

- 16. A Strange Forest 111
- 17. The Sixth Trip 114
- 18. What Can Change in Twenty-four Hours? 120
- 19. Some Boys Up Ahead with a Kalashnikov 125
- 20. Our Bad Situation Gets a Little Worse 131
- 21. Blindfolds, Please 136
- 22. We Came to Rescue You Guys 142
- 23. We Can't Think of Anything to Say 146
- 24. The Rules of Hospitality 151
- 25. Open House at the Torture Center 161
- 26. The Hawalya 168
- 27. My One Percent Chance 176

Acknowledgments 183

Appendix 1: A Darfur Primer 185

Appendix 2: The Universal Declaration of
Human Rights 195

Introduction

"If God must break your leg He will at least teach you to limp"—so it is said in Africa. This book is my poor limping, a modest account that cannot tell every story that deserves telling. I have seen and heard many things in Darfur that have broken my heart. I bring the stories to you because I know most people want others to have good lives, and, when they understand the situation, they will do what they can to steer the world back toward kindness. This is when human beings, I believe, are most admirable.

If you know where Egypt is on the map, you can go down from there and find Sudan. The western side of Sudan is called Darfur, which is about the size of France or Texas. Darfur is mostly flat; it has a few mountains but many endless plains of little trees, scratchy bushes, and sandy streambeds.

Darfur is where I lived with my family until the attack on our village. Our people are called the Zaghawa. We are

traditional tribal herdsmen who live in permanent villages; our grass huts are very big around and have pointed roofs that smell very good in the rain. My childhood was as full of happy adventures as yours. While you probably had a bicycle and then a first car, I had a camel, Kelgi, that I loved dearly and could make go very fast. On cold nights he might come into the hut, which was okay with everyone.

While we Zaghawa are not Arabs, many nomadic Arabs lived near us and were a part of my childhood as friends. My father took me to feasts in their tents, and they feasted with us.

Dar means land. The *Fur* are tribespeople farther south who are mostly farmers. One of the *Fur* leaders was king of the whole region in the 1500s. The region took its name from that time.

Hundreds of thousands of my people have been killed recently, as you may know. Two and a half million others are now living difficult lives in refugee camps or in solitary hiding places in desert valleys. I will explain why this is happening. If you are hungry for more details, I have included a deeper explanation in the back of this book.

As for the future, the only way that the world can say no to genocide is to make sure that the people of Darfur are returned to their homes and given protection. If the world allows the people of Darfur to be removed forever from their land and their way of life, then genocide will happen elsewhere because it will be seen as something that works. It must not be allowed to work. The people of Darfur need to go home now.

I write this for them, and for that day, and for a particular woman and her three children in heaven, and for a particular man and his daughter in heaven, and for my own father and my brothers in heaven, and for those still living who might yet have beautiful lives on the earth.

I write this also for the women and girls of Darfur. You have seen their faces wrapped in beautiful colors, and you know something of their suffering, but they are not who you think. Though they have been victimized, they are heroes more than victims. My aunt Joyar, for example, was a famous warrior who dressed like a man, fought camel thieves and Arab armies, wrestled men for sport—and always won. She refused to marry until she was in her forties. I dedicate this to her and to the girls of my village who were faster and stronger than the boys at our rough childhood games. I dedicate this to my mother, who, as a young woman, kept a circle of attacking lions away from our cattle and sheep in the bush for a long day, a long night, and all the next morning, using only the power of her voice and the banging of two sticks. The power of her voice is something I know very well.

Near my village is a beautiful mountain we have always called the Village of God. Though the Muslim religion is practiced throughout our area both by indigenous Africans like me and by Arab nomads, it is also true that our people, especially our young people, have always gone up on this mountain to put offerings into the small holes of the rocks. Meat, millet, or wildflowers may be placed in these holes, along with letters to God, thanking Him or asking Him

please for some favor. These gifts and notes have been left here long before the newer religions came to us. For a young man or woman, a letter may ask that some other young person be chosen for his or her mate. It might be a letter asking that a grandfather's illness be cured, or that the rainy season be a good one, or that a wedding be beautiful and the marriage successful. Or it might simply ask that the year ahead be good for everyone in the village below. So here it is, God: I am up there now in my heart, and I put this book in Your mountain as an offering to You. And I praise You by all Your Names, and I praise our ancient Mother of the Earth, and all the Prophets and wise men and women and Spirits of heaven and earth who might help us now in our time of need.

