

THE CHANGE

My name is Samir and today, October 13th, is a very emotional day for me, since it's my tenth birthday.

Surely, the first thought that crosses your mind, is that I will enjoy myself with my friends accompanied by many gifts. Basically typical things of birthdays for privileged children, but the situation I find myself is much worse, almost breathless after reaching the refuge of Lebanon.

My family and me, have had to move here because of the state in which the war is, the same as always or even worse.

On the way, while running away, everything went at the speed of light. As we were advancing towards the refuge, the image reflected in front of our eyes was really hard, thousands of families stayed behind trying to get up here.

After arriving at the Lebanese shelter, I could see that my day is coming to an end, without gifts and without meeting my friends, but with something very important, the life of my family and mine. After all, material objects are not important in this life, but the importance of the people we love most and we always go to be able to count on their help and support.

The days pass, although more and more slowly, everything remains the same, or rather, we all remain the same, in the same place and frightened because the war reaches and everything vanishes in just seconds.

My day always starts very early and ends very late. 5:00 in the morning, I get up to help father with our work, the one that it gives us to eat every day, it is about general services for the shelter.

Meanwhile, mother stays with little Aixa, who is only 3 years old; she controls food and money since the theft of both is very common in that place.

The following week, winter arrives in Lebanon, mother is responsible for weaving warm clothes because the cold is quite unpleasant, specifically for Aixa that is sick and low defenses, so she must be very sheltered to prevent it from worsening to a much worse situation.

Father and I continue to work hard to be able to feed and survive but the cold is very intense and there are days that prevent us from doing that.

We do not have medicines in the shelter for Aixa to improve, we are exhausted, and have not enough money to request them elsewhere. Aixa's situation is getting worse, doctors have told us that the pace of her heart is too slow and she may have an illness in the blood.

I can not understand how, from a simple cold, the situation has got worse.

I am sad, discouraged, I do not want to lose my little sister. Many people are the ones who die every day in this season of the year, and I see it very

often around the shelter while I work with father, he always tells me that those people are going on a trip to a wonderful place, without any complications, where they will be much better and will be able to enjoy every day of all amenities that they need, but ... what is it about?

Every night I pray that my sister will get better, and that if she leaves, she leaves to that beautiful place that Father talks to me about. As always, what is that beautiful place and where is it?

Two days later, the doctors have returned to see my sister and her hope of life does not reach 3 months, her situation is quite critical and the only way to save her is by performing a heart transplant, that process can only be done in a more developed country, such as Greece, Bulgaria, among others.

One week and three days later, they grant us some plane tickets so that on December 20 we can travel to the destination where they can perform the heart transplant to my sister, which will surely take place in Greece, since it is the closest place to us.

On a very warm morning of December 20, father, mother and I went out to the airport, Aixa is covered in blankets, sleeping under the arms of mother, it is very early.

Once there, they warn us to get into the plane and it flies towards our destiny, I'm nervous, it's the first time I travel in a transport that goes at a great speed and that when taking off, your stomach fills up of butterflies that cause a huge tingle inside it or something similar that my father told me.

Once inside, they explain all the security rules and act after the flight starts, Dad's saying is confirmed, thousands of butterflies invade my stomach and hug very strongly the amulet that father gave me when I was 5 years old.

Aixa, remains asleep, she is so weak that her body can not stay awake. Once several kilometers from the ground, I open the window and watch thousands and thousands of clouds, mother rests with Aixa and father reads one of his favourite books.

After two intense hours of flight, we landed in Greece. We take our luggage, which comes out by an automatic tape.

Aixa has awakened and her eyes shine more than ever, everything is different here.

Immediately after, our course begins its journey to the hospital. They take all the data from Aixa and send her to a room. Her eyes shine, but mine even more. The sanitary service works at the speed of light, then, as soon as we arrive we have been told that the operation is scheduled for within 2 hours at the most and all her data is recorded in less than five

minutes. We are also going to do a medical examination to father, mother and to me.

At 1:30 p.m., the operation of Aixa's small family begins. Impatiently I wait to leave the operating room, doctors have told us that the operation lasts about four hours.

Only fifteen minutes have passed and I'm desperate because of nerves. Mother told me I should rest, I'm still small and I'm not used to staying so long without resting, so I curl up on one of the benches in the waiting room, despite having been offered Aixa's bed, I'm so stubborn that I have to stay here.

As soon as I hear the exit door of the operating room, I will jump to listen carefully to the doctors' news about the operation.

And the time came, I listen to the exit door and I get up from the bench. The doctors, with a big smile on their faces, inform us that the operation has been fabulous, at the same time I see my sister leave the operating room asleep, like a rose.

