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# Secret Gifts of Faith wrapped in My Cancer cells

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Spiritual conception of a plight turned  
by God into a blessing.

Memoir of a Muslim woman



Author:

**Zahira Boudehan**

Translated by:

**Dr. Asma Y. Ismail**

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**Memoir of a Muslim woman**

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## **Dedicated To..**

**My mother**, may Allah protect her,

**My father**, may Allah be merciful to him,

**My sisters**, Farida; my second mom, and Theldja,

**My friend** Razika, may Allah be merciful to her,

and for **all Cancer patients** on this earth.

# Acknowledgement



I would like to express my respect and gratefulness to my  
teacher:

**Dr. Khaled Douibi**

Professor of Hadith and its sciences at Batna University.

Thank you for teaching me how to be strong.

~ ~ ~

I am highly grateful to my friend

**Tasbeeh Kurdi**, from Jordan

Thanks for being my friend

~ ~ ~

I pay my gratitude and heartiest respect to

**Ronoud Mohammed** from Sudan

I'm glad you are my sister

Thanks for connecting me with the translator

~ ~ ~

And thank YOU, **dear reader**

Wherever you are in this world

~ ~ ~



## **Translator's preface**

Being treated for Cancer is laborious, writing is healing, it provides an invaluable tool for patients to express and share their experiences, struggles, transformation, and reflections.

As a medical doctor, this book helped me to see beyond the disease, medications, and follow-up appointments, it gave me the opportunity to dive deep into this human as a soul, not just as a patient. It led me to some values which will not be brought by medicines, but Allah will grant you with it. I realized the bright side of illnesses, the illness as a motive for establishing a robust bond with Allah, belittling this worldly life, and unleashing the purity and the luminosity of the soul.

Allah will reward you for every hardship and pain you came across in your life. The Prophet Mohammed Peace be upon him said “No calamity befalls a Muslim, but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it, even though it were the prick he receives from a thorn”. You cannot change the fact that what had happened had happened, but you can try to embrace it and accept the gift.

At the end, I'm highly grateful to Dr. Huda and Ms. Sara for the great effort they spent revising and proofreading the translation, May Allah reward them immensely.

**Dr. Asma Y. Ismail**

**Sudan**

## ● With lots of hesitation ... I say: 🌀

In the name of Allah..who gave me eloquence..  
While we are trying to irrigate the patience tree with the truth ...  
The truth of the worldly life ... some robbers are working hard  
to make the water muddy. They want the tree to die, its leaves to  
fall, roots to dry, and fruits to fall unripe.

~ ~ ~

I heard frightening stories about cancer and its patients.... A killing  
disease. Patients must be ready for death, but before that they will  
suffer different types of extremely painful conditions. Why do we see  
them on TV without hair? Where are their eyebrows and eyelashes?  
Many thoughts and questions about this disease circle in my mind,  
then fade away as I immerse in my daily routine.  
Never in a million years would I have imagined that  
Cancer would be so close to me  
And that the next turn would be mine.  
A strange cell started to work inside my body  
Quietly and maliciously.

~ ~ ~

With lots of hesitation, I decided to write about  
this wonderful experience I struggled through.  
Yes, despite the pain it was great.  
It was great, from the moment of the diagnosis until the recovery.  
With every single cancer cell dying as all-new cells are born.  
It was a great experience. It took me back to  
the world of transparency,

To the intersection between life and death. I stood there with my soul and thoughts while my body was lying down with no power and no strength in the hospital.

During the nights which were full of physical pain;  
My soul was traveling between the cancer cells which had been attacked by the chemotherapy, waiting for their last word before they leave; it dictated the words of this book which I entitled

## **Secret Gifts of Faith wrapped in My Cancer Cells**

Hopefully, it would offer solace to the patient, and a lesson for the healthy.

**Allah knows best.**



## ●🍃 **My friend who died of cancer..** 🌿

Between death, patience, and absence ...

I found myself confused and lost ..

Three doors are in front of me...

The first one carries glad tidings for those who were once patients,  
and now welcoming life.

In the second door ... a broken soul and  
a black spot with lots of sadness.

The third door has many scribbles and strange poorly understood  
writing .. Then a rope descends from the roof, wraps around  
that soul and kills it.

When dealing with a death catastrophe, there is no fourth door...  
And the dead will not return again.

~ ~ ~

I always had such thoughts whenever I was faced with the death  
of someone, or gave a talk about death, I would  
try to convince people to choose the first door (glad tidings for those  
who stay patient) and their eyes would answer me in a way I never  
realized until I lost my friend who died of cancer.

She was aspiring to accomplish one thing ... She kept repeating it  
regularly while I was staying with her ...

"I hope to memorize The Quran and excel in it" ..

A woman in her thirties...

Single ...

She jumps like a child when she is happy...

Why she jumps happily?

Because I said to her "Your recitation improved" when  
she recited some Verses of The Quran ..

A woman in her thirties,. with a mind of a woman about to go to the afterlife..

No day can pass in that dorm without hearing the echo of her voice reciting The Quran. Her recitation used to fill the room, the lobby and nearby rooms. We missed her recitation when she traveled to visit her family  
A woman in her thirties...

~ ~ ~

One time she heard loud music and noise in the dorm. She said to me “let us go and advise them”. She went confidently..

And I tailed behind her with caution and reluctance..

Those girls had a bad reputation..

We always tried to avoid them because of that.

We went upstairs to the fourth floor, to their room. They were surprised by two uninvited visitors. After greeting, she pointed to the chairs and said: “I am so tired coming upstairs, can I have a seat?”. She sat with her head up, watching them attentively I sat beside her,, quiet,, my eyes down,, waiting for their reaction

The music was loud...

No one cared about her, no one respected her age.

