**The Motif of the Land (*al-Arḍ*) in the Poetry of Salem Jubran: A Reading of the *Kalimāt min al-Qalb* Anthology as an Illustration**

**Introduction**

The study aims to explore the motif of land *(al-arḍ)* and the way it is used in the poems of Salem Jubran (1941–2011), along with its associated connotations, symbolism, and poetic imagery. In addition, it aims to identify the nature of this motif of the land and the extent to which the poet was able to use it successfully, rendering it an effective tool within the poetic text.

The topic of land, as used to create particular and recurring aesthetic effects, is considered a novel area for literary discussion in literature. These thematic recurrences and reiterations, whether through forms of words, phrases, or ideas, sometimes impose patterns of repetition on the poet designed to reinforce specific meanings in the mind of the reader. Repetition reflects the nature of resistance poetry, in which expressions of pain and suffering demand that repetition be used as an auditory and conceptual mechanism to help convey this pain (Boulos 1986, p.82).

This motif is a salient feature of the poetry of Jubran, a member of the second wave of Palestinian poets, a man who suffered much in prison, and a member of the “Maki,” the Israeli Communist Party. He was born on a tide of anger crashing onto bitter realities. This can be sensed in his 1970 anthology *Kalimāt min al-Qalb* (Words from the Heart), in which the poet directly addresses the Palestinian people in particular and the Arab world in general. His poetry speaks of the nation and of connections with the land. The love of the land is evident in his poems and the content centers on Palestinian national (*waṭanī*) and pan-Arab (*qawmī*) sensibilities. What is most pronounced is his advocacy of a sense of connection with the land and of belonging to the Arab world immersed in pan-Arab concerns and causes after 1967. The poet’s expressiveness on these two topics stems from his faith in the power of the people.

Literary critics have discussed Jubran’s poems extensively, especially the prominent social and humanitarian themes in his work. However, I have yet to find a single study specifically on the motif of the land in his poems. Consequently, I found it intriguing to explore this topic, focusing on the issues raised above.

Through my analysis of his poetry, I have sought to answer one principal question: What is the role of the motif of the land in Salem Jubran’s poetry? Several sub-questions emerge from this question: How is the motif of land presented? What techniques does the poet use?

The study consists of an introduction and then two main sections. The first section is theoretical, presenting the poet’s biographical details and the motif of the land, along with a contextual outline of the development of local Palestinian poetry after 1948. The second offers a textual critique of a large selection of Jubran’s poems and identifies the leading significance of the motif of the land in his work.

1. **Theory and Background**
   1. *The Life of the Poet Salem Jubran*

Salem Jubran was a Palestinian resistance poet born in 1941 in the village of Buqeiʿa (Peke’in in Hebrew) in Al-Jalil al-ʿAla (Upper Galilee). He lived in Nazareth until he died there on December 19, 2011. He received his elementary schooling in Buqeiʿa and graduated from Yanni Yanni High School in the village of Kafr Yasif in 1962. It was at this time that he joined the Israeli Communist Party (Maki) and began working in journalism, a profession he pursued until 1992 (Mujadala 2011, p.185).

The first indications of his poetic expressiveness appeared at an early age, and he wrote his first poem in eighth grade. Much of his writing in high school was devoted to the issue of patriotism and depicting the tragedy and suffering of the Palestinian people. Jubran, considered one of the second wave of poets who began writing in the early 1960s, was a living witness to the impact of the occupation. He suffered in its shadows, which inspired many of his patriotic poems (Mujadala 2011, p.186).

*1.2. Prison and House Arrest*

Considerable research on Jubran has focused on his arrest and imprisonment in 1967. Given that this is seen as an important period in his life that had a significant impact on his poetry, it is worthwhile to examine it in this section.

In 1967, Jubran was arrested and imprisoned due to his political activity. Subsequently placed under house arrest, he was prohibited from leaving the city during the day and from leaving his house at night for two years. Jubran’s bitter taste of jail inspired his patriotic poetry, in which he denounced the injustice of the occupation and the grim lot of the Palestinian people. These bitter experiences led to his 1970 anthology *Qaṣāʾid Laysat Muḥaddidat al-Iqāma* (Poems of Undetermined Residence). The themes of love and yearning for the homeland are evinced in most of its poems, as he described the 1967 Six-Day War and its aftermath from the perspective of the Palestinian people’s tragic day-to-day existence (Mujadala 2011, p.204). It becomes clear that prison became Gibran’s inspiration for the meanings of revolution and resistance, manifested in the imagery he manifests in his love for the land. Habib Boulos describes Joubran as the poet of the land and resistance, writing that:

[Joubran] is one of the poets who laid the foundations for national resistance poetry, and among those who armed themselves with Marxist scientific theory to crystallize their ideas, stances, journeys. He is a teacher and intellectual leader, whose writing, poetry, and opinion-making shaped our identity. We have learned so much from him, and he has left an imprint on an entire generation (http://www.odabasham.net/%D9%86%D9%82%D8%AF-).

*1.3. The Artistic Features of Jubran’s Poetry*

What distinguishes Jubran’s poetry is that it expresses real lived experience, conveying his pain and suffering to his own people, their sufferings being the same harsh experience he had endured in prison. He explains:

I do not decide the length or meter of my poems before I write them. I live my reality and garner from it the imagery and intensities of personally and communally endured experiences. I engage with what I amass and try to digest it intellectually and emotionally... My commitment is to one thing: That what I write is honest not only about myself but with life in general... It is important to me that there is something new in my poetry’ new revelations; this is what I strive for. Whether poems are long or short does not matter to me, because, after all, I’m not selling fabric. (Al-Jadid, p. 41).

After reading an extensive selection of Jubran’s poems, the key features characterizing his work and the main themes he addresses emerge:

(a) Repetition of words and expressions.

(b) The repeated contents and topics return in more than one poem, especially those relating to his homeland.

(c) The storytelling style of certain poems, with narrative evinced through character, dialogue, plot, time, and place.

(d) The simple, smooth, and spontaneous language of his poetry.

(e) The use of many colloquial words and expressions.

(f) The use of Christian vocabulary projected onto Palestinian realities.

*1.4. His Career*

Jubran edited the *Al-Jadid* and *Al-Ittihad* magazines, then became editor-in-chief of *Al-Ghad*, the communist youth periodical. In 1990, he was appointed editor-in-chief of *Al-Ittihad* daily, after which he founded and headed the editorial board of *Al-Thaqafa* magazine. He was secretary of Al-Jabha al-Dimuqratiya lil-Salam wal-Musawa (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, known as “Al-Jabha” or by its Hebrew acronym Hadash) that had split from the Israeli Communist Party. Jubran resigned from *Al-Ittihad* in 1993 over ideological differences. He died in 2011.

