

## The Tahrir Square Sermon of Shaykh Yûsuf al-Qaradâwî

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On February 18, 2011, one week after the fall of the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, some two millions Egyptians assembled once again in Cairo's Tahrir Square for the Friday prayer.<sup>1</sup> The day had been proclaimed *Yawm al-Fath* "the Day of Victory". The intention was to celebrate the beginning of a new era, to commemorate the martyrs of the revolution and to maintain pressure on the military council temporarily governing the country. The sermon (*khutba*) was not going to be preached by one of the highest ranking official Muslim clerics – the Shaykh of al-Azhar University, for example, or the Mufti of the Republic – but by the most emblematic figure of the religious opposition to the former regime, Shaykh Yûsuf al-Qaradâwî, 84, who had just come back from Qatar the day before.

Shaykh Dr. Yûsuf al-Qaradâwî is one of the most influential of Sunni ulama today. Born in Egypt in 1926, he graduated from al-Azhar Faculty of Principles of the Religion (*Usûl al-Dîn*) in 1960 and later got his PhD with a dissertation on "Alms (*zakât*) and its Effect on Solving Social Problems". His involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood led to various imprisonments under King Farouk and Nasser. In 1961, he was invited by the State of Qatar to develop Islamic studies in the new Qatar University. He has been residing in Doha since. He helped create the very popular *IslamOnline* website in 1997, and his weekly program on Al Jazeera, *The Sharî'a and Life*, is watched by tens of millions of Muslims worldwide. When the Taliban decided to blow up the Bamyân Buddhas, he went to Afghanistan to try to save the statues. He is currently the chairman of the International Union for Muslim Scholars and the head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research. Among his many books, *Islamic Awakening between Rejection & Extremism* (1991) and *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase* (2002), are must-reads for anyone interested in modern Islamic thought and activism of the *via media*.

For some who are old enough to remember the triumphal arrival of Imâm Khomeini in Tehran after the fall of the Shah in 1979, the return of Shaykh al-Qaradâwî to Cairo and his first address to Egyptian crowds, on the Egyptian soil, after many years of absence and censorship, might have had a flavour of *déjà vu*. Hence the fears expressed by some commentators, the more so as this charismatic scholar, as remarked by D. D. Kirkpatrick in *The New York Times*, "is banned from the United States and Britain for supporting violence against Israel and American forces in Iraq". The editors of *Tablet* write for example that this "Brotherhood cleric is popular, but may also be dangerous", and explain that "Qaradawi is not somebody that either Israel or the West should want inspiring the revolutionaries or shaping the course of the revolution" because of his views on homosexuality and the Holocaust.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See D. D. Kirkpatrick, *After Long Exile, Sunni Cleric Takes Role in Egypt*, in *The New York Times*, 18 February 2011, on internet: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/world/middleeast/19egypt.html?\\_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/world/middleeast/19egypt.html?_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=print); D. Murphy, *Egypt revolution unfinished, Qaradawi tells Tahrir masses*, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 18 February 2011, on internet: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0218/Egypt-revolution-unfinished-Qaradawi-tells-Tahrir-masses>.

<sup>2</sup> See the Editors, *Qaradawi Addresses Tahrir Square*, in *Tablet. A New read on Jewish Life*, 18 February 2011, on internet: <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/59415/qaradawi-addresses-tahrir-square/>.

But what precisely did Shaykh al-Qaradâwî say last Friday, during the prayer in Tahrir Square? For those who were not there or do not know Arabic and cannot therefore benefit from the various video recordings already circulating on the internet, it would be difficult to form a sound opinion on the basis of the brief reports and analyses, or short quotations, sometimes incorrect, available in the written press or on the web. The translation offered here will help them to get a better understanding of the personality of the so-called “Egyptian Khomeini” and of the message which he addressed to his fellow-countrymen in the uncertain revolutionary times they are currently going through. Moreover, to the extent that Shaykh al-Qaradâwî can be considered close to the Muslim Brotherhood, his sermon provides a good illustration of the kind of ideas inspiring this movement said to have had a pivotal part<sup>3</sup> in the success of the January 25 Revolution and expected to continue to play an important role in any future democratic government in the Nile valley. Finally, those seeing in the old preacher a tenor of “Islamist extremism” will be able to measure the distance separating Cairo from Tehran, and how multi-form Islamism can be, particularly in the matter of relations with non-Muslims.

