

The background of the cover features an open book with Arabic text. A prominent red ink blot, resembling a bloodstain, is smeared across the lower half of the image, partially obscuring the text on the pages. The text on the pages is in Arabic script, with some words like 'وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ' and 'فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ' visible.

The Manifest Truth:

A Refutation of Those That Manipulate Islam

Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari

Translation Waleed Arafa

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A scholarly evaluation of extremist ideologies from
the Muslim Brotherhood to ISIS

The concepts of *ḥākīmīyya*, *jāhiliyya*, *jihād* and
Homeland as misunderstood by extremists, in
contrast to the proper understanding established by
the qualified scholars of Islam.

By Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari

A translation from the original Arabic text
by Waleed Arafa

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Contents

Translator's Note	9
Preface	11
Chapter 1	19
The Concept <i>Ḥākimiyya</i> [Divine Sovereignty] and <i>Takfīr</i> [Excommunication of All Muslims]	
Chapter 2	53
The Concept of <i>Jāhiliyya</i> [Ignorance], the Discontinuation of Islam and The Inevitability of Conflict	
Chapter 3	69
<i>Dār al-Kufr</i> [The Abode of Disbelief] and <i>Dār al-Islām</i> [The Abode of Islam]	
Chapter 4	87
Monopolizing the Divine Promise	
Chapter 5	95
The Concept of <i>Jihād</i>	

Chapter 6	109
The Concept of <i>Tamkīn</i> [Complete Hegemony]	
Chapter 7	153
The Concept of Homeland	
Chapter 8	171
The Islamic Project: Reality and Myth	
Chapter 9	179
Principles Overlooked in The Mindset of The Extremists Leading to All of Their Historical Blunders.	

Translator's Note

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all creation, the Most Merciful, Most Gracious. May peace and blessings be upon His Beloved Messenger our Master Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh, his household, his companions and those following his example in excellence until the Day of Judgment.

Translating this authentic Azharite scholarly thesis dedicated to identifying and combating the distortions of the overzealous, the falsifications of the deceivers and the erroneous derivation of the ignorant, was no easy task. It is only through the aid of Allah that this translation was completed.

The intention was that the text must be translated faithfully yet not literally or word-to-word. Occasionally, I have taken certain liberties I thought were necessary in transmitting the intended meanings from Arabic to the English language.

Such liberties were only possible through close discussion and by the permission of the original author Dr. Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari, who was very generous with his time and explanations. I thank him for gracing me with such honor and giving me a priceless opportunity to learn more about his thought.

The text is rich in Arabic terminology, used by the qualified scholars of Islam in a given manner and used by extremists to mean something completely different. Thus, the choice was to use transliteration along the English equivalent between brackets.

A good example is the word *tamkīn* translated to [empowerment/empowering] as per the scholars but also translated [complete hegemony] at times as per the extremists.

The majority of verses have been taken from Muhammad Asad's *The Message of The Qur'ān*, although there are times where slight alterations were made. Italics are used for foreign terms and all names, titles.

The footnotes are mostly those of the author in the original text, except for those added by the translator [tn].

I wish to thank the editorial team for their efforts in editing the text and spotting all my linguistic shortcomings and transliteration blunders, as well as Nisreen Moustafa for her patience in formatting and typesetting the text, as well as the cover design.

Waleed Arafa, London 2017

Preface

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all creation. May peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad ﷺ, the master of the first and the last of creation, upon his household,ⁱ his companions and whoever follows their example in excellence until the Day of Judgment.

This study is an authentic Azharite scholarly thesis which aims to identify and epistemologically analyze the core statements, theories and ideas that form the basis of modern political trends that identify themselves as ‘Islamist’, particularly those that have appeared in the last eighty years. This endeavor is motivated by the need to fulfill the obligation of providing people with a plain elucidation of these movements as well as the need to prevent confused mindsets and dark and erroneous concepts from being associated with the Noble Qur’ān.

Over the course of the past eighty years, so-called ‘Islamists’, in their eagerness to serve the *sharī‘a* [Sacred Law], have accumulated their efforts

ⁱ The Prophetic Household the *Ahl al-Bayt* are a distinct group of people specifically mentioned by Allah most High in the Qur’ān “Come, let us summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our selves and your selves, then let us beseech God to lay His curse upon those who lie!”, Qur’ān, surah *Āl-Imrān* 3:61 and their virtues were extolled by the Prophet ﷺ himself who in applying this verse summoned ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib, his own daughter Fātima, and his grandchildren al-Ḥasan and al-Husayn, saying, “O God, these are my family” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba, Bāb Min Faḍā’il ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib*, 2404. For more see *The Perfect Family, Virtues of Ahl al-Bayt* translated by Khaild Williams and forward by Dr. Mostafa al-Badawi, published by Visions of Reality Books, 2015. [tn]

to yield a number of religious theses. They have based these upon principles and thought processes which they claim to be representative of the Sacred Law. In the wake of turbulent historical events, their literary output has taken the form of numerous books, publications, poems, literary works, newspapers, and periodicals. Based on unfounded intellectual principles, these publications were the vehicle used by these movements to express their thoughts and analysis of events around them.

This was an era charged with great psychological and political pressure. It witnessed the fall of the Caliphate; the Muslim mind was torn between different worldviews and loyalties; the state of Israel was established and ensuing wars were fought. The civilizational challenge that these events presented to the Arab and Muslim worlds resulted in a major intellectual mobilization and social transformation. Many minds attempted to overcome the state of confusion that resulted from the collective failure to comprehend the new reality and form a discourse capable of coming to terms with it.

In the midst of this upheaval, a grand movement was being formed. It was an attempt to find a solution that derived directly – but not necessarily correctly – from the Noble Qurʾān and the Honorable Sunnah.ⁱⁱ The founding fathers of this movement were imbued with a remarkable enthusiasm and zeal for Islam. They had a sincere drive for supporting, promoting and recruiting for what they believed to be the cause of Islam. However, their enthusiasm and zeal could not make up for their deficiency in scholastic understanding and derivation.

This is evident in the countless incidents in which they would misquote specific verses from the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth [Prophetic Traditions]. They would deploy the sacred texts in order to justify a particular thesis that they wished to formulate and consolidate. The emergence of a consistent pattern of misusing Islamic holy texts ensued from the fact that while they claimed to abide by the Qurʾān and Sunnah, they did not have the necessary diligence and persistence essential to the processes of *iṣṭinbāt* [extrapolation]. They lacked the knowledge, not to mention mastery, of the tools of extrapolation, technicalities, procedures, criteria, subservient epistemological disciplines and mechanisms by which the processes and

resulting conclusions could be scrutinized and authenticated. The order and rigor needed in approaching the Noble Qurʾān is the only guarantor against the grave mistake of man falsely attributing to Divine Revelation an understanding which essentially contradicts, opposes and is at odds with the principal Quranic discourse.

Such order and rigor were clearly absent in the approach of the Islamists, resulting in the uncorroborated and inauthentic conceptions, proposals, theories, and derivations that they have developed over the course of the last eighty years. This is the natural outcome of the pseudo-intellectual efforts of zealous yet untrained religious writers, preachers and enthusiasts let alone those who only trained as physicians, engineers, craftsmen and as professionals in many other vocations. They were all guilty of intruding upon the field of religious studies without acquiring the proper tools or training required of them.

Nonetheless, the output of these confused minds succeeded in attributing their extremely dangerous and distorted conclusions to the *sharīʿa*. This led to the committing of rash actions by those who followed and practiced such beliefs, which in turn produced a vicious cycle of hard times, terrible calamities, imprisonment, suffering and death. An unhealthy milieu arose, in which pseudo-intellectualism coupled with suffering further impeded the possibility of true scholarship. Instead, what emerged was a rash and reactionary brand of understanding largely born of immense psychological pressure.

On the other hand, al-Azhar al-Sharīf represented an indisputable and grounded scholarly approach. An approach that boasts a thousand-year old legacy in the arts of education, the subtleties of scholarly craft, bringing forth generations of formidable scholars and covering vast interdisciplinary realms. Al-Azhar's legendary expertise was honed over time resulting in a wholesome, well-integrated, mature and crystalized approach due to its long and consistent history of receiving and educating scholars from many nations with diverse cultural, sociological, and anthropological

ii Any saying, action, approval, or attribute, whether physical or moral, ascribed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ other than the Qurʾān, whether before or after the beginning of his prophethood. It is considered the second source of legislation, Qurʾān being the first source. [tn]

backgrounds. The peaceful and slow process of epistemological exchange between al-Azhar and other scholarly centers both in the East and the West resulted in the solidification of its scholarly approach and methodology in an unprecedented manner. This made it very difficult for any other center of learning in the Muslim World to come close to its scholarly stature.

Drawing on its scholarly richness and resourcefulness, al-Azhar kept a close eye on the discourse brought forth by the Islamists. It scrutinized their understanding of the two sources of the Divine Revelation – the Qurʾān and the Sunnah – as well as their application of it to modern realities. Every related event or incident was closely followed, examined, analyzed and finally given a scholarly verdict. Some of the efforts of al-Azhar gained renown, while others were less known due to the lack of proper documentation and communication with media outlets.

In recent years, the problem of misquoting the Qurʾān has grown exponentially. The discourse that developed over eighty years began to increase in its confusion and degeneration. Previously general ideas began to produce specific notions, which in some cases resulted in actual application. The gap between the leaders of this discourse and the true scholars widened. The old leaders may have had some understanding of traditional scholarship and consequently a modicum of respect for the scholarly way. With the advent of a younger and more zealous generation of leaders who had no scholarly capacity whatsoever, this ceased to exist. While their forefathers produced a discourse that was merely disharmonious with the objectives of the *sharīʿa*, the new generation of leaders took it to an outrageously shocking and ugly new level; one that was in direct conflict with the objectives of the *sharīʿa*.

They have been responsible for the resurrection of the concept of *takfīr* – the excommunication of Muslims from the fold of Islam – an idea that had been buried in the books of extremist thought for centuries. This new generation of thinkers revived the forgotten ink of condemned parchments into active and lively organizations and militant groups which gave birth to second and third generations of *takfīr*.

The advent of this thought has given rise to the emergence of groups that nonchalantly perform beheadings, terrorize the innocent and embody

the *takfīrī* disregard for solemn oaths. Such groups commit crimes against humanity, all the while insulting the religion of Allah, the Creator. They attribute their own convoluted understanding and evil exegeses to Islam and its sacred texts. We may call this phenomenon, “The Angry Exegesis of the Noble Qur’ān”.

These groups claim to derive their origins in the Divine Revelation, yet they flagrantly disregard the proper methodologies of understanding the Revelation that God has designated. They claim relevance based on modern realities, when in fact they have been overpowered by modern realities, both in comprehension and interaction.

A response from al-Azhar to this movement is necessary. Drawing from its accumulative interdisciplinary knowledge, history, distinguished personalities, methodologies, and scholarly tools, a historical stance had to be formulated. The final product of such movements has to be subject to intense scrutiny. This study is the first step towards issuing a final verdict, capable of purifying the image of Islam from every distortion attributed to it by the zealots, every fallacy projected onto it by the deceivers, and every erroneous derivation of the ignorant. This is a task so important that it must be considered the cornerstone of any serious attempt towards the renewal of Islamic religious discourse. For only through such steps can the reality of Islam as a refuge for all, a beacon for science, knowledge and civilization, be seen again.

The grand Imām Muḥammad Abū Zahrah once said: “The renewal of Islamic discourse is nothing but refreshing the true sheen of this religion, by cleansing its image from fallacies and allowing people to see deep into its unadulterated essence and pure quiddity”.

This book is an historical Azharite stance, formulated through the surveying, condensing, distilling and comparison of the concepts in question. It sorts out the genuine and axial from the temporal and contingent in order to help focus on the fundamentals of the discourse in question.

A discourse which includes ideas such as *ḥākīmīyya* [Divine Sovereignty]; *jāhiliyya* [Ignorance]; the inevitability of the clash of civilizations; *jihād*; *khilāfah* [Caliphate]; the Islamic Project; the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim lands; *tamkīn* [Complete Hegemony]; the relationship

between man-made laws and the *sharī'a*; the concept of a Homeland; as well as many other misconstrued and distorted concepts that have, since the beginning of the last century, given the world nothing but a culture of *takfīr* and bloodshed.

In doing so al-Azhar is following the very footsteps of Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه. He was the first person to debate the Kharijites by identifying their main ideas and scrutinizing them based on the indisputable tenets of Islamic scholarship. His mastery of the tools of learning was no match for the Kharijites' inconsistent logic and deviant understanding. He would begin any discussion by preparing the ground for proper methodical discussion. He would then point out the proper procedure and premises used by the people of knowledge in their approach to derive meaning from the Divine Revelation. In this way, Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه set an early precedent for the proper scholarly approach to engaging and debating false ideas.

Likewise, the first Kharijites of his time set an early precedent for every other deviant group that would appear later in history. They did so by excommunicating the wider community of Muslimsⁱⁱⁱ and bearing arms against them. The justification for their actions was based on their misunderstanding of the divine statement:

“...for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!” [5:44]

At this juncture we stand before two methodologies: a consistent Azharite methodology and an erroneous thought process, confused by agitation, anger, rashness and aggression as well as a blind and unequipped zeal for Islam. Throughout the course of history, the latter methodology has disappeared and resurfaced in the form of consecutive waves, taking different forms and using different slogans and names. However, these different manifestations are inherently the same ways of thinking, essentially reiterating the same principles and theories and committing the very same blunders in approaching the Divine Revelation.

The fact is that if the Islamist currents and movements of our time, all of which are established on the aforementioned notions, were to trace their

epistemological genealogy and discover their ideological ancestry, they would find themselves at the feet of the very first group of Kharijites, who were debated and intellectually defeated by Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه.

Today, they have different names and they pledge allegiance to seemingly different and often conflicting figures. The whole spectrum of Islamist groups from the Muslim Brotherhood to ISIS may outwardly look different, but in reality they are all intellectual descendants of the first group of Kharijites.

By contrast, if al-Azhar were to reveal its own epistemological genealogy and scholarly ancestry, it would doubtlessly find that it is no less than an unbroken chain of transmission leading all the way up to Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه.

In its honest transmission, understanding and service of the Divine Revelation, al-Azhar is the true guardian of Islam's orthodox methodology as understood and practiced by the likes of Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه and the ranks of scholars who followed in his footsteps throughout the centuries. It is also responsible for safeguarding the Divine Revelation against inauthentic confused approaches, even if the propagators of such distortions are simply ignorant zealously pious Muslims.

The Islamic orthodoxy asserted by Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه at that particular historical juncture, was accurately transmitted from one generation of scholars to another, until it was handed to Islam's seat of knowledge, the Mecca of Islamic epistemology, the bastion of Islam: al-Azhar al-Sharīf.

A detailed account of what transpired between Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه and the Kharijites will be discussed later. It will be clarified and commented upon in order to identify his methods of cognition, scholarly horizons and research etiquette.

Finally, and in the same vein, the current writer is in the process of preparing a lexicon, which is intended to identify all the Quranic verses and prophetic traditions which have been misquoted and abused by the extremists in clear violation of their original meanings and which disregard the scholarly principles set in the classical disciplines of *Uṣūl* [Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence], *Balāghah* [Rhetoric], Arabic language and the

iii Mostly the actual companions of the Prophet! [tn]

rules of *Tafsīr* [Quranic Exegesis]. This lexicon will also point out the true meaning of these verses and prophetic traditions as well as pointing out the errors of the extremists in understanding these scriptures.

This should not be seen as an attempt on behalf of al-Azhar to monopolize the right of deriving meaning from the holy texts or making knowledge an elitist endeavor. The reality is that al-Azhar is concerned with the consistency of the indisputable methodology which it has been entrusted with and which it has truly safeguarded, disseminated and documented in treatises which have been made available for all to study. It is the very methodology withheld and served by other institutes of Islamic scholarship such as al-Zaytūna in Tunisia, al-Qarawīyyīn in Fes, the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, al-Fātiḥ in Istanbul, the dedicated *Arbiṭa* of Ḥaḍramawt, the *Mahāḍir* of Shinqīt, the *Masāyid* of Sudan, the esteemed centers of learning in the Malay archipelago, India, Iraq, Africa and the rest of the Muslim world. This is no monopoly, it is merely an attempt to ensure that before welcoming any person or entity wishing to contribute to the noble endeavor of deriving meaning from the holy texts, they must not fail to acquire and perfect the proper methodology and attain their rightful place in an unbroken chain of transmission, to prevent them from becoming ignorant intruders.

Last but not least, we pray to Allah to grant us His perfect guidance, for He is the only one capable of bestowing such blessings, and may praise and blessings be upon our Master, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his household and companions.

Chapter 1

The Concept *Ḥākimīyya* [Divine Sovereignty] and *Takfīr* [Excommunication of All Muslims]

The concept of *ḥākimīyya* [Divine Sovereignty] is the fountainhead from which sprouts the entire spectrum of theories developed, embraced and promoted by fundamentalist Islamist groups. Their intellectual proposals, notions and assertions can all be traced back to the single concept of *ḥākimīyya*, which in turn gave birth to the idea of *shirk ḥākimīyya* [polytheistic governance] and *tawḥīd ḥākimīyya* [monotheistic governance]. All of these terms were coined by Sayyid Quṭb and further elaborated by his brother Muḥammad Quṭb. This gave rise to other ideas such as *al-^ḥuṣṣa al-mu^ḥmina* [the Band of Believers], *al-wa^ḥd al-ilāhī* [the Divine Promise] meant for the chosen band and *jāhiliyya* [Ignorance]. The latter is what Quṭb believed to be the general state of Muslims around the world. He considered them to be *jāhili* because they did not fit his definition as legitimate members of the *band of believers*. Henceforth, Quṭb advocated *al-mufāṣala al-shu^ḥūriyya* [emotional segregation] between these two groups of Muslims. However, for Quṭb, segregation was not enough. He proclaimed that the former were morally superior to the generality of Muslims which led to the development of his belief in an inevitable conflict between the two groups of Muslims. In fact, he believed that such a conflict was necessary for the establishment of the caliphate and the fulfillment of the idea of *tamkīn* [Complete Hegemony].

This entire paradigm is based on Qutb's peculiar understanding of the concept of *ḥākīmīyya*, which has permeated and occupied the minds of modern Islamists.

This logic and cognitive framework permeated the intellects of people that were once earnestly religious and transformed them into extremists and zealous *takfīrīs*, who ultimately became murderers, bearing arms and spilling innocent blood. If we trace the origin of this thought, we arrive at Sayyid Qutb's magnum opus, *Fī ḡilāl al-Qur'ān* [In the Shade of the Qur'ān]. Qutb's other books such as *Ma'ālim fī 'l-ṭarīq* [Milestones] can be seen as excerpts or summaries from the *ḡilāl*. In his memoirs,¹ Yūsuf al-Qaraḡāwī states: "The idea of excommunicating today's Muslims is not only suggested in the *ma'ālim*, in fact it originates in the *ḡilāl* and other books of which *al-Adāla al-ijtimā'īyya fī 'l-Islām* [Social Justice in Islam] is the most prominent."

The fact that *ḡilāl* is the Magnus opus upon which all extreme groups rely and learn from, makes it incumbent to study it closely and critically in a scholarly manner, identifying and distilling its main theories and key statements from within its voluminous chapters and literary elucidation. The central importance of this text is emphasized by the fact that the ideas found in other similar writings, such as Ṣāliḡ Sirīyya's *Risālat al-Īmān* [The Epistle of Faith], can beyond doubt, be traced back to the *ḡilāl*. This book calls upon the excommunication of the rulers of Muslim countries, as well as designating the wider community of Muslims as *jāhili* [ignorant of Divine Guidance], consequently classifying the Muslim countries as belonging to *dār al-ḡarb* [the abode of war]. He states: "All regimes currently in power in Muslim countries are, beyond any doubt, apostate regimes and all the communities under their rule are *jāhili*".

The same can be said of Shukrī Muṣṭafā and his terrorist group, *al-Takfīr wa l-Hijra* [The Excommunication and Exodus]; Muḡammad 'Abd al-Salām Faraj, his terrorist group *al-Jihād* and his book *al-Farīḡa al-ghā'iba* [The Neglected Duty] down to the present-day manifestation of ISIS.

The link between *ḡilāl* and ISIS is evident in the biography of Ṭāḡa Subḡi Falāḡa [also known as Abū Muḡammad al-'Adnānī], ISIS' second-in-command, entitled *al-Lafṡ al-sānī fī tarjamat al-'Adnānī* [The Accessible Word: A Biography of Al-'Adnānī] written by Turkī Mubārak al-Bin'ālī.

In this book, al-^ḥAdnānī states that he was strongly influenced by Sayyid Quṭb's *Fī zilāl al-Qurʿān*, and that he had studied it meticulously for twenty years. So strong is al-^ḥAdnānī's attachment to the book that he admits that it is the book most dear to his heart and discloses of his intention to reproduce the book in his own handwriting! He then mentions an incident that took place in a Qurʿān recital class he used to attend. When he came across the verse:

“...for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!” [5:44]

Al-^ḥAdnānī says that he was deeply shaken. He turned to one of his colleagues and began asking a number of questions. What are the sources of the constitution of Syria? What constitutes the legislative authority, the judiciary and executive authorities? The colleague proceeded to answer al-^ḥAdnānī's questions to which he responded: “This means our government is apostate”. The colleague said: “*al-salāmu ‘ālaykum* [peace be upon you]”, turned his back and promptly left. This was the beginning of al-^ḥAdnānī.

This should be sufficient evidence to support the claims regarding the central importance of the *zilāl* to Islamist thought and why it must be studied to understand groups like ISIS. Groups like ISIS are but a new wave in the very same sea of extremist ideas brought forth by the *zilāl*.

We need not emphasize that this study is not concerned with Sayyid Quṭb the person. He has passed on to the afterlife and now stands before Allah, the only true and just judge of all. Instead, this study is concerned with Quṭb's ideas, which live with us to this day. It focuses on Quṭb's approach in attempting to understand the Qurʿān, as well as his continuous violations of the sanctity of the Divine Revelation by attributing erroneous conclusions which serve to sabotage the higher objectives of the *sharīʿa* altogether. This study seeks to discover how Quṭb has given the extremists a falsified theoretical pretext by which they can excommunicate Muslims and later target them with violence.

1 Ibn al-Qaryah wal-Kutab, *Malamih Sirah wa Masirah*, 3/69, Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 2008

Regardless of its author, such an erroneous approach must be critiqued with a scholarly response, in order to safeguard the message of the Noble Qur²ān against distortion. It is an acceptable possibility to derive a certain meaning from the holy text, which may generalize or localize its effect. However, it is utterly unacceptable to derive meaning that would corrupt the holy text's very essence, ruin its objectives and excommunicate its sincere guardians.

Ḥākīmīyya is Quṭb's principal concept. Originally borrowed from Abū 'l-A'ālā al-Mawdūdī, Quṭb developed the concept into a full-blown theory, which evolved into a worldview pervading *takfīr*. Al-Qaraḍāwī states:² "This is a new phase which Quṭb's thought has evolved into. We call it the phase of Islamic Revolution, which means revolting against all Muslim governments, or more accurately, the governments claiming to be Muslim. It is a revolt against all Muslim communities, or more accurately, the communities claiming to be Muslim. Because in reality, according to Sayyid Quṭb, all communities established on the face of earth have become *jāhili* communities. In this phase, Quṭb formulated his revolutionary ideology, rejecting everything and everyone surrounding him, an ideology saturated with anathematization of the society at large and people in general." He adds: "The most dangerous aspect in the new directions adopted by Sayyid Quṭb was his reliance on the notion of *takfīr* and his expansion of it."³

We stand before an ideology that is characterized by imbalance and is deeply confused in its diagnosis of reality. It is an ideology eager to collide with the entire world, yet is not capable of providing original solutions for its problems while remaining in line with the fundamentals of the *sharī'a*.

The first seeds of this ideology were sown by Ḥasan al-Bannā in his *Risālat al-mu'tamar al-khāmis* [The Message of the Fifth Conference]. In the *zīlāl*, Sayyid Quṭb irrigated and tended to this seed, and ISIS emerged as one of its many bitter fruits. In the book *Idārat al-tawahhūsh* [The Management of Savagery], ISIS presented to the world the theory and application of the destruction and misery that they have created.

Al-Bannā's *Risālat* is an important precedent for the agitation and

nervousness that pervades ISIS. It was imbued with the rhetoric of confrontation, perhaps giving an early preliminary blueprint of what an ISIS worldview would look like. Hence, it is necessary to initiate another scholarly critical study on the thought of Ḥasan al-Bannā, in search of the beginnings of his thought. For it is al-Bannā's thought which must be held accountable for producing the mindset embraced by the Muslim Brotherhood, which ultimately paved the road for the deployment of violence by both his group and other groups which followed.

Al-Bannā's thought, at its core dependent on the formation of secret organizations, cannot be exonerated from its role in propagating extreme thoughts amongst other groups; the links must be highlighted. The emergence of the likes of Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī and Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zarqāwī, who are but developed examples of earlier *Ikhwānī* models, is sufficient proof.

It is important to point out that the choice of limiting this study to the ideas of Sayyid Quṭb does not mean that Quṭb is the only problem. In reality, the seeds of this ideology were sown in al-Bannā's thought, who in turn had adopted ideas from others before him. The primacy given to the study of Quṭb's thought in particular is due to the massive effort he made in reigniting a flame that was almost extinguished. If al-Bannā was the one to sow the seed, Quṭb was the one who tended it through to fruition. A timeline surveying the emergence of Kharijite thought, regardless of its different manifestations, names, entities and forms, must be kept in mind. Today we have twenty-five currents or groups all sprouting from a common source that has disappeared and reappeared throughout the centuries depending on the strength of the grand traditional centers of learning like al-Azhar and al-Qarawīyyīn. The stronger these traditional centers of learning are the more weak and irrelevant the Kharijite currents become.

Sayyid Quṭb, as well as his *takfirī* predecessors before him, established the concept of *ḥākimiyya* based on a few fundamental points.

² See *ibid* /3/56

³ See *ibid* /3/58

The first fundamental is the distorted understanding of the verse:

“... for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!” [5:44]

Quṭb followed al-Mawdūdī in excommunicating anyone who does not implement the rulings of the *sharīʿa*, even if they believe such rulings to be true and Divinely revealed from Almighty Allah. Any excuse such as the practical inability of implementing such rulings was unacceptable to both Quṭb and al-Mawdūdī. This is indeed a strange, extremely zealous and narrow-minded approach. It is an approach that hastens to excommunicate believers without any discernment. This can be explained in the light of another inauthentic belief held by both men; the belief that *ḥākimiyya* is an integral part of Islamic creed. Quṭb subjectively added a so-called new fundamental to the fundamentals of creed, consequently excommunicating everyone who did not accept his innovation. In doing so, Quṭb embodied the teachings of the Kharijites, which stand in stark contrast to authentic Islam preserved by the overwhelming majority of Muslim scholars, generation after another, from the early generation of the noble companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

There are, in fact, a number of explanations of this noble verse offered by the authentic scholars. The most favorable explanation is that only those who deny that the rulings of the *sharīʿa* are truly divinely revealed and dictated by Allah, can be said to have committed an act of disbelief. This clearly does not include those who do believe in the truth and divine source of the rulings of the *sharīʿa*, but who may be unable, for one reason or another, to see it through to its practical application. Such a person cannot be designated a disbeliever.

In his *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī states: “ʿIkrimah says: The statement of Almighty Allah:

‘...for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high,’ [5:44]

refers exclusively to those who deny in their hearts and openly oppose with their tongues. As for those who recognize the rulings of Allah in their hearts and testify to them being the truth with their tongues, despite committing that which is in opposition to such rulings, these are people who have certainly judged in accordance with what Allah has bestowed; they have merely not put their belief into action. Thus, they are not the ones intended by this verse, and this is the correct response to the question of what this verse means.”⁴

The Proof of Islam, al-Ghazālī, states in *al-Mustasfā*: “After having mentioned the Torah and its rulings, Allah says:

‘... for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!’ [5:44]

In our opinion, this refers to those who have not judged in accordance with what Allah has bestowed out of disbelief and denial.”⁵

In his *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, Imām Abū Muḥammad ‘Aṭīyya al-Andalūsī states: “The vocabulary of this verse does not indicate generalization. It is rather a *lafẓ mushtarak* [homonym] which is often used for specification, such as the verse in which Almighty Allah states:

‘...for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!’ [5:44]

This cannot be taken to mean that if the rulers of the believers rule with other than the truth, that they should be considered disbelievers. Not in any possible sense.”⁶

A close look at the explanation given by the scholars concerning this verse such as Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib رضي الله عنه,

⁴ *al-Taṣfīr al-kabīr*, Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī /6/35, Dar al-Ghad al-Arabi, Cairo, 1412 H. – 1992 C.E26

⁵ *al-Mustasfā*, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī /168

⁶ *al-muḥarrar al-wajīz*, Imām Abū Muḥammad ‘Aṭīyya al-Andalūsī, 2/9529 Al-khusus

Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān رضي الله عنه, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha^cī, al-Suddī, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Abū Ṣāliḥ, Abū Majlaz, ^cIkrimah, Qatāda, ^cĀmir, al-Sha^cbī, ^cAṭā³, Ṭāwūs, and later Imām al-Ṭabarī in *Jāmi^cu 'l-bayān*, al-Ghazālī in *al-Mustasfā*, Ibn ^cAṭīyya in *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, Imām al-Rāzī in *Mafatīḥ al-ghayb*, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Juzayy in *al-Tas'hīl*, Abū Ḥayyan in *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-^cadhīm*, al-Alūsī in *Rūḥ al-ma^cānī*, al-Ṭāhir Ibn ^cĀshūr in *al-Taḥrīr wa 'l-tanwīr* as well as al-Sha^crāwī in his exegesis; demonstrates that there is a universal understanding of this verse.

Opposed to this understanding, Sayyid Quṭb described the explanation offered by the learned scholars mentioned above, many of whom were companions of the Prophet ﷺ, by saying: “The intellectual wrangling deployed in understanding this clear, general and absolute ruling, is but an attempt to escape a confrontation with truth. Furthermore, the attempt to explain this verse in any other way is to distort the meaning of the revealed words and to take them out of context”⁷

Quṭb thus accused all of these learned scholars, including the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, of being fabricators who distort the meaning of the revealed words and take them out of context.

Upon closer examination, we find that the only precedent for Quṭb's *takfīrī* understanding of this verse is that of the Kharijites. In his book, *al-Sharī'a* [The Sacred Law], Imām al-Ājurī states: “Abū Bakr ibn Abī Dawūd related that al-Muthannā ibn Aḥmad related that ^cAmr ibn Khālid related that Ibn Lahī^ca related by the way of ^cAṭā³ ibn Dīnār that in his explanation of the verse:

‘...as well as others that are allegorical...’ [3:7]

Sa^cid ibn Jubayr states: “The *mutashābihāt* refers to verses whose meanings are ambiguous to the lay reader. By claiming their particular understanding of a verse to be the correct guidance, deviant groups attempt to justify their deviations.

An example of how the *Ḥarūrīyya* (a Kharijite sect) follow the literal meanings of ambiguous verses, is their interpretation of the verse:

‘... for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers,’ [5:44]

which they read together with the verse:

‘...and yet, those who are bent on denying the truth regard other powers as their Sustainer’s equals!’ [6:1].

Consequently, if a leader decrees something that is not in full compliance with the *sharīʿa*, they declare him to be a disbeliever. According to their logic, such a ruler has regarded himself as his ‘Sustainer’s equal’ and is therefore condemned as a polytheist as well as the people he leads. Thus, the misinterpretation of this verse becomes the pretext for all the havoc wreaked by the Kharijites.”⁸

The second fundamental principle, which is persistently and tirelessly mentioned by Qutb in the *ẓilāl*, is the following self-proclaimed axiom: “*Hākīmīyya* is the most defining characteristic of divinity”. This so-called axiom could not be further from the truth. Furthermore, not a single Muslim theologian or scholar has ever proclaimed it. Such a statement is nothing but a broad-stroking rhetorical attempt at tackling very delicate theological issues, which cannot be approached except through immaculate expression based on established scholarly rules. For in fact, the most defining characteristic of divinity is something completely different. It is the unique and absolute perfection of His essence.

Qutb’s erroneous statement, “*Hākīmīyya* is the most defining characteristic of divinity,” serves to unjustly portray the failure of Muslims in implementing tertiary legal rulings as being a denial of the sovereignty of Almighty Allah altogether as well as a denial of His Essence. It psychologically prepares someone who has adopted this way of thought

⁷ *Fī ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Qutb /2/898, 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E33
Qurʾān 3:7

⁸ *al-sharīʿa*, Imām al-Ājurī /341, See also al-Durr al-Manthūr /2/146, and al-Itṣām /2/138

to break down the barriers of cautiousness and sensibility, which protect Muslims from accusing others of disbelief. This is but a glimpse of how this second fundamental was deployed by Quṭb to accuse Muslims all over the world of disbelief.

The third fundamental principle is Quṭb's baseless accusation of the laws used in standard courts and the judicial system, as not being in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high. Consequently, this means that the judiciary system and the law it overlooks, is yet another form of rebelling against Almighty Allah over the most defining characteristic of His divinity, which Quṭb claims is *Ḥākimiyya*. This leads him to yet again accuse the entire Muslim nation of disbelief. Thus, Quṭb ignores and renders useless the accumulative efforts of hundreds of erudite scholars, who have spent their entire lives meticulously studying the relationship between law and the *sharīʿa*.

