Analytica Islamica

**Classical Muslim Approaches
to the Understanding of Islam and
Other Religions (and their Implications
for Inter-religious Understanding)**

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ISLAM AS A SYSTEM: A Critical Analysis of Sayyid Quthb's Principle Thought

Mhd. Syahnan

Abstrak

Ideolog Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, Sayyid Quthb, termasuk pemikir muslim modern yang sangat luas pengaruhnya. Pengaruh yang luas ini bergantung pada pemikiran-pemikirannya yang sangat menarik, produktivitasnya dalam menulis, serta drama kehidupannya yang penuh gejolak. Tulisan ini menyajikan garis-garis besar pemikiran Sayyid Quthb, khususnya tentang Islam sebagai sistem.

Kata-kata kunci: Sayyid Quthb, jahiliyah, Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun.

Introduction

Sayyid Quthb was a popular Islamic spiritual and intellectual leader whose influence continues to make itself felt in the Muslim world, long after his death. The Quthbian ideas that have come to influence most of the contemporary movements of political Islam are mainly the ones reflected in the writings he produced during his imprisonment. However, it will be argued that he became inevitably influenced by his socio-political background, and his thought developed against the backdrop of the regime of the time. This paper is an attempt to explore in what sense he considers Islam as a system and to show how this idea illumines certain other aspects of his thoughts. In so doing, this will illustrate the reasons why his thinking has considerable appeal amongst Muslims today. This exposition will only focus on those salient features that lend themselves to the concerns of this study and that demonstrate the factors shaping Quthb's orientation and thought.

Sayyid Quthb's Background

Sayyid Quthb Ibrahim Husayn al-Shadhili was born on October 1906 in the village of Musha near the city of Asyut in upper Egypt. He was born to an influential family, his father, Quthb Ibrahim, having

been a member of one of the contemporary political parties, *al-Hizb al-Wathani*.[1] Quthb Ibrahim was moreover a pious man who believed that modern knowledge and technology could be harnessed for the promotion of human welfare. And even though the family was financially in decline at the time of Sayyid Quthb's birth, it remained prestigious due to his father's educated status. Quthb's autobiographical work, *Thifl min al Qarya*,[2] provides us with an illuminating account of his life and family, as well as a critical description of rural and urban life in Egypt in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Quthb began to devote himself to learning at an early age. However, we are unsure as to whether he started his education at a religious school (*kuttab*) or a modern primary school (*madrasa*). What is certain, however, is that he graduated from a government school in 1918. By the age of ten, Quthb is reported to have committed the entire text of the Qur'an to memory. Then, two years after the 1919 revolution, Quthb left his village for Hulwan where he lived with his journalist uncle in order to complete his education in Cairo. There, he prepared for the *Tajhiziyya* at a preparatory and secondary school. On passing this he was officially accepted in Dar al-'Ulum's Teachers' College in 1929 from which he graduated in 1933, obtaining a B.A. in Education. Upon completing his studies in Dar al-'Ulum, he was appointed as an instructor at the same college in recognition of his accomplishments.

Quthb was not only a journalist but a critic as well. In the Egyptian capital, he became closely associated with and influenced by such modernists as Thaha Husayn, 'Abbas Mahmud al- 'Aqqad, and Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat. It appears that his acquaintance with these figures left a significant impression on Quthb's secular (modern) ideas, one of which was the notion of separation between religion and literature, which was expressed in his writings during the 1930s and 1940s. As a writer, he also became engaged in polemics concerning literature, religion and other current issues.[3] Quthb soon realized, however, that he needed to learn more in order not to be at a disadvantage with respect to 'Aqqad and Thaha Husayn, both of whom were known for their Western orientation and their high-calibre intellects.

In 1948, at the age of 42, Quthb left Egypt for the United States to study modern Western methods of education. It has been suggested that Quthb's scholarship was granted by the government in order to get him out of the country for a while, thus weakening his attacks on

the authorities. By placing him in direct contact with the West, the Ministry of Education believed that Quthb would learn to appreciate the West and its educational models which the former was aiming to adopt.[4] In other words, Quthb's scholarship can be regarded as a political ploy designed to distance him from contemporary affairs.

