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CHAPTER III SAYYID QUTB: MILESTONES

The Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) is widely regarded as one of the founders of radical political Islamic thought, although his ideological and legal-theological⁶⁹³ ancestry can be traced back to

⁶⁹³ Sayyid Qutb can be placed, albeit in a broad scope, within the Salafi School of theological thought. See: K. E. Shienbaum and J. Hasan, *Beyond Jihad: Critical Voices from inside Islam* (Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2006), p. 115. The central tenet of this theology is that the generation of the companions (Salafi) of Muhammad and the following two generations represented Islam at its finest. After these generations, Islam became increasingly 'polluted' by un-Islamic influences and innovations and thus gradually diminished the perfection of Islam. The aim of the Salafi theology is to purify contemporary Islam of these influences and to restore (*Palingenesis*) the Islam of the days of the Salafi. The Salafi theology is often at odds with other forms of Islam especially because of their insistence on the exclusivity of the Quran and Hadith. According to Salafi theology, a number of dogma's and conventions that have evolved throughout the history of Islam are deemed un-Islamic innovations or *bid'ah*. One of these innovations is the strict reliance for the explanation of Islam on one of the four schools of religious jurisprudence or *Madh'hab*. From the beginning of Islam, scholars have, throughout the course of centuries, made legal decision based on the Quran and hadith, decision that over time attained the status of doctrine, and ultimately formed and defined the four schools of jurisprudence. With the formation of these schools of jurisprudence and the establishment of doctrine the ability for independent judgment, *itjihad*, became supplanted with the concept of imitation, *Taqlid*. This is a far too complex subject to be discussed here but the main point from the Salafi point of view is that imitation has 'closed the gates of itjihad' and caused man to imitate other man instead of relying primarily on the Quran and hadith. As such, imitation can take the form of worship of one of these schools which borders on polytheism, *Shrik*, and is considered blasphemous and opposed to the concept of the oneness of God, *Tawheed*. Although the Salafi do not oppose the schools of jurisprudence as such, they deny these schools any claim of exclusivity. By comparing these schools with one another and cross referencing them with literal interpretations of the Quran and hadith the Salafi have 'reopened the gates of itjihad', something that sets them apart from other theological schools of Islamic thought. This process of purifying Islam from innovations and un-Islamic influences poses

other Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab⁶⁹⁴ (1703-1792), Sayyid Abdul A'la Maududi (1903-1979)⁶⁹⁵ and Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949). Qutb studied in the United States between 1948 and 1950 and was shocked by what he saw as the moral depravity of that society, in particular, according to Qutb, western individualism, materialism, open sexuality,

in some respects a threat to traditional religious authority and the political authority that is legitimized by the latter. As such, the Salafi's can be seen as reformers and to a degree as modernists due to their defiance of tradition and of political and theological authority. However, the idea of opening the gates of *ijtihad* to the common believer may sound liberal and democratic; it often times a severe narrowing of the bandwidth of interpretation and the dissolution of customary law, which is deemed to contain of un-Islamic influences, which developed in the orthodox body of Islam.

⁶⁹⁴ Saudi Sunni scholar whose teachings would form the Wahhabi movement, a puritanical creed of Salafi theology. Following the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah, the Wahhabi movement took it upon itself to cleanse the Saudi peninsula of all innovations it deemed un-Islamic and fought a violent jihad against non-Muslims and Muslims who did not agree with its theological premises. Today the Wahhabi movement is regarded to have inspired radical jihadist networks like Al-Qaeda and is the state religion of Saudi-Arabia. The main works of Wahhab are: Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab at-Tauhid*, — — —, ed., *An Explanation of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab's Four Principles of Shirk*. In addition see the critical evaluation of Wahhab's influence in: Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, "Wahhabism: State-Sponsored Extremism Worldwide," (2003), Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, pp. 17-73. Whilst most academic literature on Wahhab is fairly negative in its assessment of Wahhab's doctrines, it is only fair to direct attention to a study which claims that Wahhab is often misinterpreted: DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*.

⁶⁹⁵ Pakistani born theologian Maududi is known for coining the term *theo-democracy*, which he regarded as the anti-thesis for western democratic concepts. A theo-democracy in his view was a democracy in which the sovereignty lay not with the people, as in western democracies, but exclusively with god. These two concepts of sovereignty are mutually exclusive and the government of a country should base its law solely on the laws of god, as they can be known through revelation. His main work are Mawdudi, *Jihad in Islam*. and Maulana Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Fundamentals of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Dar Al Wahi Publications 2008).

racism and an unjust economic system. Upon his return to Egypt in 1950 Qutb joined the MB and quickly rose to their highest ranks, being elected to the MB's leadership council in 1952.⁶⁹⁶ In that same year the free officers' movement, headed by Gamal Nasser, instigated a coup aimed at overthrowing Egypt's monarchy with the help of the MB. The reason for the Brotherhood's assistance was the commonly held view that the monarchy was subservient to British colonial interest and generally un-Islamic. Although they hoped that the revolution would lead to an Islamic state, encompassing the implementation of Shari' ah law, this did not happen. Nasser's policies of secular pan-Arabism alienated his former Islamist allies and ultimately led to an attempt on his life in 1954. The assassination failed, but the regime of Nasser did use it as a pretext for a crackdown on the Brotherhood. Together with many other figureheads of the Brotherhood, Qutb was jailed and not released until 1964. During his stay in prison he wrote two books: the 30 volume commentary on the Quran (*tafsir*), *in the shades of the Qur'an*, (*Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*), and his main political work *Milestones*, (*Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq*), which is a summary of his *tafsir* and which was published clandestinely in 1964. He was briefly released in 1964 but rearrested in 1965 and put to death in 1965 on account of an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the regime.