For more than 150 years, many erudite scholars, with the sincere intention of protecting the truth of Islam, have studied this topic in great detail. They established comparative studies in which they defined and enumerated the areas of agreement and disagreement. For example, *Shaykh al-Islām* Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār who was also the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar, assigned his famous disciple Rifāʿa al-Ṭaḥṭāwī with the task of translating the Napoleonic Code into Arabic. The complete translation was then put to the attention of the great scholar Shaykh Makhlūf al-Minyāwī, who carried out a detailed comparative study between the laws included in this code and those of the Mālikī School of jurisprudence. This study was the subject of al-Minyāwī's book *al-Muqāranāt al-tashrīʿiyyā* [The Legal Comparisons], which was followed by another book with the same title authored by another great scholar, al-Tidī. This was followed by the publication of the *Majallat al-aḥkām al-ʿadliyya*, the famous Ottoman Courts Manual that influenced subsequent writings on the law as evidenced by the works of Qadrī Pāsha. This phase of study was followed by the Egyptianization of the laws with the efforts of al-Sanhūrī Pāsha. This was in turn followed by the codification of the *sharīʿa* itself by the Grand Imām Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, which was published in four volumes by the Egyptian Parliament's official print

house, along with a study done by the assiduous scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, Mūsṭafā al-Zarqā in his book *al-Madkhal al-fiqhī al-‘ām* [The General Introduction to Jurisprudence]. There are numerous studies and scholarly works in this regards of which it is important to mention a few. Of note are the works of Shaykh Sulaymān al-‘Abd, the leading Shāfi‘ī scholar at al-Azhar, who was also the Vice President of Egypt’s Higher *Sharī‘a* Court; the works of the erudite Shaykh Muḥammad Sulaymān, the President of the Higher *Sharī‘a* Court; ‘Alī Abū ‘l-Futūḥ Pāsha; Dr. Shafīq Shihāta; the erudite Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Shahba; the erudite Shaykh Dr. ‘Alī Jum‘a, member of the Council of Senior Scholars⁹ and the Grand Mufti of Egypt; Dr. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Qāsim, whose book’s introduction was written by Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh, the former Minister of Education in Saudi Arabia; ‘Omar al-Matrak, member of the Saudi Justice steering committee in Riyadh; Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz; the erudite Shaykh ‘Alī al-Khafif; and the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, the erudite Shaykh Ḥasanayn Makhlūf. The list is indeed long, and I feel privileged to have my own copies of most of these studies in my private library. This is a mere glimpse into the grand and extensive efforts exerted by Muslim scholars in addressing this issue. These scholars carried out their intellectual duty with honesty and in their service to the truth of the *sharī‘a*, did not falter in addressing the issues and problems of their times. They neither shirked from their scholarly responsibilities, nor did they lose touch with the reality of their times. They responded to the challenges of their time by establishing institutions, protecting their Homelands and returning to the job of developing civilization. The erudite Shaykh Ḥasanayn Makhlūf describes these magnificent efforts, especially in reference to the *Majallat al-aḥkām al-‘adliyya* and the works of Qadrī Pāsha, by saying: “Such efforts were received by the scholars of Islam with acceptance. And how can you possibly conceive the genius of the scholars of Islam of that era?”

9 The highest scholarly authority for Sunni Muslims in Egypt. It consists of 40 members, all of whom are Azharite scholars carefully selected against a strict set of criteria and headed by Grand Imām of al-Azhar al-Sharīf himself. The council is responsible for a variety of affairs; most importantly nominating the Grand Mufti of Egypt, electing the Grand Imām of al-Azhar al-Sharīf, and determining the compliance of any new legislation with Islamic Sacred law. [tn]

Despite this, Sayyid Quṭb chose to ignore all of these efforts, cast away the accumulative studies of the Muslims in this field and proceeded to accuse the entire Ummah of disbelief.

The fourth fundamental principle is the erroneous understanding of this verse:

“Judgment [as to what is right and what is wrong] rests with God alone.” [12:40]

Scholars of *Uṣūl* [Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence] and *Tafsīr* [Qurʾānic Exegesis] have understood this noble verse from the Qurʾān to mean that Almighty Allah is Unique in His authority to designate the rules of *ḥill* [lawfulness], *ḥurma* [prohibition], *nadb* [recommendation], *karāha* [offensiveness], *ibāḥa* [permissibility], *ṣiḥḥa* [validity], *fasād* [invalidity] and *inʿiqād* [effectuating of contracts]. They understood it to mean that He does not share this unique authority with other than Himself, and that His prophets, messengers and the consensus of the Muslims are His means of revealing what He alone has ordained regarding every issue. This understanding is a matter of creed. The discussion of the details of jurisprudence, such as tracing back a certain ruling to its legal causes, justifications, conditions, and impediments should not be considered a matter of creed; rather they are a matter of jurisprudence. However, Sayyid Quṭb considered the shortcomings of people in their application of the jurisprudence to be an affront to the unique authority of Almighty Allah in establishing His rules. Moreover, Quṭb designates the unintentional faltering of humans in carrying out the particulars of legal matters to be a challenge against Almighty Allah with regards to the most defining characteristic of His divinity, which led to Quṭb accusing them of disbelief. In reality, he was the one who was terribly confused. He ventured into the delicate and fine realms of *Kalām* [Dialectical Theology] and *Uṣūl*, both of which he had not studied, let alone attaining mastery of them. In his book *Fath al-Bārī* [Victory of the Creator], Shaykh al-Islām al-Hāfiẓ Abū ʿl-Faḍl Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (May Allah have mercy on his soul) states: “He who speaks in other than his field of knowledge comes up with such absurdities”.¹⁰ Prior to him, Imām Abū ʿl-Muẓaffar

al-Sam‘ānī stated in his book, *Qawāṭi‘ al-adilla* [The Cutting-edge Proofs], regarding a particular discussion: “It would have been better for him (May Allah pardon him) to have not ventured into this discipline and left it to the experts. For the least damage awaiting he who ventures into what he is not qualified for, is to suffer being exposed before the learned experts. The only pronouncements that ought to be taken with serious consideration, in any discipline, are those spoken by the experts. To each endeavor are men dedicated to it, and only they must be listened to.”¹¹

The fifth fundamental principle is the complete absence from this discourse, of an important and precise component of *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, which is the study of the *‘Awārīḍ al-ahlīyya* [Impediments to Legal Competence]. If a person is subject to enough of these impediments then they are absolved of legal responsibility.

The sixth fundamental principle is the false claim that the unbroken chain of transmission of the religious sciences has in fact been broken and discontinued. This claim is indeed the wildest, most outrageous and is absolutely unprecedented. It is a grave crime committed by Quṭb against the entire Ummah [Muḥammadan Nation]; the nation of the middle way, knowledge, religion, civilization, goodness and guidance. Quṭb quickly moves from false premises to false conclusions, until the snowball of falsehood eventually leads him to claim that the existence of the true community of Islam ceased to exist altogether centuries ago. In his book *Ma‘ālim fī ‘l-ṭarīq* [Milestones], Quṭb states: “we can say that the Muslim community has been extinct for a few centuries.”¹² This concept repeatedly appears in different books of Quṭb. These six fundamentals are the backbone of Quṭb’s understanding of the concept of *ḥākīmīyya* or Divine Sovereignty.

¹⁰ *fath al-bārī* [Victory of the Creator], Shaykh al-Islām al-Hāfiẓ Abū ‘l-Faḍl Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī /3/58441

¹¹ *Rqawāṭi‘ al-adilla* [The Cutting-edge Proofs], Imām Abū ‘l-Muẓaffar al-Sam‘ānī /1/399

¹² *Ma‘ālim fī ‘l-ṭarīq* [Milestones], Sayyid Quṭb /8 in Arabic /25 in the English translation edited by A.B al-Mehri 58 ibid page 17, 18 Arabic and page 34 translation

Sayyid Quṭb was only capable of making all of these claims because he completely ignored the accumulative experience of the scholars of Islam in understanding divine revelation. He ignored the well-founded methodologies of understanding and even considered the legacy of Islam to be nothing but a *jāhili* culture. Quṭb states: “Much of what we consider to be Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought are also constructs of this *jāhiliyya*.”¹³

Thus, Quṭb isolated himself from the proper methodologies established, accepted and practiced by learned scholars in understanding the Qurʾān. He proceeded to exert himself in understanding it relying only on his personal intuition and subjective assumptions. In the very beginning of his book *al-Taṣwīr al-fannī fī ‘l-qurʾān* [Artistic Imagery in the Qurʾān], Quṭb says: “I entered institutions of learning and read the exegeses of the Qurʾān from the books of exegesis. I listened to the explanations given by teachers, yet I did not find in what I read and listened to, the delightful and beautiful Qurʾān that I experienced during my childhood. Oh what sorrow! All the beauty has been concealed, as if it were empty of pleasure and excitement. Could it be that there are two [different] Qurʾāns? Could there be a Qurʾān of childhood: full of passion, readily accessible and exciting; versus the Qurʾān of youth: inaccessible, tangled and torn apart? Or has the Qurʾān just fallen victim to the methodologies of exegesis? I have thus returned to reading the Qurʾān directly, rather than through the books of exegesis. Only then did I reunite with my beautiful and beloved Qurʾān, where my exciting and pleasurable images reside...”¹⁴

This statement is of utmost importance because of how it exposes Quṭb’s methodology in understanding, analyzing and approaching the Quranic text. It is a methodology in complete isolation from any of the accumulative efforts exerted by the scholars of Islam who spent their lifetimes in service of the Quranic text and its comprehension. Furthermore, it condemns such scholarly efforts as *jāhili* constructs. Consequently, in his attempts to understand and deduce from the Qurʾān, Quṭb chose to replace meticulous scholarship, which has crystalized at the hands of erudite scholars of Islam over the course of history, with his subjective, vague and generalized taste for literary aesthetics, which he enjoyed so much in his childhood. Once

again, Qutb is in stark contradiction with the very teachings of the Qurʾān, especially when it states:

“...whereas, if they had referred it to the Messenger or those charged with authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it...” [4:83]

The underlying theme here is that *takfirī* currents have been consistent in their attempts to distort the interpretation of this noble verse. The successive waves of *takfirī* thought that have appeared throughout the history of the Ummah have sprouted from this erroneous interpretation. This is in spite of and in direct opposition to the well-established scholarly consensus on the proper understanding of the same verse. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his book *Tārīkh Baghdād* [The History of Baghdad] relates that Ibn Abī Dāʾūd used to say: “A Kharijite man entered the presence of al-Maʾmūn who said: ‘What motivates your opposition to us?’ The Kharijite answered: ‘A verse in the Book of Almighty Allah.’ Al-Maʾmūn said: ‘Which verse?’ The Kharijite answered: ‘...for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!’ Al-Maʾmūn replied: ‘Do you have proof that this is indeed a revealed verse?’ The Kharijite affirmed: ‘Yes’. Al-Maʾmūn asked: ‘What is your proof?’ The Kharijite responded: ‘The consensus of the Ummah,’ to which al-Maʾmūn responded: ‘As you have accepted their consensus in affirming that this verse is revelation, you must accept their consensus regarding its interpretation.’ The Kharijite then said: ‘You have spoken the truth. Peace be upon you, Commander of the Faithful.’”¹⁵

13 See *ibid* /17, 18 in Arabic and /34 in English/60 Nisa 83

14 *al-taṣwīr al-fannī fī ʾl-qurʾān* [Artistic Imagery in the Qurʾān], Sayyid Qutb /8, 10th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1408 H. – 1988 C.E

15 *Tārīkh Baghdād* [The History of Baghdad], Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī /10/186, also *Tārīkh Dimashq* [The History of Damascus], Ibn ʾAsākir /33/306 Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1995 C.E, Critically Edited by Muḥib al-Dīn Abī Saʾid ʾUmar Ibn Gharamah al-ʾUmari

The Prophet ﷺ vehemently warned against this *takfirī* attitude. Ḥudhayfa رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “I fear for you regarding one who reads the Qur’ān until its radiant sheen becomes evident upon him and he becomes a supporter of the cause of Islam. Nonetheless he transforms the Qur’ān into whatever Allah wills, negating and abandoning what he previously said, in order to wield his sword against his neighbor and accuse him of polytheism.” I said: ‘Oh Prophet of Allah! Which of the two is more worthy of [the accusation of] polytheism, the accused or the accuser?’ He said, ‘Indeed, the accuser.’” This prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Bazzār in his *Musnad*¹⁶ and was graded *ḥasan*¹⁷ by al-Haythamī. It was also narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*¹⁸ as well as Abū Ya‘lā in his *Musnad*, about which Ibn Kathīr said: “This is a good [*jayyid*] chain of transmission”. It was also narrated by al-Taḥāwī in *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, al-Harawī in his *Dhamm al-kalām wa ahlihī* as well as Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tabyīn kadhīb al-muftarī*. It was also narrated by Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal, as mentioned by al-Ṭabarānī in *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*; Ya‘qūb ibn Sufyān in *al-Ma‘rifa wa ‘l-tārīkh*; Ibn Abi ‘Āṣim in *Kitāb al-sunna*; and Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Aṣbahānī in *al-Ḥujja*.

A lengthier explanation of this prophetic tradition will be presented later on.

It is not possible for the entirety of the Muḥammadan Ummah to deviate and become overrun by disbelief as imagined by Sayyid Quṭb and the various currents, movements and contemporary religious groups who follow in his footsteps. The Prophet ﷺ has informed us that his Ummah is protected against polytheism and disbelief. Imām al-Bukhārī relates, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, a tradition narrated by ‘Uqba ibn ‘Āmir رضى الله عنه that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: “I do not fear that you will fall into polytheism. However, I fear that you will compete over the ephemeral world.”¹⁹ This caused Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-Barr to state in *al-Tamhīd*: “Whosoever fears for the Ummah of Muḥammad that which was not feared by its own Prophet has committed a clear aberration.”²⁰

This is a clear example of how those that are obsessed with accusing others of apostasy are in reality deviant in their own understanding of the Qurʾān. It also serves to show how the absence of the proper tools of approaching Divine Revelation allows for subjective leanings and deviant thought to misrepresent the words of Almighty Allah, turning the religion of mercy and solace into a rampage for blood. Thus, the most important duty of scholars, in all times and places, is to fulfill the responsibility of warding away all that is erroneously attributed to the noble revelation – in order to maintain the purity and authenticity of the religion of Almighty Allah from any human tampering, especially that of the highly confused – as well as highlighting the proper methodology of understanding the meanings intended by Almighty Allah.

16 A compendium of Prophetic Traditions. [tn]

17 In Ḥadīth terminology it means “Good” which is used to describe hadith whose authenticity is not as well-established as that of *Ṣaḥīḥ* hadith, but sufficient for use as (religious) evidence. [tn]

18 A compendium of Prophetic Traditions of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* grade. [tn]

19 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 15/95, *Kiṭāb al-Maghāzī* [The Book of Expeditions]. Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, Egypt, 1421 H. (al-Ṣulṭāniyya)

20 *al-tamhīd li ma fī muwaṭṭaʾ Malik min al-maʾānī wa ʾlasānīd*, Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Barr/2/121

A comparison between the understanding of Sayyid Quṭb of the aforementioned Quranic verse compared to the understanding of the overwhelming majority of Muslim scholars from the generation of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, through the following generations of scholars up until the contemporary scholar Imām Muḥammad Mutawallī al-Shaʿrāwī

The Scholars of Islam	The <i>Takfīrī</i> Understanding
<p>Ibn Masʿūd, Ibn ʿAbbās; al-Barāʾ ibn ʿĀzib; Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān; Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī; al-Suddī; al-Ḍaḥḥāk; Abū Ṣāliḥ; Abū Majlāz; ʿIkrima; Qatāda; ʿĀmir; al-Shaʿbī; ʿAtāʾ; Ṭāwūs; Abū Rajāʾ al-ʿAṭāridī; ʿUbaydallah ibn ʿAbdullāh; al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; Imām al-Ṭabarī in <i>jāmiʿu ʿl-bayān</i>; al-Ghazālī in <i>al-Mustaṣfā</i>; al-Baghawī in his <i>Tafsīr</i>; Ibn al-Jawzī in <i>Zād al-Masīr</i>; Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī in <i>Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb</i>; Imām al-Qurtubī; Ibn Juzayy in <i>al-Tasʿīl</i>; Abū Ḥayyān in <i>al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ</i>; Ibn Kathīr in <i>Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAdhīm</i>; al-Alūsī in <i>Rūḥ al-Maʿānī</i>; al-Ṭāhir Ibn ʿĀshūr in <i>al-Taḥrīr wa ʿl-Tanwīr</i>; Shaykh al-Shaʿrāwī in his exegesis.</p>	<p>Sayyid Quṭb</p>

The Scholars of Islam	The <i>Takfīrī</i> Understanding
<p>The opinions of the aforementioned scholars may vary. However, the most accepted and agreed upon opinion regarding this noble verse is that it highlights the gravity of the sin committed and that its meaning is not in any way, shape or form tantamount to excommunicating the sinner in the manner of the <i>takfīrī</i> understanding represented by Sayyid Quṭb</p>	<p>Sayyid Quṭb's claims are unprecedented and nobody, other than the Kharijites, has ever expressed a similar opinion. In his book, <i>al-Sharī'a</i>, Imām al-Ājurri relates that Sa'īd ibn Jubayr said that when reading the verse:</p> <p>"... for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!" [5:44], the Kharijites would read it together with the verse:</p> <p>"... and yet, those who are bent on denying the truth regard other powers as their Sustainer's equals!" [6:1].</p> <p>As a result they would conclude that the leaders who rule by other than the truth and the groups of people they lead are all polytheists, finally using it as a pretext for the havoc they wreak and the crimes they commit.</p>

A Remarkable Prophetic Warning Regarding a man from the people of the Qurʾān who ends up becoming a *takfīrī*, bearing arms against the innocent and spilling blood

It is related that Hudhayfa رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“I fear for you regarding one who reads the Qurʾān until its radiant sheen becomes evident upon him and he becomes a supporter of the cause of Islam. Nonetheless he transforms the Qurʾān into whatever Allah wills, negating and abandoning what he previously believed, in order to wield his sword against his neighbor and accuse him of polytheism.’ I said: ‘Oh Prophet of Allah! Who of the two is more worthy of [the accusation of] polytheism, the accused or the accuser?’ He said, ‘Indeed, the accuser.’”

This prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* and was graded *ḥasan* by al-Haythamī. It was also narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as well as Abū Yaʿlā in his *Musnad*, about which Ibn Kathīr said: “This is a good [*jayyid*] chain of transmission”.²¹

This prophetic tradition is of utmost importance because it describes a curious case of enthusiasts for the cause of Islam who suddenly transform and mutate in the most astonishing manner. Their beginnings seem very benign in their passionate dedication to the Qurʾān, which causes them to attain a radiant sheen. Nonetheless, they end up accusing others of polytheism, consequently bearing arms and murdering innocents.

The Prophet ﷺ described such a person as having three main characteristics:

The first is the fact that such a person has been blessed with an intimate proximity with the Qurʾān. He is no stranger to it as he has dedicated himself to memorizing and serving it until he becomes known amongst the people as trustworthy.

The second characteristic is that such a person is seen to have a radiant sheen, which is caused by his close and intimate interaction with the Qurʾān; a source of light that is transmitted to people who continuously recite and serve the book of light. This radiant sheen causes others to think highly of such a person.

The third characteristic is that such a person is extremely enthusiastic about Islam, to the extent that others see him as a staunch supporter who takes it upon himself to protect and defend Islam.

These three characteristics help establish a remarkably good reputation for such a person within his community, causing everyone to trust him. Even those who may differ with him acknowledge his enthusiasm for Islam and his service to the Qurʾān.

However, this is exactly where the case of such a person becomes problematic, causing confusion and great disruption to the community. This person starts undergoing a series of curious transformations, which were described by the Prophet ﷺ as: "... nonetheless transforms the Qurʾān into whatever Allah wills ..." The transformation such a person is said to make is not of the letters, wording or the phrases of the Qurʾān, rather the transformation is in that person's understanding and interpretation of the Qurʾān. The reason why such a person encroaches upon the sanctity of the holy text with his false interpretation is because he thinks that his recitation and efforts in serving the Qurʾān alone qualify him to properly interpret and understand it. Naturally, this encroachment results in this person concluding a concoction of false concepts, illusions, deviant deductions and distorted interpretations. The lack of any tools of cognition, methodologies of extrapolation and the ignorance of the multiple interdisciplinary sciences required to approach the Qurʾān, renders such a person helpless in perceiving the objectives of the Qurʾān, causing him to excommunicate others and accuse the Muslim community

21 Mūsnaḍ al-Bazzār, al-Hāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Bazzār /7/220, Muʾasasat ʿUlūm al- Qurʾān, and Maktabat al-ʿUlūm wa ʾIḥikam, Beirut, al-Madīnah 1409 H., see also Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid /1/178, Dar al-Rayyān lil Tūrāth and Dar al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Cairo, Beirut 1407 H., see also Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān /1/281 Muʾasasat al-Risalah, Beirut 1414 H., 1993 C.E, see also tafsīr Ibn Kathīr /2/266 Dar alFikr, Beirut 1401 H.77 The first is the lengthiest chapter and the second is one of the lengthiest chapters of the Qurʾān

of polytheism. Moreover, he declares a so-called holy war upon members of his own community, bearing arms against them and spilling their blood. He heeds no call for restraint. To the contrary, every call for restraint is met with more stubbornness, emanating from his belief that he has become one with the Qurʾān; hence any refutation of his understanding is taken to be a refutation of the Qurʾān itself.

It is important to take a closer look at the stages that lead up to the transformation of his understanding of the Qurʾān. How does such a person, in the course of his attempt to understand the Qurʾān, fall so candidly into deriving meanings which are in direct opposition to the higher objectives of the Qurʾān?

The whole problem begins when such a person burdens himself with the cumbersome task of producing knowledge, deriving meanings, and extracting concepts and theories from within the Qurʾān, aided with nothing but his enthusiasm and zeal. The concepts, theories, and principles yielded from such a process are clearly flawed, full of erroneous constructs and extremely bizarre. However, the absence of the mastery of the scholarly array of tools, sciences, and principles that aid the truly learned scholars, makes such bizarre conclusions acceptable in his own eyes. In addition, his ignorance of any scholarly standard by which he can evaluate his findings and derivations, makes it easier for him to oversee how deficient they are. In time, this causes him to approach the Qurʾān with erroneous preconceived notions and theories. His approach deprives him of the merits of objective research. Instead, it forces him into a search for forced clues in order to confirm his subjective bias. Thus, this person is ultimately engaged in putting words into the mouth of the Qurʾān, furthermore misquoting the Qurʾān in contradiction to the real meanings of the Qurʾān. This whole approach is nothing less than ‘the distortion of the overzealous, the falsification of the deceivers and the erroneous derivation of the ignorant.’

The clarity with which the scholars are able to judge such a person and his approach to the Qurʾān as deviant is not necessarily shared by the laypeople. For they have seen the radiant sheen upon his face and know only of his long record in the service of the Qurʾān and his support

for Islam. They simply become confused about him, too hesitant to point out his mistakes and deviations with any amount of certainty.

This is exactly what is alluded to by the Prophet ﷺ regarding the disruptive nature of the presence of such a person in the community. He warned against a state of division and polarization amongst the people caused by their differing stances to this phenomenon. Some immediately recognize the threat posed by this person's appetite for excommunicating others and become resentful, not only towards the person but towards the Qur'ān itself. This is only because such a person has managed to convince the masses that he truly represents the Qur'ān and speaks on its behalf. All the destruction and violence he causes becomes attributed not to the deviation of the person but to the Qur'ān itself. Others within the community cannot simply believe that the understanding of such a person, apparently dedicated to the Qur'ān, could be deviant. Their predicament is their inability to identify the cause of the problem and they remain confused and divided about the situation. A third group crystalizes around the person's insistence that he holds the ultimate truth and that he is the Qur'ān's guardian par excellence and cannot be mistaken. But in the same vein as the previous group, they cannot accept the violent proposals made by him and end up rejecting Islam as a whole due to their identification of terrible shortcomings in the religion of Almighty Allah.

Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* relates on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd who said: "A man said: 'Oh Messenger of Allah! I intentionally come late to the dawn prayer, because of how long the prayer becomes when led by so-and-so.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was terribly angered, and I had never previously seen him this angry. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Oh people! There are some amongst you who, due to their behavior, drive people away from Islam. Whosoever leads the prayer should keep it short, in order to accommodate the week, the old and the needy.'"

Al-Bukhārī also relates on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه, who said: "A man arrived with two camels as the night entered while Mu'adh رضي الله عنه was leading the prayer. The man left his camels and followed Mu'adh رضي الله عنه in prayer, who started reciting either *al-Baqara* or *al-Nisa'*.²²

The man then parted with Mu^ʿadh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, leaving the prayer before it was complete, and later heard that Mu^ʿadh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ had spoken ill of him because of this incident. The man then went to the Prophet ﷺ and complained to him about Mu^ʿadh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Oh Mu^ʿadh! Do you wish to try [the people]?’ three times. ‘It would have been better if you had recited *‘sabbih isma rabbika ‘l-ʿlā’*;²³ *‘wa ‘l-shamsi wa ḍuḥāhā’*;²⁴ or *‘wa ‘l-layli idhā yaghshā’*;²⁵ for the old, the weak and the needy pray behind you.”

This occurrence during the life of the Prophet shows the disruption that people experienced due to the enthusiasm of a single noble companion. While leading the night communal prayer, he made it lengthy beyond the ability of some of the congregation; in fact some were even late for the following dawn prayer due to the length of the previous prayer. This resulted in one man leaving the communal prayer altogether and completing the prayer alone in order to tend to his personal matters. In some narrations it is reported that some zealots criticized the man and accused him of being a hypocrite for doing so. This entire affair drove the man to complain; not about an act of immorality, rather about an excessive religiosity that resulted in commotion and disruption.

This caused the Prophet ﷺ to become angry in a manner that was unprecedented. He described those who caused the furor of turning people away, and rebuked his noble companion by saying, “Do you wish to try [the people]?” The Prophet ﷺ then proceeded to explain the balanced and accessible approach that helps people avoid those states of confusion that drive them away from Islam. Such states of confusion come about when people attribute the zealotry of a single person to the religion itself; a zealotry that results in burdening people and calling them hypocrites, when in fact the real problem is the zealot’s unawareness of the capacity of the people in question. Perhaps this incident helps us understand the gravity of the Prophet’s warning regarding the man of the Qur’ān who turns into a *takfīrī* as his deepest concern for us as Muslims.

The excommunication of other Muslims is an extremely dangerous affair. It is equally dangerous to appear to be a representative of the Qur’ān and the *sharīʿa* while in reality being void of any knowledge. This is precisely what the Prophet ﷺ highlights as his deepest concern for his

Ummah; as well as the excommunication of rulers and leaders based on their shortcomings and injustices.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Umm Salama رضي الله عنها relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There will appear rulers whose actions some of you will recognize [as wrong] while others of you will disapprove of. He who merely recognizes them will be absolved whilst those who disapprove will be safe. But he who approves of their bad deeds and imitates them is spiritually ruined.” People asked the Prophet: “Should we not fight them?” He replied: “No, not so long as they pray.”²⁶

Imām al-Bāqillānī comments: “Such rulers cannot be excommunicated based on a statement or opinion unless there is, based on a salient proof, a consensus amongst Muslims that he is worthy of excommunication.”²⁷

Ibn Ḥazm says: “The truth is that whoever is Muslim cannot be deemed otherwise, except based on a sacred text or consensus; not based on flawed claims and fabrication.”²⁸

Imām Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ al-Qushayrī says: “This is indeed a stern warning for whoever accuses any of the Muslims of being an apostate while they are not.”²⁹

The Proof of Islam, al-Ghazālī, in *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-īmān wa ‘l-zandaqa*, says: “We should avoid the excommunication of Muslims as much as possible; because permitting the spilling of blood of those who pray and declare their belief in the Oneness of Allah is a grave error. The error in not condemning a thousand apostates is minor in comparison to the error of spilling the blood of a single Muslim.”³⁰

22 *al-Baqara* consists of 286 verses is the lengthiest chapter and *al-Nisā* consists of 176 verses is the third lengthiest chapter of the Noble Qur’ān. [tn]

23 *Sūra Al-A‘lā* [Chapter 87 consists of 19 verses]. [tn]

24 *Sūra Al-Shams* [Chapter 91 consists of 15 verses]. [tn]

25 *Sūra Al-Lail* [Chapter 92 consists of 21 verses]. [tn]

26 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*/3/1480/ *Kitab al-Imarah*, Dar Iḥiya al-Tūrāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut, Critically Edited by Muḥammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi.

27 *al-fatawā* [The Edicts] Imām Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī /2/578, Dar al-Ma‘rifa, Beirut.

28 *al-faṣl fī al-millal wa ‘lahwa’ wa ‘l-nihāl*, Ibn Ḥazm /3/138, al-Khanjī, Cairo.

29 *al-manthūr fī al-Qawā’id*, Imām al-Zarkashī /3/91, Ministry of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait, 1433 H. – 2012 C.E

30 See *ibid* 3/88

Ibn al-Wazīr al-Yamanī said: “Behold the great difference between the exclusion of ordinary Muslims who belong to various Muslim sects, as well as the majority of the Muslim scholars from the Muslim faith; and their inclusion as Muslims supporting the cause of Islam, increasing the Muslims in number, and strengthening its position. The attempt at disunity and accusing others of disbelief based on conflicting evidence is not permissible; especially when there is stronger, or at least equally strong, evidence in favor of unity and strengthening the cause of Islam, protecting lives and pacifying seditionists. It is especially uncalled for unless such disbelief is clear as day, unanimously agreed upon and indisputably necessary.”³¹

The debate between Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and the Kharijites regarding their erroneous understanding of Almighty Allah’s words: “... for they who do not judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, disbelievers!” [5:44] An exemplary discourse in engaging with contemporary extremist religious currents.

Abū Zamīl Sammāk ibn al-Walīd al-Ḥanafī related that Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه told him: “When the Kharijites had gathered in their stronghold – about six thousand in number – I said to ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه: ‘O Commander of the Faithful! Would you please hasten to the prayer so I can leave to meet them?’ He replied: ‘I fear that they will harm you.’ I said: ‘Fear not!’

“I set out in the best Yemeni clothes.” (Abū Zamīl commented: ‘Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه was as handsome and outspoken as could be.’) Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه continued: “When they saw me arriving, they said: ‘Welcome, welcome Ibn ‘Abbās, but what of this outfit?!’ I responded: ‘What objection can you have with this outfit when I have seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ shrouded in the best of outfits himself.’ I then recited to them:

‘Say: Who is there to forbid the beauty which God has brought forth for His creatures...’ [7:32]

They said: ‘What brings you to us?’ I replied: ‘I come to you from the Commander of the Faithful, the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the *Muhājirīn*³² and *Anṣār*,³³ and I see none of them amongst you. It is they who were present when the Qur’ān was revealed, and hence they know its interpretation better than you. I come to relate to you their claims and to them your claims. So what is it that you resent about ‘Alī, the cousin and son-in-law³⁴ of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?’ After conferring amongst themselves they said: ‘Debate him not, because Allah says:

‘they are contentious folk!’ [43:58]

Others said: ‘why should we not debate him? Is he not the cousin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, calling us to debate on the basis of the Book of Allah?’

“So they replied: ‘we resent – of ‘Alī – three things.’ I said: ‘what are they?’ They said: ‘Firstly, he has imposed the judgment of men upon the judgment of Allah, how can that be? Secondly, he has fought yet has taken neither captives nor spoils of war. If it were permissible to fight his foe, it should have been similarly permissible to take them as captives; and if it were forbidden to take them as captives then it should have been similarly forbidden to war against them. Thirdly, he has removed his title ‘the Commander of the Faithful’ from his name;³⁵ were he not the Commander of the Faithful then he must be the Commander of disbelievers.’ I said: ‘Is there anything else?’ They replied: ‘That is all.’

31 *īthār al-Haq ‘ala al-Khalq*, Ibn al-Wazīr al-Yamānī /402 Dar al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyya, Beirut 1987 C.E

32 Literally “The Emigrants” who were the first people to embrace Islam, whom Allah ordered to emigrate from Makkah to al-Madinah.⁹⁶ *Al-Ma’idah* [tn]

33 Literally “The Helpers” which is a title given to the first Muslims from amongst the local inhabitants of al-Madinah who shared their city and wealth with the Muslim emigrants before the conquest of Makkah. [tn]

34 ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه is the son of Prophet Muhammad’s uncle Abū Tālib and he was married to his youngest daughter Lady Fatimah رضي الله عنها. [tn]

35 To prevent more bloodshed, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه removed the title in signing the truce with his foes who did not accept his authority. [tn]

“I said: ‘As for your claim that ‘he has imposed the judgment of men upon the judgment of Allah’, I have heard Almighty Allah saying in His book:

‘...with two persons of probity giving their judgment thereon ...’ [5:95]

regarding the penalty of hunting a hare or equivalent, the value of which is a quarter of a dirham.³⁶ Allah delegated men to judge on such a case. He could have judged it Himself had He wished to do so. Allah also said:

‘And if you have reason to fear that a breach might occur between a [married] couple, appoint an arbiter from among his people and an arbiter from among her people; if they both want to set things aright, God may bring about their reconciliation.’ [4:35]

Does my answer to this contention of yours suffice?’ They replied: ‘Yes.’

“I said: ‘As for your contention that he ‘has fought yet has taken neither captives nor spoils of war,’ I say that he has fought against your mother.’³⁷ Allah said:

‘The Prophet has a higher claim on the believers than [they have on] their own selves, and his wives are their mothers.’ [33:6]

If you were to claim she is not your mother, you would be guilty of disbelief,³⁸ and if you were to acknowledge her status as your mother, then how could it be permissible that she would be taken as a captive? This means you are caught between two heresies. Is my response sufficient regarding this contention?’ They said: ‘Yes.’

“I said: ‘As for your contention that he has removed his title ‘the Commander of the Faithful’ from his name and were he not the Commander of the Faithful then he must be the Commander of disbelievers; allow me to tell you of a similar action carried out by he whom you cannot dispute

with. On the day of al-Hudaybiya,³⁹ when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was drafting a treaty with Suhayl ibn 'Amr,⁴⁰ the Prophet said: 'O 'Ali! Write: 'The following are the terms of agreement between Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah and Suhayl ibn 'Amr,' to which Quraysh objected, saying: 'Had we acknowledged that you are the Messenger of Allah, why would we be at war with you? Your name and your father's name are sufficient.' The Prophet said: 'O My Lord, you know that I am your Messenger,' and taking the draft he said: 'O 'Ali! Write: 'The following are the terms of agreement between Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh and Suhayl ibn 'Amr'. By Allah! The Almighty has not ousted him from his status of prophet-hood because of this deed. Is my response sufficient regarding this contention?' They said: 'Yes.'"⁴¹

This debate is exemplary because it provides us with a number of important lessons.

The first lesson is the fact that Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه took the initiative by going to the Kharijites himself. He did not wait for them to come to him. This informs us that our institutions must continuously, consistently and systemically survey and learn about new ideologies, philosophical arguments and contentious ideas. Furthermore, they should actively study them and identify the main ideas on which they are based. The next step is to study, discuss, and formulate a scholarly position with regards to such ideas. Finally, this well-formulated position must be conveyed and made accessible to everyone concerned, especially those who champion the ideas in question.

36 A Dirham was a coin based on a unit of weight in silver with varying values (2.975 – 3 grams) in different times and locations. [tn]

37 The Mother of the Faithful is a title for the spouses of the Prophet ﷺ. The one alluded to, in this context, is Lady 'Ā'ishah bint Abū Bakr رضي الله عنها. [tn]

38 By plainly contradicting the Qur'ān the Word of Almighty Allah. [tn]

39 A treaty signed between the Muslims led by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Quraysh before they have become Muslim. [tn]

40 The representative of Quraysh on that day. [tn]

41 *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, al-Hākim al-Naisābūrī /4/202/ Dar al-Kutub al-ʿilmiyya, Beirut, 1411 H. - 1990 C.E, also *Sūnnan al-Nasā'ī al-Kubrā*, al-Nasā'ī /5/165/ Dar al-Kutub al-ʿilmiyya, Beirut, 1411 H. - 1991 C.E, also *Tārīkh Dimashq* [The History of Damascus], Ibn 'Asākir /42/463 Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1995 C.E. Critically Edited by Muḥib al-Dīn Abī Sa'īd 'Umar Ibn Gharamah al-'Umārī, also *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtārāh* /10/413/ Maktabāt al-Nahḍa al-Ḥadīthah, Makkah al-Mukarramah, 1410 H.

