

Writing with White Pen
Abdullah Alhumami



حكومة الشارقة
GOVERNMENT OF SHARJAH
SHARJAH EDUCATION COUNCIL
مجلس الشارقة للتعليم



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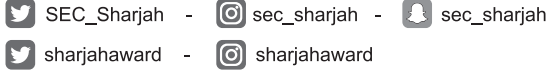


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Dedication

To the godfather of all the distinguished and excellent.
To the builder and founder of the Arabic and Islamic culture.

To his Highness
H. H. SHIEKH
DR. SULTAN BIN MUHAMMAD AL QASIMI

- May God Protect Him -

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Chapter One

White Cane... White Pen



White Cane... White Pen

I stood there in front of a huge audience to give my speech. A speech for «World Day for the Blind», or White Cane Day as it's called.

While my steps lead me to the podium, countless thoughts crossed my mind:

Why am I here on the podium?

Is it my ability and skill of public speaking?

Or is it my ability to express what's going on in my mind?

Perhaps it's my friends confidence that I will do well!

All of these reasons maybe, but what I kept remembering the most was a moment I experienced ten years ago. I was standing on a podium to accept the best award that I have ever received in my life.

This award changed the way I think, as well as my lifestyle. I received this award when I was a child in 2004 and again when I was a teenager in 2009. I feel like it is always with me and it's as if I receive it every day with every new achievement in my life. I feel the warm, reassuring handshake with H. H Sheikh Dr.Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi's

The speech was about the white cane and how it is considered a symbol of achievement and independence for the non-sighted and visually impaired. Considering it as a means to guide us through the road, as we move and travel. It's a tool and a sign revealing of the case of its carrier; not intended to provoke sympathy, but it aims to support the blind and weak-sighted in discovering their surroundings and to keep its carrier

safe from any sudden coming surprises. Additionally it aims to provide them with an opportunity to move unhindered. It makes those around them aware of their case and offer help to guide them,, not with the intention of arousing pity, but with the intention of acknowledging and avoiding the obstacles in the environment in which they move. It also reminds people around them to practice the most basic moral action of providing assistance if needed.

When I talked about the white cane and praised the efforts of UAE in taking care of the blind, I felt that there were more words that could have been said and that i did not convey the whole experience as i should have. Thus, I left the podium dreaming of writing with a white pen a book that represents a life experience and a book that inspires lives.

So, here is that book.



Chapter Two

The birth of hope



The birth of hope

In the dreamy life of Sharjah, there's a long street that starts from the east and ends in the west near the concert? line that separates the street from the sea waves, or maybe it starts from there and ends in the east. There's no difference, beginnings and endings don't matter to a blind person; what's important is that it's a long black street.

Opposite of that, lays Al Nasiriyah, one of Sharjah's oldest cities. Its name is deeply rooted in Arabism, which brings much pride to Sharjah. Al Nasiriyah was our first home, something that no one can forget.

In Al Nasiriyah there's a family that is rooted to this lands soil but flies to its glorious sky. They were living in happiness with their first daughter and waiting for the birth of their first son, me. I was born into this family. But the joy did not play out as expected, there was something that killed their joy and made it fade away. The doctors did not congratulate the parents properly, and the nurses gave up hope of a rewarding gift and were trying to find appropriate words to comfort the parents.

What shattered their joy was that the newborn baby would never see the light. Blind, unsighted, unseeing, blind as a bat, are all words that may help to convey information, but how would this news be received by the parents .

It was the hottest day of summer, the eighth day of the eighth month of the year 1993. Relatives who came with words of congratulations also had some words of sympathy. I believe my mother was very sad, and my father probably even sadder. Who in the world can bear the thought of a child that was meant to be

his parents companion and supporter to tread into this hard world , only to turn out to be one who needs to be supported!

That's what I think, but I am not quite sure. my mothers warm hug made me feel safe in a world that's still unknown. My father's kisses, whispers, and words of the Azaan made me feel the love. I don't know why I didn't feel that he was concerned! Did he have such a strong faith that he was content with this hardship and was pleased with me or was he very good at hiding his concerns and worries ?

I don't know if my father remembered my brother who died months after being born, a year before my birth, . perhaps he felt it was the same, I do not know whether I was born, or if I was still in the darkness of the Womb. I do not know if I knew that there was something that has not been created in me!

I came to life but I cannot say that my eyes have seen the light. this world is only an extension of my previous

world, in which I lived for the past nine months. There is no difference at all. Darkness is dominant here, and darkness was dominant there.

Many things were calling for despair that day, but the heat of the rising sun opened up doors for hope. Hopes not limited by the extent of sight, but expanded by the extent of insight.

Chapter Three

A mother's job



A mother's job

It is true that my mother was not working at that time. However, being a mother is a full-time job, not to mention being a mother for a blind child! She does everything that you could imagine, and even more, to be the eyes he sees with and to be the window to his world.

My mother is the kind of woman that knows what she wants. Life, before I was born, was not easy, and it will not be easy after I was born. "We are here in life to fight ... This is our destiny, this is our choice.» My mother believes in fate and she always does what

pleases God. I often feel that God loves my mother very much. When I was an infant, I smelled the smell of paradise in my mother, and for those who don't know, the blind person has an unmistakable sense of smell. Generally, no one will disagree with me because this smell is present in all mothers.

I think my mother went through very hard times through life. Love, attention, and responsibility was there, but knowledge is also necessary for any circumstance in life. Experiencing this for the first time, my mother did not have the knowledge she needed to raise a blind kid.

Her efforts in buying games and teaching aids were not always helpful. She felt desperate and felt that there was something missing she needed to help me move forward in life. This may be difficult, but not for those living in Sharjah since it's facilitated by the emirate's interest in humanitarian, community, and cultural work. Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services may have been the first solution my mom sought out, but the Child early intervention center was the right one.