Qutb's thought is exemplary to some of the basic characteristics that can be seen in a plethora of contemporary and later political Islamic works. In *Milestones* Qutb bridges the gap between the modernists' state centred and Salafist ummah centred response to modernity. Qutb, like al-Zawahiri, was not officially entitled to carry the title of *faqih* or *mujtahid*, one who is entitled to give fatwa's or conduct independent legal reasoning, *itjihad*. Strictly speaking this would require a more than a decade long study at one of Sunni Islam's centres of religious study such as the prestigious Egyptian Al-Azhar

⁶⁹⁶ Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 41.

university. It should be noted however that the critique of Ibn Taymiyyah, which stated that the ulama of his time were subservient to the worldly powers, was a critique that was employed by Qutb as well. Qutb and the ideologues of Islamism after him refer to these '*imams of defeat*' numerous times and reject their self proclaimed monopoly on the ability for *ijtihad*.⁶⁹⁷ In addition, the fact that unlike earlier periods, Muslims were now literate and in a position to read and debate the sources of Islam challenged the traditional requirements attached to the title of *faqih* and *mujtahid*. These two arguments are a clear sign of Qutb's Salafist background.⁶⁹⁸ An interesting observation which must be put forward here is that whilst later Islamism ideologues are all heavily influenced by Qutb's writing, very few of those ideologues will explicitly refer to either Qutb's *tafsir* or *Milestones*. Rather they refer to universally trusted and authoritative works of *fiqh* and canonical texts in order, as I suspect, to avoid soliciting criticism based on Qutb's lack of official credentials on the one hand, and to emphasize their reliance on classical canonical sources on the other. The work of al-Zawahiri 'Exoneration' which we will be discussing in the next chapter is exemplary of this phenomenon.

Qutb's book *Milestones*, as many of the other books of political and non political Islamic ideologues, all start with the assumption that the reader understands what Islam is, what its sources are and which legal-political-theological concepts govern its being. One would be hard-pressed to find an explanation of faith in works of this category. For this reasons I have devoted the chapters one and two of this part of the book to this subject matter.

This chapter will analyze Qutb's *Milestones* on the basis of the adapted schematic of Voegelin's Gnostic Speculation mentioned in

⁶⁹⁷ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 75-76.

⁶⁹⁸ See for a more substantiated background on this topic: Bernard Hayek: "On the nature of Salafi thought and action" in: Meijer, *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*.

the beginning of this part of the book, starting with the observation that Islam is the formula for self and world preservation from which all action flows.

3.1: The nature of Islam

The religious, legal and political vocabulary employed by Qutb did not originate from Qutb but has an ancestry going back to the Qur'an and the foundations of Islam itself. Many of these terms on the surface sound familiar to a non-Islamic western audience unacquainted with the background of this terminology but this similarity is superficial at best. Terms and concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, peace and human rights are used abundantly but their meaning, in the usage by these political and Islamist ideologues, is quite different from what one would ordinarily expect. Whereas totalitarian regimes made intentional use of *doublespeak* as a means of propaganda and misdirection, political and Islamist writers do so without a desire to deceive, at least when it concerns their writings which are aimed at an Islamic audience, as we will see later on. When a non-Islamic audience is addressed *doublespeak* does become a part of the vocabulary.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁹ This type of doublespeak is often referred to correctly or incorrectly as *taqiyyah*. Its origins lie in Quranic verses 16:106 "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment" and 3:28 "Let not believers take disbelievers as allies rather than believers. And whoever [of you] does that has nothing with Allah, except when taking precaution against them in prudence. And Allah warns you of Himself, and to Allah is the [final] destination." It should be mentioned that the concept of *taqiyyah* is of Shi'a origin. It means that one is allowed to hide one's faith when under grave external duress. Sunni Islam generally looks unfavourably upon this practice and values those who proclaim their faith even when under external duress since this is a testimony of one's willingness to suffer for the faith and can lead to martyrdom. The life of Ibn Taymiyyah being such an example. Qutb too has unfavourable views on such practices as we will see, but Zawahiri employs a form of legal reasoning in

Hidden throughout the text of *Milestones* then are concepts which would be clear to a Muslim but which require explanation for a non-Islamic audience. Qutb describes Islam as the formula for self and world preservation as follows:

Throughout every period of human history the call toward God has had one nature. Its purpose is Islam, which means to bring human beings into submission to God, to free them from servitude to other human beings so that they may devote themselves to the One True God, to deliver them from the clutches of human lordship and man-made laws, value systems and traditions so that they will acknowledge the sovereignty and authority of the One True God and follow His law in all spheres of life.⁷⁰⁰

Qutb here refers *inter alia* to the concept of the oneness of God, *Tawheed*. *Tawheed* presumes that God, and thus Islam, is all encompassing and that all human activity, both private and public should be in accordance with the will and guidance of God. Even horizontal human relations and private thoughts thus fall under the vertical relation between God and man. Religion itself therefore is not something that exists solely in the heart of humans, as a private inner conviction, but permeates every sphere of being itself. Qutb underscores that Islam bears no resemblance to western concepts of religion or to the concept of religion as purported by the Imams of his day:

These research scholars, with their defeated mentality, have adopted the Western concept of 'religion', which is merely a

which taqiyyah is allowed under very specific circumstances based upon the life and example of the prophet Muhammad. We will look at this in the chapter dealing with Zawahiri.