And for you, my friend, my reader, I thank you so much for taking this journey. It is a hard story, of course, but there are many parts that I think will surprise you and make you very happy that you came with me.

The story I am telling here is based on my memories of a time of great difficulty and confusion. I have done my best to capture the details of my experiences, and to set them down here accurately and to the utmost of my recollection, and I am grateful to those who have helped me focus and occasionally correct my account. Of course, no two people can view the same event in the same way, and I know that others will have their own tales to tell. Surely these collective tales will add up to the truth of the tragedy in Darfur.

The Translator

1. A Call from the Road

I am sure you know how important it can be to get a good phone signal. We were speeding through the hot African desert in a scratched and muddy Land Cruiser that had been much whiter a week earlier. Our driver, a Darfur tribesman like me, was swerving through thorny acacia bushes, working the gears expertly in the deep sands of another and always another ravine, which we call a wadi, and sailing over the bumps in the land—there are no roads to speak of. In the backseat, a young news filmmaker from Britain, Philip Cox, was holding on as we bounced and as our supplies thumped and clanked and sloshed around. A veteran of these deserts, he was in good humor—even after a long week of dusty travel and so many emotionally difficult interviews. Survivors told us of villages surrounded at night by men with torches and machine guns, the killing of men, women, and children, the burning of people alive in the grass huts of Darfur. They told us of the

rape and mutilation of young girls, of execution by machete of young men—sometimes eighty at a time in long lines.

You cannot be a human being and remain unmoved, yet if it is your job to get these stories out to the world, you keep going. So we did that.

I was Philip's translator and guide, and it was my job to keep us alive. Several times each hour I was calling military commanders from rebel groups or from the Chad National Army to ask if we should go this way or that way to avoid battles or other trouble. My great collection of phone numbers was the reason many reporters trusted me to take them into Darfur. I don't know how Philip got my cell number in the first place—maybe from the U.S. Embassy, or the U.S. State Department, or the British Embassy, or from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, or from one of the aid organizations or a resistance group. It seemed that everyone had my cell phone number now. He certainly did not get my number from the government of Sudan, whose soldiers would kill me if they caught me bringing in a reporter.

These satellite phone calls—and often just cell phone calls—frequently were to commanders who said, *No, you will die if you come here, because we are fighting so-and-so today*. We would then find another way.

If one rebel group hears that you have been calling another group, they might think you are a spy, even though you are only doing this for the journalist and for the story—you give the rebels nothing in return. I had to be careful about such things if I wanted to get my reporters out of Darfur alive, and so more stories could go out to the

world. Since the attack on my own village, that had become my reason, and really my only reason, for living. I was feeling mostly dead inside and wanted only to make my remaining days count for something. You have perhaps felt this way at some time. Most of the young men I had grown up with were now dead or fighting in the resistance; I, too, had chosen to risk myself, but was using my English instead of a gun.

We needed to arrive at our destination before sundown or risk attack by the Sudanese Army, or by Darfur rebels aligned with government, or by other rebels who didn't know who we were and who might kill us just to be safe. So we didn't like what happened next.

Our Land Cruiser was suddenly blocked by six trucks that emerged from a maze of desert bushes. These were Land Cruisers, too, but with their roofs cut off completely so men could pile in and out instantly, as when they have to escape a losing battle or get out before a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) reaches them. Dusty men with Kalashnikov rifles piled out. On the order of their commander, they pointed their guns at us. When so many guns are pulled ready at the same time, the crunching sound is memorable. We moved slowly out of our vehicle with our hands raised.

These men were clearly rebel troops: their uniforms were but dirty jeans; ammunition belts hung across their chests; their loosely wrapped turbans, or *shals*—head scarves, really—were caked with the dust of many days' fighting. No doctors travel with these troops, who fight almost every day and leave their friends in shallow graves.

Emotionally, they are walking dead men who count their future in hours. This makes them often ruthless, as if they think everyone might as well go to the next life with them. Many of them have seen their families murdered and their villages burned. You can imagine how you would feel if your hometown were wiped away and all your family killed by an enemy whom you now roam the land to find and kill so you can die in peace.

