



The
Epitome
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Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

2024
Volume 1
Issue 3





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eISSN 3009 – 0075

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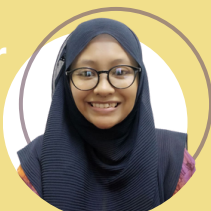
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synopsis

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah is thrilled to announce the release of the third edition of its e-magazine, The Epitome. This publication exemplifies our steady dedication to fostering creativity in language and literature.

The primary objective of THE EPITOME is to offer a platform where writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers can come together to exchange their ideas, discoveries, expertise, and narratives. Our special focus revolves around an array of creative writing genres, encompassing Playwriting, Short stories, Songs, Speeches, Memoirs, Literary Journalism, Humour writing, Lyric essays, Innovative essays, and Personal essays, with a goal to embrace diverse linguistic expressions, with content available in four languages: English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic.

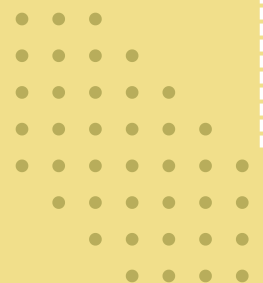




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As I Stood by Palestine

Sharina Saad

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As I stood by Palestine, the air was heavy with the acrid scent of destruction and despair. The walls of Al-Shifa hospital echoed with the moans of the wounded, the cries of infants, and the anguished pleas of families torn apart by the relentless onslaught. The once sterile halls were now stained with the blood of innocent lives, a stark reminder of the brutality that had befallen this resilient land. I was broken inside having to witness this horrific scene.

The flickering lights overhead cast eerie shadows, creating a surreal tableau of pain and suffering. I could see the worn faces of the heroic doctors and nurses, working tirelessly days and nights to mend the broken bodies and shattered spirits of those who had survived the merciless assault. Each medical professional wore a mantle of resilience, determination, and sorrow as they navigated through the chaos, desperately trying to save as many lives as they could. These medical staff were reluctant to leave their patients in despair even when their lives were at stake. Some braved themselves to return homes for a while but were never able to resume duty afterwards. How sad this was.

As I moved through the hospital corridors, I locked eyes with a broken father, his gaze a reflection of the profound loss etched onto his soul. He clutched his daughter's lifeless body close to his, kissing her eyes, caressing her face as if he wanted to photograph her face in his memory forever. "Reem is the soul of my soul"

He mumbled as he smiled painfully while bidding his last goodbye to his beloved daughter. At one corner, a young father clasped a crumpled photograph, a cherished memory of a time when laughter echoed through the alleys of his home. Now, those alleys lay in ruins, and the laughter had been replaced by the haunting symphony of destruction. Outside the bombings never seemed to stop. Oh! When would this agony end?

The wailing mothers huddled together, offering comfort and solace to one another in the face of unimaginable grief. Their tears flowed freely, a collective river of pain that traced the contours of their cheeks. In the midst of this heart-wrenching scene, I glimpsed the resilience of a person unwilling to surrender to despair. A Mother whose acceptance of God's test was beyond compare. The repeated chants of Alhamdulillah reflected her faith in wholeheartedly accepting and holding on to hope, like a fragile thread in the face of adversity. As I said next to this gentle soul, she braved a sincere smile and said "Alhamdulillah my son has gone to Allah". How courageous this mama, a firm believer of Islam was.

In the midst of the tragedy that unfolded in Palestine, a profound courage emerged from the hearts of those who faced the specter of death. The martyrs, whose sacrifice had become the bedrock of resistance, were revered as symbols of unwavering courage. The angels of death must have been busy, yet content, dealing with the ease of these passings. Their names echoed through the hospital corridors, whispered with reverence by those who knew the cost of standing against oppression. Despite the heart-wrenching scenes of bloodshed in the hospital corridors, a poignant aroma of musk lingered, a stark contrast to the surrounding sorrow.

It was as if the departed souls left behind an essence of resilience. The memory of those who lost became a powerful force, stirring deep emotions and fortitude in those who endured, motivating them to persevere against overwhelming adversity.

In a small corner of the hospital, I found a group of children drawing colorful sketches on whatever paper they could find. I spotted Julia, Mina, Amina, Sulaiman, Ibrahim, Mohammad, Tariq and many more in another corner. I was told by the hospital staff that these kids were orphaned as their entire extended family members were killed in Gaza City due to the recent airstrikes. Ibrahim was rescued from under the rubbles and suffered injury in his legs. Amina's both hands were amputated while Muhammad's head was bandaged. Tariq, who is five, was trying to console his one-year-old brother Sulaiman who was crying non-stop looking for his mama and baba. Julia's parents were both doctors and were killed on their way home from the hospital. They all had a fair share of sad stories, but their innocent teary-eyed faces lit up upon receiving candies which I managed to get for them from some volunteers. I brought some toys and handed them to the children. Laughter momentarily drowned out the surrounding pain, creating a fleeting oasis of normalcy. These children, though scarred by the horrors they had witnessed, embodied the indomitable spirit of a generation unwilling to surrender its dreams.

As I stood by Palestine, I felt the weight of history and the collective resilience of a people who refused to be erased. I bore witness to the unwavering faith of my Muslim brothers and sisters, a steadfast strength that empowered them to endure the profound misery and daily sorrows they faced. The people of Palestine embodied the essence of devout worshippers in Islam, placing a greater emphasis on the hereafter than on worldly pursuits. Their steadfastness in the face of adversity, buoyed by the assurance of a heavenly reward, painted a poignant picture of resilience. And as they faced the harrowing reality of the present, the promise of a paradise beyond served as a testament to the enduring power of faith and the unwavering human spirit.

The world may have turned a blind eye, but within the walls of Al-Shifa hospital, the stories of survival, sacrifice, and unwavering hope were etched into the history of human existence. Amidst the darkness of a besieged land, the people of Palestine maintained a resilient spirit, refusing to abandon their dreams despite unimaginable massacre. They stood tall and became stronger because they already knew the ending of all these grieves:

Palestine will be free.

The End.



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eISSN 3009-0075



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