The second lesson is the wonderful approach laid out by Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه in debating the Kharijites. He intentionally set out to them in the best of Yemeni outfits. Why did he do so? What was the motivation behind this calculated move? What did it have to do with debating them? The answer is that Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه knew that this would attract their attention; causing them to think and ponder upon their own lack of aesthetic sense as well as the beauty of true prophetic guidance, without which no understanding of the rulings, principles and higher objectives of such guidance can be achieved. The absence of beauty, the inability to appreciate and live it in everyday life through dress and food, causes its absence from one's general mindset. One's thought process becomes barren, distorted, lacking in cohesion and thus unaware of the higher objectives of the *sharīʿa* and its essence. Such a state is in stark contrast to the true state represented by the People of the Cave, who said:

“Let one of you go with these silver coins to the city, and let him see what food is purest there, and bring you a supply from it. Let him conduct himself tactfully.” [18:19]

The word *azkā*, as it is in the original Arabic, means more than just the ‘purest’. It also means the healthiest, finest and most tasteful. Why is it that a group of people, who had just been resurrected from three hundred and nine years of sleep, be so selective in their choice of sustenance? Such was their uncorrupted nature that mercy, cohesion in beauty and perfection caused their choice to be set upon the finest in all things; be it their sustenance, dress, behavior, intellectual and spiritual state.

Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه approach had its desired effect. Not only did he capture the imagination of those he was addressing; he was able to make them reflect upon his appearance which provoked the ensuing conversation.

Through his foresight, Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه was able to subtly show them how they had unjustly revolted against their society, accused it of disbelief and taken to violent action in the name of supporting the *sharīʿa*. They claimed to be more knowledgeable of the *sharīʿa* than ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه and the companions of the Prophet. In reality, due to the paucity of

their knowledge, they were obsessed with a limited number of issues; completely unaware of the holistic integrity of prophetic guidance. Their initial objection to the beautiful outfit worn by Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه was proof that they had no idea of how the outward and the inward are interconnected and that seeking excellence and beauty has a profound effect on one’s mindset.

This is the very reality of contemporary extremist groups we see today. They appear in public in austere, dreary clothing, thinking that it is in keeping with the prophetic guidance. This serves to show how erroneous their understanding of the *sharī‘a* is.

The third lesson is that Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه was able to successfully point out the inherent strength in his approach to the *sharī‘a* in relation to their weakness by citing that he was not representing his own, personal view but that of the various groups of companions led by the Commander of the Faithful; that generation of believers who lived during the time of the Divine Revelation and were thus most qualified to interpret it.

In this manner, he was able to expose the intellectual poverty of the Kharijites and their lack of possessing the appropriate tools needed to acquire knowledge. He was able to cast doubt on the Kharijites’ conclusions and judgments by pointing out that they had attempted to excommunicate the very people that possessed authentic knowledge. He successfully demonstrated that ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه possessed all the attributes that proved his righteousness and authenticity in the face of the Kharijites who possessed nothing of the same stature.

Firstly, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was able to count the companions of the Prophet ﷺ amongst his followers; a scholarly council of the highest order. Secondly, ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه followers were those ‘who were present when the Qur’ān was revealed’ which meant they knew, more than anyone else, the causes of revelation and what objectives it served. They were extensively trained and experienced in applying the Divine Revelation to the realities of life and had inherited from the Prophet ﷺ the ways of comprehending it and the keys by which the treasures of its knowledge could be unlocked. Thirdly, ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه followers and supporters were those who “... know its interpretation better than you...” This is because of their superior

knowledge of the Arabic language, as well as their unparalleled knowledge of the prophetic rhetoric, which they had acquired through the honor of their intimate companionship with the Prophet ﷺ. For many years, he taught them how to identify the objectives of the *sharīʿa*, interpret the Qurʾān correctly and safeguard it from misinterpretation. Fourthly, the Kharijites did not have a single companion on their side. This meant that their arguments held no scholarly weight whatsoever. All they possessed was a zealotry fueled by anger and rashness, which served to blind them from seeing that the other side was righteous. All of these points testify to the perceptiveness and insight of Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه in finding the right approach in deconstructing the Kharijites' arguments and gently yet decisively showing them where and how they had erred.

The fourth lesson we can derive is that Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه presented us with an important approach in identifying the central maxims upon which the theories of the Kharijites are established. Moreover, he validated his findings with the Kharijites themselves, who in turn clearly affirmed that their three contentions were the only basis on which their entire stance was based. "I said: 'Is there anything else?' They replied: 'That is all.'"

By doing so, Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه was able to avoid the classic error often made in debates, where the points of the debate are unidentified and the debating parties go back and forth in total disarray, rendering the whole discussion useless. This is precisely the approach upon which the dialectical theologians established a scientific discipline known as *Maqālāt al-Firaq* [The Maxims of the Sects], as evidenced in the works of Imām Abū ʿl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī: *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyyīn* [The Maxims of the Islamists] as well as *Maqālāt al-Mulḥidīn* [Maxims of the Atheists] which is a lost manuscript. Another good example of this discipline is *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* [The Objectives of the Philosophers] by al-Ghazālī which is a purely descriptive work. The *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* is a summary of the central tenets of all philosophical groups and schools of thought. In this book, al-Ghazālī did not engage in an intellectual response to these tenets; rather his sole purpose was to clearly identify each tenet as believed by the philosophers themselves. He was able to extrapolate these tenets and focus on the core, central beliefs of the philosophers without delving into minutiae. The same can be said about

al-Rāzī in *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa 'l-muta'akḥirīn* [Compendium of Thought of the Ancients and the Contemporaries] as well as numerous other works by others in this discipline. The aim of this discipline was to accurately verify and record the thoughts and beliefs held by each sect, as well as closely following the emergence of new sects and the evolution of the old ones. These scholarly efforts gave the Muslim dialectical theologians a highly corroborated account of the ideas and beliefs of others, which could then be critically studied. This original approach was spearheaded by Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه, as witnessed in this debate. A revival of this holistic approach today is much needed.

The fifth lesson that we learn from this debate is that the central concept of Kharijite thought was *ḥākimīyya*, the very concept upon which contemporary extremist groups establish their cause. This is yet further proof that what we face today is the very same ideology identifiable by the same characteristics and beliefs.

Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه was successful in showing the Kharijites of his time how they had overlooked the proper methodology of interpreting the Qurʾān; how they had taken words and phrases out of context without possessing the diligence to discover what might have been said about the same question in other Qurʾānic verses. He showed them how authentic interpretation requires patience in identifying all the verses related to a particular question; at the same time being capable of discerning the general from the particular, the unqualified and unspecified from the qualified and specified and how they all work together. He showed them that only when one possessed these skills could one be on the right path in understanding the message of the Qurʾān and the *sharīʿa*. Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه was able to demonstrate all of this in a manner that the Kharijites could not refute.

May Allah be pleased with Ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه and may he reward him in the most perfect way, for he has given us the proper principles and methodology through which we can deconstruct the extremist thought of today: in order to serve true knowledge and defend the Noble Qurʾān against nonsensical claims that are only based on zeal and complete ignorance.

Chapter 2

The Concept of *Jāhilīyya* [Ignorance], the Discontinuation of Islam and The Inevitability of Conflict

Sayyid Quṭb's theory of *jāhilīyya* [Ignorance] consists of a number of issues about which he was greatly misinformed, causing him to produce a number of dubious notions. The result was that Quṭb proceeded to condemn all of his contemporaries of *jāhilīyya*, and in turn of disbelief.

Quṭb became so obsessed with his newly established theory that he mentioned the term one thousand seven hundred and forty times (1740) in his book *Fī ṣilāl al-Qurʿān*. On just one page, the word *jāhilīyya* can be counted nine times, whereas the word *nūr* [light] appears only 435 times in the entire book. This statistic is preliminary and might not actually mean much, but it at least implies how obsessed Quṭb was with this particular notion and how integral it was to his worldview.

One of Quṭb's issues was his conflation of the belief in Almighty Allah as the sole authority of legislation on the one hand; and the practical application of that legislation on the other. The application of legal rulings is a contextual matter dependent on the presence of legal causes, conditions and impediments. Turning a contextual matter of legislation into a matter of creed, and considering the inability or failure to apply a legal ruling into a matter of disbelief is a grave error. This led Quṭb to suggest further strange ideas, such as adding new tenets to the divinely established

fundamentals of faith. He considered deeds and peripheral legal questions to be an integral part of Islamic creed; an idea that was central to Kharijite thought, who believed that deeds and creed are equal components of faith, consequently accusing Muslims of disbelief based on sin.

Based on this erroneous premise, Quṭb drew one erroneous conclusion after another; including the idea that Islam as a religion no longer existed and that a conflict between the Muslims, according to his narrow definition, and the rest of humanity was inevitable. We will proceed to detail some of the erroneous conclusions that Quṭb drew based on this false premise.

1. The conflation between matters of creed and legal issues.

In *ẓilāl*, Quṭb states: “The boundaries that define creed are all-encompassing and deal with every aspect of life. The notion of *ḥākīmīyya* in Islam, in all its aspects, is a matter of creed, not just morality. In all its aspects it is a matter of creed.”⁴² This could not be further from the truth. Contrary to Quṭb’s innovation, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa ‘l-Jamā‘a* believe that faith is a matter of the heart, and that deeds or actions are not included in the essence of creed.

2. The addition of a new fundamental of faith which conflated the belief in Allah having sole legislative authority with the practical application of the law resulted in another innovation which Quṭb termed *tawḥīd al-ḥākīmīyya* [monotheistic governance] alongside its counterpart term, *shirk al-ḥākīmīyya* [polytheistic governance]. In the *ẓilāl*, Quṭb states: “The issue of legislation is one of *ḥākīmīyya*, and the issue of *ḥākīmīyya* is one of faith.”⁴³ He continued: “... the issue of legislation and *ḥākīmīyya* is the very issue of religion and creed.”⁴⁴ These ideas originate with Ḥasan al-Bannā who said: “In our books of jurisprudence, governance is counted as a matter of creed, not a matter of jurisprudence.”⁴⁵ According to this view, matters of governance, politics and gaining

power are all essentials of Islamic creed. This is why gaining power and assuming political authority became a matter of life and death. The necessary implication of this view was that those that opposed them were in fact opponents of the fundamental tenets of the faith itself; allowing them to nonchalantly accuse their foes of disbelief.

The orthodox view of *Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l-Jamā'a* is in complete contrast to the view of Quṭb and al-Bannā. In *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī and its commentator 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī state: "Contrary to the Shi'ites, *Imāma*⁴⁶ is not a fundamental of religion and creed. According to us it is a matter of jurisprudence... *Imāma* is a general authority that governs both religious and worldly affairs".⁴⁷

Despite these clear statements, al-Bannā and Quṭb forced the issue of government into the realm of creed. Not only did they consider the general issue of political governance to be a matter of creed, they extended this idea to include all aspects of political procedure including running for elections; thereby making it easy to declare that their political opponents were in fact disbelievers. Ḥasan al-Bannā states: "the failure of Islamic reformers to demand governance is an Islamic crime, which can only be redeemed by rising up and taking executive power away from those who do not have faith in the laws of Islam."⁴⁸

According to this view, the ultimate goal of Islam is to usurp power, failing to do so is an unforgivable crime, redeemable not by merely attempting to gain it, but only through successfully doing so.

42 *Fī ṣilāl al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Quṭb /3/1902, 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

43 See *ibid* /3/1205

44 See *ibid* /3/1235

45 *Magmū'at al-rasā'il Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā, Risalat al-mu'tamar al-khāmis* [The Message of the Fifth Conference], Ḥasan al-Bannā /297, Dar al-Kalimah lil nashr wal tawzī', 5th edition, 2012 C.E

46 Assuming both religious and political leadership and power. [tn]

47 *Sharḥ al-mawāqif al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī*, 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī /4/344, Dar al-Baṣā'ir, Cairo, 1429 H. – 2008 C.E

48 *Magmū'at al-rasā'il Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā, Risalat al-mu'tamar al-khāmis* [The Message of the Fifth Conference], Ḥasan al-Bannā /297, Dar al-Kalimah lil nashr wal tawzī', 5th edition, 2012 C.E

This is echoed in the writings of Sayyid Quṭb. He states: “The *tawḥīd* of worship, of Lordship, of guardianship, of *ḥākīmīyya*, of the source of *sharīʿa*, of the way of life, and the oneness of the entity to which all people must be fully answerable; that is the *tawḥīd* worthy of the mission of the Messengers, worthy of the effort expended in its pursuit, worthy of all the pain and persecution endured throughout history for its fulfilment. This is not because Almighty Allah is in need for it. Almighty Allah is Self-Sufficient and is not in need of His creation.”⁴⁹

He also said: “There are only a few examples, scattered throughout the course of history, of people who outright rejected the idea of divinity and denied the existence of God. In fact most people but err in knowing the true reality of their Lord by associating partners to Allah; either through actual belief and worship of false deities or through *ḥākīmīyya* and subservience. Both these forms of association are *shirk* [polytheism], and exclude their practitioners from the fold of the true religion of Allah.”⁵⁰

We can observe that Quṭb equated the adherence to the legal aspects of the *sharīʿa* to belief itself. Any shortcoming in a person’s application of the law was to be treated as a deficiency in one’s belief. According to Quṭb, political and legal matters should be judged in terms that, in reality, belong to the fundamentals of creed, fundamentals such as the condemnation of polytheism and disbelief. This was another grave mistake committed by Quṭb.

Furthermore, Quṭb states: “Throughout human history, the theoretical foundation upon which Islam is established is the testimony that there is no god but Allah, which entails the oneness of Almighty Allah in worship, lordship, guardianship, authority and *ḥākīmīyya*. This oneness should be established inwardly in terms of belief; be manifest in the performance of rituals in terms of worship; and practically by adhering to the *sharīʿa* in one’s daily life. The testimony that there is no god but Allah is not truly fulfilled according to the *sharīʿa* until it is established in this holistic manner, making it a real criterion by which one can be judged to be Muslim or non-Muslim.”⁵¹

In this statement, Quṭb renders the testimony of faith invalid unless it is coupled with deeds and ritual worship. This is in contrast to the belief of the generality of Muslim scholars, who believe that the validity of a

person's faith is not affected by acts of worship and practical deeds, except in terms of increasing and decreasing ones faith. They did not consider the failure to fully comply with the particulars of the law to nullify one's belief in the unique oneness of Almighty Allah in worship and submission.

Quṭb says: "Anyone who does not acknowledge the Oneness of Almighty Allah in His *ḥākīmīyya*, at any time or place, is a polytheist. The belief that there is no god except Allah coupled with offering ritual worship to Allah alone, does not remove one from the pale of polytheism. This was the state of belief of the *ḥunafā'*⁴⁹ [pre-Islamic monotheists] whom no one ever considered to be Muslim. They are only considered Muslim when they complete the chain: when they join belief and ritual worship to the belief in Almighty Allah's *ḥākīmīyya*, and reject the legitimacy of any governance, law, declaration, value or tradition that does not originate with Almighty Allah alone...only this is worthy of being considered Islam."⁵²

He also states: "Creed in Islam is established upon testifying that there is no god but Allah, by which a Muslim rejects the worship of any created being and worships Allah exclusively; and rejects the governance of any created being and renders it exclusive to Allah. Legislating for minor issues is the application of the right of *ḥākīmīyya*, just as it is when legislating for major issues; hence it is the application of the right of being worshiped, which is something the Muslim refuses for anyone but Allah. Religion in Islam is the compliance of human beings to a single source of authority in their practical affairs, to the exclusion of compliance to the authority of human demi-gods; in the same way that belief in their hearts is dedicated to a single divinity, that of Allah! The application of legislation is the application of divinity; hence compliance with such legislation is but an acknowledgment of divinity. That is why a Muslim must only recognize the divinity of Allah and reject the self-proclaimed divinity of demi-gods.

⁴⁹ *Fī zilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Quṭb /3/1902, 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

⁵⁰ See *ibid* /3/155

⁵¹ See *ibid* /3/1556

⁵² See *ibid* /3/1492

This is why we see such emphasis placed in the Qurʾān on establishing these fundamentals of creed, a glimpse of which we have seen in the context of this Makkan chapter.”⁵³

Quṭb continues: “Many enthusiasts for this religion – let alone its enemies and detractors – see the cause of *ḥākīmīyya* as separate from that of creed. They are not stirred for its cause as they are for the cause of creed, and they do not consider deserting it to be an act of deserting the religion, in the same manner as they do with creed or ritual worship! However, this religion does not recognize the separation of creed, worship and the *sharīʿa*. It was the efforts of a well-trained [propaganda] machine that was able, over the centuries, to belittle the importance of the question of *ḥākīmīyya*, to the extent that it holds very little significance even to those who are enthusiastic for the cause of this religion! This is the topic to which a Makkan *sūra* is devoted, not the topic of political order or *sharīʿa*, but creed. It deploys all of these effective tools and proofs in the context of the application of an issue related to social norms. All this is done because it is related to a major fundamental; the fundamental of *ḥākīmīyya*. This major fundamental is related to the very basis of this religion and its true essence. As for those who condemn an idol worshipper as a polytheist, but refuse to similarly condemn those who comply with laws originating from other than Allah – feeling uneasy about the former but not the latter – they do not truly read the Qurʾān, nor do they know the nature of this religion. They should read the Qurʾān as Allah revealed it and take His words seriously:

“... and if you obey them; indeed you are polytheists.” [6:121].

These enthusiasts for the cause of this religion occupy their minds and the minds of people in investigating whether a particular law, procedure or opinion is in compliance with the *sharīʿa* or not. They become offended by any objection to this endeavor; as if Islam is truly established, and it is only such objections that cause deficiency in the establishment of Islam! Such enthusiasts of the religion bring harm to the religion without even knowing it. In fact, they greatly wound it with their peripheral concerns. With their

petty interests, they sap what remains of the doctrinal energy still present in the hearts of some people. They are in fact sanctioning the *jāhili* state of affairs, claiming that the religion is well established therein; the only thing standing in the way of its perfection being the objections raised over their peripheral concerns. In reality the religion has ceased to exist altogether because it no longer manifests itself in a system that attributes *ḥākimiyya* to Allah alone. The existence of this religion rests on the existence of the *ḥākimiyya* of Allah. If this fundamental is absent the religion is absent.”⁵⁴

In these passages, Quṭb presents *ḥākimiyya* as being an integral component of creed. He considers the failure to comply with it to be a desertion of the religion, resulting in him accusing Muslims in general of disbelief. He equates such Muslims to idol worshipers, based purely on their shortcomings in complying with legal rulings, and despite their unshakable faith in Allah. This is precisely why al-Qaraḍāwī describes Quṭb’s book *ẓilāl al-Qur’ān* as ‘overflowing with *takfīr*.’

Quṭb states: “We must remember this verse together with what we said about it in the previous pages in order to truly comprehend what is meant by *shirk* in this particular Quranic context; it refers to *shirk* in faith as well as in *ḥākimiyya*. The context is self-evident; all we need is to be continuously reminded of it. The efforts of the devils in derailing this religion from its fundamental beliefs have regrettably borne fruit, uprooting the question of *ḥākimiyya* from its proper position in creed, separating it in our perception from its doctrinal origin! This is why we find the most ardent supporters of Islam who are outspoken in rectifying rites of worship, criticizing moral decadence, or a breach of the law, overlooking the fundamental of *ḥākimiyya* and its central position within Islamic creed. They criticize minor evils while overlooking the greatest evil of all; leading a life in contradiction to *tawḥīd*: the belief in the oneness of Allah in *ḥākimiyya*.”⁵⁵

53 See *ibid* /3/1211

54 See *ibid* /3/1216

55 See *ibid* /3/1229

3. Quṭb does not consider jāhiliyya to be a particular historical epoch of the past; rather it is a system that transcends time and existed before and after the advent of Islam. Is it really conceivable that the people could regress to the old days of pagan ignorance, in all of its disbelief, polytheism and social decadence?

The overwhelming majority of Muslim scholars believe that it is not possible for the followers of Islam to regress into a state of disbelief. They regard any breach of the *sharīʿa* to be sin and error, not disbelief and apostasy. In fact, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned this in clear terms. Al-Bukhārī relates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of ʿUqba ibn ʿĀmir رضى الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “I do not fear polytheism for you. However, I fear that you will compete over worldly gains.”

Nonetheless, Sayyid Quṭb believes that the Muslim Ummah in its entirety has returned to the very *jāhiliyya* of disbelief and polytheism that was present before the Prophet ﷺ. In the *ẓilāl*, Quṭb states: “*Jāhiliyya* does not refer to a bygone historical era. *Jāhiliyya* refers to any system that is based on the servitude of some humans to others, which is, without exception, the case with every single system present on the face of the earth today. In all the contemporary systems embraced by mankind today, humans are following other humans in their dogmas, principles, standards, values, laws, rules, conventions and traditions”.⁵⁶ He also states: “*Jāhiliyya* is not an historical era; it is a state which comes into existence whenever its primary components are found in any given system. At its very core, it is the return of governance and legislation to human whims”.⁵⁷ He also says: “*Jāhiliyya*, in the light of this text, is not a period of time. It is a set of circumstances, which existed yesterday, exist today and will exist tomorrow. Whenever these circumstances appear, they take on the characteristic of *jāhiliyya*, which is the exact opposite of Islam and in full contradiction to it.”⁵⁸ He also states: “*Jāhiliyya* is not a period of time; rather it is a state of affairs that is capable of being repeated in different forms at any time.”⁵⁹ Even more severe is his statement: “There is no schism between religion and the material life, the likes of which exists in the case of the *jāhili* state of affairs all over the earth today.”⁶⁰

This is a great transgression against the blessed Muḥammadan Ummah. It is a great transgression against the entire religion of Islam for anyone to think that it has ceased to exist and that the entire planet has been engulfed by the *jāhiliyya* of disbelief and polytheism.

Quṭb states: “Despite the *jāhiliyya* that dominates the entire planet today, his heart, his devotion and action are all set in the pursuit of once again establishing Islam in the souls of people, their lives, in confrontation of *jāhiliyya* with its notions, interests, traditions, practical realities, the stress it causes him, its hostilities against him, and opposition to his divine doctrine and his divine way of life”.⁶¹

He also says: “Upon looking, he finds that those who claim to be Muslim are not really so, because they do not apply the teachings of Allah’s revealed book. He feels that the task is too great for him to bear, and he feels that he cannot face the entirety of this misguided humanity with the decisive word of truth. He feels that it is pointless to tell everyone that they stand for nothing and to show them the true religion! But this is not the correct course of action for *jāhiliyya* is what it is even if it engulfs the entire population of earth. The reality lived by the inhabitants of the earth has no grounding if it is not based on the true religion of Allah. The duty of someone with a calling should neither be affected by the spread of misguidance, nor the enormity of falsehood; falsehood is like ashen debris. Just as the first calling was initiated by conveying to the entire population of the world that they were completely misguided, today it must commence in the same fashion. For indeed, humanity has come full circle; today is similar to the day when Allah appointed His Messenger ﷺ.”⁶²

56 See ibid /1/557

57 See ibid /2/890

58 See ibid /2/904

59 See ibid /2/990

60 See ibid /2/933

61 See ibid /2/1017

62 See ibid /2/941

4. Quṭb insisted that Islam ceased to exist a long time ago.

He was engrossed by this dark misconception like someone troubled with psychological problems, believing that the entire world was upon polytheism, that the Muslim Ummah in its entirety had rejected Islam and turned to *jāhiliyya* and disbelief. In his book, *al-ʿAdāla al-ijtimāʿiyya fī 'l-Islām* [Social Justice in Islam], he states: "If we scan the entire planet today, in light of the divine definition of what religion and Islam is, we will find that this religion has no existence. The religion ceased to exist when the last group of Muslims gave up the belief that *ḥākīmīyya* over people's lives is exclusive to Almighty Allah."⁶³ In *Maʿālim fī 'l-ṭarīq* he states: "The Muslim Ummah ceased to exist centuries ago."⁶⁴

This is an outrageous offence committed against the Muḥammadan Ummah, the community described as the best community to have been sent to mankind. This is an unjust accusation of disbelief and polytheism; the one who accuses the entirety of people of being astray, is in fact the most astray. He says, in *ẓilāl*: "History has gone full circle and we live in a state similar to the one in which this religion first taught the unity of God to humanity. Humanity has gone back to worshipping the slaves of Allah instead of Allah Himself; and to the injustices of false religions. It has turned its back on the testimony of "there is no god but Allah." Even if some of them continue to shout the testimony from atop the minarets, they are ignorant of and uncommitted to its implications, unopposed to the legality of the *ḥākīmīyya* – which is synonymous to divinity - claimed by slaves for themselves. It makes no difference whether they make such a claim as individuals, legislative bodies, or as a people. Individuals are no different to legislative bodies or entire nations since none of them are gods; hence they have no business in claiming *ḥākīmīyya*. However, humanity has regressed into *jāhiliyya* and turned away from the testimony that there is no god but Allah by attributing divine attributes to slaves. They neither acknowledge the Oneness of Allah, nor do they pledge unadulterated allegiance to Him anymore.

Humanity at large, but particularly those who shout out the words: “There is no god but Allah,” atop the minarets in the east and the west without heeding their implications, shall bear the heaviest sin of all and suffer the greatest and harshest torment on the Day of Rising. For this latter group has committed apostasy after guidance had become clear to them, and after they had embraced the religion of Allah! Today, the Band of Believers must take its time to ponder upon these clear verses.”⁶⁵

In these passages, Qutb is openly stating that the entire Ummah has committed apostasy, even those who shout out the call for daily prayers from atop the minarets of the mosques. In fact, in Qutb’s belief, they will suffer the greatest punishment and be guilty of the worst sin on the Day of Rising.

He does not exempt anyone from this condemnation, despite speaking of the band of believers: “The band of believers must rise up and take its time to contemplate this divine lesson. For this band is confronted by exactly the same total *jāhiliyya* that confronted the band of believers upon whom these verses were revealed”.⁶⁶ He continues: “The band of believers must take the same position against the *jāhiliyya* that has engulfed the entire earth.”⁶⁷

Ṣaliḥ Sirīyyah, in his book *Risālat al-īmān* [The Epistle of Faith], states: “All state laws that are in violation of Islam are laws of disbelief. Anyone who has prepared, or was involved in the preparation of such laws, making them legally binding, as well as anyone who has applied them without objection or condemnation is a disbeliever. Anyone who was a part of a committee involved in drafting up such laws; all the members of parliament who have condoned them; the entire cabinet that has presented them; the president who approved them; the judges, prosecutors, police

63 *al-ʿadāla al-ijtimāʿiyya fī ʿl-Islām* / 183, Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1415 H. – 1995 C.E

64 *Maʿālim fī ʿl-tarīq* [Milestones], Sayyid Qutb /8 in Arabic /25 in the English translation edited by A.B al-Mehri

65 *Fī zilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Qutb /2/1057, 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

66 See *ibid* /2/1057

67 See *ibid* /2/1057

detectives and criminal investigators who have interrogated according to them; without objecting to such laws and were sincere in carrying out their jobs according to such laws are all disbelievers. Every single person who has subscribed to these laws, failed to condemn them, or stood in apathy is also a disbeliever. They have all preferred the law of mankind to the law of Allah. This is disbelief because they have taken deities other than Allah and judged by that which was not revealed by Allah.”

5. The inevitable clash with the entire population of the earth.

All the aforementioned points caused Sayyid Quṭb to come to a strange conclusion; that the only possible relationship between Muslims and others is that of conflict and struggle. To this effect Quṭb said: “This religion has no choice but to fight its detractors. Its mere existence is a universal declaration of the Lordship of Allah over the entire universe. It is the liberation of man from the servitude to anyone besides Allah, which manifests itself in the form of a collective organizational movement under a new leadership separate to the leadership of *jāhiliyya*. It gives birth to an independent and exceptional community that refuses to accept the *ḥākimiyya* of any human being because, within this community, *ḥākimiyya* belongs solely to Allah. The mere existence of this kind of religion is enough to mobilize all the *jāhili* communities surrounding it, all of which are based on servitude to other servants, in order to crush it, in defense of their very existence. Therefore, the new community must also mobilize to defend itself. This becomes a matter of inevitability with the very birth of Islam itself. It is a battle forced upon Islam; it has no choice in fighting it. This is a natural struggle between two entities that cannot coexist for long.”⁶⁸

He also says: “They know very well that the *jāhiliyya* that they have subscribed to and now dominates the lives, morals and systems of their people, cannot be at peace with this religion, nor can the religion persist

in the face of it. It is a battle that will only end when *jāhiliyya* is expelled from the earth, when this religion becomes transcendent and all religious expression is solely for Allah; meaning all authority on earth belongs solely to Allah, where all those who transgress the authority of Allah are expelled throughout the earth. Only then can we say that religion is solely for Allah.”⁶⁹

Is the relationship between Islam and other nations established upon conflict and annihilation? If it is, then what is the difference between the ideology of Sayyid Quṭb and the theory of the Clash of Civilizations as conceived by Samuel Huntington? How can such a claim be reconciled with Allah’s command:

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and then rendered you nations and tribes so that you might know one another,” [49:13] as well as: “We have sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.”? [21:107]

Quṭb’s theory of *jāhiliyya* is based on a number of false and distorted premises. These include the addition of a new fundamental of creed; the conflation of a failure in conforming to legal rulings with matters of creed; and the complete disregard of the theory of ‘Impediments to Legal Competence’ as expounded by the scholars of *Uṣūl*. He also invented the concept of *tawḥīd ḥākīmīyya*, which was used as the premise for concluding that *jāhiliyya* - which is synonymous to disbelief and polytheism - had dominated the entire earth; that the Muḥammadan Ummah had fallen into disbelief; that Islam ceased to exist, and that a conflict between Muslims and everyone else was inevitable. We have cited many passages from Quṭb’s works, which testify to these beliefs. Anyone who diligently reads *Fi ṣilāl al-qurʿān* will come away with an erroneous understanding that will cause him to view all Muslims, as well as the rest of the world, in a awful manner; will fully embrace the idea of a conflict and struggle between Muslims and other peoples; and will exude with the idea of *takfīr*.

⁶⁸ See *ibid* /3/1441

⁶⁹ See *ibid* /2/1061

6. At times, Qutb calls for tolerating non-Muslims who believe in a different creed from that of Islam altogether, yet never tolerates the Muslims he so audaciously excommunicates. Qutb's views have now evolved into its latest incarnation: ISIS, which tolerates no one. This latest version of Qutb's views is responsible for the gruesome practice of beheading innocent people and the reintroduction of slavery.

Qutb says in the *zilāl*: "Islam, clearly and beyond doubt, is tolerant of those who differ from it in creed. However, it does not show the same tolerance to those who subscribe to Islam with their tongues yet contradict it with their actions. It does not tolerate those who claim to testify to the Oneness of Allah and that there is no god but Allah, but accept one of the attributes of divinity to be ascribed to other than Allah; namely accepting the *ḥākīmīyya* and legislation of humans."⁷⁰

This strange understanding is the reason why extremist *takfīrī* movements throughout history have persisted in targeting Muslims with bloody rampage. These movements have become dedicated to massacring Muslims, as well as making sure that the rest of world becomes oblivious to Islam's true guidance, sciences, and its epistemological and civilizational achievements. They have succeeded in perverting and reversing the role of religion in Islam, as well as the higher tenets of the Muḥammadan message. Instead of establishing the Muslim Ummah as the leading nation in the world, as a nation of guidance and peaceful summoning to the path of God, and promoting the universal values championed by Islam and its *sharīʿa*; they turned on the Muslims with murder and bloodshed.

In *al-Bidāya wa 'l-Nihāya*, Ibn Kathīr states: "This type of people are the most strange amongst all the children of Adam. Exalted is Allah in His transcendence, He who has diversified His creation, as He had eternally willed. In describing the Kharijites, one of the pious predecessors excellently said: 'They are certainly the ones alluded to by Almighty Allah's words:

"Say: 'Shall We tell you whose works will bring the greatest

loss. Those whose efforts have been wasted in the life of the world while they thought they were doing good. Those are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him. Therefore their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection We give no weight to them.”
[18:103-105]

These ignorant deviants, wretched in their words and works, have unanimously agreed to leave the midst of the Muslims, have planned to collectively depart to al-Madā'in⁷¹ until their numbers are big enough to control the city and its inhabitants; to fortify themselves therein and call upon their brethren and supporters who share their views and methodology from amongst the people of al-Baṣra⁷² and other cities so they can convene in al-Madā'in and establish it as their headquarters.”⁷³

70 See *ibid* /2/732

71 An ancient metropolis established by the Sasanians as their capital, located to the southeast of Baghdad. [tn]

72 Iraqi city located on the western banks of Shat al-Arab closest to modern Iraq's southern borders. [tn]

73 *al-Bidāya wa 'l-Nihāya*, Ibn Kathīr /7/286/

Chapter 3

***Dār al-Kufr* [The Abode of Disbelief] and *Dār al-Islām* [The Abode of Islam]**

Classical Muslim jurists classified the world into two territories; *Dār al-Islām* [The Abode of Islam] and *Dār al-Kufr* [The Adobe of Disbelief]. This classification was motivated by the need to define the jurisdiction in which the rulings of the *sharīʿa*, in their standard and default form, were applicable. It also helped to identify the territory beyond this jurisdiction; where the rulings of the *sharīʿa* would take an exceptional form.

This need arose from the human necessity of Muslims travelling and interacting with other people who subscribed to different philosophical backgrounds and belief systems. Travelling and living within predominantly Muslim countries was not a problem, because no changes in the rulings regarding worship, legal contracts or transactions were needed.

Ibn Baṭūṭah, whose travels took him from Tangier in Morocco to China, travelled within a largely Muslim milieu; which meant that no thought was required to switch between default and exceptional rulings. However, this was not the case for someone who did travel beyond the predominantly Muslim regions.

Venturing into or inhabiting predominantly non-Muslim countries raised different legal questions. These lands had their own systems, cultures, norms and laws that were different from those of Muslim lands. Different answers were required for the details of the law; Muslims in

foreign lands needed to know how to buy, sell, marry, inherit, bequeath and practice all the other forms of human and social interaction while remaining faithful to the *sharīʿa*.

In order to derive answers from the Divine Revelation, which were needed by the *mukallaf* [legally accountable Muslim] in interacting with others around the globe, the Muslim jurist was obliged to consider the differences between *dār al-Kufr* and *dār al-Islām*.

This was not merely an academic exercise. It was a serious endeavor with many practical implications for the lives of Muslims. Many scholars focused on identifying the criteria that could lead to a distinction between the two abodes. Given the importance and complexity of the issue, the jurists naturally arrived at different conclusions.

