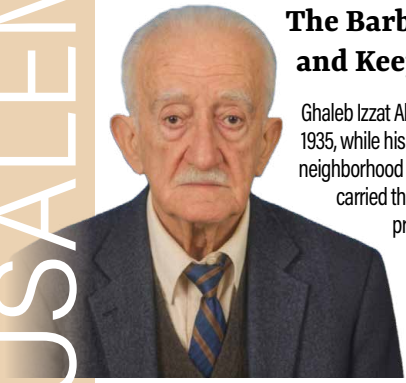
A FACE FROM JERUSALEM

Ghaleb Izzat Al-Wa'ari



The Barber of Jerusalem and Keeper of Memories

Ghaleb Izzat Al-Wa'ari was born in Beit Jala in April 1935, while his family was residing in the Upper Baq'a neighborhood in West Jerusalem – a district that once carried the family's name, Hayy al-Wa'ari, owing to the properties and orchards they owned there before the *Nakba* of 1948. He grew up during the British Mandate period, moving between the Frères School near Bab al-Jadid and later the Ibrahimieh School, where he studied under the renowned Jerusalem educator Nihad Abu Gharbiyyah. With the outbreak of the war, his family was forced to leave Baq'a and relocate to the Old City, beginning a new chapter in his life, one that would shape both his Jerusalemite identity and his professional path.

Ghaleb inherited the barbershop trade from his father, one of the earliest master barbers in Jerusalem. For him, the "salon" was a second school, a place where men were shaped, just as memories were preserved. After completing high school, he formally entered the profession in 1953 and soon became Jerusalem's leading barber and a central figure in its social landscape. The most prominent men of the city sat in his barber's chair: Anwar al-Khatib, Faisal al-Husseini, Abdullah Khalil al-Silwani, Dr. Khalil Yunus al-Husseini, along with doctors, judges, educators, and countless Jerusalemite personalities. His barbershop became a space filled with political and social stories, a place that breathed with the pulse of the city.

He first worked on Al-Zahra Street, one of the most important streets in modern Jerusalem, before moving to his current salon on Salah al-Din Street, the main commercial artery of East Jerusalem. There, he remained steadfast as stone: a witness to changing times, untouched by them.

In 1958 Ghaleb married, describing that period as "the most beautiful days of life." He had seven children – Maher, Muhammad, Bilal, Mahira, Maha, Nada, and Lou'a – and the family grew to include about forty-five grandchildren who gather around him with affection and pride, carrying forward the family legacy that stretches from the Al-Wa'arineighborhood to Salah al-Din Street.

Since 1956 Ghaleb has lived in Wadi al-Joz, a neighborhood he sees as both his roots and his continuity, despite the profound transformations Jerusalem has undergone. He refused to leave the city during the 1967 war, as many others did, choosing instead to stay, saying: "This is my country... and I will not leave it." He passed the profession on to his sons Maher and Bilal, entrusting them with the salon as an inheritance, a craft, and an honor that they continue to uphold, preserving the family name and its authentic Jerusalemite presence.

His message to the youth of Jerusalem encapsulates the wisdom of seventy years of steadfastness, skill, and dignity: "Learn... hold fast... and take pride in your homeland and your craft. Jerusalem endures through those who endure in it."