A Muslim Friday service usually starts with a sermon in two parts and ends with a prayer of two prostrations. Each of these two cycles of prayer includes the audible recitation of the opening surah and of another passage of the Qur’ân, the selection of which is left to the imam. In the context of a successful revolution, the verses chosen by Shaykh al-Qaradâwî for the Tahrir Square prayer were highly significant. The first passage was surah *al-An’âm (The Cattle)* - 6, verses 42-45: “We have certainly sent Messengers to nations before you, and We seized them with stress and distress, so that they might grow humble.<sup>42</sup> If only, when Our disaster came on them, they had been humble! But their hearts were hardened and Satan made all that they used to do seem decorous to them!<sup>43</sup> Then, when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of all things till, even as they were rejoicing in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and surely they were dumbfounded.<sup>44</sup> So of the people who were unjust the last remnant was cut off. Praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds!<sup>45</sup>” The second passage was from surah *al-Fajr (The Dawn)* - 89, verses 1-14: “By the Dawn,<sup>1</sup> and the ten nights,<sup>2</sup> and the even and the odd,<sup>3</sup> and the night when it departs,<sup>4</sup> is there in this an oath for a thinking man?<sup>5</sup> Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the ‘Âd,<sup>6</sup> Iram with their columns,<sup>7</sup> the like of which was not created in the lands?<sup>8</sup> And with the Thamûd, who clove rocks in the valley?<sup>9</sup> And with Pharaoh, firm of might,<sup>10</sup> who all were tyrannic (*taghaw*) in the land<sup>11</sup> and spread much corruption (*fasâd*) therein?<sup>12</sup> Therefore your Lord poured on them a scourge of torment.<sup>13</sup> Surely, your Lord is ever on watch.”<sup>14</sup> As much as their choice, the way Shaykh al-Qaradâwî recited these verses undoubtedly had an impact on the Tahrir Square worshippers, notably his repeating of the verses 10-14 of *The Dawn* in the following sequence – 10, 10, 11, 12, 11, 12, 13, 14, 14 – underlining the tyranny of Pharaoh, his corruption and his final chastisement by God.<sup>4</sup>

As traditionally done during a Muslim Friday service, Shaykh al-Qaradâwî quotes other Qur’ânic verses during his sermon. Also faithful to tradition are the elaborate praises of God and witnessing to

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<sup>3</sup> See D. D. Kirkpatrick, *A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History*, in *The New York Times*, 13 February 2011, p. 4; on internet: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/world/middleeast/14egypt-tunisia-protests.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/world/middleeast/14egypt-tunisia-protests.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&emc=eta1).

<sup>4</sup> See and hear on internet: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XdJ1\\_x6v8k&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XdJ1_x6v8k&feature=player_embedded).

His oneness and to Muhammad's Messengership, which preface each of the two parts of his sermon, as well as the long series of invocations ending it. They are also included in the present translation as they are an integral part of a *khutba* and are often used to give it a particular ideological or militant flavour. It is indeed during the final invocations that, for example, the legitimacy of a ruler is publicly reaffirmed by asking God to bless and protect him. As observed in Iran and elsewhere during the last decades, it is also during these closing supplications that the divine curse is invoked by some imams on the United States, Israel, unbelievers, enemies of Islam, etc. As for Shaykh al-Qaradâwî, one would search in vain for such invocations or even, any of such words, in his Tahrir Square sermon.

Apart from its specifically liturgical sections, the sermon of Shaykh al-Qaradâwî develops as a speech to six different audiences, which he addresses one after the other: the revolutionary youth, the Egyptian people as a whole – Muslims and Copts alike –, the army, the “children of Egypt”, i.e. the “workers, peasants and employees”, the Arab rulers and, last, the Palestinians. It thus deals with the January 25 Revolution itself, interreligious relations, constitutional and governmental issues, including justice and human rights, social and economic realities, authoritarianism in the Arab countries and the Palestinian conflict, with an emphasis on the humanitarian situation in Ghazza.

Three final remarks.

