



SAINT BARSOUM EL ERIAN

*“Remember those who rule over you,
who have spoken the word of God to
you, whose faith follow, considering
the outcome of their conduct”
Hebrews 13:7*

His Birth

St. Barsoum was born in 1257 A.D. from pious parents. His father was the faithful scribe of Queen Shagaret El-Dor, who gave him the title of “preferred notable”; his mother was from the family of El-Taban.

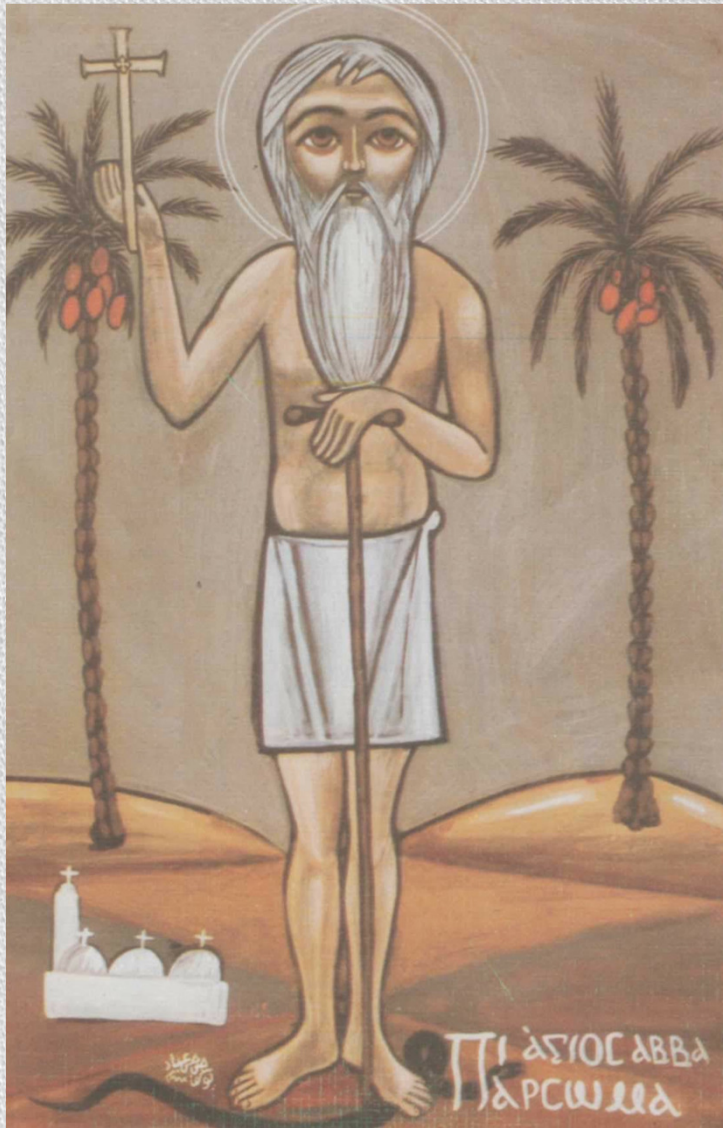


Determination:

When his parents passed away, St. Barsoum inherited their great fortune and was placed under the care of his uncle, who coveted St. Barsoum's riches.

St. Barsoum did not resist his uncle, for he remembered the words of Solomon the Wise, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity . . . What profits a man of all his labor which he endures under the sun?" (Eccl. 1:2) Some of St. Barsoum's relatives tried to incite him to sue his uncle but he utterly refused.

Making a Choice: Poverty



St. Barsoum lived outside of the city for five years, suffering the harshness of the summer heat and of the winter cold.

He wore no clothing except a hairy sackcloth, following the example of the St. Paul, the first hermit.

Ascetic Living:

St. Barsoum went to live as a hermit in a cave adjoining the church of Saint Mercurious in old Cairo.

Strong Faith:

In the cave lived a large snake who prevented people from entering. When St. Barsoum tried to enter the cave, the church's people stopped him, for they feared for his life.