People in our society usually respect people with her attire...

There were many girls... about twenty..

All were in black ... all were dancing madly..

Suddenly, one of them recognized her presence..

She turned the music down, Razika started talking to them ...

She advised them then recited some Verses of The Quran ...

~ ~ ~

The smiles of her doctor after operation were full of despair,, but Razika didn't know...

She was discharged home three days after the operation...

And she died while she was reading The Quran...

She died after a stomach surgery..  
She was the top of her class, she had excellent answers  
that used to blow her teachers...  
She was a student of Ibn Al-Qayyim<sup>1</sup>  
She memorized his words by heart..  
A month passed.. And Razika is under the ground..  
Razika was under the ground while I was planning to visit her in  
the dorm  
To see her..  
To listen to her advice..  
To hear her recitation..  
To tell me about her day..  
To tell her how much I missed her after one year being away..  
To tell her how much I love her and how much I valued her..

~ ~ ~

I arrived at the dorm heading to her room,  
but it occurred to me to visit one of our friends before that.  
When I was about to leave her room on my way to Razika, it  
happened I asked her about the wedding of one of our colleagues:

“When was her wedding?” I said.

“Four months ago,” she answered

I asked her: “Who attended?”

She answered: “**Razika**, may Allah be merciful to her, X and I”

**What?!!!**

May Allah be merciful to her?

What do you mean by that?

“Razika died, don’t you know?” she said

Died?!!!

Are you joking??

---

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Scholar (1291-1350)

I'm on my way to visit her, and you are saying she died?  
"She died one month ago may Allah be merciful to her." she said  
I was shocked and speechless  
I was staring at the dorm, the trees,, the walls,, as if I was watching  
them for the first time..  
All places were strange, even people were so  
I was lost..  
Razika died?!!  
DIED!!  
How many times we did our prayers together..  
We dined together..  
We drank together..  
We laughed together..  
We cried together..  
We argued with each other..  
Then reconciled together..  
We studied together..  
We stared at the sky together..  
We recited The Quran together..  
We were up late discussing some issues together..  
I walked through the corridors and between the trees, searching for  
her steps, her voice and laughter..  
Imagining her everywhere, looking at her  
shadow walking in sublimity between the crowd..  
I can identify her among others with her green dress..  
I left the residence with my sadness to the bus station;  
The one whom I intended to visit is my predecessor to the grave..  
I was shocked.. I was not able to cry, I didn't believe that from  
the start, a voice from my inside was blaming death for taking my  
friend... why her? Why now? Why her in particular? Why did she die?  
How come I cannot see my friend thereafter?

## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

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I was distraught when I hopped into the bus and,  
I scanned my phone for a song about the Traits of true friends..  
I tried to convince Razika to listen to this song, but she disliked songs.  
I let her listen to the lyrics and said to her: they describe you ...  
I put the headphones in my ears, and once the song started my  
tears started to pour

*My friend is someone whose presence we can never have enough of*

*When he is away I feel lost*

*He heals my heart*

*His absence makes my heart sick*

*He is the beloved one*

*I love him for the sake of god*

*No one can cover his absence*

*He is descent and has good manners*

*When I said goodbye..my tears poured down*

*I said goodbye but he is still in my heart*

~ ~ ~

Now, it is seven years since Razika passed away, may Allah  
be merciful to her.

She is away but not from my mind.

~ ~ ~

They are not dead, they are alive in our hearts,,  
those who ascended to the heaven with loving souls..

Only their bodies left us to the womb of the earth..

We will follow them ..

We are only a few days away...

It is only a matter of a breath in and breath out, our pulse and  
circulation urge towards death..

We are only years, weeks, days, minutes, or probably seconds away  
from them...

And in the blink of an eye, we are gone..

Between patience and death, there is an inevitable loss..

We perceive the value of things when we lose them suddenly, as a day loses its shine after the sun hides behind the clouds, or a night becomes darker when the moon is away..

## ●🍃 **The moment..** **when I knew that I have cancer**🌀

Razika's death made it easy for me to accept my situation and try to discover it with curiosity. She was my best friend, and my role model. She was nine years older than me, I used to accompany older friends since my childhood. I usually sought her advice about many issues, I observed her prayers in the night while we are sleeping, she was asking Allah and making Du'aa .

Her activity encouraged me to set aside my laziness, her ambition increased my motivation, her optimism eliminated my depression She didn't tell me that she is a cancer patient, she didn't complain, she was always smiling and happy, pleased and content.

One day she stood beside the window, looked at the sky for a long time, then said with a smile "I long to meet Allah"  
When I read the lab results after I translated them into Arabic, some strange words held my attention. I googled them and started to read the results:

LYMPHOMA?

~ ~ ~

I stopped reading suddenly and with an inaudible voice

I said "Cancer"?

That means DEATH?

At that moment, I felt a shudder from my toes to my head, my body was chilling and my heart beats became fast.

I remembered Razika, may Allah be merciful to her.

I said with my heart "O Allah, give me patience and take my soul as a Muslim"

Then I continued reading, I read about cancer symptoms and prognosis, I also read about chemotherapy and its side effects and success rates. I read all that as if I was not the patient. After I said that Du'aa , my heart calmed down and my soul was reassured. The cancer ghost shrank in front of my eyes to become as a simple cold no one cares about it.



## ● **The Chemotherapy journey started** 🌀

Our perception of failure or loss is unjust for the worldly life ..It always misses the eternal world..

We always read that; challenging someone who has nothing to lose is a matter of idiocy and wasting of time. This is because he is willing to make the other part sad to satisfy his need for the victory. Something like an inferiority complex problem

That's why some said that if a loser smiles at the winner, the latter will lose the taste of winning

~ ~ ~

For instance, cancer looks like a gigantic ghost threatening your life, your dreams, your ambition, and your projects with its cells.

