

Unveiling the Veiled

It begins with the Name... and ends with Identity

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كشَفُ الْمَسْتُور.. مَعَ الْأَسْمِ تَكُونُ الْبِدَايَةُ، فَتَكُونُ الْهَوِيَّةُ خَاتِمَةَ الْحِكَايَةِ

They Obliterated the Name

They obliterated your name. They recorded the names of the far and the near, while you are the linchpin, and yet they obliterated it. They inscribed the names of the minor and the major, yet with grand intent and immense determination, they obliterated it. No one missed the mark; they all agreed upon you, so they obliterated it. In their media, in their announcements, they conspired against you and obliterated it. If you were mentioned in ill, they permitted it, placing it at the forefront of their declarations. And if one day you were mentioned in good, they were deaf and dumb, casting you into the oblivion of neglect, obliterating you.

I searched long and hard, until travel wearied me. I scrutinized their records, their ledgers, their news, investigating every report. In the aerial bulletins, there is no name for you, O Syria. They mentioned Beirut, Amman, Nicosia, Ankara, and especially Tel Aviv, while you are the heart, yet your name is absent. Palestine was already gone, and from now on, your name too has joined the missing. The name "Tel Aviv" was crammed next to Amman for lack of space, while the space above them was vast enough for your name; yet out of their hatred and malice, they obliterated it. They mentioned Tehran, Beirut, and Sana'a, and you are the pearl amongst them, and despite that, your name received the full measure of their rancor... so they obliterated it.

They operate on visual memory. And in this arena, they work on the non-Syrian. As for the Syrian, they target him by cutting off his means. They cannot hide the name from him, for his very standing and livelihood are tied to the Name. They wanted their own people to grow accustomed to seeing images of the world empty of your name. They wanted the eye to scan the geography and embrace from you only a void. So that the mind grows accustomed to seeing this emptiness. After that, they can plant what they had long concealed in this nameless land. Thus, a state dies, and another rises, perhaps even multiple others, and the people, in their stupor, do not feel it. And if they feel, they do not ache. And if they ache, they do not rise. And if they rise, they do not persist.

For the mind, however boastful and arrogant, is a captive to its auditory, sensory, and especially visual inputs. They weave together within it into a tight emotional fabric, intricate and robust; this is the individual consciousness. When the inputs are similar, and the data synchronized, people align into a single emotional system; this is the collective consciousness of the people. They knew the mechanism of the brain, and upon what they knew, they built. They built the plans and schemes, and from a mind whose greed has no bounds, they set forth. They set out to manufacture the data, the inputs, so that the collective consciousness of the people would be as they desire.

They did it with Palestine long ago, and now they are striving diligently with your name and your very existence. Thus, out of malice and profound knowledge, they obliterated it. For when the name disappears from the field of vision, and the absence repeats over time and across places, its echo fades in the collective memory of the simple people. The people's feelings towards the place are erased, and the ember of belonging is extinguished... and this is the essence and the ultimate goal.

And on most scientific platforms, there is no mention of your name in the registration lists. They forced me to borrow an alternative name for you from the worlds, or else I would remain outside the realm of attention, left to glean from margins and summaries. And they told me implicitly that I must choose. It is either profound ignorance, or a relinquishment of identity. Renounce your identity, and you will be among the winners, the triumphant. We will open for you the avenues and the squares. We will grant you access to the treasures of knowledge and the

products of others. Climb with us the threads of the world wide web freely, and you will be among the victorious. Conquer the sky, penetrate the earth, and you will not lack cyberspace to conquer, among the legion of conquerors. They do not state it explicitly, for an explicit statement becomes a document for the protesters and the enraged against them. Nor do they announce their intentions bare as they are, but the wise and discerning understand from the implication.

They wanted to steal identity, they wanted to kill the very origin of existence and belonging. They wanted to swap the garment, enticing with the opportunity to enter their lavish world. They do not care which cloak I don, what matters to them is that I submitted to their command and accepted. I found it easy to change allegiance, and that is what matters. The goal seems noble in its appearance, but beneath it lies a vile devil. They knew it was the first step on the path of submission, so they concealed it. After that, the subsequent, more severe steps would be easy to achieve, so they lay in wait.

First, I accept belonging to other than you, coveting and heedless, so I grow accustomed to the means. And what does it matter, as long as the end goal is serious and noble? And when the action is repeated, and the outer garments are changed, the identity is buried in my subconscious. And belonging becomes at the whim of my fingers, a garment to be changed upon demand and by the demander. And as long as the means is a gateway to immense good, no harm is expected from behind it, no slander. So the mind is put at ease by its action, and does not regret. And the soul is content with its intent, and does not weary. And between this and that, the ailment has built and established itself in the subconscious. And non-belonging has infiltrated my thought, and taken residence.

And in times of ordeal, when danger looms and the loss of homeland and identity is imminent, and when the homeland calls upon its children, I search within my depths for the incentive but cannot see it. For the giving of blood and wealth is an act of heroism that many of us lack the capacity to perform. And unless the incentive is great and the belonging is firm, nothing precious becomes cheap, no invaluable thing is slaughtered as a sacrifice for a homeland in pain. So I refrain from defending you, purposefully and consciously this time. I strip off one identity and put on another, with eyelids lowered and eyes at peace.

