself a safe country to belong to and raise a family of my own, in pride and dignity.

Both my family and I have had to endure the war-inflicted pain and struggles that the entire country of Iraq has been through. I have lawfully served all the duties I was assigned during the Iraqi-Iranian War, and lived through the bombing of cities, and the merciless blockades that were forced upon innocent civilians after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which caused thousands of Iraqis to die without fault. It has caused harsh struggles and demeaning living conditions that only harmed civilians.

I often rewind my life to the days I lived in Iraq that I have never and will never forget, as long as I am alive. People back then despite the poverty, were content with their modest lives and upheld values that held the society together, away from any political or ethnic differences and sensitivities. Some were pro-monarchy and some were against it. I still remember the downfall of the monarchy from my early childhood back in 1958, and the death of the king. A lot of people occupied the streets celebrating the rule of the revolution that took over the monarchists.

The country was stuck in a loop of military coups, each bloodier than the former. And this is what happened to the rule of Abd-Alkareem Kassem that replaced the monarchy, which was soon removed by the Arabic Socialist Ba'ath Party in 1963. And the Party's rule was then replaced by Abd Alsalem Arif in 1964. Abd



Abd Alrahman Arif was then removed by the Ba'ath party in 1968, the fall of Saddam Hossein, and the occupation of Iraq by the United States and affiliated states, in 2003.

The country experienced military coups, bloody struggles, cons, and wars that destroyed Iraq and displaced its people.

What gives me hope is that despite all the coups and chapters tainted with blood and tears the country has been through before 2003, people were able to live with each other regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or political affiliations. There was a time when peoples' love for each other out-shined the political attempts to poison our society and prevent us from living in peace with each other. Iraq was witnessing visible academic, scientific, cultural, and societal developments, where people enjoyed a strong education and healthcare system, except the times of the blockade that lasted nearly a decade. Back then the Iraqi government provided quality free education in all fields, along with free accessible healthcare and medicine. There is a sacred place in my memory for those precious times. I will forever remember them with a never-dying hope for that better tomorrow our people have been awaiting

My small city beautifully demonstrated the diversity of religions and ethnicities. Sunni and Shia students studied together in the same halls, Muslims and Christians from the City of Mosul and Egypt all worked and lived together in harmony. It was a beautiful mixture of people who came from all these different



backgrounds, their differences are what made my city, our country more special. They stood together so tight that there was simply no room for random incidents to divide them. We lived through the sweet and bitter days together. Religion is for the people and our homeland, that is Iraq, belongs to us all, no matter what our beliefs are.


I still remember the joy that sparked our hearts when our immigration case was accepted to come to Canada. This country allows us and our children the opportunity to study, build a future for ourselves, be employed, and support ourselves financially. Our first years here were filled with all sorts of difficulties, such as overcoming the language and custom barriers when interacting with the Canadian society, which was vastly different from that in Iraq. Besides, it was hard to get jobs in our fields that we majored in, as both my wife and I have had to work in completely unrelated fields. We were hoping the Canadian government would have special immigration programs in place for the highly-educated ones to enable them to better serve the country.

Throughout my immigration process, I truly appreciated the country's developed and up-to-date laws that aim to serve and protect its people and the presence of all sorts of programs for youth development. This is one of the many things that made my family love Canada and be proud to call it our home. We are eternally grateful for giving us the sense of security and safety that we never knew in our homelands.

## MEMOIR 7

# CREATE GENERATIONS WHO ARE KEEN AND HONEST TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY...

*It surprised me that they required me to take a course on teaching methods in order to apply for jobs in Canadian universities despite the vast and accumulated experience I had exceeding more than thirty years in teaching.*



It is a long journey down the memory lane filled with success and struggles and suffering of a person born and raised in a large family like most Iraqi families, who in the past refused birth control for reasons that may be religious, social, or tribal.

The average financial income of the family at that time depended entirely on the father (the head of the family) who would most likely be employed in a private company. The father is primarily responsible for the family's livelihood and spending on family members and preparing school supplies and other family needs. He also monitors the performance of boys and girls accordingly.

On the other hand, the most commonly unemployed mother is responsible for household chores, preparing food, raising the children, as well as submitting a daily verbal report to the head of the family (the father) about the family's needs and the children's daily behavior and their performance of homework.

The main task of the children is to study, excel, and help in some household chores. The prevailing characteristics among family members is respect, cooperation and being able to rely on one another, as well as the implementation of what the father, mother and older brother command.

## EDUCATION HISTORY

The primary school, which lasted for six years, was about 2 km away from our house, and when I went to school in the morning, I would walk to school, accompanied by my brothers or our neighbors' children, taking roads that may be bumpy or unsafe as a shortcut.



We had to endure the severity of the summer heat and the freezing winter cold to get to school early. In those days, teachers were dedicated to students' academic performance. Those who failed to perform and were late or absent from schoolwork were immediately punished with a stick in front of the entire class or daily morning parade in front of the entire school. The school administration would send periodic or monthly letters to parents informing them of the children's performance, or inviting them to visit the school to see their children's progress on a daily basis and explain any difficulties they are experiencing. The teaching method and follow-up at that time was to force students to persevere, excel, and adhere to ethical and values-based school practices, as failure to participate in school duties would result in expulsion or degradation of the student's education. Therefore, this relationship of interest between the family and the school helped create generations who are keen and honest to take responsibility, and can contribute to building advanced civilized societies which enhance the status quo for the better in the future.

