

I Will Never Forget That Day

By Bakiza Nashashibi Imam



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I was ten years old in May 1948 and remember vividly leaving our home on St. George Street in the Saed and Said neighborhood (named after the mosque on Nablus Road).

My father decided to drive us all to Jericho (mother, sister, and brothers) just after my uncle Izzat was shot in the head right in our garden. The streets of Jerusalem were empty. Perhaps everybody fled the war. My mother quickly selected some pieces of furniture to give to Mr. Momjian to hide them in "El-Mutran" (St. George's School). Mr. Momjian was our neighbor and a good friend of the family. He and my father would go deer hunting at least once a week.

This shooting incident happened in front of my eyes and I will never forget that day. How we all gathered around Uncle Izzat, checking whether he was still alive. He was quickly taken to the closest hospital, the Austrian Hospice, in the Old City, for surgery.

Once in Jericho, we reached the monastery Deir il-Rahbat on Sabiha Street. There I felt safe. There was no shooting like in Jerusalem. I remember Maika, the mother superior, who spoke Arabic with us, while they all spoke Italian amongst themselves.

Schools were closed. Every morning, a special van would pick us up (we were seven girls) to go together to Aqabat Jaber Refugee Camp to help the Red Cross distribute food to the refugees. In the beginning we all volunteered, but later on we were given pocket money.

We lived in the Jericho monastery for three years before we were able to return to our family home.

Born in Jerusalem, Bakiza Nashashibi was educated at Ma'mounyeh School and Schmidt College before she married Fareed Imam and became the mother of five children. She lives in Sheikh Jarrah and has been an active member of the Women's Union Association and the YWCA.

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