This should not scare your faithful soul, since you know that no one dies before his day. When death approaches, any illness can be lethal even if it was a simple cold. When it is not your time no illness is grave even if it was cancer.

One week before the chemotherapy session,  
I went to the hospital to do the requested tests.

While the nurse was taking the blood samples, a psychiatrist doctor came looking for new patients, she saw (Cancer center) in my report. She looked at me with compassion, then held my hand and asked me

about my age. I said twenty-six. She said with sorrow and sigh:

“Don't be scared. You will be ok. This disease is not as before, the treatment is available now, just be patient and strong.

You will leave to pursue your dreams and succeed, you will get married and have a family, you.....”

She continued her speech, while I was asking myself:

With whom is she talking?

Is she talking to me?

Why is she sad as if she is the patient and not me?

At this point I couldn't help laughing, and thanked her for her reassuring words. And to cut it short; I didn't want to tell her that I'm not concerned with what she said as I didn't consider myself a cancer patient.

I left the hospital in a hurry.

~ ~ ~

Was I trying to escape from that fact? Or did I really not care? I don't know what was taking place inside my lymphatic system, but I was calm and reassured to the extent of indifference...

To the extent of inattention.

Sometimes I forgot my disease until I touched the large swellings in my neck. Even when I touch them, I was not convinced they are mine. It was spreading under my skin, the largest one was egg-sized and hard like a stone. My family members cried when they saw it, but I looked at the mirror, smiled and say "I wonder what might be inside this egg!".

It's time for the first session, the nurses brought the chemotherapy.

One container had red fluid while the other looked like water.

They marked all the drug containers, then brought in the normal saline and dextrose drips as I learned later.

I looked at the patients around me, one of them was sleeping. Another was looking out of the window with a lost gaze staring at her own world. A third one was vomiting and the one beside her looked annoyed. That old woman was looking at me as if she wanted to start a conversation. A toddler patient was crying from the needle and trying to escape.

The old woman asked me with curiosity about my age, where I came from, what type of disease I had and how I encountered it,

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while feeling sorry for my youthful life which will be lost due to these malignant cells. She said “we are old. It doesn’t matter if we passed away as we lived for a long time, but you are still young my daughter..”

I let her continue her conversation and surrendered to the notion which kept showing up in my mind;

What is the meaning of life?

What is it worth to keep chasing it and be sad for its losses?

Is this worldly worth my life?

I remembered my soulmate Razika, my days with her, my days while I was studying in the Islamic center. I remembered my teachers, the library, my small desk at home, my mother, my siblings, my family and everybody concerned about my illness and wished me health.

I remembered Mecca, Mecca the impossible dream of the poor...

Mecca which was and still is my dream.

Is it worth living to pursue that dream?

## ● **Reflections in the hospital** ●

On this earth, some things are worth living for,,  
Or the desire to live for.

When I was a teenager, I read this ancient quote *“If it weren't for these three things I would have loved parting with this world.”*

One of them was  
*“accompanying people who pick the best words when speaking to you as if they are picking the best fruits”*

~ ~ ~

I knew people like that; they picked the best words, best things.

They chose words which  
were full of kindness, praise, righteousness and piety  
We have many choices to choose from to help follow the right path,  
in the way we treat ourselves or others.

How many words not spoken but if had been, would have brought  
upon us great rewards..

How many actions we supposed to do but we didn't,, intentions,,  
reflections,, steps.

How many tongues have uttered this question “Are we forced or do  
we have free will?” But they should instead have  
asked: “Did we make the right choices?”, “Did we have to say yes  
instead of no?” or “No instead of yes?”

I can smell the pang of our conscience when we say  
“Are we forced or do we have free will?”

It is as if we are seeking an excuse for the bad choices we make when  
we say “We are forced”, saying: Once I am forced I have  
no responsibility for what I did out of my control or a supreme  
will did it, then tasked me with my sins.

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We are looking for a philosophical argument when saying “we have a free will”, and once we are free to choose, it is no sense to be charged for our mistakes. We were given the full freedom to do it, and it is trickery to be blamed for something while we have a free will to do it.

The rational choice should be to stop those futile arguments. Life is much bigger than to be limited in an argument that goes folly between a numerator who says we are forced and a dominator who says we have a free will.

On this earth, many things are worth living, once we incorporate the sense of Humanity.. Brotherhood.. Peace.. Love.. Filiations and Fatherhood.

Khawla was my room partner. She was in her twenties, and had the same cancer type as mine, but she was in the fourth stage. She suffered a lot before she died, but she was always smiling. Her father was visiting her daily and trying to meet her needs. I still remember one day when he visited her, she thanked him and he replied “You are most welcome, my child.”

~ ~ ~

I don't know where in my body I felt that sudden pain while I was repeating her father's words after he went “You are most welcome, my child.” She was staring at me with surprise then said:

“Is your father dead?”

Talking about orphanhood is so difficult and painful.. It brings sadness to an orphan's heart which is broken and rifted..

Craving for peace and support,, power and serenity..

False power fills his hearts to help him face the vulnerability of orphanhood

“My Dad”

All the alphabet steps aside for these letters of the fatherhood  
to dominate, leaving behind brotherhood and all other relationships

I have many fathers..

The Prophets (Peace be upon them).. The Companions..

The Followers and all the righteous forefathers..

They are all my fathers..

They don't know me..

Between tears and other phonics when I say "my dad"

Many barriers of power ... patience.. and reticence

These barriers fade when it comes to "My dad" letters..

Only tears speak..

~ ~ ~

With all helplessness to express the meanings of fatherhood with  
words or sentences..