After completing the intermediate stage, which lasted three years, I proceeded to middle school, which was also three years in duration. Both schools were located within a short distance from where I lived, so it was not difficult to reach them. Reminiscing back to those school stages, I will never forget the names of the genius teachers. Their love, dedication and sincerity were incomparable to any other.

The teachers did whatever they could to deliver the scientific information and raise the students' academic level. They worked out of duty and loyalty to the nation, adhering to the circulating Iraqi saying (halal salary).

For my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, I was accepted into Basra University, located in the governorate where I resided, after passing the final check of the preparatory stage and completing the central application to apply for admission. Unfortunately, I was not accepted in the major that I wanted to pursue. This was one of the most important challenges that I faced in the beginning. When I finished my initial university studies, I was appointed a position as a laboratory assistant in the college where I completed my studies, and in the same scientific department where I graduated. I prepared for practical lessons in laboratories as well as teaching students of different academic levels due to the scarcity of the number of teachers available in the department and the college at that time.

Upon expiration of the two-year legal period, I was nominated for completing postgraduate study outside Iraq at a foreign university, provided that I obtained admission from one of the foreign universities, and in return the Iraqi government undertook payment of all the wages, academic and living expenses

as required. I started contacting universities that taught in English exclusively, and I received several offers to study the major I wished to specialize in. A British university I wished to study in extended an offer to continue my PhD studies there.

Travelling to Britain was the first trip I had taken outside of Iraq. My family was grieving and they were anxious about overcoming potential difficulties and the unknown. The required qualifications for direct enrollment and access to the university were achieved without difficulty in the academic course that began three weeks before my arrival in Britain. What made my studies there more difficult was the lack of enrollment in English language courses, which foreign students are supposed to take for six months before starting the actual course. I completed the course requirements, I obtained a higher diploma in a year, and immediately after that, I joined the research work required for completing the requirements for my master's and doctoral degrees.

There was a devastating war between Iraq and Iran at that time, most of which was in Basra, the city in which my parents lived, and so the family went to another city within Iraq due to bombing all around Basra. The bad conditions in Iraq and poor communication as a result of the devastating war that lasted for eight years (which continued with the length of the research work), caused me to be in constant anxiety and fear for the safety of my family as well as the devastation that befell Iraq and the Iraqis.

Despite the bad conditions of the war in Iraq, I continued working on my research. As a consequence, I was able to attain a master's degree and the doctorate in the field I wanted.

After obtaining my doctorate, I returned to Iraq and took up my old job at the college as a teacher in the department I used to work in before. Despite my reluctance to work in administration, I was nominated to take over the presidency of the science department where I worked. The position lasted more than seven years during which the department received the title of the distinguished department three times in the college, and many scientific and educational accolades were achieved.

I was nominated for several positions in college, but I refused to take any other administrative position after that. I wanted to devote my time to research and teaching, as well as to fulfill other family obligations. I continued my work as an instructor in the department while assisting in managing some scientific committees in the department and college.

After the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, the situation became completely unstable and insecure. The deliberate assassinations resulted in the loss of many Iraqi

lives, and everyone was threatened with assassination by unidentified criminals and gangs. In addition to that, the standard of education in schools and colleges had declined drastically since the occupation. In order to maintain the educational and academic levels of my children, I left Iraq with my family to work in the State of Qatar until the security improved in Iraq, and our stay in Qatar continued for two years.

## **IMMIGRATION TO CANADA**

During our stay in Qatar we decided to apply for immigration as professional immigrants (skilled workers) to Canada, the beautiful, safe country in which all teaching and medical options were available.

It took us nearly four years to obtain approval to immigrate to Canada. In the meantime when situations in Iraq slightly improved, we returned and continued working the same jobs as before. However, the security situation began to worsen, terror and fear returned to our hearts and lives, social conditions were inadequate, educational levels fell to their lowest levels, and many legal violations were committed. In all respects, the general conditions of the country were rapidly deteriorating and every citizen of Iraq was under threat of kidnapping, murder, extortion, and theft. There was neither a system of law nor a law to protect or defend its people.

I finally traveled with my family to Canada in 2012, first in Mississauga, where we resided for a limited period of time to complete the required paperwork and receive proof of residency in Canada.

After my eldest daughter completed her four-year undergraduate degree in civil engineering in Iraq, she came with her mother to settle with us in Canada. As for my middle son, he was studying medicine, and the period of his studies in Iraqi universities was six years, and so he had to delay joining the family in Canada in order to complete the remainder of his study period. Unfortunately, even after graduating from the university, he could not come to Canada and settle down with the family because of the restrictions placed by the Iraqi government on medical graduates in Iraq, by not providing them with graduation documents from Iraqi universities until they completed the active medical profession and worked at hospitals in cities, villages and rural areas for a period of no less than five years. It was nerve racking for the family due to the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Iraq. He stayed in Iraq until he was able to finish the period, obtained the required academic documents and then he joined the family in Canada.

After settling in Canada, I applied for jobs at Canadian universities, but they required the verification of my degrees from British universities, although they

were in English. It surprised me that they required me to take a course on teaching methods in order to apply for jobs in Canadian universities, despite the vast and accumulated experience I had exceeding more than thirty years in teaching and research work.