The theoretical knowledge and training courses attended by my mother at the Child Early Intervention Center made her an expert in dealing with people with special needs, especially with the blind.

I know a lot of people who refuse to learn English because they just don't want to work hard and set aside time for learning, although it may open the doors of financial and professional development. My mom did not settle for that and went out of her way to do even more. She learned braille!

I am astounded with my mother's continuous efforts to increase her knowledge and by the enormous caring emotions God gave her. what a self-sacrificing mother!.

I find myself contemplating the purpose of acquiring knowledge. A person usually learns and acquires skills to help him or herself, but my mother was learning and gaining skills not for herself but for the sake of helping me, her blind child.

It wasn't the usual case where a mother drains herself to build her children, instead, in our case, my mother was building herself to build her son. What a beautiful job!

Chapter Four

Seeing with hands and ears



Seeing with hands and ears

As a blind person, the senses of hearing and touch were my keys to the world. My family sought to help me develop the skills of both hearing and touch. Child Early Intervention Center has been very helpful in informing my mother about successful practices for the development of these senses.

What drove me to explore the world was curiosity and the love to learn and discover. I always asked about things, or felt them with my hands. Some may be frustrated by the many questions I ask, but those who love me would be more than happy to respond and explain.

Some may be frustrated when I touch their face to know their features but those who love me were happy as my little hands traveled along their face, driven by the curiosity and love of knowing how each person looks.

I put my hands on a table and discovered its place and surroundings.

I walked along the road, sensing my steps, and the road becomes part of my memory.

I touch the walls with my hands to get to the door, and then the place of the door becomes known to me.

I feel the features of my father's face, so I can distinguish his face from other faces.

I smell the smell of my mother, and it's etched into my memory.

I started my life journey. I started to feel like others; they're not better than me, and I'm nothing less than them. I was not something my parents or my family felt

ashamed of; they opened the doors of life to me. I went out just like any child goes out with his or her parents, I swang on the swings, and let my body fall of the slide in the playground. I felt the sand between my fingers, and at the Mosque, I prayed and felt the softness of the carpet . Of course, things weren't always smooth. There were ups and downs in this journey and many failures, and embarrassing and terrifying experiences,. When things happened at home it was fine, but when it was out of the house, things got out of control.

Such an event comes to mind; I still remember it to this day. When I was three years old, My family went to the market to buy some stuff. I was walking between my parents and I felt that the path was narrow, it was more like corridors. I felt like there were barriers that surrounded me, and every minute or so, my parents would stop to pick up something from the shelves and put it in the shopping cart.

I was hearing the sound of glass against glass, and aluminum against aluminum, copper against copper, plastic against plastic, and paper bags against paper

bags. I could recognize and distinguish each, when they came into contact with each other.

Out of curiosity, I tried to feel the gigantic shelves on the right and on the left, and sometimes when my parents were not paying attention to me, I would take something off the shelves and throw it into the basket. Sometimes it would be glass so it would break. My father paid for what I broke and gave me advice. I would get some experience from all that.

But what happened that one time was completely different, perhaps tragic. My little hands were touching the shelf on my right, and the shelf was not steady. I came upon an interesting cluster of products that seemed to be arranged in a pyramid like form. My curiosity drove me to grab one of the items. As I touched it, I knew it was glass made, and what confirmed that was the fact that when I pulled it, I heard a loud sound indicating that tens of glass cups had fallen on the ground and had been broken. It was something that caught the attention and the ears and the curiosity of all the shoppers. Everyone was watching and saying: Oh,

it's a massacre of cheese cups.

In terms of numbers; it was tens of broken cups.

In terms of money, the loss exceeded one thousand dirhams.

In terms of order, the chaos was overwhelming.

But in the world of emotion, no one could know the feelings I experienced that moment: fear, regret, sadness, helplessness, despair, embarrassment, frustration ... all the negative emotions you can imagine, I felt that moment.

The anger of my parents, the fury of the shop owner, and the sympathy from shoppers, None of it mattered to me, As much as the indescribable internal feelings at that moment.

This accident passed, but it happened again.. And it might happen again. But life has taught me not to stop trying; that is my right. It also taught me to be careful about everything.



Chapter Five

Nun, the pen and what they write



Nun, the pen and what they write

The roads lead to any place. some roads we drive through in a car, and others we walk. I loved this specific road that took me to Mus'ab ibn Omair Mosque in Al Nasiriyah. There, when I took off my shoes outside the mosque, and sat in the corner of the mosque on a soft carpet, I sensed the steps of all the people moving in one direction to the qibla, some in calmness, and some of them in a hurry.

I heard the Imam Opening the prayer with Takbir then I sensed the people's bodies moving toward the sound, and my imagination was following the sounds and the movements. I listened carefully waiting for the word

“Amen” so I can repeat it with the others. I was eager to listen to the Imam reciting the Qur’an. The verses often awed me with their wonderful verbal harmony.

When my father heard me reciting verses of the Qur’an he felt that I could be close to it, so he took me to the Imam, sheikh Farouq. When my father introduced me to him, I felt his hands reaching out for my little body, I knew that he was like me; he feels the world with his hands. just a simple touch gave him the impression of my young age and small body, so he said to my father: he is too young, he’s not even in school, or kindergarten, how can he memorize the Qur’an?

However, he allowed me to join the Qur’an studying session in the Mosque. My way to the mosque everyday was a path of knowledge and learning I was fast at memorizing the Qur’an, I exceeded everyone else’s memorization. Sheikh Farouq was tough on my classmates but he was tolerant and kind with me. He praised me a lot, which encouraged me in memorizing the Quran, and soon I completed the memorization of two complete sections of the Qur’an. it was a good

skill that'll allowed me to join kindergarten with a bit of confidence.

My mother was very proud, since kindergarten kids usually barely memorize one chapter of the Qur'an, and here I am with two chapters memorized!



