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Presented to: The Zewail committee

The Key Entity to a Reformed Egypt

When we come to look at a society, we look at the entities that form that society i.e.: the government & the people. But we miss the minor detail that forms that deep spirit that makes the society what it is. We talk of it but we don't relate it to the bigger picture. In this paper through philosophical and sociological methods, I will demonstrate how this entity that we take for granted is the key to what we want to be, what we are and what led us to be what we are.

Egypt has been a major participant in the "Arab Spring" and as we have seen before, many politicians and professionals in their field talked about the different ways in which the society can be fixed and what were the factors that led to Egypt's deterioration over the past years. Many announced that it is academia and that a well-established academic system will provide our generations with knowledge to think ahead towards the future. I don't disagree with this point but there is something they and the whole world are overlooking which goes hand-in-hand with academia which forms education. The entity that I refer to in my introduction is the "Family". One undermines the strength of this small unit like undermining the strength of an ant in the animal kingdom due to its size. The importance of the family unit has been described by many philosophers in the past centuries and yet is not put into thought. This image could also be said about history; we have read and seen why many revolutions around the world have occurred and yet politicians do the same mistakes that lead to rivalry of the people. The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius stressed my point by saying "The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home."¹ Confucius used the word 'integrity' not 'strength' which is more spiritual than it is quantifiable or measurable and by that he means that the family unit should be complete and whole in terms of ethicality which is the basis of the strength of the whole nation. He also uses the word 'home' which naturally gives the impression of a warm feeling of belonging and where one was brought up. The choice of words Confucius uses leads to the deeper meaning that we overlook and proves that we ridicule the importance of the family unit.

We have seen how corruption in Egypt works and that is by fostering & promoting the society abnormal values such as: bribery, and by allowing the people to view abnormality as normality that is beneficial to them. Renovating the population's thinking will be by doing the opposite but, by simply using the same method. That is by fostering the family healthy and positive values and allowing them to view them as the normal values which will fix the society and will be beneficial to them. A quote by Confucius states "From the loving example of one family a whole State may become loving, and from its courtesies, courteous; while from the ambition and perverseness of the one man the whole State may be thrown into rebellious disorder. Such is the nature of influence."² Confucius's quote is from the emotional perspective of love which is the synchronized factor that comes with values. Values are nothing without an emotional base for it; any value which is taught and learned within the family contains the basis of love and caring for the member. This could also be seen when the opposite is occurring; when the parents do not make the effort to teach their children the values, this means that caring for their children's future and upbringing does not exist.

¹ <http://quotationsbook.com/quotes/author/1644/>

² http://www.notable-quotes.com/c/confucius_quotes.html

The influence of one man stated by Confucius in the above quote we have witnessed in Egypt and what the Egyptians were crying out against. The nature of influence that Confucius talks about is the one way for Egypt to rise again into a strong independent state. Of course claiming to have the instant solution to corruption is unrealistic but, the beginning of the solution should start somewhere and that is by emphasizing the correct values to the family unit.

To demonstrate this we could look at the healthcare problems which are part of corruption due to neglect of the values. All the healthcare problems such as cancer, hepatitis, bilharzias and much more are results of people not applying their jobs with solid values and not caring for the health of others. If doctors in public hospitals have values and care for the code of their profession, they wouldn't use inefficient equipment, used vaccines & blood bags ...etc. Values, again, are the basis of such corrupt systems which cause the influence effect that Confucius mentioned in his quote. This is very dangerous because the population is dependent on one another & is what causes the functioning of all the entities involved. Even internationally, when one government does not hold correct values with another, the country's relationships will be unstable and many problems will arise.

A Mr. Ropes wrote in the Florida Philosophical Review an article titled "Values as a Political Metaframe", he defined a political metaframe as "an overarching structure encompassing various different ways of framing a political issue."³ From that we can see that the values are able to shape the whole political system because the principles are the base and they cannot be extracted except from the most powerful unit in the population. When we come about politics, every country has a governmental entity that works towards international & national actions and decisions and again, they disregard the family unit that is the basis of such actions. We can ask ourselves: What makes a developed country developed? What makes a country economically stable? What makes a country economically unstable? Politicians in countries with strong economies are proud of it and talk about it as a self- working body that is strong on its own. They usually neglect that the people who did this who consist of hard-working families that work within their society, who are involved in the buying & selling decisions, who cause the working cycle effect in the country. When we look at families and societies who prefer a president, they look for someone who cares for them as a unit, who cares for their conditions and who looks into their little problems which will eventually solve the bigger problems. When we talk about poverty as a numerical statistic of a country, aren't they families that form this statistic and who are experiencing these conditions?

The Family is the key to our post-revolution change. The Family is the seed that forms the tree (society) that forms the forest (population) as Confucius the great Chinese philosopher said, "It cannot be when the root is neglected that what springs from it will be well ordered."⁴ The reconstruction of the family values is what will lead our country to a brighter future. The family of course is composed of the parents and the children and one does not give it deep thinking of how they all affect each other and that causes the ripple effect of affecting the society. When an Egyptian child who works with his father in his grocery store, sees his father stealing from the customer extra money and teaching him how to do so, wouldn't that influence his values and thinking? Wouldn't he find that it is an easy way to put food on the table and provide for the family without extra effort being made? Wouldn't he later, in his adult life imitate him? The moral values all come from within the family and from the experiences and ethics that the parents provide their child with.

³ Roper, James. Florida Philosophical Review: The Journal of the Florida Philosophical Association, 7(1), 52-77. 26 p. Summer 2007. <http://web.ebscohost.com.library.aucegypt.edu:2048/ehost/detail?sid=eaa71dba-2578-4880-b85c-1c507ddc5284%40sessionmgr15&vid=1&hid=14&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWVhvc3QtGjI2ZQ%3d%3d#db=phl&AN=PHL2121066>

⁴ http://www.notable-quotes.com/c/confucius_quotes.html

In Egypt, our Educational ministry is called “Al Tarbeya w Al Ta’aleem” which shows that ethical & behavioral values are prioritized over the curriculum and the academic content which form education. Schools and universities should be emphasize and promote the ideal family values to bring up efficient generations. One must start from the smallest detail to bring up a healthy generation and when the values are taught to families, they will be transmitted to the whole population. From the ministry’s title, we can see enough evidence of the importance of the values as a role player yet, we still seem to place it as a last resort and we prioritize the monetary substance. This is the mindset that the Egyptian people were targeted towards previously to the extent that this mindset was followed by the mindsetters themselves. Unfortunately, they oversaw that values are the starting point that create a healthy cycle of monetary achievement because when the people work with values such as: hard work, efficiency and generation of money will be the result of this.

As a conclusion, I would like to point out that the concept of “efficiency” is an emphasized term used in almost all academic books in all subjects including: business, economics, engineering, politics...etc. Efficiency is defined as “performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort”⁵ How can one perform in the “best manner” without the involvement of values? Efficiency is not all about technical skills but also habitual from the values taught within the family. Egypt’s reforming point starts with values within the Egyptian family no matter what social class they are in or which governorate they belong to. Egyptians families are known for their strong family ties but family values have the stronger and upper hand that will reform and renovate Egypt into a state better than it has ever been.

⁵ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/efficient>