

People Are of Different Types . . .

Al-Wadi (Hadith al-Wadi), October 27, 1934

People are of different types — that is, they differ in their passions and inclinations, they diverge in their doctrines and opinions, and their portions of taste vary from one to the next. God, without any doubt, willed good for people when He made them of different types. Among them are the righteous, and among them those who are not. Philosophers and thinkers take genuine delight in demonstrating to people what is good and what is evil, and in setting standards for both; and it is likewise incumbent upon philosophers, once they have shown what is good, to summon people toward it, and once they have shown what is evil, to warn people away from it.

Had God, exalted is He, not made people of different types, moral philosophy itself would never have existed — that philosophy which shows people good and evil, and their respective standards. Indeed, had God, exalted is He, not made people of different types, the very science of psychology would never have existed, that science built upon analyzing emotions and passions, studying tastes and inclinations, and thoroughly investigating sensation, feeling, and the faculties of intellect in all their variety and divergence. Nor would there be any science of psychology, any sociology, any science of ethics, any science of law — nor, indeed, economics or political science, nor any of these sciences at all, all of them so intimately bound up with human life, none of which could ever have come into being, or grown and flourished, or borne their good and pleasant fruit, had God, exalted is He, not made people of different types. We ourselves cannot fully grasp this supreme philosophy on our own; we live among people upon this earth, and we observe, in the close daily lives we share with them, some manifestations of it, discuss some of its manifestations, and are influenced by others still. We shall soon see how God, exalted is He, has made people of different types for the wisdom of judgment — a wisdom containing much that we ourselves are unable to think through, given how much divergence, discrepancy, and disparity exists among them — and we shall find in this a lofty intellectual pleasure, as well as a powerful lesson we might put to use when we act, and that might benefit us when we speak. Should you find yourself, come morning, asking yourself why God made people of different types, and should you find yourself, come evening, asking yourself the very same question — indeed, put this question to yourself constantly — it will bring

you comfort, and ease of mind, whenever you do, for these different types conceal a treasure that never runs dry, one that only those who truly know how to extract its treasures can draw upon, only those who truly know how to make use of every precious vein running through it.

Take our own ministers, for example, as one type among these different types: some of them are marked by such delicate sensitivity, such fineness of feeling, that scarcely a breeze can pass over them without troubling them, and when it does trouble them, they seldom hesitate to resign, only to return to their posts once reassured once more. It is not fitting for us to seek examples of this type in Egypt, for it would be dangerous, in point of actual fact, to speak of our own ministers in Egypt, however permissible such talk might appear on the surface — for it might well push matters toward the very truth of things, driving them toward the chambers of the prosecution, and then toward the chambers of the judiciary, and then toward the absences of imprisonment. The sensible man is right to reduce his own visits to the prosecution, to the courts, and his own sojourns in prison, wherever he can find any way to avoid them.

Let us seek our examples instead in France, then, where the French are known for their patience, and where the possibility of criticism troubles them but little. Monsieur Doumergue's government stood as living proof that ministers are of different types: one among them, the Minister of the Interior, Monsieur Sarraut, hardly felt himself blamed by the public after the death of King Alexander before he had already tendered his resignation, only to find rest and repose once more. Another among them, bound up entirely with the exercise of power, clung to it with the sturdiest of ropes, refusing utterly to loosen his grip except by the sword itself — the Minister of Justice, whose public opinion had so insistently pressed the Prime Minister to accept his resignation, and whom the French press had accused, as God willed it, of charges impossible to substantiate: that his colleagues denied them, and that the Prime Minister himself grew embarrassed by them — and yet none of this increased him in anything except sheer insistence upon remaining in power, and seeking out whatever means he could find with the President of the Republic, until finally the Minister of War, Marshal Pétain, found himself forced to request, before the Council of Ministers, the very dismissal of this minister who refused to resign of his own accord. Had this minister only thought things through and properly weighed the consequences, the Council of Ministers would have dismissed him in the

end regardless — but God guided him, and he resigned as the ministers do, exactly as we have said, of different types. Among the trustees of the public case, too, we find that they are of different types as well: some of them feel embarrassed by absolutely everything, exercise scrupulous precision in absolutely everything, and possess a particular sort of judicial sensitivity, such that they scarcely feel the faintest doubt, or the slightest blame directed their way, before hastening to resign — and some of them feel nothing at all, take notice of nothing at all, until the executive authority itself is forced to remove them by outright dismissal. The trustees of the public case in France are, on the whole, of a most delicate, most sensitive type — so sensitive that they resign without ever even being asked to. But there exists, among the trustees of the public case in France, another type entirely — one that neither resigns, nor is even asked to resign, precisely because, as we have said, people are of different types. There was that Public Prosecutor whose suspicions were stirred by the Stavisky scandal, who felt no embarrassment whatsoever, and awaited no dismissal at all, until his own brother-in-law, Monsieur Chautemps, who happened to be Prime Minister, dismissed him instead.

And the parliamentary men among the deputies and senators are, too, of different types: some of them feel as though they had taken on some delicate, translucent cloak, one the very rain of the sky cannot penetrate, and free of any accusation whatsoever, so that no sooner does the slightest doubt come near it than they scarcely feel it at all before resigning, growing suspicious of their own parliamentary work, and abandoning it entirely — unable to see how they might restore themselves to honor except by returning to their parliamentary work, or else devoting themselves fully to other, better pursuits. But most French parliamentarians of this first type do not feel blame worth the trouble even when it is directed at them openly, face to face, and even when they must defend themselves before one of the two chambers or before the highest court — for the other type exists too, precisely as we have said, of different types. For Monsieur Chautemps, for example, did not resign from the premiership and its own affairs alone when suspicion was first raised around him — rather, resignation was also demanded of him from the Chamber of Deputies itself. And still he continues to struggle and defend himself, until he showed himself innocent, and then put himself forward for election to the Senate, and won it by the overwhelming majority of the voters' votes — and yet, for all that, he still refuses to chair the very committee of that same chamber tasked with uncovering the truth of this entire affair, and whatever scandals connect to it.

And it is along these very lines that our thinking may proceed: we shall find officials of different types, we shall find journalists of different types, we shall find scholars themselves of different types, and we shall see that every single group of people diverges in passions and inclinations, in sensation and feeling, and in taste and understanding. And we shall learn that God, exalted is He, made people of different types for a wise purpose, much of which we ourselves cannot fully think through, given the divergence, discrepancy, and disparity among them — and yet we shall find in this a lofty intellectual pleasure, and a powerful lesson we might put to use when we act, and that might benefit us when we speak. Should you find yourself, come morning, asking yourself why God made people of different types, and should you find yourself, come evening, asking yourself the very same question — indeed, put this question to yourself constantly — it will bring you comfort and ease of mind whenever you do, for these different types conceal a treasure that never runs dry, one that only those who truly know how to extract its treasures can draw upon, only those who truly know how to make use of every precious vein running through it.