I didn't anticipate myself to pour all those tears while trying to talk  
about fatherhood. I didn't think my words will betray me..

I thought I could speak fluently for more than twenty days..

And through speaking about fatherhood my suppressed letters will  
be released,,

But that added more suppression to them..

I don't know why I didn't feel orphanhood till my twenties..

Why I didn't seek fatherhood kindness all these years..

Fatherhood is a grant..

A grant that will eliminate the ugly life scars in my heart

~ ~ ~

On this earth, many things are worth living for,,,

Or the desire to live for

Once, my fathers are alive..

My teachers ... Religious leaders... Scholars..

They are my fathers.

They eliminate life constraints with whiffs from heaven.

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They guide us through the darkness.

They tell us about paradise, we hear water flow, leaves swish,  
angels praise, and people greeting each other and praising Allah

~ ~ ~

When we find nothing to provide for a dead person, but only Du'aa  
and some words.

Khawla, my room partner died..

She studied Islamic science, she was a hijabi woman..

She was keen about her prayer on time..

She was careful about her niqab<sup>2</sup>..

She embraced life..

She was happy with her engagement and was planning for  
her wedding..

Her disease was stage four..

My disease was stage two..

Her disease was resistant to chemotherapy and started to spread in  
her body..

My disease was responding to treatment and  
on its way to disappear..

She loved life and I hated it..

She wished to recover and I wanted to die..

She died and I didn't.

She learned all the names and types of the chemotherapy drugs..  
I didn't even know whether the drip that ran in my veins was salt  
or sugar..

She was very careful And I was very careless..

Patience sometimes betrayed under the toll of painful treatment,  
and she would cry loudly.. I supported and reassured her..

In my turn, when I screamed in pain, she would listen

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<sup>2</sup> Niqab is the face veil which is part of the Hijab (Modesty). Muslim women are worshipping Allah by wearing it.

to my sighing and say "I know you are in pain, be strong.

You inspire my strength and patience"

She told me a lot about her dreams, plans for her life after marriage,  
her home, her stuff. She was laughing a lot and telling jokes,

She was buried in the last ten days of Ramadan..

To the last minute, she was clinging to life..

To the last minute,, she wanted to live..

And to the last minute, she was,,

She was ..Smiling..

**Pray for her and for Razika.**



## ●🍃 **Death, an enemy that turned into a friend** 🌀

I can't say I was on my best psychological solidity all the time while battling cancer and the painful treatment sessions. There were ups and downs. Sometimes I became weak and cried.

Many times I went into indolence and carelessness about the surroundings. When I hear patients sighing around me, or death of one of them, (that toddler died too) I became deeply sad, hated life and felt a strong desire to leave this life, although my body was responding well and the egg in my neck started to disappear along with the other smaller ones.

But the chemotherapy doesn't do that for free, I have to pay the price, my hair started to fall first. Then I suffered from a burning sensation in my mouth and sour throat whenever I wanted to eat or drink.

Chemotherapy affected them too. My bones became loose and my immunity became weak. I hated to hear about food and I went into an involuntary strike. I didn't dare to put anything in my mouth, except under direct pressure from my family.

I suffered from constipation due to the small amount of water I drank, needless to mention the consequences of constipation which led to eight days of hospital admission, I used to cry every night from pain to the extent that everyone thought those were my last days.

My mom and my older sister Farida (my second mom) were sitting beside me all the days with tearful eyes.

Their tears didn't stop; no one ever shed as many tears like them. With all these circumstances, there was a certain secure spot inside me which wasn't affected or disturbed; it was calm and content.

Can I call that patience? Did Allah respond to my Du'aa and pour patience inside my heart? The more I suffered from the treatment, the more I became in love with death and more submissive to it.

My recovery was anticipated as I read before and as doctors said also, but I was wishing to go to the afterlife to meet my dad and my friend. No, not just to meet them, but afterlife itself was my goal;

it became my dream. As if I was a thirsty person in the desert and found a drop of water.

When our fate is linked to a drop of water sought after a long fight... pray what is the worth of the whole world when before this drop...

I felt like I am just a visitor in this worldly life and have no place even if I stayed for a long time..

Death became my friend

~ ~ ~

### **Then I wondered**

Why not build a friendship with the death...

Why not reconcile and meet it with a smile and kindness...

Eventually, I have to go through this step to the afterlife...

It was not deserving of all this hostility,, we are indebted to it..

We have to be thankful to death as it transfers us to the real life.

we have to say with the poet:

*O Allah reward death the best way,*

*it was more kind to us than everything ever*

*It relieves pain quickly and draws the afterlife nearer*

~ ~ ~

I remembered when I cried after I lost my friend

And asked myself: Was I crying over her or over my days with her?

Many abstract facts became like a myth in our minds when

we need to face them..

We believe in death as an inevitable end when someone

we don't care about dies..

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But when it comes to our beloved ones we ask in shock:  
“How did they die?” ...  
“Why him/her specifically?” ..  
“Are they really dead?” ...  
Our turn is near..  
Who do we cry when someone dies?  
Why are we sad?  
We always miss our days with the dead...  
The more the value is of the days we spent together,,  
the sadder we are  
If we were sad for them then we should have to cry all our life..  
Why do our tears stop then after a while of someone’s death?  
We adapt ourselves to continue our life without them  
And we are loyal to ourselves and its adaptation  
A strange fact .. May not satisfy some, but with deep thinking about  
that we can understand: we do not miss the dead,,  
we miss our days with them.

## ● Patients I helped before my escape

Cancer patients have different stages of the disease, different reactions from complaining to silence to patience, but most of them share the same hope and calmness. They support each other. Whatever is your pain, you are not alone, there are many who are suffering more and your situation is better than theirs.

