

Tiramisu

I would like to start with an apology to whoever reads my monthly column because this is probably the most negative one I've written. It's not my regular uplifting prose, I admit, but the truth is that today, I need someone to lift my spirits.

Why am I not celebrating our victory in Gaza? Am I less patriotic than the masses on the streets who are rejoicing in our triumph? Am I that politically un-savvy and unable to understand the implications of ending the war on Gaza (or at least of a long-term ceasefire)? Haven't I read that Israel has effectively admitted defeat?

Could it be that 50 consecutive days of images of dead children, screaming parents, and the utter destruction of homes, factories, and high-rise buildings have simply killed any sense of optimism or any positive feeling in me? I'm hollow inside. There's an emptiness and sadness in my gut. I envy those who can take all this, dress their wounds, and move on. Even to the point of celebrating. I am sorry; I simply can't do it. There are just too many dead people, too many injured, too many traumatised children, and too much destruction to celebrate.

To add insult to injury, so to speak, I just read a sarcastic post on Facebook by a good friend of mine in which he "apologises" to those still alive in Gaza for not being able to join their victory celebrations because we, Jerusalemites, are hotly debating a more important matter which is whether to allow students to wear the hijab in an all-girls local school run by nuns. We're considering going to Egypt to discuss the issue, my friend cynically added. Are you still asking me to celebrate?

If we think it's bad here in Palestine, ISIL, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, is surely proving us wrong. The uprooting and massacres of Christian and Yazidi Iraqis are beyond any horror we've witnessed in our part of the world. According to my friend Shukry, Genghis Khan, the Mongol emperor who invaded Mesopotamia in the thirteenth century, who massacred civilians and burnt the library of Baghdad, would be considered a humanitarian when compared to ISIL. Celebrate what? Tell me.

I'm trying hard to end somehow on a positive note here. I pray that the lives of over 2,100 people who were killed in Gaza would not go to waste and that their sacrifice would pave the way for an independent Palestinian state. I am encouraged by the maturity and the sense of nationalism of practically all the interlocutors on the hijab issue. I have to admit that the debate so far has been rather civilised, and both parties have resisted any external influence. If it remains a debate or a squabble within the family, then we have hope; otherwise, we're doomed. Finally, I also pray that the nightmare in Iraq and Syria would end, although I fear that we've not yet hit rock bottom there.

Tiramisu is a popular coffee-flavoured Italian dessert. I understand that it also means "lift me up." So please, Tiramisu!

Sani P. Meo
Publisher