Among the rebels are the Sudan Liberation Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army, the Justice and Equality Movement, and several others. There are other groups in Chad, and they travel across the borders as they please. Where they get their guns and money is often a mystery, but Darfur has been filled with automatic weapons from the time when Libya attacked Chad and used Darfur as a staging area. Also, it must be understood that Sudan is aligned with radical Islamic groups and is, as a separate matter, letting China get most of its oil. So some Western interests and some surrounding countries are thought to be involved in supporting the rebel groups. It is sad how ordinary people suffer when these chess games are played.

Nearly half of Africa is covered by the pastoral lands of herding villages, and much of this land has great wealth below and poor people above. They are among the three hundred million Africans who earn less than a dollar a day, and who are often pushed out of the way or killed for such things as oil, water, metal ore, and diamonds. This makes the rise of rebel groups very easy. The men who stopped us probably needed no persuasion to join this group.

The men's weary-looking young commander walked to me and said in the Zaghawa language, "Daoud Ibarahaem Hari, we know all about you. You are a spy. I know you are Zaghawa like us, not Arab, but unfortunately we have some orders, and we have to kill you now."

It was easy for him to know I was a Zaghawa from the small scars that look like quotation marks and were cut into my temples by my grandmother when I was an infant. I told him yes, I am Zaghawa, but I am no spy.

The commander breathed in a sad way and then put the muzzle of his M-14 rifle to one of these scars on my head. He asked me to hold still and told Philip to stand away. He paused to tell Philip in broken English not to worry, that they would send him back to Chad after they killed me.

"Yes, fine, but just a sec," Philip replied, holding his hand up to stop the necessary business for a moment while he consulted me.

"What is going on?"

"They think I am a spy, and they are going to shoot the gun and it will make my head explode, so you should stand away."

"Who are they?" he asked.

I told him the name of the group, nodding carefully in the direction of a vehicle that had their initials hand-painted on the side.

He looked at the vehicle and lowered his hands to his hips. He looked the way the British look when they are upset by some unnecessary inconvenience. Philip wore a

well-wrapped turban; his skin was tanned and a little cracked from his many adventures in these deserts. He was not going to stand by and lose a perfectly good translator.

"Wait just a moment!" he said to the rebel commander. "Do . . . *not* . . . *shoot* . . . *this* . . . *man*. This man is not a spy. This man is my translator and his name is Suleyman Abakar Moussa of Chad. He has his papers." Philip thought that was my name. I had been using that name to avoid being deported from Chad to a certain death in Sudan, where I was wanted, and to avoid being otherwise forced to stay in a Chad refugee camp, where I could be of little service.

"I hired this man to come here; he is not a spy. We are doing a film for British television. Do you understand this? It's absolutely essential that you understand this." He asked me to translate, just to be sure, which, under my circumstance, I was happy to do.

More than his words, Philip's manner made the commander hesitate. I watched the commander's finger pet the trigger. The gun muzzle was hot against my temple. Had he fired it recently, or was it just hot from the sun? I decided that if these were about to be my last thoughts, I should try some better ones instead. So I thought about my family and how I loved them and how I might see my brothers soon.

"I am going to make a telephone call," Philip explained, slowly withdrawing his satellite phone from his khaki pants pocket. "You will not shoot this man, because your commander will talk to you on this telephone momentarily—you understand?" He looked up a number from his pocket

notebook. It was the personal number of the rebel group's top commander. He had interviewed him the previous year.

"Your top man," he said to all the gunmen standing like a firing squad around us as he waited for the call to go through. "Top man. Calling his personal number now. It's ringing. Ringing and ringing."

God is good. The satellite phone had a strong signal. The number still worked. The distant commander answered his own phone. He remembered Philip warmly. Miracle after miracle.

Philip talked on the phone in a rapid English that I quietly translated for the man holding the gun.

Philip held one finger up as he spoke, begging with that finger and with his eyes for one more moment, one more moment. He laughed to show that he and the man on the phone were old friends.

"They are old friends," I translated.

Philip then held out the satellite phone to the commander, who pressed the muzzle even harder against my head.

"Please talk to him now. Please. He says it's an order for you to talk to him."