⁷⁰⁰ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 45-46.

name for 'belief' in the heart, having no relation to the practical affairs of life.⁷⁰¹

Qutb, al-Zawahiri and Khomeini all operate from this basic premise: Islam is a totalist concept of life which extends beyond the boundaries of personal belief and which requires implementation in the public and thus political domain. To entertain thoughts to the opposite, i.e. that religion is a private matter, is to them on equal footing with being a *munafiq*, hypocrite. These hypocrites and the imams that legitimize their beliefs are therefore seen by all three ideologues as the existential internal enemy. See infra.

Qutb, arguing against this conception of religion as private belief, posits the concept of Tawheed. One of the aspects of Tawheed is that sovereignty and authority belong to God alone and to such a degree that every law, value system or even tradition that is not derived from the will and guidance of God, i.e. manmade, is un-Islamic and therefore against God. The only thing man can do and is expected to do is to follow and implement "his law in all spheres of life". This totality of God's influence and authority over the everyday life of the believer is further explained by Qutb as follows:

The Islam of Muhammad-- peace be on him--came for this purpose, as well as the messages of the earlier Prophets. The entire universe is under the authority of God, and man, being a small part of it, necessarily obeys the physical laws governing the universe. It is also necessary that the same authority be acknowledged as the law-giver for human life. Man should not cut himself off from this authority to develop a separate system and a separate scheme of life. The growth of a human being, his conditions of health and disease, and his life and death are under the scheme of those natural laws which come from God; even in the consequences of his voluntary actions he is helpless before the universal laws. Man

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., p. 76.

cannot change the practice of God in the laws prevailing in the universe. It is therefore desirable that he should also follow Islam in those aspects of his life in which he is given a choice and should make the divine Law the arbiter in all matters of life so that there may be harmony between man and the rest of the universe.⁷⁰²

What we see here is the development of the logicity of ideological thinking. The basic premise, which is beyond question or doubt, is the sovereignty and authority of God in all matters of life. All knowledge, power and law derive from him thus representing the symbolic seat of power, law and knowledge as described by Claude Lefort. Such a symbolic and transcendent representation of power, law and knowledge is common in all religions. The problem with Islamism, however, is that in the Islamists' view this transcendence is immanentized through the Shari'ah. It is the Shari'ah which *symbolically* and *actually* occupies this seat of power, law and knowledge. Every conceivable human action, according to Qutb, should "make the divine Law the arbiter in all matters of life so that there may be harmony between man and the rest of the universe". In this formulation, which is repeated numerous times throughout Milestones and which is the kernel of all Islamist writings, we can see the equivalent of Arendt's 'Law of nature or history', the fundamental idea to which the logicity of ideological thinking is applied. If this line of thinking is put into practice then there will be "harmony between man and the rest of the universe". This of course, as I will show through Qutb's writings, also means that everything that opposes this path towards salvation needs to be eradicated in order to accelerate the fabrication of Utopia.

Central to this idea of Islam as the bringer of harmony between man and the universe is the legal-philosophical concept of liberty or freedom. We saw in part I of this book that the liberal and libertarian idea of freedom as illustrated by Friedrich von Hayek's uncertainty

⁷⁰² Ibid., pp. 45-46.

principle is opposed by the totalitarian idea of freedom as a state of being which is in full compliance at all levels of existence with the Gnostic speculative formula for self and world preservation.⁷⁰³ That formula or plan presupposes to have ultimate knowledge of good and evil and claims to have the right to transform society into the living embodiment of that formula, whilst doing so without regard for individual consent or opposition. Since the plan is either the product of the secular Gnostic's search for self and world preservation, or the religious identification of religion as that plan, the plan *is* the ultimate source of authority and sovereignty from which all laws flow, the seat of power knowledge and law, and must be enabled to transform society for the good of mankind.⁷⁰⁴ In other words, man must be forced to be free.

Qutb exemplifies this latter concept of freedom as follows:

In this respect, Islam's way of life is unique, for in systems other than Islam, some people worship others in some form or another. Only in the Islamic way of life do all men become free from the servitude of some men to others and devote themselves to the worship of God alone, deriving guidance from Him alone, and bowing before Him alone.⁷⁰⁵

According to this view, which is shared by al-Zawahiri and Khomeini, any system of laws or values, any order of being which is not founded

⁷⁰³ "The point which is so important is the basic fact that it is impossible for any man to survey more than a limited field, to be aware of the urgency of more than a limited number of needs. Whether his interests centre round his own physical needs, or whether he takes a warm interest in the welfare of every human being he knows, the ends about which he can be concerned will always be only an infinitesimal fraction of the needs of all men." Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 60.

⁷⁰⁴ "Totalitarian lawfulness pretends to have found a way to establish the rule of justice on earth – something which the legality of positive law admittedly could never attain." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 462.