Chapter Six

A terrifying bell



A terrifying bell

Life is not fair at all; all your expectations and dreams can be shattered by someone else's decision, and it will be painful when you feel the absence of justice.

I felt my mother's hands sweating when we stood in front of the kindergarten principal trying to convince her to accept my registration into kindergarten. The principal completely refused my application because she was afraid of the responsibilities that came with a disabled child.

My mother made me recite some verses of the Qur'an to prove to her that I was a fast learner, but the words

froze on my tongue and I wasn't able to recite.

That was maybe due to the internal protest, rejection of injustice, and refusal to believe that I was being deprived of a right that I saw needed no proof to be justified.

This was as much as my right as it was any other kid and that's enough. It hurt me more when the principal looked at my small body as an excuse for refusing my application, and justified it with her fear of me being hurt during the break or while riding the bus.

My mother fought fiercely and refused the fact that I would be deprived of education based on an excuse. She roared like a lioness would while defending her cubs and said: Is ignorance the alternative? would you keep your son at home and not send him to learn because you are afraid he would get hurt?

With my mother's insistence, the principal did not have any option but to finally agree on one condition that my family would have to drive me to kindergarten

every day. However, my family actually did more than that. They didn't just drive me to the kindergarten gate, they walked with me to the classroom door. I don't remember which class, but I never forgot the terrifying bell sound that kids are happy to hear. They would leave the class than there would be total silence. That moment was one of the most difficult moments of my life. The sudden silence after everyone has left me all alone in the room. It's really terrifying!

That however, never happened again throughout my other school years. I often had a friend who sat with me and ate lunch with him during the break. When I think of these moments now, I find it unfair to ask young children in kindergarten to take the responsibility of taking care of their blind friend. It is not fair at all. My reaction then in those horrible situations was some tears. When the teachers noticed that, they would says: I'm with you darling ... do not worry.



Chapter Seven

Shapes and colors



Shapes and colors

In kindergarten, kids learn to play, they play to learn. The most beautiful thing at this stage is that everything is new, every experience is exciting, and every piece of information is great.

When the teacher asks, I will be the first to answer, I never had a problem with talking, I never had any problem with doing any activity with my classmates, but the words are scattered in the mouths of the teachers when talking about colors.

What does the color (purple) mean to a blind child in kindergarten? And what's the difference between it and the color(blue)? What do they mean by red, yellow, and green? and the two girls, who disagreed over a toy and the dispute between them solved only by the color of the toy.

Although these questions were very simple they meant a lot to me. To me there is only black.

If I sleep I see darkness.

If I'm awake I face darkness.

I see the roads with my hands.

In doubt, confused and lost.

The air around me.

Is my only guide.

I felt how confused the teacher felt when talking about colors with other children, I wanted to ask questions, but I kept my questions and looked for the answer in the depths of my mind.

It didn't bother me when children paint in art class, life is prettier with colors.

What I really enjoyed was shapes, I feel the shape with my hands and tell the teacher about it is: square, rectangle, triangle or circle.

I found great pleasure in discovering the shapes of things, «this is square». The cry of the first achievement is not equivalent to any achievement. In fact, it was normal for me, but for the kids who were with me in class, it was astonishing.

I think some of them thought that there was some kind of magic.

In all cases, however, achievements were tempting and calls for greater achievements.

I was already looking for the greatest achievement. Several pleasant months of studying at the kindergarten raised the love of learning in me. The fun you have while learning is not like anything else. But unfortunately, pleasures do not last, no matter how beautiful and exciting the road is, there must be bumps and obstacles in our way.



Chapter Eight

No school for you



No school for you

My achievement in kindergarten hit a wall and a major obstacle. At the time, I was about to enter the first grade in 1999, but there was no regulation to merge «people of determination» into public education.

Here began another journey of suffering for my parents. How can I study in the first grade if the public schools don't accept blind students? Where then I can complete my studies? Will I be content to just to the basics of reading and writing in Braille that my mother taught me?

It's true that some public-schools' principals were willing to cooperate, but it was difficult to be in an unqualified Classroom environment with 38 students per class.

My parents continue to try again. The solution was in the centers run by the Ministry of Community Development, and the nearest center was Dubai Rehabilitation Center for Disabled. Here a three-year story began.

And One of the conditions for admission to the Center was to pass an introductory year in Braille. Thanks to my mother's efforts in the pre-kindergarten years, and during the kindergarten period, I was perfect in Braille, and I no longer needed an introductory year. I passed the requirements in two months. I entered the first grade directly.

In these three years, I have had years of frustration that could have ended my progress in education. But After all patience, beautiful things await.

First I must give compliment to every teacher who taught me, and all the love for each teacher who made an effort.

But I cannot forget the cruelty of our teachers, their constant yelling, and perhaps their severe beatings.

I cannot forget that my little body was moaning under the blows that were coming from every where I feel the beat when it hits me and I cannot avoid it.

Cannot forget the terrifying, of the school bus when I was bullied by the student with mental disabilities. Throughout these three years, I came home frustrated, hoping tomorrow would be better. Tomorrow comes and it's as it was yesterday, so I sit on the bus hoping that next year will be better, and nothing looks that it will. I started to lose my passion for education, and I began to think seriously about a serious decision.



Chapter Nine

I Don't want School



I Don't want School

The irony is that I was dying to go to school and yearned to learn, now I hated school and got bored of it. The daily state of frustration that I was constantly living was increasing with days.

Daily morning fear of going to school, accompanied by cramps in stomach, and loss of appetite. The Repeated evening of bored school tasks that must be done so that punishment will not be severe. with this difficult psychological situation, I had only to declare rejection: I do not want school, I will not go again. This surprised my parents and thought that it was just a vent of anger.

But I was really serious and insisted on this decision.

Today I am amazed at my courage to make such a decision. But I fully realize that our ideas at a young age make up our lives when we grow up.