The commander hesitated as if it were some trick, but finally reached over and took the phone. The two commanders talked at length. I watched his trigger finger rise and fall like a cobra and then finally slither away. We were told to leave the country immediately.

To not get killed is a very good thing. It makes you

smile again and again, foolishly, helplessly, for several hours. Amazing. I was not shot—*humdallah*. *My brothers, you will have to wait for me a little longer.*

Our driver had been wide-eyed through all this, since drivers often do not fare well in this kind of situation. There was joy and some laughter in the Land Cruiser as we sped back toward the village of Tine—which you say “Tina”—on the Chad-Sudan border.

“That was amazing what you did,” I said to Philip. We drove a few trees farther before he replied.

“Amazing, yes. Actually, I’ve been trying to get through to him for weeks,” he said. “Lucky thing, really.”

The driver, who spoke almost no English, asked me what Philip had said. I told him that he had said *God is good*, which, indeed, is what I believe he was saying.

2. We Are Here

Philip asked me if my name was Daoud or Suleyman. I told him that I was Daoud when in the Darfur regions of Sudan, but I was Suleyman in Chad. I explained my situation.

“Everyone has lots of names around here,” was his reply. He asked what I preferred to be called. Daoud, please, though many of my close friends also call me David, which is where Daoud comes from in the Bible. I asked him for the commander’s phone number, which he read to me.

We crossed back into Chad and moved up along the border, then came back into Darfur farther north. It would be worth our trouble not to run into that same rebel group again. But, one way or another, we would get the story for Philip, and Philip would get it out to the world. You have to be stronger than your fears if you want to get anything done in this life.

The problem in dealing with rebel groups is that it is often difficult to know who is on which side on any given day. The Arab government in Khartoum—the government of Sudan—makes false promises to make temporary peace with one rebel group and then another to keep the non-Arab people fighting one another. The government makes deals with ambitious commanders who are crazy enough to think the government will promote them after the war, when in fact they will be discarded if not killed then. These breakaway commanders are sometimes told to attack other rebel groups, or even to kill humanitarian workers and the troops sent from other countries to monitor compliance with cease-fire treaties. This is done so the genocide can carry on and the land can be cleared of the indigenous people. History may prove me wrong in some of these perceptions, but this is how it seems to most people who are there.

It is also believed that the government pays some of the traditional Arab people, many tribes of whom are otherwise our friends, to form deadly horseback militias called the Janjaweed to brutally kill the non-Arab Africans and burn our villages. The word *Janjaweed* may be from an ancient word meaning “faith warriors,” or it may be a combination of words meaning “evil spirits on horses,” or, some believe, it just means “gunmen on horseback.”

This is my prediction: When the government has removed or killed all the traditional non-Arabs, then it will get the traditional Arabs to fight one another so they too will disappear from valuable lands. This is already happening in areas where the removal of non-Arab Africans is nearly complete.

“So why did you come back home to Darfur just in time for this war?” Philip asked me over the roar of the Land Cruiser as we again bounced through wadis and over sand banks.

“A very good question!” I shouted back to him with a laugh.

On a day when you come so close to death, you should think about what you are doing here. Yes, you have a job to do in this place, but maybe you are also a little crazy to be here when you could be far away. But death had been chasing me for a long time now, from when I was thirteen and the world lit up around me, and I first saw men flying in pieces above me.

Here is that story. I was finishing my afternoon chores and thinking about the coming night of playing our village games, *Anashel* and *Whee*, rough-and-tumble sports played on the moonlit sand. Twenty government troop trucks suddenly surrounded our village. The commander gathered everyone from the village and organized the beating of some of the village men—quite old men—and demanded to know the precise whereabouts of the younger men who were presumed to be hiding in the hills with the resistance groups. That in fact was where they were, but the old men did not know exactly where they were, so the commander soon realized that the beatings were useless. He burned six huts to make his point.

Changes in the weather had forced the Arab nomads to graze their animals farther south into Zaghawa lands. In the past they would have asked permission, and a few camels might have changed hands. If no bargain could be

reached, and if they used the water and the grass anyway, a challenge would be made for a battle of honor on a traditional battlefield, far from any village. After that fight, the matter would be considered settled and the Arabs and the Zaghawa would immediately be friends again, dining in one another's homes.

