

✿ Yahya Abulhaj

The Sly Man, Who Found A lucky Path

Welcome to A Story of man that,

Started somewhere in early 2020,

At eighteen, Yahya made the critical decision that he needed to pass high school. He struck a deal with his neighbor, Yassine, who was studying the same major but in a different school, to get serious about their studies. Both had missed opportunities in previous years, and now they needed to make up for lost time by intensifying their efforts. This partnership, based on mutual support, proved invaluable in overcoming years of a "Let's Just Pass" mentality.

Yassine was there when Yahya needed someone the most. The challenges of isolation were mitigated by their focused collaboration, which helped transform their weaknesses into strengths. Without this support, it's likely that Yahya would not have made it through that crucial year.

Together, they played catch-up and managed to pass *bac*, Tunisia's national high school exam. In Tunisia, where French remains a secondary language deeply ingrained in administration, education, and business due to the country's history as a French protectorate, all students sit for the *bac* during their fourth year of high school.

It was in this year that Yahya realized the importance of math, not just for passing the exam but for developing critical thinking skills essential for life.

This epiphany came largely thanks to Mr. Béchir Mahdaoui, a teacher who profoundly changed Yahya's relationship with mathematics. Before meeting Mr. Béchir, Yahya had little understanding of the subject and even less hope. Mr. Béchir's methodical teaching and emphasis on fundamental concepts transformed Yahya, not just in math but in many other areas of his life.

By the time of the national exams, Yahya and math were "great friends," and with Mr. Béchir's help, Yahya passed his *bac*.

After completing high school, Yahya was determined to pursue studies in computers, but his *bac* score wasn't high enough to secure a place in the computer science or engineering programs in Tunis. Undeterred, he navigated the complexities of government bureaucracy to gather official documents that detailed his family's low income and his difficult circumstances. Yahya compiled these with a cover letter and applied to several colleges, ultimately securing a place at ISTIC, a technical institute, through sheer persistence.

Mr. Béchir's influence didn't end after Yahya passed his *bac*.

Mathematics continued to play a crucial role in his university studies, especially during his first year in Computer Systems Engineering and later in Probability and Statistics.

Yahya credits Mr. Béchir not just for teaching him math but for instilling in him a sense of possibility and inspiring a transformation that continues to shape his life.

After Yahya publicly acknowledged his math breakthrough, Mr. Béchir reached out to him directly, a touching moment that further solidified the impact this mentor had on Yahya's life.

Once in college, Yahya also applied for and received a public university scholarship, which helped improve his situation. He quickly realized that while university offers valuable lessons, there's always more to be collected along the way—knowledge, experiences, and connections that shape not just a career, but a life.

Yahya's progression from struggling high school student to successful tech professional in Qatar is a striking example of overcoming immense challenges through perseverance and resourcefulness. His story follows a trajectory of self-transformation, driven by necessity and a refusal to give up, even when circumstances were dire.

At 18, Yahya barely thought he could pass high school. This feeling of uncertainty, paired with a background of social and economic hardships, highlights how far away success must have felt at that time. However, despite the doubts, he made a critical decision: he aligned with his neighbor Yassine, formed a strategy to pass the *bac*, and took the first step toward changing his future.

By the time he was 19, after managing to scrape through high school, Yahya's struggles had shifted. He faced even more severe challenges—he couldn't afford to buy food. This period represents a low point, where basic needs were difficult to meet, but also where the necessity for change became clearer. This stage can often serve as a powerful motivator, where desperation fuels the drive to find solutions, and for Yahya, it did just that.

At 20, Yahya found himself diving into the world of Azure—one of the leading cloud platforms—without much hope. This period of his life was characterized by learning and struggling to make sense of a vast, complex technological landscape. But it was this persistence in the face of hopelessness that began to set the foundation for his breakthrough. It wasn't just about acquiring technical skills; it was about building resilience and the belief that he could grow beyond his circumstances.

At 21, his hard work started paying off. Yahya secured a remote tech job while still living in Africa, a major milestone that would open the door to financial stability and professional growth. For someone who just two years earlier couldn't afford food, landing a remote job in tech was an indication that things were changing. This job allowed him to leverage his technical skills, all while working from a region where tech opportunities are harder to come by.

By 22, Yahya's journey took an even more dramatic turn. He left Africa for Qatar to take on an onsite job. This move represents a significant leap—not only geographically, but also professionally and personally. To go from learning cloud technologies out of desperation to working onsite in a Gulf nation, known for its thriving job market, is a testament to the incredible growth Yahya experienced in just a few years.

Now at 23, Yahya is sharing his story with others to inspire them to accelerate their own journeys, specifically twenty of May 2024. He emphasizes that his story isn't just about achieving success; it's about finding a path out of seemingly impossible situations, fueled by dedication and a willingness to keep pushing forward. He's writing this to help others realize that no matter where you start, progress is possible if you remain focused and resilient consequentially Microsoft Azure immediately took notice, describing it as "Incredible" and thanking him for all he has done.

This recognition thickened the reality of his accomplishments, but the real question posed by Azure—"How did you get started with Azure?"—truly brought Yahya back to the very beginning.

