

Nostalgia for the Little Boy of *Al-Eid*

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As the fasting month of *Ramadan* comes to an end in five days; and as *Eid El-Fitr* follows, the child in me time travels decades and decades to more than half a century, six decades back with memories stirred how earnestly in attendance, the child in me, was looking forward for the joys of the shared festivities of coming El-Eid.

New clothes, labeled “*Tiab El-Eid*,” meticulously stacked in the dresser right next to my bed with a fitting tailored suite colorfully dangling for a hanger; a nice new shirt and new shining shoes’ a complete new attire; as all tugged neatly in the dresser under the vigilance of my never sleeping eyes earnestly awaiting the first signs of the breaking of the dawn to jump to shower and rush back to putting on my new clothes, the glamour of a new born child that I dreamt would be.

The surroundings were all festive. Every living thing was in full smiles; mortals and even the inanimate of furniture and stairs, all seemed pleasantly different. With the resounding of “*Happy Eid*” greetings floating in the air mixing with the fragrance sprayed on every inch of our corps; it is the elders: grandfather; grandmother; father; uncles and aunts, that one approaches to kiss their hands lifting thrice to one’s forehead as a sign of reverence; great respect; rather, an expression of gratitude, appreciation and love.

The child in me remembers how the whole clan of uncles, aunts, sisters, brothers and cousins; how we all converge into a central spot as the male members in the clan of the different ages we all move in unison, in tandem, in a one single drove through a string of sequential observed customs, Eid after Eid. After the performance of the Eid prayer at a central mosque, we all move to the Central Cemetery to read a prayer, *Al-Fatiha*, for the souls of dead relatives, visiting their tombs that a few days before we ornamented with Palm Branches neatly arched over the graves as a token of remembrance and love.

The whole clan then resumes the walk for a gala Eid Breakfast; exchanging greeting along the way with the mantra of “*Happy Eid*” with members of other clans as clans run into each other.

As if a musical cadence, all members of our clan then all converge on the house of my paternal grandfather, *Hajj Ali*, being the only surviving elderly of the clan. Wide assortments of delicious plates spread over the large surface of the dining table await us as the diligent females in the family spent the previous night toiling in the preparation of the wide assortments of perfected delicious dishes.

Now comes the ultimate prize that a child savors most and spend time speculating how significant and large it is going to be. After breakfast, we children line up so the elderly in the clan can dole out “*Eidiah*,” pocket money in varying amounts dependent on the generosity of the elder as with time we came to categorize each elder on the scale of zero to ten contingents upon his largess. Depending on the collective size of “*Eidiah*,” that would determine how sufficient of a provision to last the spending on the three full Eid day festivities, trying every possible game attraction sprawling the makeshift Amusement Park erected in the center of the town.

The male members of the clan of all ages resume the walk to call on the widows of the deceased patriarchs of the clan who have for long passed away. Sweets are served and cheerful pleasant chats are exchanged. It instilled in our minds as children the respect of the memories of the elderly; loyalty and affinity to their surviving widows.

A tear came falling from my eye, near the twilight as I became the elderly once was the child; with some folks that are gone and remnants of town folks that are lingering under an oppressive settler colonialist Israeli rule; I could never fetch the Palm Branches one day before the Eid to ornament the tombs of my Grandfather, Hajj Ali; my father, Rafiq Masri; my mother, Ramziah; and my many uncles, aunts, cousins and friends at the town’s central cemetery as I am denied entry to my birth place; the store of a child’s memories; as so dictated the law of jungle; the oppression of a colonialist Israeli rule.

The Child in me, so I adamantly declare, will never surrender; will never die. The Child in me shall never submit as eternally inspired by the Divine Law of Justice for all. The Child in me Shall Overcome; Justice Will Prevail as the Child in me will again fetch the Palm Branches to ornament the tombs of my beloved ancestry!