

The True Miracle of Israel

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Israelis and their supporters tend to depict Israel as a country of miracles. What else could explain the country's astonishing "birth" and subsequent survival against all sorts of "existential threats"? How else would Israel develop at such a phenomenal pace, making the "desert bloom" and continually scoring a high ranking amongst developed nations in most noteworthy aspects?

Meanwhile, Palestinians continue to be depicted as "their own worst enemies", a people who "never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity" and who stand outside the parameters of rational human behaviour. Israel is often, if not always, contrasted against a regional backdrop of "backward", "undemocratic" and essentially violent Arabs and Muslims.

Such depictions — of luminous, civilised Israelis facing wicked, backward Arabs — are the building blocks of a polemic sold tirelessly by Israeli, American and Western media. Most often, it goes unchallenged, thus defining the West's understanding of Israel and its moral "right to exist". The argument is rooted in the horrors of the Jewish holocaust; however, Israel's handlers have managed to turn deserved sympathy for that tragedy into an unwarranted assertion, somehow equating Palestinians with Nazi Germany in order to justify a constant state of war in the name of self-defence.

In this specific context, the power of the media cannot be over-emphasised. It has defined a fallacious reality based on a skewed narrative. Never in history has a story been so slanted as that of Palestine and Israel. Never has the victim been so squarely blamed for his own misfortunes as the Palestinian. This is not an arrogant counter-narrative to Israel's concoctions. It's a glaring truth that continues to be either ignored or misunderstood.

The "miracles" often associated with Israel are not random; they are assertions. Miracles are a religious notion, referring to the unexplained and supernatural. Thus they become exempt from rational questioning. This formula has served Israel's strategic purposes well. On one hand, Israel's existence is portrayed as a resurrection of sorts: from near-annihilation to a "miraculous" rebirth. Indeed, considering how the birth of Israel story is offered, the narrative is no less impressive than biblical legends. Such discourse has been used successfully to appeal to a much larger group than those who identify with Israel on ethnic or religious grounds. It has impressed tens of millions of Christian fundamentalists worldwide. In the United States, Christian Zionists represent the popular backbone of the pro-Israeli camp. While American Jews tend to vote based on economic or political interests, Christian Zionists see their allegiance to Israel as a religious duty.

Like all religious miracles, Israeli miracles are "matters of faith". They can either be accepted as one package or rejected as such; the bottom line is that they are beyond

argument, beyond the need for tangible proof. Those foolish enough to deconstruct this — and thus question Israel as a state accountable to law, like all others — are subjected to the wrath of God (in the case of the “true believer”) or the wrath of the media and the Zionist lobby (in the case of the sceptic). When an American politician, for example, is accused of not standing “fully behind Israel”, the accusation doesn’t warrant justification. It stands on its own, like a biblical command that has survived the test of time and reason: Thou shalt stand fully behind Israel. The accused politician can only defend his record of support for Israel; he cannot question why this is necessary in the first place, or ever acknowledge the fact that the latter’s track record is soaked in blood, sullied by illegal occupations, and grounded on human rights violations and defiance of international law.

As the 60th anniversary of the so- called birth of Israel draws near, a most impressive — albeit grotesque — misrepresentation of that history will be offered in abundance. Media pundits and politicians will celebrate the miracle, omitting how Israel was delivered on top of the ruins of hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages. The killing and ethnic cleansing that became known as the Palestinian Catastrophe — or Nakba — was not the work of invisible and miraculous seraphs, but rather well trained and well-armed Zionist gangs and their supporters.

Nor did Palestinians lose the battle due to their laxity or backwardness. Their bravery, for those who care to consult serious historical works (such as those of Israeli historian Ilan Pappé or late Palestinian Professor Edward Said), is a badge of honour that will be carried by Palestinians for years to come. They lost because, as parallel historic experiences demonstrate, neither bravery nor fortitude are enough to withstand so many powerful forces at play, all plotting for their downfall.

Moreover, those celebrating Israel’s miraculous efforts in making the desert bloom — the inference being that “nomadic Palestinians” failed to connect with the “neglected” land, and only the “return” of its rightful owners managed to bring about its renewal — will most likely forget that it was the Palestinian proletariat — the cheap, oppressed, and dispossessed labour force — that mostly worked the land, erected the homes and tended to the gardens of the miracle state. No less than \$100 billion of American taxpayers’ money contributed to Israel’s current economic viability, as well as military preparedness.

All of this is likely to be overlooked as Israel and “friends of Israel” around the world celebrate another miraculous year of survival and affluence. Will they pause to wonder why over five million Palestinian refugees are dispossessed and scattered around the world? Will they lend a moment’s silence to the many thousands who were brutally murdered so that Israel could live this fallacious miracle? Will they ever understand the pain and the tears of successive generations dying while holding onto the keys of homes that were destroyed, deeds to land that was stolen, and memories of a once beautiful reality from which they were violently uprooted?

If there is any miracle in Israel’s existence it is that the lies upon which it is founded could be perpetuated for so long, despite glaringly obvious truths to the contrary. Indeed, it is a miracle that such grave injustice could reign for so long uncontested.

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