Quthb spent a period of two years in the United States studying at Wilson's Teachers' College, or what was then known as the University of the District of Columbia, and at the University of Northern Colorado's Teachers' College, where he earned an M.A. in education, as well as at Stanford University. On his return to Egypt, Quthb visited England, Switzerland and Italy.[5]

Quthb's sojourn in the United States (1949-1951), left him profoundly disillusioned with what he believed to be the moral decadence of Western civilization, its anti-Arab bias, and its staunch support of Zionism.[6] Moreover, this situation may have affected the future course of his thought, marking a transition from literary and educational pursuits to intense religious commitment. As such, one can argue that the trip intensified his political involvement instead of lessening it, as had been the original intention.

Quthb's return to Egypt in 1951 coincided with the growing crisis in Egyptian politics which was to lead to the military coup of July 1952. At the time, Quthb declined the government offer to become an adviser to the Ministry of Education, opting, instead, to devote himself to the national struggle for the realization of an Islamic alternative. Thus he began writing articles for various newspapers on social and political themes, as well as seeking to translate his ideas into action.[7] He eventually left the ministry of education owing to disagreements with the government's educational policies as well as its submissiveness to the British. At this juncture, it was the Muslim brotherhood's model of praxis/ activism that attracted Quthb's attention. His contact with this organization appears to have been the result of his regular contributions to the Brothers' publications, such as *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* and *al-Da'wah*, both of which were founded in 1951. In addition, the organization's involvement in both the Palestine war and the guerrilla war against the British military installations in the Suez canal zone, in late 1951, clearly impressed Sayyid Quthb. Thus, an intense reciprocal relationship was forged between Quthb and the Brothers at a time when the latter were gripped by a serious leadership crisis.[8] and were rebuilding in accordance with the vision of their new leader.

The beginning of Quthb's affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood is uncertain, but Fadl Allah dates it to 1951, i.e. shortly after his return from America.[9] Moreover, the great respect with which Quthb was held by the Society, in addition to his expressed loyalty to the Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood, al-Hudhaybi, vis a vis Shalih al-Ashmawi and his supporters, led to his immediate elevation to the organization's prestigious Guidance Council.[10] Interestingly, Quthb was eventually to become the movement's ideologue, and was appointed editor of another of its journals, *al-Muslimun*.[11]

It is alleged that Quthb was a key liaison between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Free Officers, who overthrew the monarchy in 1952.[12] Nevertheless, Quthb's attitude towards this group Officer prior to the 23 July coup is a matter of conjecture. Moreover, it seems that the Brotherhood's mistrust of the Free Officers was transmitted to Quthb, who began to view the latter with increasing concern. Quthb voiced this concern to the officers when he invited a number of them, including 'Abd al-Nasir, to his home in Hulwan, a week prior to the revolution.[13] This invitation, according to al-Khalidi, came as a result of the goodwill exhibited by the Free Officers towards the Muslim Brotherhood. A month later (August 1952), Quthb delivered a lecture entitled "Intellectual and Spiritual Liberation in Islam" at the Officer's Club, which was attended by many of the country's most prominent intellectuals and politicians, such as Thaha Husayn and Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir.[14] It appears that 'Abd al-Nasir and his associates, at the time, shared many of the Muslim Brotherhood's views on the need for greater social justice and reform, even if they did not ground them in a specifically Islamic context. In addition, the close relationship between the Brotherhood and the Officers prompted Nasir to persuade Quthb to become the director of the Hay'at al-Tahrir (the Liberation Rally). However, relations between the Free Officers and the Brotherhood soon deteriorated as it became increasingly clear that each side had a different agenda. Quthb, for instance, was intent on propagating Islam and imposing Islamic principles on society, as opposed to 'Abd al-Nasir who favoured a more secular approach.[15]

Nevertheless, it was not until October 1954, following the Manshiyya incident, that a tense standoff between the Brotherhood and the Free Officers ensued, culminating in the latter accusing the Brotherhood of an attempt on Nasir's life. Whether it was accidental or designed, such a pretext certainly enabled 'Abd al-Nasir to deal a coup de grace to the Muslim Brotherhood.[16] Thus, Quthb was arrested in November 1954,[17] in spite of his poor health. This

subsequently worsened with the tough handling meted to him and the other detainees during the 1954 interrogations.[18] Then, in July 1955 Quthb was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labour.[19] In prison, he witnessed the continued torture of his colleagues, with perhaps the worst episode occurring in 1957 when more than a score of the Muslim Brotherhood inmates were killed outright and dozens severely injured.

