

On Being Negative

I am not sure what the Facebook post was about, but the content must have been uncommonly positive or had an optimistic tone. As expected, the post attracted scores of negative comments, ranging from casting doubt to being totally dismissive, as if something sacrilegious had been posted. Then came a comment from a wise older gentleman (whom I know) who had held several senior public positions in various countries around the world. "Palestinian negativity, par excellence," he wrote. There was a lull in the comments after that, but it didn't last long. The negative remarks resumed unabated.

We Palestinians and the Jordanians seem to compete on who gets first prize in being more negative. In contrast to the Egyptians, who are generally known to be light-spirited, and to a lesser extent, the Lebanese, who have historically painted a rosy image of life, the peoples on both sides of the River Jordan have the reputation of being heavy and, in plain words, negative. Of course, we write it off as being realistic, but I suspect it has something to do with our genetic composition! I'm sure there are sociological explanations, but for me, the number one cause has to be our genes! However, and in defense of us Palestinians, we most certainly have more concerns than our Jordanian brethren although, particularly these days, one can't predict the future. But still, as things stand, we Palestinians will keep The Jordan River Cup of Negativity!

But seriously, can anyone blame us? It seems that the world has conspired against us, and it certainly didn't start with the United Arab Emirates stabbing us in the back by deciding to normalize ties with Israel. To be fair though, they did it in order to stop the Israeli annexation of most of Area C! While we're at it, let's go back a little to see when our woes started. Maybe it'll shed some light on why we are negative. Did it start when Donald Trump and his sidekick son-in-law cut funding to the Palestinians and recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital? Nope. Is it when Hamas took over Gaza in June 2007? Maybe the three Israeli wars on Gaza? Or Camp David? Perhaps our calamity started when we lost what had remained of Palestine in the 1967 War? *Al-Nakba* in 1948 is surely the most painful blow the Palestinians have suffered, and we continue to suffer its effects to this very day. But even before that, Palestinians were stabbed by others such as Lord Balfour and his infamous declaration in 1917. In fact, one can go as far back as 1516 when the Ottomans captured Mamluk Syria and Palestine. And you ask me why we Palestinians are negative? Seriously?

Despite all the above, when I see children going to school, playing sports, playing musical instruments, or performing rap like 11-year-old Gazan Abdel-Rahman Al-Shanti, I am encouraged. Sometimes I feel that merely living in Palestine is, in itself, a heroic act. Bear with us if we're negative.

Long live Palestine!

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