

Providence . . . — 2 —

Al-Wadi (Hadith al-Wadi), November 15, 1934

God Almighty decreed it for Egypt, after having decreed for her more than four years of trial — and so the people's joy in it, and the people's delight at it, matched the wretchedness the people had suffered from that trial, and the sorrow they had borne from that ordeal; and the people's thanks to God Almighty for its happy outcome matched the people's acceptance of God Almighty's decree in whatever trial He decreed, whatever ordeal He tested them with, and whatever suffering He purified them through — in life and property, in benefit and utility, in conscience and character.

Yes — success, God decreed it for the nation as a reward for her long patience, her noble endurance of the calamities loosed upon her, the injustice spread over her, the oppression imposed upon her; and praise be to God for what He tested her with, for in it lay a purification of hearts, a cleansing of consciences, a refining of character, a distinguishing of the corrupt from the sound, a separation of the sincere from the hypocrites, a revelation of the manhood of those able to say they are men, a proclamation of the dignity of those able to say they are honorable, a tribute to the pride of those able to say they refuse abasement, a recognition of the manly virtue of those able to say they are guardians of the homeland, bearers of trust, keepers of covenant, capable of sacrificing everything except the homeland and what is due it of honor, pride, dignity, and independence. Praise be to God Almighty for revealing all this that He revealed, and for showing the modern world that modern Egypt is worthy of ancient Egypt — that she holds patience and endurance, pride and refusal, loftiness and ambition, contempt for the powerful, disdain for the unjust, a horror of abasement, a rejection of submission and surrender. Praise be to God, who showed the modern world, through these long and heavy years, that modern Egypt is worthy of the hope she aspires to, the independence she longs for, the lofty ideal she reaches toward — that calamities may crowd upon her without her despairing of them, evil may be poured upon her without her scattering before it, criminals may spring up within her without her heeding them, plots may be schemed against her without her falling into them, temptation may be turned upon her without her being dazzled by it, false hopes may be dressed up for her without her being deceived by them — but that she remains fixed in her place, steadfast as the mountains that

enclose her valley on either side, pure of heart, conscience, and intention, as pure as the very air that stirs her to motion and life, laboring in earnest, resolve, patience, and vigor, as tireless as the river that grants her fertility, blessing, and beauty — great in her own eyes, and great in the eyes of her enemies and her lovers alike.

Great as this sea that bears witness to the ancient glory she once had, and holds the promise of the modern glory yet to come. Praise be to God, who showed, through these long and heavy years, that Egypt is neither foolish nor feckless, neither reckless nor surrendered to passion; that Egypt wants what she wants with understanding, and does what she does with resolve and certainty; that Egypt has leaders who advance only once they have thought, weighed, and planned — and once they advance, know neither hesitation nor retreat; once resolved, know neither weakness nor surrender; once determined, know neither fear nor faltering — terrors surround them, and they smile at terrors; hardships are raised against them, and they laugh at hardships; for they have believed in God and country, and so have relied upon God and trusted in country, and have gone their way, taking counsel with nothing but the faith that fills their souls and the trust and certainty that fill their hearts. .

Praise be to God, who showed that this man they call al-Nahhas — of whom the talkers talk and the speculators speculate — is a son of Egypt worthy of being her devoted son, just as she is worthy of being his tender mother; a son of Egypt to whom Egypt can grant her love without limit, confident that she can never repay him fully for his loyalty to her and his struggle on her behalf; and he is one worthy of spending, in her cause, his safety, his ease, his very life, content in the knowledge that he has still not rendered her the full measure of her due — for Egypt grants him only what nations are able to grant their sons, and he grants Egypt only what sons are able to grant their nations; and the fullest reward for this man's devotion, and for this nation's loyalty and support, rests with God alone, who alone can give without measure, whose power knows no limit, whose favor, when He favors, knows no limit, and whose wrath, when He is wrathful, knows no limit:

Yes — praise be to God, who granted this weak man the strength to become the most powerful of his contemporaries among his countrymen, through his resolve and his firmness, his certainty and his faith; and who granted this poor man the wealth to become the richest of his contemporaries among his countrymen, through his keen heart, his pure

conscience, his sound judgment, his penetrating insight, and his far-seeing vision.