Basing himself on what he had seen, Quthb set in motion his idea for the creation of a disciplined secret cadre of devoted followers whose task was originally limited to self-defence. Without declaring so publicly, Quthb had come to believe in using violence against the government if it used force against his organization. Still later, he reached the conclusion that violence was justified even if the regime were merely deemed unjust and refused to alter its behaviour.[20]

Quthb was released from prison in 1964, but was still kept under police surveillance, in spite of the intervention of the Iraqi president 'Abd al-Salam 'Arif, who issued Quthb a formal invitation to live in Iraq which the latter declined, insisting on residing in Egypt. Eight months later, however, Quthb, together with over a thousand members of the Muslim Brotherhood, his brother and two sisters, was rearrested on charges of sedition and terrorism.[21] Incontrovertible evidence against Quthb was apparently not presented, particularly since his revolutionary tract, *Ma'alim fi al-Thariq* - the chief document on which the prosecutors relied - did not explicitly call for the armed overthrow of the state.[22] Rather, this manifesto urged resistance in the form of turning away from existing society and creating a model *ummah* (community of believers) which would eventually establish true Islam. In the end, and despite great international pressure, the government executed Quthb and two of his colleagues, Yusuf Hawwash and 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il, on 29 December 1966. Ever since, Quthb has been regarded as a martyr by his supporters.

The Principles of Quthb's Thought

In what follows we will seek to portray the socio-political milieu in which Quthb lived as well as argue that Quthb's radical ideas were the outcome of the political and economic unrest under 'Abd al-Nasir's regime. These radical ideas were subsequently expressed in his later works.

Quthb's Conception of Religion/ Islam

Islam, according to Quthb, is a universal concept that is confined in his view neither to ritual, nor to social, economic, or political concepts. Rather, it transcends all these aspects to embrace the myriad facets of life.[23] Such a view of Islam and of its inter-connectedness with the world permeates most of the works he wrote following the 1952 revolution. These works are less tentative in nature, and more articulate. They express in absolute terms the nature, essential characteristics and scope of his Islamic vision. They also take cognisance of such questions as the source, authenticity and function of such a world view. Moreover, in affirming the divine source of his Weltanschauung, its originality and application to the modern world, Quthb appears to have been aware of the implications of the ideologies he was challenging.

According to Quthb, the concept of Islam comprises seven characteristics, all of which are closely interconnected. They are: unity of God (*tawhid*), lordship, constancy, comprehensiveness, balance, positiveness, and realism. Given the breadth of discussion found on each of these topics, and the fact that they lie beyond the scope of this paper, only a brief outline of each will be proffered in the following. As far as *Rabbaniyya* or lordship is concerned, Quthb maintained that the main feature of the Islamic concept is its divine origin, as distinguished from human thought and its development. This is not to say, however, that Quthb did not believe in the power of human intellect. On the contrary, Quthb ardently believed in the supremacy of human reason, although limiting its scope and declaring it to be unable to provide the eternal basis for the human and religious quest.   Revelation and reason constitute a secondary level of his investigation. Abu Rabi' maintains that "Quthb's *rabbaniyya* shares the same basic qualities of Hegel's *geist*."[24]

The second essential quality of the Islamic conception is constancy (*tsabat*).   Quthb believed that human history revolves " around a constant axis", which is lordship, the essential core of which is neither subject to the contingency of change nor evolution. Concerning this matter, Yvonne Haddad has asserted that "the doctrine of constancy in the Islamic world view is proposed by Quthb as a dam against Westernization and the appropriation of the European values, ideas, customs, and fashions. It also functions as a refutation of the basic intellectual premise of Darwin's theory of progressive evolution, as well as that of dialectical materialism."[25] This quality, according to Quthb, not only guarantees the integration and harmony of Muslim

life with that of the universe, but it also provides constancy in the order of society and an awareness of the permanence of the orbit within which one lives and moves.[26]