What was different now was that the Arab government of Sudan, because it wanted the more settled people off the land, was taking sides with the Arab nomads and providing some with guns, helicopters, bombers, and tanks to decide the arguments. This had driven many of the young Zaghawa men to join resistance groups. The Sudanese Army commanders were now going from village to village, looking for these fighters, telling the women to make their men turn in their weapons or else see their homes burned. Pressure was also being put on the people to move into the towns and cities "where they would be safe." If they did this, however, they would live in the most severe kind of poverty.

The commander had grabbed me and two of my cousins to be his translators, since he knew that we were of school age and that all students were forced to learn some Arabic, which is what he spoke. If they caught you speaking Zaghawa in the schools, or not knowing your Arab words, they would use camel whips on you. The commander stood up on the running board of his truck and made us say all his orders about giving up weapons. The women were crying and begging the soldiers to stop the beatings and let the children run away.

Often such commanders would shoot a few people to

emphasize the seriousness of the matter. In many instances, whole villages were burned. But this commander was not that strict. He told the three of us children that we must show them the way to a village he needed to visit next. We did not want to go with him, because, unlike the women and the old men who were being beaten, we knew the village defenders were in the steep wadi beyond the village waiting to attack these trucks. But we were pushed into the front seat of the first truck and were soon speeding out of the village.

Suddenly, there were painfully loud explosions all around us and machine-gun fire everywhere as the trucks came to a halt and the soldiers streamed out to find positions. We screamed from the window, "We are here! We are here! It's us!" The commander pulled us out and used us as shields as he ran into the bushes. We put our faces close to the sand and the RPG rounds exploded into some of the trucks, sending any stragglers into the sky with trails of smoke and red mists of blood. The furious gunfight seemed to go on forever, but it was actually just a few minutes: guerrilla fighters always withdraw quickly to fight another day. When the shooting stopped, the commander stood and looked down at us.

"I think you helped make a trap for me," he said, waving his pistol in our faces. We waited to die. He looked at us and, shaking his head, mumbled something we could not make out because our hearing had been hurt badly by the explosions. He then simply walked over to his men. They collected their dead and wounded and drove away in

their working trucks. We ran back to the village, yelling, "We are here!" in case the defenders were still in the bushes. Our mothers and sisters greeted us, crying, dancing around us and saying so many times, *Humdallah! Thank you, God!*

The three of us couldn't hear much of anything for a few days. Eleven people died, mostly government soldiers.

Soon after that my father sent me to school in the largest city in North Darfur, El Fasher. I was his youngest son. Living with cousins, I could finish primary school and continue on to intermediate and secondary school. I was very sad to leave home.

Life in El Fasher was overwhelming—too many people, too many cars, too many new things. I got very sick the second week, mostly homesick. El Fasher is a city of mud buildings and sandy streets: so many streets that I got lost all the time. There are some government buildings and a large prison where, everyone knew, terrible things happened.

My brother Ahmed knew from our cousins that I was having a hard time, so he came to see me. He stayed for a week until I got better, walking me to school with his long arm over my shoulder and making me feel like home. He said that fate had given me a blessing, and that I should work hard at school. He came to visit whenever he could, which was quite often. He showed me good things about the town. Eventually I grew to like El Fasher.

I got a job cleaning tables at a restaurant after classes. I watched television for the first time. A cousin would put his TV outside his home so all the cousins and neighbors

could watch. I didn't like it much because it was mostly about the government of Sudan's military. I did like the movies, but the first one I saw was a Clint Eastwood movie, and I went running down the street when I thought the bullets would come out of it from all the shooting. My cousins came laughing down the street to get me.

A movie house played American films once a week and films from India the rest of the time. It was very cheap; I went to see every new film with a few coins of my restaurant money.

At the restaurant, and from the older students, I began to learn about politics. There were many military operations against the Zaghawa at that time, and many Zaghawa were leaving El Fasher to join resistance groups. Dictator Omar Hassan Ahmal al-Bashir had just taken over Sudan, which made us all angry. A Chad commander named Idriss Déby was fighting the Chad government for control of that country. He is a Zaghawa and we thought he was a great hero. Some wanted to go join him. He would later become president of Chad.

This fighting sounded like a good idea to me. I dropped out of high school and hid for two weeks, planning with friends to go to Chad and join up with Déby.