When I find myself today a specialist in visual disability at the Ministry of Education, I realize that this option I went through today is because of the period of suffering that accompanied me in the early stages of education.

I realized that we need a teacher who understands the suffering of blind, and is qualified to teach them, gives them knowledge with tenderness, loving behavior, and confidence.

There is a saying, «be the change you want to see in the world» and this is being done; the decision to drop out of school was not the solution. The solution is to try to change the harsh image and the frustrating and repulsive practices I have experienced in my childhood by creating the model I want to be. and this

what happened. It was not the decision of angry, afraid, or frustrated child to impose himself on a confident mother and aspiring father. Therefore, the journey of learning in the early stages of education continued in its difficulty until thing got better.

In 2003, the Ministry of Community Development issued a decision to merge those with special educational needs «people of determination» into public education schools.

I was in third grade when that happened. I was able to go directly to public schools, but the conditions of this arrangement and the readiness to implement the decision delayed the merge process. I completed this year at the rehabilitation center for the disabled excited to sit one day in a regular chair at a regular school, not feeling that I am different than other members of the community.



Chapter Ten

Hattin and Al Qasimiyah



Hattin and Al Qasimiyah

If you live in Sharjah, you are living the pulse of Arabism. Living in Al Nasiriyah make you feel saturated with the spirit of Arab victory. if you want a Primary school, you have two options: AlQasmiyeh, where the ancient Arab struggle, assets, and Round in the Arabian Gulf, or Hattin, which makes you fly in the spirit of Saladin.

My mother went to al-Qasimiya school, which is the closest to our neighborhood. My mother did not succeed in obtaining my acceptance for reasons that are related to school equipment. The fourth grade was on the upper floor. There are many obstacles in the school that wouldn't allow me to move freely.

The reason seems to be valid. So I ended up with the second option. Hattin School was a good choice. The only painful thing is the paper that my mother was forced to sign, a «disclaimer» paper that gives my parents full responsibility for anything that might happen.

It's a paper for cowards. It is a racist paper. It carries many negative connotations, including Society does not take responsibility for the blind, and society abandons the support of the family on its journey with the blind, and that - the blind – is a big burden that everyone avoids.

Overall, my mother was brave and proved to the school that things were under control and even above what they expected. Thanks to summer study of the fourth-grade curriculum I entered the class and I am familiar with all the subjects. I was one step ahead of my classmates. It was surprising to the principal that I got first place in the school.

Found myself in a world I love, this is my world. A

member of society, like any individual. There is no one better than me, and I'm not better than anyone.

My first place in school was not my achievement alone, my mother gave me all her effort and knowledge. My teachers who taught me everything. The counselor supported me in extracurricular activities. The school principal, Ms. Batoul - may she rest in peace - who asked my mother to sign the «disclaimer» and then she admitted that she was wrong.

In public schools, I started from classroom excellence to participate in contests, and I began to put my fingerprint on community institutions. I start to feel that I am important not only to my family or to school, but to society as a whole.



Chapter eleven

The Award



The Award

The Inclusion of people with special needs into public education was not a minister's decision; it was fate.

Thanks to this decision, I have the opportunity to develop myself and my skills, to feel that I am a full member of society, and to realize in my mind that I am no less than anyone, and I am no better than anyone. The difference between me and others is what we accomplish.

The value of a man should be seen in what he gives
I took it upon myself to master and be the best in anything I do.

I took an oath on those nights that will not Breach I and my people love to achieve the first place

In Hattin school was the beginning, I heard about the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education from the counselor, her criteria applied to me:

In the field of presentation and communication, I began to create a group of skills gained through courage and self-confidence and development of the linguistic proceeds by memorizing the Qur'an and reading books.

In the field of talent and hobbies, the Qur'an was my talent, which I sought to develop.

I also sought to present creative and innovative projects proportionate with my age at that stage.

As for the activities, competitions, and prizes, I felt the pleasure of participating in the various activities organized by the Ministry of Education and participating in our school, and I enjoyed the search for competitions in different categories and participate in them. Perhaps one of the first competitions that I participated in is the

Latifa Award for childhood creations. I won the second place in The Holy Qur'an memorizing category.

At that early age, I was keen to volunteer and do community services and participate in self-development activities, without losing sight of my skills and constantly developing them.

I do not recall that I made a great effort to prepare the file, all I did was coordinate and document the work and put it in a unified and orderly framework.

I was not nervous, I was not eager to win, I did not care about winning at all, I only enjoyed the achievement. Just building my skills and developing my abilities was a pleasure I still feel to this day. Although the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education was the first prize of the major educational awards I participate in, but I considered it as any local competition at my school, I did not realize when I was in fifth grade that I was awaiting an award that will change the course of my life.



Chapter Twelve

Take off the glasses



Take off the glasses

My mother received a promising call from the Sharjah award for Excellence in Education. It was promising but it was strange. They were asking for a personal picture of Abdullah Awad Mabrouk Balith from fifth grade at the Hattin school.

My mother responded to the request directly, and we sent a second picture, although we had attached a picture to the file we sent the first time.

The call came again, the picture was inappropriate because of the black glasses worn by the student,

the request was explicit: «Take off the glasses before taking the picture.» «Why is he wearing glasses?» The answer was surprising to the caller: «Because he is blind.»

The words of apology and regret showed by the caller were too many, and our response was very simple: «There's nothing to apologize for.»

In fact, we were in a feeling that transcends self-confidence and pride, I proudly say to myself: I did not win pity or sympathy from the judges, but I won because my achievement imposed itself. I am a member of the society and have excelled my peers.

It seems strange, but deep in its significance, with its integration, impartiality, and equal rights.

On the 25th of April, at the Cultural Palace and in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi at the ceremony honoring the winners of the tenth session of the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education. The winners were lined up and seated in the

seats that were reserved for them in the theater. It was a surreal feeling that I felt it for the first time.