Comprehensiveness (*shumul*) is another distinguishing feature of his vision of Islam. Islam, he declared, is a comprehensive way of life far superior to any other systems. In fact, in his *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami wa Muqawwimatuh*,[27] he speaks extensively on the oneness of Allah, Allah's divine nature, the permanence of Allah's order, and its all-encompassing nature. He also explains there that the *Syari'ah* is related not only to government but also to belief, ethics, knowledge and art, all of which he firmly linked to the divine origin and independence of Islam.[28] Accordingly, he declared as theoretical the division of human activities in Islamic law into acts of worship (*ibadat*) and social relations (*mu'amalat*). His dissatisfaction with this division stemmed from the fact that it might lead to inconsistency in the acceptance of Islam and an unnecessary polarization which might undermine the praxis. He was firmly against the notion that Muslims could perform their rituals in accordance with Islamic tenets, while having their social relations governed by regulations other than those emanating from Islam. Thus, Quthb concluded that "Islam is an inseparable unity. Any division of which is contrary to this unity."[29] In other words, Islam governs man's relations with his Lord, the universe, and his fellow human beings. More importantly however, Islam provides model solutions to all aspects of human existence.

Al-ijabiyya (positiveness) is another characteristic of the Islamic concept which operates among the multiple relationships that exist between God and the universe, life, and man. Obedience to God proceeds from the aspect of positiveness in the believer's life.[30] Quthb's example of the first Muslim community, capable of revolutionizing society by applying the positive dimension of the oneness of God, makes this conclusion evident.[31] Accordingly, the Islamic concept is not merely a negative (inactive) concept in the realm of conscience, or a theoretical idea that exists only within the spiritual realm; rather, the Islamic concept is a design that creates a situation which preserves the oneness of God and the unity of mankind. Despite the fact that positiveness is dependant upon divine authority, it can, nonetheless, be verified, and its competence demonstrated by action and dynamism.

Balance (*tawazun*) denotes what Quthb perceived to be the norm between the absolute Divine will and the laws of the universe. This

characteristic in particular has preserved the unique nature of Islam. It is evidenced in the harmony that exists between that which is revealed, which humans can grasp and apprehend, and that which is accepted by faith, since man has no capacity to comprehend it. Human nature feels comfortable with this vision since absolute knowledge rests with God in whom man places his total trust. "Any doctrine that is totally comprehensible to humans is no doctrine," he affirmed. Moreover, it is the balance between the known and the unknown, the revealed and the hidden that is in accordance with human nature.[32]

Realism, another fundamental feature of the Islamic conception, pertains to two basic facts, namely, the divine and the human. This realism grounds Quthb's vision in reality, and refutes the accusation of idealism leveled at it. Yet, to be fair, it must be stated that his vision is both idealistic and realistic in that it aims at establishing the highest and most perfect system to which humanity can ostensibly ascribe. The role of man, as perceived by this Islamic vision, is within the limits of his capacity. Man is taken as he is, "one who eats, marries, procreates, loves, hates, hopes and fears." Furthermore, his nature, capacities, virtues, evils, strengths, and weaknesses are all taken into consideration. In other words, this vision, does not elevate man to the level of divinity, nor does it regard him in angelic form. This perception is contrary to the Brahmanic vision of man which denies the body as unreal, and to the Christian which sees man as a composite of an evil body and a pure soul.