*1.5. Publications*

Jubran published three poetry collections:

*Kalimāt min al-Qalb* (Words from the Heart; 1971);

*Qaṣāʾid Laysat Muḥaddidat al-Iqāma* (Poems of Undetermined Residence;

1972)

*Rifāq al-Shams* (Companions of the Sun; 1975)

His poems also appear in the 1968-published *Dīwān Al-Waṭan al-Muḥtall* (Anthology of the Occupied Homeland).

**2. Land and Other Motifs in Jubran’s and Other Palestinian Poetry**

*2.1. Introduction*

In this section, I explain the general conception of the term “motif” and the particular motif of the land used by indigenous Palestinian poets, given that Jubran is one of their numbers. Jubran devoted most of his poetry to resisting the occupation and exposing its methods and practices. As a result, discussing his poetry means talking about resistance, a major theme in much of his three anthologies published between 1967 and 1975.

There is no resistance without love. Thus, for a poet to resist, he or she must willingly become immersed in the experience of love. Love of the homeland, love of the people, and love of the land are the wellspring of resistance poetry. Truth be told, Jubran’s deep love for his homeland, his people, and his land verges on veneration. In an early work, Jubran summarized that love in a wonderful and simple poem called “Ḥubb” (Love) which, despite its simplicity, has an enchanting beauty and a delicacy of feeling about it that portends the emergence of a great poet:

*Kamā tuḥibb al-umm ṭafla-hā al-mashawaha*

*Uḥibbu-hā*

*Ḥabībtī bilādī*”

[As a mother loves her disfigured child

I love her

My beloved country].

This great love for his country makes him feel every blow struck upon it and every violation it undergoes, thus recording all the hardships his people and nation have suffered since 1948 (Boulos 1986).

*2.2. The Term and Concept of the Motif*

Motifs are repeated textual features in literary works designed to draw the reader’s attention to them. By appearing repeatedly as an idea or theme within and across the writers’ texts, the motif takes on and clarifies the overall meaning (Wahba 1974, p. 333).

When an idea is repeated to the point of becoming a motif, it indicates its significance to the poet. The difference between motifs and refrains is that the latter is used as a formal expression that is repeated consciously and often for formal reasons only. In contrast, the motif represents an idea that is dominant for the poet, and which is highlighted in various forms, its repetition not necessarily being conscious. (Wahba 1974, p. 343).

Motifs stylistically aid our understanding of literary texts. They are not mere repetitions of expressions in poetic contexts, but engender emotions within the audience and, thus, reflect psychological and emotional aspects of the scenario depicted (Taha, p. 120). Taha adds that motifs’ most important role is in conveying the main textual ideas.

*2.3. The Land Motif in Palestinian Poetry*

What distinguishes Palestinian poetry generally and resistance poetry as a genre is that it revolves around basic national issues of protecting, preserving, and remaining within the homeland. Palestinian identity cannot be realized without the land. If Palestinians lose the longstanding homeland of their forebears, they lose their sense of identity and selfhood (Mawasi 2017, p. 32).

It is natural that the idea of the land is a preeminent one in Palestinian poetry, given that the struggle for Palestinian identity to emerge cannot divorce itself from the meanings and contours of the national terrain. The land as a fundamental and salient motif has appeared prominently in all Palestinian poets’ works since the first generation emerged after 1948 (Mawasi 2017, p. 36). This specific, powerful relationship between Palestinian poets and the land makes them persistent and steadfast in their all-consuming determination to remain and resist any endeavors to uproot and displace them in any way they can.

Jubran is one of the Palestinian poets who laid the foundation for the committed, resistance-oriented national poem. Along with others, he turned to Marxist theory to shape their ideas, stances, journeys, and writings. As a teacher and intellectual leader, Jubran refined Palestinian identity through his writings, poetry, and views, leaving his mark on an entire generation.

*2.4. Local Palestinian Poetry*

After 1948, Palestinians inside Israel became a minority subject to state control and remained under military rule until 1956. The Israeli authorities took control of education and established new policies that reflected their national goals. This restricted opportunities to write in a way that contravened those policy strictures and even to familiarize oneself with output from the Arab world.

Jubran was one of the poets of resistance. After 1967, indigenous poets within Israel became known to the Arab world, particularly because of their political inclinations, which they infused into their poetry. This led to the concept and use of the term resistance and Palestinian “resistance poetry” is particularly associated with Mahmud Darwish (1941–2008), but also Tawfiq Zayyad (1929–94), Samih al-Qasim (1939–2014), and Salem Jubran (Mawasi 2017, p. 12).

According to Mawasi, the application of the term “resistance” to Palestinian poetry was confined to political literature in Israel. The Arabs in Galilee (*al-Jalil*), the Triangle (*al-Muthallath*) that lies adjacent to the “Green Line,” the south desert/semi-desert Negev (al-Naqab) region, and the mixed-community cities have their own particular conditions, as their lands were confiscated and they faced a new type of expropriation in settlement building (2017, p. 32). Mawasi identifies Ghassan Kanafani (1936–72) as the first to use the term “resistance literature” for those artists living under oppression and in cultural captivity as a historic model of a determined and steadfast resistance culture. Kanafani himself stated:

What distinguishes resistance literature in occupied Palestine from 1948 to 1968 is the harsh and extremely ferocious conditions that it challenged and lived in, and it was the furnace in which its artistic production was baked day after day (1966, p. 34).

After 1967, indigenous resistance poetry shifted toward poetry of the nation as a fundamental axis, expressed in different ways by different poets. They addressed the 1948 *nakba*, wrote longingly of their families, depicted the tragedy of the refugees, and resisted both displacement and military diktats. They wrote in defense of and out of love for the homeland, protested the confiscation of property, and rallied around Palestinian identity (Mawasi 2017, p. 44). Although critics differ on what the concept of “resistance literature” is, most who have written on our indigenous poetry agreed to use this term to describe it. This is because this poetry is produced under the pressure of the specific circumstances of occupation, in every sense that word conveys.

Our poets watched events unfold, observing and interacting with them and translating them into poems that challenged and rejected the painful realities imposed: injustice, occupation, and discrimination. They graphically depicted the community’s wounds and raised loud voices against the occupiers and their methods. Our poets’ pens revealed all the occupiers’ schemes for suppression and displacement. Those who viewed the issues from a distance, far above the pain, ambitions, and hopes of their people, were spurned and cut off from the masses. Because our poets who have lived here have lived through these trials and tasted their bitterness, their poetry has taken on distinctive features that have much in common with progressive poetry worldwide. However, local Palestinian poetry differed from other progressive poetry in its steadfast preservation of its local particularisms and special Palestinian overtones. Our poetry has been a progressive, revolutionary one that built on the great poetic heritage prevalent before the *nakba*. Our poets have adopted these visions because they are familiar with what was produced by the pens of progressive writers in the Arab and international worlds, through what was published in the newspapers and magazines of the Israel Communist Party, a rare source during a dark period of scarce sources and a lack of accessible progressive books (Boulos 1986).