Before the tribunal which hanged him for assassinating Anwar Sadat in 1981, Khalid Islambuli shouted “I killed Pharaoh!” In his Tahrir Square sermon, Shaykh al-Qaradâwî does not call for the killing of anybody. However, he does not hide his satisfaction that the pharaonic and criminal regime of Hosni Mubarak was toppled by a peaceful insurrection. For him as for the classical Muslim theologian Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), it may be permissible for a Muslim to assume important public responsibilities in a non-Muslim state, just as Joseph did in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> But when rulers behave like Moses' Pharaoh and “look down their noses on the servants of God, as they seek to share with God His greatness and grace, and so make themselves into gods that enslave their people”, the message of Muhammad, like that of all the Prophets, remains “a message to emancipate all of mankind from all the Pharaohs, Qârûns and Hâmâns who enslave people and impose themselves as high and mighty rulers without any right”.<sup>6</sup> Force should however be used only as a last resort. The joy of Shaykh al-Qaradâwî manifest in his *khutba* must have been all the more real that the popular mobilization which caused the fall of Mubarak was far more faithful to Islamic ideals than the events that ended the rule of his immediate predecessor.

Shaykh al-Qaradâwî praises the Egyptian army and seems to believe that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces now ruling the country will meet positively the various demands that he addresses to them in his sermon. The future will tell us whether he is right to be so confident. These kind of interventions and recommendations by a cleric to a military establishment in some ways remind the historian of the sharing of power between the emirs and the ulama, through mutual legitimization, during the Mamluks' rule over Egypt (1250-1516).

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<sup>5</sup> See Y. Michot, *An Islamic Revolution*, on internet: <http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/revolt.html>; Y. al-Qaradâwî, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*. Revised translation by S. M. H. al-Banna (Swansea: Awakening Publications, 2002), p. 22-23, 171-79.

<sup>6</sup> Y. al-Qaradâwî, *Priorities*, p. 116.

There is a strong aspect of nationalistic populism in Shaykh al-Qaradâwî's sermon, manifest in the number of times he speaks of *al-sha'b*, i.e. the Greek *demos*, the Latin *populus*, the French *peuple*, not just of *al-nâs*, "people" in general. One may have suffered under Nasser but still remain deeply influenced by his rhetoric.

This complete translation of Shaykh al-Qaradâwî's sermon is based on two video recordings originally broadcast live by Al Jazeera and now circulating on the web,<sup>7</sup> not on written transcripts. The recordings are often of very poor quality and would not meet any professional standard. Several words and phrases were very difficult to distinguish and understand. I am most indebted and grateful to one of our Hartford Seminary students, Samy Metwally, himself a promising Egyptian scholar, for kindly, patiently and meticulously helping me to overcome the hurdles. It is when one learns so much from a student that teaching is such a pleasure.



#### TRANSLATION

Praise is due to God! "Praise is due to God, Who has guided us to this. We could not truly have been led aright if God had not guided us" (Q. 7:43). Our Lord, to You the praise is due, as befits the majesty of Your Face and the greatness of Your might. Praise is due to God, a praise abundant, excellent and blessed, which fills the heavens and fills the earth, fills what is between them both and fills anything You want besides! Praise is due to God, Who helps the believers to win and humiliates the wrongdoers! Praise is due to God! We praise Him and we ask Him for help; we ask Him for guidance and we ask Him for forgiveness. We seek refuge in God, Exalted is He, from the evils of our souls and the bad of our actions. We praise You, O God, and we thank You. We cast off and we abandon whoever rejects You. There is no god but You. There is no god but God alone. He has made His promise be true. He has helped His servant to win. He has strengthened His soldiers. He alone has defeated the unjust. I bear witness that there is no god but God alone, Who has no partner. I bear witness that there is no god but You, "the Owner of the sovereignty. You give the sovereignty to whomever You want and You take it away from whomever You want. You strengthen whomever You want and You humiliate whomever You want. In Your Hand is the good. You are powerful over every thing" (Q. 3:26). And I

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt21n0ScrfE> and <http://www.qalansuwa.com/online/islamyat/7172--30-.html>. See also <http://www.albidapress.net/news.php?action=view&id=12058>.

bear witness that our master and our imam, our model and our loved one, Muhammad, is the servant of God and His Messenger, the blessings of God and His peace be upon him, and upon his brothers – the Prophets and the Messengers, especially “the resolute among the Messengers”<sup>8</sup> – Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, the blessings of God be upon all of them – and those who follow them in beneficence, until the Day of judgement.