Divine oneness or *tawhid* is the core of the Islamic conception, and the foundation which bestows veracity and validity upon all similarly revealed religions. "The creed of Islam requires every Muslim to believe that God is the supreme ruler, legislator, and planner of people's lives, their relationships, and their connection to the universe and life in general."[33] Hence, submission to God means that there is only one God to whom divinity can be ascribed, and from whom all guidance is received. Consequently, Quthb calls for the organization of man's life and society according to the divine will and revelation. He also alludes to the loss of the notion of man's servitude to God and its replacement by that of man's servitude to man. Accordingly, he calls for the restoration of the vertical relationship between God and man, which, he believed, would lead to the liberation of man and the end of his enslavement to other men. Lastly, it remains to be said that in commenting on Quthb's vision, Moussalli describes it in the following terms: "The Islamic concept guarantees coherence in

character and energy in the entity of the Muslim individual and society, and prevents destruction, split personality and dissipation that are caused by other creeds and concepts."[34]

Islam vs. Jahiliyyah

Central to Quthb's ideas is the concept of *jahiliyyah*, a term which originates in the Qur'an, generically meaning "ignorance", but also used to refer to the cultural and intellectual state of the Arabs prior to the divine revelation of the Qur'an. It was frequently used to describe the Arabs' willful ignorance and antagonism towards the Prophet and his message. Following Mawdudi, who developed this concept in his writings, Quthb maintained that *jahiliyyah* was not limited to time and space but could be equally used to denote anything at any time. In his own words:

Today we are in the midst of a *jahiliyyah* similar to or even worse than the *jahiliyyah* that was "squeezed out" by Islam. Everything about us is *jahiliyyah*: the ideas (*tashawwurat*) of mankind and their beliefs, their customs and traditions, the sources of their culture, their arts and literature, and their laws and regulations. [This is true] to such extent that much of what we consider to be Islamic culture and Islamic sources, and Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought ... is nevertheless the product of that *jahiliyyah*.[35]

Based on this assertion, one can deduce that there are two cultures in the world, according to Quthb, namely the Islamic and the *jahili* culture. Thus, he not only criticized the West and its cultural influence, be it capitalist, socialist or communist, but also the leaders of Islamic societies who, in his view, accepted secular ideas and incorporated them into the Islamic world instead of submitting to God's law, as prescribed by the Qur'an and the Prophet's teachings. Quthb also incorporated into his *jahili* concept the Asian and African polytheistic systems. Moreover, he accused the Christians and the Jews of *jahili* behavior because of their willingness to accept the power of their religious leaders and for letting the latter decide for them, whether right or wrong. He also accused these religious leaders of ingratiating themselves with the political establishment and dabbling in politics, which is the exclusive prerogative of God.[36]

It is very likely that, together with other factors, the massacre of the Brothers witnessed by Quthb at the Liman Tura prison in 1957 convinced Quthb that the contemporary Egyptian regime was un-Islamic.[37] Hence, he drew an analogy between the strategy of the

Prophet Muhammad against the pagan Arab forces and the situation in Egypt during the cold war. He also declared Egypt to be in a state of pagan ignorance, thus justifying the use of force to bring about change. By the same token, he declared a *jihad* to restore the *Syari'ah* to its rightful prominence in society, and described such a *jihad* as a holy duty incumbent upon every Muslim.

Hakimiyyah

In order to eradicate *jahiliyyah*, Quthb called for the absolute sovereignty and rulership (*hakimiyyah*) of God. Some scholars have argued that the term *hakimiyyah*, in contrast to *jahiliyyah*, is neither a Qur'anic nor a dogmatic term originating in the realm of political theory of classical Islam, but rather a modern one, which Quthb appears to have adopted from Mawdudi.[38] The key issue which this term refers to is the issue of state sovereignty and its legitimacy. This issue came to the fore in Quthb's time and appears to have been influenced by his confrontation with 'Abd al-Nasir's oppressive regime.[39]

Quthb, however, reinterpreted a number of verses that could be classified as "*hakimiyyah*" verses in a manner completely different from his predecessors, and endowed them with a more radical interpretation,[40] changing the meaning of the verb *yahkumu* from "to judge" to "to rule," thereby sanctioning collective action against any ruler who fails to abide by God's law. This new interpretation was critical for Quthb, who wanted to make it clear that Muslims must not only believe in the tenets of Islam but must govern themselves according to them. By declaring the total sovereignty and rulership of God, Quthb implicitly sanctioned the wresting of political power from the hands of its human usurpers and restoring it to God. Such restoration, he believed, would be achieved when an Islamic-based state (polity) was established, guaranteeing the enforcement of the *syari'ah* in its totality, and more importantly, guaranteeing justice and freedom to the believers.