The hope of finding a job as an instructor or researcher in Canadian universities or colleges began to diminish with time due to the limited availability of jobs in the field of my specialty, and the difficulty in meeting some of the requirements for the purpose of applying for a job. This stage was very difficult, painful, disappointing, and the optimism that I initially had upon my arrival in Canada faded over time.

In order to sustain the cost of living in Canada, I had to search for work with lower wages and away from my professional specialty. My wife also faced obstacles in finding employment as a radiology specialist who had also worked extensively in this field for more than thirty years. The biggest legal hindrance was the system not recognizing the certificates of doctors graduating from outside of Canada. Even after passing the required examinations, it is extremely difficult for a specialist doctor from outside of Canada to practice as a specialist in Canada. As a result, my wife was unable to obtain a job as a specialist doctor. She had to take the required examinations to find employment as a sonographer technician in a private clinic, not as a radiologist.



The failure to provide the real opportunity for experienced immigrants with university degrees such as doctors, engineers and others or holders of higher degrees such as masters and doctorates to practice their professional specializations and benefit from their accumulated professional experience is a great loss to Canada in all areas of specialization that they were practicing in their countries before coming to Canada. Immigrants with degrees usually come to Canada as professional immigrants (skilled workers), which means the Canadian government will approve their immigration based on the availability of job opportunities for their profession in Canada. Thus, the immigrant expects the ability to obtain employment without obstacles or legal hindrances that hinder his employment in his preferred field of work.


Therefore, it is imperative for the authorities responsible for employing certificates of immigrants coming from outside Canada to review the laws and regulations that hinder the work of doctors, university professors, and other university degree holders in their specializations and work to overcome difficulties and facilitate legal procedures in order to quickly benefit from their specializations and experiences in the service of important sectors in Canada.



## MEMOIR 8

### THIS HAD THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MY CAREER...

*I thank God that I am still blessed with the life that many lost because of this epidemic.*



In the name of Allah the Merciful

The goal of narrating the following events is not to write the story of my life, but to review my experience in practical life after obtaining the necessary academic qualifications. I worked as an accountant in one of the government departments in Sudan for four year. This prepared me for my next job where I settled for more than thirty-five years until my retirement. My job coincided with the development boom in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I joined a Saudi bank as an employee in the pre-computer era. It was a great challenge to compete with my fellow employees, and I wanted to prove myself every step of the way. This created a distinguished relationship between me and several managers I worked for. Over a period of fifteen years, I was promoted as branch manager and trusted with increasing responsibilities.

Job stability is very important for every person, so the longer the employment period in one job, the more you stabilize your life. On the other hand, beware of getting used to the daily routine and try to introduce some kind of change, such as trying a new task within your field. I tackled the process of switching from the paper format to the electronic system after more than fifteen years of manually handling the daily tasks of the bank.

By writing notes and excluding any unnecessary step I was able to simplify tasks to reduce the wasted time that were usually spent on completing them. This approach helped me get a new job in the regional administration to supervise about 70 branches who did not have a procedures guide. I was working with 3 district managers and I consulted with them to make adjustments and simplify the procedures with the branches.

We succeeded in eliminating the delay complaints by visiting the branches and evaluating their performance. With joint efforts, we succeeded in completing monthly statistics for each branch, for example, statistics about the growth in

customer deposits and the number of credit cards issued to customers.

Then we planned a monthly comparison between the branches according to their categories A, B and C at the regional level. These achievements were reported to the Branches Network Manager in one of the periodic meetings with district managers from all regions in the Kingdom. They began applying the same standards and procedures by providing him with monthly statistics, which found resonance with the higher management. This had the most significant impact on my career, as I was later included as a team leader in the group of branches and regions to which I was entrusted with the process of re-engineering branches and management operations.

Regionalism was a qualitative leap for me. We were provided with hotel accommodation and a car to facilitate our transfers from the administration to the targeted branches, whether from inside or outside Riyadh. We used to travel to different regions to collect data, analyze, and diversify data sources, as well as to know the conditions of each region of the Kingdom. Since it is not necessary for banking products to have the same customer demand in all regions, we raised recommendations to cancel a product in one region to reduce expenses, or increase a product in a region with higher demand for it, thus increasing profitability.

I was analyzing the collected data about all the procedures and transactions that took place between the branches and general or regional administration. Then I was recommending the cancellation of any invaluable procedure or transferring the process to be completed automatically from within the bank's electronic system (especially with regard to the accounting system, to reduce the number of employees in each branch and thus reducing the expenses). There was a transition stage of the banking services to the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) for cash withdrawal and deposit, check deposit, and many other services that were subsequently implemented through the IT employees group at the bank.

We also developed the process of collecting and circulating cash, feeding ATMs, monitoring the cash available in the machines, insurance of funds transferred between cities, organizing the process of depositing excess funds with the Central Bank, and the reduction of the paper documents circulating between branches and the administration to prepare for their final suspension and transfer their circulation via e-mails. In general, after completing the study and implementing the recommendations submitted to the Board of Directors, a qualitative and effective transformation occurred. The bank's profits increased by a high rate due to the unexpected reduction of expenses in large proportions.

