

The War Barber..

Part of the forced adaptation to the war environment, the necessity of human and personal needs. Their urgent need to shave, especially after the prolonged period of our survival in a state of displacement that exceeded 170 days.

Barbers are spread everywhere. In places that comes to mind or not. Especially since a barber only needs a plastic chair, scissors, a small comb, a razor, a towel, and a small brush to clean the falling hair from the customer. Thus, a barber becomes ready to receive the greatest personalities and leaders, the poor, the beggars, and the homeless, all of whom sit on the same chair to get rid of their hair, mostly in light of the difficulty of showering, which has become a luxury of life of the displacement. Thick hair on the head and chin has become a dominant feature of male appearance, and a fertile ground for collecting dust, insects, and more.

As a result of the massive human overcrowding numbers in the south and in the areas of displacement, and the small number of barbershops, for barbers had left their luxurious salons behind them and headed beyond Wadi Gaza. The comfortable session for the customer, the perfume, the type of soap, the quality of the bathrobe, the type of scissors, and the appearance of the barber, the cleanliness of the shop, and the sterilization of materials became unimportant, and no longer attract the customer's attention at all.

Here you will find barbers spread out in the markets, and if you go to the Beach Street, you will find them wandering along the street and in front of the school gates, and you can even encounter them inside hospitals.

Here my story begins, with what I saw and heard during a conversation between a customer and a barber inside Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. I was waiting inside the hospital for a friend I had to meet, I was in front of the reception entrance.

Due to the overcrowded entrance, and as a result of the intense bringing of martyrs and wounded people to the hospital, and the crying and screaming of their families, while a group of men standing all the time in front of the reception door to perform the funeral prayer for the souls of the martyrs before burying them; I took a stand and waited for my friend next to a very thin young barber, who was shaving for a man in his fifties, who was even thinner than him.

At first, I was surprised by the presence of a barber in this place full of martyrs, injured people, and dozens of journalists and photographers, who transmit news all over the world. How did it occur to this young man to take this place as a location to practice his barbering profession?!

I soon discovered that the hospital itself has a large number of displaced people spread out in the hospital courtyards, whether inside the corridors or outside, and of course, all of them, along with the employees, visitors, and vendors, need to have their heads shaved, which left

my astonishment and amazement irrelevant - in times when our feelings are becoming numb – for It is wartime, my dear friends!

Back to our story! Suddenly, as I was watching this creative young man’s resilience and struggle with the harshness of life conditions; the man who was shaving, picked up a strand of his falling white hair and wondered: Whose hair is this?

The barber answered: “Your hair, Hajj..”

The man denies what he saw and said: “This is not my hair. My hair is dark black, this hair is white”.

The barber replies: “By God, Hajj, this is your hair. All your hair is white, white”.

The man replies: “How did this happen and when!? I know my hair well. All my life it has been black. When did it change color!? Do you have a mirror, son!?”

The barber reached into the pocket of a black bag next to him. He took out a small mirror from it and handed it to the man who seemed to have not looked at his face in the mirror for several months. As soon as his eyes fell on the mirror, he went into a fit of silent crying.

The barber thus stopped his continual work. For me too, everything stopped around me, and I no longer heard the screams of the afflicted, nor the movement of ambulances, to the point that I have forgotten my appointment with the friend that I came for. I left the hospital gate in silence that looked like crying. My feet moved me away from the place, and everything seemed white, like the color of the tears of that fifty-year-old man in the barber’s chair. I continued my way, not knowing where my feet would take me next.

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