Similarly, Sayyid Quthb believed that since divine sovereignty is so comprehensive, any nondivine authority must be illegitimate, irreligious, and tyrannical (*thaghut*). Hence, he declared the purpose of Islam to be the removal of such illegitimate *thaghut* and its replacement by legitimate divine authority. Moreover, since all human beings are the servants and creatures of God, none of them has the authority to rule over the others. Such opinions, however, seem to

have been influenced by those of earlier jurists such as Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) who reiterated them in connection with the Mongol ruler of the time. Quthb and his supporters, however, believed that such opinions were valid for all times and that Islam sanctioned armed resistance to Muslim rulers who were anti-Islamic. They also believed that such resistance is not only permissible or laudatory but mandatory.

Quthb's Attitude Towards Philosophy

Quthb is not an advocate of the majesty of human reason, even though the thought of Western philosophers was frequently alluded to in his early career. In fact towards the end of his life, Quthb refused the employment of philosophy as a means of assessing religion on rational grounds in one's quest for the truth.[41] Quthb maintained that the apprehension of knowledge is not a matter of intellectual activity but of the reception of truths that are absolutely divine in their origins. In his perspective, the workings of discursive logic or inductive analysis are not necessary for, and are actually inimical to, the triumph of mankind in Allah's universe. That triumph is rather vouchsafed by the ability and the willingness of the human mind to absorb self-evident truths whose secrets are unlocked by divine text.

To support his view, Quthb argued that the endeavor of Western thinkers who champion the use of philosophy has led to seriously adverse consequences for human beings. God, he asserted, bestows upon his servants the ability to distinguish themselves from and elevate themselves above animals, as well as to fulfill their tasks as God's vicegerents on earth.

Nonetheless, Quthb sanctions the use of one's intellect in the pure sciences, such as chemistry, so long as such usage does not transgress the boundaries of experimentation and, more importantly, so long as it does not involve some sort of philosophical interpretation.[42]

In addition to rejecting Western philosophy, Quthb also refuted the efforts of such Muslim philosophers as Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina and al-Farabi, whom he regarded as mere imitators of their Greek predecessors.[43] His discontent centered upon their effort to reconcile revelation and reason, an endeavor grounded in Platonic and Aristotelian notions which are alien to Islam. This rejection of philosophy is expressed in his *Khasha'ish al-Tashawwur al-Islami wa Muqawwimatuh*, wherein he criticizes two prominent modern thinkers in the Islamic world, namely, Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and

Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1937) for adopting "inappropriate and poorly comprehended Western philosophical frames of reference in developing their interpretations of Islam."[44] Moreover, he believed that 'Abduh erred in his attempt to reconcile reason and conscience, because reason, Quthb argues, varies from one individual to another, and as such cannot serve as an independent basis of interpreting the Qur'an.[45] Similarly, he deemed Iqbal erroneous in his borrowing of ideas from Hegel and Comte, because such an attempt would ultimately lead to the infiltration of idealist and positivist conceptions into Islam.

However, despite Quthb's criticism, there appears to be an affinity between his conception of Islam and the philosophy of Iqbal. This affinity is most conspicuous in Quthb's concept of movement or dynamism in Islam, and Iqbal's principle of movement.[46] Nevertheless, Quthb did assert that Iqbal's interpretation was constrained and distorted by its philosophical dependence upon either the materialistic or the dualistic systems. He also affirmed that the frames of reference Iqbal employed had an impact upon the formation of the ideas they were meant to convey, although denying that every idea must originate in some formal context.[47] Similarly, Quthb lamented that both Iqbal's and 'Abduh's defence of Islam against the accusation of retrogression, lost sight of Islam's main focus, which is human existence in its entirety (*al-kaynunah al-insaniyyah*) and ended up by "confining truth inside explanations."[48]