The event was perfectly organized. We started with the national anthem, which deepened my sense of belonging to this homeland. I listen carefully to the national anthem as if I was hearing it for the first time. It is a different feeling than the one I have when standing in the morning assembly to hear the national anthem.

The speech for the winners made me think of repeating the experience, again and again, to stand next time on the podium and give a speech on behalf of my colleagues. What is truly amazing is the moment of receiving the award from Sheikh Sultan. Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi is an inspiring personality. The meeting of Sheikh Sultan is an inspiration, and his words are an inspiration. His presence at the ceremony, and before me, and the encouraging words which I have heard from him, all made me feel that I am not receiving an ordinary award, it is the dream award, and with it, I started a new stage of my life.



Chapter Thirteen

Energy burst



Energy burst

Receiving the award really burst all my talents. I realized that school is nothing but a stage of life. It is not the goal. Suddenly I remembered, my mother and my father, struggle to register me for kindergarten and then to primary school. I was happy with every door opens to me, but I was sad when some school refuses to open its doors to me.

Today, after receiving the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education, I realized that life is a long path, of multiple stages and varied obstacles.

Our success in challenging these obstacles open up wider horizons, but our failure also strengthens us and may be the reason to close doors of evil that we unaware of, neither by sight or vision.

Today, I am in front of a new path, and I continue towards new doors.

I finished the first cycle of basic education, and moved to the second.

From school to another, and from teacher to teacher. The choice was to join the Khalid bin Mohammed school for it's closer to our house, but then, I do not know why I joined the Ali bin Abi Talib school in AISabikha suburb.

The principal's approval was necessary, and this time he did not hesitate for a second. who could reject a student who won the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education!

But I was just afraid of dealing with teachers. And how many things we fear in life and then discover that it is

better than we have ever expected. And the Almighty said: ((But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not.))

What I did not know was that I would meet with Mr. Ahmed Abdouloui, the principal of Ali bin Abi Talib school, and our meeting would remain in my memories.

And what I also didn't know that I would meet Mr. Khader Thabit and his experiences, which he passed to me, and it will remain within the outcome of my life.

I didn't know that I would meet with Mr. Imad Al Madarik, who worked with me for long hours, and continuous days to develop my personality.

And Mr. Ahmad Al Abdooli, one of the oldest principals in Sharjah. His name was associated with the school of Ali bin Abi Talib, which he leads since the eighties of the last century until the second decade of this century. When you enter Ali bin Abi Talib school, you'll face at the front a brief words about Ali bin Abi Talib May Allah

be pleased with him. These words was written for a contest in 1984.

It was Ahmed Al Abdoli's idea, where he held a competition among students urging them to write about the person the school is named after him. Most of the students, or perhaps all of them, participated in the competition; an easy contest, with a great prize.

And the teachers urged the students to participate in the competition by devoting the creative writing class for the competition.

The student who won the contest in 1984, came back again in 1995 to stood on a cold morning in front of the principal's office, waiting for the principal to hand over his assigned papers as an Arabic teacher in the school. The principal asked him kindly: «Your face looks familiar. Did we meet in one of the mosques in Sharjah?» The teacher responded:

No. We have met 13 years ago on the school radio platform to receive the prize for winning the writing contest for this word hanging in here. This teacher

returned after 13 years to visit the school on an official visit after he received his doctorate degree and found Mr. Ahmed Al- Abdoli with the same old loving spirit, and the same mission, and in the same school. For long period of time, the school name (Ali bin Abi Talib) and the principal's (Ahmed Al- Abdoli) were linked together.

Personally, I was not surprised with this story when he told the story himself, I know this man well, and I know that he is very humble and very loving.

In my first meeting with him in the school assembly, I went to the radio platform to receive some prize and I extended my hand to shake, but he gave me more than a handshake. He approached me and wanted to hug me. I did not know why. But When he hugged my little head, I realized that I had not only received a prize but got a warm paternal hug.

During my time at the Ali bin Abi Talib school, the school day was not fully completed for Mr. Ahmed Al- Abdoli if I was not on the radio platform: reading

the Qur'an, or a poem, or receiving a certificate of appreciation or an award. Mr. Al- Abdoli went further than that when he allowed me to read his personal speech in an official forum and in the presence of the manager of the educational district, it's a gesture that many principals do not dare to do. It's something that not a principal would do but a leader. He was very proud of me, and whenever he would introduce me to someone he would say: He is a winner of the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education.

He was hoping that I won the Award in the name of the school, but because I won the Award before when I was in Haitin school, I couldn't participate in again till another three years.

When I had an opportunity to take part in the Hamdan bin Rashid Award for Distinguished Academic Performance I participated and won it, he was delighted and very proud. He would always say: «He is the first student from the school to win this award since it was founded in 22 years». before I turn the page of Ali bin Abi Talib school, I remember a teacher who had

a great impact on me, and left a good memory in my heart, not because he starts the class daily by calling my name and giving me a candy .yes “daily”.

Mr. Khader Thabit, the Arabic language teacher, accompanied us on a school trip to the zoo. His efficient educational and supervisory role in the trip encouraged me to write a report about the trip and bring it to school the next day. He asked me to read it out loud to my classmate, and so I did. Since then writing has become more than a homework it became a hobby, a knowledge, an exercise, a lesson, a passion, a taste and a blessing. Then from writing to public speaking, and because I present my writings to him verbally, he noticed my public speaking ability, and then it evolves from presenting my work in class to standing on the school’s radio platform.

I still remember the first speech that I wrote and delivered on the radio. It was in 2004, days after Sheikh Zayed died, may Allah have mercy on him.

It did not stop at public speaking, he encouraged me

to memorize poems and deliver. Poems have a place in my heart, and I see it as miraculous and impressive. I see it as a true miracle of the Arabic language. I see in poetry a way to build a personality that is difficult to defeat in this life. It is the messenger of conscience and heart, a messenger of reason and thought.