The annual profit growth began to trend upward in the following years. After we performed our mission to the fullest, the bank's management wanted to retain


the team members to benefit from the experiences that we have accumulated from the study. Therefore, they chose us to join several positions in the public administration. I was chosen as a financial monitor for the Operations and Systems Group, for which I worked for two months. Then I was transferred to another location with a new administration that was assigned to a colleague from the team who completed the study with us and asked me to help in searching for accounting differences in the branch regarding trading in global stock exchanges. So I looked at his work and found it very similar to my work several years ago, so I agreed to help him after my working hours and we were able to amend a large part of the differences within a month. This achievement was informed to his manager, who asked me to take over the position of Observer of International Mediation Operations. Being an adventurer, I agreed to take the job and prove my competence. Indeed, I accomplished many things in this job and created a strong relationship between me and all colleagues in the administration.

After several years, I was promoted as Director of International Mediation Operations at the bank until I retired after years of moving between different jobs in several cities in Saudi Arabia. I recently settled in Canada, where I am looking forward to obtaining Canadian citizenship, and resume my daily routine after the Corona epidemic that disrupted many plans for everyone. I thank God that I am still blessed with the life that many lost because of this epidemic.



## IF THE EDUCATED DO NOT WRITE TO EDUCATE PEOPLE, WHO WOULD DO IT?...

*I was called to the State Security Investigation Department, and I was asked not to write in political fields again and to stick to writing about scientific subjects as I used to before.*



I was born in 1937, the era of the monarchy. My father, who used to work as a superintendent of the railway station of Minya in Upper Egypt, loved His Majesty the great young King Farouk I, the king of Egypt and Sudan, the ruler of Nubia, Darfur, and Cordovan, and he gave me his name out of love and respect. I studied at Farouk Al-Awal Primary School in the city of Tahta (Kharga District), and the expenses were covered by the royal family- like everyone who bears the name of His Majesty. When we were young, we loved His Majesty the King and looked up to him. We would sing songs, greet the flag, and greet the king of Egypt and Sudan in the morning assembly at school.

Primary School consisted of four years where we studied mathematics, history, geography, Arabic and English languages, principles of science and health, in addition to painting, hobbies and sports. At the end of each academic year, we sat for our final exams in special committees. Whoever fails in one subject takes a supplementary exam after a month, and whoever fails in two subjects or more repeats the school year. At the end of the fourth year, an examination is held at the level of the directorate to obtain a primary certificate, which is a general certificate that qualifies you to work in government departments, banks, and companies. It also qualifies for transfer to the secondary school, for those who want to continue their education. I passed the primary certificate exam with distinction and decided to continue my studies at the secondary school.

I went to Tahta Al-Amiriya Secondary School (now Refa'a al-Tahtawi), free of charge because of my high grades. The secondary school consisted of five academic years. The first four years we all study mathematics (algebra, geometry, and trigonometry), languages (Arabic, English, and French), sciences (physics, chemistry, and biology), history and geography, in addition to drawing, sports, and hobbies. In the final academic year, you get to choose between two sectors,

either scientific or literary. The scientific department studies mathematics, sciences, and languages, while the literary department studies history, geography, philosophy, logic, and languages.

I passed my first four years with excellent grades, but I personally preferred studying languages, history, and geography more than science subjects. My favorite hobby was writing for the school journal, and that is why the principal of the school put me in the literary sector. I later heard from some of my fellow students that it was rumored I went for the literary sector because I feared the competition for the highest grades. I spoke with the school principal and asked him to move me to the scientific sector-and this was my first mistake. I passed high school with a grade of 75% (at that time nobody got more than 80%).

I was granted a scholarship because of my high grades, and I decided to go for dentistry at the University of Cairo. As part of my scholarship, I was given 4 pounds per month (if I maintained my high grades). At the end of the first semester, I went back to Upper Egypt to spend time with my family. When asked about my studies, they made fun of me and said that they will open a clinic for me beside the barbershop, or maybe I should consider working with him at his place (at that time dentistry was not quite common in Upper Egypt and people used to extract their teeth at barbershops). I went back to Cairo and transferred my documents to the Faculty of Science in Ain Shams University- and that was my 2nd mistake.

The study in the Faculty of Sciences required me to study four science subjects in the first year, so I chose to study chemistry, geology, zoology, and botany. In the second year I dropped botany and continued to study the other three sciences. In my third year, I left zoology and continued my studies in chemistry and geology. In the fourth year, I had two options, either the specific study of one science or the general study of the two sciences. One of the conditions for the first option was that you should have a degree of excellence in the subject you choose to pursue your studies in, as a prerequisite to joining the university teaching faculty as a lecturer. Thankfully, I had excelled in both subjects; however, I decided to go with the general study of the two sciences. This is mainly because it had more employment opportunities after graduation, either as a chemist or as a geologist. I was not interested in working at the university because the teacher's salary at that time was 15 pounds per month, and after the deductions I would be left with 13 pounds only. On the other hand, working in companies, the salary depends on your position, but it ranges between 40-60 pounds per month. I graduated with a very good grade in chemistry, with distinction in geology, and with a general grade of honors.