In the 1980s, magazines and newspapers began to appear that published resistance poetry, including *Al-Anba* (1968–85), *Al-Sharq* (1970–), the Hebrew/Arabic *Liqa* magazine (1964–88), *Al-Aswar* (1988–), *Mashaweer* (1978–80), *Al-Mawakeb* (1983–2003), *Mawaqif* (1993–), and *Masharif* (1995–97), as well as the University of Haifa–Al-Karmal’s academic magazine (1980–).

In the 1990s, Palestinian female poets who wrote about national concerns began to appear on the literary scene, such as Nidaa Khoury (1959–), Mona Zaher (1975–), Rita Odeh (1960–), and Amal Radwan.

Mawasi adds that anyone who examines the indigenous progress of Palestinian poetry will observe a recent ebb in the nationalist wave and in the motivation to struggle for a Palestinian state, as well as in participating in national events that most poets had hitherto been keen to attend. He thinks that this is attributable to the effect of the Oslo Accords, the partial return home of Palestinians, and the preoccupation of people within the country with local issues (2017, p. 56). Consequently, a few of the first-generation poets continued on their poetic journey but with less revolutionary spirit about their work. According to Mawasi, this is because the first-generation poets in the 1960s and 1970s attracted the most critical attention and readership. In a sense, it was as if those figures who illuminated the paths of poetry at one time had become obscured, or at least overshadowed and diffused in power (2017, p. 56). This discussion of indigenous Palestinian poetry, with all its splendors and peculiar resonances, leads us to talk about a leading poet who played a major role in raising the standing of our poetry and imbuing it with progressive, revolutionary hues: Salem Jubran (Boulos, 2016).

**3. Textual Critique**

*3.1. Introduction*

Many of the poems of Jubran that I analyzed for this study diffuse a spirit of resistance and most of their content revolves around two principal axes: the nationalist (*al-waṭanī*) and the pan-Arab (*al-qawmī*). The nationalist axis is evinced in his expressions of love for and cherishing of his Palestinian homeland that seek to re-awaken the Palestinian popular nationalist sensibility and endow it with the spirit of resistance. The pan-Arab axis is expressed in Jubran’s identification with the wider Arab world and immersion in its issues and activities, expressing his solidarity and sense of belonging to the wider Arab world through his poems.

Jubran deployed the land motif in his poetry in a constant manner, repeating words, phrases, and meanings, with different frequencies of repetition. His use of the motif is striking and intriguing and, as I will go on to show, was notably shaped by his political vision.

*3.2. The Nationalist Axis*

The national axis is the most prevalent in Jubran’s poems, with most of his poetry having a revolutionary character. In the poem “Al-Qarīya al-Madhbūḥa” (The Slaughtered Village), the poet describes brutal scenes:

*Damm damm damm ka-anna al-arḍ lā tunbit aʿshāban bi-lā dimāʾ*

*Al-laḥm fawq al-laḥm wal-dammār yazīd jawʿ al-waḥsh lil-dammār*

*Wal-sighār yamshawn marʿūbīn bayn al-nār wal-ghibār*

[Blood, blood, blood, as if the land does not sprout unbloodied grass

Flesh upon flesh and the destruction swells the beast’s craving for destruction

And the little ones walk terrified between hellfire and dust (p. 62)]

Tears do not solve the problem, and weeping recovers neither the lost territory nor the homeland. Begging for resolution no longer serves a purpose and waiting for reprieve from others no longer serves a purpose either. The solution lies in unity and resistance, for Palestinians to take matters into their own hands. The solution lies not in individual measures but in popular revolution, so let us rip everything up, even our certificates and testimonials, and take up weapons in defense of the homeland:

*Kull al-shahādāt ilā al-mirḥāḍ*

*Kull kutub al-dirāsa*

*Taʿallum al-tayāsa*

*Fal-taʿallum al-jibāl anna thāʾiran jadīdan*

*Ātin*

*Li-kay yashum fī taḥrīr arḍ al-shams*

*Aw yahruq fī miḥrāb-hā infās-uh*

[All certificates down the toilet

All the schoolbooks

Learn to be politicized

Let the mountains know that a new revolutionary

Is coming

To join in the liberation of the land of the sun

Or have his breath inspire its sanctuary (p.32).]

Jubran’s poems simultaneously convey revolution and hope, as he writes in the *Kalimāt min al-Qalb* collection:

*Sajjil ismī fīl qāʾima al-sūdāʾ s*

*Sajjil ism abī, ummī, ikhwatī*

*Fa-anā lan atanāzil ʿan arḍī al-ṭayyiba al-muʿaṭāʾ*

*Lan aʿmal jāsūsan lil-ajhiza al-sūdāʾ*

[Register my name on the blacklist as S.

Register the names of my father, my mother, my siblings.

For I will not relinquish my beautiful, bounteous land.

I will not spy for the black apparatus (1971, p.55).]

We can see from these verses that Jubran wants to reveal the practices and methods they use in an attempt to win him over to their side. We also sense the steadfastness of his refusal, one that he wants the Palestinian people to also adopt. In the poem “Lā Tusāfir” (Do Not Travel) from the same anthology, the poet urges Palestinians to remain on their lands because the love of the homeland is a powerful reason to stay:

*Qif hunā lā tatruk al-arḍ qif hunā inna dhiʾāb al-layl*

*Tarjū an tusāfir li-tarā arḍ-ak ʿuzalāʾ ḥazīnatan*

*Baʿd an kān bi-hā raḍwān yaḥmī-hā*

*Wa-yasqī zajaʿ-hā an kānat maṣūnatan*

[Stay here, do not leave the land; stay here, for the wolves of the night

Hope you depart only to see your land sorrowfully sequestered

After it had had goodwill to protect it

And water its crops, having been protected (1971, p.20).]

In the poem “Ughniya” (Song), Jubran glorifies the people, those who have endured all the shocks that have befallen them, have healed their wounds, and walked over in pursuit of spring. He also insists that he and his people will remain on their home soil, for the homeland endures without its people, nor its people with their homeland. Therefore, Jubran asks his people to stand together and unite in the battle for survival:

*Ka-l-sindiyān hunā sa-nabqā*

*Ka-l-ṣukhūr*

*Ka-ʿarāʾis al-zaytūn fawq rabā bilādī*

*Ka-l-nuhūr k-al-ḥamāʾim al-barriya al-khaḍarāʾ*

*Anā sawfa nakhfiq fawq arḍ-ik*

*Yā bilādī*

*Ka-l-nusūr*

[Like the oak trees, here we will stay,

Like the rocks,

Like the burgeoning olive trees high above the hills of my country,

Like the rivers, like the doves of the verdant terrains,

I will flutter over your land,

Oh! my country,

Like the eagles (p.6).]