Mr. Thabit made me love poetry. We searched together in poetry books about good poems that we can use. We found a lot of nice verses. We liked them so I wrote them and practiced reading them.

On presenting day my presentation was amazing, and my words were expressive, and my voice was clear and loud, and I began to feel confident. And at the end, there was a big round of applause.

Chapter fourteen

On Air



On Air

Ether is a substance that fills all cosmic space; the scientists assumed its existence because they could not explain how light and sound could travel without a medium. When we say over the ether, we mean radio. Radio was something I love, starting from school's radio, to participating in radio interventions that I was keen about, especially in Sharjah Radio, and ending with having me as a guest on Sharjah Radio in an educational program hosted by the educational counselor Saif Al Mutawa.

People say that radio times are over. But time has shown that radio has a special and intimate nature

among social media. Keep in mind the growing number of listeners and the large number of callers, some of whom have become well-known social figures.

I was a loyal listener to the radio, following its religious, scientific, and social programs. I enjoy the songs. honestly, the radio was part of my personality, it made my skills grow and my behavior improve.

But I always try to be a person with influence, to be a sender and a receiver at the same time. So, I used to call the radio at an early age and practiced my language skills. But what I consider to be a key point in my relationship with ether is sitting at the dialogue table with the educational counselor Saif al-Mutawa, in a dialogue about excellence and superiority, on disability and ability. It was unusual that an educational program with a significant educational reference and a massive number of followers would have a student in the primary school as a guest. But the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education is a key not only for opening schools but also for opening the atmosphere of good opportunities.

Another world that entered after my journey in the radio was the world of technology. Some of my friends may be surprised when I send them messages every morning via WhatsApp that's a morning letter with a quote, an idea or an issue. Or an article discussing a social issue in our societies. Or audio and video clips.

They are often astonished by what I do, they don't know that like others we blind people check our e-mail.

We write a reply to their messages. In fact, I have entered the world of technology through courses, and I made sure to measure my progress in them, and I monitor the positive impact I leave on society through my skills, hobbies, and talents.

When you open to page 35 of the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education, you will find that the award is keen to make sure that the winners have talents and hobbies that are constantly developed, and have an impact on their society.



Chapter Fifteen

South to Al Ain



South to Al Ain

Sharjah the center of culture, the love of my life. Here's an apology.

After Sharjah schools, the Sharjah Award and Sharjah Radio, I found myself forced to move from Sharjah to Al Ain. It is true that Al Ain is a quiet, peaceful city, a city of flowers, violets and castles, a city of civilization, history, and a city of modernity.

When we talk about the Bronze Age, we are talking about the period of Hafeet between 3200 BC and 2700 BC. When we talk about the Helli civilization, we are talking about the man who lived in Al Ain 3000 years ago. Lovely.

But that did not interest me at that time. All I cared about was a conversation that was between my parents. It was about that we have to move to Al Ain. My mother got a job in Al Ain and we have to move there. In Al Ain, I joined Al-Bayraq school in the ninth grade. Today I adore Al Ain, I love it just like how a lover loves flowers, but I do not know why I don't have any feelings towards Al-Bayraq school. The school doesn't deserve the feeling I have toward it. The school was not the problem but I cannot deny the following facts: For the first time, my percentage declined from 99% to 94%.

For the first time in my life I entered and got out of a school without making friends.

For the first time, I felt I was not welcome in the school.

For the first time, I feel that I do not belong anywhere.

For all this and for other reasons I felt that I was in the wrong place, and I was longing for Sharjah, I dreamt about it, about its mosques, its streets, its schools, its

broadcasting, and its award. That award, which I felt was the key that opened a lot of doors to me, and here I am wandering without a key. Will I find the key again? Did the journey of excellence end in my life, and a stage of tiresome began? That life in which we are forced do things, we do it because it's our duty, without love or passion, we do it because we should do it.



Chapter Sixteen

High school



High school

There must be a pause of appreciation for the institutions that support the blind and do their societal role with sincerity and dedication. An individual always needs support, and it is unfair that society leaves one alone.

Zayed Foundation for Humanitarian Care and People with Special Needs, which has developed a vision and declared it:

«Equal Rights Deepen the Happiness and Empowerment of People with Disabilities» and harnessed all its potential to realize this vision.

The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), which is giant, it was born a giant, but it lacked in the special abilities section knowledge and experience in the integration of people with visual disabilities and their educational needs, and their needs for educational devices and resources, but this did not prevent them to pay attention to even one student in the school and decide to support him and ask him about the devices that are needed for blind people. I am indeed proud to have transferred my experience to people in this department, and this has been the reason for supporting an important component of the educational process, namely students with visual disabilities, or let us say «people with determination and insight.»

The Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalid Al Nahyan Cultural Center, which has been distinguished by its scientific, cultural and social contributions, has given me an open space for self-development and allowed me to return to the field of excellence.

In Al Dahmaa school I found a different environment that is different than other schools I studied in. I found

the youthfulness of Al Ain youth and their maturity, the clarity of their minds and their intelligence. I found an administration that supported me and had an important role in the achievements that will come.

The principal, Mr. Mohamed El-Hantoubi is more than just a principal; he's a mixture of administrative spirit and the human spirit. The spirit of humanity is expressed by the word father, and the administrative spirit is expressed by the word leader. However, there were some difficulties. The Ministry of Education system was teaching the scientific materials in Arabic whereas Abu Dhabi Education Council was teaching them in English, and when I found myself in this strange environment, I felt a bit lonely.

Moreover, some books were new and are produced by the Council, and therefore were not available in Braille. So I did not have books to read, and this put me under great pressure, but it is not compared to the psychological hope that science teacher left in me, who I asked him about the curriculum papers in advance to give me a chance to take a look at them, he

said: «Don't worry. I will give you two degrees higher than any student in the class. «I felt that it was some kind of pity and that it was closer to a charity than to education.»

