



Kabalan family history

MY KABALAN FAMILY, LEBANON, AFIFA, AND ANEMONE (THE FLOWER OF FREEDOM)

Nothing is left to chance. The history of my family does not begin with the great achievements made and the works performed by my Great Hero, my paternal grandfather Don Kabalan, for the Arab-Islamic community in Argentine soil. Rather, it dates back to before the 1920s when the invasions in Lebanon and the patriotism of the Kabalan family led them to fight for the freedom of Lebanon, now the Lebanese Republic.

But later poverty and hunger in some areas of Lebanon, as well as the post-war social and emotional quality of life, forced my grandfather Kabalan to emigrate with profound grief and confusion, together with his mother Asma and his brother Hassan, to the now so beloved and generous Argentina!

Some time later and after many acts of faith for the Arab-Islamic community, the visionary Kabalan met Afifa, who was my grandmother. Kabalan and Afifa shared a family tie as is often the case with Mediterranean families.

Afifa, the Arab name meaning “being decent, chaste,” is the name I chose for my recent initiative. Afifa, my *setta* (grandmother), was a woman who accompanied my grandfather in his long fight for the preservation of both Arab and Islamic traditions in such a faraway land.



And thus it was as part of this great dream that Afifa was born, as well as the Anemone flower—in Arabic language “Shaqa’iq An- Nau’man”—which accompanies this project; the wild flower that grows in every corner of the Lebanon, with its deep red, the same red as the flag, the same red that symbolizes martyrs’ struggles.

The Anemone flower is usually identified with the essence of being a woman, no matter their race or religion. It is a woman, a flower, a sweet smell, and a symbol of life and protection that while needs to be protected at times because of its natural sensitivity, in most cases it is she

who protects, gives shelter, educates, and it is she who fights like the women from Jerusalem, Palestine, Iraq, Syria or Lebanon!

The Anemone flower reminds me of all women who have fought and still fight for their rights and freedom. This flower blooms regardless of being planted or watered; it grows according to normal plant life cycles and as a result of Divine will. The Anemone flower will guide you through those narrow paths in Lebanon that may lead you to the snowy mountains or the Mediterranean shores and its caves where marine turtles swim.

The Anemone flower blossoms in the corners where the Prophet Jesus worked his miracles and Saint Peter preached to the Christians; Anemone grows in the land of martyrs in south Lebanon; it grows where the Romans, Ottomans and Greeks have taught and learned about the land of the Phoenicians, the Land of the Cedars, the small and magical Lebanon.

Anemone blooms among mosques whose call for prayer compels Muslim believers to comply with their obligation and hope, "The Salah," and it grows between the Christian Temple and the Islamic Temple, because there are many places where both types of temples can be found down the same path.

Afifa, my grandfather Kabalan, and the wild Anemone flower are the drivers behind the construction of knowledge regarding the woman in the Middle East and the Islamic World from a positive perspective in a land open to other cultures as is the case with Argentina.

The old saying has it that behind every great man, there is a great woman who accompanies him, and I have no doubt that Afifa was a great woman who mirrors the greatest female fighters in every respect.

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