

Evasion of life and death!

How the world turned upside down, and downside up, in a moment after October 7th, as if the Armageddon had occurred and no one had yet comprehended what was happening or what would happen or what had happened. Death surrounded us from every side! There is nowhere to Flee? No escape, while the drone is above your head, pouring its buzz into your ears. Its voice penetrates your entire being, driving you crazy, like a dentist's dental carving machine, with its sharp, deadly voice. Imagine continuing to listen to it for days and months on end. With the difference that the voice of the drone is louder and more knowledgeable – it can photograph you naked or clothed, awake or asleep, in the street or in your room, and if it wants to kill you, it carries its own missiles.

On Friday, October 13, 2024, we and hundreds of thousands were displaced to the south, because the north had become a war zone, so my family and I went to Deir al-Balah. I don't know why, when I was riding in the car with my family, North Korea and South Korea came to mind. Why is there a north and a south? North and South are a never-ending story.

We thought that our displacement would last only a few days, but here we are entering the seventh month and we still dream of returning, every day, hour and moment. For the first time, I realize the true meaning of my father's pain when he used to talk to me about the country and his constant longing to return. A house is not just walls and land, it is mountains of memories, plains of nostalgia, and a sea of childhood memories and youthful vigor. Home is the small homeland that penetrates your heart and conscience, and you keep drowning in its details quietly and silently without realizing it.

This is not what I want to talk about! But in reality, to survive death more than once, to dodge it like a skilled football player, over and over again, and be able to survive, is a wonderful and beautiful thing and a matter of luck. Either you die without warning, when unexpectedly a goal knocks you, cuts you into pieces, or keeps you under the rubble, slowly decomposing and evaporating, like many who evaporated and nothing is found of them. Many people evaporated in the wrong time, history, and geography, which demands a strong pause from us..

In fact, I have often become tired of this world, and more than once I have wished for death, but when you feel that death is storming you, raping you, threatening your existence, imposing on you and your family - the family that you have spent your entire life sacrificing for - this is something that no one can bear. I must live, defy death, stay alive, and defend my life and my

family until the last moment of my life. But how do we survive this amount of hellish lava that is thrown at us from the sky? If surviving was an easy task, hundreds of thousands of people would not have died or have been injured!

Whenever I go to the market and meet a friend from the refugee camp, whose residents I know, I always ask the person to reassure me about his family, the neighbors, and the people of the camp. The person immediately begins listing the names of those who were martyred, those who went missing or were injured. Immediately my memories of the camp ignites and the names mentioned pops up with their faces before my eyes, smiling as usual, and I could hear their voices welcoming me. Oh, my dear friends, you left your places so quickly. How will the camp recover without you, when sadness has become endemic in every corner, nook and street of the camp?!

My tears begin to fall against my will.. Who said that tears dry?! No, tears never dry. Emotions dry, but tears do not dry. If there is an emotion that moves the conscience, the tears will continue to flow, like mother's milk. The mother continues to breastfeed her child even if he is ten years old, as long as she has affection and love, and he continues to grow in her embrace. The difference between breast milk and tears is that breast milk helps raising and makes the child grow, while tears makes sadness subside. Emotions control tears, so you might find people crying for a loved one for a lifetime, because their sadness is great and their emotions has not ended. So tears continue to flow whenever that missing person is mentioned or remembered.

For seven months, my tears have not dried. I used to think that everything starts small and then gets bigger, except sadness, it starts big and then gets smaller. But I discovered during the war, as it continued for months, and as the tragedies increased, that sadness is fatal. How many mothers, fathers and brothers died, saddened by those who left them! Sadness grows as joy.

Whoever did not die by the sword died of something else. Causes are multiple and death is one.

I never prepared myself for death, I was always preparing for life, especially since in a few months I will turn sixty and rest for the first time in my life. My life which I spent on a horseback, carrying my sword, and fighting its horrors. I didn't rest a day.

I had plans with my wife to visit Egypt and stop in Cairo, Alexandria, Luxor, Aswan, Sharm El Sheikh, and El Alamein. Before the war, every night we imagined the trip, the number of days we would spend in each city, and how the trip would go. We will only carry a small shoulder bag each, so we can commute easily. How much we have warned our children not to ask us to buy things while we are in Egypt, so that we do not find ourselves moving to meet their requests. We

used to tell them: leave this time out of life for us once, so that we can say that we have lived and were happy for two days in this miserable life!

I am not at ready to die now, as I still have many dreams and happy times that I dream of spending with my family and friends. Go away, O death, for I insist on life! Our great poet Mahmoud Darwish said, on this earth there is what worth to live for, and I ad; under this sky there is who wants to survive with a moment of love, a free homeland, a piece of bread, and a sip of water. Oh, ghost of death leave our life! Haven't you had enough innocent souls!?!

Could anyone tell us how much the price of our freedom is, so we will pay it and finish?

Isn't it enough for all this oppression and pain that lasted for more than 75 years to end? Or are we destined to remain unlike to peoples of this earth, swallowing oppression over and over again! Dreaming that this endless night will see a morning rise!!

May, 8, 2024

Ali Abu Yassin