Ahmed came and found me. He sat me down under a tree and told me that I should use my brain, not a gun, to make life better. He said it would be wrong to turn away from the gifts given to me by God and my family.

"Shooting people doesn't make you a man, Daoud," he said. "Doing the right thing for who you are makes you a man." So we walked back to town and I returned to school.

I became interested in English because of a wonderful teacher, and I became lost in the classic books of England and America. I particularly loved Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*. These changed me; they opened and freed my mind. I still paid attention to politics, however.

Around this time my father wanted me to accept an arranged marriage and come home to be a camel herder, just as the men of our family had always done. I thought I might do that, as I loved camels so, but I wanted to see something of the world first, and I wanted to choose my wife and let her choose me, too. A camel, by the way, can be away from its human family or camel family for twenty years and still know them very well when somehow it comes back. Camels are completely loyal and full of love and courage.

My urge to see something of the larger world was perhaps from all the television and movies and mostly the books. I finished my studies and, giving my apologies to my father, who took me for a walk and said I must learn to take care of my family one way or another if I was to be a man, I headed to Libya to find a good job.

I got there by camel and by truck. Déby, the new president of Chad, was traveling overland to Libya at the same time. He and his motorcade got hopelessly lost in the dunes. Helicopters from Libya found most of them and led them onward. The truck caravan I was in found the rest of his vehicles and gave the men much-needed water. At an

oasis, I saw Déby standing and went to greet him and shake his hand.

When you travel across the Sahara by camel, or even by vehicle, it is easy to get lost in the dunes—there are no roads. You just go.

A special red salt, dug from North Darfur, is put in camels' water to help them make the long trip. Horses are of no use here, since it would take three or four camels to carry the water and food needed by one horse. It is better just to take the camels.

If you travel in the summer months, the sun and heat will be very hard on the camels; if you travel in the winter months, the freezing sandstorms will cut your face if you do not hide from them deep in your robes. These are not small trips: you might take your camels a thousand miles, which would be like traveling from Athens to Berlin through all of Serbia, Austria, and the Czech Republic, or from Miami Beach to Philadelphia—a very long way without roads or shelter.

There are many human bones in the desert, particularly where North Darfur blends into the great dunes of the Sahara. Some of these bones are still wearing their clothes and leathery skin, while others have been bleached by hundreds of years of the searing sun. Mirages make birds sitting on distant dunes—birds no bigger than your fist—look like camels. Mirages make dry flatlands look like distant lakes. Mirages make the bones of a single human skeleton look like the buildings of a city far ahead. This sounds impossible, but the Sahara is an impossible place. All trails are erased with each wind. You can note the stars

at night, if it is clear, or see where the sun rises or sets, also if it is clear, but it is not always clear, and the tilted horizon provided by the great dunes disorients you even under a cloudless sky. From ten in the morning until about four in the afternoon you cannot guess the direction.

You are modern and think your compass and your GPS will keep you from trouble. But the batteries will give out in your GPS, or the sand will ruin it. Your compass may break or become lost as you try to put away your bedding one morning in a hard sandstorm. So you will want to know the ways that have worked for thousands of years.

If you are good, like my father and brothers, you will put a line of sticks in the sand at night, using the stars to mark your next morning's direction of travel; you can extend this line as needed. Be careful: some people die because they look to a distant mountain as their guide, but the wind moves these mountains around; you might travel in circles until your eyes close and your heart withers.

It says everything about this land to know that even the mountains are not to be trusted, and that the crunching sound under your camel's hooves is usually human bones, hidden and revealed as the wind pleases.

3. The Dead Nile

My years away from Darfur were mostly good years. It takes nothing away from them to say that I ended this sojourn as a prisoner in Egypt.

In a prison in Aswan, southern Egypt, a very old jailer—perhaps the age of my own father—was kind enough to let me talk to him through the bars late at night. My Arabic served me well with him, and he asked about my adventures. His company was very welcome.

“Why did you go to Libya? How is it there for a young man like yourself?” he asked as he made a cigarette for himself and one for me.

I told him that I had found a warm community of Zaghawa friends and cousins working along the seacoast there. They made a place for my mattress and found me a restaurant job at a military academy. The Arab students there were also kind to me and lent me their books to study,