

Crisis of Thought!

One of my old fellows from the guard, an executive at a bank which had newly reorganized as an Islamic bank, came to visit me recently. We had an anxious conversation about the economic situation and the impact of oil depletion. He wanted to discuss these things in order to wisely learn about the situation from the perspective of the client and the investor. I answered him from my point of view which I will share with you here, although many people might not agree with it.

First, I answered him with a question: “What is the population of Shubra El Kheima in Cairo?” The answer is 8 million. Then I asked him another question: “How far is Abdali from Nuwaiseeb?” “Maybe 300 kilometers,” he replied, “but you still haven’t answer my question.”

I actually did answer him. The native population of Kuwait is only around one and a half million and the area of Kuwait is very limited. For example, a road in Saudi Arabia from Dammam to Jizan costs more than the cost of all Kuwait’s roads, meaning that the infrastructure and services in Kuwait are manageable and in no way comparable to surrounding countries. In addition to that, the country is a creditor, and not a debtor to any party, and it owns investments worth hundreds of billions in revenues not included in the State budget. You mention all of that, yet the people are afraid that oil will reach twenty dollars. Kuwait suffers from a psychological fear of danger because the country does not speak to its people, leaving them to make decisions based on rumor and anxiety. My friend laughed, but he didn’t comment since he was not Kuwaiti and didn’t want any trouble. But I am Kuwaiti and I care about my country.