However, their diverse opinions had nothing to do with the violent and confrontational connotations ascribed to these two terms by later extremists. At that time, these were scholarly terms, intended to point out the difference between the default and exceptional rulings. By no means were they dedicated to studying the nature of the mutual relations between the two abodes. For the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is vastly interactive and rich. It draws upon the realms of jurisprudence, morals, ethics, and divine principles governing human sociology. It is all in support of guidance and peaceful coexistence as the higher objectives and fundamental underpinnings of such relations.

The illustrious Imām Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī says in *al-Fatāwā* [The Edicts]: “The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘To be chosen by *Allah* as the cause for the guidance of even a single individual is indeed better than the best of worldly gains.’ A lack of interaction with Muslims will cause them to be less likely informed about the merits of Islam. The number of people that embraced Islam in the period between *al-Hijrah* [the Emigration] and the truce of *al-Ḥudaybiyya* was small. However, between *al-Ḥudaybiyya* and the Conquest of Makkah, around ten thousand strong embraced Islam. This was because of their interaction with the Muslims made possible by virtue of the truce, and this is precisely the reason for the *dhimma* contract.”⁷⁴

Similar to this classification was the idea of dividing the globe into different time zones. The motivation of doing so was similar to the

aforementioned classification; namely to identify and differentiate between the realms of default and exceptional rulings.

A geographical location may be considered to belong to the realm of default rulings depending on the stability and standard behavior of indexes upon which legal rulings rely, such as the presence of the natural phenomena of sunrise and sunset. Only then can the times for prayer; the appearance of the crescent moon to mark the beginning and the end of the months of the *Hijrī* calendar – especially the month of *Ramadan*; as well as the time for beginning and ending the fast, be accurately calculated. For example, in the latitudinal region between 0°⁷⁵ and 42°, such cosmological signs and indexes are considered stable and standard whereas in the region located between 42° and 62°, these signs become exceptional. Depending on the season, nighttime can be as short as four to five hours while the remaining hours of the day are in daylight. How should Muslims begin and break the fast in such a region? There must be a special ruling for this particular case. This is because the Sacred Law is an inclusive system, which takes into consideration the circumstances of human beings wherever they may live. Furthermore, the region between 62°N and the North Pole is considered a ‘no-signs zone’. For instance, people who live in certain parts of Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, not to mention the population of the North Pole, experience six months of constant daylight. How and when should Muslims in such regions pray *Fajr*⁷⁶ and begin and break their fast during *Ramadan*? This is the conceptual background which motivated Muslim jurists to classify the world into different latitudinal zones, so they could help people lead a normal life without having to clash with their religious obligations or vice versa. Similarly, they classified the world according to location in response to the fact there are some regions of the world where Islam and its rulings inform the core of the social contract treasured by the population, whereas in other regions this

74 *al-fatawā*, Imām Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī /2/404/ Dar al-Fikr, Beirut

75 The Equator. [tn]

76 Indicated by true dawn, which is the time separating the darkness of night from the light of the day. [tn]

is not the case. Thus, Ḥanafī masters of jurisprudence began to explore the permissibility of transactions of otherwise unsound or invalid contracts in *dār al-Kufr*, as well as the permissibility of inheritance between Muslims and non-Muslims. Upon investigating the reasoning for such rulings as given by the likes of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah; al-Sarakhsī, the author of *al-Mabsūt*; al-Kāsānī, author of *Badāʾiʿ al-sanāʾiʿ*; in addition to Imām al-Shāfiʿī and the leading scholars of his school of jurisprudence as well as many other jurists; we find that it is based upon identifying the geographical region and drawing a clear map where the rulings are applied in their default form, as well as in their the exceptional form. The philosophy that gave birth to the concepts of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr* is a philosophy of life not a philosophy of death, murder, aggression and conflict.

So how did the extremists, especially in the last eighty years, deviate from this understanding? How did they distort the concepts of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr*? How did they take both concepts out of their original context and transform the philosophy underpinning them from one of life to one of death and destruction? How did they make an idea based on peaceful and prosperous coexistence into a gateway to misery for both Muslims and humanity at large? How did they help in demonizing Muslim jurists and even Islam itself?

The very sound and logical concepts of *dār al-Kufr* and *dār al-Islām* were transformed into corrupted notions based on a completely different philosophy. This was the doing of Sayyid Quṭb, as well as those whom he influenced including Ṣāliḥ Sirīyya in his book *Risālat al-Īmān*, Shukrī Muṣṭafā, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām Faraj in his book *al-Farīḍa al-ghāʾiba* and recently ISIS.

In the *ẓilāl*, Quṭb says: “In the viewpoint of Islam and the perception of the Muslims, the world is divided into just two parts with no room for a third. The first is *dār al-Islām* which includes every land where the rulings of Islam are applied and the Sacred Law of Islam is in the seat of authority, whether the population is Muslim or both Muslim and *Dhimmī*. Or if the entire population was *Dhimmī* but governed by Muslim rulers who carry

out the rulings of Islam and govern in the land in the name of Sacred Law. Or if the population was fully Muslim or both Muslim and *Dhimmi*, but subjugated by those considered *ḥarbī*, however that population continues to apply the rulings of Islam and is judicially in compliance with the Sacred Law of Islam. The decisive factor in determining whether a given country is to be considered *dār al-Islām* is whether the rulings of Islam are being applied and whether it is governed according to the Sacred Law of Islam or not. The second is *dār al-Ḥarb*, which includes every land where the rulings of Islam are not applied and where the Sacred Law of Islam is not in the seat of authority, regardless of the faith of its inhabitants; whether they claim to be Muslims, *Kitābī* [People of the Book] or pagans. The decisive factor in determining whether a given country is to be considered *dār al-Ḥarb* is the absence of the application of the rulings of Islam and the absence of governance according to the Sacred Law of Islam. It is thus considered *dār al-Ḥarb* as per the individual Muslim and the Muslim community. The Muslim Community is that which resides in *dār al-Islām* according to the aforementioned definition. This community that follows the path of Allah and is governed by His Sacred Law, is the community worthy of being protected against bloodshed, where wealth and public order must be protected, where transgressors against its security – transgressing against lives and possessions within it – must be punished according to the penalties decided by the Islamic Sacred Law – in this lesson and in other lessons... This is because it is a fine and virtuous community, a liberated and just community, where work and welfare are guaranteed for both the able and the disabled, a community where the catalysts for good are abundant and those for evil are subdued in every way. That is why such a community is entitled to the gratitude of each and every individual who belongs to it, by guarding such bliss bestowed upon them by the public order, and by safeguarding the rights of others pertaining to their lives, possessions, honor and morals. They must also uphold the obligation of preserving the *dār al-Islām* intact, where they live in security, safety, and prosperity, with complete rights, with all human privileges and social rights, furthermore responsible for safeguarding these privileges rights. All of this being said, whosoever violates the order of this abode, the abode of Islam, then they

are no less than a transgressing, sinful, evil person who deserves to be severely punished, given that it is guaranteed that such a person would not be condemned based on hearsay, and that *ḥudūd* [ordinances] be restrained by taking *shubūḥāt* [specious proof] into consideration. On the other hand, *dār al-Ḥarb*, according to the aforementioned definition, neither has rights nor do its inhabitants have rights to enjoy the guarantees that come with the punishments of the Islamic Sacred Law, because they do not implement the Sacred Law in the first place, and they do not acknowledge the governance of Islam, and because according to the Muslims who live in *dār al-Islām* – who themselves implement the Islamic Sacred Law in their lives – such a realm does not enjoy any amount of sanctity. Thus, the lives and the wealth within its boundaries are permissible – for Muslims to take – and have no sanctity in Islam, not unless they have some pact with the Muslims, whenever pacts are signed with the *dār al-Islām*. The Sacred Law also upholds such guarantees for every *Ḥarbī* that enters the *dār al-Islām* under a security agreement for as long as this pact is valid, limited to the borders of the territories of *dār al-Islām* which is under the authority of a Muslim ruler – A Muslim ruler is only he who applies the Sacred Law of Islam.”⁷⁷

Such statements are extremely dangerous, and it is from whence spring all the applications exercised by *takfīrī* extremist organizations, which have become a dagger in the back of the Muslim body. It is such organizations that murder Muslims almost exclusively, after having condemned them as apostates based on Quṭb’s opinions and statements. Everything practiced by ISIS, al-Qaeda and similar organizations is based upon statements like the one just mentioned and the likes of it.

For Sayyid Quṭb is firm in his division of the world into two realms: *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Ḥarb* without even the possibility of a third one. This entails that there is only one possibility of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. He goes as far as even painting the majority of the Muslim countries as *dār al-Ḥarb*, after having condemned them as apostates and as *jahilī*, which in his view means they have become disbelievers and people who have regressed and turned away from Islam. To Quṭb there can be no *dār al-Islām* unless a group of people takes abode in any given location and declares it as such, especially as opposed to the other Muslim countries.

This sharp demarcation is Quṭb's first step, which is followed by laying out the only possibility of interaction between these two realms: an open and continuous declaration of hostility and merciless war. Quṭb believes that only *dār al-Islām* deserves peace and security, whereas *dār al-Kufr* – which includes not only non-Muslim countries but the vast majority of Muslim countries which he accuses of disbelief – does not deserve any guarantees of security and its inhabitants' lives and livelihoods are seen as fair game for the people of *dār al-Islām*.

Interestingly, if this masterplan and its components – as dark, complicated, psychologically tormented, oozing with hysteria and misery as it is – were to be implemented, the outcome would be the exact and complete manifestation of ISIS, al-Qaeda or any other terrorist and criminal organization. Imām Muslim related in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whosoever revolts against my Ummah, striking both the pious and the dissolute amongst them, has no regard for the faithful and does not honor the pacts with whom they were made, does not belong to me and I do not belong to him.”⁷⁸

On the other hand, Quṭb in the *ẓilāl al-Qurʾān* states: “Indeed this religion had no other choice but to strive against its detractors. For its mere existence is but a general declaration of the Lordship of Allah upon all creation; liberating man from servitude to anyone but Allah, manifesting itself in the form of a collective organizational movement under a new command different to those of *jahiliyya*, and giving birth to an independent and exceptional community which refuses to accept the *ḥākimiyya* of any human being, because, within this community, *ḥākimiyya* belongs to Allah alone. The mere fact that this religion exists in this form is enough to mobilize all the *jahilī* communities surrounding it, all of which are based on servitude to other servants, in order to crush it in defense of their very existence. Thus the new community must also mobilize to defend itself. This is a matter of inevitability. It becomes so with the very birth of Islam itself. It is an inevitable battle forced upon Islam, and it has no choice in

⁷⁷ *Fī ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Quṭb /2/873, 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

⁷⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* /6/21/, Kitāb al-Imarah, Dar al-Nawadir, Damascus, 1433 H. – 2012 C.E

delving into it. This is a natural struggle between two existences which cannot coexist for long.”⁷⁹ He also says: “they know too well that the *jahiliyya* that they have ascribed to, and has now dominated the status of their people as well as their morals and systems, cannot be at truce with this religion, and cannot be allowed to survive. Hence it is a battle without an end until *jahiliyya* is utterly removed from this earth, this religion becomes transcendent and religion becomes all for Allah; meaning all authority on earth becomes for Allah, where all those who transgress against the authority of Allah are chased away anywhere on earth. Only then religion becomes all for Allah.”⁸⁰ Quṭb continues: “Allah, the Exalted, declares with these absolute texts the unity between all the camps of *jahiliyya* in their position regarding Islam and Muslims, and how they are all bent upon achieving their goal across time and that such a position is not dependent on specific circumstances or times! Without understanding this inevitable law governing the nature of relations between the Muslim and the *jāhili* conglomerates, and without explaining all the resulting phenomena in its own light, understanding the nature of *jihād* in Islam will not be possible. Not even the understanding of these long confrontations between the *jahiliyya* and Islamic camps. It will also be impossible to understand the motivations of the pioneering *Mūjahidīn*, or the secrets of Islamic conquest, or the secrets of the pagan wars – against Muslims – as well as the Crusades, which have not slowed down in the entire period of fourteen centuries and continue to be waged against the Muslims to date. Albeit such Muslims have unluckily forsaken the truth of Islam and kept nothing of it but the name, suffering in the camps of communists, pagans, and crusaders in Russia, China, Yugoslavia, Albania, India, Kashmir, Abyssinia, Zanzibar, Cyprus, Kenya, South Africa and the USA. Not to mention the barbaric crushing of the avant-garde of the Islamic renaissance everywhere in the Islamic World, or what used to be Islamic in more accurate terms, as well as the cooperation between communism, paganism, crusaders and the regimes in charge of the crushing process, seen in the friendly sponsorship and aid which is tantamount to full patronage, and erecting walls of silence around them while they go on crushing these noble cadres! None of this would be understood without realizing this inevitable law and all

the phenomena ensuing from it.”⁸¹

When we look at the way in which authentic scholars have discussed the two abodes, their respective rulings and the differences between them and then compare that to the way this contemporary generation have done so, we notice a great difference between the two approaches: one is a meticulous scholarly approach that draws from the mercy and solace embedded in the religion of Allah while the other lacks a proper scholarly methodology and reverses and perverts the higher objectives of the Sacred Law, transforming the issue into one of a struggle and conflict.

These two terms, *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr*, were coined in the third and fourth *Hijrī* centuries and they did not connote any degree of threat to anyone. As human thought evolved, these meanings were expressed in different terms; what is known today as the sciences of International Relations and International Law.

The very concepts of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr* reflected upon by Abū Ḥanīfah and the great jurists of those times, thirteen hundred years ago, have evolved into a full-fledged scholarly discipline; one which has its own fundamentals, concepts, principles and experts, known today as International Relations from which International Law branches. It is worth noting that when a number of modern researchers studied the book written by Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan al-Shaybānī titled *al-Siyar al-kabīr*, they found it to be full of records of the important incidents from the time of the Prophet and beyond; an incredible treasury of information regarding the conquests, battles, treaties, agreements, truces and other forms of interaction between international entities. They concluded that this book was to be considered the first recorded scholarly work on the science of International Relations, and that the first similar work in Europe appeared six centuries later. A legal society was established in Paris named the Shaybānī Society of International Law. It was to focus its work on furthering studies on this grand pioneer and his *magnus opus*.

⁷⁹ *Fī zilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Quṭb /3/1441/ 40th ed., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

⁸⁰ See *ibid* /2/1061/

⁸¹ See *ibid* /3/1592

The importance of this book encouraged other groups of researchers to conduct more research on it. One particular study was interested in comparing the book with contemporary related sciences. The International Institute for Islamic Thought conducted this study and published it in twelve volumes entitled *The Encyclopedia of International Relations in Islam*. This voluminous work confirms our understanding that the work of the pioneering Islamic jurists were early steps in the discipline of International Relations. Moreover, it suggests that the classification of the world into two abodes – *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr* – requires a third realm: *dār al-‘ahd* [Abode of Treaty], in order for the original idea to be more complete and relevant to modern-day realities.

A thesis proposed by a contemporary researcher ‘Ābid al-Sufyānī, claims that there is a consensus amongst the classical scholars regarding the classification of the world into two realms and that they cannot be increased to three. However, Dr. Ismā‘īl Faṭṭānī conducted another academic thesis, which concluded that there was in fact no consensus regarding this issue. Furthermore, Faṭṭānī argued that the names for these old classifications are inapplicable to our reality today. His argument was based on the fact that Muslims can be found living almost everywhere in the world and they are generally allowed to practice the rituals of their religion wherever they are. He concludes that the two ancient abodes have evolved and crystalized due to changes in social norms, modes of living, systems of administration as well as advances in political philosophy. This crystallization, in Faṭṭānī’s opinion, rendered the old abodes obsolete while ushering in a new third abode *dār al-‘ahd* [Abode of Treaty].

It is important to mention the PhD thesis presented at the Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences at Cairo University by Dr. Muḥyī al-Dīn Aḥmad Qāsim, titled *al-Taqsīm al-Islāmī li al-Ma‘mūra Muqāranatan bi l-Jamā‘ah al-Dawliyya al-Mu‘āṣira* [The Islamic Division of The Known World in Comparison to the Contemporary International Community]. In his thesis, Dr. Qāsim agrees with all the conclusions we have made in this chapter so far. His thesis confirms the motivations and thought process of the classical jurists with regards to the classification of the world into *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr*. He also points out how the extremists have reversed

and perverted these notions in the last eighty years. He also highlights how the extremists have reduced the broad and lofty horizons of the jurists dedicated to improve humanity's quality of life everywhere on earth. The jurists of olden times were busy finding ways to help Muslims overcome possible discrepancies resulting from living amongst non-Muslims while being observant, as well as presenting an honest image of what Islam is to other people so they could see the beauty of the Sacred Law and the higher objectives of Islam as a religion of guidance and morality. The efforts of these jurists were finally crystallized, acknowledged and celebrated as the precursor for the study of International Relations. On the other hand, in the minds of Sayyid Qutb, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām Faraj, Ṣāliḥ Sirīyya, and ISIS, such notions were reduced to believing that the only possible relationship between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr* is that of conflict, war and bloodshed. Worse still, they applied the same idea within Muslim countries after having condemned them as apostate states. Hence Egypt and all the other Arab and Muslim countries were condemned as *dār al-Kufr*. Given their views, the next step after such a condemnation, was to take to murder, armed violence, bloodshed and calling their own crimes a *jihād*.

Many righteous notions of the Sacred Law have been humiliated. Many luminous concepts revealed by the Almighty as a source for life, guidance, and mercy, as well as proof to the wisdom of the Sacred Law, have been reduced and defaced through the distortion of the overzealous, the falsification of the liars and the erroneous interpretation of the ignorant.

According to such extremists, the issue is no longer about understanding how a ruling is applied with consideration to non-Muslims and the loftiness of the notion of International Relations originating from the proud legacy of classical jurisprudence. They have transformed the whole concept into one of merciless conflict, choosing the battlefield to be the Muslim World itself. Thus Egypt, the land of scholarship in both science and religion, the land of al-Azhar al-Sharīf and Islam, is transformed into *dār al-Kufr*. This false condemnation, coupled with their erroneous belief that conflict is the only way to interact with *dār al-Kufr* dragged them into hostilities and bearing arms in the name of *jihād*.

It is interesting to see the discussions brought forth by Ibn Taymīyya when he points out to the possibility of a mixed realm, which is neither exclusively *dār al-Islām* nor *dār al-Kufr*. An example of this is a land which has been formerly considered *dār al-Islām* and is later conquered by a non-Muslim ruler – like when the Tartars conquered Northern Syria – or in the case of the exact opposite. In both cases this abode can be called *al-dār al-murakkaba* [Compound Abode]. Ibn Taymīyya presented the special case of this type of abode in a treatise titled *al-Fatwā al-Mārdīniyya* [The Mardinian Edict], *Mārdīn* being the name of the region where he was born and raised. He had to flee from it as a child after the Tartars had conquered it.

Ibn Taymīyya lays out a principle for this compound abode, summarized in the following: “In such an abode, a Muslim must be treated according to what he deserves, and the violator of the Sacred Law must be fought according to what he deserves”. The word *yuqātal* [fought] was adopted by *jihadist* and extremist groups as the basis for their bloodthirsty behavior. They did so despite the problematic nature of the edict. The phrasing of the edict is very general and elusive. What is the definition of a violator of the Sacred Law? Such a general description could easily include a person guilty of petty sins, as well as a terrorist. Another problem is the word *yuqātal*. Who is entitled to carry out this *qitāl* or fight? The extremists reply to this question by stating: ‘We are.’ This is a grave error. It is not the right of individuals to encroach upon and appropriate the duties of state institutions. Such duties cannot be fulfilled appropriately except through state institutions or established administrative systems entrusted with ensuring security and fighting corruption, as is the case in any distinguished nation around the world.

The word *yuqātal* in Ibn Taymīyya’s edict was a chief inspiration for the *takfīrī* and violent stance taken by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj in his book *al-Farīda al-Ghā’iba* [The Neglected Duty]. He uses this word to falsely justify aggression against countries and their peoples. However, his claims were debunked by the scholar and jurist Shaykh ‘Aṭīyya Ṣaqr in his book *Naqḍ Kitāb al-Farīda al-Ghā’iba* [Refutation of The Neglected Duty]. Later, more scholars dedicated their attention to studying Ibn Taymīyya’s edict based on a different approach. They were intrigued by the inconsistency

in Ibn Taymīyya's choice of words; especially the word *yu'āmal* [must be treated] as opposed to *yuqātal* [must be fought]. They were confident that there must be some mistake. So they pursued this particular thread of investigation, reviewing original sources in the hope of identifying it. They devoted particular attention to Ibn Muflīḥ, known to be an assiduous scholar specializing in the Ḥanbalī School of jurisprudence, who often quoted Ibn Taymīyya. They managed to find the Mardinian Edict as quoted by Ibn Muflīḥ, and lo and behold it read: "In such a realm a Muslim must be treated according to what he deserves, and the violator of the Sacred Law must be treated according to what he deserves". The difference between 'treated' and 'fought' is tremendous. The former entails studying the social, legal, cultural, and intellectual reality of the land in question, as well as considering its norms and traditions. This is completely different from the implications of the word 'fought'.

In his publication *al-Manār*,⁸² Shaykh Rashīd Riḍā quoted the edict in its correct wording as referenced by Ibn Muflīḥ. The typo responsible for this blunder first appears in a printed edition of *Fatāwā Ibn Taymīyya* [The Edicts of Ibn Taymīyya] produced by Faraj-Allah al-Kurdī in 1327 H. On page 248 of volume 28 of the *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* [The Compendium of Edicts], 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qāsim followed al-Kurdī in his erroneous quotation. The misquotation became the better known and propagated version because of how famous and commonplace this particular edition was. The absence of verification and the basic standards of scholarship lead to disaster. Incomplete information is far more dangerous than no information at all. The Mardinian Edict, and the lack of verification in dealing with it, resulted in the murder of many Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It has caused damage to the higher objectives of the Sacred Law, resulting in distorting the image of Islam and Muslims, especially that both the English and French translation of the edict were based on the misquotation. The illustrious scholar Shaykh 'Abdullāh Bin Bayyah took it upon himself to set the record straight. He arranged

82 A monthly magazine, published in Cairo, Egypt, established in Shawwal 1315 H. – March 1898 C.E [tn]

for a meticulous scholarly endeavor employing many experts to help find the original handwritten manuscript of Ibn Taymīyya's edict in *al-Maktaba al-Zahiriyya* [The Zāhiriyya Library] in Damascus, which was indeed found under the recall number 2757, *Maktabat al-Asad* [The Asad Collection]. The original wording as inscribed in the original manuscript was *yu'āmal* [must be treated] and not *yuqātal* [must be fought]. In Rabi^c al-Thānī 1431 H, a conference was held in the Turkish city of Mardin, in which many scholars and jurists attended, resulting in an explanatory declaration concerning the whole affair. The contribution of al-Azhar al-Sharīf to the conference was through a scholarly study and declaration prepared by the Grand Mufti of Egypt at the time, the illustrious Shaykh Dr. 'Alī Jum'a whose study was considered one of the main pillars of the conference.

This entire affair serves as a wakeup call urging an end to the reliance on the writings of the enthused, amateurs, emotional and rash people. It is a call to stop following those who base their verdicts on nothing but their literary gifts and zeal while tackling extremely sensitive and difficult matters, yielding erroneous understandings and distorted interpretations, and ultimately transforming the religion of Allah into complete misery for the entire creation. The Almighty says:

“... whereas if they referred it to the Messenger of Allah and those charged with authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it.” [4:83]

It is also important to note that it is a terrible mistake to limit the study of the relationship between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-Kufr* to the jurisprudential approach alone. In fact many additional approaches must be taken into consideration including Ethics, Values, Divine Principles pertaining to the society, the Higher Objectives of the Sacred Law and Universal Guidance. Only when these approaches are combined with that of jurisprudence can we arrive at a complete theory which is much needed by the Muslim mindset in order to understand the nature of the relationship between Muslims and other nations, civilizations and peoples.

The jurisprudential approach is concerned with permissibility and

prohibition, validity and invalidity etc., which as important as they are cannot compensate for the input of other approaches. For example, the approach of Values entails that we must see the world around us through the network connecting various global powers, be they Muslim or not and then process the data using the tools of a science called *al-sunan al-Ilāhīyya* [divine practices]. This science is an authentic and classical Quranic science invested in demonstrating the consistent divine methods upon which Allah has established the entire universe. Such are higher principles, immutable and constantly accurate. Some of these principles concern human sociology, the rise and fall of civilization, and the cosmos. This discipline has been disseminated by many scholars including Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbdūh and Rashīd Riḍā in the interpretation of the Qurʾān titled *al-Manār*. Others include the eminent Azharite scholar Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq ʿArjūn, Dr. Muṣṭafā al-Shakʿa, Dr. Magdī ʿĀshūr as well as many students of Dr. Muṣṭafa al-Shakʿa, especially from Algeria and Morocco. Many scholars and researchers attended a conference in Jordan in order to share their findings in this field and managed to identify sixty different principles within the Quranic text pertaining to lives, peoples, civilizations, and horizons. *Al-Sunan al-Ilāhīyya* pertaining to the society and civilization is particularly important in understanding the nature of the relationship between Muslims and others. They are equally important for the establishment of *Uṣūl Fiqh al-Ḥaḍāra* [Principles of Civilizational Jurisprudence], following from the example of the well-known science of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* pertaining to the principles of textual jurisprudence established by Imām al-Shāfiʿī.

Some of these *sunan Ilāhīyya* include *al-taʿāruf* [Acquaintance], *al-takāmul* [Integration], *al-tawāzun* [Balance], *al-tadāfuʿ* [Competition].

The principle of *al-taʿāruf* [Acquaintance] is especially crucial for the relationship between Muslims and others, moreover the relationship between all nations and peoples in general. The Almighty says:

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and then rendered you nations and tribes so that you might know one another.” [49:13]

This verse is commonly referred to in an individual sense, especially upon meeting a stranger. However, Allah establishes this acquaintance on the basis of the classification of mankind into peoples and tribes, thus the acquaintance should also be seen on the same scale. This is also an important reminder that peaceful acquaintance is and should be the basic and most natural state of affairs when it comes to the relationship between nations. This is what Islam believes in and strives to achieve. It is contrary to a philosophy of global hegemony, which can only perceive relations to be based upon conflict and the complete annihilation of the other. Samuel Huntington in the *Clash of Civilizations*, Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History* and *The Last Man*, as well as Sayyid Quṭb and all the other extremists have championed such ideas. It is very alarming that Quṭb and his clique managed to arrive at such violent ideas despite the crystal clear message of the Sacred Law. The similarity, on the conceptual level, between these seemingly different names is uncanny. If we were to remove or hide the names, external appearances and non-essential qualities of these figures, we would find that we are confronted by a single concept and single worldview; conflict and struggle. The only difference is in the branding. One is branded as a so-called Islamic stance, supported by a concoction of misquotations from the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, finally yielding extremists. The other is branded as a philosophical output, yielding the end of history as put forth by Fukuyama and Huntington, informing and influencing strategies credited with much of the violence, destruction and misery suffered around the world today.

In 1997, the king of Spain in cooperation with President Muḥammad Khatamī of Iran along with some Iranian scholars, launched an international initiative which they named the Alliance of Civilizations. As positive as this initiative may have been, the authentic and classical Quranic science of *sunan Ilāhīyya* [divine practices] aspires for much more than just an alliance establishing the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as entire International Relations on the foundation of the magnificent divine practices of Acquainting Civilizations. In the same vein, the writings of Professor Zakī al-Milād discussed Acquainting Civilizations. His writings encouraged the organization of various seminars to further

look into this important idea, as a way of widening the horizons to include cultural exchange, epistemological interaction, intertwined livelihoods, the passing on of experiences and scientific achievements. Such is the grander picture, which makes wars and the taking up to arms an occasional type of interaction, which should be seen as a very limited exception engulfed by a wider context of guidance and mercy, which Allah has called *al-ta'āruf* [Acquaintance].

This raises an important question: How did this peaceful and constructive approach become faded, overshadowed and wasted in favor of the cause of *takfir* and bloodshed?

Chapter 4

Monopolizing the Divine Promise

The idea of *takfir* – accusing the entire community of apostasy based on the erroneous understanding of *ḥākīmīyya*, which in turn led to condemning all Muslims of *jahiliyya* – paved the way for yet another bizarre conviction. The extremists did not stop at considering themselves the only judges fit to condemn everyone else of disbelief. They also saw themselves as the exclusive owners of Islam’s truth. Thus, they began to read every verse of the Qurʾān in which Allah promises aid, support and empowerment for Muslims, as if these verses were addressed exclusively to them. This delusional understanding further fueled their haste to accuse others of apostasy. It also increased their ferociousness and perseverance in taking up arms against the Muslims at large, murdering and destroying everything in their way. The more the Muslims as peoples, states and institutions defended themselves, the further this band of self-righteous extremists went in their delusional denial. Such insistence is rooted in their firm conviction that *al-waʿd al-ilāhī* [the Divine Promise] is meant exclusively for them.

The reality is that we stand before a long record of deluded misconceptions, one begetting the next. This mitosis of erroneous beliefs gave birth to an incredibly resentful, vengeful and hostile individual with only one objective: to accuse Muslims of apostasy and disbelief.

This objective coupled with a firm belief in the inevitability of an eternal struggle, meant that such an individual would sign up for a life of hardship. Nonetheless, the belief in *al-waʿd al-ilāhī* exclusively meant for him, dwarfed any amount of possible hardship. The promise is only for him and the promise is certain.

Extremist groups began to produce an avalanche of literary works, poems, accounts of heroics and epics, which in fact were nothing but a record of their aggression against Muslims. However, they view it as if it were a proud history; a baptism of patience and steadfastness.

In their effort to sanctify these so-called heroics, they took to the Quranic verses speaking of the victories Allah granted to the outnumbered and weak over larger numbers equipped with great might, and made them their own. In reality they were transgressing against the sanctity of the Qurʾān and its verses. They were in clear violation of the Qurʾān's majesty with their evil interpretations, distorting its implications with their ignorant intrusions without the appropriate tools or methodologies of understanding. In addition to all of this they were deeply involved in accusing everyone else of apostasy and later warring against them in a bloody onslaught, desiring to destroy the communities and institutions that they had condemned as apostate. In their own minds they could not recognize their transgression against the Qurʾān. On the contrary, they were confident that every promise of victory was theirs and theirs alone. Such was their state of mind, which totally shut down their intellect to any claim, discussion or suggestion that they might be mistaken. They have become one with the Promise. Thus, any attempt to show their unworthiness of it was immediately rejected, because according to them, it would be tantamount to undermining the credibility of the Divine Promise itself. In fact, we have heard with our own ears, some of these extremists speaking of how doubting the success or considering the failure of a given person – whom they consider one of them – in ruling a given country is tantamount to doubting God Himself.

This is a clear case of conflating the strength of their convictions with how the hard facts of life govern such matters. They choose to ignore the weight of qualification, efficiency, experience, learning and knowledge,

favoring the power of their metaphysical certitude. This is yet another delusional belief held by the extremists. For the idea that their faith in themselves could render capability and experience unimportant, is another violation of a Divine Practice and the laws by which He governs creation. The more people try to offer them advice with regards to the importance of experience and knowledge, the more they reassure themselves that this is all irrelevant because the Divine Promise will certainly make up for their deficiencies. Their history of literary heroics and epics are another source of reassurance. This is but a conceptual and intellectual confusion, where the Quranic verses are abused, producing a human archetype bent on destroying the universe, while believing he is saving it. Quṭb, in *ẓilāl al-Qurʿān*, says: “The promise of victory, conquest and hegemony is but a divine practice, as consistent as these planets and stars are in their orderly cycles, as sequential as night and day on earth across time, as sure as the sprouting of life from the lifeless earth once it receives water... However, it is dependent on Allah’s pre-ordinance, that it would be fulfilled whenever He wills. Its outwardly indications may seem slow in relation to the limited lifespans of human beings. Nevertheless, it never fails and is never late, and it might actually already be fulfilled in a manner unperceivable by human beings. For humans often look for familiar forms of victory and conquest. They may not even realize the promise has been fulfilled except after a while! Humans might covet a particular form of victory and conquest for the soldiers of Allah and the followers of His messengers, whereas Allah wills another form, more complete and more durable. The will of Allah is indeed the prevailing one, even if His soldiers must suffer hardships and endure for much longer than they had originally anticipated.”⁸³

Quṭb continues in the *ẓilāl*: “This promise is valid for every battle where disbelief confronts belief. When the disbelievers face the believers, it is certain that the former are terrified, by virtue of the terror Allah has cast into their hearts. However, it is important that the truth of

83 *Fi ẓilāl al-Qurʿān*, Sayyid Quṭb /5/3001/ 40th edition., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

faith is resident within the hearts of the faithful, the truth of heeding no patronage but that of Allah, the absolute confidence in this patronage, doing away with the slightest speck of doubt regarding the fact that the soldiers of Allah are the ultimate victors, that Allah prevails whatever be His purpose, and that the disbelievers can neither elude their final reckoning even if they remain unscathed on earth, nor can they surpass Allah, Transcendent be He! In dealing with the Promise of Allah, one must believe, regardless of the opposition posed by the outwardly state of affairs, that it is truer than that which could be perceived by human sight or fathomed by human intellect."⁸⁴

Qutb also says: "The believer takes the promise of Allah to be the inevitable reality, even if the limited reality apparent for a limited generation or within limited loci is contradictory to this inevitable reality. For such limited reality is but a perishable falsehood, which only exists on earth to serve a special wisdom, which may be the awakening of faith and encouraging it to fulfill the promise of Allah in its preordained timing. It is when one examines this incredible war that the enemies of belief wage upon the people of belief, in its diverse forms of torment, oppression, plotting against them in various ways and for elongated periods of time, to the extent that the violence of such aggressive campaigns escalate to the murder, disposition, torture, sacking and oppression of the believers in every possible manner – yet despite it all, belief remains in the hearts of the believers, protecting them from collapsing and protecting their peoples from a full loss of character, a complete engulfment by the nations attacking them, a subjugation by an unlawful tyranny, until this belief eventually pounces back at the enemy and shatters him...when one contemplates this lengthy sequence of events, one finds proof to the truthfulness of what Allah Almighty said in the very sequence of events without even having to go through the long wait for the complete unfolding of events!!! In any case, a believer has not an iota of doubt that the Promise of Allah is the inevitable truth, which must manifest in existence, and that those who challenge Allah and his Messenger are bound to humiliation and that Allah and His Messengers are the victors, and that this is what shall come to pass and what must come to pass, no matter the outward state of affairs."⁸⁵

Quṭb continues: “The true hardship of this calling is to receive Allah’s decisions with patience until the preordained timing, at the exact hour He wills in His Wisdom. Many are the hardships of the road, those of discrediting and torture, those of rejection and opposition, those of the leviathan quality of falsehood, those of people being deceived by the pride of a seemingly victorious falsehood and finally the hardship of restraining oneself in dealing with all of the above, in a complete state of willingness, calm and tranquil confidence in the truthful promise of Allah, carrying on over the path without doubt or hesitation, no matter the obstacles...all of which is an enormous effort in need for willpower, patience, as well as Allah’s support and stay.”⁸⁶

Take note of what is even graver, when Quṭb says: “... and He has given them a superiority by which they condescendingly look down upon the herds of humans, lost in the vast expanses of ignorance all over the earth, and they would feel that Allah has bequeathed them that which He has not given anyone in His creation...” It is also interesting to see how this superiority is linked to and justified by his claims of the spread of *jahiliyya* all over the earth. He says: “... for He willed, Transcendent be He, that this Qur’ān should be the living and enduring guide after the passing of the Prophet ﷺ to command the generations of this Ummah, to foster and prepare them for their role of Righteous Leadership, which it promises them for as long as they follow its guidance, remain true to their pacts with it, draw their entire way of life from this Qur’ān, honor themselves and transcend through it over all the earthly ways, which in their earthliness are automatically ways of *jahiliyya*!”⁸⁷

He also says: “Even the believer’s very desire for his creed to transcend, the word of Allah to be victorious, and the vanquishing of the enemies of Allah, even this very desire, Allah wants to rid the believers from, so they would leave it entirely to Him, in order to rid their hearts from

⁸⁴ See ibid /1/491/

⁸⁵ See ibid /6/3513/

⁸⁶ See ibid /6/3670

⁸⁷ See ibid /1/261

harboring any desire even if such a desire were not personal! This creed is about giving, repayment and the discharge of one's obligations without the faintest earthly gain, not even that of victory, conquest, Complete Hegemony, superiority as repayment. For all repayment awaits in the hereafter! Only then, victory happens, empowering happens, superiority happens, however, not as part of the transaction, not as a part of the deal, for this deal offers nothing in this worldly life, it is only about the discharge of obligations, repayment, giving and trial."⁸⁸

Qutb continues to stress the link between Complete Hegemony and superiority, highlighting the importance of being confident in the Divine Promise in order to sustain an individual in their continuous trial, discharging of obligations, repayment and giving in attempting to attain Complete Hegemony and superiority, until they perish without witnessing its fruition. Nonetheless, such an individual dies in complete confidence that superiority and Complete Hegemony will be realized for those that come after him.

