

Gaza's Women... I Kiss Your Foreheads!

My heart is chewed as if in the mouth of a hungry lion every time I witness our women in war being forced to do things or take actions that even the mightiest of men would struggle with in other places and countries.

Who would have believed it if someone told them that a woman could carry a 25-kilogram sack of flour on her head and walk with it for 7 kilometers or more?!

Every time I see this scene, the roaring lion leaps from its den and begins to chew on my heart. I watch in pain as I contemplate the part of her face that appears from beneath the folds of the flour sack she fought so hard to obtain, snatching it from the jaws of certain death.

In truth, no matter how skilled I am in description, my emotions—before my pen—remain incapable of capturing all the tragic details of the scene, where all colors mix and blend with the hues of anger, oppression, sorrow, and exhaustion... the smell of dirt mixed with blood, flesh, and betrayal.

Death here has its own rituals, known only to those who have lived under all forms of bombardment and destruction in a massacre unlike any known in history.

Here, death does not simply mean the cessation of body movement, but rather the extraction of soul and hope, and the imposition of a lifestyle beyond human endurance. This mother, struggling for the safety of her children, is not deterred in her mission to affirm her free existence in the face of the harshest and most difficult tasks, challenging all the hardships imposed by this cursed war.

With all this daily torment and endless demands, we sometimes find her screaming—exploding—just to make sure she is still alive, still able to feel pain, to reflect, and to dream of life. You see her carrying her child, running to the clinic to treat him for diseases of types and forms we've never seen before. And of course, the last thing you'll find at the clinic is medicine. There is almost nothing but Panadol, and even that is rationed to one strip for the most critical cases.

Yes, all of us—men, women, children, and elders—have tasted the horrors of this massacre. And this leads me to firmly believe that Gazan women bear the greatest share of the unbearable torment, whether through the loss of husband, son, brother, or provider. Many of them have become without a supporter to lean on, left alone to struggle for survival.

This is the Palestinian mother, sister, and daughter. If there remains even a small fragment of human conscience in this world, then the whole world should bow in reverence and kiss your proud foreheads.

Ah, my wounded heart—we feel helpless and betrayed in the face of your immense resilience and towering pride.

It is a recurring pain and death that does not cease—like the boulder of Sisyphus, who every time he lifted it to the top of the mountain, it would fall again, ending his life in a continuous cycle of struggle. We live the same situation of waiting for the war to end. With every new hope, and at the last moment, the boulder falls again, and the cycle repeats.

What these lines contain is nothing compared to the real reality our women live through during war. Reality is too harsh to be captured by words, no matter how eloquent.

As someone who lives in the eye of the storm and sees the conditions of half the society and the hardships they endure at all times, I can only plant a kiss of respect and appreciation on the forehead of every woman who stood courageously and sacrificially by the human side of life - a life that can never be complete without you.

I hope the war ends tomorrow and that all women return to a life that resembles life, and that everyone tries—even a little—to make up for what they've endured in this indescribably horrific war.

Ali Abu Yassin

1/6/2025