



The Fragility of the Chair, Hollowed by Corruption

On the spread of corruption across state institutions and its consequences for the nation and society, affirming that reform cannot be achieved by awaiting a savior or a single institution, but only through a sincere popular will beginning with each individual's responsibility to resist wasta and corruption.

By Dr. Mishal E. AlSharidah · 2 min read · Updated Friday, July 21, 2023

Since when has a ministerial post been so easily dismissed – its occupancy so precarious – particularly amid reports of impending resignations?

We are living through an unprecedented chapter in Kuwait's history since liberation. During this period, the embryo of corruption was nurtured until it matured and, in its own image, begat a generation of corrupt operatives embedded across every sector of the state – operatives who violate rights, who sanction the plunder of public funds, and who normalize regulatory, financial, and academic infractions. These operatives pursue their ends at the expense of the nation and its people.

What is the solution? Superman?

Even the Superman theory – the savior who single-handedly vanquishes every corrupt villain and restores peace and stability – will not succeed. For Superman cannot be responsible for everything that happens in every place and at every moment; only God is capable of that.

What is the solution? The National Assembly?

The people have placed their trust in members who represent every stratum of society within an assembly that speaks for the nation and its demands – demands for considered legislation

that facilitates and supports the vital reforms sustaining the march toward rebuilding this homeland. Yet have the operatives of corruption exploited the Assembly, deliberately skewing the compass of nation-building and paralyzing a government that was alive one day and buried alive the next?!

What is the solution?

If you have read this far, you may well agree that this corruption is a tribulation that has reached every individual and every household — from the child in school and the student in college to the adult in the workplace. We profess with absolute certainty that we desire the welfare of our beloved nation; yet when we confront reality, we transform into one of these very operatives ourselves — seeking *wasta*, rightfully or wrongfully, to reach our ends whatever they may be: a position, a transaction, an exemption, an approval.

It is we who reform or corrupt our own environment. It is we who advance or obstruct reform. It is we — by God's will — in whose

hands rests the righteousness of this nation. Let us neither single anyone out nor cast a sweeping net: the corruption of a few can erode the integrity of an entire nation, yet it is equally certain that a nation is redeemed by the sincere will of its people.

Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi wrote in his celebrated verses:

If one day the people will to live, then Fate must needs respond; the night must needs be torn asunder, and every chain must needs be broken.

And he who is not stirred by life's longing shall dissolve into its air and perish. Woe to him whom the call of life does not rouse — from the slap of triumphant nothingness.

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