After the end of our final exams, and about twenty days before the results came out, a friend and I were in the college campus cafeteria. Coincidentally there we

met with Dr. Murad Ibrahim, one of the geology professors who asked us if we are interested in working as geologists. We expressed our interest, but we said that we do not have our certificates yet. He told us to go to the management of the Sinai Manganese Company in Tahrir Square and ask to meet the Director of Personnel Affairs. He told us to tell him that he sent us there, and that he will talk to him and assure him that we are remarkably successful and hardworking, and that he will personally send him our certificates immediately after the results come out.

We went there and met the Director of Personnel Affairs who welcomed us and asked us to bring our papers (except for the graduation certificate). We went back to him the next day with all the required papers and signed a work contract in the company at a rate of 50 pounds per month. At the beginning of the following week, the company's car picked us up in the city of Suez, and we crossed the Suez Canal on the ferry to South Sinai, Umm Bujma mine, where we started to work. The manganese ore in this mine was of medium thickness lens sandwiched between layers of limestone and dolomite that formed in the Middle Carboniferous period.

The geologists' office was close to the mine and it had a three-dimensional map of the mine divided into cubes and each cube showed the amount of manganese ore that was extracted from it and the amount left. Workers inside the mine break these lenses that contain the manganese ore and periodically, a worker would come with a sample of what was collected to the geologists' office. Geologists examine these samples geologically and chemically, and preliminary evaluate its quality, and then write down the quantity that was extracted on the map. After that, the groups of samples are sent weekly to the company's laboratories in Cairo for comprehensive chemical analysis. Generally, the geologist did not have to go to the mine and would trust the information he gets about the places of extraction from the foreman.

After two weeks of work, I finally went down to the mine to check whether what was extracted from the ore matched the information given to me by the foreman or not. When I landed, I was dismayed by what I saw in the mine. Most of the workers were suffering from manganese disease (manganese poisoning). The new workers suffered from trembling hands (such as Parkinson's patients), fatigue, headaches, and a stray eye, while the workers who had spent more time there suffered from short-term memory loss, impaired control, interference in speech and hallucinations- Manganese craze. I asked to meet the head of geologists at the site and explained to him what I saw and told him that the dry extraction method causes the raw powder to spread in the air and the workers to inhale it, causing them all these symptoms and diseases. Instead, we could replace it with

wet method of extraction, where water is sprayed on the raw material before breaking it-avoiding the spread in the air. He looked at me angrily and said:” You just started recently and want to change things already? Stay out of our business and do not interfere with what does not concern you.” As a result of frustration, I asked for a few days off. I left for Cairo and did not return to work, did not get my papers back, and did not even demand my dues for my work period.

A few days after leaving the mines of the Sina Manganese Company, I started working as a chemist in the dyeing and processing department of the Al-Mahalla Al-Kobra Company for Spinning and Weaving, with a monthly salary of 45 pounds, on the condition that they provided me with a residence in the company’s compound (I married as soon as I graduated). I stayed in this company for 6 months, staying in the staff break room, and traveling to Cairo on the weekends. Whenever I demanded the company for a residential apartment according to the work contract, they told me that there are no vacant apartments currently, and that I will get an apartment as soon as an engineer is referred to the pension.

The Egyptian Company for Fertilizers in Suez announced the need for 4 chemists to work in the company’s laboratories in Suez, and one geologist (to work in the sulfur mine owned by the company in the Jemsa area on the Red Sea). I applied for the position of a geologist, and after the interview, we signed the contract at a base salary of 38 pounds, and an additional 20 pounds as compensation for working in a remote area. I submitted my resignation from the Mahalla company and started working at my new job temporarily in the factories, waiting for the arrival of the company’s car from Jamsa- which comes to Suez in the middle of each month to obtain food for the mine workers- to take me to my new workplace. However, when the car came, the company informed me that the mine had almost exhausted the sulfur, and what remained was of low quality. Ahmed Abboud Basha, the owner of the company, decided to close it and use the resulting pure sulfur as a “by-product” of the oil refinery in Suez. The company gave me two choices: I can either occupy the position of the supervisor at the Dolomite Quarrying Department in Mount Ataqa, or continue as a chemist in the laboratories, and in both cases, I will be given an apartment in the company’s compound immediately. I refused to work in the quarries department because I would not be working in the field of geology, instead I would be just blasting certain areas of the mountain to obtain the required stones. I decided to work as a chemist in Ma’akil for only 38 pounds.

The company was owned by Aboud Basha and was partially nationalized in 1962, and entirely in 1964. It became a public sector company and changed its name from the Egyptian Company for Fertilizers and Chemical Industries to the Nasr Company for Fertilizers and Chemical Industries. Before nationalization, there were no job ranks, only jobs, where each job had its own salary and annual bonus

between 5-15 pounds depending on the importance of the job. In addition to that, the company distributed gratuities at the end of each fiscal year, ranging between 200-500 pounds depending on the job and the employee's confidential report. After the nationalization, it was necessary to rank the employees financially.

For university graduates, they start at the seventh rank with a salary of 20 pounds, and an annual bonus of one and a half pounds. After spending two years at the company, they move to the sixth rank, and the annual bonus remains the same. At the fifth rank, the annual bonus becomes two pounds. The company evaluated me, and I was placed on the sixth rank and my salary was 53 pounds. So, my salary stayed the same, however, my annual bonus which was 8 pounds prior to nationalization became only one and a half pounds. In addition to that, the annual gratuities that we used to obtain at the end of the fiscal year (I was getting 250 pounds) were cancelled, and they were transferred to profits up to a maximum of 50 pounds.