For him, it all began when he stumbled upon a Facebook post where Microsoft was offering free certification opportunities through its virtual training days.

That unforeseen display would lead him to breakthroughs that triggered a chain of actions and set in motion the trajectory of his direction, building an intense drive into technology and innovation.

This is unbelievable so let me say it again that Yahya came across this cloud thing as a pure *chance* that would somehow change his entire life from *Nebrass Lamouchi*, a Tunisian working at Microsoft.

Though he wasn't close to Nebrass, Yahya had a deeper connection with *Housseem Dellai*, also Tunisian and Solution architect @MSFT.

It was through Housseem's reposting of the opportunity that Yahya came across Azure.

This moment is crucial, as it highlights the importance of community and the serendipity that can occur when you are part of a network.

Despite not being direct friends, shared origins and connections led to a life-changing opportunity.

Let us understand this.

Yahya's journey into the world of technology began to unfold rapidly once he somehow got on uni.

As he completed high school and transitioned into that—which in itself is remarkably auspicious, Yahya was yet not content with merely following the conventional educational trajectory. He sought to go and maximize his potential by diving headfirst into the world of cloud computing and acquiring real things with a pure aim to solidify his skills and get armed early on.

One of his most significant initiatives during this period was the decision to take on a series of Microsoft exams. These certifications were not just markers of technical knowledge, but key milestones that helped him forge a new identity in the tech world. Sequentially, Yahya began with introductory exams, testing his understanding of Microsoft's foundational technologies. The Power Platform, which was his fourth exam, proved to be a critical stepping stone. However, the real turning point came when he tackled and successfully passed the Azure Administrator certification, a more advanced and challenging associate-level exam.

This achievement was not just another certification—it was the catalyst that gave Yahya the momentum to push forward with renewed energy. The Azure Admin certification is known for its rigorous testing of core cloud management skills, and earning it allowed Yahya to gain confidence in his ability to master complex cloud concepts. This also positioned him as a serious contender in the field of cloud computing.

As Yahya continued his journey, he developed an almost insatiable hunger for personal growth. The satisfaction he gained from each certification motivated him to keep pushing forward. Each exam became a stepping stone, propelling him closer to his long-term goal of mastering the cloud. In the process, Yahya discovered a deep passion for continuous learning. With each new certification, he gained not only technical expertise but also a sense of achievement that reinforced his determination.

Today, Yahya proudly holds all of Microsoft's foundational exams, each of which represents countless hours of study, preparation, and practice. His journey through these certifications has become symbolic of his broader pursuit of excellence in the cloud space. His ability to remain focused and disciplined through rigorous study reflects his unwavering commitment to personal growth. For Yahya, the cloud is more than just a technological field—it's an expansive realm of possibilities, where each new skill learned brings him one step closer to achieving his full potential.

By conquering these exams, Yahya hasn't just equipped himself with technical credentials; he's laid the groundwork for a future defined by continual learning, adaptability, and resilience.

What began as a desire to challenge himself has evolved into a deep-seated drive to excel in an industry where innovation is constant.

His story serves as a testament to how persistence, strategic effort, and a passion for learning can lead to remarkable success—even when starting from humble beginnings.

Yahya's path to cybersecurity started as a natural extension of his interest in networking and security during his college years. Although he didn't attend many classes, he was captivated by the technical intricacies of networks and encryption, focusing on securing data and understanding the core of digital protection.

He immersed himself in the concepts of the CIA triad—Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability—realizing the importance of safeguarding the digital world.

Yahya growing fascination with security became a key motivator, pushing him to aim higher and pursue advanced certifications in cybersecurity. These weren't simple achievements; they required dedicated study, hands-on experience, and a deep understanding of complex systems.

Yahya meticulously planned his path, taking on certifications that typically require several years of specialized work to achieve.

Yet, he accelerated his progress, earning his first Azure Security Engineer Associate certification in December 2021, followed by a string of other expert-level achievements within a year.

The certifications he acquired—Azure Security Engineer, DevOps Engineer Expert, Azure Network Engineer, and more—reflect a level of expertise that sets him apart in the cloud and cybersecurity fields. The most notable is his Microsoft Certified Cybersecurity Solutions Architect Expert, earned in July 2023. This rapid progression, achieved within such a short period, is remarkable and speaks to his dedication, discipline, and hunger for continuous improvement.

Yahya now operates in a heightened state of awareness, driven by a profound sense of purpose.

With over 1,000 cloud assessments completed and over 31 certifications spanning Google Cloud Platform, Amazon Web Services, and Azure, he's not just building a career—he's creating a future in which security is paramount, and personal growth is relentless.

This entire narrative underscores that no matter the starting point or the obstacles along the way, the decisions we make and the people we encounter can set off a chain of events that alter the course of our lives.

For Yahya,
it was a blend of perseverance,
strategic learning,

And the right connections;
with a heavy serendipity,
That transformed his life.

Through his words,
Yahya is encouraging others to recognize that,
Greatness is forged from within,

And that the most difficult circumstances can give rise;
to the most significant growth.

Best regards,

Yahya Abulhaj,

Seeker of the fourth way