Now, to our topic. O brothers, O my sons and my daughters, O my brothers and my sisters, O my grandsons and my granddaughters, children of Egypt! The usage of preachers, for their sermons, is to say “O Muslims!” but me, I say in this Square, “O Muslims and Copts! O children of Egypt!” This is the day of the children of Egypt all together. It is not the day of the Muslims alone. I am addressing them from this tribune (*minbar*), and from this Square, Tahrir Square – or, rather, from this day onwards, it ought to be called the “Square of the Martyrs of the January 25 Revolution”. O Brothers, I am addressing you from above this tribune and from the Square of the Martyrs of the January 25 Revolution, this revolution which has taught the world how revolutions should be. It was not an usual revolution but it was a revolution teaching something. The youth who have triumphed in this revolution did not triumph over Mubarak only. They triumphed over Mubarak, they triumphed over injustice, they triumphed over falsehood. They triumphed over robbery and they triumphed over plundering. They triumphed over egoism and they initiated a new life by this revolution. The first whom I will congratulate are these youth, some of whom thought that they would not triumph. As for me, in my last sermon, I swore on the pulpit, I swore by the Great God that this revolution would triumph and that this youth would never be let down, because I believe in the ways (*sunan*) of God which do not fail to manifest and I believe in the promise of God, Who never lies. God has indeed promised to help the believers to win, and God has promised to make the truth win over falsehood. “And say: Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Surely, falsehood is ever bound to vanish” (Q. 17:81). It is not possible that falsehood should triumph over the truth. Falsehood has an hour but the reign of truth will last until the coming of the Hour. “As for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; while, as for that which is useful to mankind, it remains in the earth” (Q. 13:17). It was inevitable that this revolution should triumph, and that its believing children should triumph over this tyrant (*tâghût*),<sup>9</sup> over this Pharaoh who threatened and menaced. But the believers – Egypt once it believes – made answer to Pharaoh.

That Pharaoh had said to the Egyptians: “Do you believe in Him<sup>10</sup> before I give you permission?” (Q. 20:71). Similarly this Pharaoh said: “Do you make a revolution before I give you permission to make a revolution?” It is not allowed to the minds to be convinced, nor to the hearts to believe, nor to the limbs to move except with an authorization from Pharaoh! “You are making a revolution before I give you permission to make a revolution?” “You are believing in Him before I give you permission?” The children of Pharaoh, Egypt, once they believed, said to Pharaoh, defiantly: “We will not prefer you to what has come to us of clear proofs and to Him Who made us; therefore, decide what you are going

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<sup>8</sup> See Q. 46:35: “Then have patience (O Muhammad) even as the resolute among the Messengers (of old) had patience, and seek not to hasten on (the doom) for them.”

<sup>9</sup> See Q. 16:36: “Serve God and shun the tyrant”.

<sup>10</sup> I.e. “the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron”; see Q. 7:121-22, or also Q. 20:70.

to decide” (Q. 20:72). Observe the human being when he believes and the human being before he believes! The magicians whom Pharaoh had brought together from all the regions of Egypt threw their cords and their rods and said: “By Pharaoh’s might, we will surely be the winners” (Q. 26:44). And “they said to Pharaoh: ‘Will there surely be a reward for us if we are the winners?’ ” (Q. 26:41) – ‘Is there money?’ – “He said: ‘Yes, and surely you will then be of those who are made near’ ” (Q. 26:42). – ‘There is money, positions, and many benefits!’ – And what did these authentic Egyptians say once they believed, the truth having appeared to them? “We will not prefer you to what has come to us of clear proofs and to Him Who made us; therefore, decide what you are going to decide; you can only decide about this world’s life. Surely we believe in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and the magic to which you compelled us; and God is better and more lasting” (Q. 20:72-73).

This is Egypt when it believes. This is why these youth from all regions in Egypt, from all social classes, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, workers and cultured – though the majority were cultured and educated people –, we saw altruism increase among them. They became, they fused into, one melting-pot: Muslims and Christians, radicals and conservatives, rightists and leftists, men and women, old and young, all of them became one, all of them acting for Egypt, in order to liberate Egypt from injustice (*zulm*) and tyranny (*tâghût*). It was inevitable that Egypt be liberated, because these youth willed it, and when the youth will, their will participates of the will of God. In the past, we learnt by heart this poem of Abû l-Qâsim al-Shâbbî:<sup>11</sup>

*Surely, the day the people (sha‘b) wills to live, the divine decree (qadar) must inevitably comply!*

