

Incitement

Kawkab al-Sharq, 10 August 1933

The Ministry's newspapers have long harboured, and continue to harbour, intense indignation toward those who quarrel with the scholars of Islam — those lanterns in the darkness, those beacons of guidance, those stars of the night. In those same newspapers there is fierce hostility toward all who dispute with the scholars of Islam, the lanterns of darkness, the beacons of guidance, the stars of the night. And in those newspapers there are both explicit statements and insinuations to the effect that whoever quarrels with the scholars is quarrelling with Islam itself — for the scholars are the outward manifestation of Islam and of its dignity, the guardians of Islam and its defenders. Whoever doubts them has doubted Islam; whoever stirs suspicion around them has stirred suspicion around Islam.

And in the Ministry's newspapers there is incitement of those in authority against all who criticise — lightly or severely — the scholars of Islam, the lanterns of darkness, the beacons of guidance, the stars of the night; for to protect those scholars is to protect Islam.

Yet alongside this loud and persistent clamour, the Ministry's newspapers maintain a silence no less prolonged and no less insistent — silence concerning what the scholars of Islam, the lanterns of darkness, the beacons of guidance, and the stars of the night have become entangled in: their muteness in the face of the suspension of Islamic legal rulings and the continued residence of a Muslim woman in the household of a non-Muslim man who has no right to detain her, just as she has no right to remain with him. No Islamic government may sanction her connection with him and her subjection to him. And the scholars of Islam, the lanterns of darkness, the beacons of guidance, and the stars of the night may not give their approval to a government that either endures this sin or proves incapable of removing this evil — for the Quranic text is unambiguous, admitting of neither interpretation nor alteration, and is clear beyond any possibility of evasion. We must therefore ask: which of the two parties is more deeply in sin? Those who wish to correct the crookedness in the scholars of Islam and guide them along the clear and straight path of calling to the way of God and defending the religion of God? Or those who support the scholars in the very entanglement they have fallen into — silence about what neither God, nor His Messenger, nor the Muslims can accept? And which party more rightly deserves to have the authorities set upon them, in an Islamic country that proclaims Islam as its official religion: those who call for the implementation of God's rulings without let or hindrance, even from the Evangelical Council? Or those who acquiesce in the suspension of those rulings and the functioning of the Millī Council in their place, and who urge the Islamic government to strike down the defenders of Islam?

The Ministry's newspapers have a peculiar logic that presents things backwards and elevates things downward. But the logic of those newspapers does not concern us; their babble is too trivial and too trifling for us to pause over or heed. What does concern us, and what calls us to reflection, is the logic of the Ministry and the Council of Senior Scholars. We have said to them, and we continue to say, that the Egyptians will not allow the story of Nazla Ghunaym to pass as it is intended to pass — consigned to deep silence and prolonged hush. They will remember it, and will not cease to invoke it, until they learn what the Ministry and the Council have done in the matter.

The Ministry bears responsibility for two things: first, the protection of Islam, which it has taken upon itself to defend; and second, the enforcement of the law, for which it was established. We wish to know to what extent it has fulfilled its obligations toward the protection of Islam and the enforcement of the law in the case of Nazla Ghunaym. We would like to know whether it is content with or offended by the subjection of this Muslim girl to non-Muslims in defiance of Islamic rulings. If it is content — and we are certain it is not — then it promised to protect Islam and did not protect it, and was established to enforce the law and did not enforce it. If it is offended — and we are certain it is — then what has it done to remove the causes of this offence? And what prevents it, or renders it incapable of removing them?

As for the Council of Senior Scholars, we affirm that the Muslims did not twist the Council's arm — as the common saying goes — to make it take upon itself the solemn covenant it announced to the people: that it exists to call to the way of God and to defend the religion of God. It took that covenant upon itself freely and of its own accord, neither driven to it nor compelled. God — glory be to Him — commands the Muslims to fulfil their covenant with God when they have covenanted, and not to break their oaths after confirming them. The Muslims therefore have every right to demand fulfilment from the venerable Council, and to begrudge any shortcoming that would lead the Council to break its covenant or violate its oaths.

The Islam that the Council rose to protect and defend is in urgent need of that protection. What has the Council done concerning this Muslim woman who awaits one to deliver her from captivity and restore her to the guardianship of the Muslims? A verse of the Noble Quran is being suspended in an Islamic country — and it is not the law that calls for its suspension, nor the constitution. On the contrary, both the law and the constitution insist on its implementation and its respect. We would therefore like to know which of the two weighs more heavily with the Council of Senior Scholars and with His Eminence the Grand Imam, the Sheikh of al-Azhar: that this noble verse remain suspended, or that the Council press the Ministry firmly for its implementation — and indeed make clear to the Ministry that if the

suspension of this noble verse continues, the Council will be compelled to resign.

We wish to know which of the two alternatives weighs more with the Council: the suspension of a verse of the Noble Quran and a ruling of Islam? Or its continued tenure in positions from which it is failing to discharge its obligations?

We await an answer. We will persist until we obtain that answer. And we assure the Council that the incitement directed against us — whether from the Council itself or from the Ministry's newspapers — will neither frighten us nor deflect us from this persistence.