

A day in the life of arab

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the summer months of 1985 I was in Beirut, Lebanon on a two months vacation where I met some good people. Ahmed is a grade schoolteacher in Beirut and I meet him barely one week after I arrived in Beirut, when I was hanging around, pondering about the historical significance of Mount Hermon as it was mentioned in the Biblical history.

He lives in the outskirts of Beirut a few blocks from where I am living and he has a deep knowledge of the Lebanese history and culture. One time, I ask Ahmed about what he thinks of Israel, as the Biblical text seemed to point out to Israel as God's favored nation. Ahmed would usually flare-up when the issue concerns Israel.

As I read on some of their historical literature I have learned that despite of the relative wealth of Lebanon, its leaders were divided into three main groups on some national issues.

The first group wanted Lebanon to be part of France, while the second group called for the integration of Lebanon within the framework of Arab unity, and the third wanted independence of Lebanon from France. As I was analyzing the political situation in Lebanon during this time, I realized that it was the spirit of Arab nationalism that had prevailed, as most of the Lebanese believed Lebanon is an inseparable part of the world. I noticed that most Lebanese are devout Arab nationalists and their cultures were distinctly in the context of the Arab world. One of its writers even wrote that Lebanon was culturally influenced by the Mediterranean and by the ancient people that inhabited this basin.

As I go around the cities, faces of western influences were evident in most cities through the many facades particularly in the main cities. The Arab traditional lifestyle which revolves firmly around the family, socializing, and hospitality were exactly the case in most families, although those living outside the city especially in the remote areas, retained their old customs and tradition. As I had observed, Lebanese people are generally literate and Lebanon has one of the most technically prepared, and educated populations in the Middle East.

In matters of food and drinks, most of Lebanese cuisines were a combination of the European cuisine and the eastern spicy. The Lebanese traditional dishes still exist in many places, which are simple preparations, using grains, pulses and vegetable and fruit. A Typical Lebanese meal on the other hand is the mezze.

This is a thorough spread of forty or fifty hors d'oeuvres or simply a salad bowl. However, unlike in other Arabian countries, Lebanese people were the most frequently disturbed people by war, by invasion and annexation of different countries surrounding her. Lebanon at one time was under French government and at some other period was invaded by Syria and Israel. Despite of those troubling wars, and internal chaos, the Lebanese people was thriving economically.

In my observation however, despite that this country is an Arab state many of its inhabitants are Christians and at some times was governed by a Maronite Christian but was assassinated in February 2005. As I analyzed the social and cultural life of the Lebanese society I found out that the root of internal

chaos in Lebanon was, there is an unresolved character of the Lebanese national culture.

Was the character of the Lebanese society Arab and Muslim in orientation or Christian and Western? There are several strong communities competing to gain control of power in Lebanon such as the Maronites, Christians, the Nusayris, the Antioch Turks, and Bedouin, which reveals the multi-culturism of the Lebanese society that in my view, this multiculturalism should be clearly understood by its people in order for them to gain peace within, and in international relations.

Reference

Lebanon

<http://www.arab.net/lebanon/>