The divine decree... Some people (*nâs*) say: “Does the divine decree follow people?” Oh yes, the divine decree... God Most High says: “God does not change the condition of a folk until they first change that which is in yourselves<sup>12</sup>” (Q. 13:11). Change what is in yourself, and God will change your situation and your condition. The people (*sha‘b*) changed, so God changed its condition! The people (*sha‘b*) endured, it was put to the test, it made sacrifices, it was determined, and the fear was removed from it. The pharaohs, in the past, made people (*nâs*) fear, they used to gain victories by frightening them, they used to throw fear into the hearts of people. But people did not care about Pharaoh, nor about Korah (*Qârûn*), nor about Hâmân, nor about the State Security, nor about torture, nor about the camels, the mules, the horses,<sup>13</sup> nor about the snipers, nor about any of all these things. They were determined, the people (*sha‘b*) was determined, the youth were determined, the youth of the revolution were determined to continue, and God realized their hopes, God realized their goals.

My congratulations to this people (*sha‘b*), my congratulations to these youth, the revolutionary youth, whose hands I would like to kiss, one by one, because they have raised our heads by what they have realized, by their enduring, their outdoing all others in endurance and their remaining steadfast,<sup>14</sup> these young people who have made this revolution, and have given mankind the highest example. I

<sup>11</sup> Tunisian poet (1909-1934) famous in the whole Arab world. See R. Marston Speight, *A Modern Tunisian Poet: Abû al-Qâsim al-Shâbbî*, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 4 (Cambridge: 1973), 178-89.

<sup>12</sup> The Qur’ân has “themselves”. The shaykh adapts it, for the occasion, to “yourselves”.

<sup>13</sup> On February 2, 2011, thugs on horseback and camels stormed into the revolutionary crowd in Tahrir Square.

<sup>14</sup> See Q. 3:200: “O you who believe! Endure, outdo all others in endurance, remain steadfast, and observe your duty to God, in order that you may succeed.”

consider them, in some way, as like the Helpers,<sup>15</sup> whom God described in His Book by saying: “They prefer them before themselves though poverty may afflict them” (Q. 59:9); the Helpers who have been described as being many when it is about succouring others, and few when it is about cupidity. One of them remains hungry so that his brother may eat his fill, one of them works hard so that his brother may rest, one of them stays up at night so that his brother may sleep; he prefers them to have the bed and the cover, the food and the drink. These are the youth of Egypt.

I recommend to these youth to keep their spirit. The revolution has not ended. The revolution has just started producing fruits. Do not think that the revolution is over! Consider that the revolution is continuing, because we will participate in the construction, the construction of the new Egypt, Egypt which has learned many things from this revolution. Be patient with your revolution and preserve it! Beware lest someone steal it from you! Protect this revolution! Be on your guard against the hypocrites, who are ready to put on, every day, a new face, and to speak with a new tongue! “When they meet those who believe, they say: ‘We believe’; and when they are alone with their devils, they say: ‘Surely we are with you’ ” (Q. 2:14). Yesterday they were against the revolution and, today, with the revolution! Be on your guard against those! Say to the youth: “Protect your revolution! Be vigilant about this revolution, and continue to protect it!” This is what I demand from my children, the youth of the revolution: to continue their revolution and to preserve their unity. Beware lest someone enter among you who would corrupt this excellent relationship and this fraternity which has brought you together in this Square. These are my words to the youth of the revolution.

Other words now to the Egyptian people (*sha‘b*), to the whole Egyptian people (*sha‘b*), the great people (*sha‘b*) whom God has mentioned in the Qur’ân. Note that the Qur’ân has not mentioned any country by name, except two countries: a country mentioned in one verse, Babylon, with its magic,<sup>16</sup> and Egypt, which He mentioned five times in the Glorious Qur’ân. No country is mentioned in the Qur’ân more than once except the country about which He said: “Enter safe into Egypt, if God wills” (Q. 12:99). And those wrongdoers did not want anyone to enter into Egypt except with fear. They sowed fear and took away the things by which society is sustained. Hunger and fear: they imposed these two together on people. Hunger and fear! They were getting fatter and the people (*sha‘b*) of Egypt was perishing from emaciation. They were stealing in millions and the people (*sha‘b*) of Egypt was getting its salaries and wages in millims. They used to plunder the wealth of the country and to smuggle it abroad. It has been said that what was plundered from Egypt during these years amounts to three trillion dollars. Three trillions of dollars, not billions! Three trillions of dollars! If this money were returned to Egypt, or if half of it were returned, or a quarter of it, the debts of Egypt would be repaid and it would pay for the projects to build Egypt in the future.