The primary credit for these specific ideas do not go to Sayyid Qutb, for it is in fact the seeds sown by Ḥasan al-Bannā in his words: "this means that the Noble Qurʾān appoints the Muslims as custodians over incompetent people, giving them – the Muslims – the right of coercion and dominion over this world, in service of this noble custodianship. Thus, it is our affair entirely, not the affair of the West, it belongs to the civility of Islam and not the civility of matter."⁸⁹

This bizarre perception, which portrays us as custodians, totally defeats the higher objectives of the Sacred Law in making the Muslims a nation which humbly channels the light of knowledge, wisdom, guidance and morality to all other nations, and not as al-Bannā believes the matter to be; some sort of superior custodianship and coercion.

The consequence of presenting a person with such ideas is that he will come to believe that hegemony and superiority is his ultimate goal. Furthermore, he will grow to believe that what he needs to rely on is his possession of the Divine Promise, rather than his own capability to achieve prosperity and development. The same applies to the creation of livelihoods, the establishing of civilization, erecting institutions, honoring

and sufficing the needs of the human being. Such beliefs are but a complete loss of the true meaning of Complete Hegemony and the higher objectives of the Sacred Law. This understanding uproots the entire matrix of Islam, originally dedicated to the preservation and honoring of human life, the preservation of religion, honor, possession and intellect.

However, these extremists remain oblivious to such higher objectives. They continue to believe that empowerment is to achieve hegemony, to establish a political regime and usurp power and authority. They remain firm in their belief that the Divine Promise is an exclusive guarantee for success and aid, regardless of their ignorance of the keys of bringing forth development and prosperity. In their delusions, they refuse to take note of the people's complaints concerning their livelihoods, offering only arrogant responses smacking of denial. One delusion leads to the next. Soon enough they turn their denial of people's suffering into accusing the poor complainers of challenging Allah's religion and Sacred Law. Later they begin to condemn the criticism brought forth by the people as candid attempts to discredit their much-treasured Divine Promise. Finally, they become fully convinced that such people are essentially in opposition to Allah's Sacred Law, becoming all the more submerged in *jahiliyya*, which then means that the battle is nigh. They take up to arms and wage their war under the name of *jihād* for the sake of Allah.

88 See *ibid* /1/550/

89 *Magmū'at al-rasā'il Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā, ila ay shaiy' nad'ū al-nās*, Ḥasan al-Bannā /38/ 5th Edition, 2012 C.E, Dar al-Kalimah lilnashr wal tawzī'

Chapter 5

The Concept of *Jihād*

The extremists condemned the Muslims as apostates under the pretext of their distorted understanding of *ḥākimīyya*. Then they accused the Muslims of *jahilīyya*, which is but disbelief and polytheism. Consequently, they declared, beyond any doubt, that Islam had been discontinued for centuries. They also ruled that all man-made laws and constitutions are but forms of apostasy. From there on, they moved on to topple rulers and statesmen and engaged in murdering Muslims, with specific goals: usurping power and establishing an alternative political authority. They decided that conflict was inevitable and they labeled their violent plan as a *jihād*.

The truth is that the notion of *jihād*, as prescribed by Allah, is a lofty affair, which manifests in a diversity of forms, all of which are motivated and strongly linked to the higher objectives of the Sacred Law; specifically guidance and treasuring the sanctity of life, not destroying it. The exceptional unavoidable need to wage just wars is but one of these diverse forms of *jihād*. Moreover, the Almighty established a matrix of governing values to ensure that those who are involved in true *jihād* do not inflict unfair and unjustified harm. Hence, they were ordered not to cut down a tree,⁹⁰ kill a goat or frighten a monk or worshipper in their places of worship. The Almighty ordained that *jihād* be governed by means of

90 Tree and goat are symbolic of environment or creation in its entirety, as per many scholars who have explained this tradition. [tn]

magnitude and consequence. This is to say that if *jihād* is ever taken beyond its defining boundaries, exaggerated in magnitude, or employed where it should not have been, it no longer becomes *jihād*. It becomes an act of hostility, injustice and outright aggression.

As we compare the extremists' understanding to the genuine proposals of Islam, we find ourselves confronted by continuous transgressions against the notions and concepts established by the Sacred Law, which are then forcefully juxtaposed with their own erroneous ideas stemming from their catastrophic main theory of condemning the entire community of apostasy. Their desire to corroborate their deviant conclusions with terminology from the Sacred Law, regardless of their true meanings, achieves nothing except distorting the Sacred Law and the terminology used to express its true values. People become confused when their understanding of the Sacred Law is channeled through the erroneous practice of these extremists. The result is that people begin to believe that this bleak and ugly perception forced upon them is in fact the truth of the Sacred Law.

Al-Bukhārī relates by way of Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه, who said: "A man arrived with two camels – used for plowing the land – as the night had commenced, while Muʿādh رضي الله عنه was leading the prayer. The man left the camels and followed Muʿādh رضي الله عنه in prayer, who started reciting either *al-Baqara* or *al-Nisāʾ*.⁹¹ The man then parted with Muʿādh رضي الله عنه – leaving the prayer before it was complete – and later heard that Muʿādh رضي الله عنه had spoken ill of him because of this incident. The man then went to the Prophet ﷺ and complained to him about Muʿādh رضي الله عنه. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Oh Muʿādh! Are you putting people to trial?' He said this three times. 'It would have been better if you had recited '*sabbih isma rabbika al-Aʿlā*,⁹² or '*wa 'l-shamsi wa ḍuḥāhā*,⁹³ or '*wa 'l-layli idhā yaghshā*,'"⁹⁴ for the old, the weak and the needy pray behind you."

This prophetic statement makes it absolutely clear that the case of an individual obliging others to follow his personal choices in adhering to the Sacred Law, causing them distress, is a grave matter. The statement denounces such an act by describing he who has committed it as being disruptive. It brings to the attention of that individual, the damage his act

may cause to people's perception of the Sacred Law, even if this individual – such as the case the Ḥadīth is pertaining to – was pious beyond question and had done so with no other intention but to make his prayers lengthy as he loves them to be. So what of those who condemn all people of apostasy, bear arms against them and label their aggression a *jihād*?

This deviance in thought, as previously pointed out, can be traced back to Ḥasan al-Bannā's statement: "... when amongst you –members of the Muslim Brotherhood – three hundred battalions, which have prepared itself spiritually with faith and creed, intellectually by attaining learning and culture, physically through exercising and sportsmanship, only then demand of me to lead you through the tumults of the seas, to storm with you into the clouds of the sky and to conquer with you every hardheaded tyrant."⁹⁵

Much to the same effect is Ṣāliḥ Sirīyya's statement in *Risālat al-Īmān*: "... the *jihād* intended to replace these governments and establish the Islamic State is the individual obligation of every Muslim, man or woman, because *jihād* must be continued until the Day of Resurrection. *Jihād* is an obligation in order to replace falsehood, even if the false party is not an apostate, as is in the case of al-Ḥūsayn عليه السلام and in accordance with what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'The best of martyrs is Ḥamza and the one who stands up to a tyrant instructing him as to what should and should not be done, upon which the latter kills the former'. Thus, *jihād* against apostasy is indisputably, even amongst any two Muslims, the most obliging obligation and the epitome of Islam: 'Whoever dies without having participated in a conquest and has not even had the intention to do so, has certainly died in a *jahilī* manner'. Those who die in defending the governments of disbelief against those who rise to establish the Islamic

91 The first is the longest chapter and the second is one of the third longest chapters of the Qur'an

92 Chapter Al-A'laā (a short chapter)

93 Chapter Al-Shams (a short chapter)

94 Chapter Al-Lail (a short chapter)

95 *Magmū'at al-rasā'il Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā, Risālat al-mu'tamar al-khāmis*, Ḥasan al-Bannā /290/5th Edition, 2012 C.E, Dar al-Kalimah lilnashr wal tawzī'

State are disbelievers, unless they are coerced, in which case Allah will then evaluate them according to their different inner intentions. This is a serious matter, yet Muslims today have not given it any attention. It is in need of a completely different and independent epistle dedicated to it entirely. Very often, Islamic movements procrastinate in revolting against the state, in fear of bloodshed. That is because they do not clearly see the crux of the matter, which in reality is as obvious as the sun; the disbelief of this state.”

These words reduce *jihād* to condemnations of apostasy and hostility towards innocent people. A bleak and dark image is painted and labeled *jihād*.

A Comparison

Jihād as prescribed by Allah as a noble cause intending to achieve guidance contrary with the bleak and erroneous image painted by the extremists.

The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam	The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists
<p>1- The diversity and inclusivity of the forms of <i>jihād</i>: Prescribed by Allah as a lofty and luminous notion, which can be attained through diverse means: the works of the heart, the peaceful calling of others, the offering of proof, the elucidation of ideas, meticulous planning, and only in exceptional unavoidable circumstances through armed struggle. Examples of the opinions of the Muslim jurists can be seen in the book <i>Kashf al-qināʿ</i>^c [Unveiling of the Mask] by the erudite scholar al-Bahūtī 3/36/ ʿĀlam Al-Kutub, 1403 H. as well as <i>Maṭālib ulī al-nuhā</i> [The Quests of the People of Intelligence] 2/503/ al-Maktab al-Islāmī.</p>	<p>1- The reduction of <i>jihād</i> to armed struggle and the reduction of armed struggle to murder.</p>

<p>The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam</p>	<p>The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists</p>
<p>2- <i>Jihād</i> for most scholars is considered a means not an objective in and of itself. The means are defined as: rulings prescribed to achieve other rulings, and not intended in and of themselves, rather to make the achievement of other rulings complete, as per al-Ṭāhir Ibn ʿĀshūr in his book <i>Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa</i> [Objectives of the Sacred law], page 148. Thus, the relationship between <i>jihād</i> and armed struggle is not specific. For what is in fact specified is that which helps achieve the higher objectives, which at times could mean the abandoning of armed struggle itself. The leading scholar of Shafiʿis, Imām al-Ramlī, in <i>Nihāyat al-muḥtāj</i> 8/46, says: “<i>Jihād</i> can be fulfilled by building impregnable fortifications and trenches and it can also be fulfilled by armed struggle.”</p>	<p>2- <i>Jihād</i> is an objective in and of itself. Al-Qaradāwī, in his biography titled <i>Ibn al-qarya wa ‘l-kuttāb: malāmiḥ sīrah wa masīrah</i> (volume 3/page 59) says: “Just as I discussed with the martyr Sayyid Quṭb his opinions regarding <i>Ijtihād</i> [Independent Reasoning], so did we discuss his opinions pertaining to <i>jihād</i>. He has adopted the narrowest and strictest of opinions in Islamic Jurisprudence, in contradiction with the opinions of the eminent contemporary jurists and preachers. His opinion was that the Muslims must prepare themselves for a war against the entire world, until they become Muslims or submit the <i>jizya</i> in humility.”</p>

The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam	The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists
<p>3- The higher objective of <i>jihād</i> is guidance. Imām al-Subkī, in <i>al-Fatāwā</i> (volume 2 page 340), Dār al-Maʿrīfah, Beirut: “The statement uttered by the Prophet ﷺ to ʿAlī رضي الله عنه when he was seeing him off to Khaybar: “To be employed by Allah to guide even a single soul, is better for you than a whole lot of red camels.”⁹⁶ The words of the Prophet ﷺ demonstrate that the objective of battle, in this case, is guidance, however the wisdom of the situation necessitated the battle. For the higher objective is the guidance of people, calling them to Oneness and the Sacred Law, and securing such virtues for them and their offspring to the Day of Resurrection. If it was possible to achieve this by ways of learning, debate and the removal of misconceptions, then this is the perfect choice, and this is precisely why it is said that the ink of the scholars is better than the blood of the martyrs.</p>	<p>3- <i>Jihād</i> and war is not part of the bigger picture the objective of which is guidance.</p>

⁹⁶ An expression pertaining to the most coveted worldly gains. [tn]

The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam	The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists
<p>However, if it was only possible through battle, then we would fight to achieve one of three goals: Offering Guidance which is the highest in rank, or become martyred trying, which is a middle rank in relation to the higher objective. Thus, martyrdom is very honorable because of the sacrifice of life, which is the most precious thing one can offer and in this regard it is considered the best, but only in the realm of means. For it is second best in the realm of objectives, because the highest objective is to elevate the word of Allah.”</p> <p>Also, Imām al- ‘Izz Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, in <i>Qawā’id al-aḥkām</i> (1/125) says: “Means become invalid if their objectives become invalid.”</p>	

The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam	The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists
<p>4- <i>Jihād</i> is a legal ruling, not a burst of enthusiasm and rashness. As a legal ruling it is governed by the five legal categories. Depending on the situation, it could be obligatory, commendable, forbidden, undesirable or permissible. Allah has ordained rulings but He has also designated what could invalidate those very rulings. In a given situation, <i>jihād</i> may appear to be valid when in reality it is not because it is being applied beyond its permissible boundaries and/or because it has gone beyond the legal restraints and conditions, turning into outright aggression, murder and destruction. Instructing us regarding the etiquette of <i>wuḍūʿ</i>^o [ablution], the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whosoever overdoes it – beyond what has been prescribed – has verily committed an abuse and an injustice”.</p>	<p>4- <i>Jihād</i> and war to them is an act of aggression lacking in restraint and is not governed by religious or rational values. It is a mere forgery of concepts in order to justify their desire to commit atrocities, execute beheadings in the name of <i>jihād</i>, causing people to turn their backs to Islam and perhaps deny God altogether.</p>

The Correct Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as understood by the Esteemed Scholars of Islam	The Erroneous Concept of <i>Jihād</i> as embraced by Extremists
<p>He described the excessive use of water in ablution, beyond the legally prescribed amount, as an abuse and an injustice, so what of those who behead people, spill blood and terrorize innocent people, driven by random justifications, without the slightest legal reasoning which could sanctify such acts as acceptable by the Sacred Law. The truth of the matter is that such acts are driven only by personal whims; a yearning to quench the thirst of ill-minded personalities for authority and dominion over the lives of others.</p> <p>Imām al-Qarāfī in <i>al-Furūq</i> (1/135) says: "In the same manner which Allah, Transcendent be He, has ordained rulings, He has also ordained invalidators – of the same rulings..."</p>	

A comparison

The understanding of the concept of *Jihād* between the overwhelming majority of the scholars of Islam with the odd understanding of Sayyid Quṭb and indicating the congruence between Sayyid Quṭb and Ḥasan al-Bannā's understanding.

The Opinion of the Overwhelming Majority of the Scholars of Islam	The Deviance of Sayyid Quṭb
<p>Al-Qaradāwī, in his biography titled <i>Ibn al-qarya wa 'l-kuttāb: Malāmiḥ sīrah wa masīrah</i> (volume 3/page 61, second edition, Dār-Al-Shurūq, Cairo, 2008) says: "Amongst our criticism of Sayyid Quṭb - may Allah have mercy on his soul - is that he accuses contemporary scholars who oppose his conception of <i>jihād</i> of two things. The first is naiveté, heedlessness, stupidity and other descriptions all pertaining to some sort of lacking in rational and intellectual capabilities. The second is flaccidity and psychological weakness, defeat before the stressing realities imposed by the contemporary West as well as being influenced by insidious Orientalism!</p>	<p>For Sayyid Quṭb <i>jihād</i> is about conflict with the entire world.</p> <p>Al-Qaradāwī, in his biography titled <i>Ibn al-qarya wa 'l-kuttāb: Malāmiḥ sīrah wa masīrah</i> (volume 3/page 59) says: "Just like I discussed the opinions of the martyr Sayyid Quṭb regarding <i>Ijtihād</i>, so did we discuss his opinions pertaining to <i>jihād</i>. He has adopted the narrowest and strictest of opinions in Islamic Jurisprudence, in contradiction with the opinions of the grandest contemporary jurists and preachers. His opinion was that the Muslims must prepare themselves for a war against the entire world, until they become Muslims or submit the <i>jizya</i> in humble humility."</p>

The Opinion of the Overwhelming Majority of the Scholars of Islam	The Deviance of Sayyid Quṭb
<p>All of which pertains to psychological and moral aspects. Those whom he is accusing are in fact prominent figures of this Ummah when it comes to religious learning, jurisprudence, preaching, and thought. Be it Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbdūh, Shaykh Rashīd Riḍā, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, Shaykh Muḥammad Mūṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, Muḥammad ʿAbdūllah Derāz, Aḥmad Ibrāhīm, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Khallāf, ʿAlī al-Khafif, Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, Muḥammad Faraj al-Sanhūrī, Muḥammad al-Madanī, Muḥammad Mūṣṭafā Shalabī, Muḥammad al-Bahī, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Mūṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī, Muḥammad al-Mubarak, ʿAlī al-Ṭantāwī, al-Bahī al-Kholī, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Sayyid Sābiq, ʿAllāl al-Fāsī, ʿAbdūllah Bin Zayd al-Maḥmūd and others amongst the masters of religious learning, some of which passed away and met their Lord,</p>	<p>My comment is that the origin of this collisional idea, in fact, comes from Ḥasan al-Bannā. For he says: “Now that our calling has become strong and tough enough to direct and not be directed, to influence and not be influenced, we call upon the prominent individuals, the notables, the organizations and parties to join us and walk our path, to work with us and to leave behind them the nonsensical appearances, useless as they are, in order to unite under the flag of the Great Qurʾān and come under the shade of the noble Prophet’s banner, and the straight path of Islam. If they respond favorably, it will be for their own good and happiness in this life and in the hereafter, and with their aid, the calling will save time and effort. However, if they refuse, then it will not do us harm to wait a little more and seek aid from only Allah, until they come under siege, feel terrified and then feel obliged to labor for the calling but as inferior followers when they could have been chiefs.</p>

The Opinion of the Overwhelming Majority of the Scholars of Islam	The Deviance of Sayyid Quṭb
<p>the likes of the names we have mentioned, as well as others who are alive and waiting to pass whom I respect and acknowledge, whom I need not mention.</p> <p>My comment regarding the words of al-Qaradāwī is it is in fact Ḥasan al-Bannā who prepared the way for this type of thinking adopted by Sayyid Quṭb. Let us read carefully the words of Ḥasan al-Bannā: “Now that we all see eye-to-eye, to this extent, and now that we have agreed regarding the Muslim Brotherhood’s views, which I have presented to you, fully corroborated by the Book and agreed-upon Sunnah, supported by evidence and proof. Only one out of two would doubt all of this: One whose soul has not been immersed in the spirit of Islam, and has not learnt about the objectives of the Noble Qur’ān. The second is someone who knows all about it, however, remains complacent without exerting effort and laboring just because of psychological weakness.</p>	<p>Allah always prevails in whatever His purpose may be: but most people know it not.</p> <p><i>Majmū‘at al-rasā’il li ‘l-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā: Risalat al-mu’tamar al-khāmis, page 287, 5th Edition: Dār al-Kalimah Lil-Nashr a al-Tawzī‘, 2012 C.E</i></p>

The Opinion of the Overwhelming Majority of the Scholars of Islam	The Deviance of Sayyid Quṭb
<p>There is also a third type, but we do not consider them of our people to begin with and thus we neither consider them nor do we address them.” <i>Majmūʿat al-rasāʾil Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā: Ilā Ayyi Shayʾin Naḍʿū al-Nās</i>, page 48, 5th Edition: Dār al-Kalimah al-Nashr wa ‘l-Tawzīʿ, 2012 C.E</p> <p>Case in point: Ḥasan al-Bannā accusing those who differ with him of psychological weakness, not being immersed in the spirit of Islam or that they are not at all of his people and need not be considered at all.</p>	

Chapter 6

The Concept of *Tamkīn* [Complete Hegemony]

The concept of *tamkīn* is an essential structural element in the ideological matrix embraced by the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as all other groups who are but offshoots of this mother group. This notion was adopted and theorized in order to transform it into an active political ideology, fashioning itself in the form of an organized movement. This is in line with their general direction, as presented in their multiple theories. It is all rooted in the excommunication of Muslims at large; their peoples, regimes, governments, scholars and institutions all the same, the discontinuation of Islam, the succumbing of the earth into a *jahilīyya* of disbelief, the inevitability of conflict and struggle and the actual resort to violence and bloodshed against the Muslim communities, while falsely and unjustly calling it *jihād*.

This evolution of ideas and steps all channeled into the concept of *tamkīn*, which is but a number of procedures, plans and efforts dedicated to achieve one goal: usurping power and establishing their political realm as the only way, in their views, to establish religion.

They have come to such bleak and unjust conclusions based on an avalanche of deviant interpretations and confused mindsets comprised of nothing but zeal, fury, emotions and literary works void of any learning. They lacked in any epistemology, which otherwise could have helped

them correctly extract the Quranic concepts in line with the objectives of the Qurʾān and in respect to the accumulative experience of Muslims across history.

The process of establishing concepts and extracting implications from the Qurʾān is an epistemological process of the highest order. It requires scholarly tools, keys, criteria, standards and checks to guarantee the legitimacy of a given understanding and accurate gauges by which the congruence of an interpretation with the higher objectives of the Qurʾān can be measured. It is a terrific and scrupulous scholarly process because it is entrusted with maintaining the authenticity of revelation and guarding against any attempt to attribute to it human whims or dishonest interpretations, especially when they vehemently defend these incongruent interpretations and take it to be absolute truth and as sacred as the actual holy text. This is precisely why the noblest and most perfect of scholarly tasks is the continuous identification and engagement with new theories and discourse, which claim to represent revelation. The intention being the scrutiny of new output, to discern what has been derived in line with the tools and methodologies of interpretation, and thus can be kept and upheld, no matter how different it is from previous output. The intention is also to identify what is purely based on human whim and emotion, consequently putting words in the Qurʾān's mouth so to speak.

The criteria by which any thesis regarding the Qurʾān can be evaluated and classified as appropriate and relevant to revelation is in employing the principles of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* [Principles of Jurisprudence], the sciences of *Balāghah* [Rhetoric] including *Maʿānī* and *Bayān* [Rhetoric and Diction], Legal Maxims, the Objectives of Sacred Law, knowledge of matters of consensus, diligence and experience in the ways of the leading figures in the fields of independent reasoning and scholarship and awareness of the collective and accumulative experience of Muslims in transforming the verses of the Qurʾān into practical programs capable of offering insight and guidance in full harmony with the special circumstances of any given era.

In contradiction to this entire matrix, the extremists produced their own erroneous understanding of *tamkīn*, based on emotion and confusion. It is the result of a process, which has skipped the essential procedure of

summoning all the relevant Quranic verses pertaining to the concept in question. It was also a process incapable of fathoming how such verses interlinked and lacked the necessary diligence to reach deep into the implications of the vocabulary as well as its context. Moreover, it has failed to evaluate its conclusions in light of all the other sources of the Sacred Law to make sure it was harmonious and to avoid self-contradiction. In the absence of this methodology, they have hijacked a verse from the book of Allah, in order to portray the concept of *tamkīn* as if it were a number of procedures which enables them to usurp authority, with an idea that they alone monopolize Islam and the right to establish it and that they alone have been given a Divine Promise to be victorious, not only to the exclusion of all the other Muslims, but in fact to be victorious over them, because according to their point of view, the others are apostates.

However, once we overlook the theories of these movements, and begin to look into the pure fountainhead of the Qur'ān, first identifying every word deriving from the root of *tamkīn* which has been literally mentioned in the Qur'ān, such as *makkana*, *nūmakkin* or *makkannā*, as well as the terms considered of the same meaning albeit mentioned using a different Qur'ānic expression, summoning all of such words in one place, then bringing the two most exemplary models Allah – Exalted in His Transcendence – has associated with *tamkīn*; the model of our master Prophet Joseph عليه السلام and the model of Dhu 'l-Qarnayn, we find ourselves floating in a completely different horizon of luminosity. We will find that we are standing before a Quranic proposal in stark contrast to the views of these extremists.

Tamkīn as proposed by the Islamists is too distorted. The distortion is of an extent capable of altogether altering man's perception of the religion of Allah, its lofty higher objectives and its expected outcome of mercy, prosperity and guidance for mankind.

Once we search for the concept of *tamkīn* as presented by the Islamists, in the writings of the eminent and leading scholars of Islam, intriguingly enough we find no trace of it whatsoever.

Suffice it to say that one of the contemporary members of the Muslim Brotherhood, considered to be the most enthusiastic promoter of the

concept of *tamkīn*, Dr. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, who presented an academic paper in Sudan entitled *Fiqh al-Tamkīn fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* says in its very beginning: “As far as my limited knowledge of this *fiqh* – of *tamkīn* – is concerned, research into this subject is very recent. Writing in this field and pointing out its importance has been sparked only recently.” He continues: “I have reached the conclusion that the subject of *fiqh al-tamkīn* is one of the most important fields for research and dissertations which must interest researchers.”⁹⁷ The reason for this intriguing absence is the predecessors’ deep understanding of the concept of *tamkīn* as proposed by the Qurʾān. They understood it to be the result of complying with the collective commands of the Qurʾān pertaining to faith, morality, guidance, labor, development, civilization and scholarly research capable of producing the matrix of human sciences established upon the foundation of revelation. In the eventuality that Muslims complied with such commands, Allah would reward them by establishing an excellent reputation and high regard for them in the entire world. Thus, they would be known as makers of civilization and prosperity and for bringing forth and developing various scholarly fields. Consequently, other civilizations would seek their jewels of wisdom and treasures of knowledge, traveling to Muslim learning centers, where they would witness first hand the best and purest of moral conduct. It is in this manner that the Ummah becomes a beacon showing the road to Allah, first and foremost by way of its behavior and practice, before showing the road to Him by way of scholarly evidence, discussion and debate. It is this impression, clearly witnessed by other nations, which Allah calls *tamkīn*. This explains the reason for the absence of a discussion of such a concept in the works of the predecessors. Throughout their history, Muslims were simply not occupied with looking into *tamkīn* because they understood it to be a conclusion, not a procedure or premise.

This is also why Allah – Exalted in His Transcendence – uses the term *tamkīn* to describe other nations, which later perished as a punishment for their sins. For in the case of such nations, *tamkīn* was but a mastery of the sciences pertaining to the making of civilization and the resulting high esteem in which others regarded them with. In their case, *tamkīn* was

due to their excellence in certain fields, despite the fact that they were not coming forth from or rooted in belief. *Tamkīn* can be awarded to a believing civilization, in which case it helps introduce others to the beauty of Islam. Nonetheless, it can also be awarded to a civilization that is not based on belief, in which case their scientific paradigms produce methodologies that exclude the question of divinity from its intellectual endeavor. This has been the reality throughout human history: a continuous ebb and flow between those who consider the idea of faith and those who choose to ignore it.

So when the extremists appeared on the world stage, excommunicating Muslims, claiming that Islam had been discontinued and condemning the whole world of drowning in *jahiliyya* – which is synonymous to complete disbelief – they began planning to establish the presence of Islam according to their understanding, which is distorted as it is because of their lack of the necessary tools for understanding revelation. Thus, they hijacked the concept of *tamkīn* and loaded it with connotations in line with their plans and practice. They transformed it from being a conclusion to becoming a premise. They distorted its reality from something that is awarded by Allah to whoever labors for it in seriousness, into a number of steps that they must undertake and go to war for.

The words of ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī in his book *Fiqh al-naṣr wa ʿl-tamkīn*, are a strong proof to the centrality of the concept of *tamkīn* in the ideological matrix embraced by the extremists. He says: “*Tamkīn* for the religion of Allah is the greatest of all goals. It is what is intended by every particular task in laboring for Islam, all the stages, goals and means to further our calling, as well as our movement including all of the efforts and undertakings related to it, the organization along with its objectives in its calling and action, as well as education in all of its various types, goals and means.”⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Fiqh al-Naṣr wal-Tamkīn fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm Anwāʾuh wa Shurūṭuh, Asbābuh, marāḥiluh wa Ahdāfuh* /6/ Muʿasasat Iqraʾ, Cairo, 2012 C.E

⁹⁸ See *ibid* /439

He then moves to a particular point in his thesis entitled *Ahdāf al-Tamkīn* [Goals of Complete Hegemony]. He says: “One of the important issues which must be studied is the goals of Complete Hegemony and its fundamental objectives. If we refer to the texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, we will find that the goals of Complete Hegemony are as follows:

1- Empowering the Muslim community in establishing a political authority...”⁹⁹ Strangely enough, al-Ṣallābī goes off on a tangent in discussing the first goal he states as the establishing of political authority and its consequences and becomes totally consumed in discussing minute details, which he claims lead to the establishment of political authority, until the book is concluded, nonetheless without any mention of any other goals for *tamkīn* in addition to the first one, which is the establishing of political authority.

In explaining the stages of *tamkīn*, he speaks of what he has coined as *marḥalat al-Mughālaba* [The Stage of Overpowering], where he states: “the stage of overpowering requires that those who are involved in it must possess a full understanding of the concept of *jihād* in its overarching manner. It also requires a state of readiness for all cadres of all fields to mobilize towards usurping power, imposing the governance of the Sacred Law of Allah and empowering His religion. The mobilization of Muslims in the stage of Complete Hegemony shakes the thrones of tyrants. Every new stage this calling completes increases the fear of the unjust and brings near the end of the rulings of *jahiliyya*. The arrows of this calling are aimed at the very foundations upon which the thrones of the tyrants are erected, the most important of such foundations which it seeks to take away is the usurping of power from their very hands.”¹⁰⁰

Therefore, the concept of *tamkīn*, as they understand it, includes the following:

1. *Tamkīn* is the greatest goal intended by every particular task in laboring for Islam
2. The objective of *tamkīn* is the establishment of political authority
3. The most important stage of *tamkīn* is *mughālaba*
4. *Mughālaba*, in their view, is *jihād*

5. The mobilization in the stage of *mughālaba* and *jihād* shakes the thrones of tyrants, ends the rule of *jahiliyya* and usurps power from the very hands of the rulers.

Verily there is neither power nor might except with and by Allah. To Him we belong and to Him we shall return.¹⁰¹

The theoretical foundation upon which the extremists establish their understanding of *tamkīn* is the following noble verse:

“[Joseph] replied: ‘Set me over the storehouses of the land, for I am a knowledgeable guardian.’” [12:55]

The extremists claimed it to be Quranic evidence proving the permissibility of seeking a position of power and demanding to rule. It is true that they may have found some commentaries by some scholars of exegesis to that effect. Nonetheless, they neglected the fundamental Quranic theory, which explains *tamkīn* as a Divine Practice. Furthermore, Sayyid Quṭb fanned the flames in his commentary on this particular verse, presenting extremely dangerous ideas and incredibly distorted concepts.

Upon examining his commentary in the *ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*,¹⁰² one finds that he is standing before a fully fledged theory, extremely bizarre to an extent, which makes it worthy of dedicating an entire book to discuss it and refute it in detail.

I will attempt to summarize the main features of this theory in bullet points and then offer brief comments to demonstrate the terrible

99 See *ibid* /453

100 See *ibid* /433

101 Two statements uttered by Muslims for various reasons and in various occasions, but especially when hit by a calamity. Such is the expression of the author who in this particular case is using the phrase to indicate sorrow over how extremists distorted the concept of *tamkīn*. [tn]

102 *Fi ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Quṭb /4/2006-2013, 40th Edition., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

confusion he suffered in understanding the concept of *tamkīn* as presented by the Qurʾān, and how he approached it under the influence of bleak perceptions, which in turn caricaturized and insulted the original meaning of the Quranic concept.

Sayyid Qutb's approach revolved around the fact that the scholars of Islam paused before this verse for further contemplation on how to understand the reply of Joseph عليه السلام: "Set me over the storehouses of the land," [12:55] given that this reply may give the impression that he was seeking a position of power and plotting for it, especially in light of the prophetic guidance which clearly instructs against doing so. Imām Muslim relates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* by way of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sumūrrah رضي الله عنه, who has been reported to have said: "The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said to me: 'Oh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sumūrrah! Seek not a position of power; for if it is granted to you due to your demanding it you will be held hostage by it, but if it were handed to you without you demanding it, you will be aided in fulfilling its dues.'"¹⁰³

The Muslim mindset realizes that both the Qurʾān and the noble Prophetic tradition are revelation from Allah. Thus it is impossible that they would contradict one another and in cases where it might appear that they do, the scholarly and scrupulous methodology resorts to extracting aspects of cohesion and complementarity, by which both sacred texts fall into the harmony that naturally binds them.