In the poem “Al-Biqāʾ” )Staying), p. 34, Jubran describes the *nakba*, displacement, exile, and homelessness. Jubran sees and has lived all these tragedies and records them in poetry that urges the people to stay on their lands and in their homeland no matter what. He sees how the occupiers plot to make them leave and he urges them to stay, to cling to every stone and inch of land:

*Al-arḍ khanājir*

*Taḥt al-aqdām al-waḥshiya*

*Wal-Arḍ muqābir lil-aḥlām al-hamajiya*

*Sa-uẓill hunā*

*Fī bayt min aḥjār*

*Fī khawkh maṣnūʿ*

*Aw fī iḥdā mughr bilādī*

*Yā jazzār*

[The land sprouts daggers

Under savage feet.

And the land sprouts graveyards for barbaric schemes.

I will stay here

In a house built of stones,

In a hut made

Of tree branches,

Or in one of my country’s caves,

You butcher! (p.34)]

These are expressive poems seasoned in pain and regret, but they are also infused with revolution and vision:

*Kān layl al-nakba al-aswad lā ishāʿ fī-h*

*Ghayr ishāʿ al-qanābil*

*Laysat Taqātul!*

*Wa limādhā yā bilādī!*

*Qālat al-aʿyīn fi raʿb*

*Wa-lam tafham tafāsīl al-qaḍiya*

[The black night of the *Nakba* radiated

Nothing but explosion

It is not battle!

And why, oh my country!

The eyes said in terror

And did not understand the details of the case]

In this simple passage, Jubran sums up the impact of the *nakba* and records the popular ignorance of the conspiracy against them woven by colonialism, Zionism, and Arab reactionaries.

There was the *nakba* and then there was displacement, exile, and homelessness. Jubran poet saw and, indeed, lived all these tragedies and so recorded them in poetry. He did not foresee these events but was acutely aware of the aims and dynamics of the plot against his people. He refused to surrender, and his poetry spurred the people to stay on their land and in their homeland no matter what. He and his comrades knew that the plot’s key aim was to make them leave their homeland. He urged his people to stay put and cling to every rock and inch of land. This determination to stay was Jubran’s first step in his poetry toward resistance.

In the poem “Al-Biqāʾ” )Staying), p. 34, Jubran writes:

*Al-arḍ khanājir*

*Taḥt al-aqdām al-waḥshiya*

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In a hut made

Of tree branches,

Or in one of my country’s caves,

You butcher! (p.34)]

For Jubran, Palestinian lands are planted with daggers under the feet of the occupiers, repelling every foreign incursion and the graveyard for Zionism’s barbaric fantasies built on the displacement of an entire people. Despite the brutality of Palestine’s occupiers, the poet is determined to remain on his land and in his home, dreaming sweet, verdant hopes of a bright future. His steadfastness and optimism are unrelenting, even if trampled under the occupiers’ feet. He believes in the power of his people, and that injustice will wither if they stand firm and resist:

*Sa-uẓill hunā*

*Amsak jarḥī fi-yadd*

*Wa-alwāḥ bil-ukhrā gh-rabīʿ,*

*Yaḥmal li-bilādī*

*Difaʾ al-shams wa-bāqāt al-azhār*

[I will stay here

Holding my wound with one hand

And waving with the other toward a Spring

That brings to my country

The warmth of the sun and bouquets of flowers.]

The goal, then, is to liberate the “land of the sun.” This liberation is not achieved individually in the mind but through popular resistance. The era of individual solutions is over and, because the poet’s starting point then was love for his country, he begins this new era with the same momentum. Resistance fails if it does not grow out of love for every grain of soil, yard, and house in the homeland:

*Yumkinukum an taqlaʿū al-shajar*

*Min jabal fī qariyatī*

*Yuʿāniq al-qamar*

*Yumkinukum an taḥrathū kull buyūt qariyatī*

*Fa-lā yuẓill, baʿd-hā athar*

*Yumkinukum an taʾkhathū rabābtī*

*Wa-taḥraqū-ha baʿd an taqṭaʿū al-watar*

*Lākinakum lan takhnaqū laḥnī*

*Liannī ʿāshiq al-arḍ mughannī al-rīḥ wal-maṭar*

[You can uproot the trees

From my village mountain

Embracing the moon

You can plow through every house in my village

Till there is not a trace left in it

You can take my *rabab*

And burn it after you cut the strings

You can

But you will not smother my melody

Because I am a lover of the land, a singer of the wind and rain.

No matter what you do, you will not be able to deprive me of my love for my land, my people, and my country. Al-Jalil (Galilee) is my paradise on earth, with its verdant terrain and pure water. I have remained here for its sake and I will continue to do so; I will preserve it with my blood. The poet’s love for Al-Jalil, as a son of its lands, is profound:

*Kān al-Jalīl nāsan*

*Wa-turba khaḍarāʾ wa-māʾ*

*Wa-baʿd an ḥurimt an azūr-hu*

*Ṣār al-Jalīl jannatan*

*Wa-nās-hu ālīha*

*Wa-ṣār ḥattā layla ḍīyāʾ*

*Aqūl lil-qiyāṣir al-ṣighār: Mā aḍʿaf-kum*

*Qadd taḥṣabūn khuṭwatī*

*Lākin qalbī hāʾim fī waṭanī*

*Yazūr ayy biqaʿa yushāʾ yafʿal mā yushāʾ*

[Al-Jalil was a people

And verdant soil and water,

And once I was deprived of being able to visit it,

Al-Jalil became a paradise

And its people gods.

And it became until night became light

I say to the little Caesars: How weak you are!

You may stop my steps

But my heart wanders in its homeland

Visiting anywhere it wants, doing whatever it wants.]

Jubran depicts the land as impeding and rejecting the occupiers as strangers and the land of Palestinians is a graveyard for the barbaric dreams of Zionism, built on the displacement of an entire people. Nonetheless, the poet will remain steadfast on his land and in his home, believing that injustice will wane if we stand firm and resist.

In the poem “Ughniya” (Song), Jubran glorifies the people, those who have endured all the shocks that have befallen them, have healed their wounds, and walked over the thorns in pursuit of spring. He also insists that he and his people will remain on their home soil, for nor will the homeland endure without its people, nor its people with their homeland. Therefore, Jubran asks his people to stand together and unite in the battle for survival:

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I will flutter over your land,

Oh! my country,

Like the eagles (p.2).]

In the poem “Nihāyat al-Miliyūn” (The End of the Million), Jubran describes the liberation of the land from the enemy, achieved through Palestinian popular unity, not achieved individually but through popular resistance:

*Yumkinukum an taqlaʿū al-shajar*

*Min jabal fī qariyatī*

*Yuʿāniq al-qamar*

*Yumkinukum an taḥrathū kull buyūt qariyatī*

*Fa-lā yuẓill, baʿd-hā athar*

*Yumkinukum an taʾkhathū rabābtī*

*Wa-taḥraqū-ha baʿd an taqṭaʿū al-watar*

*Lākinakum lan takhnaqū laḥnī*

*Liannī ʿāshiq al-arḍ mughannī al-rīḥ wal-maṭar*

[You can uproot the trees

From my village mountain

Embracing the moon

You can plow through every house in my village

Till there is not a trace left in it

You can take my *rabab*

And burn it after you cut the strings

You can

But you will not smother my melody

Because I am a lover of the land, a singer of the wind and rain (p. 34).]