My illness and pain became mild when I saw those with end stage disease as doctors say, or those with zero immunity who are isolated as any microorganism can kill them..

Some of them passed through my life without any effect, and some had a very big impact.

I can't forget one patient who was so nervous due to the long duration chemotherapy session's and she was crying. I tried to uplift her and I told her about the great rewards Allah prepared for patients, she answered nervously:

"I'm done .. I don't want more rewards,, this is enough ... Enough... I don't want any more pain... I want to have a rest."

I can explain her reaction, it was due to the pain that penetrates every cell in her body, but I couldn't mask the madness tone of my voice saying to her: "let us say you recovered and lived for forty years? And then what? Wouldn't you die at the end? What is the difference if you died today or after forty years? Do you want to lose heaven with those words you said? May Allah forgive you, what you said is wrong".

She calmed down, asking Allah to forgive her and crying quietly..

Another day I heard some noise, and asked the nurse about it.

She told me that one patient refused to take the dose and he was trying to escape from the center. I had just finished my session

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and was walking out the female ward with difficulty, barely seeing my way due to dizziness when I saw him coming out of the male ward trying to escape. I don't know how I procured power and courage to stop him and say: we all have cancer and we are bearing with the treatment, why don't you reconcile with it as well and ask Allah to heal you?

I said those words and went out. Thanks Allah he calmed down and continued his treatment, as they told me on my next visit.

I was patient and strong during the first five sessions of chemotherapy, doctors said I needed to have six sessions, one session every three weeks. When I went for the last session I was not in a good mood, the nurse tried to insert the venous line two times and failed, after the third failure I became so mad.

I became like that girl and man I helped before, I took my bag and went home and decided not to go back again. The hospital and home were on standby after I escaped. Doctors had to dispose of the treatment bags prepared for me after eight hours of non-usage, thus losing a dose for nothing.

My family members were worried and tried to convince me to go back but my ears were deaf as I lost my patience.

That evening, the doctor in charge called me and convinced me to come back. I went over the next day, and continued my treatment reluctantly.

~ ~ ~

Most of the patients were listening to or reading The Quran. Some of them admitted that they were not listening to The Quran before, but when they became ill, nothing calmed them down but The Quran.

I didn't see any patient listening to music or songs to relax  
They knew the truth now..

No place for music in the hearts that realized the true fact

of the worldly life..

There is a big difference between hearts moved by The Quran  
and others moved by music.

The Quran softens your heart while music hardens it.  
Hearts which are full of The Quran are surrounded by a halo of light,  
and those dumped in music are absurd and hard.

Ibn Al-Qayyim was right when he said:

*“The love of The Quran and of music can not meet in one heart at  
once.”*

●🍃 **With every disaster..**  
**a grant and a glad tiding**🌀

We are living our lives waiting  
for good things to happen. Good things are always there and they  
will come, but we don't know... When? .. How?.

Allah sometimes brings us good things in unexpected ways,  
and sometimes bad things come from where we expected good  
things or people we thought will help us.

Maybe we took the wrong way from the start. As no building will  
be strong unless the base is solid, so is our life..

Or it may be the right way, but not the right time and  
we misinterpret it in a wrong way..

Or it was not important from the start and we  
were wrong to care about it..

But as we humans are weak and hasty by our nature, we urge to  
calm down ourselves and this makes us do wrong things sometimes.

Then we regret that later.

We have to rethink our perception of life

We have to bear in mind the afterlife

Heedlessness will lead us to inapprehensible losses

We can not ignore that voice inside, we can not escape from it..

We either get the rewards of the present life and lose the afterlife,,

Or work hardly and patiently to overcome the temptations of  
the worldly life to win the afterlife

~ ~ ~

When I attempt to explain the bright side of cancer and express the  
faith secrets I discovered inside my cancer cells; I find it difficult to  
arrange my thoughts and challenging to express them in a way  
reader deserve.

If cancer did as much as showing us humans that we are weak without Allah, this will be enough for the rest of our worldly life. This would spark our love for Allah and strengthen our faith to long for meeting Allah.

Without this truth, your life will be strenuous. You will be cramped, insecure, disturbed, miserable, lost and confused, not aware of the right way or the secure destination.

The fact that you are a weak human, a small cell not seen by the naked eye if passed through your body can move you from your home to the hospital in a complete surrender, no power,, no strength

The fact that you are a slave of the Strong, the Almighty, who raised the heaven, evened the earth, created the sun, the moon, the stars and all of them are controlled by His commands.

Allah: the Peace, the Supreme Believer, The Ever Watching, the Compeller, The Abaser, The Exalter, The Bestower of honour and The Humiliator.

A reminder of the fact that all doctors and all types of treatment cannot heal you without Allah's permission

Remembering that, I never relied on doctors; they are only means for healing. My heart was firmly convinced that Allah, who created me and guided me, will heal me.

These malignant cells are under his will, and they are going to disappear soon, if He so wills.

One of the Faith secrets in this disease, is helping you realize how hard the times Prophets (Peace be upon them) passed through, specially Prophet Ayoub who was patient and pleased with Allah's decree, asking Allah the most Merciful to heal him.

You feel like you share these moments with them, follow them as they were relying on Allah. You find peace when you make Du'aa



## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

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and prayers while you are kneeling and prostrating to Allah, feeling ill and standing with difficulty. You feel the honesty in your Du'aa.

Your prayer is full of reverence and your soul is preoccupied with Allah, free from all life concerns, asking Allah cure and healing. The more your soul believes in certainty the more your soul will fly high, you forget yourself, your pain and suffering. You ask Allah to forgive you and redeem your sins.

You will observe the true fact of this worldly life, you will recall your sins and negligence.

