

Nizar Hassan was born in 1960 and raised in the village of Mashhad, near Nazareth, where he has lived with his family. He studied anthropology at Haifa University and after graduating worked in TV. Starting in 1990, he turned to cinema. In 1994, he produced *Independence*, in which he pokes his Palestinian interlocutors about what they think of the bizarre Israeli notion of their "independence". They have stolen another people's homeland and call the act "independence"! Hassan dwells on that absurdity. As the world's attention was captured by the news of Israel planning to "annex" yet a bit more of Palestine and add it to what they have already stolen, I received an email from Nizar Hassan, the we-eminent Palestinian documentary filmmaker. He wrote to me about his latest film, *My Grandfather's Path*, and included a link to the director's cut. It was a blessing. They say choose your enemies carefully for you would end up like them. The same goes for those opposing Zionist settler colonialists. If you are too incensed and angered by their daily dose of claptrap, the vulgarity of their armed robbery of Palestine, you would soon become like them and forget yourself and what beautiful ideas, ideals, and aspirations once animated your highest dreams. Never fall into that trap. For decades, aspects of Palestinian and world cinema, art, poetry, fiction, and drama have done for me precisely that: saved me from that trap. They have constantly reminded me what all our politics are about — a moment of poetic salvation from it all. Nizar Hassan's new documentary is one such work — in a moment of dejection over Israel's encroachment on Palestinian rights and the world's complicity, it has put Palestine in perspective. The film is mercifully long, beautifully paced and patient, a masterfully crafted work of art — a Palestinian's epic ode to his homeland. A shorter version of *My Grandfather's Path* has been broadcast on Al Jazeera Arabic in three parts, but it must be seen in its entirety, in one go. It is a pilgrimage that must not be interrupted.

The title: Nizar Hassan's life

Nizar Hassan belonged to Mashhad. Having graduated in Anthropology from Haifa University, first he worked in TV, and then he joined cinema. When it comes to his work *Independence*, it criticizes the Israeli idea of independence. And, in his film *My Grandfather's Path*, he gives the idea of being careful in choosing one's foes because people become like their enemies. Resultantly, they forget themselves and their own beautiful ideas. In fact, he has saved from that trap due to his deep connection with world literature, and this link with art has made him realise that to connect with the politics of the country is a recipe of being away from art.

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