Consequently, one finds a total rejection of rational exchange or argument as the chief means of disseminating the truth of Islam in Quthb's works, especially the later ones. Indeed, it seems that when faced with the beauty and veracity of the Qur'an and the vision of the ideal life espoused in it, Quthb saw no need for any reasoned philosophical argument. Instead, one finds him declaring that faith is all that is required, and that the apprehension of the truth is more likely to be attained subjectively through a direct appreciation of the beauty and inevitability of the Islamic Weltanschauung, rather than through intellectual endeavours or philosophical speculations.[49] Thus, knowledge that "deals with the mind and is reckoned to be a fund of culture" is not Quthb's central concern. His main concern in fact seems to be the marriage between *'ilm* and praxis, or as he put it "we seek the movement (*al-harakah*) behind knowledge."[50]

Concluding Remarks

As an active member and the main ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Quthb seeks to disseminate what he believed to be the correct understanding of Islam and to purify the religion of alien elements accruing to it through centuries of false interpretations. Nevertheless, his thought is not free of subjectivity and idealism stemming from his own personal and political experiences. And, although it lies beyond the scope of this paper to delineate the myriad factors that compelled Quthb to have such mainstream of ideas, one may venture to suggest that these were inspired by the thought of Mawdudi.[51] However, it can be equally argued that Quthb's thoughts were sole inspired by his milieu. In addition, the prison term he endured and his isolation from the real world might have also contributed to his idealistic outlook and his later radical position. *Wallahu a'lam bi al-shawab.*

Catatan

[1]Sayyid Quthb, *Thifl min al Qarya* (Beirut: Dar al-Hikma, n.d.), 139.

[2]It was first published in Cairo in 1946 when Quthb became firmly established as a literary critic in Cairo's leading literary reviews. See *al-Risala* (Cairo), no. 670 (May 6, 1946), 510-11.

[3]For a close analysis of these issues see for e.g. John Calvert, "Discourse, Community and Power: Sayyid Quthb and the Islamic Movement in Egypt." Ph.D. dissertation, (McGill University, 1993), 98-115; Adnan Ayyub Musallam, "The Formative Stages of Sayyid Quthb's Intellectual Career and his Emergence as an Islamic Da'iyah, 1906 1952." Ph.D. dissertation (University of Michigan, 1983), 67-108.

[4]Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Quthb: Khulasat Hayatih wa Manhajuh fi al-Haraka, al-Naqd al-Muwajjah ilayh* (Beirut: Dar al-Da'wa, 1977), 14-15.

[5]There is no mention in the sources of how long Quthb stayed in each place, although it is certain that he visited them.

[6]Quthb's opinion concerning the Jews is illustrated in his *Ma'rakatuna Ma'a al-Yahud.*

[7]Quthb's eagerness to become more involved in practical matters and to extend his mission beyond penmanship, can be detected in the decreasing number of works he wrote during his stay in the U.S.A. Quthb explained that "He desired to achieve something more worthy than mere writing". See Adnan Ayyub Musallam, *The Formative*, 210-211; cf. A.B. Husayn, *Sayyid Quthb: Hayatuh wa Adabuh* (Mansura: Dar al-Wafa, 1986), 44.

[8]For a detailed account of this see, *inter alia*, Calvert, "Discourse," 190-198.

[9]Mahdi Fadl Allah, *Ma'a Sayyid Quthb fi Fikrihi al-Siyasi wa'l-Dini*, second ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1979), 41-56 .

[10]Calvert, "Discourse," 194.

[11]Fadl Allah, *Ma'a Sayyid Quthb*, 41-56.

[12]Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharoah*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 41.

[13]Shalah 'Abd al Fattah Khalidi, *Sayyid Quthb, al Syahid al Hayy* (Amman: Maktabat al Aqsha, 1981), 140.

[14]Ibid.,140-3.

[15]Ahmad. S. Moussalli, Ahmad S. *Radical Islamic Fundametalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Quthb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1992), 32-33;

[16]Upon hearing the regime's accusation, the Brotherhood denied it, declaring the attack to be a mere police provocation and a ploy designed to justify 'Abd al-Nasir's crackdown on the organization. See Gilles Kepel, *Muslim*, 41.