The proverb *“Good health is a crown on the head of a well person that only a sick person can see”* will come true, especially when you try to be independent and dispense of the services provided by your caretaker, even if they were happy to provide it.

The sense of dependence will weigh on you throughout your journey; you wish to be healthy to eliminate that unpleasant feeling.

The constant need for outside help leads to an intolerable psychological pain. You feel the suffering of the handicapped when you sleep nights with difficulty ..

You go through their pain and realize their feelings...

You will hate the pitiful stares and know why they hate that too..

You try to express happiness and satisfaction while you recognize why they look like that. You will respect them more when you pass through the situations they went through, you hope to have a magic wand to heal them all...

And once you have nothing to do to yourself..or to them,, you will just make Du'aa,, and be more humane and merciful.

~ ~

## ● **Cancer: When Masks Fall** ●

Illness, as other hardships you face in the worldly life, tests you first then tests people around you. You find them either truthful or hypocrites..You might be shocked, hurt or careless according to your personality and tolerance.

~ ~ ~

I remember two girls who were engaged before they were diagnosed with cancer. One of them was abandoned by her fiancé, while the other's fiancé was clinging to her..

Masks had fallen to reveal the true face of the first fiancé who broke the engagement and left her to suffer alone, the second one was the man who stood firm with his fiancée to the end regardless the results

Strangely enough, the first girl had a mild type of cancer with good prognosis and high cure rate, while the second one had a more aggressive type with low cure rate

So what happened?

As a good psychological state plays a big role in the body response to chemotherapy, as it speeds the cure. The first girl was going through very painful psychological trauma, her response to treatment was poor and her condition deteriorated after it was good. The second girl was receiving good support, she responded well and doctors noted apparent improvement. I came across many other different stories. Three women were with me in the room. In the first bed, an old woman sitting beside her daughter in law, she cares for her in a kind and a good way as if she was her daughter. In the next bed a lonely young girl, she looked anxious, why? Her mother in law treats her in

## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

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a bad way and does not respect her illness, she was demanding her to do her daily home activities.

Its masks fall off, the first revealed a merciful face, and the other revealed a hard-hearted woman.

I don't want to reveal more about people who were around me..

but few of my relatives and many strangers provided me with support and aid since I've been diagnosed with cancer,, till now

We face many hardships through our life like illnesses, poverty, problems or any other hardship. Remember what Allah said,

***"Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you."***

[Al-Nur: 11]<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Translation of the meanings of The Noble Qura'n in the English language](#)

## ● *Lessons from my illness* ●

I wrote some posts last year while I was battling cancer. I posted them on Facebook, and many suggested having them published as a book. They were not many enough to be published as a separate book, so I preferred to include them here with these secrets of Faith.

They are sincere words that came out of my suffering and full of pain. I hope you find them useful and helpful, may Allah reward me.

~ ~ ~

### **You think you have bad luck**

You lose nothing in this worldly life  
if you didn't waste your time doing frivolous things  
And those who oppressed you shall be duly punished  
in the afterworld

~ ~ ~

### **Believe in God**

Nobody knows all the truth, only Him  
No one can make you happy; no one can make you sad

~ ~ ~

### **For sake of sublimity**

Make sure that every time you love Allah more, you grow more  
confident in Him

You will refrain from preoccupation with petty matters  
Nobody can put you down

~ ~ ~

**"Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves"**

Do what you want

Pretend what you want

Say what you want

Declare what you want

Hide where you want

Reveal what you want

To Him, you are exposed:

***“Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance”***

[Al-Isra: 25]

~ ~ ~

An established foundation

Don't grieve over hardships

If they affect you, treat yourself with patience

If somebody hurts you, just say

***“Truly Allah defends those who believe”*** [Al-Haj: 38]

And if things get tough

Just remember

***“Allah will grant after hardship ease”*** [Al-Talaq: 7]

~ ~ ~

**For sake of pureness**

To the quiet people..

Those who are full of reverence, and whom veneration arises  
every time their names are mentioned

I love their serenity..

They face the bustle of life with a deep breath

An idea in and a wisdom out..

I love their speech, their look,

their silence and the way they manage life's' twists

Even their fuss is calm..

They revolt in silence..  
Just one look from them can make others mute..  
No word can confront the glamour of their silence.  
I love the way they make decisions  
They end it with a small smile,  
full of confidence with no hesitation or fear  
Riotous persons only hurt themselves and people around them  
While quiet people are full of peace  
They relieve themselves and people around them  
**My love, respect, and peace for these quiet creatures.**

## ● Philosophy in the hospital ●

### Happiness:

I was talking with one of my friends  
I mentioned what Mustafa Mahmoud<sup>4</sup>, may Allah be merciful  
to him, said about happiness:

*“One forgets to ponder over happiness while engrossed in work,  
and this is the ultimate happiness.”*

She asked: Is ultimate happiness to forget to look for happiness?

How is that?

I said: True happiness is in Paradise as Allah said.  
Those who are looking for it in this worldly life, are actually looking  
for flawless rest, health, money, home, happy family;  
with no hardships or troubles, no hurdles or difficulties ..

They want everything to go as they wish

They mostly think about this fantasy during their leisure and idle  
times

And while they are in work, the brain will be occupied by  
the joy of doing and achieving

They avail to do useful things, they can work, attempt and achieve

This happiness generated by immersion in work will cause them  
to forget the flawless happiness they were dreaming of, and which  
will only happen in Paradise.

***“Those who remember Allah (always, and in prayers) standing,  
sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the  
creation of the heavens and the earth”*** [Al-Imran: 191]

They are living in the earthly paradise before they leave  
to the Paradise in the afterworld

---

<sup>4</sup> Egyptian doctor and author (1921-2009)

And Allah is most knowing.