I say to the Egyptian people (*sha‘b*): “Felicitations to you, O people (*sha‘b*)! This great people (*sha‘b*) which embraced Christianity and gave thousands – souls and blood – for Christianity. They fought the Byzantines, despite the fact that they were Christians like them, because they were opposed to them in the matter of doctrine. There used to be periods which are called the “Eras of the Martyrs”.

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<sup>15</sup> The Madinan Companions of the Prophet, who welcomed him in their city after he left Makka.

<sup>16</sup> See Q. 2:102.

And when it embraced Islam, it sacrificed itself for this Islam. It fought the Crusaders and it made King Louis IX prisoner in the house of Ibn Luqmân<sup>17</sup> in Mansoura. It fought the Tatars and the battle of ‘Ayn Jâlût<sup>18</sup> took place on 25 Ramadan of the year 658 H., led by the Mamluk commander al-Muzaffar Sayf al-Dîn Qutuz. He defeated the Tatars against whom nobody was standing. The army of Egypt triumphed over them – Egypt which has been the qibla of Islamic culture throughout the past centuries, the qibla of Islamic sciences and of the Arabic language.

Egypt, O brothers, has triumphed in this revolution and has triumphed over what has been called “sectarianism”. There was something which they used to call “sectarianism”, and which they themselves had produced. In this Square, the Square of the Martyrs of January 25, the Christian stood with the Muslim, side by side. I remember that yesterday, while I was coming from Qatar, a young man came to me, saying: “I am So-and-so, son of So-and-so, from Egypt. I am a Christian. I am one of those who follow the program *The Sharî‘a and Life* and your Friday sermons in Qatar. I am proud of you, you who are calling for the unity of the Umma, and you..., and you...” I said: “Praise is due to God!...” In Tahrîr Square, the Copt brothers were standing as guards of their [Muslim] brothers while they were praying. And today I invite them not to guard their brothers, but to prostrate with their Muslim brothers in thankfulness to God Most High. To prostrate is something that the Muslims and the Christians both do. In this square, this sectarianism has come to an end, this cursed sectarianism. Yesterday, Ahmad Ragab, the satirist writer, mentioned that he had visited Tahrir Square and found a young Muslim girl pouring water for a Muslim man for the ablution; he said: “Now, the revolution has succeeded!” As for me, my granddaughter was leading a group of young people washing and cleaning the squares, and painting various things in need of paint. A priest passed by them, a priest, who said to them: “Do you need some help? I, I can help you.” They said: “Yes, please”, thinking that he would work with them. He took out a hundred Egyptian pounds and said: “This is my help to you.” They said “God is greater!” (*Allâhu akbar!*) and bought some brushes, paints, and other things. This is the Egyptian spirit, the spirit that encompasses all. I hope from the people (*sha‘b*) of Egypt that it sticks to this unity, the unity of a line of people praying. Let there be no fanaticism! We are all believers. We have to believe in God and to deepen our faith. We are all Egyptians. We are all rising up against falseness (*bâtil*). We are all angry on behalf of the Truth. That spirit must persist, O my brothers and sisters, O my sons and daughters!

Some words now to the army of Egypt. Some words to the army of Egypt. I salute the army of Egypt. I salute this army which is the armor of the people (*sha‘b*), its support and its pride. Some of the brothers told me: “Don’t overpraise the army! It might let you down and not help the revolution to win!” I said to him: “By God, they will not let me down!” When I preached my latest sermon, after the first communiqué that had been issued and many people had been struck by disappointment because of it, I said: “I believe that the army of Egypt will not be less patriotic than the army of Tunisia. The army of Tunisia helped the revolution of Tunisia to win, and the army of Egypt, which entered four wars for

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<sup>17</sup> The *Dâr Ibn Luqmân* in Mansoura (Egyptian delta) is the house where the defeated French king Louis IX was detained in 1250, during the Seventh Crusade. It is now the National Museum Mansoura.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Ayn Jâlût, or “the Source of Goliath”, in Palestine, where the Mamluk army defeated the Mongols on September 3, 1260.