Vile are their deeds, and truly naive are our actions. They cast the bait deceptively, and we swallow it without realizing the consequences. Have we ever asked about the hidden goals behind this feverish generosity?! They offer social media services for free to all who desire. They do not ask us to relinquish an identity, nor do they ask for a price or any paltry sum.

In contrast, the Syrian finds it impossible to access scientific sites without changing his identity. Choose any nationality you wish, and you will be permitted entry. But if you refuse, you remain at the door as long as you are stubbornly clinging to your identity. In the first case, they are intensely keen for you to declare your identity in full, unabridged detail. But in the second, you are deprived of it, prohibited.

The reason, as I see it, is clear and evident. For in the first, they wanted the data in detail. They wanted it as material for their field studies. Through it, they wanted to know the society you belong to. They scrutinize the motives for its renaissance, the catalysts for its awakening, its moral structure, its habits, its symbols. They study every detail and minute aspect of it.

And the price? Cheap amusement, wasted time, and a mirage. People interact via social media, yet they do not connect. The mother becomes distracted from her infant, engrossed away from him often... and do not ask. She is physically next to him in place, but her feelings wander far from him. She seldom leaves the nest, and often her thoughts are roaming elsewhere. The student plays, neglecting his studies, gaining nothing but blame, and has no harvest except failure. The worker becomes preoccupied away from his machine, and the calamity here is greater and more severe. Everyone is in a virtual space and a desolation; the wanderer in them reaches no ground nor ascends to any heaven.

And as long as your name is available to every desirer, some renegades with evil intentions slip in among the crowd of the sincere. They broadcast whatever lies and falsehoods they wish. They wreak corruption and incitement in the feelings of the simple folk. They sow discord in the hearts of the country's original inhabitants. Chaos spreads in the structure of society and its components. The great fire becomes a destruction and ruin of everything beautiful and authentic. No one knows who started the fire, and we search in vain, finding no helper to extinguish the blaze.

There is a malevolent mind lurking behind this illusory space. A mind greedy for money and power, enamored with dominion until it became the slave and wealth the master. The graver danger lies in the genius of this mind and its ability to induct and then deduce in the most precise manner. It collects data, coordinates and organizes information. It analyzes, mobilizes the energies of its scientists and thinkers. It plans, sets primary, alternative, and contingency methodologies. Then it launches forth, feverishly, sparing nothing of the reserves of this afflicted land and its simple inhabitants. It ceaselessly sucks the resources of nations, plunders their wealth. It destroys their dream of renaissance and prosperity, kills ambition. It dissipates energies, wastes dignities. It does not hesitate at any deed, small or large, for the sake of a fevered mind and its recklessness.

It plays with names as it does with destinies, and shows no mercy. It drops the name when it wishes, and sometimes reveals it clearly, and often you see it toy with it and often it exaggerates. In both cases, it is the one who reaps the benefits and it alone who profits. It does not hide the name by an oversight, nor does it inscribe it on a whim. Rather, the goal is the principle behind all its actions. And the lust for dominion is what governs all its behavior and every movement. So do not be deceived by a splendid appearance or adorned speech, and do not accept without scrutiny what is offered to you, even if the prices are low and the gifts and grants abundant.

Her Name Is Shaam

And as for her name, it is Shaam... for those who have lost the name of glory and misplaced the address of time. Her name is Shaam, for those stolen by the glitter of the moment and unable to see the ancient essence. Shaam, a beauty mark on a fair cheek, a pearl on a marble neck. A red rose in the greenery of a garden, enchanting among dark-eyed maidens. Time failed to erase her for ten thousand years. Betrayed her in a moment of her inattention, so she stumbled – did she not know that even the steed may falter? Her foot slipped on a sharp bend in the road, so she fell – did she not know that even the wise may err? But no matter! As long as the pulse is stubborn, and the breaths are a raging fire. For no night is long, except that a near dawn sweeps it away.

Rise, O Shaam! For life is only for the tenacious. Rise, O Shaam! For gold, even when aged, remains precious, an adornment for the beautiful. Rise, O Shaam! For time has grown old, while in its eyes you are youthful and fresh. Rise, O Shaam! For the sailors have lost their way, and the sea has abandoned its faithful shore. And the sky longs for its sun, and the earth is choked, awaiting its blessed water. The estrangement of time has been long.. O Shaam! So return, O beacon, that the lost may be guided and the bird may return to its moist nest. So that a right may be stilled, and justice may be established. And oppression may be crushed, and the tyrant, the grudge-bearing, may fade.

Rise, O Shaam! Towards you, proud souls wade, and your dowry is a sacred wine: blood, aged to purity, offered in sacrifice. Rise, O Shaam! For generosity has been squeezed dry, and summer has hummed, departing, and Fairuz sings while your radiant phantom is absent. Rise, O Shaam! If the lovers are slain by the fangs of a ghoul, there remains at the gate of the citadel a loyal soldier. You captivated him with love, so he flowed as ink, and in the moment of decision, he is a dauntless warrior, whose wisdom is sealed with his own blood. He sees in the whiteness of the horizon only your two green eyes and a crown of light and fire, and beneath his heel, a black ghoul, cast down.

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26/10/2025