Chapter Seventeen

The Sharjah Award again



The Sharjah Award again

Sharjah winds started blowing in Al Ain, and I began to breathe the beautiful essence of Sharjah Award for excellence in Education. It all started this way:

Zayed Foundation for Humanitarian Care and Care for People with Special Needs invites me to present a course in technology for the blind, and it is fun to present your experience and knowledge to others.

This has made me feel appreciated in the community I've moved to. It welcomes me and gives me great roles in it. The capacity section of Al Ain Office at the Abu Dhabi Education Council honors me as the first blind to receive 94% of the final rate. This made me feel appreciated.

The Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalid Al Nahyan Cultural Center organizes a course that has opened up new horizons. It is a course in self-development and personal improvement. It was a long and systematic course, and I came out of the course with a goal in life: To have a fingerprint in the field of family counseling.

I remember that in secondary school, I was studying family cases, guiding families to family stability, and I do not know whether this is a correct situation or a hasty step. Some may see it as an impulsive, hasty move, but I see it as an obsession, and I feel it is a recipe for greater success.

In fact, my merchandise that entered this area was not just a course; those who are taught by Dr. Rima Ouda realize that some people are a school! And Dr. Rima is this type; she contacted me personally over the months to provide a scientific material that didn't continue, I found a great response.

In the face of these achievements, which I began to regain with it the spirit of the Sharjah Award, I decided to submit my file again to the award. It did not take me

much time or effort, but gave my soul a chance to fly again in Sharjah; a free ride and a good landing from Al Ain to Sharjah. It's my win for the second time.

I challenge anyone who has lived the experience of winning a prize twice to decide which one of the two times is more exciting and memorable. If he said the first time, he's right, the first experience is memorable. If he said the second time, he's also right; the return to the first love revives the dead heart.

Both feelings are sincere. The test is to put yourself at stake, to make your achievements competitive, and to always renew the joy, and repeat achievements.



Chapter Nineteen

A friend and a partner



A friend and a partner

Abdullah al-Kaabi. A friend who was with me yesterday as I write my journey, but that is not the reason why I write about him.

I met him in the 10th grade at Al-Dahma School in Al Ain. At first, the meeting was a passing one with a mutual friend, Ali Al Shamsi.

The relationship deepened because of the common interests and deepened when we gathered in the literary section in the 11th grade.

Choosing the literary section was my preference because of my literary tendencies, and I did not expect to find Abdullah in the same class as mine. He entered

the classroom and sat next to me, and during this year and the one that followed he was my classmate, a companion, and a friend.

And I was appreciative when he proposed that his mother should visit my mother. But what made me deeply appreciate him was that he was placed in a difficult position when his friends asked him to choose between my friendship or their friendship, and without hesitation he chose me.

Some people think that the blind talk a lot, and want him to remain silent because he lost sight. Unfortunately, there was this kind of people in my class. Dialogues have often taken a divergent view in ways that colleagues would not accept, and I could not help but satisfy them. The separation is the inevitable result.

When Abdullah was put in this position, he refused to distance himself from me as others did, even if he did I wouldn't blame him. I know that I give people a lot of advice, and most people at this time do not like to be advised.

Once we were sitting in a garden in a place full of families and hikers, not far from a group of young people. They opened the radio in the car, played the songs out loud, and started dancing to the songs in a way I could not describe. But my friends' dissatisfaction with them forced me to take a step. I asked my friends to lead me to them. Of course, they refused. But their refusal did not prevent me from going and performing the duty of giving advice; in order to keep the youth from losing its identity and authentic spirit. In this situation and in others like this. Abdullah was with me. Thanks, Abdullah.

Once, Abdullah came to me running carrying the newspaper, and in it was my picture when I received the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education. He said: «Did you see ...?» Then he stopped as if he remembered something, and he felt very embarrassed.

I smiled and said to him: Yes, my friend, I saw it. It's fine, we all see.



Chapter Twenty

Sultan of Culture



Sultan of Culture

I was honored to touch the Glory when I received the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education from His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi.

In my childhood, I heard about chosen Sharjah as the Arab Capital of Culture in 1998.so, I thought it had all the pride and reached the height of glory.

In my youth, I've witnessed the celebration of Sharjah the Arab Capital of Culture in 2014.I said: This is the pride. This is bigger and superior.

And Today, as I am writing my first book, Sharjah named World Book Capital for 2019

Oh, bright city, what glory you look for! What more glory does Sultan of knowledge, science, culture, and book Seeks for you!

Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi is a Statesman, a man of wisdom, knowledge and religion, a culture and intellect, and a man of education. He's has a unique personality. as well, the meeting with his highness was unique, which opened the doors to me for excellence and achievement.

I would like to thank him on behalf of all Sharjah students, whom he considers his sons.

for that: He give them the Foundation of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, in which I studied. He established the Sharjah Award for Excellence and Excellence in Education, which I won.

He has established more than 20 museums in Sharjah; for developing personality, building skills, behavior adjustment and acquire knowledge. your

highness, We promise you and to Sharjah that we with you in this road of development and knowledge towards the sun.



Chapter Twenty-One

Literature and I



Literature and I

Today, with a quick look at the past; I am a graduate from Al Ain University for Science and Technology, College of Education.

And I am a specialist in visual disability at the Ministry of Education.

And I am expressing myself through words that bring to you what I've been through in my life. of time and place and people.

And every morning I write a piece of literature in which I put my thoughts and ideas and I share it with others.

But what brought me to Literature, words, and book!
I recall here the role of literary, social and cultural competitions held by the relevant institutions in the UAE. and When I open my submission file for the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education, I find that the award directed me to many literary and cultural activities, and I was seeking to participate in competitions related to writing and public speaking.