I am very happy to have saved the little Aixa thanks to have come to this continent, where everything is different.

It gets dark and Aixa sleeps deeply, on the contrary, I try to rest but I can not stop looking at her in case something happens to her, I think I should be awake with my eyes wide open and aware of the things that can happen.

My head is filled with thoughts, and that is, so many facts have happened in so little time.

We left very early from Lebanon, we arrived in Greece and immediately to the hospital, where they perform the Aixa operation in a blink of eyes. One of the things that surprises me the most is how they treat human beings

on this continent, here in Europe, everything is totally different, distinction by race, sex, religion and so on. But you have the right to life, to freedom, not to be subjected to torture, the right to education, to work and to one of the most important from my point of view, the right to health.

What would have happened to Aixa if we had not travelled to Europe? Many people die in Lebanon and one of the reasons is that health has nothing to do with the one here, speed, perseverance and work are totally different.

There, most diseases work with medicines imported from other countries and now they are scarce in abundance because the area is in a serious situation of war. But... now I have a huge doubt, what will happen to us from now?

Immersed in the fatigue, my eyelids close slowly and the question vanishes in the air of my thoughts.

The next morning I feel like someone is touching my head, at the same time I listen to the singing of the birds and slowly open my eyes. Aixa has awakened and she is who caresses me giving me good morning with a splendid smile from side to side of her face. I have never seen her so happy, we see father and mother enter through the door of the room. They have spoken with the doctors and within 3 days if Aixa keep stable, she will be discharged.

That same night, while mother is in the room with Aixa telling her a story, I tell father that if he has a moment to talk with me and so I can ask him the question he asked me yesterday night. He tells me that we can talk and he suggests taking a walk. We started the march and asked him the question previously said to father, he stops walking, grabs me by the shoulder and says "do not worry about that, son, these are issues that we should try mother and me" I, with wide eyes keep staring at him and ask him for an explanation.

Father is a person, who is very easy to convince in order to tell you something, and nothing else to insist a couple of times, I get him to inform me of the plans of the future and he decides to do it.

Samir, I do not know if you have noticed, but our life here can improve in an amazing way, in terms of rights, freedom and also economically.

Yesterday I started working in a workshop near the hospital. Money is nothing to worry about, the most important thing is that we all feel very good, I have to give you some bad news too, you know that not everything will turn out great, if the circumstances are not very bad here in Greece, I am afraid that we will not return to Lebanon, therefore we will not be able to see the family, in addition your cousin Nawel died last night in a bombing.

Situation is getting more and more dangerous, therefore our new life begins

and it will probably end here, in Europe. The color of the skin changes drastically from one color to another and father scares me wondering if I'm okay. I almost do not get the words, but it seems to me that on the one hand mother and father have been able to make the best decision for all of us, but on the other hand, I will never see my family again.

I tell my father that I feel very good and that the decision taken together with mother is the correct one.

The next day, the small Aixa was discharged and we left the hospital. Now, I have no idea where we're headed. Father and mother look at each other, stop in front of a large building, where they see enough people around, they turn around and tell us that that will be our stay during the first weeks until we can economically have a house for us alone.

This building is an association for the most needy, and here, at no cost, you can get food and rest. Some young guys teach us the facilities and rules of the site and then we settled in that place.

I still do not understand the faces of father and mother for having brought us here, at last and finally this place is not as bad as the shelter of Lebanon and when our economic situation will improve we will enjoy many more things.

When night comes, I find myself playing with Aixa, then father calls me because he has to tell me something.

He tells me that things will change, but, as he told me before, also tells me that next week I start taking classes and therefore I will not be able to help him with his work as I did before. He will go to work, I will go to school and mother will be taking care of Aixa, at the same time she keeps sewing blankets that maybe, later he can get a reward for these.

The days pass quickly and father is promoted in his work, so the benefits will be greater.

Three weeks later, father and mother meet us because they have to give us

great news, which is that we already have our home.

Every day that passes, I realize how fast everything is happening. I have the right to education and I learn amazing things every day. I imagine myself working as an engineer in a few years, or maybe as an architect. Our life has become a very pleasant routine. Father and mother have the right to work and Aixa and me to receive a good education.

The days, the months, the years pass, and now I find myself finishing this story on my desk while, Aixa is doing his studies at university and father and mother almost finishing his period of work.

Now, I realize all the advances, among other things, that I have in front of my eyes and that I had no idea before that they came into existence. This change in my life has been towards a destiny that I will never be able to forget, I will never want to escape from and it will always last.

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