⁷⁰⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 11.

upon Islam is in fact slavery, the antithesis of freedom. It is the mission of Islam to free man from the bonds of slavery and to bring him into the fold of Islam which is the only way in which mankind can ever truly be free. This includes democratic systems in which laws are devised by man, in which human laws bind and thus enslave humans to other humans. That slavery also includes liberal values which are derived from the horizontal relationships between men amongst themselves. Qutb's notion of freedom can thus be called radical because it aims to redefine the order of being from a horizontal relationship of man towards man, in which values are flexible and temporal, into a vertical orientation in which the primacy in all matters is between man and the static law of his creator.⁷⁰⁶

In the next few paragraphs I will explain how this concept of freedom is not merely a statement about static values but rather encapsulates a movement which corresponds to what Arendt called the 'law of movement', a movement which is inherent to Islam and which is expected to be the acting agent for the reshaping of the order of being. we will look at a number of concepts that are intricately woven into Qutb's but also al-Zawahiri's and Khomeini's concept of Islam as the formula for self and world preservation, namely: *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah*, *Jahiliyyah*, and *hakimiyyah*, meaning respectively; the inborn nature of man, servitude, ignorance and sovereignty.

3.1.1 Fitrah and Ubudiyyah

In Islam it is presumed that every child is born a Muslim, it is only through his nurturing or free will that he can depart from the path of Islam.⁷⁰⁷ Furthermore, all mankind falls under this concept of *fitrah*; it

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 85-86, 96-97.

⁷⁰⁷ Note the resemblance to Rousseau's concept of man in the state of nature. The parallel with Rousseau's concept of freedom and Robespierre's program for political revolution has ample similarities to the concept discussed here. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Victor Gourevitch, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997)., Robespierre and Zizek, *Virtue and Terror*.

is not something particular to a particular tribe or ethnic group. This can be seen by the fact that Quran claims that all the prophets of the Torah and Gospel were in fact Muslims. Islam maintains that mankind longs to be reunited, through the concept of *fitrah*, with his Islamic nature. Whilst Allah has sent to every nation its own prophet in order to accomplish this reuniting of man with Islam, Islam holds that these prophets were misunderstood, or their words corrupted by subsequent religious groups.⁷⁰⁸ Islam itself was revealed to Muhammad as a correction to the forgeries done by the Jews to the Torah and the misguidance of the Christians.⁷⁰⁹ Thus the revelation of the Quran took place so that mankind as a whole could return from the path of *Jahiliyyah* to the true path set out for him by his creator, Allah. The concept of *fitrah* thus points to this true path, the inborn nature of which man deviates at his own peril. This concept is closely linked to the concept of the Gnostic speculation and the law of nature in respectively Eric Voegelin's and Hannah Arendt's analyses of secular totalitarian systems.⁷¹⁰ As we have seen in part I of this book, totalitarian ideologies operate from the secular position that man is living in despair, loneliness and chaos. They have fallen out of the 'garden of Eden' and are in desperate need for a way back. The totalitarian party is the Sheppard; the ideology is the path the herd must follow. Thus the main function of ideology in a totalitarian system is to prescribe and, if need be, forcefully fabricate society into a new state of being which is in harmony with the universe, man and history itself. This state, if followed correctly will lead men back into the 'garden of Eden' from which it has fallen due to their own ignorance.

The concept of *fitrah* in Qutb's perception mirrors the function of the 'Law of nature' in Arendt's theory and that of the essential order which is the object of the Gnostic's search for an end to anomie and

⁷⁰⁸ See the second chapter of this part of the book.

⁷⁰⁹ See the Quran 5:12-15

⁷¹⁰ See Suurland, "Totalitarian and Radical Islamic Ideologies."

chaos. Unlike those however, the law to which Qutb refers is both transcendent as immanent, both divine and positive. Since Shari'ah law is derived from the Quran and the hadith, both of which are divine in creation or guidance, the border between the transcendent and immanent has been bridged and this bridge has been objectified in positive law.⁷¹¹

The definition of fitrah in the work of Qutb is as follows:

Behind this universe there is a Will which administers it, a Power which moves it, a Law which regulates it. This Power keeps a balance between the various parts of the universe and controls their motions; thus they neither collide with each other nor is there any disturbance in their system, nor do their regular motions come to a sudden stop, nor do they become disorganized. This will continue as long as the divine will wishes it to continue. The whole universe is obedient to God's Will, His Power and His Authority; it is not possible for it to disobey the divine Will and its ordained law for a single moment. Due to this obedience and submission, the universe continues to go on in a harmonious fashion, and no destruction or dispersion or disturbance can enter into it unless God wills it.⁷¹²

All of the universe thus follows the law and will of God, all except one category of creatures and that is mankind who by fault of their own God given free will are able to diverge from this divinely ordained path.⁷¹³ The same type of thinking was evident in the National-

⁷¹¹ "He Who has created the universe and man, and who made man obedient to the laws which also govern the universe, has also prescribed a Shari'ah for his voluntary actions. If man follows this law, then his life is in harmony with his own nature. From this point of view, this Shari'ah is also a part of that universal law which governs the entire universe, including the physical and biological aspects of man." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 88.

⁷¹² Ibid., p. 87.

⁷¹³ It seems that throughout the Quran there are multiple references to God giving humans the ability to err as some a test of faith, a concept known as

Socialist or Stalinist concept of the law of nature and movement, whose work was interrupted by man's free choice.⁷¹⁴ The symbolic fall from Eden therefore is once again attributed to man's choice to divert from God's ordained path.

Qutb then postulates that *fitrah* demands that man is obedient to this law in order for his true nature to be in concordance with the nature with the universe and the will of God.⁷¹⁵ The only way therefore, that man can be truly free and live the life worthy of a human being is by his total submission to this law.

