Great

He was resolute whenever he spoke or acted. He was determined whenever he set his mind upon something or advanced toward it. He was proud whenever humiliation threatened him, defiant whenever degradation was demanded of him, dignified whenever dishonor was imposed upon him.

God granted him a pure heart, a fiery spirit, a stainless conscience, a noble character, and a tongue sharp and discerning like the edge of a sword: it touched nothing without cutting through it. Then fate hurled at him calamities and hardships, yet his strength did not weaken, his sharpness did not dull, his character did not fracture, and he never turned aside from the path he had chosen for himself.

Indeed, the calamities themselves could not stand against him. They fled before him defeated and exhausted.

Not every hardship that confronts great men is evil, and not every blessing granted to them is good. These overflowing blessings with which God favors a great man are themselves a kind of trial, for they may tempt him toward vanity, arrogance, and laziness. Likewise, the harsh afflictions by which God tests great men are often a form of encouragement and purification, teaching them endurance, patience before disaster, and superiority in the struggle against events.

Saad was tested by immense blessings, yet they corrupted nothing within him. He was tested by relentless misfortunes, yet they blunted neither his will nor his determination, nor did they ever allow despair to enter his great soul.

The Egyptians united in loving and honoring him before the Revolution because he was the leader of their intellectual elite and the guide who led them toward their highest ideals of freedom, dignity, independence, and national pride. It was to him that Qasim Amin turned when he published *The Liberation of Women* and found himself abandoned by society. Muhammad Abduh and his few loyal companions also found refuge beside him, for they represented Egypt’s hopes and ideals at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

The Egyptians united again in loving and honoring him during the Revolution because he led the entire people toward that precious hope which before the war had belonged only to the elite, but after the war spread among all Egyptians.

After the Revolution, however, the Egyptians differed concerning him. The overwhelming majority remained loyal to him, while a smaller group rose in opposition, resisting and disputing him with all the strength they possessed.

Against him also stood the mightiest empire on earth: the most powerful, the most violent, the widest in dominion and authority. It exiled him, then recalled him; banished him again, then released him when it could no longer prevail over him.

Yet throughout his life he remained smiling in prosperity and smiling in adversity alike. Blessings never drove him to arrogance, nor did calamities weaken or humiliate him. Throughout his struggle he remained steadfast before his Egyptian opponents and mockingly defiant toward the disasters inflicted upon him by foreign enemies until both alike grew weary of contending against him.

Then those same opponents came to him, placing their hands in his, acknowledging his leadership, and cooperating with him in goodness and public service. Even his foreign adversaries came to recognize that there was no path toward winning the confidence of the Egyptian people except through agreement with this man.

Thus he spent the final chapter of his great life with the unanimous love and admiration of the Egyptian people secured around him. No one dissented. No one withdrew from him. And this at a moment when he had overcome a fierce and stubborn enemy intoxicated by the greatest military triumph known to history in the greatest war history had known.

Then this great man died, and all Egypt mourned him, grieving as though it had lost the greatest of its sons—not merely in modern times, nor in the Middle Ages, but since the loss of its independence in ancient history itself.

Even the English who had opposed him, struggled against him, and subjected him to endless intrigue and suffering grieved his loss, because they had lost a noble adversary who might one day have become their closest friend and who might even have reconciled the Egyptian people with them.

Thus fortune smiled upon this great man, and he met fortune with greatness. Fortune frowned upon him, and he met its frown with equal greatness. He knew how to be noble in peace, noble in conflict, noble in struggle, and noble in truce.

He experienced hatred in its fiercest form, yet hatred never corrupted him. He experienced love in its most beautiful form, yet love never made him arrogant. He departed from this life after filling the hearts of the living, and the passing of days, months, and years after his death has not diminished his place in hearts but increased it.

His authority over souls has not weakened but grown stronger. Forgetfulness has not erased his memory but rather protected it, making him a permanent example before the Egyptian people and before all the peoples of the East, who seek in him an ideal model and learn from his life patience in adversity, perseverance in defending [redacted], contempt for the schemes of enemies, and steadfastness before hostile plots.

The truly great man is an immortal book. Time does not write him for one generation or one people alone, but for all generations and all peoples. Men may know the beginning of his story, but they never know its end.

They will not know the end of Saad's book merely because they know the year of his birth and the year of his death. Death does not close the lives of great men. Perhaps it truly begins them, or at least begins their finest and most fruitful chapters, for death removes from them all that is mortal while preserving what cannot perish.

Egypt and the East may face changing hardships and alternating fortune, prosperity and suffering, yet they will always remember that this man opened before them the gate to a life of dignity and honor and taught them how to seek its means, walk its difficult paths, and endure the sacrifices and pain required to attain freedom and independence.

Egypt and the East will continue searching for the source of Saad's greatness and asking how such greatness became possible. They will discover it in his patience, which never wearied before hardship; in his perseverance, which never ceased striving; in his forbearance, which never became cruelty when power allowed cruelty; in his anger, which never compromised with falsehood when truth refused compromise.

They will find it in his tongue, which never hesitated when speech was required; in his pen, which never faltered when action was necessary; in his mind, which never tired when thought was demanded;

and in his intelligence, which never retreated before any problem or difficulty but penetrated to the deepest truth of every matter before it.

And perhaps people have known only the smallest part of this great man. For the lives of great men reveal their secrets only after time has passed and the lives of ordinary men have disappeared into forgetfulness.

Let Egyptians remember Saad today and tomorrow. In doing so they do not honor Saad so much as they honor themselves. Saad has already passed into that eternal realm where great men gain nothing from human remembrance. Rather, it is people who benefit from remembering the great, because in their lives they find lessons in patience, courage, and disdain for catastrophe.

How desperately Egyptians need, every day and especially in these difficult times, to remember Saad and contemplate his life so that they may learn how patience endures calamity, how struggle continues when enemies unite, and how devotion rises when ■■■■■ calls upon its sons to sacrifice their strength, labor, wealth, and even their souls in order to preserve its dignity and achieve the freedom and independence it desires.