I continued to work with continuous promotions, and I reached the fourth rank as Head of the Gas and Ammonia Plants Division in 1967. On June 6 of that year, the Six-Day War started. We deported our families outside the city of Suez, and the company continued to work in the same manner with the consumption of all the stored liquid ammonia stocks in order to avoid the disaster of a cannonball hitting one of its storage compartments. The Head of the Egyptian Armed Forces reassured us that the enemy's weapons cannot reach the company's factories. Despite these assurances, one of our factories was surprisingly hit, and this led to the explosion of one of the liquid ammonia storages. Thankfully, it was empty, but the remnants of the gases in it led to its explosion, blowing out some of its parts and destroying a building in the residential city. We did not have any hideouts or even protective walls, but God's protection followed those workers that ran in every direction to protect themselves. There were no deaths, except for only one person, whose heart stopped from fear, without sustaining any injuries.

After this attack, factories completely stopped production, and most workers were given indefinite leave, and the scientific competencies were loaned to similar companies. A number of colleagues and some experienced workers, including myself, were transferred to participate in operating the new nitrogenous fertilizer plant in Helwan belonging to the Coke and Chemical Industries Company. I worked there from 1969 until 1972. During my stay in Cairo, I obtained a master's degree in Metal Corrosion and Boiler Protection (Ain Shams University). I also joined the UNESCO Faculty of Commerce program, Ain Shams University, for a postgraduate diploma in Industrial Business Management. It is a two-year program and is equivalent to a master's degree. They did that as a part of their plan to build their core management

team for their companies. As an incentive, I got 5 pounds for completing my master's degree and 5 more for completing the diploma in Industrial Business Administration. I also started preparing for a Ph.D. in Philosophy on Environmental Pollution with Chemical Pollutants in Fertilizer Factories. I completed it after returning to my company in 1974 and was granted an incentive bonus of 10 pounds.

The company had signed a contract before the war to purchase a factory for the production of ammonia nitrate (Azot 21.5%) from Germany, and it was shipped days before the war, and when it arrived at the port of Alexandria, the company rented a piece of land in Helwan (Cairo) in which the new factory was to be built after the war ended. The company decided to install the new factory in Mit Antar, in the city of Talkha, Dakahlia Governorate. At the beginning of 1970, the state seized an area of agricultural land in the village of Mit Antar (500 feddans) and began to transfer the new factory from Helwan and began the installations. I was called back to participate in the start of operations at the end of 1972 and was promoted to the third rank (Head of Departments of Gas and Ammonia Plants).

In 1977, the company signed a contract with an Italian company to purchase a urea production plant. I went on a mission with a group of colleagues to the Netherlands, to a company (Dutch State Mines), which owns the franchise of the urea industry, to see and train in a factory similar to what we started installing back home. I was promoted to the second rank as Director of Laboratories and Research for Urea Factories in 1977, and in 1979, I was promoted to the rank of Director General of Research and Quality Control for Nitrate and Urea Factories, and I was at that time the youngest to obtain the rank of General Manager of the Company. I stayed in the rank of general manager for a long time because there were no vacant sector head ranks, and my boss, who filled this position, was going to retire in 1995, and I was the only candidate for the position.

After retirement, my immigrant son who has resided in Mississauga, Canada since 1993, and works as a veterinarian, sent me an invitation to visit him. I accepted his invitation in May 1998, and my visa was limited to six months only. Before the period expired, my son surprised me by extending my stay in Canada for an additional six months. I returned to Egypt and it never occurred to me to leave my beloved Egypt ever again. In order to fill my time, I went back to my old hobby since high school, which is journalism. During my work period, I used to write for some Egyptian newspapers, but my writings were limited to scientific subjects, such as environmental pollution, chemical industry technology, and other scientific matters. However, I decided to go back to writing in the literary and political fields that I had missed very much. I wrote an article called "Comparison between Dictatorship and Democracy", and I was extremely conservative in it and did not mention the fact that what we are living in Egypt is

dictatorship. The article was published in the Al-Ahly opposition newspaper.

After that, I was called to the State Security Investigation Department, and I was asked not to write in political fields again and to stick to writing about scientific subjects as I used to before. I asked: Is the Egyptian rule a dictatorship? He told me: Of course not, Egypt is a country with a long tradition of democracy. To which I replied: I glorified democracy in my article and preferred it to dictatorship, and I did not mention the Egyptian government, so why was I summoned?

I spoke to my son on the phone and asked him to send another visa invitation, but I did not tell him the reason behind my request. I travelled back to Canada in December 1999 and told him the situation. I applied for immigration from within Canada and my son pledged to take care of me. In Canada, I found the open press, so I practiced writing in all immigrant newspapers, including Arab Star newspapers, Arab News, Akhbar, Al-Bilad and Al-Arabiya.

Two weeks before the expiry of my visa, the immigration application was still undecided, so my son submitted a request to extend my visa for another six months. The extension was denied, and a day was set for my departure. We went to a lawyer, and he advised us to file a case seeking asylum (I had an opposing opinion to this), so that I could stay until the case was decided.





