

English Translation:

Markets¹ in Iraq are flourishing² around the year because most people's living, I mean you see most sellers whose only source of earning money is selling stuff in the market. There is something that emerged in Iraq after the first Gulf War in 1991 which is *basteya*³.

*El-bastaat*⁴ is a group of anything, for instance it could be a group of veils, or a group of shirts; a group of fragrances or cosmetics. These things are put on a big table of some sort in the market. Their price is a lot less than that in the shops.

The *bastaat* matter spread in Iraqi society after the first Gulf War in '91 because people could not afford any more to buy from shops. I, among many people, I used to go to the *basteya*, I go *Abu el-basteya*⁵ to buy, for example, a flask of fragrance from him or buy a veil, hijab, from him; or I buy a shirt because its price equals sometimes half the price of that in a shop. Why would I buy a shirt for ten thousand dinars when I can buy it for seven or six thousand from *Abu el-basteya*. *El-bastaat* became a savior when it came to reducing expenses for Iraqi family.

Most markets are open on the pavement. You rarely see blocks specified for them because people prefer to shop while they walk, as we say, they buy stuff while they walk in a street. They gather the stuff they need from [sellers on the] pavement and return home. The prices, as I have said, are less because *Abu el-basteya* does not pay rent, unlike a shop owner or a person who rents in a commercial building.

Commercial buildings are usually most specified for auto parts, in other words, auto spare parts and fixing cars because they need a big space, a big effort, and they need many workers. That's why you see them, I mean auto parts, in commercial buildings because, as I have said, they need a big space in order to take care of a car and fix it; those are something else.

¹ *Aswaq*: "markets". Most of the markets in Iraq are bazaars.

² *Muzdahira*: means flourished.

³ *Basteya*: a seller's table on sidewalk. It looks like a small shop but without any construction.

⁴ *El-bastaat* plural of *basteya*

⁵ *Abu el-basteya*: the man who sells in *basteya* or the *basteya* owner. The term *abu* means "father of", nevertheless, the Iraqi use it also to indicate the meaning of ownership.

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