In the poem “Al-Ṭālib Alladhī ʿAshaqa al-Thawra” (The Student Who Loved the Revolution), the poet addresses the usurper of his lands declaring that, no matter what you do, you will not be able to confiscate my love for it, my people, and my country. For my land and Al-Jalil (Galilee) are my paradise, and I will remain for its sake. I will preserve it with my blood, for the poet’s love for his land is profound:

*Kān al-Jalīl nāsan*

*Wa-turba khaḍarāʾ wa-māʾ*

*Wa-baʿd an ḥurimt an azūr-hu*

*Ṣār al-Jalīl jannatan*

*Wa-nās-hu ālīha*

*Wa-ṣār ḥattā layla ḍīyāʾ*

*Aqūl lil-qiyāṣir al-ṣighār: Mā aḍʿaf-kum*

*Qadd taḥṣabūn khuṭwatī*

*Lākin qalbī hāʾim fī waṭanī*

*Yazūr ayy biqaʿa yushāʾ yafʿal mā yushāʾ*

[Al-Jalil was a people

And verdant soil and water,

And once I was deprived of being able to visit it,

Al-Jalil became a paradise

And its people gods.

And it became until night became light

I say to the little Caesars: How weak you are!

You may stop my steps

But my heart wanders in its homeland

Visiting anywhere it wants, doing whatever it wants (p.31)]

In “Qaṣīda bi-lā Awsama” (Poem Without Medals), the poet describes the Palestinian people’s resistance, who have endured oppression and suffering, but who have heroically stood up, defying humiliation and embracing freedom, the freedom that makes them ready to shed blood for it, freedom and assuming the mantle of a revolutionary for a cause:

*Yataʿallum al-shaʿb al-muʿadhdhab kayf yajʿal min turāb min ḥajār arḍ al-ḥammā*

*Aklan ka-l-asmāk al-Masīḥ wa min al-maghāʾir fīl jibāl quṣūr ʿazza lā tuhīn*

*Sayān yuṣbiḥ kull mawqaʿ thāʾir fī ʿayni-h*

*Mahdan li-naṣr aw ḍarīḥ*

*Wa-yuẓill yamshī*

*Wal-dimāʾtazīd-uh badhlan*

*Li-mīlād al-nahār*

[A tortured people learn how to make out the dust of the stones of the fevered land

Food like the fish of Christ and from the caves in the mountains palaces of glory that

are never humiliated

Likewise, every place of revolution becomes, in his eyes,

A cradle of victory or a shrine.

And he keeps walking

While the blood increases his sacrifice

For the birth of the day (p.10).]

*3.4. The Pan-Arab Axis*

Jubran also addresses the Arab world in his poetry, especially in light of the events of the Six-Day War that shattered its dreams of holding onto Arab lands. In “ʿĀṣifat al-Hazīma” (Storm of Defeat), he writes:

*Hazzā min al-aʿmāq, yā ʿāṣifat al-hazīma*

*ʿĀlim-nā al-shāʾikh*

*Fal-yudammar al-iʿṣār kull al-tuḥuf al-qadīma nāsan wa-afkāran*

*La-yuḥriq lahab al-thawra kull arāḍī-nā*

*Kay lā tuḥāk, min jadīd, fawqa-hā mahzala*

*Kay la tuʿād, min jadīd, fawqa-hā jarīma*

*ʿAmlāq hādhā al-ʿAṣr, hubb aṭlaʿ al-naṣr*

*Fa-kull al-sābiqīn aṭlaʿū al-hazīma*

[Shake from the depths, you storm of defeat,

Our aging world.

Let the hurricane destroy all the ancient artifacts, people, and ideas.

Let the flame of revolution burn all our lands

So that it is not smothered in travesty once again

So that a crime is not repeated upon it again.

The giant of this age, rise up and bring victory

For all the predecessors brought was defeat (p.10).]

In the poem “Ughniya” (Song), Jubran glorifies the people, those who have endured all the shocks that have befallen them, have healed their wounds, and walk over the thorns in pursuit of Spring. He also insists that he and his people will remain on their home soil, for neither will the homeland endure without its people, nor its people with their homeland. Therefore, Jubran asks his people to stand together and unite in the battle for survival:

*Ka-l-sindiyān hunā sa-nabqā*

*Ka-l-ṣukhūr*

*Ka-ʿarāʾis al-zaytūn fawq rabā bilādī*

*Ka-l-nuhūr k-al-ḥamāʾim al-barriya al-khaḍarāʾ*

*Anā sawfa nakhfiq fawq arḍ-ik*

*Yā bilādī*

*Ka-l-nusūr*

[Like the oak trees, here we will stay,

Like the rocks,

Like the burgeoning olive trees high above the hills of my country,

Like the rivers, like the doves of the verdant terrains,

I will flutter over your land,

Oh! my country,

Like the eagles (p.2)]

We will remain here like the roots of our trees. Nothing can uproot either them or us. Our roots in the Palestinian lands are profound, from out of its womb. Winter comes and goes but the roots remain with their dreams of spring, embracing life, for all the conspiring storms cannot budge us an inch from our soil and homeland:

*Sa-uẓill fawq turāb-ik al-madhbūḥ yā waṭanī*

*Maʿ al-mizmār, anshid al-rabīʿ*

*Wa Iqūl lil-bākīn wal-mutashāʾimīn*

*Inna al-shitāʾ yamūt fa-ibtasamū*

*Wa-lā tatakhādhilū taḥt al-dumūʿ*

*Hātū ayāday-kum, fa-maʿarikat al-biqāʾ*

*Turīd-kum sandān wa maʿarikat al-rujūʿ*

[I will remain above your slaughtered soil, oh my country,

With my flute I will hymn the Spring

And I say to the whiners and doom-mongers

Winter is dying, so smile

And do not be weak under tears

Give me your hands, for the battle of survival

Needs your support, just like the battle of return.]

The battle is therefore a battle of destiny, a battle of survival in and return to the homeland and native soil. None of this can be achieved through crying and cringing, but through unity, optimism, and embracing life, because it is the lifeblood of the poor and the oppressed.

In the poem “Al-Qāʾima al-Sūdāʾ” (The Blacklist), Jubran challenges the authorities, exposing their methods and those who cooperate with them. No matter how much the authorities try to tempt our poet and our people to surrender their lands and homeland, to become their agents serving their dark apparatus, they will refuse and remain free and honorable. Jubran defends his people, urges them to stay, and guides them on the right path:

*Sajjil ismī fīl qāʾima al-sūdāʾ*

*Sajjil ism abī, ummī, ikhwatī*

*Sajjil ḥattā ḥayṭānī*

*Fī baytī lan talqā al-ashrifāʾ*

*Lā tanẓur naḥwī bi-ʿayūn barida balahāʾ*

*Sajjil ismī*

*Fa-anā lan atanāzil ʿan arḍī al-ṭayyiba al-muʿaṭāʾ*

*Lan aʿmal jāsūsan lil-ajhiza al-sūdāʾ*

[Register my name on the blacklist.