While looking at the case, the judge asked me: Why do you ask for asylum? I answered the judge: I am one of the most averse to asylum, and I consider it a stigma, but I am forced to do it, because if I return, I will be arrested and possibly killed. The judge asked: Why are you afraid to return? I answered: Because I am a journalist, I have written hundreds of articles against the regime in my country in all immigrant newspapers. At that moment I handed her a pile of newspapers with my writings in them. The judge asked: You are well aware that what you write can get you in trouble, so why do you write it? I answered: For two reasons. The first is that if the educated do not write to educate people, who would do it? And the second is that a writer is like a fish that dies if it comes out of the water, the writer dies when he stops writing too. The judge smiled and told me you deserve the Canadian Permanent Residency, and signed my documents.

I obtained my permanent residency in Canada, and two years later, I was summoned to perform the oath and get the Canadian citizenship that I am immensely proud of. A year later, I wrote an article in newspaper in which I celebrated my birthday as a Canadian citizen, and stated that I love my country, Egypt, and that I am proud of my new country, Canada, that even though I gave it nothing, it gave me everything, the most important of which is protection and freedom of opinion.



## CHILDREN HAVE A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE THEIR FUTURE...

*I graduated during 90's and due to the mandatory military service in Syria it was common for young people to choose to travel to the Gulf countries and pay the financial return for exemption from military service*

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I was born in Deir ez-Zor city during 70's. This city is located in the far east of Syria on the Iraqi border. It passes through the Euphrates River to its estuary in the Shatt al-Arab in the Arabian Gulf. During that time, there was a conflict between the Syrian and Iraqi regimes, which resulted border closure for a lengthy time. Furthermore, the Syrian dictatorship was responsible for the marginalization of Deirez-zour province. The reason for this was a tribal extension of Iraq's Anbar tribes. The Muslim Brotherhood staged a failed coup against the Syrian state in the 1980s, resulting in the destruction of significant areas of Aleppo, Hama, and Idlib provinces and the deaths of thousands of people, and I still recall the fear and gunfire in our city. I finished my primary and secondary education, and in keeping with our society's culture, young people were learning and working during their summer vacations to learn a profession. I was assisting my brother in learning the carpentry profession and contributing to any extra revenue that could help the huge family of eight people.

I chose to study computer science at Damascus University's Intermediate Institute of Computer Engineering for two years after graduating from high school. I graduated during 90's and due to the mandatory military service in Syria it was common for young people to choose to travel to the Gulf countries and pay the financial return for exemption from military service after five years, which was a waste of time and money. After receiving a contract in the field of communications and information technology in Riyadh in 1998, I relocated to Saudi Arabia. At first, I was overjoyed, especially because the job is relevant to my subject of study and might provide me with fresh experience, particularly since it was a new revolution in the world of communications. Since it is a closed system on its own, the Syrian dictatorship did not allow it to be adopted at the time. I admired the human diversity that exists in the Arab Gulf countries, which is meant to enrich any civilization, and I did gain a good understanding of other cultures and made friends with individuals of other races and languages, as well as learning some new vocabularies in other languages. Some of the racism

in Saudi laws caused me anxiety and inconvenience, for example, we were not allowed to travel from one city to another unless we had a written letter from the sponsor (employer) stating that the employer does not mind, and there were many other things that perpetuated racism that I cannot discuss.

I began my career as a telecommunications device salesman, and as I obtained new skills, I was able to advance through the ranks to become a sales manager for huge corporations' years later. In fact, Saudi Arabia became my second country due to my bigoted viewpoint. When got married during the 2000's, I faced a new hurdle because my bride was an Iraqi citizen. The Saudi government forbade the granting of permissions to grant Iraqi citizens residence permits in Saudi Arabia as a result of the Gulf War, I was unable to obtain my wife's permission to stay with me. I had to leave Saudi Arabia and quit my work in order to return to Syria, where I was born. Following that, I applied to give my wife Syrian citizenship, which I encountered some difficulty with, but which I eventually received a year later. In 2007, a corporation contacted me and offered me a job in Saudi Arabia, where I would be able to return with my wife and live and work in Riyadh. I worked in a telecommunications business there, and my condition was stable, and God blessed me with three children. The events of the so-called Arab Spring began in 2011, and, as is well known, people in Syria demanded a change of regime. The regime retaliated with a military system of cannons, missiles, and planes that destroyed most cities, killed tens of thousands, and displaced millions both inside and outside Syria.

Following this, most countries applied sanctions, including the closure of Syrian embassies and the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Syria, in order to punish the Syrian dictatorship. In fact, the truth has had negative results for Syrian people, particularly those living outside of Syria, as Syrian citizens have found it difficult to travel from one country to another due to a shortage of embassies and most nations' refusal to give visas. This circumstance reminded me of what occurred to Iraqi residents during the occupation and the disintegration of the state, when millions of Iraqis were displaced as the security system collapsed. My stay in Saudi Arabia was brief and tied to my employment contract.