~ ~ ~

**You have to say to yourself:**

I'm a Muslim

Living in a safe country

I'm healthy

I have food for today

There are millions of disadvantaged people around the world  
who look upon you as a king

So, You have to stop complaining, and to start praising Allah

Thanks Allah, you made my life good

~ ~ ~

You will not forget

You walk slowly, turning around..

No one knows your follies..

But you are still afraid..

Imagining all people watching you..

And looking after you..

But you are the one who feels regret

You think you have a strong heart, but it is very weak in reality..

Your heart beats goes fast every time you see the one you  
oppressed..

An inner voice grows louder..

It says:

You are wrong, you are a criminal, you are unjust..

It will not go down unless you repent..

And if not,

Your inner voice will not forget

Never..

Even if you forget.. It will not forget..



***“Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against  
you this Day”***

[al-Isra: 14]

~ ~ ~

## ● 🌿 **When will you understand?** 🌀

Moments of happiness are weird..

Not safe all the way..

They are questionable..

They are just “moments”

Stolen moments that invade our lives to make us calm ..

They are stolen moments..

In this life which is full of hardships..

Valuable as they are, they are only moments..

It will last forever in the Paradise..

With endless eternity..

No tiredness, no boredom

Only the foolish assume that happiness lasts long in the earthly life..

We are just visitors on this earth... Passing through it..

When you understand that

You will live your temporary sadness with happiness

~ ~ ~

## Remember

Don't think that:

People who are humble, full of peace  
Whom their wisdom shines when they speak  
Who live up and shine every day  
Who spent their nights praying for Allah

Don't assume that:

They have two hearts, three brains or twenty five legs  
They are humans like you, but they have high ambition

Don't think you can't be like them

Don't underestimate yourself

You can.

Full stop.

~ ~ ~

### **Take care...**

After a life lived defending Islam  
A life full of Fiqh (Jurisprudence) and Iman (Faith)  
At the end of his life..

Ibn Taimiya<sup>5</sup>, may Allah be merciful to him, said:

*"I regret I didn't give the Quran more time."*

Beware my friend

Not to finish you relationship with The Quran by the end of Ramadan

**Have I not warned you now?**

~ ~ ~

---

<sup>5</sup> Islamic scholar (1263-1328)

## ●🌿 The best way to revenge 🌿●

If you have been assaulted by someone,  
Who was always trying to oppress and humiliate you,  
Your anger wells up with every letter you hear from them..  
Your hatred and anger will solve nothing  
The psychological effort you put into that  
will only please their dark side while you grow more tired  
Forgive them (:  
Listen to my advice, ease and spare yourself..  
And if you have a greater soul, you treat them the best way..  
If you responded to them in revenge, You give them what  
they wanted..  
But when you meet them with kindness, you shock them, that  
is hard on them.  
When you forgive, you let them down..  
You make them shy of themselves..  
You awaken their soul, and they will try to clear out their mistakes,,,  
in a low-tone voice  
The tone that shows your peaceful revenge  
And the meanings of your supreme response  
You want to have revenge on them?  
Just forgive them  
Do you think that will be easy?  
It is difficult; only blessed patient people can do it, as Allah said:  
***“But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are  
patient, and none is granted it except the owner of the great  
portion (of the happiness in the Hereafter i.e. Paradise and in this  
world of a high moral character)”*** [Fussilat: 35]

## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

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Those who are patient are blessed, their faith helped them to  
overcome many difficulties they passed through  
Pain will teach you how to control your madness..

People who are seeking the afterlife,  
will find it easy to control themselves ..

That said,  
Don't you want to be blessed?

Forgive..  
And that is it

~ ~ ~

## Dear reader

Listen to me with your heart:

You don't know the Unseen or know what is better for you

***"It may be that you dislike things which are good for you"*** [Al-Baqarah: 216]

Listen to me with your mind:

You are human, with no power or strength

You may be running towards grief and you don't know

***"... and that you like a thing which is bad for you"*** [Al-Baqarah: 216]

So, flee to Allah:

Say in your prostration

***"O Allah plan for me, I can't do that alone"***

***"...Allah knows but you do not know"*** [Al-Baqarah: 216]

~ ~ ~

### **The Quran**

***"Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad SAW, etc.). who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise)"*** [Al-Isra : 9]

I will continue to remind you until I die:

Don't abandon The Quran.

~ ~ ~

### **Yourself**

When you occupy yourself with great things, you realize how many trifles had occupied it before..

You ask yourself: "How did I waste my precious time doing such nonsense?"

## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

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You will be relieved when you see these trivialities fall from  
your heart and disappear from your interests as you move towards  
more gracious ambitions

The vigilance motto:

If you don't occupy yourself  
with great things, petty things will occupy it

~ ~ ~

## ● Secret of prosperity ●

A soul which is full of contentment  
Is in comfort and freedom of mind,  
Believe in the God who gave you responsibilities and duties,  
He is testing your obedience.  
You don't need not be rich, to have fancy cars and huge palaces  
or to tour in the Canary islands..  
Someone may have all these things but live with a troubled soul,,  
and live in sadness and depression  
When he looks to his neighbor who lives in a house made of wood  
or mud..  
Not having what to eat for his day and may remain hungry  
for days without food,,  
But he sounds happy and satisfied.  
He wonders: why?  
It is conviction  
The soul becomes free when it feels contentment  
Satisfied with what it has  
He will not watch others' things  
He is satisfied with his simple home  
He will not feel inferior when his neighbor makes a palace  
he realizes that worshipping Allah is the only criteria for  
differentiation between people  
***“Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer)  
who has At-Taqwa”*** [Al-Hujurat: 13]  
He goes through this life confidently  
The Sky is the limit for his ambition  
He doesn't care for nonsense