This obedience to the Shari`ah becomes a necessity for human beings so that their lives may become harmonious and in tune with the rest of the universe; not only this, but the only way in which harmony can be brought about between the physical laws which are operative in the biological life of a man and the moral laws which govern his voluntary actions is solely through obedience to the Shari`ah. Only in this way does

Al-Ibtilaa'. See for instance Quran 21:35: "Every soul will taste death. And we test you with bad and with good as a trial. And unto us you will return."

⁷¹⁴ "This movement, proceeding according to its own law, cannot in the long run be hindered; eventually its force will always prove more powerful than the most powerful forces engendered by the actions and the will of men. But it can be slowed down and is slowed down almost inevitably by the freedom of man, which even totalitarian rulers cannot deny, for this freedom – irrelevant and arbitrary as they may deem it- is identical with the fact that men are born and die and that therefore each of them is a new beginning, begins in a sense the world anew." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 398.

⁷¹⁵ "According to this concept, obedience to the Shari`ah of God is actually a consequence of the need to harmonize human life with that law which is operative within man himself and in the rest of the universe. This need demands that the law which governs the social affairs of human beings should be in accordance with the general law of the universe; it demands that man submit to God alone, with the rest of the universe, and that no man should claim lordship over others." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 92.

man's personality, internal and external, become integrated.⁷¹⁶

Here we come to an interesting point. As we saw earlier the quintessential hallmark of the liberal society is what I termed Hayek's uncertainty principle. Because man can only know so much about his own needs let alone those of others, he is not legitimized in prescribing the law for others. Any attempt to do so will by default result in unjust laws whose injustice can only be alleviated by voluntary consent of often a temporary nature. Any form of law that does not rely on consent but on the planners own concept of justice must therefore rely on coercion in one form or another thus paving the road to serfdom. In the Qutbian notion of justice and freedom, the concept of justice and freedom is wholly externalized and the antithesis of Hayek's concept. It is exactly this inability of humans to come to a just society on the basis of voluntarism that necessitates their servitude to divine law. In other words, obedience to Shari'ah law is the *only* guarantee of freedom and justice:

Man cannot understand all the laws of the universe, nor can he comprehend the unity of this system; he cannot even understand the laws which govern his own person, from which he cannot deviate by a hair's breadth. Thus he is incapable of making laws for a system of life which can be in complete harmony with the universe or which can even harmonize his physical needs with his external behaviour. This capability belongs solely to the Creator of the universe and of men, who not only controls the universe but also human affairs, and who implements a uniform law according to His will.⁷¹⁷

If man diverts by 'a hair's breadth' from the Shari'ah, disharmony will follow. Therefore if man is to live a free and just life, he must obey the

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.p. 89

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

laws which are in accordance to his nature, *fitrah*, and live a life of servitude to the law of God, this concept is known as *ubudiyyah*.

The question that then follows is the degree in which man himself is capable of making his own decisions. We already know that in principle the Shari'ah is derived from the Quran and the Sunna through the instruments of *usul al-fiqh* which is in reality human labor within the bandwidth allowed by the rules of *fiqh*. But is man allowed to be the sovereign judge of his own affairs? Is there a realm of existence in which the Shari'ah is not the final judge or where deviation from Shari'ah can go unpunished? The short answer in Qutb's view is no.

Voegelin in his criticism on Marx already mentioned the inability to ask questions, the inability not to agree and the prohibition on questioning the origins and validity of the premise of the system.⁷¹⁸ These same restrictions apply to Qutb's vision on Shari'ah law and the place of humans under its reign:

The question may be asked, "Is not the good of mankind the criterion for solving actual problems?" But again we will raise the question which Islam raises itself, and which it answers; that is, "Do you know better, or God?" and, "God knows, and you do not know. [...] The good of mankind is inherent in the divine Laws sent down by God to the Prophet- peace be on him-which have come to us through his life. If at any time men think that their good is in going against what God has legislated, then first of all, they are deluded in their thinking."⁷¹⁹ None of Allah's creation has the right to ask Him – may he be exalted- why He has chosen all this and willed it to be [...] None of Allah's creation has the right to ask why He has chosen to create man with the *fitrah* he has, why He has

⁷¹⁸ See "science, politics and Gnosticism" in Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, pp. 262-264.

⁷¹⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 85-86.

chosen to make the operation of this fitrah permanent and uninterrupted; and why He has chosen to make the divinely ordained program for human life be realized through human existence, rather than enforcing it miraculously, through obscure, hidden means.⁷²⁰

According to Qutb, and this applies to al-Zawahiri and Khomeini in equal measure, man is wholly incapable of knowing what is good for him. It might be that his reason, *aql*, inspires him to arrive at a sound conclusion but this then is the result of his God given inborn nature, fitrah and not of his own volition. In accordance with Voegelin's observation on the sheer inability of asking questions in Gnostic speculative systems, Qutb reiterates this inability and even formulates areas of forbidden knowledge.⁷²¹

The basis of the message is that one should accept the Shari'ah without any question and reject all other laws in any shape or form. This is Islam. There is no other meaning of Islam. One who is attracted to this basic Islam has already resolved this problem; he will not require any persuasion through showing its beauty and superiority. This is one of the realities of the faith.⁷²²

Shari'ah law thus "[...] deals with the morals, manners, values and standards of the society, according to which persons, actions and events are measured. It also deals with all aspects of knowledge and

⁷²⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁷²¹ The Shafi'i school of law for example incorporates the same categories of forbidden knowledge. Qutb here merely reiterates concepts which existed long before he wrote *Milestones*. See Ibn al-Naqib al-Misri and Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law Umdat Al-Salik*. A7.2. The categories listed include: philosophy, the sciences of the materialists by which is meant "the conviction of materialists that things in themselves or by their own nature have a causal influence independent of the will of Allah" and "anything that is meant to create doubt in eternal truths. See also Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 107, 114-115.

