

## Bu-Saleh

A simple Kuwaiti and a man of God, as they say, Bu-Saleh has an inspirational story worthy of writing. My first encounter with him was in the mid-1980s during my employment in the credit sector in one of the banks. I found his request for an export letter of credit rather strange because Kuwait only imports and never exports! I jokingly asked: "What are you exporting? Oil?!" "No, leather," he laughed, "I own a tannery." He invited me to visit the factory, and so I did. I was surprised by his factory, but even more so when I found his bedroom was next to his office. My curiosity was endless. He told me: "I sleep in the factory so that I can supervise everything after dawn prayer." But why leather? "The hides are a wasted fortune as most of them just get burned." He also managed to obtain privilege for tanning and exporting that fortune. As a banker, that story is like a music to my ears; a locally available raw material, uncomplicated manufacturing, no huge capital requirements, and, most importantly, a man committed to his job. I found no difficulty in supporting his industrial activity, and in no time, the factory grew bigger and his exports increased to Italy. Suddenly the merchants became aware of his growing fortune and started putting pressure on the State bodies to crush what they accused of being a monopoly. Unfortunately, the campaign was led by a member of the bank's Board of Directors who used his position to access the financial statements of Bu-Saleh's factory. Eventually, the tannery was taken away from Bu-Saleh, those merchants paid him compensation, and he left his factory. But God granted him a livelihood from where he didn't expect.

I lost touch with Bu-Saleh for a while after that, but then I received a call from him asking me for a financial consultation, and I always advise anyone who asks. I asked