I remember Latifa Award for Childhood Creativity in the category of public speaking in 2006, I gave a speech entitled «Good companionship», and I remember the Emirates Transportation Competition 2010, where I delivered a speech entitled « dangers of the road
I remember as I entered the book world Mr. Khader Thabet and Mr. Imad Al-Mudaraki who taught me in school and they are the cause of the letters I write, and the words I wrote, and pages I achieved.

One day I wrote in a morning a phrase I would like to mention here: «you Will not live a happy life or be satisfied till to be pure in heart, a good intention and turn away from what bothers you and strengthen your

skills but above all to please Allah, this is the reasons that open to you the doors of a happy life».

Another day, I wrote: «Change comes only from a true will from within; you cannot change yourself without this will. even if all reasons on the earth are met.»
God helps you change if you yearn for change.”
and now Every day I write more. Hello, pen.



Chapter Twenty-Two

White Pen



White Pen

Writing with white pen ... was an unforgettable experience

Writing with white pen ... A book in which I mention my experience in the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education. This award was presented as a model in a deeper and more comprehensive experience in the fields of life. I started in Sharjah as a child, and I am a teacher.

Since the day I decided to take off my black sunglasses, I find the symbolism of whiteness dear to me.

Yes, I have put black sunglasses for long time, but today I take them off.

I took it off because it has never been my choice, and I love to go on in life living my choices and not the others choices.

I am in a society that I love and belong to. I do not want to hide from it.

I took my glasses off because I love my eyes and because I accept myself as it is.

The title of this book is inspired by the white cane. that cane that I talked about in the beginning of this book. I talked about it and I know that I did not use the white cane, but I took it as a symbol of white pen.

And a cane is too far away from a pen!
while a pen is the symbol of education and knowledge,
a cane is not a good means to teach even if it works.

And the white cane, although it has played an effective

role in many societies, it's not effective in the UAE society. Walking is not so popular. But the pen in the UAE is the popular and in the lead ; the country is established on education, sponsored education, and provided education to everyone without distinction or exclusion.

The white cane, in my opinion, underestimates the potentiality of the blind of knowing the details of the place and keeping it in mind. It reminds me of a friend who was skillful in memorizing and accessing places easily, but when he started relying on smart maps and applications he lost his skill.

These are just thoughts about the white cane, I am totally convinced about , and maybe, it will change tomorrow. But what will never change is that the pen is immortal. And it will be as life goes on. as the pen gave immortality to Taha Housen through his books.

The pen is immortal and its effect remains, and there is no difference between a pen writes in braille dots and a pen writes in black ink. In all cases, the pen is

a messenger of thought, a translator of mind, a carrier of emotions, and a revealer of matters.

Therefore, I tend to the pen. Out of hope, love, and trust to whom He swears by the pen.

I swear by the pen and what they write.

[68] Surah Al-Qalam (the pen)

They said:

My child was born blind. From his early childhood, he loved listening to the Holy Quran and he memorized it in his early stages of life. He gained eloquence, and creative writing. He has future aspirations and is careful in his decisions. He has a passion for reading, knowledge and acquiring skills. He thrived to succeed. He has a footprint and an impact on society. his insight made him a person of determination. May God protect him.

Umm Abdullah - my mother

Abdallah.. He is a piece of my soul. I love him when he listens to my daily details, and he does not like when my smile disappears. He wishes nothing but love and good for us. I've never seen like his dignity, nor the beauty of his morality. He's like an angel descended from the sky and occupied our hearts, my brother did not lose anything and did not lack anything, but there is a shortage of minds that believe that the heroes who succeed must lack something, they are a pride to us, they know us the best, I will proudly say: «he is one of a kind, «and this saying will remain immortal: «Disability is in mind, not body»

Wafa and Hamda – My sisters

«Thati»): a program of self-development and refinement of the personality, talents, abilities, and potentiality.

in this program i meet a young man; Abdullah Awad who was a role model for everyone who knew him during the period of «Thati» program; he was keen to benefit himself and others and be a productive member of his society and in his precious country.

Dr. Rima Odeh - My coach in the «Thati » program

What brings me closer to Abdullah is greater than fellowship and friendship. It's brotherhood. which brought us together in school and continued to do so in our work life. I met him when he was carrying on the achievement of winning the Sharjah award. and when I accompanied him and I realized that excellence is not only an award to him, it is a way of life. How proud I am of him.

Abdullah Al Kaabi – My friend

When I met Abdullah in a computer skills course in Dubai, I liked him right away. I felt that he has mind wide open, I sensed wisdom in him. So, I consider him more an adviser than a friend.

Ali Al Hashemi - My friend

Time takes me back to that boy, who was only 12 years old when he came from the Emirate of Sharjah to complete his education in Al Ain Education Office. He fascinates you with his great dreams, he was ahead of his time, with a spirit that challenges disability. I

can't forget the hours of volunteer work that he spent among us motivating his peers and participating in teaching them Braille and visual impairment devices. I Congrat those hearts that carry the love and goodness, and to those who motivate others, and to those who impose the impossible to become a beautiful reality.

**Fatima Al Kaabi - Head of Capacity Section at the
Abu Dhabi Education Council**

Abdullah al-Hamami, from the time I met him when he was a freshman in the university. He was the first to attend my lectures and never missed once. I knew him as a mature young man who loves to learn and is keen for knowledge. He is striving for knowledge. He's one of his kind, clever with the sense of humor, as he appreciates education and educators

I wish him continuous progress and success, and to always see him as a symbol of education and knowledge.

Dr. Shams al-Islam - my university professor

Many students passed by me. Few of them remain in mind. Abdullah is the most memorable.

Ahmed Abdouli - Principal of Ali bin Abi Talib School

When Abdullah Al Hammami came to Al Dahma School, I realized immediately that this boy would be worthwhile. I rejoiced in his excellence, and more when I read his words.

Mohammed Al-Hantubi - Principal of Al-Dahma School