⁷²² Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 36.

principles of art and science. In all these guidance from God is needed, just as it is needed in legal matters.”⁷²³ Thus the concept of Shari’ah represents to Qutb a total concept and the only concept according to which life should be ordered, a concept which is impervious to human questioning and to any attempt at falsification by real world experiences. Fitrah, thus expressed in the Shari’ah, correspond to the description of ideologies in the work of Arendt.⁷²⁴

The unfolding process in Qutb’s view and in the classical Islamic view in general started with God’s first revelation to mankind and will find its zenith when “all religion is for Allah”.⁷²⁵ Inherent in this message is the movement towards this ‘return to Eden’ which will be exemplified by man’s servitude, *ubudiyyah*, to God and God’s undivided sovereignty, *hakimiyyat*, over every aspect of life.

3.1.2 Hakimiyyat

⁷²³ Ibid., p. 107.

⁷²⁴ “Ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process- the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future- because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas.” [...]

“Ideologies always assume that one idea is sufficient to explain everything in the development from the premise, and that no experience can teach anything because everything is comprehended in this consistent process of logical deduction” [...] “the result of this application is not a body of statements about something that *is* but the unfolding of a process which is in constant change. The ideology treats the course of events as though it followed the same “law” as the logical exposition of its “idea”. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 469.,

⁷²⁵ The Quran and hadith make multiple references to this goal of purifying mankind until all religion is Allah’s. See for instance: Quran 61:9 “He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse.” And Quran 9:29 “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued”.

One of the central points of Islam is the call to 'command the right and forbid the wrong'⁷²⁶, of course, knowing what is right and wrong requires guidance and this guidance is delivered through the Quran and the *sunna* and manifested in the Shari'ah. Hence, Islam claims to be a total system of private laws of ritual but also of public laws concerning everything from trade, to inheritance and just war theories. Thus Qutb and others argue that Islam is by its very nature a religion with an inseparable political component.⁷²⁷ Everything that is thus not Islamic is either *shirk*, idolatry, *bid'a*, an unlawful innovation, or *kufir*, unbelief, and by that virtue automatically inimical to Islam. This purity of religious doctrine, as we saw earlier, revolves around the idea of *tawhid*, the unity of God Outside of God there is nothing, and everything that is, owes its existence to God, thus God is the supreme sovereign that guides everything in the universe. Allegiance, obedience and indeed ones whole life is therefore for Allah and none other, this is the concept of *hakimiyyat*.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁶ See from the Quran: Allah Almighty says, "Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success." (3:104) The Almighty says, "You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid the wrong." (3:110). The Almighty says, "Make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant," (7:199) and the Almighty says, "The believers, men and women, are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong." (9:71)

⁷²⁷ Sayed Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), p. 7.

⁷²⁸ A number of verses and hadith related to this idea of the supremacy of Allah and his messenger, which together form the core of Islam, are repeated time and again in both the works of Qutb as those who preceded him and came after him, to illustrate the necessity of obeying Allah alone. Quran 58:22: "Thou wilt not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred". This particular verse is said to be revealed in relation to Abū 'Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrāh, one of the ten companions of the prophet who was promised paradise by Muhammad. During the Battle of Badr in 624 A.D. al-Jarrah faced his unbelieving father in battle. Though he tried to evade him, his father blocked

Islam is the religion of unity among all the forces of the universe, so it is inescapably the religion of tawhid, it recognizes the unity of Allah [...] Islam began by liberating the human conscience from service to anyone other than Allah... no one other than Allah has authority over it [...] Allah alone has power, all others are servants who have no power over themselves or others.⁷²⁹

True just government, Qutb argues, is therefore that government that is the government of Allah. The only government Allah will accept is *his* government and thus the primacy of the vertical relationship between man and God is established. In practice this means that man-made laws for instance are *shirk*, innovations leading to disbelief and constituting an offence to Islam and Muslims alike.⁷³⁰ Democracy in that respect is incompatible with Islam since it would make men slaves to one another instead of slaves to Allah. Another consequence of this line of reasoning is that the Quran, the revealed word of Allah, in practice functions as the constitution that limits the operational boundaries of the state. Of course the Quran and the Sunna have to

his path and al-Jarrah slew him as he was an unbeliever. See also: Ibn Kathir, p. 538. A second Quranic verse oft quoted is 9:24: "Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property which you have acquired, and the slackness of trade which you fear and dwellings which you like, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command: and Allah does not guide the transgressing people." See also the relevant hadith in Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari*. Volume 1, p. 64 "[...] Whoever possess the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: 1. The one to whom Allah and His messenger Muhammad become dearer than anything else, 2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake, 3. Who hates to revert to disbelief after Allah has brought him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire".

⁷²⁹ Qutb Quoted in Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 24.

