

# “Why Was I Ever Born” Righting the Wrong

By Dr. Alon Ben Meir

Artwork by Florence Dabby

The bombing continues unabated. The explosions are heard in the distance. A family with seven children is cowering in fear in a corner of their shack, not daring to step out, dreading instant death from shrapnel or a sniper's bullet. They occasionally look up to the sky through a hole in the roof, hoping still for some rain drops collected in a bucket underneath. Drinking water is nowhere to be found, and only the rain drops keep the family alive.

The mother is careworn; she tries to breast-feed her baby boy, Mahmood, but her milk runs dry. The baby's eyes are open still, gazing at nothing, perhaps wondering what's happening to him and why. Slowly he tries to raise his weakened hand to touch his mother's breast, as if pleading for just one more drop of milk. His arm falls back, hanging; he can't move, he can't cry, his eyes run dry, he has no tears left to shed to ease his agonizing pain!

If you bent to ask him how he is feeling, and if he could only talk, he would say “Why, why was I ever born?” Weeks of starvation finally took their turn. His body surrenders, and he dies in his mother's arms. How correct was James Baldwin when he said “A child cannot, thank Heaven, know how vast and how merciless is the nature of power, with what unbelievable cruelty people treat each other.”

Countless Yemeni children are dying from starvation and disease while the world shamelessly watches in silence, as if this was just a horror story from a different time and a distant place, where a country is ravaged by a senseless, unwinnable war while a whole generation perishes in front of our eyes. Those at the top who are fighting the war are destroying the very people they want to govern; they are the evil that flourishes on apathy and cannot endure without it.

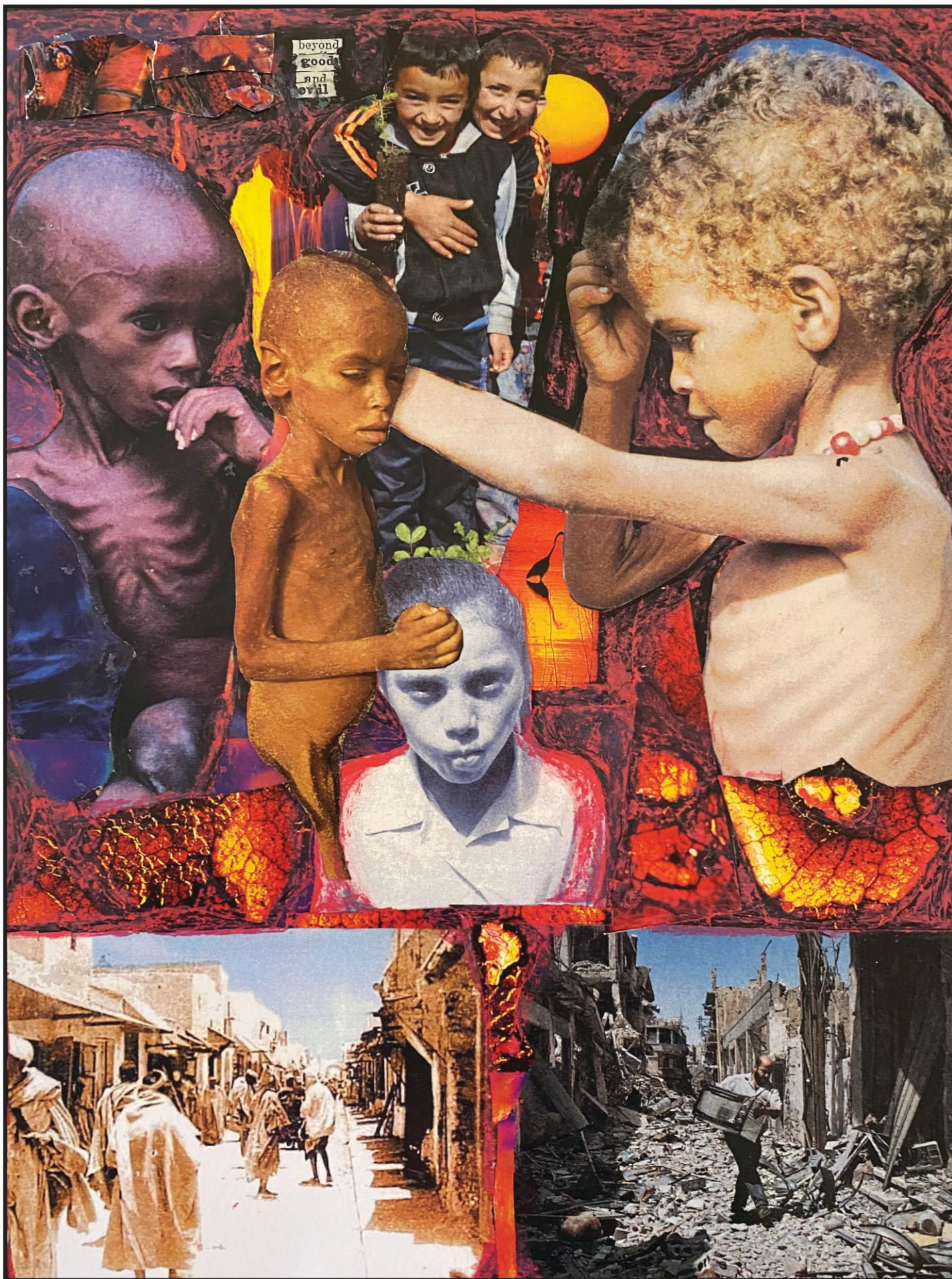
What's there left for them to rule? Twenty million Yemenis are famished, one million children are infected with cholera, and hundreds of thousands of little boys and girls are ravenous - dying, leaving no trace and no mark behind to tell the world they were ever here. And the poorest country on this planet earth lies yet in ruin and utter despair.

The civilian casualties became a weapon of choice, and the victor will be the one who inflicts the heaviest fatalities. And as the higher the death toll of civilians continues to rise, climbing ever higher, the closer they believe they come to triumph. “People speak sometimes about the “bestial” cruelty of man,” Dostoyevsky said, “but that is terribly unjust and offensive to beasts, no animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel.”

When will the international community wake up?

Evil humans can do much horrific harm, but those who watch them with deafening silence cause a greater disaster for failing to act. When will they try to bring the Yemeni calamity to a close? What will it take to bring the combatants to what's left of their sanity?

There is nothing left to fight for, though however hopeless the conditions are, we can still be determined to change course.



And if we succeed in saving even a single life, as the Abrahamic religions teach us, it is as though we have saved the whole world.

Cognizant of the Yemeni tragedy, President Biden - unlike Trump - took the first step by suspending the shipment of the killing machines. He could not allow himself to watch this human catastrophe to continue to take such a toll on the Yemeni people while degrading our morals and numbing our conscience.

It is time to warn Iran to end its support of the Houthis, as Tehran will never be

permitted to establish a permanent foothold in the Arabian Peninsula. As an ally, Saudi Arabia should be encouraged to maintain the ceasefire and sue for a peace agreement.

The Houthis must remember that there will be no victors, only losers - losers, for they have already lost the country. The country they are fighting for is no longer there. They must now start at the beginning, and only together with the beleaguered government put an end to these unspeakable atrocities. And maybe, just maybe, the community of nations will

come together with the US to right the wrong, not only for the sake of the Yemeni people but for the sake of humanity.

We are facing the test of time, and we will never be forgiven for failing to rise up and answer the silent call of that little boy, Mahmood, who died so cruelly so much before his prime.

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