In this case, the scholars presented us with numerous ways in their application of this scholarly method in finding the common thread linking the verse:

"Set me over the storehouses of the land"[12:55]

on the one hand and the prophetic instruction summarized in: "Seek not a position of power..." Yet despite this, Sayyid Qutb introduced an amazingly bizarre theory, which is but more evidence of the dark depths his mind had succumbed to. Sayyid Qutb's theory is composed of the following points:

1. Accusing the jurists and the general juristic mindset of being extinguished and stagnant during the centuries of regression.
2. Jurisprudence was established through the activity of a Muslim community and it is this very activity that established jurisprudence.
3. Drawing the distinction between what he calls *fiqh al-ḥaraka* [Jurisprudence of Proactivity] and *fiqh al-awrāq* [Jurisprudence of Scrolls]. Furthermore, he accuses those who do not acknowledge this as not being jurists and of being ignorant of what the true nature of *fiqh* is, even the very nature of Islam itself.
4. Jurisprudential rulings have not been established in a vacuum and cannot be sustained in a vacuum. Qutb was alluding to the discontinuation of the Muslim Ummah, because he had excommunicated it and accused it of *jahiliyya* and polytheism. Consequently jurisprudential rulings were obsolete since the Ummah, in his opinion, ceased to exist.
5. Abstaining from electing oneself and seeking positions of power is a legal ruling which has been established in a Muslim community, to be applied within a Muslim community. Thus, the discontinuation of the Muslim community renders this legal ruling obsolete.
6. Proactivity and movement is the forming element in the Muslim community.
7. Continuous proactivity in the Muslim community automatically shapes the destinies of people according to tribulation and steadfastness, and that is how the rest of the community elects such candidates.

8. It cannot be said that there is no need to stand up and elect oneself after the community becomes established because the community is in perpetual movement, which requires people to be constantly evaluated.
9. The contemporary Muslim community is a *jāhili* community meaning it is a community of apostates; hence it is a vacuum where no legal ruling can conceivably exist to begin with.
10. Sayyid Qutb is the only one in possession of knowledge and he is the only one who knows where to start in order to get the Muslims out of this labyrinth.
11. Currently, religion does not cater to the needs of communities because they have become *jāhili* and apostate communities. This is why he does not acknowledge the legitimacy of their existence to begin with and consequently does not bother himself with them. The *jāhili* communities refer to the Muslim communities after Qutb has excommunicated them.
12. First and foremost, a war against the entire world must be waged, so that a Muslim community can be established, and only then can a new jurisprudence be established. Step one is to excommunicate people, which is followed by depriving them of a functioning or valid jurisprudence, followed by step three which is waging a war of subjugation and then finally a new jurisprudence can be established. Thus, Qutb sets himself and his followers, in the name of Islam, on a collision course with the entire world, labeling this as *jihād*.
13. People must be subjugated first and then a new jurisprudence can be established for them later.
14. This does not mean that the rulings of the Sacred Law are not currently applied. Qutb acknowledges their application, however, he is contentious about their

validity in the context of what he considers a non-existent Muslim community.

15. Finally, Qutb's theory can be understood in light of what he believes to be Joseph عليه السلام seeking a position of power. In Qutb's theory, Joseph عليه السلام was allowed to do so only because he lived in a *jāhili* community where the rule of not electing oneself is inapplicable.

Such are the dark and unjust cornerstones upon which Qutb established his theory of jurisprudence. Every point will be corroborated with actual quotations from his writing, accompanied with a commentary exposing the magnitude of his crime committed against Islam and Muslims, the violation of the sanctity of the Qur'ān in distorting its verses and meanings, as well as his attributing to it the darkest of understandings and interpretations.

Suffice it to say, someone like Dr. Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī has clearly judged Sayyid Qutb as totally ignorant of jurisprudence: "If he – Qutb – had a chance to study Islamic jurisprudence, to acquaint himself with its opuses and references for a period of time, he may have changed his opinions. However, his specialization and his cultured nature have not allowed him such an opportunity – especially since the references of jurisprudence, in their manner and style, do not suit his fine artistic taste."

Now let us read the very wording of Sayyid Qutb pertaining to each and every point mentioned previously:

1. With regards to accusing the jurists and juristic mindset of being extinguished and stagnant, he says: "... It is because we see that the matter is deeper and expansive, much more than could be explained by just this. For there are other factors which must be understood in order to comprehend the methodology of deduction from fundamental sources and texts, so that both the

principles and rulings of *fiqh* can be given the dynamic nature which is original to it, which has otherwise become extinguished and stagnant in the minds of the jurists and in the mindset of jurisprudence altogether, during the centuries of extinguishment and stagnancy!”¹⁰⁴

2. Jurisprudence was established only through the proactivity of a Muslim community, and it is this proactivity of the community that created *fiqh*. Quṭb says: “Islamic jurisprudence was not established in a vacuum. Neither does it exist, nor is it understood in a vacuum... Islamic jurisprudence has been established within the Muslim community through the proactivity of this community in confronting the actual and realistic needs of an Islamic life. The opposite is not true. Islamic jurisprudence did not create the Muslim community; it is certainly the Muslim community’s practical proactivity in confronting the needs of an Islamic life that has created Islamic jurisprudence. These two practical historical realities are tremendous in their implications, and they are also essential in comprehending the nature of Islamic jurisprudence, as well as comprehending the dynamic nature of the rulings of Islamic jurisprudence.”¹⁰⁵
3. Drawing the distinction between what he calls *fiqh al-ḥaraka* [Jurisprudence of Proactivity] and *fiqh al-awrāq* [Jurisprudence of Scrolls]. Furthermore, he accuses those who do not acknowledge this as not being jurists and that they are ignorant of what the nature of *fiqh* is, even the very nature of Islam itself. Quṭb says: “those who do this and attempt to apply these rulings as if they were established in a vacuum, and as if they could exist today in a vacuum ... they are not jurists! They have no understanding of the very nature of jurisprudence! Not even of the very nature of this religion to begin with! The Jurisprudence of Proactivity is essentially different from

the Jurisprudence of Scrolls.”¹⁰⁶

4. Jurisprudential rulings have not been established in a vacuum and cannot be sustained in a vacuum. Quṭb says: “there is not a single fully independent juristic ruling that exists in a vacuum, without embodying the factors of the situation, atmosphere, environment and circumstances in which it has been primarily initiated ... it has not been initiated in a vacuum and thus cannot be sustained in a vacuum!”¹⁰⁷
5. Abstaining from electing oneself and seeking positions of power is a legal ruling that has been established in a Muslim community and is to be applied within a Muslim community. Thus, the discontinuation of the Muslim community renders this legal ruling obsolete. Quṭb says: “thus it is an Islamic ruling which appeared so it could be applied in an Islamic community ... it has been established in an actual context, not in an idyllic vacuum. Thus, it is inapplicable, invalid and incapable of establishing its appropriate effect, unless it is applied in an Islamic community ... Islamic in its establishment, in its organic composition and in its commitment to the complete Sacred Law of Islam ... every community which does not satisfy these properties is considered a vacuum in relation to this ruling, which cannot sustain it, neither can it be valid for it, nor can it restore it!...This applies similarly to all of the rulings of an Islamic system.”¹⁰⁸
6. Proactivity and movement is the forming element in the Muslim community. Quṭb says: “Proactivity is the

104 *Fi zilāl al-Qur’ān*, Sayyid Quṭb /4/2006, 40th Edition., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

105 See *ibid*

106 See *ibid*

107 See *ibid*

108 See *ibid* /4/2007/

109 See *ibid*

formative element for this community. For the Muslim community is born to the proactivity of Islamic creed."¹⁰⁹

7. Continuous proactivity in the Muslim community automatically shapes the destinies of people according to tribulation and steadfastness, and that is how the rest of the community elects such candidates. Quṭb says: "... until Allah judges between them and their people in truth and empowers them on earth as He empowered the Muslims the very first time, resulting in the establishing of an Islamic regime in Allah's land. This is when the entire timeline of movement between the point of initiation until the actual establishment of the Islamic regime will serve to classify these proactive members of the struggle into their relevant classes of faith, according to the criteria and values of faith...on such a day those people will need not nominate or elect themselves, because their entire community which has struggled alongside them knows them and therefore elects and nominates them."¹¹⁰
8. It cannot be said that there is no need to stand up and elect oneself after the community becomes established, because the community is in perpetual movement, which requires people to be constantly evaluated. Quṭb says: "It may be said after this: this can only be so in the initial phase, but what after the establishment of the community? This is indeed a question only asked by those who know not the nature of this religion! This religion is in constant motion, it never ceases to move...it moves to liberate mankind."¹¹¹
9. The contemporary Muslim community is a *jāhili* community meaning it is a community of apostates; hence it is a vacuum in which no legal ruling can be thought of to exist to begin with. Quṭb says: "This present *jāhili* community, in relation to the nature of the Islamic regime and its juristic rulings, is but a vacuum in which

neither the Islamic order can be established, nor in which these rulings can be applied.”¹¹²

10. Sayyid Qutb is the only one in possession of knowledge and he is the only one who knows where to start to get the Muslims out of this labyrinth. Qutb says: “I know the starting point of this labyrinth ... it is the assumption that this *jāhili* community in which we live, is a Muslim community, and that the principles of the Islamic regime and its juristic rulings can be brought to be applied within this *jāhili* community in its very present organic composition and its present values and morals! This is the starting point of this labyrinth...once the researcher starts from it he is indeed starting in a vacuum, he delves deep into this vacuum until he is deep into a diaspora until he is stupefied! Certainly, the *jāhili* community in which we live is not the Muslim community, therefore neither can the Islamic order be applied within it, nor can the special juristic rulings belonging to this order be applied... It cannot be applied because of the impossibility of such application which stems from the fact that the principles of the Islamic order and its juristic rulings cannot be activated within a vacuum, because in its very nature it was not initiated within a vacuum, and neither has it been activated within a vacuum.”¹¹³
11. Currently religion does not cater to the needs of *jāhili* and apostate communities because it does not consider their existence legitimate to begin with, consequently it does not bother itself with them. Qutb says: “...just

110 See *ibid* /4/2008

111 See *ibid*

112 See *ibid* /4/2009

113 See *ibid*

as the rulings of this religion which we have does not match the needs of *jāhili* and apostate communities and does not cater for them... because this religion does not acknowledge the legitimacy of the existence of these *jāhili* communities to begin with, consequently it is neither concerned with acknowledging the needs stemming from their *jahiliyya*, nor does it cater for them.”¹¹⁴

12. First and foremost, a war against the entire world must be waged in order for the Muslim community to be established, and only then, a new jurisprudence can be established. Quṭb says: “This movement must be confronted by trial, torment, and tribulation. Some will fail their trials, some will regress, Allah will prove good to His promise for those who have proven good to theirs with Him, giving up their lives through martyrdom and some will be patient in their steadfastness, marching on until Allah judges between them and their people in truth, and until Allah empowers them on earth. Only then will the Islamic regime be established, consequently those who have marched to realize it become impressed with its very imprint and become known for its values... only then will their lives have demands and requirements different in nature and in the manner in which they can be satisfied, to those of the *jāhili* communities...It is then, in the light of the reality of the Muslim community, that rulings can be deduced and a lively dynamic Islamic jurisprudence can be established, not in a vacuum, but in a realistic context with specific demands, requirements and problems.”¹¹⁵
13. People must be subjugated first and then a new jurisprudence can be established for them later. Quṭb says: “We believe that it is time for Islam to take its superior place in the souls of those who propagate its call. They should not make it a mere servant for the *jāhili* status

quo, communities and needs. They must tell the people, especially those who ask them for edicts, that they must come first to Islam, declare their primary subjugation to its rulings...or in other words...they must come first and embrace the religion of Allah, declare their servitude to Allah alone, testify that there is not god but Allah and what it entails without which there can be neither belief nor Islam. That is the belief in Allah's exclusive Divinity on earth, just like He is exclusively Divine in the heavens as well as recognising His Lordship, which means His governance and authority alone in the entirety of the lives of all people, to the exclusion of the lordship attributed by creatures to other creatures, in denying governance between creatures and legislation of creatures for creatures. Only when the people respond favorably to this call, or at least a group of them do, only then can it be said that the Muslim community has taken its first steps into existence. It is that community then, which can be considered the living realistic medium where a lively Islamic jurisprudence can establish itself and later grow to face the needs for this community submissive to the Sacred Law of Allah in action."¹¹⁶

14. This does not mean that the rulings of the Sacred Law are not currently applied. Quṭb acknowledges their application, however he is contentious about their validity in the context of what he considers a non-existent Muslim community. Quṭb says: "By no means does this entail that the rulings of the Sacred Law, as dictated by the Qur'ān and Sunnah, are not currently established from a legal point of view. It only means that

114 See *ibid* /4/2010

115 See *ibid* /4/2011

116 See *ibid*

the community for which these rulings were ordained, which these rulings should only be applied within, in fact where these rulings cannot exist without, is itself inexistent. Hence, the actual existence of these rulings is dependent on the establishment of that community... however, they remain obligatory for those who have reverted to Islam from amongst these *jāhili* communities, mobilizing in the face of *jahiliyya* to establish the Islamic regime and hence become exposed to that which befalls anyone who mobilizes with this religion in the face of *jahiliyya*, its deified tyrants and its masses in submission to the earthly tyrants, in full acceptance of polytheism in matters of Lordship.”¹¹⁷

15. Finally, this reveals the secret of why Joseph عليه السلام sought a position of power, in Qutb’s view, which is only because he lived in a *jāhili* community where the rule of not electing oneself was inapplicable. Qutb says: “This clarification serves to show us the true ruling concerning Joseph’s situation عليه السلام. For he was not living in a Muslim community, where the principle of not electing oneself and seeking a position of power based on such election is inapplicable. He was also of the belief that the prevalent circumstances allowed him to become an obeyed governor instead of a servant in a *jāhili* context.”¹¹⁸

After having demonstrated this outrageous, hostile and unjust perception, I will offer the following thoughts:

1. These claims are still rooted in and established upon the main and primary fundamental in Sayyid Qutb’s worldview, which is to condemn the community of disbelief; accuse it of ignorance of Divine Guidance known as *jahiliyya*, which to him is synonymous to polytheism; to rule that Islam has long been discontinued;

and that colliding with this community and waging war against it is a matter of inevitability in order to establish a Muslim community in the first place. In previous pages, we have quoted from Quṭb's book *al-ʿAdāla al-ijtimāʿiyya fī 'l-Islām* [Social Justice in Islam]: "When we look around the entire planet today, in light of the divine definition of what religion and Islam is, we find that this religion has no existence. This existence ceased to be since the last group of Muslims gave up on believing that governance in the lives of people belongs exclusive to Almighty Allah."¹¹⁹ He also says in *Maʿālim fī 'l-ṭarīq* [Milestones]: "The Muslim Ummah ceased to exist many centuries ago."¹²⁰ This undoubtedly excommunicates the Muslims at large, confirming that they became apostate centuries ago. Consequently, juristic rulings become invalid because of the inexistence of the community where such rulings cannot exist without.

2. This thesis, as well as each one of its implications, is extremely dangerous. For the claims of the discontinuation of Islam, the absolute reigning of *jāhiliyya* and the invalidity of jurisprudence including its rulings and branches is but a transgression against the religion of Islam and the *Muḥammadan* message, which Allah has predetermined as the final message, a mercy to all creation, and He willed that this Ummah be the best nation brought forth to mankind. Nonetheless, Sayyid Quṭb claims it became a nation of disbelief, one ignorant of Divine Guidance and entrenched in polytheism many centuries ago.¹²⁰

117 See *ibid* /4/2013/

118 See *ibid*

119 *al-ʿadāla al-ijtimāʿiyya fī 'l-Islām*, Sayyid Quṭb /183/ Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1415 H. – 1995C.E

120 *Maʿālim fī 'l-ṭarīq* [Milestones], Sayyid Quṭb /8 in Arabic /25 in the English translation edited by A.B al-Mehri

His opinion is the result of total ignorance and the absolute absence of any comprehension of the nature of Islam, how to practice it in different circumstances and states of being. For the Muslims lived and practiced their religion for thirteen years in Makkah, which took them and Islam as its sworn enemies. The Muslims practiced their religion in Abyssinia, in the midst of those who believed differently; people that were not hostile to them but rather welcoming of the Muslims' presence. They also lived and practiced Islam in Madinah, before the Emigration of the Prophet ﷺ, as a minority in the midst of a multi-faith community which included Jews and the tribes of Aws and Khazraj who were predominantly non-Muslim. The Muslims also lived and practiced Islam in the second era of Madinah, after the emigration of the Prophet ﷺ, as a majority which welcomed coexistence in diversity, hosted others and opened up to them. Thus, Islam has given us four different models for living by and practicing this religion in different contexts and diverse ambiances. Nevertheless, this Qutbist ideology barges in to claim that Islam has ceased to exist altogether and that it has been discontinued.

3. Accusing the jurists of being extinguished and stagnant is another major transgression that Qutb commits against the Muslim history of knowledge. It is a result of a complete lack of awareness of the actual trajectory of jurists and their incredible efforts in surveying, following, observing, searching and researching every problem and incident which happened across the Muslim land, after which they diligently labored in perceiving, classifying and studying it, until they reached a juristic ruling pertaining to it. This is but proof of their perfect understanding of the Sacred Law, its higher objectives and tools. Muḥammad Abū 'l-Mazāyā al-Kattānī compiled a book entitled *Tabaqāt al-Mujtahidīn* [Biographies of Independent Legal Jurists], in which he lists information about five thousand *mujtahids* across the generations of the Ummah. This is proof of the uninterrupted continuity of Independent Reasoning

through the generations.

4. The transgression against the status of the Prophet of Allah, Joseph عليه السلام, in claiming that he lived in a *jāhili* era in which juristic rulings were defunct and irrelevant because jurisprudence and its rulings cannot exist in a vacuum, is but terrible ignorance of the stature of a noble prophet who is not in need for rulings, because in fact he is directly connected and supported through direct revelation which comes to his aid whenever a new incident occurs, revealing to him the exact Divine verdict in this regard.
5. Our master Joseph عليه السلام neither demanded a seat of power, nor did he seek one. The usage of “Set me over the storehouses of the land,” [12:55] as evidence to the contrary is a huge mistake in understanding the specific implication of the verse, an unawareness of the context of the Qurʾān, imposing erroneous meanings upon the actual implications of the Qurʾān and the actions of the prophets and a projection of Qutb’s distorted and subjective ideas upon the actions of the prophets of Allah and the implications of the Qurʾān. This is in effect putting words into the Qurʾān’s mouth, so to speak, all because they give their own preconceived notions precedence over the actual holy text, which is all a grave mistake.
6. The key to understanding the noble verse “Set me over the storehouses of the land,” [12:55] is knowledge. Allah describes Joseph عليه السلام as a person of knowledge in the context of many consecutive verses. It is only when his remarkable knowledge of agriculture and crisis management in the face of famine became evident that the Egyptian people, well-experienced in agriculture, testified to the unrivaled exceptional understanding, knowledge and experience of Joseph عليه السلام. The king then requested his presence several times, but Joseph

ﷺ declined. Finally, when the king managed to have an audience with Joseph ﷺ, the former offered to appoint the latter to any position he wished for. After much persistence, he agreed to become a minister or an advisor on matters of the economy. In reality, Joseph ﷺ did not demand the seat of power in the first place. He did not seek it. He was invited and summoned to take on its responsibility. He was repeatedly pressured in to accepting it while continuing to decline. A full elaboration of this noble verse will follow soon.

What follows is a thorough study of the concept of *tamkīn* as understood by the mindset and methods of deduction of al-Azhar al-Sharīf:

Allah, Exalted is He in His Transcendence, uses the word *al-tamkīn* many times when speaking of believers and nonbelievers alike. He uses it in speaking of previous nations of ancient times, as well as in speaking of mankind in general. Whenever He speaks of *tamkīn*, He attributes it only to Himself. Every time *tamkīn* is mentioned, it is presented as an act of the Divine, not a human duty. This means it is something to be created by Allah, not a human obligation. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And We have given you [mankind] empowerment over the earth, and appointed for you therein a livelihood. Little thanks do you give!” [7:10]

The meaning of *tamkīn* here is that Allah, the Exalted, equipped this planet with gravity, suitable temperature, specific weather, atmospheric layers, trees, evaporation, clouds, rain, flowing rivers and the presence of plants and fruits. Thus, He calls this Divine creation *tamkīn* or empowerment over this particular planet. He has not placed us on Mars, Venus or the Moon. He has not created similar circumstances on these planets and other celestial bodies. So, it is this Divine ordinance and preparation bequeathed by Allah to this universe that He has called the *tamkīn* or empowerment of man.

It is even the case that Allah, the Exalted, ordained that *tamkīn* is something which could happen to a non-Muslim:

“See they not how many a generation We destroyed before them, whom We had empowered in the earth more firmly than We have empowered you, and We shed on them abundant showers from the sky.”[6:6]

Behold the magnitude of bliss and natural wealth Allah has bestowed upon them. He gave them plenty of rain for forests to flourish, to establish agriculture and to allow for fisheries. He then says:

“... and made the rivers flow beneath them.”[6:6]

This indicates a continuation in the accumulation of wealth as well as increased prosperity, all of which are forms of *tamkīn*. However, this empowerment is not dependent upon belief. The proof for this is in the rest of the verse:

“...Yet We destroyed them for their sins and created after them another generation.” [6:6]

The fact that the earth is laden with wealth, in addition to the existence of programs, work plans and efficient execution has led to what is described as empowerment, which can still take place in the absence of belief. The people mentioned in the verse were not Muslims, nonetheless the expression chosen by Allah to describe what He bestowed upon them, be it surplus, power, authority or international power in their time, is *tamkīn*. It is He who bestowed all of this upon them as a purely Divine act.

Allah also says:

“Those who, if We empower in the earth, establish their prayer and pay the *zakāt* [alms], and enjoin good and forbid evil. And to Allah is the sequel of all affairs.” [22:41] He also

says: “Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will cause them to succeed others in the land, as He gave succession to those who were before them, and that He will empower for them their religion which He Has approved for them, and that after their fears He will change it to security.” [24:55]

The concept of *tamkīn*, as pertaining to nations, is similar to the concept of love in the case of individuals. It cannot be demanded as a task or duty. An individual cannot be demanded to make people love him deep down in their hearts. Rather, he may be told to treat people in an excellent manner, to mingle with them with perfect behavior, to be fair to them and that is when Allah will cause their love for you to sprout. Al-Bukhārī related by way of Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه, who reports that the Prophet ﷺ said: “If Allah loves a servant, He calls unto Gabriel: ‘Allah loves such and such person, so love him.’ So Gabriel loves him. Then Gabriel calls unto the heavenly beings: ‘Allah loves such and such a person, so love him.’ So the heavenly beings love him and then acceptance is established for him on earth.”¹²¹

Thus, what man can be held accountable for is a number of moral and behavioral rulings, which he is capable of carrying out in a successful manner, resulting in Allah establishing acceptance for him. Otherwise if he carries them out in a shocking manner, it will only serve to breed the resentment of people towards him, because he is pretentious, phony, arrogant and posturing amongst people with his best behavior. What, then, of a person who claims that he will create people’s love for him, laying plans and procedures and even fighting in favor of such plans! This is precisely what the extremists have done with regards to the issue of *tamkīn*.

Allah instructed people to worship Him, to acknowledge His Oneness and to believe in Him. He then instructed them to work towards creating development, civilization, prosperity, honoring mankind, preserving life, intellect, honor and ridding minds of ignorance. If we as a nation fulfill these duties amongst other nations, in addition to establishing an efficient economy, political order and an ever-evolving educational system, Allah

will empower us amongst the nations. In delving deeper into the Quranic luminescence that speaks of empowerment, we find that the aforementioned analysis is the very best that the scholarly Azharite mindset is capable of producing, bound by fundamentals of Divine Practices, juristic maxims, the etiquette of analyzing the verses of the Qur'ān and summoning all the verses pertaining to the same topic to be studied with insight.

The story of Joseph عليه السلام is a good example. Allah says:

“The man who bought him in Egypt said to his wife: ‘Receive him honorably. Perhaps he may prove useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.’ Thus We empowered Joseph in the land, so that We may teach him to interpret events, Allah brings to pass what He will, though most men do not know.”[12:21]

Where is the empowerment in being bought up to be a slave? This is but a divine decision. Allah decided that Joseph عليه السلام be thrown into the well leading to his enslavement, so that he could be taken to Egypt in order to then have an encounter with those who were on speaking terms with the king, which would then create for him a fine reputation with regards to his learning and knowledge. This in turn would cause the higher bureaucrats in the kingdom to enthusiastically seek him in order to employ his expertise and make use of his learning. This very course, which Allah willed for Joseph عليه السلام so that the king would know him and then seek his capabilities, was *tamkīn*.

Tamkīn is but a wealth of knowledge, which forces others to respect your expertise and seek your aid. Behold this context:

“They said: ‘This is a confusion such as happens in dreams; and we are not skilled in the interpretation of dreams.’ Thereupon the one of the two men who had been released,

121 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī /2/629, Kītab Bad’ al-Khalq, Bāb Dhikr al-Malā’ika. Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, Egypt, 1421 H.

after a long time remembered and said: 'I will tell you the interpretation of it, send me [to Joseph in prison]. O Joseph! O man of truth! Tells us about seven fat cows which seven lean ones devoured; also of seven green ears of corn and [seven] others which were dry, that I may return to my people, that they may know.' He said: 'You shall sow, as usual, for seven years. Leave in its ears what you reap, except a little which you may eat.'" [12:44-47]

This is a plea for Joseph عليه السلام, the renowned expert in managing the affairs of kingdoms and states, to help them comprehend: "...seven fat cows which seven lean ones devoured; also of seven green ears of corn and the [seven] others which were dry..."[12:46] Joseph عليه السلام responded to their plea. He explained that which they could not comprehend. Not only that, he transformed his explanation into a masterplan. Thus *tamkīn* or empowerment in his case was in the form of his wealth of knowledge, which provided him with the foresight to predict future crises, as well as handling and solving them. It is when Joseph عليه السلام demonstrated such knowledge that:

"the king said: 'Bring him before me so that I may attach him exclusively to myself.' Then when he had spoken to him he said: 'You shall today become with us honored and trustworthy.'" [12:54]

Allah had ordained acceptance for Joseph عليه السلام, so the king requested to see him because of his unrivaled knowledge, moreover when he actually spoke to him, the king was surprised to find that before him was an economic mindset of the first rate, so he said to him:

"You shall today became with us honored and trustworthy."[12:54] Consequently, "[Joseph] said: 'Set me over the storehouses of the land, for I am a knowledgeable guardian.'"[12:55]

Behold how empowerment takes place. However, despite its clarity, the extremists cut out and isolate a smaller phrase out of the greater context of the verse:

“Set me over the storehouses of the land,”[12:55]

and audaciously claim that this verse is evidence for the permissibility of scheming to usurp power. The crux of the matter with regards to this topic is that a person should prove himself in matters of knowledge, so that one’s country can see the expertise he possesses. This is when they will seek him in his capacity as a problem solver. They will then seek to employ his knowledge and willingly desire for him to take charge of their affairs.

Empowerment is a divine act, created by Allah out of nothingness. For our part we are instructed to work according to certain schemes and duties. Some of which include the development of the earth, exerting effort, sustaining scientific expertise, establishing countries, as well as worshipping Allah and purification of the heart. If we succeed in fulfilling such duties, Allah will then establish for us a worldwide positive reputation, which can be called empowerment. Such empowerment to nations is exactly the same as love is to individuals. Only Allah can create it, and our responsibility is to simply work towards attaining its causes and fulfilling its dues.

The primary key in understanding *tamkīn* in the case of Joseph عليه السلام is knowledge, which was repeated many times, such as in Prophet Jacob’s عليه السلام saying:

“Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of events.”[12:6]

Thus, learning the interpretation of and foreseeing events is an important key of knowledge.

This key is also repeated in the verse:

“The man who bought him in Egypt said to his wife: ‘Receive him honorably. Perhaps he may prove useful to us, or we

may adopt him as a son'... Thus We empowered Joseph in the land, so that We may teach him.”[12:21]

Allah then says yet again:

“And when Joseph reached his full manhood, We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge.”[12:22]

A fourth time, this key of knowledge is repeated when He says:

“He said: ‘the food which you are given [daily] will not come to you before I shall have told you the interpretation before it befalls you. This is part of the [knowledge] that my Lord has taught me.”[12:37]

Perhaps the reason why knowledge was mentioned before wisdom in the Chapter of Yūsuf in Allah’s words:

“Your Lord is indeed Knowing, wise,”[12:6]

as well as in two more verses in the chapter, is due to the fact that the empowerment of Joseph ﷺ came forth from the Divine Knowledge, which was bestowed on him, as opposed to what He says about Abraham ﷺ:

“... and gave him tidings of [the birth of] a knowledgeable son. Then his wife came carrying and beating her face. ‘I am but a barren old woman!’ she said. They said: ‘Thus did your Lord say, He is the Wise, the Knowing.’”[51:28-30]

In this case, He mentioned wisdom before knowledge, because bestowing a son to Abraham despite of old age is a matter of Divine Wisdom.

Later, the great calamity befell the country, serving to expose Joseph’s ﷺ expertise, talents, gifts and wealth of knowledge. The entire Egyptian

people and the authorities ruling the country requested his help. They pleaded with him to share with them his wealth of knowledge in the form of procedures and plans capable of rescuing the country from a serious economic threat. The king had dreamt of seven fat cows, which seven lean ones devoured, as well as seven green ears of corn and seven dry ones, so he said:

“O council! Tell me the interpretation of my dream.”[12:43]

It was a situation where a specific epistemological expertise was needed to explain the implications of this dream, to decipher the code and predict future events:

“...if you understand the meanings of dreams.”[12:43]

However, the council sought by the king were out of their depth and so:

“They said: ‘This is a confusion such as happens in dreams; and we are not skilled in the interpretation of dreams.’”[12:44]

They negated any possibility of having knowledge of such a matter, which is further proof to the Quranic theory of empowerment, in the case of our Master Joseph عليه السلام, that it is based upon knowledge that Allah has bestowed on him. On the other hand, the community’s lack of similar knowledge at that time became evident in His saying:

“Thereupon the one of the two men who had been released, after a long time, remembered and said: ‘I will tell you the interpretation of it, send me [to Joseph in prison]. O Joseph! O man of truth! Tell us about seven fat cows which seven lean ones devoured; also of seven green ears of corn and [seven] other dry ones, that I may return to my people, that they may know.’”[12:45-46]

This is evident in the words of the man sent to Joseph عليه السلام because he said that they specifically needed him because they had no knowledge of what they otherwise witnessed Joseph's عليه السلام incredible knowledge of, and in such an overpowering manner. Behold how many times the word knowledge appeared in this context. Joseph عليه السلام then begins to demonstrate his overpowering knowledge and the amazing solutions to the impending economic crisis:

“He said: ‘You shall sow, as usual, for seven years,’[12:47] which is a seven year plan. “Leave in its ears what you reap, except a little which you may eat.”[12:47]

This is when they realize that they need a specific agricultural plan on a national scale, as well as other plans for storing and consumption.

“Then will come after that seven hard [years], which will consume all but a little of that which you have stored for them.”[12:48]

This shows how he successfully guided them through the crisis, to the extent that at the end of it they will have not only covered their need for wheat through the seven years of famine, but moreover have a minor surplus.

“Then will come after that a year in which people will have abundant water and in which they will press [wine and oil].”[12:49]

The advice he gave regarding cultivation was undoubtedly, as a matter of practicality, discussed thoroughly and in much detail. However, the Qurʾān, consistent as it is in not mentioning such details did not mention them. It only mentions conclusions and overarching issues, makes a concise mention of the premises and generally overlooks minute details.

Thus there is no mention of detailed discussions, which probably included cultivation methods, crop types needed to overcome the famine,

a working schedule, manpower and the requirements of irrigation and farming. All of which is part of the great expertise possessed by Joseph عليه السلام pertaining to an issue so deeply engrained within the very experience of the Egyptian people, whose civilization was established, first and foremost, as an agricultural one. The Egyptian people who had lived for thousands of years cultivating the banks of the River Nile, listened attentively to the advice of this dignified master, and to their astonishment, he was instructing them in their own field but with far more advanced details and techniques, the type and level only available to a prophet receiving revelation.

“He said: ‘You shall sow, as usual, for seven years.’”[12:47]

Joseph عليه السلام meant that they need to do so with a sense of urgency, will and mobilization in an attempt to ensure full production throughout the seasons to come to accumulate as much wheat as possible. He then said:

“...what you reap,” [12:47] which indicates another set of procedures, pertaining to reaping expertise and “...Leave in its ears what you reap ...”[12:47] which is another expertise in storage. “...except a little which you may eat.”[12:47] “Then will come after that seven hard [years], which will consume all but a little of that which you have stored for them,” [12:48]

entailing that he had explained to them particular methods of storage. Such methods would keep the wheat edible without expiring during the seven years, as well as how to spend it in a manner which would make these quantities enough for the Egyptians and the populations of Greater Syria and other neighboring countries, yet having a smaller quantity left at the end of it all.

It was an unusual expertise in multiple fields of knowledge and working schemes, astounding and new even to a people rooted in this realm. So when this knowledge was revealed, and the decision-making circles grew aware of him, it was they who sought after Joseph عليه السلام, to

benefit from him and save the country, especially in the absence of an expert of similar caliber.

“And the king said: ‘Bring him before me!’” [12:50] But Joseph عليه السلام refused and said: “Go back to thy lord and ask him [first to find out the truth] about those women.” [12:50]

However, the king insisted on calling Joseph عليه السلام:

“...Bring him unto me, so that I may attach him to my own person.” [12:54]

This is decisive proof that Joseph عليه السلام did not seek high office, and that the *tamkīn* meant by Allah in this context is the acknowledgment of all the expert houses and centers of decision-making of Joseph’s عليه السلام time that he was a man of great knowledge and tremendous rare expertise, which they were in dire need of. It was only after the king had convened with Joseph عليه السلام, realizing the depth and breadth of his knowledge, that he said:

“Behold, [from] this day thou shalt be of high standing with us, invested with all trust!” [12:54]

It is important to stress that this convention happened only after Joseph عليه السلام was invited over and over with him refusing to meet the king every time. It is clear that he did not seek to rule. Joseph عليه السلام was neither a fortuneteller nor a predictor of the future. He was but a far-sighted expert with strategic abilities, able to perceive what is to come from looking into numerous evidence, which could be considered a perceptive futuristic type of jurisprudence.

One might wonder: is this a case of pure prophetic expertise? Or is it the fruit of exerting effort, research and study? The answer is that the subject concerns Joseph عليه السلام who was raised in a prophetic household, which had accumulated the illuminations of four generations of prophets. For he is

a noble prophet, son of a noble prophet, son of a noble prophet, son of a noble prophet; Joseph عليه السلام the son of Jacob عليه السلام, the son of Isaac عليه السلام, the son of Abraham عليه السلام, peace be upon them all. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ called him: “The noble, son of the noble, son of the noble son of the noble.”¹²² Such a household with such a lineage in knowledge, sainthood, command and leadership, provides a young person with experience from a very early age, which means that even if he were not to be brought up as a prophet he would still become a leader high in command.

