

Poem Analysis

Mohammad Kassem

mak121@mail.aub.edu

وَقَفْتُ أَمَامَ

الشمس صارخةً بها

يا شمس، مثلك قلبي المتمردُ

قلبي الذي جرف الحياة شبابهُ

وسقى النجوم ضياؤه المتجددُ

مهلاً ، ولا يخدعك حزنُ جانرٍ

في مقتلتي ، ودمعةُ تنتهدُ

فالحزنُ صورةُ ثورتي وتمردِي

تحت الليالي ؛ والألوهةُ تشهدُ

She stood before the sun, screaming:
'Sun! You are like my rebellious heart
Whose youth swept life away
And whose ever-renewed light
Gave the stars to drink

Careful! Do not let a bewildered sadness
Or a sighing tear in my eyes deceive you.
For sadness is the form of my revolt and my resistance
Beneath the night—divinity be my witness! '

In “Revolt against the sun”, Nazik al-Mala’ika expressed her thoughts about women of the Middle East and South Africa region through her exceptional poetic capability to create such a piece of art. A naïve examination reflects this poem as if a burst of emotions without any intention more meaningful, deeper intention. However, a thorough analysis reflects a tremendous liberating derive depicted in Nazik's self-description.

“She stood before the sun, screaming”. If you imagine a person standing- not sitting or kneeling- against the sun which represents authority, god, and any powerful entity and scream, this situation is an expression of revolution, courage, and self-expression. After this revolutionary scene, Nazik explained a shared characteristic between her and the sun where both of them are rebellious, willing to sacrifice and provide life. Here, it is crucial to analyze a specific feature that Nazik shared with the sun that is Nazik in like the sun providing nourishment for the stars. However, stars are self-shining, unlike moons that reflect the brightness of the sun. So, how can we interpret this shared feature? Focusing on women in MENA, it is possible to consider that the sun here represents Nazik or intellectuals, nourishments represent education and knowledge provided by Nazik and intellectuals, and the stars are the future women that are going to glow in the darkness of ignorance. Thus, the sun is a representation of the source of education for upcoming MENA women against ignorance and marginalization. Also, this nourishment is ever-renewal which may reflect the inability to stop women strive for education, enlightenment, and rights. This shows the unidirectional movement of women toward their rights.

“Don’t be betrayed by the sadness [and] my tears... Sadness is the form of my revolt and resistance”. In these lines, Nazik declared that sadness and tears are a form of revolt and resistance rather than a manifestation of weakness and victimhood. The shared sadness and

oppression practiced on women is the commonality that will unite women together to change the status quo and achieve a better life for themselves.

“Below the night- divinity be my witness”. Night mentioned can represent the ignorance of the patriarchal society. Besides, if we stick to the above consideration that future women are the stars, then it appears clearly that although there is a dark night, the shining stars/educated women are increasing day after day to eventually shine the sky of the night. “Divinity is my witness” is very crucial at this point to prove that women's acts are not against god because most if not all the interpretations of religious texts support patriarchy and consider even any attempt to reinterpret them as a rejection of God rules and infidelity. Thus, Nazik is challenging the notion that feminism and women’s rights are against god.

In the end, Nazik is an exceptional poet who can convey infinite messages and sophisticated arguments through short and musical lines. Her brilliance relies on the deep philosophy underlying simple words.