Egypt and for Palestine, it is not possible that this army betray its country, it is not possible that it sacrifice the youth for the sake of a single individual. This army is too reasonable and too noble to do that. And I swore that the army would join with the people (*sha‘b*). The army joined with the people (*sha‘b*), issued these decisions which we had seen, and announced from the first day that the right to express itself peacefully was guaranteed to the people (*sha‘b*) as long as it remained peaceful. It also announced that it understood the demands of the people (*sha‘b*) and that it would not intervene against it; and it did not and would not use force against the children of the people (*sha‘b*), who are making the revolution and demonstrating peacefully. This army, which has announced that it is not an alternative to the legitimate order (*shar‘iyya*) which the people (*sha‘b*) wants and which the youth of this square would be pleased with. It also announced that it is attached to freedom and democracy. It has set up this commission for revising the constitution – within ten days! – and it is in a hurry that life be changed into civilian life – this commission which is chaired by this eminent man, the legal adviser, the jurist, the historian, the thinker, the moderate, the fair-minded, Târiq al-Bishrî.<sup>19</sup> We want from this commission that it play its role as soon as possible.

And we demand from the Egyptian army that it liberate us from the government that Mubarak formed in his time, a time now over, annihilated. We want a new government, in which there are none of these faces which people cannot bear anymore. Every time people see them, they remember the injustice, they remember the killing, they remember the falseness, they remember the raid of the camels, the mules and the horses, they remember the snipers who kill people, they remember the vehicle which is going right and left, back and forth, and is killing people, running people over! Twenty people were killed, run over by this vehicle! People do not want to see these faces. We demand from the army and from its command that it liberate us from this government and set up a government, form a civilian government from the children of Egypt – and how many they are, the noble children of Egypt who did not commit such crimes! We also demand, we demand from the army that it immediately set free the political detainees and the political prisoners whom the prisons are holding and who have lived long years under the vaults of the prisons after being judged by military tribunals or emergency tribunals that give no evidence and do not care about the truth. The traces of these tribunals must be erased. I do not want our brave and noble army to be charged with any sin. Every day which passes while those people are in prison, every day which they spend in prison, or even, every hour, all those who caused this injustice and are not correcting it are committing a sin. Inasmuch as we are able to correct this injustice, this injustice must cease.

Before I finish speaking, I want to turn to the children of Egypt. I know that the children of Egypt have suffered a lot of injustice. Various groups of workers, peasants and employees, how long they have suffered injustice! However, God did not build this world in a day, nor in hours. He built it in six days, although He had the power to build it with a “‘Be!’ and it is”,<sup>20</sup> in order to teach us perseverance. We inevitably must be patient, a little longer. I call on everyone who has stopped working, or is

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<sup>19</sup> See <http://nisralnasr.blogspot.com/2011/02/tariq-al-bishri-and-constitutional.html>.

<sup>20</sup> See Q. 2:117: “The Originator of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees a thing, He says to it only: ‘Be!’ and it is.”

striking, or is sitting-in, to contribute to this revolution with his work. Egypt wants you to work. The Egyptian economy is underdeveloped and it is not permitted to us who have supported the revolution, it is not permitted to us to be a cause retarding the construction of Egypt, retarding the economy of Egypt. On the contrary, we must convince all our brothers who are striking and who are sitting-in, to be patient a little longer. I am calling on the army to contact them, to reassure them and to promise them that this is indeed what we want, so that Egypt moves along in its construction, in the phase of construction. All the children of Egypt are now ready to build. Everyone is ready to take a stone and to build something in this country. I call on all the children of the country to work for construction. We are in a new phase, a phase in which the truth triumphs and falseness is brought to naught.<sup>21</sup> Surely, it is the right of all these Egyptians that they get their rights, that they obtain that which they deserve and that they be treated equitably, but it is also our duty to be patient with our brothers in the army, so that all hopes be achieved, one after the other. “And say to them: ‘Act!’ God will see your action, and so will His Messenger and the believers, and you will be brought back to the Knower of the invisible and the visible, and He will inform you about what you used to do” (Q. 9:105). Pray to God Most High and He will hear your prayer.<sup>22</sup>

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Praise is due to God, the Forgiver of sins! Who has no partner. Those who are in the heavens and on the earth glorify Him. To Him belong the sovereignty and the praise, and He is powerful over every thing. I bear witness that our master and our imam, our model and our loved one, Muhammad, is the servant of God and His Messenger, the bearer of good tidings, the warner, and the enlightening lamp, the blessings of God and His peace be upon him, upon his family and his Companions, who believed in him, backed him up, helped him to win, and followed the light that had been sent down with him. Those are the successful! Pleased be God with those who forward his call, are guided by his Sunna and struggle as he struggled, until the Day of judgement!