Yes — praise be to God, who entrusted Egypt's banner to a man who knows how to keep that banner pure and honorable, untouched by defilement, unexposed to abasement or disgrace.

Praise be to God for all this, and for more than all this — for all that Egypt can reckon, and all that Egypt cannot reckon, of His trial when He tested her, of His favor when He favored her, of His kindness and care toward Egypt in every circumstance. These tyrants have shrunk back, after having filled the earth with arrogance and pride; they have grown submissive, after having filled the air with haughtiness and vanity; they have cowered and crept back into their dens, after having spread through the air as foul birds spread, sending forth their foul cries.

These tyrants have turned back upon their heels, ashamed and afraid, after Satan called to them and they answered his call — honoring no old covenant, no right of the homeland, no sanctity of the people, no dignity of their own; their own devil dressed up falsehood for them, and they hastened to it, and threw themselves upon their base advantages as flies throw themselves upon the choicest food.

Here they are now, fallen silent, uttering nothing; grown still, stirring nothing; extinguished, doing nothing. Here they are, wishing the earth would swallow them, or the sky snatch them away. Here they are, unable to show their faces to their countrymen, they who once had no wish even to look upon their countrymen. Satan called them, and they hastened to him; then Satan abandoned them, and they abandoned themselves. They used to gather multitudes, stir up parties, and place their affairs in the hands of their great man Sidqi, wishing to resist the truth — but truth is not resisted; wishing to establish falsehood — but falsehood does not hold; wishing to fix injustice in place — but injustice does not settle; wishing to abase Egypt — but Egypt is too dear to be abased, too well defended to be wronged. They gathered multitudes, stirred up parties, delivered speeches, drew up memoranda, spent money, and set about buying consciences and corrupting character afresh — so where are they now? What has become of their multitudes, that they no longer rally? What has become of their parties, that they no longer mobilize? What has become of their speeches, that they are no longer delivered? What has become of their memoranda, that they are no longer submitted? What has become of their committees, that they no

longer defend the system, no longer champion the constitution? They have shrunk back, been humbled, surrendered to fate; and the shrewdest and most cunning among them have begun preparing to change their tune, readying themselves to secure their advantages, waiting for people to forget them a little, so that, once a few months have passed, they may reappear seeking a way to the ministers, drawing close to those in power, pursuing their immediate advantage — for they are capable of nothing but pursuing their immediate advantage.

Where is Sidqi, and Sidqi's men? Where is Abdel Fattah, and Abdel Fattah's men? Where is al-Ibrashi, and al-Ibrashi's soldiers? Where is the Minister of Traditions, and the Minister of Traditions's absurdities? Where is Sabri, and the Sabri-isms? Where is al-Qaisi, and all the clubs and whips he let loose upon Egyptian bodies, all the waste and corruption he poured upon Egyptian money?

Where are the senior officials who made themselves small until they became mere instruments of the tyrants? Where are the soldiers and the henchmen? Where are the puppets and the tools? They have all gone; they have all cowered, each retreating to his own den to manage his own affairs, hoping perhaps to feel some shame, at last, in this new age.

How badly Egypt needs firmness and resolve — the punishment of wrongdoers for their wrongdoing, the reckoning of tyrants for their tyranny, the pouring out upon these men of what they poured out upon the innocent. How badly these men need to taste what they made others taste! But if Egypt is unable to forgive these men, she is by no means unable to hold them in utter contempt, to cast them aside, and to set them down exactly where they wished to place themselves: as slaves to advantage, as soldiers of devils.

So praise be to God, who brought Egypt out of darkness into light; who lifted from Egypt that pitch-black night, the night of corruption and evil; who restored to Egypt her right to the freedom, the security, and the order that she herself approves.

Praise be to God, purely and wholly, for all this; and congratulations to Egypt and her leaders, purely and wholly, for the success God has decreed for her and for them; and lasting disgrace to the tyrants and the wrongdoers.

Taha Hussein

Al-Wadi, November 15, 1934.