Such were the customs of that time. Pharaonic dynasties would produce a number of consecutive kings inheriting power, generation after another. Such is the case of Tutankhamen who was just over twenty years old when he passed away, yet despite his young age he was one of the most famous kings in history, because he was brought up in a household known for leadership and command. If such is the case of any man under such circumstances, then what of someone who enjoyed similar privilege from an early age, being raised in a household of prophets who were sought by the populations of Greater Syria for their wisdom in solving problems and disputes, but in addition to that has also been chosen by Allah to bear the light of prophet-hood. Joseph عليه السلام grew up possessing the seeds of knowledge, the accumulative experience of centuries in conflict resolution, crisis management and the refined outcome of his forefathers’ chieftainship, as well as the coherent knowledge of the Divine principles governing the cosmos.

This ‘Josephian’ archetype rich in experience, knowledge, resourcefulness and comprehension was so compelling that the lords of management in the Egyptian state rushed to seek aid and guidance from it. It is reminiscent of the well-known rule of *Uṣūl*: “The default regarding the acts of prophets is that they are general, unless a proof is established to them being qualified”.

Thus there are particular matters of prophet-hood that are exclusive to prophets alone, whereas other matters and actions of their’s are open to be

¹²² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Būkhārī* /2/949, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Sūra Yūsuf, Bāb 1*. Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, Egypt, 1421 H.

emulated by everyone else, such as rituals of worship, management, crafts, corresponding with kings and so on. In fact the latter group of acts came into existence specifically as didactic tools, serving to form a methodology to be followed. The difference is that while non-prophets undertake such endeavors based on worldly learning and training, prophets do so based on divine tutelage.

This is indeed the case concerning all acts similar to oration, issuing religious edicts, judicial acts, management, professions, crafts, finance and correspondence with kings or any such acts of diplomacy which can be seen in the biographies of prophets. The default as pertaining to all such actions is that they are prophetic acts brought into existence by Allah in order to be emulated and practiced by humans who also acquire the necessary tools to carry such acts out.

This is a rule that applies to all of the prophets of Allah including Joseph عليه السلام. He demonstrated tremendous experience in matters of agriculture, impressive even to a people with a legendary record in this matter. He put forth plans, schemes, consultations and procedures which helped the country to overcome a severe economic crisis.

So what was the source for all these actions? Both prophet-hood and experience together, which means that Joseph عليه السلام set an example that can be emulated and applied by us. For the default position with regards to the actions of prophets is that they are open for emulation and application, except in very rare occasions which are proven beyond doubt to be specific to them and not to be emulated by others.

This is precisely why Allah Almighty recorded and highlighted this glimpse from this particular scene for us, and carefully selected it for us from amongst a long reel comprising the life of Joseph عليه السلام, estimated to be sixty to seventy years. Such a long and rich life must have had scores of other scenes; nonetheless, Allah Almighty did not keep their memory in the consciousness of humanity, except for a select few glimpses, which form a learning methodology accessible to Joseph عليه السلام by virtue of gift and prophet-hood. We, the rest of humanity, are expected to emulate and

follow this methodology, which is accessible to us through gift, acquiring experience, study, learning, scientific research, and the establishing of scientific cadres, etc.

This is similar to the teaching of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ: “Learn your rituals from me [by emulating my actions].”¹²³

It is as if Joseph عليه السلام is saying: learn from me about management, becoming trustworthy and you will be in demand. Apply the same methodology, taking into consideration the circumstances of your time, place, society and epistemological realms, in order to fulfill the duties of your time, just like Joseph عليه السلام successfully did so. Consequently, an effect will materialize, which is none other than *tamkīn* or empowerment.

The empowerment demonstrated by Allah at the hands of Joseph عليه السلام was not limited to only one type of knowledge. The sciences that he introduced to the well-established Egyptian civilization were multifaceted. He demonstrated unique legal knowledge in introducing an important legislative amendment that improved the Egyptian legal system of the time as expressed in Allah’s words:

“And [later,] when he had provided them with their provisions, he placed the [King’s] drinking-cup in his brother’s camel-pack. And [as they were leaving the city,] a herald called out: ‘O you people of the caravan! Verily, you are thieves!’ Turning towards the herald and his companions, the brothers asked: ‘What is it that you miss?’ They answered: ‘We miss the King’s goblet; and he who produces it shall receive a camel-load [of grain as reward]!’ And [the herald added:] ‘I pledge myself to this [promise]!’ [12:70-72] The brothers of Joseph عليه السلام replied: ‘By God! Well do you know that we have not come to commit deeds of corruption in this

123 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim /2/943/, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, Bāb istiḥbāb rami jamrat al-‘aqabah yawm al-naḥr rakiba wa bayān qawlih sallā Allah ‘alaiḥ wa sallam li t’akhudhū manāsikakum.

land, and that we have not been thieving!’ [The Egyptians] said: ‘But what shall be the requital of this [deed] if you are [proved to be] liars?’[12:73-74]

The Egyptians were asking about the requital of this deed as if it were proven by firm evidence and proper investigations. The brothers of Joseph عليه السلام, so confident in their innocence, replied that if one of them was proven to have committed such a crime then they should be taken as a prisoner:

“Its requital? He in whose camel-pack [the cup] is found-he shall be [enslaved as] a requital thereof!”[12:75] The verse continues: “Thereupon [they were brought before Joseph to be searched; and] he began with the bags of his half-brothers before the bag of his brother [Benjamin].”[12:76]

Allah Almighty says:

“In this way did We contrive for Joseph.”[12:76]

Joseph عليه السلام was in need for the experience of his brother to manage the economy of Egypt. When he started overseeing such affairs and laying down schemes, he saw the need for certain human resources of specific caliber and areas of expertise, which could be perfectly matched through the profile of his own brother. He then anticipated the arrival of his brothers and when he came to know of their arrival, he resorted to this legal amendment unusual in the context of the Egyptian legal system of the time. This is alluded to in Allah’s words:

“...under the King’s law, he would [otherwise] not have been able to detain his brother,” [12:76]

because it was not the legal standard in Egypt to punish he who has committed such an act to be taken and imprisoned. Nonetheless, Joseph عليه السلام had to manage the situation in a way that would guarantee he could

employ yet another capable expert alongside him, to successfully manage the economic affairs of Egypt into safety. But what would be the legal rationale to keep his brother behind? He made his own brothers utter the very words, which would serve his purpose, based on what they know of the Sacred Law of their father Isaac عليه السلام, and their grandfather Abraham عليه السلام. He caused them to declare the standard sentence in their own Sacred Law, which became a legal precedent in effect to this day. This was a case of introducing another legal system in which the accused is given the choice of the court of law they would face trial in and the type of sentence they would receive. In such a system, once the accused chooses a specific legal system to be tried with, the standard legal system of the country is amended to incorporate this new set of laws. This is why Allah Almighty says:

“... under the King’s law, he would [otherwise] not have been able to detain his brother,” [12:76]

alluding to the amendment to the standard laws of Egypt. He then says:

“In this way did We contrive for Joseph. We raise to [high] degrees [of knowledge] whomever We will - but above everyone who is endowed with knowledge there is One who knows all.” [12:76]

The word ‘knowledge’ appears again to confirm that it is the key to the concept of empowerment as demonstrated in the story of Joseph عليه السلام. Such is the appropriate understanding, which proves the error in using the story of Joseph عليه السلام as proof to the permissibility of plotting to usurp power by any means. It also refutes the idea of considering the assumption of power a goal in and of itself. Such claims are audacious claims based on an erroneous understanding of the Noble Qur’ān and wrongfully attributed to the Sacred Law.

Another example of empowerment is that of Dhu 'l-Qarnayn [The Two-Horned One], whom Allah described as someone who had been given empowerment in numerous occasions in the Noble Qur'^{ān}:

“And they will ask thee about the Two-Horned One. Say: ‘I will convey unto you something by which he ought to be remembered’ Behold We empowered him on earth...”[18:83-84]

But what is the basis of this empowerment? Allah Almighty answers this question:

“... and endowed him with [the knowledge of] the right means to achieve anything [that he might set out to achieve.]”[18:84]

It is clear in the verse that Dhu 'l-Qarnayn did not seek possessions. Rather it is Allah Almighty who endowed him with the right means to achieve anything that he might set out to achieve. At first he set out on a campaign towards the furthest point reachable in the East. A campaign of such magnitude towards such a destination requires the presence of experts of terrain and bodies of water, manpower, soldiers, provisions, maps, lines of supply and the management of a chain of command guaranteeing discipline amongst the ranks of sailors. Then he set out on another campaign in the opposite direction towards the West, and then a third campaign towards a place which Allah Almighty refers to as *bayn al-saddayn* [Between the Two Mountain Barriers]. It is worth mentioning that many commentators of the Noble Qur'^{ān} spent some time attempting to identify the location of this place. The Noble Qur'^{ān} speaks to us of a human deed, which occurred in a given historical period and exists somewhere on the globe. But where is this place? The Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd financed an expert traveller by the name of Sallām al-Tarjumān in his campaigns to the furthest northern territories in hope to find the remnants of the barrier erected by Dhu 'l-Qarnayn. The attempt to find locations alluded to in the Noble Qur'^{ān}, or other sacred texts, grew into a full-

fledged scientific discipline. The Europeans took interest in the hope of finding places mentioned in the Bible and that gave birth to Archeology. The Noble Qurʾān tacitly encourages such quests, as understood in some of its verses. It alludes to Noah's Arc:

“And, indeed, We have caused the Arc to remain forever a sign [of Our grace unto man]: who, then, is willing to take it to heart? “[54:15]

This means: I will preserve it as a sign, so that generations to come can unearth it, find it and learn from it.

Allah Almighty also says:

“and, verily, [to this day] you pass by the remnants of their dwellings at morning-time and by night. Will you not, then, use your reason?”[37:137-138]

This verse alludes to the dwellings of the people of Lot and reminds us that our passing by their remnants should not be taken for granted and that we should heed the lessons.

This is why the scholars of Islam began to ask: Where are the places that Dhu 'l-Qarnayn conquered so that we can discover the empowerment he was bestowed with? This is why another Abbasid Caliph al-Wāthiq Billah financed a subsequent historical campaign and commissioned Sallām al-Tarjumān to go to the Caucasus and the furthest northern territories near Siberia in hope of finding the remnants of the barrier erected by Dhu 'l-Qarnayn. Al-Tarjumān's campaign was recorded and mentioned in a book by al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī titled *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq* [Journey of the yearning in discovering the horizons].¹²⁴ This record was also preceded by another book by Ibn Faḍlallah al-ʿUmārī titled *al-Masālik wa 'l-mamālik* [Roads and Territories]. Such historical accounts were examined thoroughly by a number of orientalist, including the Russian

124 *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*/2/934/ ʿalam al-Kutub, Bierut, 1409 H. – 1989 C.E

orientalist Ignaty Krachkovsky, who were also experts in geography and their verdict was that the accounts show that such campaigns did take place. Another contemporary researcher was the illustrious former Indian Minister of Culture Abū al-Kalām Āzād, who took great interest in what we call the Archeology of the Noble Qurʾān, in parallel to the Biblical archeological undertakings in the River of Jordan, the Dead Sea and other locations in Palestine.

Abū al-Kalām Āzād's research as well as a number of his articles were mentioned by Professor ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Nimr, the former Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowments, in the seventies in a book fully dedicated to Āzād's archeological efforts pertaining to Dhu 'l-Qarnayn and his barrier. Ḥamdī Ḥamza Abū Zayd is yet another researcher who was also a member of the Saudi Senate. He authored a book titled *Fakk asrār Dhu 'l-Qarnayn wa Ya'gūg wa Ma'gūg* [Deciphering the Secrets of Dhu-l-Qarnayn and Gog and Magog]. His book was based on fieldtrips and research based on Chinese manuscript archives. His conclusion must be examined critically, for he believes that Dhu 'l-Qarnayn mentioned in the Qurʾān is Akhenaten, the Egyptian monotheistic Pharaoh. Many Egyptologists raised concerns and objections to this because there is no mention of such campaigns undertaken by Akhenaten in any of the papyri. Nonetheless, his effort remains a step on the road.

More importantly what does Allah Almighty mean by empowerment in the context of the story of this noble master? He says:

“Behold, We empowered him on earth, and endowed him with [the knowledge of] the right means to achieve anything [that he might set out to achieve].”[18:84]

In this context, empowerment is the final sum of all endeavors undertaken by Dhu 'l-Qarnayn. Thus, empowerment is not an independent deed or activity which was undertaken by Dhu 'l-Qarnayn. Empowerment was the final outcome of his historical and administrative undertakings. Allah Almighty says:

“and so he chose the right means [in whatever he did]. [And he marched westwards] till, when he came to the setting of the sun, it appeared to him that it was setting in a dark, turbid sea; and nearby he found a people [given to every kind of wrongdoing]. We said: ‘O thou Two-Horned One! Thou mayest either cause [them] to suffer or treat them with kindness!’”[18:85-86]

This verse pertains to his endeavors regarding the people of the West. Then Allah Almighty says:

“And once again he chose the right means [to achieve a right end] [And he marched on] till, when he reached [a place] between the two mountain-barriers, he found beneath them a people who could scarcely understand a word [of his language].”[18:92-93]

The Divine account of Dhu ‘l-Qarnayn’s campaign towards the East is mentioned in a concise manner, except when it speaks of a particular location in which the population is described as those who could scarcely understand a word of his language, meaning that they were less developed in knowledge and scientific advancement.

“They said: ‘O thou Two-Horned One! Behold, Gog and Magog are spoiling this land. May we, then, pay unto thee a tribute on the understanding that thou wilt erect a barrier between us and them?’ He answered: ‘That wherein my Sustainer has empowered me is better [than anything that you could give me]; hence, do but help me with [your labor’s] strength, [and] I shall erect a rampart between you and them!’”[18:94-95]

Dhu 'l-Qarnayn's statement meant that the knowledge, craftsmanship and technology he possessed were much better and more efficient and that all he needed from them was labor.

"... but help me with [your labor's] strength, [and] I shall erect a rampart between you and them! Bring me ingots of iron!"[18:95-96]

But where could ingots of iron be procured, especially in a land populated by people who could scarcely understand anything? This certainly means that Dhu 'l-Qarnayn, along with his learned captains, educated this ignorant population in the methods of mining and industry. Then another field of knowledge is alluded to, which is that of architecture: "Then, after he had [piled up the iron and] filled the gap between the two mountain-sides,"[18:96] because it is understood that for the erection of a sound structure, the building blocks must be organized in an orderly fashion. He carries on:

"... 'Bring me molten copper which I may pour upon it.'"[18:96]

Such was the multi-disciplinary knowledge he was alluding to when he limited the help he needed from the population to only manpower willing to learn and labor. This might be the lesson of wisdom enshrined in the final verses of *Sūrat al-Kahf*, especially followed by the opening verses of *Sūrat Maryam*:

"O Yaḥya!¹²⁵ Hold fast unto the divine writ with [all thy] strength!"[19:12]

This alludes to another type of strength and to highlight that the sum total of combining the power of knowledge with the power of efficient execution is empowerment.

In conclusion, the concept of empowerment, as mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān, can be summarized in one word: Civilization. It means that all the institutions of a given country are performing efficiently and excellently. It means the existence of successful scientific research, consistent production, job opportunities capable of eradicating unemployment, a decrease in poverty and the disappearance of adult and child homelessness. It means that such prosperity fuels even better and more efficient scientific research in order to guarantee the dignity of mankind, the preservation of the environment and resources, all the while faith and values being upheld and cherished.

This conclusion serves to expose the erroneous approach of the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots in their attempt to use the verses of empowerment to support their own agenda. The appropriate understanding of the Noble Qurʾān, in line with the authentic methodologies of comprehension and derivation, does not support their conclusions. To the contrary, their efforts are but forceful distortions, which attribute to the Noble Qurʾān that which it never suggests. This is why it is necessary to fulfil the duty of clarification, so that the true meanings of the Noble Qurʾān continue to be maintained, preserved and protected against all sorts of deviations.

Chapter 7

The Concept of Homeland

A comparison between the distorted conception of Homeland in the Islamist mindset with the appropriate conception in the Azharite mindset

First:

The Conception of Homeland According to The Islamists:

In the past eighty years, the Islamists have produced an erroneous intellectual approach in their attempts to address several major questions. Such attempts have been hampered by their lack of the appropriate tools needed to comprehend the Sacred Law in addition to the problematic and tense general mood caused by the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate, the occupation of Palestine and the psychological toll of imprisonment. The outcome was an extremely distorted understanding that served to skew and obliterate their views on a number of issues. One such important and sensitive issue is that of the 'Homeland'. Delving deep into the Islamist mindset in order to identify the components that make up their understanding of the Homeland, a few main points can be identified:

- Homeland is nothing but worthless dust.
- Love for one's Homeland is a nonsensical sentiment which must be resisted and fought, just as one must fight against their inclination to commit sin.

- The idea of Homeland is mutually exclusive to the idea of the Caliphate or the Ummah, and hence it must be completely rejected.
- Homelands are nothing but geographical allotments created by colonialism and thus cannot be loved or acknowledged.
- Homelands are "... the dwellings in which you take pleasure,"¹²⁶ which are denounced by God.
- The absence of any proof in the Sacred Law, be it from the Qurʾān or the Sunnah, pertaining to the love of one's Homeland.
- The Ḥadīth in which the love of Prophet Muḥammad for Makkah is mentioned is unique and specific to Makkah alone and cannot be generalized to include other Homelands.

This is a brief summary of the main ideas. We shall now look at statements made by classical scholars – be they scholars of Quranic exegesis, prophetic traditions, jurists, saints and literary authors – concerning the love of one's Homeland and how treasured it is in the view of Sacred Law. In fact, the Sacred Law serves to further one's primordial love for one's Homeland and highlights the nobleness of the natural tendency to defend it and commit to its cause. All of which is clearly evident in various verses of the Qurʾān and prophetic traditions.

Sayyid Quṭb says in the *ẓilāl*: "The banner which must be defended by the Muslim is that of his creed. The country, which he fights for, is the country where the Sacred Law is established. The land, which he must defend, is *dār al-Islām*, which adopts the Islamic way as its way of life. Apart from this, any other concept of Homeland is a non-Islamic concept, foaming with ignorance – of Divine Guidance – and is thus rejected by Islam."¹²⁷

He continues: "Between these ascending summits and descending valleys, falling rocks can be seen here and there, in the name of shrewdness, argumentativeness, political savvy, astuteness, cunningness, craftiness, state interest, national interest, group interest...to the end of the long list

of such titles and labels...which, once thoroughly checked, nothing but maggots hide beneath them!!”¹²⁸ Qutb carries on: “Today people establish gods called “Nation”, “Homeland” and “the People” as part of a long list of such labels. They are nothing but non-physical idols, exactly like the idols established by the pagans, which are nothing but deities competing with God Almighty, the Exalted, for His creation, to whom one’s children are dedicated, just as they were dedicated to the ancient deities.”¹²⁹

He also says: “Ignorant systems define bonds as that of blood and kin, land and Homeland, skin-color and language, race and ethnicity, and profession and class! At times it defines it as mutual interest, mutual history or mutual destiny, all of which are *jāhilī* concepts. Be they similar or different, they are all in categorical conflict with the root of the Islamic concept.”¹³⁰

- First: Homeland is nothing but worthless dust. Sayyid Qutb says in *ẓilāl*: “Those who look for justifications of Islamic *jihād* in protecting the “Islamic Homeland” are in fact belittling the “ideology” in considering it lesser than “Homeland”! This is certainly not how Islam views these concepts. This is but an innovated view, alien to Islamic sensibility. For creed, the ideology in which it is manifested and the community where this ideology reigns are the only things worth considering in the Islamic sensibility. The land itself represents no value and projects no weight!”¹³¹

126 Alluding to Qur’ān [9:24] “Say: “If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clan, and the worldly goods which you have acquired, and the commerce whereof you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure - [if all these] are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God makes manifest His will; and [know that] God does not grace iniquitous folk with His guidance.”[tn]

127 *Fī ẓilāl al-Qur’ān*, Sayyid Qutb /2/708, 40th Edition., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

128 See *ibid* /2/753/

129 See *ibid*/3/1413/

130 See *ibid* /4/1886/

131 See *ibid* /3/1441/

This is a reductionist view of Homeland. For it is not worthless dust. Our Homeland consists of a people, a civilization, institutions, history, triumphs, causes, regional and international stature and political and intellectual influence in our Arab and Islamic domains. Our Homeland is made up of genius men and women who created the history of this nation through their contributions to sacred knowledge, economics, the military, diplomacy, literature, art and many other fields. Ignoring all of this and reducing the Homeland to a handful of worthless dust is an act of disloyalty which stems from a dismembered and disfigured understanding of a grand and dignified issue.

- Second: Love for one's Homeland is a nonsensical sentiment, which must be resisted and fought, just as one must fight their inclination to commit sin.

This is a conflation of the sinful inclinations that God has commanded us to refrain from and transcend above on the one hand, and the noble sentiments and primordial motivations that God saw as sufficient in and of itself on the other. For the stability and rootedness of such a concept within the human psyche and nature made it needless to codify within the Sacred Law, simply because it is engrained in human nature enough to guide man's behavior in the right direction. This was alluded to in the book of Shafi'ī fiqh authored by the Proof of Islam, al-Ghazālī, entitled *al-Wasīṭ*: "Natural tendencies suffice the need for further proof. For the appropriate order of this world is based on such tendencies and the appropriate order of religion is established on that of the world and the systems which constitute it beyond any doubt."¹³²

This statement is an example of how a mind illuminated by the light of the Sacred Law operates, by virtue of his comprehending the very intention of God. Thus, such a mind has been rightly guided to the fact that the Sacred Law is satisfied with the rootedness of certain matters within human nature, in a way which requires no further affirmation through legal verdicts or rulings. One such matter is love of the Homeland. In his book, *al-Mujālasah*, al-Daynūrī narrates by way of al-Aṣma'ī who said: "I

heard a Bedouin saying: 'If you wish to know a man's quality, look for his yearning to his Homeland.'"¹³³

Bizarrely enough Sayyid Quṭb acknowledges this noble and primordial feeling when he says: "The feeling of melancholy generated by departing one's Homeland is indeed the prime feeling lingering within a soul which is invited to immigrate. This is precisely why He touches their hearts twice: In His loving and intimate calling: 'Oh my servants' and in His allusion to the vastness of earth: 'My land is vast.'"¹³⁴ He even quotes from a scholar: "The bee finds its hive, despite the wind blowing strongly against the grass and trees, concealing every visual clue. Man's sensory capabilities are too weak to guide him back to his Homeland, however he manages to compensate for his weakness by his navigation tools. Indeed we are in need for this instinct and it is our intellect which compensates for its absence."¹³⁵

He also says of Prophet Moses ﷺ: "Why did he return to Egypt after having fled from it; a fugitive who had murdered a Copt when he saw him fighting with an Israelite, fleeing Egypt at a time when the Israelites were being oppressed in countless ways? Why did he leave the safety and tranquility he found in Madyan beside Shu'ayb, his father-in-law, who had given him refuge and one of his daughters in marriage too? It is the weight of Homeland and kin, which was used by God to prompt Moses for his role to come...and this is exactly how we walk about in life, motivated by yearnings and callings, aspirations and rewards, pain and gain, which are nothing but the outward causes veiling the hidden intention, the veil seen by the eyes hiding the Hand unseen and unfathomable by sight, the Hand of the Mastermind, the Guardian, the Almighty, the One who holds absolute sway over all that exists."¹³⁶

He also says: "Immigrating in the way of God is transcending above all yearnings of the soul, all which it cherishes and treasures: family,

132 *al-Wasīṭ fī al-Madhhab* /7/7, Dar al-Salam, Cairo, 1417 H.

133 *al-Mūjallasah wa Jawāhir al-ʿilm* /1/60, Dar Ibn Ḥazm, Beirut, 1423 H. – 2013 C.E

134 *Fī zilāl al-Qurʾān*, Sayyid Quṭb /5/2749/, 40th Edition., Dar Al-Shurooq, Cairo, 1434 H. – 2013 C.E

135 See *ibid* /6/2884

136 See *ibid* /4/2330

neighborhoods, Homelands, memories, possessions and all the other worldly gains."¹³⁷ Quṭb also says: "His Lord reminds him of the blessings He has bestowed upon him; for He has guided him to ask for forgiveness, alleviating the misery which was weighing on his chest and saving him from absolute misery. However, He has not left him without a trial of sorts, in order to discipline him, as well as prepare him for His intention. He tried him with fear and with fleeing from just punishment. He tried him with being an alien far from his family and Homeland. He tried him through the hard work of being a shepherd when it was he who was groomed in the palace of the greatest kings of earth, the most luxurious basking in extraordinary goods and chattels."¹³⁸ He also says: "How I wonder what thoughts were in Moses' mind, which caused him to return to Egypt after the time of his contract was satisfied, despite his fearful worrisome flight from it? What caused him to forget about the danger awaiting him, after he slew a man in the land where Pharaoh was already conspiring with his courtiers to murder him? It is but the Hand moving him in all of his steps, this time moving him through the primordial yearning to family and kin, to Homeland and background, which caused him to forget about the danger pursuing him after he had fled from it alone and unwelcome, all in order for him to fulfill his mission which he was created and prepared for from the very first moment."¹³⁹

- Third: Homelands are mutually exclusive to the idea of the Caliphate or the Ummah, and hence they must be completely rejected.

Since the sense of belonging is an integral component of human motivation and one of the most important components of the primordial state in which God has created man, the Sacred Law acknowledges it and builds upon it. The Sacred Law does not, by any means, subdue such a component or ignore it. Rather it polishes it and places it in an orderly fashion in designating lofty milestones for such yearning and belonging. The Sacred Law responds favorably to this natural primordial instinct while protecting man from its potential pitfalls. The Sacred Law has no

squabble with specific affiliations as long as they operate within, originate from, strengthen and lead to the overarching belonging. In such a manner, the Sacred Law deems it permissible to love a specific location where a person may have been born and bred as his Homeland. For this is not in opposition to the love of the entire Ummah, rather it is part of it, not unless this love becomes a sort of chauvinism causing a Muslim to treat others with enmity. Only in such a case does the Sacred Law reject such a sentiment. It is from this stance that the Sacred Law puts emphasis on the love of Homeland. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was known to love Makkah and long for it, despite Madīnah being his residence and abode.

This also explains the ease with which a Muslim can reconcile his love for a particular scholastic, intellectual or research approach with the wider, more general outline. In fact, such specific affiliations are nothing but various springs hailing from a vast fountainhead. This order of cohesive affiliation is not the same as the type of affiliation denounced by the Sacred Law, the type which eventually leads to fanaticism and animosity towards the rest of the Muslims. The Sacred Law's inherent capability of striking the right balance between various circles and levels of affiliation in an appropriate hierarchy serves to nourish a diversity of opinions and affiliations, while preventing destructive fanaticism and unfounded animosity.

Affiliation exists in different circles and levels. The wider circles do not negate the narrower ones. The narrower circles should not contradict the wider circles. Affiliating and belonging to one's Homeland does not negate his belonging to the Arab nation or the Muslim World, for they are intertwined circles.

If affiliation is ignored, it will lead those who ignore it to a complete denial of Homeland, people and kin, which is unhealthy. Likewise, taking one's affiliation to extremes can lead to a conflict with one's other levels of affiliation. Thus, there is a fundamental difference between giving each

137 See *ibid* /4/2438

138 See *ibid* /4/2335

139 See *ibid* /5/2691

circle of affiliation its due without conflict or negation, which is what we are advocating on the one hand, and fanaticism and zealotry, which causes a person to put one of their affiliations in conflict with the others.

The emphasis I am putting on this meaning is an attempt to rectify a common mistake amongst some contemporaries who think that fulfilling the duty of religion lies in denying their love for their Homelands. However, this is proven to be erroneous, especially in the light of the statements of the knowledgeable scholars of Islam. Their words demonstrate how the love of one's Homeland is one circle of affiliation based on primordial human nature, encouraged and nourished by the Sacred Law, which also establishes the right balance between all circles of affiliation, maintaining justice between them all in order to achieve the harmony and perfection of the humanness of humanity.

- Fourth: Homelands are nothing but geographical allotments created by colonialism and thus cannot be loved or acknowledged. Ḥasan al-Bannā says: "Islam does not acknowledge geographical borders and does not take into consideration ethnic diversity."¹⁴⁰

Homelands are not geographical allotments created by colonialism. They are ancient entities, which existed in diversity for millennia before colonialism came into existence. The fact that there is an established current stability based on these borders necessitates its preservation and protection. However, if needed and agreed upon, the cancelation of such borders should not take place through manipulation and conspiracy. It should be facilitated through honorable agreements and respectable mechanisms, such as in the case of the European Union. Unless the cancelation of borders is undertaken in such a manner, the status quo should be respected and preserved. In addition to this, it is important to stress that the significance of the Homeland should not be reduced to the concept of borders. The significance of the Homeland is the sum total of historical, epistemological, regional and global values. The Egyptian Homeland in particular is born to the intertwinement of genius loci, genius of time and a genius of man.

The reduction of the conceptual image of the Homeland cannot pass unless concepts are confused and distorted. The outcome is a forged image that devalues Homeland, its historical achievements and contributions, falsely connecting it to negative and hated concepts such as colonialism. This is a cunning technique, which makes the thought of the Homeland interlinked with that of a much-hated colonialism, resulting in the actual denouncement of the Homeland being equated to denouncing colonialism.

- Fifth: Homelands are "...the dwellings in which you take pleasure,"¹⁴¹ which were denounced by God.

A misconception was intentionally fabricated by the zealots and groups based on the verse alluded to, which is *Sūrat al-Tawba* 24:

"Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clan, and the worldly goods which you have acquired, and the commerce whereof you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure - [if all these] are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God makes manifest His will; and [know that] God does not grace iniquitous folk with His guidance."

They equated the concept of the dwellings denounced in the verse with Homelands. Thus, forcing a false dichotomy where the love of one's home country on the one hand and the love of God, His Apostle, and the struggle in His cause on the other hand become essentially mutually exclusive, which leads to being iniquitous in the eyes of God.

140 *Magmū'at al-rasā'il Li al-Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā, Risalat al-mu'tamar al-khāmis*, Ḥasan al-Bannā /297/5th Edition, 2012 C.E, Dar al-Kalimah lilnashr wal tawzi'

141 Alluding to Qur'ān [9:24] "Say: "If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clan, and the worldly goods which you have acquired, and the commerce whereof you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure - [if all these] are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God makes manifest His will; and [know that] God does not grace iniquitous folk with His guidance."[tn]

This projection is full of error and is the result of a distorted understanding of the Noble Qurʾān, which then leads to quoting the Qurʾān in contradiction to its original message. It is the direct result of approaching the Qurʾān without the appropriate scholarly tools, which al-Azhar teaches to its students over their lifetime. The reason being that the Qurʾān was revealed in a clear Arabic tongue, hence the prerequisite of mastering a number of sciences such as the sciences of *Balāghah* [Rhetoric], *Naḥw* [Grammar], *Uṣūl al-fiqh* [Principles of Jurisprudence] and *Tafsīr* [Qurʾānic Exegesis]. Approaching the Qurʾān without such scholarly tools is impossible and the only outcome of such an attempt is to project one's own wishes onto the original intentions of the Qurʾān and putting words in its mouth. This is indeed a dangerous and most perilous approach.

It is beneficial to move on to demonstrate how to approach the Qurʾān using the example of this particular verse. The verse speaks of an individual who considers his own personal issues and narrow inclinations to take priority over grander causes. The Sacred Law only condemns those who make their fathers, sons, possessions, or houses obstacles or excuses when being negligent towards their greater duties. The attitude denounced in the verse is that of someone who prefers their house, palace, property, company or possessions to the love of God and His Apostle. Such an individual would slack once told that their Homeland is in danger and that they are needed to defend it as God has ordered. Such an individual would refuse to leave their mansions and possessions behind to step up and come forth for the defense of their Homeland, because their own dwelling is more preferable to their Homeland and its causes. Such causes are what God alludes to in the verse as “struggle in His cause”.

God Almighty tells us in this verse that the Sacred Law commands you to keep your priorities in the right order. Personal and individualistic interest should not supersede the general interest of the community as a whole. Beware of drowning in your narrow selfish interests, especially at the expense of the wider good and overall interest of the Ummah.

So how could they confuse this noble Quranic concept with their manipulated and distorted concepts, which they use to create such a false and destructive dichotomy?

The response to the rest of the points upon which they create their distorted image of the Homeland is included in the following pages.

Second:

The Correct Conception of the Homeland in Islamic Thought and the Mindset of al-Azhar al-Sharīf

The love of Homeland in the Noble Qurʾān and the commentaries of the Exegetes:

The eminent Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī presents us with a most subtle inference from the Noble Qurʾān as supporting evidence for the love of one's Homeland, further proving that it is a deeply rooted motive within human nature. This is in his allusion to the meaning embedded in God Almighty's words:

“Yet if We were to ordain for them: ‘Lay down your lives,’ or, ‘Forsake your Homelands’...”[4:66], where he says: “... He equated the forsaking of Homeland to laying down one's life.”¹⁴²

It is as if God Almighty says: Had I ordained for them the two most grievous of hardships in existence, they would not submit to this ordinance - the laying down of one's life on the one hand and the forsaking of one's Homeland on the other.

This is firm evidence proving that the love of one's Homeland is so deeply rooted that forsaking it begets pain tantamount to the pain and suffering resulting from laying down one's own life.

The renowned scholar al-Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī in his book *Mirqāt al-mafātīḥ* says: “Parting with Homelands is the most grievous of trials, thus God Almighty's words:

142 *al-tafsīr al-kabīr*, Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī /15/165/

“...for oppression is even worse than killing,”[2:191] were explained to mean the banishment from one’s Homeland, especially since He followed it by saying: “...and drive them away from wherever they drove you away.””¹⁴³

Thus, every verse speaking of the high esteem in which migration is held can be traced back to this principle meaning of tremendous patience and self-control in dealing with one’s separation from their Homeland.

A poet once said:

*Rare is patience, if befalls you one of three -calamities-
Beyond the most composed intellects of the most wise
Forced exodus from a land you dearly love
Parting with companions and the loss of a loved one*

The love of Homeland in the Noble Prophetic Traditions and the commentaries of the Ḥadīth Exegetes:

Al-Bukhārī narrates, as well as Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Tirmidhī, by way of Anas رضي الله عنه, who said: “Whenever the Prophet ﷺ returned from a journey and saw the walls of Madīnah, he would make his mount go fast, and if he was on an animal (i.e. a horse), he would make it gallop because of his love for Madīnah.”