⁷³⁰ Here one can see the legacy of Wahhab whose book Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, ed., *An Explanation of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab's Four Principles of Shirk*. Played a major role in formulating the need to cleanse Islam of everything un-Islamic.

be interpreted by those qualified to do so (*mujtahid*) and differences over interpretation can be resolved by a process of consultation (*shura*) and consensus (*ijma*), but it should be clear that the boundaries of the Quran and *Sunna* cannot be crossed even by such a consensus.⁷³¹

The question that follows from Qutb's conception of sovereignty of God is whether or not this sovereignty is limited in any meaningful way. Can we truly say that the Shari'ah is a totalist concept which describes a course of action for every facet of life, or are there realms of existence which elude the dominion of Shari'ah and the sovereignty of God?

[..] By 'the Shari'ah of Go-d is meant everything legislated by God for ordering man's life; it includes the principles of belief, principles of administration and justice, principles of morality and human relationships, and principles of knowledge. The

⁷³¹ There is however one possibility which unfortunately cannot be discussed within the confines of this book and that is the question of whether or not the boundaries of the Shari'ah can be redrawn to suit the needs of the ummah and ulama through the concept of *ijma* and *shura* based on the hadith which states: "My Ummah would not agree (or he said the Ummah of Muhammad) would not agree upon error and Allah's hand is over the group and whoever dissents from them departs to Hell." This hadith is from the hadith collection of Imam at-Tirmidhi: *at-Tirmidhi, Jami' at-Tirmidhi: English Translation (and Arabic Text) of Imam Al Tirmidhi* trans. Abu Khaliyl, 6 vols. (Riyadh: Dar Us Salam, 2007). 4/2167. The same concept can also be found in, amongst others: Dawud, *Sunan Abu Dawud: English Translation with Explanatory Notes by Prof. Ahmad Hasan. Sh. Muhammad*. hadith 4255; whilst this is a very specific point of fiqh its importance is not to be understated. If this hadith is to be found *shahih*, the highest grade of authenticity, then it would imply an enormous amount of 'legislative' power in the hands of the community since in principle; they would not be able to agree on error. However, this would also mean that two differing factions could both be right. This specific point is of value when it comes to pacifying for instance the sword verses from the Quran. It should be noted however that this matter is testing the limits between lawful interpretation and *bid'ah* or apostasy. Traditionally the power of the *shura* has been limited to the trodden path of *ijtihad*.

Shari'ah includes the Islamic beliefs and concepts and their implications concerning the attributes of God, [...] the nature of man, and the interrelationships among these. Similarly, it includes political, social and economic affairs and their principles, with the intent that they reflect complete submission to God alone. [...] It deals with the morals, manners, values and standards of the society, according to which persons, actions and events are measured. It also deals with all aspects of knowledge and principles of art and science. In all these guidance from God is needed, just as it is needed in legal matters.⁷³²

In this comment from Qutb we can see that the Shari'ah in this conception, and it is a conception shared by al-Zawahiri, Khomeini and a plethora of other ideologues, is indeed a totalist plan for the ordering of life which leaves no realm of existence untouched. Qutb argues that Islam, through the Shari'ah created and symbolizes, to use Lefort's terminology, the symbolical seats of power, law and knowledge. However, although these Platonic Forms are static, the road towards their implementation, the movement inherent in these Forms, is not.⁷³³ As we saw earlier, Allah could have created man as the perfect vessel, the unfailing conduit for his Forms but he chose not to. Connected to man's fitrah is the concept of *Al-Ibtillaa'*, the test of Allah through which man purges himself of anything that is not Islamic and thus demonstrates his servitude.⁷³⁴ Islam, according to Qutb, shows man his true nature, declares Allah's exclusive

⁷³² Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 107.

⁷³³ See on this static nature Ibid., pp. 96-97.

⁷³⁴ See Quran 2:155 "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere", and Quran 3:179: "Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which ye are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the Unseen. But He chooses of His Messenger. (For the purpose) whom He pleases. So believe in Allah. And His apostles: And if ye believe and do right, ye have a reward without measure."

sovereignty over his creation and stipulates the conditions necessary for man to declare his servitude to Allah. The test of life imposed by Allah upon men through Islam, Qutb argues, is therefore to bring mankind into the fold of Islam, to free mankind from their servitude to false idols, other man, and false systems of belief.

It is the right of Islam to release mankind from servitude to human beings so that they may serve God alone, to give practical meaning to its declaration that God is the true Lord of all and that all men are free under Him.⁷³⁵

Before we look at the exact mechanism through which this process is supposed to take place, we should ask ourselves a question regarding the political nature and typology of the system of *hakimiyyat* and *ubudiyyah* Qutb envisions to establish. According to Qutb the Islamic state is not a theocratic state for the reason that the ruler's entire legitimacy is exclusively dependent on his implementation and execution of the Shari'ah. He cannot initiate legislation, he can only uphold it. As long as he upholds the Shari'ah, the Muslims owe him their loyalty.⁷³⁶ Legitimacy and authority thus do not follow from the fact that the *ummah* chooses its own leaders, which would imply sovereignty of the people, but solely from the fact that the leader implements the Shari'ah, in which case sovereignty belongs to Allah. This led Qutb to famously state that there were no real Islamic states

⁷³⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 74-75.