Register the names of my father, my mother, my siblings.

Register even the walls

In my house; you will find only honorable people.

Do not look at me with cold, imbecilic eyes,

Record my name.

For I will not relinquish my beautiful, bounteous land.

I will not spy for the black apparatus (1971, p. 55).]

The poem ends with a wonderful passage declaring the poet’s love for his country and mocking the apparatus of power:

*Waṭanī mulkī*

*Abqā-hu lī ajdādī*

*Wa-sa-abqā-hu lil-abniyāʾ*

*Ḥurr fī-h anā...*

*Itajawwil kayf ashāʾ*

*Kabbaʾ fī ghayr milaffāt-ik bil-qāʾima al-sūdāʾ*

[My country is my possession;

My ancestors left it to me

And I will keep it for my sons.

Free within it am I,

I roam as I please,

Hidden in other files than your blacklist ones.]

In “ʿĀṣifat al-Hazīma” (Storm of Defeat), the poet describes the Six-Day War defeat that shook the entirety of the Arab peoples. This defeat capped a ‘million’-year epoch in which we were only good at crying, sadness, and humiliation. He writes:

*Bakayt milyūn sanna*

*Lam tabqa bawābat shaʿb mā waqaat ʿinda-hu kal-kalb arwī*

*Kal-kalb arwī - āh man yasmaʿ?*

*Akhbār al-ḍīyāʿ al-maḥzana*

*Bakayt ḥattā saqaṭat ʿaynaya fī shawāriʿ al-arḍ*

*Dumūʿan wa-damman*

*Sakhfī dafaʿat thaman-hu*

*ʿUrift an al-damaʿ lā yamnaḥ lil-ḍāʾʿ arḍan āminatan*

[I cried a million years

There was no gate left for a people that I did not stand at like the dog recounting,

Like a dog recounting, but oh who hears

The sad news of those lost?

I cried until my eyes fell on the streets of the earth in

Tears and blood,

My stupidity is what I paid the price for.

I knew that tears did not win me back those lost to a safe land (p. 37).]

The *nakba* came and, with it, displacement. The Palestinian people were divided between those who remained on their lands and those forcibly displaced. The authorities never stopped harassing those who remained but tried by every means they possessed to suppress them, to tighten the noose around every aspect of their lives. Then, not many years later, came the disaster of the Six-Day War, in which the illusion of the Arab colossus crumbled and, with it, the illusions of the people. It cast its shadow over the entire Arab world, which became convulsed in pain, despair, and cynicism. Yet our poets here saw in the war something other than this, were fully aware that what was happening was a new beginning, the ending of an era of sick delusion. It was a clarion call to every Arab to rise again, to abandon their accumulated burden of illusions and clothe themselves in new ideas and visions. Jubran and our local poets saw it as a jolt that woke Arabs and Palestinians from their slumber. Jubran records the impact of the setback and the storm of defeat as shaking our decrepit world, people, and ideas. Here he writes in “ʿĀṣifat al-Hazīma” (Storm of Defeat):

*Hazzā min al-aʿmāq, yā ʿāṣifat al-hazīma*

*ʿĀlim-nā al-shāʾikh*

*Fal-yudammar al-iʿṣār kull al-tuḥuf al-qadīma nāsan wa-afkāran*

*La-yuḥriq lahab al-thawra kull arāḍī-nā*

*Kay lā tuḥāk, min jadīd, fawqa-hā mahzala*

*Kay la tuʿād, min jadīd, fawqa-hā jarīma*

*ʿAmlāq hādhā al-ʿAṣr, hubb aṭlaʿ al-naṣr*

*Fa-kull al-sābiqīn aṭlaʿū al-hazīma*

[Shake from the depths, you storm of defeat,

Our aging world.

Let the hurricane destroy all the ancient artifacts, people, and ideas.

Let the flame of revolution burn all our lands

So that it is not smothered in travesty once again

So that a crime is not repeated upon it again.

The giant of this age, rise up and bring victory

For all the predecessors brought was defeat (p. 10).]

A defeat was necessary to inspire the young generation, to forge optimists who eschewed illusions and embraced hard work and decisive action. Jubran expresses veritable gratitude for this defeat in another poem entitled “Yawm al-ʿĀr” (The Day of Shame):

*Al-gharīn al-nāʿim ṣār nāran*

*Wal-ashjār*

*Ghaṣūn-hā ṣārat rimāḥan*

*Baʿd an mallat ʿiṭāʾ al-zahr wal-athmār*

*Wal-mayyitūn*

*Ustaqiẓū thawwār*

*Shukran li-yawm al-ʿār*

*Fa-naḥnu dhillat al-kilāb aw nakhmas al-ashʿār*

[The soft sand has become fire.

And the trees’

Branches have become spears,

Having grown tired of sprouting flowers and fruit.

And the dead

Have awoken as revolutionaries.

Thank you for the day of shame.

Without it we would have remained as we were, sucking on our wounds,

Suffering the humiliation of dogs or reciting poems.]

Thank you for the defeat that shook us to the core and led us into a revolutionary future. This defeat placed a stone on the head of a stage that was “a million” years old, in which we were not skilled at anything but crying, reciting poems, and ruminating over sadness and humiliation.

*Bakayt milyūn sanna*

*Lam tabqa bawābat shaʿb mā waqaat ʿinda-hu kal-kalb arwī*

*Kal-kalb arwī - āh man yasmaʿ?*

*Akhbār al-ḍīyāʿ al-maḥzana*

*Bakayt ḥattā saqaṭat ʿaynaya fī shawāriʿ al-arḍ*

*Dumūʿan wa-damman*

*Sakhfī dafaʿat thaman-hu*

*ʿUrift an al-damaʿ lā yamnaḥ lil-ḍāʾʿ arḍan āminatan*

[I cried a million years

There was no gate left for a people that I did not stand at like the dog recounting,

Like a dog recounting, but oh who hears

The sad news of those lost?

I cried until my eyes fell on the streets of the earth in

Tears and blood,

My stupidity is what I paid the price for.

I knew that tears did not win me back those lost to a safe land (p. 37).]

Due to the profound love between the poet and his country, between him and Al-Jalil and his people, death is easy and resistance worthy. Is there anything holier than martyrdom for the sake of a just cause? Jubran writes:

*Tashtaʿal al-muqāwama*

*Fī kull shibr*

*Yuʿallin al-iṣrār*

*Iṣrāru-h an tabṣaq al-ʿudwān kull dār*

*Shaʿbī anā aʿrifu-h in uẓlimat*

*Yanbaḥ min dimāʾi-h nahār*

[The resistance is raging

Over every inch.

Determination declares

Its insistence that every house spit out its aggression.

My people, I know them, if they are put in the dark

They bark daylight from out of their blood.]