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. “Say: ‘In the bounty of God and in His mercy: therein let them rejoice. It is better than what they gather’ ” (Q. 10:58). We ask the Mighty and Majestic God to render this day of this Umma better than its yesterday, and its tomorrow better than today. O God, be generous with us and don’t treat us with contempt! Give us and don’t deprive us! Give us more and not less! Prefer us and don’t prefer others to us! Be pleased with us and make us pleased! O God, we ask You to pardon us, and to grant us to do well in our religion and in this world, in our family and in our wealth. O God, cover our deficiencies and appease our fears! Protect us from before us and from behind us, from our right, from our left, and from above us! And we take refuge in Your might against being destroyed from under us. O God, open things for this country in a manifest opening! O God, guide its inhabitants on a straight way! O God, help them to achieve a strong victory! O God, give them Your grace completely, make Your serenity come down into their hearts and pour upon them Your favour and Your mercy! O God, purify our sayings from futility, our actions from

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<sup>21</sup> See Q. 8:8: “That He might cause the Truth to triumph and bring falseness to naught, however much the guilty might oppose.”

<sup>22</sup> See Q. 40:60: “And your Lord has said: ‘Pray to Me and I will hear your prayer.’ ”

foolishness, our souls from weakness, our hearts from disloyalty, our tongues from lying, our eyes from betrayal, our acts of worship from simulation, our life from self-contradiction! O God, render this day better for us than our yesterday, and render our tomorrow better than this day! Make our end excellent in all affairs and draw us away from the ignominy of this world and from the torment of the hereafter! O God, draw us away from the ignominy of this world and from the torment of the hereafter! O God, in Your mercy we hope; so, don't entrust us to ourselves even for the twinkling of an eye! Correct for us all the evil done by us. There is no god but You. O Ever-Living, O Self-subsisting, to Your mercy we appeal for help. O Ever-Living, O Self-subsisting, to Your mercy we appeal for help.

Before I conclude my speech and these invocations, I will say some words to the regimes ruling in the Arab countries. I will say to them: "Don't be arrogant! Don't delude yourselves! Don't stop History! Nobody will be able to fight the divine decrees, nor to delay the day when it rises. This world has changed and the world has evolved. The Arab world has changed from the inside. So, do not stand against the peoples (*sha'b*). Try to come to an understanding with them! Don't deceive them! Don't try to get them with empty words! It is not possible that peoples (*sha'b*) remain silent. Dialogue with them in a real dialogue, not to patch things up, but with constructive actions, constructive actions that put things in their places, respect the minds of people (*nâs*) and respect the minds of the peoples (*sha'b*)!" This is my message to the rulers of the Arabs.

Now, a message to our brothers in Palestine. Myself, I have the hope that God, Glorified and Exalted is He, just as He has cooled my eyes with the victory of Egypt, will cool my eyes with the opening (*fath*) of al-Aqsâ Mosque and will make it possible for me to preach in al-Aqsâ Mosque. O God, make it possible for us to preach in al-Aqsâ Mosque and to enter al-Aqsâ Mosque safely, without fear or dread! O God, make for us a reality of this manifest opening!<sup>23</sup> O children of Palestine, be confident that you will be helped to win! The Rafah crossing will be open for you. I demand this from the Egyptian army, from the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces: "Open the Rafah crossing! Open that which stands between us and our brothers! Ghazza is part of Egypt and Egypt is part of Ghazza. Egypt must be a support, an armor, a fortress. For Egypt which has fought four wars for Palestine, it is not proper to block the road. The crossings that are in our hands must necessarily be open, especially the Rafah crossing. We should open it to the convoys that used to be prevented from giving succour to our brothers." This is what I demand from our dear, brave and noble army.

I am asking God, Glorified and Exalted is He, that He make us see the right conduct in our affairs. Our Lord, forgive us, as well as our brothers who preceded us in the faith! Do not put in our hearts any malice toward those who believe! Our Lord, you are Kind, Merciful! O God! Amen. O God, bless Your servant and Your Messenger, Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them in beneficence until the Day of judgement!

Stand up for the prayer! Surely prayer keeps one away from lewdness and what is reprehensible.

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<sup>23</sup> See Q. 48:1: "Surely We have granted to you a manifest opening."