This prophetic tradition includes a prophetic act, which being infallible and inspired by God, serves as guidance. It is an act of the heart of the Prophet ﷺ, which combines truthful inspiration, undisputed revelation and the natural yearning of one’s heart to one’s Homeland. Such a noble state motivated by the noblest of motivations is expressed in the Prophet’s encouraging his mount to go faster so that he could be reunited with his beloved Homeland. This is precisely why al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, in his book *Fath al-Bārī fi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, says: “This prophetic tradition is proof of the great rank of Madīnah, as well as a proof for the permissibility of loving one’s Homeland and longing for it.”¹⁴⁴ A similar statement was made by al-Badr al-^cAynī in his book *Umdat al-Qārī*.¹⁴⁵

This prophetic tradition is a guide for us, teaching us about some of the noble prophetic behavior which should be emulated, just like any other prophetic Sunnah concerning ritualistic worship, etiquette, morals, best practices of craftsmanship and professions, various facets of development, international relations and the rest of the prophet matrix of values which forges the appropriate Muslim personae in its complete and perfect form.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī, in his book *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, says: “He loved ʿĀʾishah and he loved her father, he loved Usama, he loved both of his grandchildren, he loved sweets, honey, the Mount of Uḥūd, he loved his Homeland, he loved the *Anṣār* and he loved countless things which cannot be forsaken by a true believer ever.”¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the scholars considered the very reason for travel being a hardship is due to parting with one’s Homeland. This is evident in the commentary of some of the exegetes of the prophetic tradition narrated by Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī by way of ʿUqba ibn ʿĀmir al-Juhanī (عقبة بن عمار الجحاني) who related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Three supplications will undoubtedly be answered: the supplication of a parent for their child, the traveler and the one who has been wronged against whoever wronged him”. The exegetes explained that the reason for the answering of the supplication of the traveler is due to his suffering and sadness caused by parting with his Homeland, family and kin. The renowned scholar al-Mināwī says in explaining this tradition in his book *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*: “... this is because travel is when it is most probable to experience heartbreak due to experiencing long periods away from Homelands. Suffering hardships and heartbreak is amongst the greatest reasons for supplications to be answered.”¹⁴⁷

Some wise sages also say: “Longing for the Homeland is from the tenderness of the heart. Tenderness of the heart is from caring. Caring is from mercy. Mercy is from the kindness of primordial nature. The kindness of the primordial nature is from the purity of guidance.”

143 *Mirqāt al-mafātīḥ*, al-Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī /7/582

144 *Fath al-bārī*, al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿI-Ḥaḍl Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī /3/621

145 *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*, al-Badr al-ʿAinī /10/135

146 *Siyar aʿlām al-nuballāʾ*, al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī /15/394

147 *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, al-Mināwī /3/317

God Almighty has instilled a natural disposition in all of His creation, to yearn and long for their Homelands. This is easily observed in various types of beings. Lions and their cubs long for their dens, camels long for their territories, ants yearn for their villages, birds rush back to their nests and man is created with a natural disposition to hold his Homeland dearly. Ibn al-Jawzī, may Allah have mercy on his soul, says in his book *Muthīr al-gharām al-sākin*: “Homelands are eternally loved.”¹⁴⁸

The Arabs took notice of this reality and consequently took pleasure in creating names for the Homelands of different beings. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in *Fathī al-Bārī*: “Arabs use different names for different beings. They call man’s abode *waṭan*, the camel’s *‘aṭan*, the lion’s *‘arīn* and *ghābah*, the stag’s *kinās*, the lizard’s *wujār*, the bird’s *‘ush*, the wasp’s *kūr*, the jerbil’s *nāfiq* and the ants’ *qaryah*.”¹⁴⁹

All of these species have a yearning to their Homelands, to the extent that Rabi‘ah al-Baṣrī compiled a book titled *Ḥanīn al-ibil ilā ‘l-awṭān* [The Yearning of Camels to Their Homelands]. So how about man?!

All these species, incapable of intelligible speech, are still very expressive of their yearning for Homeland through their behavior, so should not man in his privileged perfections, especially regarding his loyalty, be more accomplished in this area?

The well-known poet Aḥmad Shawqī, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said:

Homeland is owed a preordained tax of blood from every free man

Similarly I say that because of the perfect humanity of man, he should be more worthy of being loyal to his Homeland and more willing to love and defend it, more than any other being or specie.

The Love of Homeland as viewed by Jurists:

Some jurists implied that the wisdom and great reward of pilgrimage is its ability to temper one’s soul through parting with one’s Homeland and

leaving one's comfort zone. Imām al-Qarāfi says in his book *al-Dhakhīrah*: "The benefit of pilgrimage is the tempering of the soul by parting ways with Homelands."¹⁵⁰

The Love of Homeland as viewed by Saints:

All saints are known to love their Homelands, to the extent that Abū Nu'aym narrates in his book *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, through his unbroken chain of transmission to the master of ascetics and worshippers, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, who said: "I suffered not in parting with anything, as much as I suffered parting with my Homeland."¹⁵¹

The Love of Homeland as viewed by Sages:

Al-Aṣma'ī says: "Indian sages said: Three characteristics found in three types of living beings are worth commending: the camels' longing for their territories, even if they had left them for so long. The birds' longing for their nests even if they were located in barren lands and man's longing for his Homeland even if living in another country is much more rewarding."¹⁵²

Al-Daynūrī relates in his book *al-Mujālasah* by way of al-Aṣma'ī who said: "I heard a Bedouin saying: 'If you want to know the quality of a man, see if he yearns for his Homeland, if he longs for his brethren and if he weeps over his past.'"

The Love of Homeland as viewed by poets and masters of literature:

Poets have forever wept and caused others to weep in their longing for their Homelands. They have produced masterpieces in expressing their

148 *Muthīr al-gharām al-sākin*, ibn al-Jawzī /75, Dar al-Hadith, Cairo, 1415 H. – 1995 C.E

149 *Fath al-bārī*, al-Hāfiẓ Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī /3/358, preceded by ibn al-Jawzī in *Kashf al-Mushkil* /3/363/

150 *al-Dhakhīrah*, Imām al-Qarāfi /3/194

151 *ḥilyat al-awliy ā'*, Abū Nu'aim /7/380

152 *al-Maqāṣid al-Ḥasana*, al-Aṣma'ī /297

yearning, to the extent that any researcher attempting to survey their output in this field can easily compile a voluminous compendium consisting of noble verses and lofty poems expressing the tremendous effect experienced in parting with one's Homeland. At times, their love for their Homelands might have been despite the lower quality of the breeze, drinking water and general conditions of living in certain areas, all of which would be overlooked just because these areas were part of the Homeland.

An example of which is the poet's words:

*The lands we made familiar to ourselves despite of them being
unfamiliar...
such is the case even with things imperfect
Familiar a land may become, with breeze and water of poor quality,
nonetheless it is Homeland*

It is because of this natural disposition that God Almighty holds migration and migrants in high esteem. It is specifically because of the amount of hardship entailed in being severed from one's Homeland, childhood playgrounds and the places where they have grown up. Such are the reasons why God Almighty mentions it in the Noble Qur'ān with the highest regard on several occasions.

Ibn Bassām says in his book al-Dhakhīrah: "The Homeland is beloved and the place where one grows up is close to the heart. The mindful yearns to his Homeland just like a camel yearns to its territory. A nobleman would never desert the land where the midwives – who helped deliver him – reside, nor does he forget about the land inhabited by his wet-nurses."¹⁵³

The author of *Dīwān al-ma'ānī* also says: "Ibn al-Rūmī explains the reason why a Homeland must be loved and in this regard he followed in the footsteps of Aḥmad ibn Ishāq al-Mūsīlī who said:

*I love the land where Sūlaymā resides, even if it were a landscape
barren
For my life is not spent in loving the land, rather the beloved
inhabiting it*

Ibn al-Rūmī said:

*I have a Home, I swore never to forsake
 Forever! Never leave it for anyone else to take
 Its where I enjoyed my youth of bliss plentiful
 The similitude of folk enjoying your shade in full
 So intimate it has grown over my own soul
 Like its my own body, once parted, death doth cajole
 Indeed men are in love, each man with his own Homeland
 Where youth made its proudest stand
 Whenever about their Homeland they do reminisce
 Their age of childhood remembers them and that is what they miss
 The cruel have treated me unjustly - attempting to force me out of
 it - and that's why I am in your chains
 But if your right hand leaves me without bliss - in retaining it -
 let not your left hand with wrath miss the cruel ¹⁵⁴*

A brief bibliography dedicated to the love of Homeland:

The high regard with which our predecessors held this noble meaning resulted in them writing about it extensively. They even dedicated entire books solely for this topic.

1. Al-Jāhīz wrote a book entitled *Ḥubb al-waṭan* [The Love of Homeland], which is available in print.
2. Ṣāliḥ ibn Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Hāshimī al-Ṣāliḥī al-Ḥalabī al-Qāḍī who was mentioned by Ibn ʿAsākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq*: “He has compiled a book dedicated to the longing for Homeland.”¹⁵⁵
3. Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Saʿd ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Samʿānī, who said in his book *al-Ansāb*: “I have

153 *al-Dhakīra ilā Maḥāsīn Ahl al-Jazīrah*, Ibn Bassām /1/343/ Dar al-Thaqafa, Beirut, 1417 H. – 1998 C.E, Critically edited by Dr. Iḥsān ʿAbbās

154 *Dīwān al-Maʿānī*, Ibn al-Rūmī /2/189

155 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, Ibn ʿAsākir /23/325

- mentioned his story in the book *al-Nuzū ilā al-awṭān*.¹⁵⁶
4. Abī Ḥātim Sahl ibn Muḥammad al-Sijistānī authored a book titled *al-Shawq ilā al-awṭān* [Yearning for Homelands]
 5. Abī Ḥayyān ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Tawḥīdī authored *al-Ḥanīn ilā al-awṭān* [Longing for Homelands]. Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khallād al-Rāmahurmūzī who authored *al-Manāhil wa 'l-a'ṭān wa 'l-Ḥanīn ilā al-awṭān* [The Fountainheads and Territories in the Longing for Homelands]
 6. Dr. Sulaymān ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Ḥamūd Abā 'l-Khalīl who authored *Muqawwimāt Ḥubb al-waṭan fī daw' ta'ālīm al-Islām* [The Pillars of Love for the Homeland in Light of Islam's Teachings]
 7. Dr. Zayd ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Zayd who authored *Ḥub al-waṭan min manẓūr shar'ī* [Love for Homeland from the Perspective of Sacred Law]
 8. Dr. Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn Muṣṭafā al-Dālī who authored *al-Waṭan wa 'l-istitān: dirāsa fiqhīyyah* [Homeland and Settlement: A Juristic Study], as well as many more authors and books.

The list of literature regarding this topic is almost endless.

¹⁵⁶ *Al-Ansāb*, al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm Ibn Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī /3/244

Chapter 8

The Islamic Project: Reality and Myth

There has been much talk recently about the Islamic Project. Arguments and counter-arguments have been made, with some supporting the idea while others reject it. Many accusations have been bandied about, with those opposing the Islamic Project accused of being the enemy of God and His Prophet, while praise has been showered on those who are seen to be proponents of the Islamic Project. These judgments have been made without any explanation of what the Islamic Project actually is.

This is an attempt to take a step back and ask what this Islamic Project is. We need to answer this question before being able to evaluate and judge its implications. We must firstly acquire a proper understanding of the notion before passing judgment.

The attempt presented here is the outcome of the Azharite outlook in understanding Islam, its sciences, its applications and in locating and diagnosing problematic issues. In the absence of the insightful Azharite outlook, concepts become obscured by meaningless argumentation, resulting in further misconceptions.

The Islamic Project is an attempt at presenting specific, tangible, detailed answers to contemporary questions and problems in the realms of epistemology, philosophy, sociology, economics, politics, administration and diplomacy.

These answers stem from the Muslim epistemological paradigm which

consists of Islam's sacred texts; objectives; consensuses; legal rulings; legislations; ethics; values; divine practices; the maxims of legal theory and jurisprudence; and its literature and art. This is achievable through the development of sciences, curricula and theories that can be developed into practical programs leading to the founding of institutions and administrative systems.

The ultimate goal of such a project is to produce epistemological and universal services and applications capable of creating institutions and civilization that truly manifest the spirit of the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* [Objectives of the Sacred law]; namely the preservation of life, intellect, lineage, religion and wealth; upholding sustainable development; respecting humanity; the reverence of foundation of morality; being open to the global community in a mutually beneficial manner; highlighting the value of childhood; the value of women; protecting the environment as well as all its inhabitants including humans, animals and plants and inanimate things; all interwoven with a divine common thread leading man back to his Lord. This type of civilization along with its applications is inclusive of all people, whether they are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, socialist, secularist, liberal, leftist, atheist or any given religion or sect. This type of civilization leaves no one feeling forced, hated, or persecuted. Even if they do not believe in the creed of this civilization, they can still enjoy the shade of its mercy, justice and compassion; for such a project produces good values and disseminates them amongst all people.

The bedrock of the Islamic project, its fountainhead, essence, ultimate goal and compass is the matrix of universal morals, human values and the pursuit of happiness of man in this world and the next. The Prophetic Tradition: "I have been sent but to perfect noble character," is its ultimate motto. Any application or result that distorts, perverts or deviates from this objective is rejected as utterly false.

This endeavor is of the type of *takhrij al-furū' 'alā 'l-Uṣūl* [extracting branch sciences from core principles]. It is the responsibility of the *Mujtahid* [Independent Legal Jurist] as well as Jurisprudence Councils. It is the extrapolation of the disciplines of Humanities, Administration and

Economics from the Principles of Islam and its Epistemological Paradigm according to the legitimate methodologies of derivation in *Uṣūl al-fiqh* [Principles of Jurisprudence] and rational sciences.

A number of steps must be undertaken in order to achieve such an endeavor, including the establishment of research centers, discussion groups and workshops, which bring together scholars of the highest caliber in *Fiqh* [Jurisprudence], *Uṣūl al-fiqh* [Principles of Jurisprudence], *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* [Objectives of Islamic Law], along with experts in contemporary affairs including, for example, diplomacy; finally resulting in a vision, a plan, and criteria for evaluation. Through this mechanism the issues facing diplomats, for example, can be identified; together with the required actions, applications and specific questions that may come up in their particular line of work, which can then be analyzed and understood. The consequences of such issues and their implications on international relations in the wider context of global diplomacy can then be meticulously studied, scrutinized and developed organically in accordance with the principles of Islam. In this manner, an original, credible and authentic synergy can be created guaranteeing a true representation of the objectives of Islam within a particular discipline, based on sharp awareness, elicitation, and accurate derivation of the answers the noble *sharīʿa* presents us with.

These measures can only be achieved if we are able to establish a safe environment of mutual trust, respect, intimate friendship, and a commitment to the exchange of knowledge and experience between all parties, regardless of any differences in opinion and understanding. An overarching commitment to constructing a country for all, by all, should be the inevitable common motive.

In the realm of politics, a similar process must also take place. It is crucial to revisit political systems; the notion of the State; its complex network of relationships vis-à-vis individuals and different social institutions; defining the functions of the State; and how all of the above intersects with various liberties. We must fully comprehend contemporary political systems together with their philosophical origins in the writings of thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Hegel and others. We must then return to the sources of the *sharīʿa* by developing and expanding upon

the writings of Imām al-Haramayn, al-Māwardī, Ibn Khaldūn and others. Only then can we say that we have fulfilled the minimum requirements for a specific, tangible, detailed project which offers specific answers to contemporary questions, sufficient for the development of further work and applications. The intellectual criticism and practical application of such theories will eventually enhance and refine any details which may have been missed, initiating a new phase of study focusing on how such theories would interact with the existing political systems. The spirit of such a process is best conveyed in the saying of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī: “I spent twenty years studying history (and sociology) in order to assist me in the realm of *fiqh* [jurisprudence]”.

Only when similar steps are taken within a holistic integrated approach in all disciplines including philosophy, epistemology, the empirical sciences, economics and administration, can we call such a project Islamic.

An example of such an effort is what was achieved by our friend, Muṣṭafa Sa‘fān, who has completed a study on the reasons and limitations that cause the suspension of the execution of certain Islamic legal verdicts in the modern world. His study listed seven hundred different problems, which all require solutions. This research took a lifetime of studying, practicing law and tackling judicial matters, yet it remains untouched in terms of analysis and in attempting to find answers from within the multi-layered jurisprudential, legal and judicial heritage of this nation.

The prospect of having various Islamic Projects is not problematic at all, especially when the theoretical basis and methodologies of research used to bring forth such projects are related to conjectural matters, mostly concerned with the ancillaries and practical applications, where plenty of room for diverse opinions is acceptable, moreover encouraged. This diversity produces richness in options and flexibility in choices for every single problem or case, while adhering to the overall rules of Islamic orthodoxy. It is another piece of evidence for the magnanimity and tolerance, divinely embedded in the *sharī‘a*, especially in its ability to accommodate the different needs and limitations of the *mukallafīn* [legally responsible individuals].

The Islamic Project is the diligent effort of Muslims in attempting

to apply the *sharīʿa* to modern realities. One of the roles of the *sharīʿa* is to present legally permissible solutions to everyday problems, while attempting to provide alternatives for solutions that are not permissible, as well as rectifying any deviations from the *sharīʿa*. This can only be accomplished by keeping track of the development and evolution of theories and philosophies, which will help to prevent the Islamic Project from stagnating, and allow it to continuously generate new answers to problems as and when they arise in the modern reality. An important characteristic of this project is its ability to distinguish *thawābit* [constants] from *mutaghayyirāt* [variables], while being able to identify those elements within a legal verdict that make it susceptible to change; such as time, space, circumstances or individuals. The inability to distinguish between constants and variables, conflating them together or mistaking one for the other will result in the petrification of the *sharīʿa* in a particular moment in time.

The Islamic Project can only be established on the back of erudite scholarship in the field of humanities, allowing its proposals to be guided and informed by the specific psychological and social needs of the subject of study, whether they be Egyptian, Arab or otherwise. We are yet to lay the groundwork for this epistemological framework.

The attempt to Islamize certain diplomatic and administrative products that have been developed by another civilization rooted in a completely different philosophical discourse to ours is a crime against Islamic civilization and its sciences. To pretentiously impose this upon the psychological and sociological makeup of the Egyptian person, after sugarcoating it with Quranic verses and Prophetic Traditions and then wrapping it up in Arabic is nothing but a farce. Externally it may look Islamic but once the surface is scratched one will find that the concealed components, specifics, epistemological fundamentals, and psychological points of departure in reality adhere to and stem from a philosophical discourse contrary to our identity and civilization. Such attempts are doomed to failure and will lead to a schizophrenic existence with a lack of coherence between intrinsic conceptual values on the one hand and practical daily applications on the other. A subtle yet categorical difference

between religion and ideology is that the former emanates from hearts and consciences, giving rise to human moral behaviors that precede the existence of any constitutional or legal manifestation.

The Islamic project cannot be fulfilled without the mobilization of scientific research as well as utilizing the enormous yet largely untapped scientific and scholarly potential that has been forced into hibernation by despair and frustration due to neglect, poverty and the complications that dominate our scholarly circles. Such a project is of a monumental national scale and requires the involvement of generations of researchers, who must be equipped with all the necessary research tools and scientific resources, helped by serious funding. However this cannot be steered by an economy on its knees. Therefore, our top priority should be to mobilize different groups towards resuscitating the economy and activating endowments dedicated to funding scientific research; a vital role in this civilizational awakening, which must be taken up by the institutions of civil society.

Nonetheless, any attempt to promote an Islamic Project before actually conceptualizing and crafting it, will have grave consequences. Inviting people to buy into a non-existent idea that offers no or low quality solutions, will cast doubt on the ability of any Islamic proposal to lead human societies towards their best interest. It would be like running a huge media campaign, costing hundreds of millions, encouraging consumers to buy an Egyptian-made vehicle, to the point where scores of people are convinced and eager to make the purchase, only to be told: "The car will be made available for sale after we establish mines, summon the workforce to extract the raw materials needed for the manufacturing process! Shortly after, factories will be constructed, and an international industrial expertise will be procured! This will take about thirty years, after which we promise to fulfil your demand!"

Many intellectuals and thinkers become anxious by any proposal for an Islamic Project, due to the bad experiences of countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Iran. The majority of these attempts plunged their societies into an abyss of destruction, anarchy and backwardness. These attempts were bitter failures chiefly because nothing had been invested in producing the philosophical, intellectual, theoretical, or practical

requirements necessary to establish a successful state. The reliance on the presence of strong fundamentals in Islam's sacred texts resulted in a complacency that they would suffice for the success of the project. They were completely oblivious to the necessity of reasoning, eliciting, extorting, and generating solutions in order to cope with contemporary issues.

In addition to all of the previously mentioned problems, another major issue that contributes to the inability of the Islamic Project to offer a solution is the absence of the ethics and morals of Islam. This allows malicious people to unleash their vulgar behavior upon the rest of society, threatening and abusing their fellow human beings, all while claiming to be representatives of the "Islamic Project"! The failure to provide solutions coupled with the intimidation of the rest of the population does a disservice to the Islamic Project as well as society at large. Such bad experiences have led some people to leave the religion altogether.

The *sharī'a* is like a mine, rich in precious metals and rare jewels. One cannot benefit from these treasures unless they are excavated and mined out by means of heavy industry, the deployment of skills, sciences and many processes including digging the earth, excavating, training the workforce, transporting the ore, melting, forging, making of the fine tools and devices needed for the final touches. Divine Revelation – both the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions – are similar to the ore; they are rich in valuable elements but require a process in order to shape these jewels that are relevant to modern realities. The problem we face today is that our tools have gathered rust due to being out of use for so long. This is eloquently conveyed in *Sūrat al-Nisā'*:

“... whereas, if they would but refer it unto the Apostle and unto those from among the believers who have been entrusted with authority, such of them as are engaged in obtaining intelligence would indeed know [what to do with] it.” [4:83]

The optimal term being the act of *istinbāt* [extrapolation], referred to in the translation of Asad¹⁵⁷ as “obtaining intelligence”. *Istinbāt* is indeed

a weighty occupation, which is based on the extraction and expansion of knowledge to provide answers that are not only true to the spirit of the objectives of Islamic Law but are also relevant to our reality. This process is capable of guaranteeing felicity for human beings in this world and the next. Ignoring or failing to perform *istinbāt* is the root of our predicament.

Only grand academic institutions like al-Azhar al-Sharīf, given its legacy of knowledge and historical experience, are capable of producing the “Islamic Project” as prescribed here. But it requires the availability of funding, the presence of a healthy intellectual environment as well as being able to take advantage of the huge intellectual potential at our disposal.

Previous historic experiments in the Islamic Project were successful in applying a framework to their reality. We need to benefit from their methodological framework more than their practical application, which was specific to their reality and is largely irrelevant to our modern context. Their methodologies will guide us to the proper way of implementing the timeless Divine Revelation. We must benefit from the structures and methodologies embodied in the works of prominent scholars such as Qadrī Pāsha; the constitutional and legal scholar al-Sanhūrī; Shaykh Makhlūf al-Minyāwī; *Shaykh al-Islām* Ḥasan al-‘Attār; Dr. Ḥāmid Rabī^c, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh Darāz; Dr. Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Najātī; Shaykh Ṭantāwī Jawharī; Shaykh ‘Alī Jum^a; as well as scores of equally prominent scholars, who have all trodden the same path, understood their times, and contributed as much as they could in accomplishing the missions and duties required of them.

This colossal endeavor may be likened to the phase of ascension experienced by different nations in history; it is hard, long, and exhausting. It is the phase in which each nation, state or civilization revisits its roots, foundations and identity; and observes, selects and imports what is in its best interest from the existing global experience, through its insightful experts, scholars, and intellectual elite.

157 Muḥammad Asad, born Leopold Weiss; (2 July 1900 - 23 February 1992) was an Austro-Hungarian born journalist, traveller, writer, linguist, thinker, political theorist, diplomat and Islamic scholar whose magnum opus: *The Message of the Qur’an—an English translation and commentary of the Quran*. [tn]

Chapter 9

Principles Overlooked in The Mindset of The Extremists Leading to All of Their Historical Blunders.

1. The study of a given case and the attempt to find guidance in both noble Sacred texts must be carried out through a number of procedures:
 - First, it is a must to identify and compile all the sacred texts, be they verses from the Noble Qurʾān or Ḥadīth [Prophetic Traditions] relevant to the case. This step is designed to ensure a holistic approach to the case and avoid the decontextualizing of a particular text and isolating it from all the other relevant texts that complete it. The reason for this is that the extrapolation of rulings and concepts is not limited to the texts directly related to jurisprudence alone. It is possible to extrapolate rulings and concepts from every verse in the Noble Qurʾān, even if they appear to be stories or records of ancient nations. Al-Ṭūfī said: “Just as it is possible to extrapolate rulings of the Sacred Law from [the verses of] commands and prohibitions, it is equally possible to extrapolate them from [the verses of] stories, sermons etc. There is hardly a verse in the Noble Qurʾān from which rulings

cannot be extrapolated”¹⁵⁸ Ibn Daqīq al-^ʿĪd states that the extrapolation of rulings from the Qur^ʾān is not limited to particular verses. He said: “Extrapolation is not limited to this number [of verses], rather it varies according to capacities and intellects [of those who attempt to do so] as well as how much God Almighty opens up for His servants in manners of extrapolation. They [who may have said something to this effect] most probably intended [by their allusions] to point out the verses including direct implications of rulings, not the verses which include rulings in less direct manners”¹⁵⁹

- Secondly, perfecting the assemblage of different texts in the appropriate order of relevance, guaranteeing the right order of approaching texts, reading texts which must be read first and those which must be read last in due time. The awareness of this hierarchy or order is key to discerning and accessing the general and the unqualified, the absolute and the limited.
- Third, the perfect identification of the textual implications and the connotations of the terms. This requires extensive knowledge of the Arab tongue and the various sciences of the Arabic language. al-Shawkānī, in his book *al-^ʿArf al-naddī*, said: “Whosoever attempts to comprehend the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ in light of what is implied by the Arab’s language, cannot possibly know the origin of the meaning of a [given] term unless he knows the science of the [Arabic] language. He cannot know the origin of the structure of Arabic terms, unless he knows the science of *al-Ṣarf* [Morphology].¹⁶⁰ He cannot know the declension of words, unless he knows the science of *al-Nahw* [Arabic Grammar]. He cannot know the subtleties and secrets of the Arabic language without knowing the science of *al-Ma^ʿānī* and *al-Bayān* [Rhetoric and diction]. He cannot know

the rules of the Arabic language, unless he knows the science of *Uṣūl*. This is why the aforementioned sciences are the prime prerequisites within the sciences of *Ijtihād* [Independent reasoning]. This is true despite the fact that some scholars disagree in regarding some of these sciences as prerequisites. However, the correct stance is that they are all prerequisites, because understanding the language of the Arabs as it is meant to be cannot be attained without such sciences. It is beyond doubt that knowing the subtleties of language leads to knowing the subtleties of the Book and the Sunnah, from whence the rulings of the Sacred Law are extrapolated equally to their extrapolation from the direct and obvious [Sacred texts].”¹⁶¹

2. The attempt to approach and extrapolate from the Qur^ʿān must neither be tarnished with any preconceived notions, nor guided by self-proclaimed theories that put one’s subjective words in the mouth of the Qur^ʿān. Rather, study it meticulously and let the text lead you to what it is truly implying and to the guidance it is offering and then revisit and revise your own preconceived notions about the text. The text must lead you and you must, in perfect reverence and with proper etiquette, anticipate the implications and possible meanings it exposes to you.
3. Beware of extrapolating a meaning from the Qur^ʿān that categorically opposes and negates its intentions and general aims. It is acceptable to extrapolate a meaning from the noble text that serves to qualify or generalize

158 Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍah, al-Ṭūfī /3/577

159 *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, Imām al-Zarkashī /6/199

160 Morphology or the study of morphemes of the Arabic language and of the way in which they are joined together to make words. [tn]

161 *al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī min Fatawā al-Shawkānī*, Imām al-Shawkānī /11/5648, Maktabat al-Jil al-Jadīd, San’aā, 1423 H. – 2002 C.E

it, but never a meaning that negates or falsifies it. Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, in his book *al-Fatāwā al-fiqhīyya al-kubrā*, said: “One of the principles established by al-Shāfi‘ī رحمه الله is that he would extrapolate from the text a meaning which qualifies or generalizes it, but never a meaning which would categorically negate it.”¹⁶² So if someone extrapolates an alleged meaning from the Qur’ān, which serves to excommunicate the entire population of Muslims, condemning it all to being in a state of *jahiliyya* of disbelief and polytheism and then rebelling against them using violence while calling it *jihād*, moreover claiming that Islam ceased to exist centuries ago, then this is definitely a meaning in categorical negation to the Qur’ān. Otherwise, how is it possible, if all such claims were true, that the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth and Islamic sciences were transmitted by generations of disbelievers over the centuries? Such an extrapolation is false indeed.

4. Show appropriate reverence for the Muslim heritage. Use it as your point of departure in order to contribute to it. Learn from its time-honored methodologies, without necessarily imitating the particulars of given cases, which were perfectly valid for their time, yet may not be valid for yours. Their approach to any case, their meticulous methodologies of depiction, adaptation, justification and proof were applied appropriately in their time, consequently yielding outcomes that fulfilled the objectives of the Sacred Law for their time. Likewise, if we apply the same methodologies today to our contemporary cases, the outcome may be different yet equally fulfilling the objectives of the Sacred Law for our time and circumstances. Do not limit yourself to their opinions regarding specific cases. Give and take, bearing in mind that it is not correct to extrapolate meanings and theories that in effect would cast away their accumulative

- efforts. An extrapolation that is in categorical opposition to the overall accumulative knowledge produced by generations of scholars is not connected to revelation indeed and is surely not in line with proper scholarship.
5. Make sure you learn about all the previous opinions regarding the case of your study, in order to avoid reinventing a previous opinion which has been thoroughly refuted such as those of the Kharijites and their likes. This step will help you avoid wasting your effort in merely reviving a deviant opinion, albeit under a contemporary new name, which has been already refuted.
 6. Three major pillars must be considered, in order to establish a correct understanding, serving as a true guardian preserving the guidance of the Qurʾān and its sciences: knowledge of the noble revelation; knowledge of its methodologies of comprehension; and knowledge of the realities of your time in the most accurate way possible. Beware of being one of those who falsely claim knowledge of the sacred texts, rebel against the authentic methodologies and are overwhelmed by realities of their time.
 7. The jurisprudence, thought, intellectual proposals and extrapolations produced under immense psychological pressures or behind bars in captivity or as a result of nothing but sheer zeal is certainly a volatile produce. It has not been given enough contemplation, nor has it undergone the appropriate processes of establishing knowledge. Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* said: “Abū Bakrah wrote to his son, who was in Sijistān, do not judge a case between any two [foes] while in a state of anger, for I have heard the Prophet ﷺ saying: ‘A judge should never rule [a case] between two [foes] while in a state of anger.’”¹⁶³

162 *al-Fatawā al-fiqhiyya al-kubrā*, Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Haitamī /1/210, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1403 H.

163 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* Ḥadīth 6739

The reason for this is that anger and aggravation leaves no room for the mind to judge matters in a meticulous manner, nor does it allow for scholastic procedure to take place as it must. Rather, it makes the person charged, defensive, aggravated and pressured by a thought that has just burst within and further intensified by hate or anger. It is not possible to arrive at an appropriate understanding of the noble revelation in such a state. The Proof of Islam, al-Ghazālī, in his *al-Mustaṣfā*, said: “An example for this is his statement [the Prophet] ﷺ: “A judge should never pass a judgment while in a state of anger” which shows that anger is cause to suspend judgment. Looking closely, it becomes evident that anger is not a cause for suspending judgment in and of itself, but rather because of the accompanying disorientation that hinders the thoroughness of the thought process required. This is why the command to suspend judgment includes a hungry person, a person with a full bladder who needs to urinate, a person in pain and not just a person in anger. Anger becomes a cause not in and of itself but because of what it entails.”¹⁶⁴ He also said: “It is like our opinion regarding the statement made by [the Prophet] ﷺ: “A judge should never pass a judgment while in a state of anger.” He has designated anger as the cause of the ban [on judgment] because of how it disorients the mind, prevents it from giving thought its due, which is also the case in states of severe hunger, severe thirst and severe pain. This is why we can apply *qiyās* [analogic reasoning] between anger and such other states.”¹⁶⁵ This is to say that anything that disorients, confuses and distracts thought, preventing it from attaining appropriate comprehension and giving the scholastic processes their due, is incapable of producing science, jurisprudence, exegesis and knowledge. Any

such products or proposals resulting from the pressuring circumstances of prisons, especially pertaining to the exegesis of the Noble Qurʾān, the extrapolation of its implications and the unveiling of its meanings, should not be considered at all. This incapability is further magnified when those who are attempting to carry out such processes are void of any knowledge of the sciences of *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, *Balāghah*, Arabic and *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*.

8. The realm of *maṣāliḥ* and *maḥāsīd* is open to interpretation only for those who have knowledge, both holistic and detailed, of the higher objectives of the Sacred Law. This is in line with what al-Shāṭibī mentioned in his book *al-Muwāfaqāt*: “If *ijtihād* [Independent reasoning] pertains to extrapolating from [sacred] texts, then knowledge of the Arabic language is necessary. However, if it pertains to meanings related to *maṣāliḥ* and *maḥāsīd*, but not due to the direct linguistic meaning of the text and not due to a postulate established by a *mujtahid* [Independent Legal Jurist], then in this case knowledge of the Arabic language is not the prerequisite, rather the knowledge of the *Maqāṣid* of the Sacred Law, both holistically and in detail, is.”¹⁶⁶
9. The lack of knowledge of *Maqāṣid* and the *ṣunan Ilāhīyya* [divine practices] results in major shortcomings in understanding. Those who do not possess such knowledge have a corrupted understanding of both the sacred texts and the realities of the world around them.
10. The extrapolation and deduction of rulings from the *Sīrah* [Biography of the Prophet] is a process governed by principles. The act of annexation and analogic reasoning,

164 *al-Mustaṣfā*, The Proof of Islam al-Ghazālī /309

165 See *ibid*

166 *al-Muwāfaqāt*, al-Shāṭibī /4/162/ Critically Edited by Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh Derāz, Dar al-Maʿrifah, Beirut.

hastily and with little or no regard to such principles, results in attributing to the Sacred Law that which is categorically contradictory to it. Thus it is tantamount to making false claims about the Prophet ﷺ, and he who lies or attributes false things to him is surely condemned to a place in hellfire. Imām al-Zarkashī, in his book *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, said: “This could be caused by a terrible misconception; the incident at hand being apparently the same as that which a Companion had previously issued an edict for. But in fact, this apparent similarity turns out to be an error. For the juxtaposing of two incidents is indeed one of the most subtle processes of Fiqh and most prone to error.”¹⁶⁷

By the aid and grace of Allah, the Sovereign Supreme, the Bestower, this book is concluded. May Allah bestow his peace and countless blessings upon our Master and Patron Muhammad, his household and his companions.

167 *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, Imām al-Zarkashī /4/571/

A scholarly evaluation of extremist ideologies from the
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