

The Tent Part 3

What went in the mind of Sa'id Jumblat in 1860, when he was imprisoned at the Grand Serail, awaiting trial and being "persuaded" by the British to accuse Khorshid Pasha ⁽¹⁾ of instigating the massacres in the Chouf?

Proud and unremorseful, he wondered what he did wrong: Provoked by the Maronite Patriarch, pampered by the English and encouraged by the Ottomans, he stood up to the honor of the Druze and encouraged his sister, Nayfeh, to massacre the Maronites in Hasbaya, as well.

Would he testify against his "friend" Khorshid? Never! His honor would never allow it.

Would he ponder whether the English have sold him out? No. His vanity tells him otherwise.

Does he regret the death of thousands? Never! It was the Maronite Patriarch who started it.

Did he know that he was a little insignificant detail in a much greater scheme? Definitely not! He is the Master of Mukhtara.

His death, due to illness, came as a convenient exit for everyone concerned, including himself; but the chapter was never closed.

What went through the mind of Kamal Jumblat in 1975, when Lebanon was at the brink of a civil war?

"Yes, I am the Sovereign of Mukhtara (Palace)... the meaning of life lies in one being the master of his own self," ⁽²⁾ says Kamal Jumblat.

"It is not me who started it; it is "them", the Maronites, the Isolationists". "They are immoral and always seek foreign protection." ⁽³⁾

What went through the mind of Walid Jumblat in 2006, when he called Bashar al-Assad the "worst of beasts", accused Hassan Nasrallah of being responsible for the explosions and raised the French flag in Mukhtara?

Again, "it is not me who started it, it is them."

Once upon a time, there was an enemy called the "Maronites"; today it is the "Shia'a", who are seeking foreign intervention from Iran.

It seems that Lebanese zu'ama raising foreign flags and pictures of kings and heads of foreign states has become a tradition in our society. This reminds us of the Lebanese during the FIFA World Cup, when they wave the flags of numerous countries.

Why do we do that? Is it to spite our neighbor or for jubilation? Or is it simply because the Lebanese football team did not make it to the World Cup?

How does the worship of the "I" influence one's conduct?

We understand that once the "I" is unleashed, irrational behavior prevails.

So it is not about ideologies but about satisfying one's personal interests and ambitions.

It is not about being a nation, but about the survival of the za'im.

This explains why our "alliances" are altered: we are with Syria because "Lebanon is part of Syria"; we are with Egypt because "it represents true Arabism"; we are with France because it is "the mother of Revolutions" and with England for being "the mother of Democracy."

Today, we are against Iran because it is "Persian" and with the United States because it is the "Supreme Power and the protector of Democracy."



Hence, raising a flag here and a slogan there does not necessarily infer a change of opinion, but seizure of opportunity with a total disregard of national interest.

Yes, I am "Sovereign", even if I raise the flag of a foreign country.

Yes, I am a "citizen", even if I raise the flag of Germany or Brazil to show my support to their football teams, and when I also raise the pictures of parliamentary candidates during the elections. But perhaps I am more honest to myself when it comes to football since I "buy" the flags, while I am usually "paid" to raise the pictures of politicians.

Yes, I am "free"; I am not a follower; it is the "Tent Law" that forces me to raise flags, slogans and pictures and fire in the air sometimes to express joy or sadness, while other times to kill.

It seems that none of "us" make mistakes. And if we ever do, they are "minor" and have extenuating circumstances; our mistakes might even reflect wisdom.

"Among our problems, as Druze, is the presence of an Israeli community in Israel. Those Druze are not faithful servants to Israel. But a Druze person is wise enough not to abandon his land when the occupier arrives..." "The Druze are rational people."

"I personally believe that if others imitated the Druze rather than escape, we would have the problem of Israel," ⁽⁴⁾ says Kamal Jumblat.

In other words, we dare to say that the Druze of Israel are wise at the same time, we describe the Maronites of Lebanon as "isolationists" and "impossible to live with." ⁽⁵⁾

Yes, the Druze are "wise" and also "scared".

This explains why 100,000 Druze voters claiming to seek "equal representation", wish to acquire around 15% of Parliamentary seats, while Suleiman Franjeh, who won around 83,000 votes lost his seat in the 2005 elections.

Is it not ironic that of all people, it is Kamal Jumblat who acknowledged that the Shia'a were driven away by the Druze hundreds of years ago and now his son is publicly prohibiting the purchase of private land in the Chouf by the Shia'a?

When asked about the war, Walid Jumblat said: "Yes (war is a crime)...but who is responsible for all these wars?"

Exactly, who is responsible? Perhaps we should look for the answer in our own tent, before pointing the finger at others...

(To be continued)

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⁽¹⁾ Ottoman High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon
⁽²⁻³⁻⁴⁻⁵⁾ Kamal Jumblat, "Pour le Liban", Stock 1978