## Secret gifts of Faith wrapped in my Cancer cells

---

Constant to his values  
Adherent to his goal  
Proud of his religion and principles  
Lots of characteristics  
I can't count  
We all need to be like him  
Let us try to have a content confident soul...  
~ ~ ~

● .. Razika .. ●

Five years passed since you were buried..  
I still see you every time I go to the college..  
I see you walking towards us with your aiding stick..  
A women in her thirties, battled with cancer and continued her  
studies leaning on that stick..  
To the last breath, the Quran was with you..  
And to the last minute, you were the best student, the top of the  
class and a student to Ibn Al-Qayyim  
I see you walking in this yard..reading a book.. not caring about  
the surroundings..  
You were a fast reader..as if you knew your death was getting closer,,  
and you had a limited time  
I still see you welcoming me... Running towards me with happiness...  
Screaming like a child: zahiraaaa  
And as an innocent child, you tell me that you improved in Tajweed<sup>6</sup>  
Then you start reciting the Quran with enthusiasm..waiting for my  
feedback  
When I look at your motivation, I find myself small..  
How many times I compared myself to you..  
You were jealous of my Tajweed and I was jealous of your courage ...  
Your love of the afterlife .. Your carelessness to this worldly life...  
Your hard study.. Your night prayers .. Your niqab<sup>7</sup>... Your simplicity ..  
Your modesty... etc.. Is my friend really dead?..  
Seven years and I still wonder.. **Is she really dead?**

---

<sup>6</sup> Rules of reciting The Quran

<sup>7</sup> I was wearing niqab but my doctor advised me to take it off as I have some respiratory problems. I hope if I could wear it again.



All these hardships that wrap around your neck as a snake  
And all these problems you are sinking in,  
All sadness, psychological disturbances, illnesses that surround you,  
All distress, poverty, depression.

Don't ever think:

All these are not connected to the prayer you neglected  
The Fajr prayer you delayed  
The Quran you abandoned  
Account for yourself

~ ~ ~

● **Think about this:** ●

***“Have they not looked at the heaven above them, how We have made it and adorned it, and there are no rifts in it?” [Qaf, 50:6]***

Think about this sky,

Fly with your soul to expand your insight

And say ***“Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire”*** [Al-

Imran: 191]

These are the best moments in this worldly life

Don't you know?

~ ~ ~

## ● *The way to figure it out* ●

Don't compare yourself to those who have more sins than you

Compare yourself with those who are  
more obedient and submissive to Allah

To know your real self.

***"So hasten towards all that is good"*** [Al-Baqarah: 148]

~ ~ ~

## ● Self-Esteem ●

If I take no pride in myself, it could stoop down to all that is low.  
Let those who oppress you fill their books with sins to the day of  
reckoning.

Devote yourself for worshipping Allah, do good deeds  
***“So do not become weak (against your enemy), nor be sad, and you  
will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers”*** [Al-  
Imran: 139]

~ ~ ~

## ● *An Important Slap* ●

It is better to have a slap that awakens you from your delusions  
The pain from a slap of truth is followed by peace and comfort  
There is no good in a delusion that is followed by pain

Be with God and don't worry

Smack your delusions with the truth

And say

***“Truth has come and Batil (falsehood) has vanished. Surely! Batil is  
ever bound to vanish” [Al-Isra: 81]***

~ ~ ~

## ● **Thieves** ●

There are many thieves around us, trying to manipulate our thoughts, to distort them, to mess with our principles....

They sneak into our values through bad companionship..

Film scenarios we follow half drunken ...

Through newspapers that circulate gossip news and rumours..

Through moments of lies ...

And during free times, their rusty minds

become active to play the tunes of delusions..

As humans, we work and move by our nature..

If we surrender to moments of leisure and laziness, bad thoughts will not leave us alone and will try to push us towards disobedience and sins.

Humans are weak in front of "leisure time" ... One is weak in front of "I would" ... "What if" ... "I will do"

*The past is gone, the future is unseen.. You have this moment to invest in.*

If one could but grasp the meaning of this verse,  
And 'what if' he could live his day as though it was his last and refrained from saying 'I will' and instead actually did acts that steadied his lost soul.



## **The Philosophy of Disease**

We run for our life concerns.. Until we fall tired..  
We run, with our thoughts racing with ourselves to the future..  
Forgetting our existence until,,  
We get pain, headache, fever, or cough  
Tiredness, fatigue, weakness..  
We try to ignore that ... And go through with our daily activities  
No, no use, No solution but to fall down and lay in bed..  
There we begin to do the math.. Calculating how long will it last?  
A psychological status.. We are neither dead nor alive  
We take sick leave from our daily life and work..  
We don't realize that we left our life behind at these moments  
of illness. We lose the whole perception of life, even if our souls  
are still in our bodies.  
We may interpret this feeling by the fact that illness is the twin  
of death..  
We develop intimacy with illness after a short time  
The same may happen with death, as illness is a transition  
If an illness can lead to death  
Death is not the end  
It is also a transition  
Transition to an eternal life  
That is the fact  
So, let us accompany death.

**The End**

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For instance, cancer looks like a gigantic ghost threatening your life, your dreams, your ambition, and your projects with its cells. This should not scare your faithful soul, since you know that no one dies before his day. When death approaches, any illness can be lethal even if it was a simple cold. When it is not your time no illness is grave even if it was cancer.



## .....About the Author.....

**Zahira Boudehan**, born in 1989 in Algeria. She studies Islamic science (The Quran and Sunna) at Batna University.

Zahira was diagnosed with Hodking's Lymphoma in 2015, it took her one and a half year to recover from cancer. In this book she shares some reflections about her journey with cancer, and it is her first book.

More than (3000) copies of the book were distributed in Algeria and Sudan (for free). The book is also available online.