

A Translation into English of Khalil I. Al-Fuzai's¹ "Decision"²

Gassim H. Dohal, Ph.D.

Associate Prof. of English, NWC, Riyadh,
SAUDI ARABIA.

dr_waitme@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

"Decision": A short story about a father who decides to live alone after a dispute takes place among his children concerning who should have him at his/her home.

Culturally, it is a family's responsibility to take care of its old relatives particularly parents. Usually males are the family members who assume this social responsibility. At the same time, females are not required even to share such responsibility³.

Keywords: story; Al-Fuzai; translation; "Decision"

Translation

At a corner of a wide room the old father stays, sitting on a luxurious chair into which he does almost plunge...⁴ ruminates the pain of loneliness, while light flows over the areas of the room. His pain flows, to engulf the place with grief, and these blurring threads about his past life mix in his mind while he is listening to that annoying argument between his daughter and his two sons.

His daughter is the light for his dark night... his two sons are the echo of a song from the past. Listening to their argument changes into a stream of anger that continuously roars to increase in the hearts branches of wrath, foliated with despair, after tears put out smiles that his lips know... a day when life was fresh and promising.

Happiness does not comfort his eyes as it did before; they saw any one of his sons walk in front of him in a garment of childhood like a pleasant light... pouring light into his affection and filling his life with happiness. Their mother was a spring of love and devotion, and with her death, he lost his life... and if he does not believe in Allah's mercy that embraces everything, he would have chosen death and gone for it.

Because his hearing is slow, they are talking without embarrassment and without knowledge that he is listening carefully to them, though he seems absent-minded, staring at the darkness of the night through the window as he regards the dimness of his

age through their conversation... and if he is not sure of himself and his wife, he may doubt they are his sons.

His younger son, Mahmoud, says, addressing his brother Yousef while their sister, Leila, listens attentively, "This is an opinion I will not agree on... my problem is that my wife does not want him to live with us, and yet I will not let him go to an infirmary, because this will show us up in front of people as unthankful children."

The father starts to dive into the focal point of himself... the years of age and the sieves of hard time undermined. He ploughed the sea and carved the rocks. Since the dawn of his childhood, he arrived at this industrial city, searching for work. He denied himself luxury to save for his small family a decent living and to grant for his sons a high education and to leave for them what will help them to face circumstances if the face of time darkens and turns a cold shoulder to them. Mahmoud fears his wife... he received a great deal of education to become an employee in one of the big companies, yet he fears his wife.

Yousef becomes angry while hearing his brother talk and tensely addresses him, "If there is one unthankful, it is you... all your excuse is that your wife does not want him, though you are financially more able than me, and your circumstances are better than mine. My house is so small to accommodate my children... my income is too meager to meet my family's expenses, while you enjoy a big salary and a modern, wide house, and one of your servants may take care of him."

Is it like this? They don't want to take care of me, even you, oh Yousef, the eldest! How do you find it so easy to say such a saying? Yousef satisfied with the least of education, but yet he succeeded in trade after a series of failing trade bargains... that planted in him greed and fear from loss. And your greed, oh Yousef, is not enough to practice with yourself and your children, you want to practice it even with your father.

Struggling with her tears, Leila replies, "Don't forget that he is our father. You, Mahmoud, fear your wife and are afraid of what people will say, yet you don't fear Allah, and you are not afraid of twinge of conscience. As for you, Yousef, you still complain about your income; it is not a new complaint, even if you have Korah's property, you will not let this way that pushes you to be mean with yourself and your family, and at last with your children."

Pain penetrates deeply into the pits of the heart... it fills up the heart... the feeling of defeat overcomes all senses. Crows of ingratitude crow in the forests of oblivion, as if the perianths of all flowers of life did not open and give out the flood of nectar of warm feelings, as if the streams of longing and fear did not explode from the springs of love... staying up at night and exhaustion if one exposed to any possible danger.

Both brothers take offense from their sister's rebuke; and Mahmoud says, "How it comes that you talk to us in such a way? You are an employee as well, and have your permanent income, so why don't you take care of him?"

She replies without trying to prevent herself from crying, "This is my wish, and my husband welcomes him as a devoted son welcomes his father, but my father refuses to live under the sponsorship of his daughter's husband while he has two capable sons."

She is my daughter... if she were a son, there would be no warnings of fear from the future in the horizon of my life. She received her high education and married an eminent man. And nothing is better to her than I stay with her, yet I insist that my sons should protect me. She is better than two sons.

But Yousef violently stands against her saying, "It is enough... keep your advice... we did not gather here to listen to one of your lectures. We came to discuss a particular topic, not to listen to your offenses."

Emotions become tense... indications of a hard dispute hover about them, and disturbance is about to awake. Anger prevails, and the weather outside the room is neither hot nor humid in this spring evening, and yet sweat abundantly pours down from their foreheads, and agitation reaches its highest level. Indeed the father is wholly engaged in his silence. Happiness and quietness left him alone since his wife's death, with whom he lived in their small house. Universe becomes small despite its width... worries rush madly upon him after experiencing life with his two sons, where he did not receive care that he needed, and now he lives in his daughter's house reluctantly.

He expects the exaggeration of the danger; he sees the heat of dialogue increasing the possibilities of this danger, so he has no option but to intervene to put an end to the situation... he has made his final decision. While standing upright with his long height, as an arrow that is not blunted in the battlefields, he says, "Never mind... I will go to live in our old house... for I am still stronger than you imagine."

He does not feel defeat while he makes his decision; he feels victorious because he is able to make this decision... and he talks to himself, "Yes... I am able to stand, even if I am alone."

February 5, 1994⁵

Translator's Notes:

- 1- Khalil I. Al-fuzai (1940-) is a literary writer from Saudi Arabia. In his writings, he introduced his culture, addressing many social, cultural, and religious issues he experienced in his society.
- 2- This story was translated from the following Arabic source:
Khalil I. Al-Fuzai. Torture That Does Not Die (العذاب الذي لا يموت).
Dammam: Eastern Province Literary Club, 1998: 49-57.
- 3- An introduction a reader may need to connect the text to its context.
- 4- . . . Every now and then there are few dots found in the source text.
- 5- February 5, 1994 is a date found in the source text; it may refer to the date of writing this story.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



Gassim H. Dohal is an Associate Professor of English from Saudi Arabia. He holds a Ph.D. in English literature. He has contributed research papers and articles in different academic journals. His works appeared in journals like *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics* (IJLLL), *The IUP Journal of English Studies*, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts* of Egypt: Ain Shams Univ., and *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies* (IJCLTS).

E-mail: dr_waitme@hotmail.com