[17]In fact, Quthb become a witness in the trial of al-Hudlybi who was connected to the secret service, with which organization Quthb was proven not to be associated. See Calvert, "Discourse," 197.

[18]For details on the treatment of Quthb and his other colleagues and the prison conditions, see, *inter alia*, Gilles Kepel, *Muslim*, 28-9; Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Quthb: Khulashat Hayatih wa Manhajuh fi al Haraka, al Naqd al Muwajjah ilayh* (Beirut: Dar al Da'wa, 1977), 7; Olivier Carré, "Le Combat pour Dieu et l'Etat islamique chez Sayyid Qotb, l'inspirateur du radicalesme actuel," *Revue française de science politique* 33, 4 (1983), 681; Khalidi, *Sayyid Quthb*, 145-47.

[19]Musallam, *The Formative*, 268-9.

[20]Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 6.

[21]Barakat, *Sayyid Quthb*, 19; Khalidi, in *Sayyid Quthb*, 147; also, Adil Hamuda, *Sayyid Quthb: min al-Qaryah ila al-Mishnaqa* (Cairo: Ruz al-Yusuf, 1987), 129-131.

[22]Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), *Political Islam*, 23. Ma'alim fi al-Thariq was first published in 1964, and contains an explanation of the fundamental rules of activism.

[23]Sayyid Quthb, *Fi al-Tarikh: Fikra wa Minhaj* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1974), 22.

[24]Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: SUNY, 1996), 148.

[25]Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Quthb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in John L. Esposito, (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 75.

[26]Sayyid Quthb, *Khasa'is al-Tashawwur al-Islami wa Muqawwimatuh* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1962), 98.

[27]This book deals with the philosophical bases of Islam and provides the foundation for an understanding of the totality of Quthb's thought.

[28]Sayyid Quthb, *Al-'Adala al-Ijtima'iyya fi al-Islam*, 7th ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1980), p. 270.

[29]Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Quthb," 76.

[30]Sayyid Quthb, *Khasha'is*, 146.

[31]Ibid., 153.

[32]Ibid. 134.

[33]Ibid. 22.

[34]Ahmad Moussalli, "Sayyid Quthb: The Ideologist of Islamic Fundamentalism," *Al-Abhats*, 38 (1990): 49.

[35]Sayyid Quthb, *Ma'alim fi al-Thariq* (Beirut : Dar al-Shuruq, n.d.), 18-19.

[36]See Quthb, *Ma'alim*, 119-121; Cf. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," 86-87.

[37]Quthb's application of the term *jahiliyya* initiated a novel departure in the dogma of the Brotherhood. Never before had any figure, even one as prominent as Hasan al-Banna', accused the Egyptian society of his day of being non-Islamic. See Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, 46.

[38]Haddad, "Sayyid Quthb," 89; cf. Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 175-177.

[39]See e.g., Calvert, "Discourse," 205; Haddad, "Sayyid Quthb," 89.

[40]Cases in point are Qur'an, 5: 44, 45 and 47.

[41]Quthb's refusal of philosophy is reflected, *inter alia*, in his various writings, such as: *Khasha'ish, Al-'Adala, Ma'alim*, and *Fi Zhilal*.

[42]Quthb, *Al-'Adala al-Ijtima'iyya fi al-Islam*, 9th ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1983).

[43]Ibid., 20.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Quthb, *Khasha'ish*, 15.

[46]See generally, Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986).

[47]Sayyid Quthb, *Khasha'ish*, 15.

[48]Ibid., 16.

[49]Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, 194-5.

[50]Quthb, *Khashah'ish*, 8.

[51]This can be discerned from the frequent references he made to Mawdudi's ideas, as enshrines in the revised editions of *Fi Zhilal al Qur'an*, Beirut: Dar al-Syuruq, 1974, 30 vols. In 6.

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Mhd. Syahnan adalah Dosen pada Fakultas Syari'ah IAIN Sumatera Utara, menyelesaikan Program S2 di McGill University, Canada dan saat ini sedang mengikuti kuliah S3 pada Program Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta.