The Discourse of Visions and Supernatural Tidings in Rabi’a Square

by Dr. Ali Mabrook | 25 July 2013

The Muslim Brotherhood is facing a crisis that threatens its very existence. This is due to the Brotherhood’s complete failure to manage Egyptian affairs over the past year, ever since its candidate, Mohammed Morsi, was elected president of Egypt.

Unfortunately, the Brotherhood’s response to this crisis is characterized by a pre-rational perspective that incorporates two related viewpoints: a visionary component that longs for heavenly deliverance from suffering; and a Masada complex (named after a fortress where Jewish Zealots committed suicide in the face of imminent defeat by a Roman army), which seeks to restore the era of blood offerings and martyrdom.

We notice that the discourse which prevails at the protest camp established by the Muslim Brotherhood at Rabi’a Square, consists largely of sermons about divine omens and visions that have recently flowed in great abundance to Brotherhood Shaykhs, whose souls – suddenly! – have become so spiritually pure, that they are serving as conduits for divine messages regarding the political direction of Egypt, accompanied by ominous warnings about those (“devout Muslims”) who have pledged to help restore their absent “Imam” (Morsi) to his Presidential Palace, even if that entails their own death.

It is obvious that the Muslim Brotherhood is seeking to convince its political opponents that there are multitudes of men and women who consider themselves potential martyrs in the cause of restoring Morsi. The fact that martyrdom is being evoked in the Brotherhood’s current struggle for power reveals the cynical and opportunistic nature of its discourse, which is in fact political rather than sacred. “We have countless followers willing to sacrifice everything, eager to die for Morsi!” It is as if the coach of one sports team were trying to intimidate his opponents, by praising the fearless strength and ability of his own players.

For the past two weeks, the encampment at Rabi’a Square has become so dominated by discourse about angels, visions and supernatural tidings that it can actually be considered a “live case study” suitable for academic researchers in the field of psychology of religion. Academicians who normally rely just on historical narratives to understand this distinctive phenomenon, may observe a contemporary expression on display at Rabi’a Square.

Of course, we cannot study this visionary discourse without examining its profound psychological impact upon those who believe in it. The goal of this visionary discourse is to provide inner peace
and reassurance to those who embrace it, by falsely claiming that God is standing by their side, as a constant stream of omens and visions envelope them.

In recent days, divine endorsement of the Muslim Brotherhood’s political position rose to such a remarkable degree that not only the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) “expressed” his support, but also the Archangel Gabriel—who revealed the Qur’an to Muhammad (PBUH)—by descending upon the Brotherhood throng in Rabi’a Square. Psychologically and emotionally, of course, this means that Allah supports the Brotherhood protestors, for He has even sent His archangel to be among them.

Needless to say, those who encourage or deliver such messages realize the profound effect these “visions” will have upon those who believe them. They know exactly what kinds of messages will penetrate most deeply within the consciousness of their own followers. In addition, the presence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is sufficient, in and of itself, to assure many Brotherhood followers that these visions are true. For according to one tradition within Islam, anyone who claims that he saw the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a dream must be believed, even if the narrator falsely claims to have had such a vision. In other words, the truth is not gauged by the circumstances, motivations and character of the narrator, but rather, by the presence of the Prophet Muhammad himself (PBUH) in a vision. Hence, there is no mechanism to distinguish the truth from false claims.

Whoever is disseminating these narratives is clearly not concerned with the truth, but rather, determined to persuade others to believe the fairy tales in question. This has become obvious, as Muslim Brotherhood narrators have dared to ascribe a greater significance to the figure of Mohammed Morsi than that of the Prophet Muhammad himself (PBUH). To cite just one example, a Brotherhood narrator claims to have seen a group of people in his vision; when it was time to pray, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked to lead their communal prayer, but the Prophet instructed Morsi to lead the prayer instead, in his presence.

One who narrates such a discourse could not possibly be seeking the truth, because he is more concerned with preserving and exploiting the political investment the Muslim Brotherhood has instilled in the consciousness of its followers. Such a man realizes, without a doubt, that the above-cited narrative echoes that of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, resurrecting an event from the early history of Islam, when the grievously ill Muhammad (PBUH) asked his companion Abu Bakr to lead the communal prayers. Abu Bakr’s supporters (including the entire subsequent tradition of Sunni Islam) extrapolated from that event to justify Abu Bakr’s right to assume political authority following the Prophet’s death.

Anyone who propagates a similar “vision” of the Prophet (PBUH)—in this case, instructing Morsi to lead communal prayers—is exploiting an historical narrative that is familiar to every Muslim Brotherhood supporter gathered in Rabi’a Square. Leading the prayer in Muhammad’s presence (PBUH) is cited as “proof” of a right to political power. Given this vision and narrative, it is only natural that Brotherhood followers would demand Morsi’s reinstatement as president, for the Prophet (PBUH) himself commands Morsi’s return to power. As a result of such manipulative discourse, many of those gathered in Rabi’a Square are prepared to sacrifice their lives for a cause they believe is dear to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), when in fact the real agenda behind the protests at Rabi’a is the gratification of the Brotherhood’s political ambitions, orchestrated by charlatans who hide behind the veil of religious belief.
The nature of the Muslim Brotherhood’s “visionary” discourse reveals that its followers belong to the pre-rational era of human understanding, and have not yet attained a state of intellectual maturity. This is consistent with the fact that the Brotherhood employs a hierarchical structure, headed by a Supreme Guide. Those who embrace such a discourse still need someone to guide and direct them—such as the Muslim Brotherhood, whose organizational structure and style of functioning reflect an ancient era in history, when human beings were subjected to the dominance of patriarchal “guardians” whose monolithic discourse was absolute in nature, and their edicts binding.

http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/222862.aspx
وغنيًّا عن البيان أن مروج هذا الخطاب يدرك فاعليته الكبيرة، وتأثره الكاسح على من يتلقونه من أتباعهم. إذ هم يعتمدون، لا محالة، على ما يعرفونه، من جهة أخرى، من أن حضور النبي الكريم في الرؤيا يكون هو السبب الكافي في تأكيدهما ووثوقتيتهما. وبحسب ذلك فإنه يلزم قبول رواية كل من يقول بحريته للنبي في المنام، ولو كان - في الحقيقة - مدعا، حيث الصدق هنا لا يرتبط بالرائي، بل يرتبط بمجرد إحضاره للنبي في الروايا لتكون رؤيته مقبولة، وبالطبع فإن ذلك يعني غياب أي معيار تمييز وراء الإدعاء، وعلو ذاك يؤول - وعلى نحو ضريوري - إلى القائم بالترويج لهذا الخطاب لا تشغله الرسائل، يقدر ما يحقق التأثير الذي تترك على المنتمين تثبيتهما، وله على حساب الحقيقة، يبدئ في التحري على ظهور النبي الكريم متصغراً في حضره رجل الجماعة "محمد مرسى"، إذ يروى أحدهم أن النبي الكريم قد تراه له في جمع في "مرسي"، وحين حان وقت الصلاة فإن الجمع قد قدم النبي الكريم لإمامتهم فيها، فما كان من النبي إلا أن تراجع مقدماً لمري ليوم الجمع - وفيهم النبي - في الصلاة.

إن من يروج لهذه الرؤيا ليس معنياً بحقيقة، بقدر ما يعنيه ما يقوم بتثبيته في وعى الجمهور الملقى من الدلالة السياسية التي يتبقيها، رغم عدم التصديق بها. فهو يدرك - ومن دون شك - ما يعرف الناس جميعاً من أن الحالة الوحيدة التي قدماً فيها النبي غيره لصلاة بجماعة المسلمين كانت هي تلك التي قدماً فيها أبي بكر ليصلي بهم حين اشتدا عليه المرض. وأن هذا التقدم كان من بين ما جرى الاستعداد إليه في تأكيد أحكام أبي بكر بخلافة النبي في الحكم السياسي للمسلمين، وما يعبده ذلك من أن إمامته أي بكر، كانت الدليل على تثبيت إمامته السياسية.

وإذن فإن من يروج لرؤية تقديم النبي مرسى ليوم الجمع في الصلاة، يعتمد على هذا المعرف للجمهور من أن التقدم في إمامته الصلاة في حضره النبي، هو دليل على التقدم في الإمامته السياسية، بحسب ما جرى من بكر، ليؤسس على ذلك أن تثبيت المكانة السياسية مرسى هو إشارة من النبي نفسه، وبالطبع فإن القصد من ذلك هو البلوغ بالجهور الملتقي للخطاب إلى الإيجار بأن اعتلائه في المبدأ، وإلى حد الاستعداد لبندل النفس، ليس من أجل شخص مرسى بل من أجل إنبذ ما أثاره النبي وأراده.

وإذن، فإنه القصد السياسي وهو يخفي نفسه وراء مخايلات الدين ومراعياتها. وفضلًا عن ذلك، فإن طبيعة الخطاب الرؤوي تكشف، على العموم، عن وقوف المثقفين له عند مرحلة، في مسار التطور الإنساني، تتميز بقصر الإنسان، وعدم بلغة حاد الرشد العقلي. ولعل ذلك يتسق مع حقيقة أن الجماعة التي تنسوب إليها تضع على رأس هاركتها التنظيمية ما تقول إنه "مرشدنا العام"، وما يعني ذلك من الإقرار بحاجة المتحمسين إليها إلى من يوجههم ويرشدهم، إن ذلك يعني أن الجماعة ومنتميها تظل تتمي إلى لحظة ماضية في تاريخ الإنسانية، كان البشر خاضعين فيها لهيمنة الخطابات الوصائية الأبدية.

http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/222862.aspx