

JUDGES' SALARIES: 95% PAY HIKE

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In his book “The Mainstay Concerning Poetry’s Embellishments, Correct Usage and Criticism”, Ibn el-Rachik recounts that a poet who became very famous was asked how his name was on every tongue and known all over. He said “It is because I have minimized what is right and said ‘what is correct.’”

But what if we believed in Imam Ali’s words that: “Upholding what is right has left me no friend”.

I do not know why we insist on holding so many seminars, symposia and conferences in English, while we talk about the problems of our youths, who are supposedly Arabs. Are they really Arabs? And while we don’t question further whether the Kurds are Arabs and the Berbers are Arabs and the Chaldeans and the Assyrians are Arabs, have we asked them about their opinions and how they want to be called? Are young Arabs, Arabs; or are they Lebanese, Moroccan, Syrian and Saudi?

Why do we insist on such loose slogans that only serve to satisfy (and only probably) our yearning to be on top while we lay at the bottom?

Why speak of the problems of “Youth” or of “Women” and not of “our” problems. The problems we face as humans, living on this land. What do we expect of youth in a world of satellite channels and silly talk shows? What do we expect of youth in the absence of any collective memory? What does it mean to be a young Arab in a historical void? In the absence of knowledge? Memory loss or dementia in the elderly is terrifying but sometimes a blessing to its victim and those around him, but to be born old with no memory is a real disaster.

- ◉ What does it mean to be Minister of Justice when you are member or a supporter of the Lebanese Forces? What does it mean to be Speaker of the House and the President of Amal Movement? What does it mean to be a member of International Socialist Party as well as Minister for the Displaced, a sectarian leader and Chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party?
- ◉ What does it mean to be Prime Minister and agree to an electoral law and run for elections on that basis; call on the Mufti of the Republic to pray at the Grand Serail “in defense the Sunna” and end your term in office “bereaving” Lebanon and the increase of sectarian discourse and expressing “surprise” at the animosity between the sects; and saying all of this in innocence, of course after winning in a sectarian election based on a sectarian law that you participated or you were created by it. What does it mean to be member of “Hezbollah” or “Mustakbal” (Future Movement) and call for the creation of a civil state, even a secular one?
- ◉ What does it mean for a taxi driver, void of both teeth in his jawline and gasoline in his car, to tell you: “God help Siniora; he cannot lower the price of gasoline because he has to pay public wages and also stand in the face of the Shia’a ..?”
- ◉ What does it mean to say that your mother was brutally killed at her door step and your father burnt, tied to his bed by the Phalangists in 1976 and then declare proudly “I voted for the Lebanese forces because the real threat is Hassan Nasrallah!”
- ◉ What does it mean to defend the practices of the Syrian intelligence in Lebanon and give it legitimacy?
- ◉ What does it mean to flood the Lebanese regime with incessant criticism and unconditionally defend the Syrian regime? What does the flood of criticism and even insults

to the Syrian regime (This, of course, not in the very distant past) mean in the light of the continuous praise of other regimes in the Gulf, Egypt and Morocco?

- ◉ What does it mean to have no media venue, visual, audio or written, or even Internet without funding from either Iran, an Arab regime and / or from the West?
 - ◉ What does it mean to disseminate ignorance and trivialities through the same media? What does it mean to find no space for free thinking, even in universities?
 - ◉ What does it mean to be born Shia’a, Sunni or Maronite? What does it mean to be born Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, or Saudi?
 - ◉ What does it mean to be young, groveling at the doorsteps of Leaders to build a future for yourself and your family? What does it mean to be a young Lebanese and not know Mustafa Farukh, Saliba Douayhi or Paul Giragorsian?
 - ◉ What does it mean to have a “Issam Fares Institute” or “Suleiman Olayan School” or “The Walid bin Talal Center” when there is nothing to commemorate Khalil Hawi, Gregoire Haddad, Ahmed Faris Al-Chidyak or Gibran Khalil Gibran?
 - ◉ What does it mean to sit around and study the situation of Youth and their directions; who is funding our studies and what are we doing with them?
 - ◉ What does it mean to be a youth from Saudi Arabia and head to Afghanistan in early 1980 to “liberate” it from the Soviets? And did any of the studies or surveys foresee that he will turn into what he turned into leading to the 11th of September, and its aftermath?
 - ◉ What does it mean for an Irani Youth to head for Ba’albeck in 1982? Did any study or survey predict that he would turn into a Party considered a threat by Israel, and proving it right by marking the first victory in the history of the Arab-Israeli wars? And couldn’t those who founded this party with the cries of “Ya Hussein” envisage that they would be answered back with cries of “Ya Abu Baker” and “Ya Omar” and that Bush, personally, would take the issue and “stand” by the Sunni in Lebanon?
 - ◉ What does it mean for the United States to invade Iraq in 2003 promoting inter Sunni-Shia’a strife (as part of the effects of the invasion); did any study foresee such effects?
 - ◉ What does it mean for a youth from Saida to go to Riyadh and come back as a wealthy man and Lebanon’s Prime Minister, be killed in 2005 with all the magnitude of events and popular demonstrations? Was this highlighted, or foreseen in our studies or surveys?
 - ◉ What does our situation mean to us all, young and old when faced with only three options: A religious-political jihadi path. A western-American ostracising path or social and political exile.
- We have to, for the sake of memory, ask the delineators of borders and chanters of “international legitimacy” slogans: Did our youth know back in the days of the Sykes-Picot agreement and Balfour Declaration that their country was to be divided and Israel created? This is why our youth are the way they are, un-read, with no memory and yearning to immigrate.
- Here we recall the words of Aos Ibn Hajar when he said:
What I have feared has occurred, Oh my soul go forth in trepidation!

— Jawad N. Adra

- ◉ This article was published in *Issue No 85, AUG. 2009.*