In “Yawm al-ʿĀr” (The Day of Shame), p. 32, Jubran confirms that tears do not solve the problem, and crying does not restore the lost land or restore the homeland we lost, and that waiting for relief from others is no longer useful, so the solution is unity and resistance, in defense of the homeland:

*Kull al-shahādāt ilā al-mirḥāḍ*

*Kull kutub al-dirāsa*

*Taʿallum al-tayāsa*

*Fal-taʿallum al-jibāl anna thāʾiran jadīdan*

*Ātin*

*Li-kay yashum fī taḥrīr arḍ al-shams*

*Aw yahruq fī miḥrāb-hā infās-uh*

[All certificates down the toilet

All the schoolbooks

Learn to be politicized

Let the mountains know that a new revolutionary

Is coming

To join in the liberation of the land of the sun

Or have his breath inspire its sanctuary (p. 32).]

The poet believes in his people, believes in their strength, their steadfastness, and their ability to live a dignified life and reject humiliation and degradation. The people have learned from defeat, from the harsh experiences they endured. This lesson has been one of rejection, persistence, and defiant determination:

*Yataʿallum al-shaʿb al-muʾadhdhab kayf yasriq min ʿayūn*

*Jilād-ah ḥattā al-naʿās*

*Wa kayf yaqtahim al-ḥuṣūn*

*Li-yaqūl lil-maḥkūm alf muʾabad!*

*Inna al-khulāṣ ghaddan*

*Idhā ustanṭiqt lā tanṭuq*

*Wa in ʿudhibt*

*Abṣiq fī ʿayūn al-ṣālibīn!*

[A tortured people learn how to steal even sleep

From the eyes of their executioners

And how to storm the fortresses

To recount to the condemned a thousand life sentences!

The end of it all is tomorrow.

If you urged to speak, do not speak,

And if you are tortured, spit in the eyes of the crucifiers!]

When a people are humiliated and their dignity violated, they become prepared to sacrifice the most precious thing they possess to have them restored. A tortured people learn how to pay a heroic price.

*Bintan li-ḥadd al-ān lam taḥlum bi-ghayr al-ʿurs*

*Lam tataqun siwā lamma al-jadīla*

*Wa fatā bi-ʿamr al-ward yaqraʾ fīl kitāb*

*Wa yaḥfiẓ al-ashʿār wal-qiṣṣaṣ al-jamīla*

*Yataʿallum al-shaʿb al-muʾadhdhab*

*Kayf yaḥtarif al-buṭūla*

[A girl who has not yet dreamed of anything but a wedding,

She has only mastered braiding her hair.

And a boy as young as a rose reads a book

And memorizes beautiful poems and stories.

The tormented people learn how to acquire heroism.]

This is a people who resist, who have lived through times of oppression and have become accustomed to sadness and suffering. But they have shaken off the dust of bad times and stood giant and heroic, beating back humiliation and embracing freedom. It is the freedom that makes them ready to sacrifice their blood for it, that makes them revolutionaries, resolutely defending a just cause:

*Yataʿallum al-shaʿb al-muʿadhdhab kayf yajʿal min turāb min ḥajār arḍ al-ḥammā*

*Aklan ka-l-asmāk al-Masīḥ wa min al-maghāʾir fīl jibāl quṣūr ʿazza lā tuhīn*

*Sayān yuṣbiḥ kull mawqaʿ thāʾir fī ʿayni-h*

*Mahdan li-naṣr aw ḍarīḥ*

*Wa-yuẓill yamshī*

*Wal-dimāʾtazīd-uh badhlan*

*Li-mīlād al-nahār*

[A tortured people learn how to make from the dust of the stones

The land of the sanctuary,

Food like Christ’s fishes

And from the caves in the mountains, palaces,

And unbowed glory.

Likewise, every revolutionary site becomes, in their eyes,

A cradle for victory or a shrine.

They keep walking on,

And blood increases their sacrificing themselves

For the birth of the day.]

For the sake of this day, this day of freedom, the people resist, endure hardships, serve time in prisons, sacrifice, and write hymns of victory with their blood, watering the land of their country with their blood for that day of freedom. No matter what happens, they remain optimistic, they see the day approaching, and they see hope coming to fulfillment before them:

*Asnad ẓahrī li-jidār abī al-tārīkh*

*Wa usaddid ṭarfī ʿan buʿd fī wajh akhī al-mutaqbal*

*Wa aqūl bi-thiqqat nabī maṣlūb*

*Yaʿlan ākhir kalima innī mutafāʾil*

*Al-darb ṭawīl*

*Wal-ahl yamūtūn min al-jawʿ*

*Wal-shuhadāʾ jaḥāfil*

*Wa anā mutafāʾil*

*Dammī al-nāzif maṭar*

*wa anīnī al-ahzawja al-ghadd maraj sanābil*

*Al-ghadd ʿurs sanābil*

[I lean my back against the wall of my father, history,

And I turn my eyes afar toward the face of my brother, the future.

And I say with the confidence of a crucified prophet

Announcing the last word that I am optimistic.

The road is long

And our family is dying of hunger,

The martyrs are legion,

And I am optimistic.

The blood I shed is rain,

My ground flesh the sky,

And my wailing a lullaby, while tomorrow is a field full of ears of corn.

Tomorrow ears of corn will marry.]

For tomorrow to become a field full of ears of corn, for the world to become a wedding of ears of corn, everyone must resist:

*Ibn ʿashrīn yuqātil*

*Wa ibn sabaʿīn yuqātil*

*Wa allatī māt akhū-hā*

*Tansaj al-ṣūf li-man qām makāna-hu*

[A twenty-year-old fights,

And a seventy-year-old fights,

And she whose brother died

Weaves her wool for the one who took his place.]

This is how victory is won and how the day of freedom dawns again, through unity, in a celebration of resistance through battle. Silence is useless because the times demand sacrifices for which the people are ready:

*Wa allatī māt fatā aḥlāmi-hā*

*Kharajat taḥmil barūdat-uh*

*Taghsil ʿan arḍ al-buṭūlāt al-mahāna*

*Wa allatī māt ibna-hā*

*Taḥlam an yaṭlaʿ tīnan wa sanābil*

*ʿUll-ah yaṭʿam fī maʿarikat al-naṣr muqātil*

[And she whose boy of her dreams died

Went out carrying his rifle

Washing heroic humiliation from the earth.

And she whose son died

Dreams that figs and ears of corn will grow.

Perhaps a fighter will feed upon the battle of victory.]

And this people for whom these poems are sung is a people forged by the colossal fire of the occupation into a giant, shaped into heroes who redeem their land with their blood. Throughout all this, the poet remains optimistic about a beautiful tomorrow, the tumbling down of the prisons, and events turning in favor of his people:

*Āh shaʿbī*

*Ṣaḥrat-uk al-nār ʿamlāqan*

*Sa-tafannā hadhihi al-dunyā wa lā tafannā, sa-tubnī*

*Bil-damm al-ghālī wa nīrān al-qanābil*

*Ghadd-ak al-ḥalū, asmaʿ al-jallād yabkī tumma yanhār*

*Wa min kafī-k*

*Kal-ṣābūn*

*Tanhār al-salāsil*

[Oh! my people,

The fire has fused you into giants.

