***Without Return: Memoirs of an Egyptian Jew 1930–1957* by Jacques Sardas**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Why did you write *Without Return*?**

I wrote *Without Return* for my family, particularly for my grandchildren. Their questions and curiosity inspired me. My story, after all, is part of theirs. As they get older, I hope they will continue to be curious—that they, too, will ask questions, seek knowledge, and pass along their stories to their children and grandchildren. I hope this book will inspire them as they have inspired me. I also hope it will encourage others to write down their stories and keep the torch of family history burning. If each generation did not take seriously its responsibility to pass along its traditions and stories to those who follow, where would we be?

**What is the main message of Without Return?**

The main message of *Without Return* is that determination and hard work can overcome anything—humble beginnings, misunderstandings, poverty, pain, persecution, and uncertainty.

**How long did it take you to write *Without Return*?**

I began writing *Without Return* around 2008, after my grandson Jake asked me to write the book. Fortunately, many memories came to mind as I sat down to write. At times I couldn’t decide what to put in the book and what to leave out. I published a much longer version of the book in a limited quantity for my family and friends, but the length was daunting. I decided to condense it so that it would be easier to read, then I decided to make this condensed version available to the general public. After all, over the course of so many years, I have experienced difficult, scary, and challenging moments as well as happy, joyful, and rewarding moments—and I want to share them with as many people as possible.

**As someone who has been a refugee himself, what would you like people to understand about immigrants?**

Refugees chose freedom over the familiar, especially when their situation is painful, dangerous, and degrading. For me, the words “without return” on my Egyptian exit visa served as an incentive. They made me realize that failure was not an option. Some immigrants are more highly motivated than native-born citizens. Immigrants are happier and more welcome when they assimilate with the people in their new country while still maintaining the practice of their religion and their ethnic origin. My wife, Etty, and I will remain forever grateful for the help we received while we were struggling to start a new life.

**What kept you going, even when it was hard to stay determined?**

1. The memory of my mother, Dora,  who sacrificed her life for her children kept me going, even when it was hard to do so. She made me believe that a birthmark I used to have on my wrist was a lucky charm from God. She’d say, “You got the mark because you’re exceptional—because you’re smart. God chose you among all the other boys to be the marked one.” So I began to rub the mark on my wrist every time I faced a challenge, and the habit stayed with me. It reminds me that my mother helped me gain confidence and get the better of my anger and disappointments.

2. My obsessive desire to break the mold of my poverty and not remain in the same social caste into which I was born keeps me determined.

**What was it like to write a book when you had never written one before?**

Writing *Without Return* helped me learn more about myself. I was also able to sort through my feelings about leaving Egypt all those years ago. When my former boss and mentor was in hospice, around 2010, Etty and I went to visit him. It was hard to accept the changes that had altered his body and mind, but they did not change what he meant to me. I realized that maybe I could think of Egypt the same way. It, too, had gone through fundamental changes, but they shouldn’t wipe away what the Egypt of my childhood meant to me. It was a beautiful country and remains an important part of my life.

**You achieved great success as a businessman. Besides determination and hard work, what are the other secrets to your business success?**

I offer these tips for business success:

1. At the entry level, I increased my value to the company by accepting assignments that were not part of my job—assignments that others turned down because they were unwilling or too busy to perform them. I doubled my efforts.

2. As a manager, getting along with people was an important factor—keeping the morale of my team high and being with them on the front lines, sharing challenges and successes. I had to be a leader. I had to mind the well-being of those who depended on me. I had to earn their respect with my behavior and my results.

3. As a CEO, I created a culture of quality, trust, teamwork, and continuous improvement. I established an efficient and steady communication process company-wide. I acted as a teacher and as a motivator to my management team, explaining our culture and defining our objectives and strategies, so that they in turn could convey them to their teams. This way the whole company could pull together in the same direction.

4. My lifetime commitment to physical fitness contributed at every level to my success. A sound body equals a sound mind.

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