Then there was a shift in the housing system after Prince Mohammed bin Salman assumed leadership under an authoritarian regime. He imposed a new residence system on non-Saudis that increased the cost of housing to levels that many people could not afford, as well as a saudization system on numerous professions. Because the telecoms sector was included in this new system, I lost my job and was threatened with deportation to Syria. I had the opportunity to apply for asylum in Canada in 2015 through a cousin who I will never forget. On July 19, 2017, we arrived in Toronto. We were met at the airport by gracious sponsors

who drove us to a house that had been prepared for us; it was a small but lovely home in the center of their neighborhood. The house included everything a family could possibly need, including furniture and food. The children, on the other hand, were first dissatisfied since they did not speak English. They were able to speak and understand English fluently after three months. The good sponsors assisted us in obtaining the essential official documents, such as a residence card, a bank account, health cards, and school enrollment for our children, to enable us settle in Canada. Two months of summer had passed, and it was a fantastic time to unwind and forget about our hardships in previous years.

New struggles arose for full integration into the new society, which included learning a new language and adjusting to new working conditions. The first step was to master a level of language that would allow us to locate suitable work. Due to the fact that children were enrolled in school according to their age and did not require any paperwork to confirm their completion of earlier classes, as we did in previous countries.

My wife and I went to private schools to study the Canadian language and culture. I was able to secure my first job in Canada six months later, thanks to the support of a sponsor. It was a part-time employment for a well-known Canadian corporation with nighttime language classes. A two-year period of peace and stability, but not without its challenges. On the other hand, it was beneficial, and the children in their schools were happy and linguistically advanced. My wife and I have participated in a variety of skill development programs provided by groups that specialize in assisting newcomers and are funded by the Canadian government. In my case, I finished a free government-sponsored program to develop entrepreneurship skills. After completing the program, I was unable to find suitable employment, I believe that these programs require significant development as well as connections with recruiting agencies. Then you might be able to find job that allows you to avoid having to rely on the Ontario government's monthly grant to meet your family's rent and living expenses. My wife enrolled in a variety of accounting and non-accounting classes and applied for jobs, but she was unsuccessful in finding work. Based on my considerable experience in Canada, I can state that there are numerous hurdles for adults to integrate, such as attaining a good level of English and enrolling in institutes or universities to earn Canadian licenses and certificates to increase access to a job with an income commensurate with the minimum living requirements, especially with the excessive rise in the prices of both homes, apartments and rentals. We should approach these obstacles with patience and perseverance, especially when the Canadian government is generous and fair in terms of providing a minimal quality of living and government-funded training centers until graduation. I feel that as members of Canadian society, children have a fantastic opportunity to shape their future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### SUPERVISED MORE THAN 40 PH.D. DISSERTATIONS

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Born during 1940' in a very beautiful, quite and green area of Baghdad, name "AlAthamya", Baghdad, Iraq, currently a Retired Professor in Canada. My life went through the steps of completing a Higher Diploma in Industrial Engineering during the 1950's and eventually completing , M.Sc. in Industrial Economics, M.Phil. in Production Engineering, and Ph.D. in Production Engineering, during the end of 19 70's.

#### **The Life Events which are most important events during my life are:**

- 1- The mass demonstrations and violence that happened in the major cities of Iraq and especially in Baghdad against Iraq-UK Oil Agreement in 1952, and after four years in 1956 against British-France-Israel invasion on Egypt.
- 2- The 14th of July 1958 overthrew the Anarchy regime, the Kingdom of Iraq.
- 3- Starting a job at the Electrical Fittings & Equipment in Baghdad in 1967.
- 4- The war 1967.
- 5- Change of work location to Iraq National Oil Company- Basrah Branch (Southern Oil Fields) in 1970-1982. Having hard work, a quite nice personal life and socializing.
- 6- Having a happy wedding day May 01, 1971.
- 7-The day of nationalization of oil foreign companies in Iraq on June 01, 1972.
- 8- Great day and full of happiness of my graduation and getting the Ph.D degree at Production Engineering Department, The University of Birmingham, U.K., December during late 1970's.

**9-** Change work location to the University of Basrah 1982-1990. The characteristics of this period, (a) Period of war and work in a heavy dangerous environment were the City of Basrah daily under heavy artillery shelling and became a war-front city. (b) The invasion of Kuwait 1990, and the start of heavy and rapid declining the lifestyle of people and civil life.

**10-** Change of work location to the University of Technology in Baghdad at the end of 1990.

**11-** The War, Iraq, Baghdad and major cities became under heavy shelling by all kinds and types of heavy rockets and other military weapons from January 19, 1991 to end of February 24, 1991, and the suction which covers everything so far.

**12-** Leaving beloved Baghdad to Amman, Jordan, attending the Yarmouk University in Irbid in 1993.

**13-** Happy event is the wedding day of my son during the end of 1990's.

**14-** Decide to immigrate to Canada, and submit the family applications in September 1997.

**15-** Landing with my family in Canada in May 2000, and starting our quiet and healthy life. We are so proud to be Canadian citizens at the Ceremony of Canadian National Oath in June 2004.

**16-** The sad day when the International Alliance Military Armies started occupying Iraq in March 2003.

**17-** Move to our new home during early 2000

During my life tenure, I taught different subjects, supervised more than 40 Ph.D Dissertations, and more than 40 M.Sc & MBA Thesis, and Published 16 books and more than 60 articles.

I was a Senior Member, Institute of Industrial Engineers, U.S.A and also have been Senior Member, Institute of Industrial Engineers, Toronto Chapter, Canada. Besides, I enjoyed being a member of European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM), Birmingham, U.K. and also as a Member of the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (MCSCMP), Malvern, USA.



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