This world will perish but you will not perish; you will build

With precious blood and the fire of bombs

Your sweet tomorrow. I hear the executioner crying then collapsing,

And from your wrists,

Like soap,

The chains crumble.]

The people must triumph, no matter how interminable the night of occupation and injustice seems to last, because the people, no matter how much others try to stifle and oppress them, will not perish, and a people who know the meaning of sacrifice will inevitably realize their victory. Jubran honors and reveres his people; he knows them and their sacrifices well and lauds those who resist anticipating victory:

*Sawfa-ughannī lil-sinīn*

*Qiṣṣa ṭawīla ṭawīla*

*ʿAn Fāṭima*

*Tilka allatī kānat tukhbiʾ bayn nahdī-hā*

*Al-dīnāmīt*

*Li-kay tūṣil-hu*

*ʿĀbira fī khandaq al-mawt*

*Ilā al-muqāwama*

[I will sing for years

A long, long tale

About Fatima

She who hid dynamite between her breasts

To deliver it,

Passing through the trench of death

To the resistance.]

These are the poet’s people, a people who do not fear death but storm its barricades because they believe in their just cause:

*ʿIndamā yuṣbiḥ al-mawt bil-qunbala*

*Khaṭran fawq raʾs thalāthīn milyūn rājil*

*Tuṣbiḥ al-marḥala*

*Qadran*

*Kull fard yuṣīr muqātil.*

[When bomb deaths become

A threat suspended over the heads of thirty million people,

The era becomes

Destiny.

Every individual turns into a fighter.]

Thus, we do not desire war. We are a peaceful people but, if we are attacked, we cannot stand silent. If danger threatens us day and night, we all become fighters, for death does not frighten us, but drives us on to further combat and sacrifice:

*Yā dimāʾ abī wa akhī wa ibn ʿammī*

*Yā dimāʾ rifāqī al-bawāsil*

*Anta, baʿd il-turāb alladhī*

*Yatanazzā asā fī al-salāsil*

*Wal-buyūt allatī dummirat*

*Wal-alūf allatī hajarat*

*Wal-ṣafāʾ alladhī*

*Ḥaraqat-hu ʿalā al-nayl nār al-qanābil*

*Ḥāfiz ākhir kay nuqātil*

[Oh, the blood of my father, my brother, and my cousin,

Oh, the blood of my brave comrades:

You, after the dust that

is swathed in sorrowful chains

And the houses destroyed

And the thousands displaced

And the serenity that

was burned intentionally by bombs fired

Are another spur for us to fight.]

This is truly our people, a people that does not accept humiliation, revolts against injustice, and demands its rights even if it costs it its own lives. Because of all this, Jubran pledges allegiance to them as the leaders of these times:

*Kull al-alā tazʿamū*

*Qabl-ak*

*Sāqūnan qaṭīʿan aʿzlan lil-mawt*

*Fa-dassa ʿalā qubūri-him - al-mujrimīn*

*Wa tazʿam ant*

All those who led

Before you

They drove as a helpless herd to death, trampled on their graves — the criminals — So you must lead now.]

We claimed leadership for many years, yet disaster followed disaster. However, now is no time for individual leadership, but for a people who resist and fight as a whole. Leadership is for a people who resist and fight, leadership is for a people who have been baptized by bitter experience and emerged from it stronger, fearless revolutionaries who know their enemy and know how to claim back usurped rights. Therefore, Jubran sings for those who resist and for the revolutionaries; he sings for the rightful owners of property, but he feels ashamed before them. He is ashamed that they sacrificed their lives for us, for their people, while he only masters the art of words, even though words, properly used in battle, become as dangerous as bullets and bombs. Here is Jubran mourning a martyr without daring to visit his grave, because he is shamed by the martyr’s great sacrifice:

*Umajjid dhikrāt-ak min ghayr an azūr ḍarīḥ-ak yā ṣāniʿ al-maʿjazāt*

*Liannī idhā zutt-uh sa-amūt ḥayyan*

*Anā kull mā ṣanaʿat-uh yaddī kalimāt*

[I glorify your memory without visiting your shrine, you miracle worker,

Because if I visit it, I will die alive

All that my hands have forged is words]

This is Salem Jubran’s poetry, brimming with vitality and rejection. In everything he wrote, Jubran stood firmly with the working class, those who toiled. This is Jubran who poured the fiery flames of his poems onto the heads of traditional leaders who sold out the cause. Jubran, while writing about the resistance of his heroic people, does not forget to sing about every revolution that has risen up against injustice and every people that has revolted against a rampaging occupier. He stands with everyone who toils for a living and everyone who fights for truth and justice.

**4. Summary and Conclusions**

I analyzed a large selection of Jubran’s poems and found that he used the motif of the land in most of his poems along several axes, the most important of which are the national axis, which is prevalent in most of his poems, and the pan-Arab axis. I sought to identify motifs in general and the motif of the land in particular in indigenous Palestinian poetry, in which the repetition of the word land is highly symbolic for Palestinians.

Jubran tried to make the phenomenon of the motif a meaningful stylistic tool that serves the poetic subject and performs an important emphatic function. The motif of the land is evident in a way that makes the reader live the repeated events and transports him into the psychological world of the poet, who imbued some of these motifs with his own feelings of the national issue, nostalgia, and resistance. Through them, Jubran highlights his love for his homeland and urges holding on to it while standing firm in the face of the enemy, which is clear to him in relation to the national axis. He also uses these motifs to highlight the pan-Arab axis, his sense of belonging to the Arab nation, and affirming that the Palestinian people are part of it.

This study has shown how the poet, despite depicting the Palestinian people’s bitter realities via the land motif, also sought to produce simple, honest, and transparent poetry that expressed his pain and suffering. It has also revealed how the poet uses the land motif meaningfully for the reader. The land motif also resonates with resistance poetry generally in that it expresses pain and suffering, and the technique of repetition helps convey this to the reader.

It is important here to mention that Jubran is certainly a “poet of the land” due to his intense love for the soil of Palestine and his adherence to it. May God have mercy on our poet and bless his soul.

With his progressive and humane vision, Jubran crafted his poems of resistance. In this regard, we can only sincerely say that he was a poet committed to the cause of his people from his first writings. It was his daily obsession; every word he uttered carried within it the seed of resistance and every poem he composed drew on the experience of an entire people. What distinguishes Jubran from other poets is his simplicity. His words go straight to the reader’s heart. The best titles we can award Jubran is a poet of the people and poet of simplicity, love, and resistance because he always stood by and urged on his people, encouraging and inspiring them, showing them the rugged, thorny path of freedom that he saw would inevitably reach its goal. For the sake of and out of love for the homeland, he wrote.

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