

Egypt 2012 The Year In Fatwas

In previous decades in Egypt, the fatwas, or legal decrees issued by learned Muslims and based on Sharia law, revolved around questions like proper prayer, when and where women should wear the hijab, and if smoking was forbidden or permissible.

That was then.

The fatwas issued in the year 2012—the year when Islamists, spearheaded by the Muslim Brotherhood, assumed formal power—are, as one would expect, markedly different, that is, much less restrained. The popular Egyptian Arabic website El-Watan News recently compiled a list of 2012's most "notable" (a euphemism) fatwas. I translate a summary of their findings below, augmented with additional observations:

Destruction of the Pyramids and Sphinx

In November, Sheikh Murjan Salem al-Jawhari, a Salafi leader, called for the destruction of all idols, relics, and statues in Egypt, specifically mentioning the Sphinx and the Great Pyramids. He called on Muslims to destroy such "idols" just as they destroyed the Buddha statues in Afghanistan. Of course, several months earlier, in July, I reported how several prominent Islamic clerics were calling on President Morsi to "destroy the Pyramids and accomplish what the Sahabi Amr bin al-As [the first Muslim invader of Egypt] could not." Then and now, the MSM scoffed at the very idea, portraying it as a "hoax." To date, reports from Egypt confirm that "some of the statues have already been destroyed by those belonging to the political Islamist parties."

Marrying Minors (i.e., Pedophilia)

Dr. Yassir al-Burhami, Vice President of the Salafi Da'wa movement, and thus an authoritative figure among Egypt's Salafis, who are playing a prominent role in Egypt's new parliament, opposed setting a minimum age in the new constitution concerning the marriage of minor girls, saying "they can get married at any time," while insisting that Sharia law is clear on this matter. Indeed, earlier, another cleric and member of Saudi Arabia's highest religious council, after saying that girls can be married "even if they are in the cradle," explained the fundamental criterion of when they can copulate: whenever "they are capable of being placed beneath and bearing the weight of the men," which has less to do with age and more to do with individual capacity.

Permitting Lies and Hypocrisy

Dr. Yassir al-Burhami also permitted wives to "lie to their husbands" about their whereabouts—if they were going to go and vote "yes" on the Sharia-heavy constitution in Egypt, and if their husbands would otherwise have disapproved. The ever-expedient Salafi leader also permitted Egypt to borrow money from the IMF, rationalizing the "forbidden" interest rate away as "administrative charges." (Islam forbids the participation in monetary loans that charge interest, as does the IMF.)

Scrapping Camp David Accords

Sheikh Hashem Islam, member of the Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, said that the peace treaty with Israel contradicts the teachings of Sharia and should be annulled, quoting the Koran: "So do not weaken and call for peace while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds" (47:35). He added that "Jews cannot be trusted."

The Islamic logic he and others use is that peace treaties with infidels are legitimate only when Muslims are weak and in need, whereas now that Egypt is under proper Muslim leadership, Allah will help it to defeat Israel.

Killing Anyone Protesting Islamization of Egypt

Sheikh Hashem Islam also permitted the killing of anti-Islamization protesters, portraying them as traitors committing "high treason." The Sheikh also exempted the murderers from having to pay the restitution required by Sharia to a Muslim victim's family. Sheikh Wagdi Ghoneim issued a similar fatwa, proclaiming any Muslim who rejects the Sharia-heavy constitution of being an apostate who must be fought and killed.

Obedying President Morsi

Sheikh Ahmed Mahlawi, the leader of an Alexandrian mosque, denounced all Muslims opposed to President Morsi, pointing out that the Koran declares it to be forbidden to disobey those in authority: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger [Muhammad] and those in authority among you" (4:59). He added that Morsi should be obeyed whether he was elected or not—as long as he enforces the laws of Allah. Indeed, according to Sharia, the Islamic ruler must always be obeyed—except whenever he fails to enforce Sharia law.

Banning Greeting Christians

The Committee for Rights and Reform issued a Fatwa against congratulating Christian Copts on their religious holidays, notably Christmas and Easter, since Muslims do not share the beliefs specific to those holidays. As for the ever-reliable Salafi Sheikh Burhami, he further forbade Muslim cab and bus drivers from transporting Christian priests to their churches, which he depicted as “more forbidden than taking someone to a liquor bar.”

Banning Saluting the Egyptian Flag

Abd al-Akhir Hamad, the mufti of the notorious Gama’ a Islamiya (Islamic Group), denounced and forbade the saluting of the flag and the Egyptian national anthem, saying that doing so glorifies that which is other than Allah—not to mention music is simply “haram,” that is, forbidden. Dar Al-Ifta’ issued a counter-fatwa to allow for saluting the flag and standing up for the national anthem.

Banning TV Shows Mocking Political Islamists

A fatwa banning TV viewers from watching the very popular shows of Bassem Yusuf, who routinely mocks Egypt’s Islamists and their fatwas, appeared and was originally attributed to Dar Al-Ifta’, though it later denied issuing it.

Banning Marriage to Mubarak-Regime “Remnants”

Sheik Omar Stouhi, Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Islamic Da’wa at Al-Azhar, forbade all Muslim women from marrying any of the sons of the “remnants” of the old regimes, portraying them as non-pious Muslims.

Banning Joining the Dustor Political Party

Sheikh Muhammad Nazmi issued a ban on people from joining Egypt’s “Dustor” political party, headed by Dr. Muhammad al-Baradei, saying that the latter is a secularist and opposed to the implementation of Allah’s laws.

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