Fearless, St. Barsoum raised his arms toward heaven, prayed, then crossed himself and proceeded saying, "O my Lord Christ, the Son of the Living God, who gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. You granted healing to the children of Israel, who were bitten by the serpents, when they looked to the brass serpent. Now, I look to you, o You who was hung on the Cross, so that You might grant me the power to be able to overcome this beast." Then St. Barsoum made the sign of the cross over himself, and moved toward the serpent saying, "You trampled the serpent and the snakes, and You tread upon the lion and the dragon. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Then he said to the serpent, "**O blessed one**, stand still in your place." He made the sign of the cross over the serpent. He prayed to God and asked Him to remove the beastly nature from the serpent. As St. Barsoum finished his prayer, **the serpent changed its nature and became tame**. The saint said to the serpent, "Henceforth, O blessed one, you shall not have power or might to harm any man, but rather you shall be subject and obedient to what I say to you." The serpent manifested signs of submission and obedience, and became with the saint as the lion was with Daniel, the prophet, in the den.

Simplicity:

After St. Barsoum left the cave, he lived on the roof of the church, again enduring the summer heat and the winter cold for fifteen years. His skin became dark as he spent his time meditating, worshiping and serving his fellow man.

His reputation of sanctity spread so far and wide that many people, Christian and Moslem alike, went to him seeking his blessings.

Continuing to only wear the goatskin around his waist, St. Barsoum became known as “El-Erian,” which means the naked or the disrobed. God granted St. Barsoum the gift of performing signs and miracles.

Having the Spirit of a Servant:

St. Barsoum offered the comfort of the Holy Spirit to his people in a time of severe troubles and tribulations for Christians in Egypt. In addition to the closing of churches, the Christians in Egypt were forced to wear blue turbans, but St. Barsoum refused to replace his white turban. The rulers of that time visited him and saw his white turban, but no one dared to force him to wear a blue one for they knew that the power of God was with him.

Eventually, however, Saint Barsoum was arrested with a number of Christians and thrown into prison. While in jail, he kept praying to our Heavenly Father on behalf of his harassed brothers. Relief came rapidly and the imprisoned were released and allowed to go in peace.

Performing Miracles:

After that incident, Barsoum went to Turah, a town south of Cairo near Helwan, and there he lived in the roof of a church in the Shahrān monastery. One day the people who came to see the saint were so numerous that the abbot of the monastery was embarrassed because he did not have enough food for them. Noticing what was happening, St. Barsoum called one of the monks who worked in the kitchen and asked him to bring him a little of the soup they were cooking. The saint prayed over the food, made the sign of the cross and asked the monk to take it back to the kitchen and mix it with the rest of the soup. St. Barsoum then asked the monks to serve the food to everyone, and the Lord, who blessed the five loaves and the two fish, also blessed the food of the monastery and everybody had their fill. When the abbot saw what happened, he went to the saint confessing his weak faith.

Performing Miracles (cont.)

It was told also, that while St. Barsoum was preaching to a group of people, he stopped talking unexpectedly. Then he looked up and said, “Please, Saint George, save him!” After a little while, a man entered the room panting and trembling. Saint Barsoum told him, “Thank God for your safety! Please tell us what happened.” The man said, “On my way to the monastery, some men attacked me, so I cried, ‘Save me Abba Barsoum!’ Suddenly, I saw a man, dressed in white and mounting a beautiful horse, chasing the robbers. Then he accompanied me to the door of the monastery and disappeared.” The people who were present glorified God, who answered the prayers of St. Barsoum instantly and sent St. George to save the good man.

Performing Miracles (cont.)

A prominent Muslim judge called Sheik Zein was bed-ridden for nine months suffering terrible pain in his legs. One night he saw in a dream, a man dressed in rags asking him about his ailment. The Sheik said that he had weak legs and that the doctors could not help him. Then he asked the poor man about his name, and he replied, “My name is Barsoum El-Erian.” In the morning, the Sheik sent his son to the Shahrān monastery with a basket of pears as a gift to Saint Barsoum. He told his son to ask the saint to pray so that God may heal him. When St. Barsoum saw the judge’s son, he called him by his name, took one of the pears, blessed it and said, “Go back to your father and let him eat from this pear, and in the name of Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead after four days, your father will be healed.” The son hurried home and gave his father the pear, and told him what had happened. The sheik started to eat the pear, but before he finished it, he was able to stand on his feet. Completely cured, he cried, “Your blessing O holy Christian, your blessing my master Barsoum El-Erian!”

The Blessed Aroma:

The cave which St. Barsoum dwelt in still exists and can be found near the entrance of Saint Mercurios's church 10 meters under the ground with 18 steps leading to it. An altar has been built inside the cave. On September 27 of every year, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is chanted on this altar in St. Barsoum's honor. Many sick people attend the celebration to be healed by the prayers of St. Barsoum.

St. Barsoum El-Erian departed to the Lord on September 10, 1317 AD and was buried in the Shahrān monastery.



Glory Be to God Forever. Amen.