⁷³⁶ "Every government that is based on the principle of *hakimiyyah* belongs to none but Allah and then implements the Shari'ah, is an Islamic government. Every government that is not based on this principle and does not implement the Shari'ah cannot be called Islamic, even if the government is run by official religious organizations. The obedience of the people is to given only if, and as long as, the government recognizes that *hakimiyyah* belongs to Allah alone and then implements the Shari'ah without any qualification other than justice and obedience." Qutb quoted In Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 32.

in his time. Moreover, by this measure there still are no Islamic states that adhere to this principle.^{737 738}

The jahili society is any society other than the Muslim society; and if we want a more specific definition, we may say that any society is a jahili society which does not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas in its observances of worship, and in its legal regulations. According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are jahili.⁷³⁹

As I have indicated in the previous chapters, the historical reality of many Islamic societies was that the ruler would not implement the Shari'ah in its entirety, that he could even make laws of his own. It is against this line of reasoning that Qutb's theory of *Jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyyat* revolts. The order of being should be restored and in that order of being there can only be a legitimate government if it fully implements the Shari'ah. So the question that arises is to which degree this government can *force men to be free*?

⁷³⁷ See the report of the Dutch government think tank WRR on the implementation, or lack thereof, of Shari'ah law in Islamic countries. J.M. Otto., "Sharia En Nationaal Recht," (Amsterdam: Wetenschappelijke raad voor regeringsbeleid, 2006). See also: Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*.

⁷³⁸ In principle, a ruler can be removed by the *ummah* only if he is a *taghut*, a transgressor, someone who does not implement the Shari'ah or hampers its implementation. As we saw earlier, part of the reason that there is a dichotomy between Islamic law and the law of the Emir is that the Emir has as much to fear from the *ulama* as he is reliant upon them. For this reason, certain laws were enacted that prohibit revolt against an unjust ruler, or even forbid the labelling of someone as an apostate (*takfir*) in order to pacify just such potential conflicts. The Jihadist Salafi's however argue that such laws were only legitimized by subservient *ulama* to assure them of the financial or material support of the Emir. We will return to this important topic in the second section of this chapter.

⁷³⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 80.

According to Qutb the true Islamic state is neither a democracy nor a theocracy. The question then is: can it become a dictatorship or tyranny? Here one will find that the Shari'ah itself contains numerous injunctions against tyrannical arbitrary rule.⁷⁴⁰ However, these too are a matter of interpretation and furthermore, what constitutes tyranny to a western audience accustomed to humanism, secularism and human rights treaties is rather different from what constitutes tyranny from an Islamic perspective. I mentioned before that *doublespeak* is often employed without ill intent, it is a matter of the differing vocabularies between the Islamic and non Islamic world and can lead a non Islamic audience to have a vastly different view, either positive or negative, from that which the Islamic speaker or writer is trying to purvey. Tyranny as we have seen in the Qutbian Islamist vocabulary in general means those systems that do not incorporate the concepts of *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyat* and do not implement the Shari'ah. Everything that is not Islamic is tyranny; hence Islamic rule can be construed to be the freedom from tyranny. To Qutb, Islamic government falls outside of the boundaries set by terms such as: democracy, tyranny, authoritarianism or dictatorship. Islamic government is in a league of its own due to the fact that it has but one mission, to implement the Shari'ah, and how it does this is quite irrelevant as long as it does not transgress the boundaries of Shari'ah. Unlike democracy, tyranny or authoritarianism which are all systems of political government based on immanence, on worldly relations and human needs, Islamic government is based solely on the reference to the transcendent. A government is just because it implements the Shari'ah, all questions relating to the justness of the Shari'ah itself, as we have seen, are deemed signs of apostasy. This

⁷⁴⁰ A beautiful hadith from the collection of Abu Dawood states: "The best Jihad is saying a word of truth in the court of an unjust ruler". Zawahiri in "Knights under the prophet's banner" relates that during the trial of Qutb, the judge asked Qutb if he withdrew his ideas and statements. Upon hearing this, Qutb allegedly raised his finger and cited this hadith thereby signing his own execution. Mansfield, ed., *His Own Words, a Translation of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*.

strict dichotomy between the Islamic order of being and the non-Islamic order of being is typified by a concept which we discussed at the beginning of this chapter namely *Jahiliyyah*. This concept is paramount to understanding the existential struggle that takes place on the presumed battlefield of human existence. It is a concept that runs through all the works of classical and modern Islamic scholars and ideologues and which forms the heart of the rallying call for Islamic revival in Qutb's *Milestones*.

3.1.3 Jahiliyaah

In line with the generally accepted narrative of Islam, the prophet Muhammad established a system of norms and values which demarcated the era since the birth of Islam from the era preceding it. Loosely speaking *Jahiliyyah* equates to a time of ignorance, a: "[...]condition of any place or society where Allah is not held to be the ultimate sovereign."⁷⁴¹ According to Qutb, "Islam and *Jahiliyyah* are the real opposites and that the clash in the future will be between them and not between civilizations as such".⁷⁴² In principle everything that is not Islamic is *Jahiliyyah* and inimical to Islam, the two cannot co-exist and Islam is perpetually obliged to eradicate *Jahiliyyah*.⁷⁴³

This concept of *Jahiliyyah* is common to both the Islamist discourse as to Islamic terminology in general. The difference between them is that for the Islamists, the concept of *Jahiliyyah* dictates a very specific course of political action which is derived from orthodox Islam, but at points, transcends its boundaries. I will return to these differences in detail in chapter six. The Islamists' concept of *Jahiliyyah* is very much akin to Voegelin's concept of *agnoia* as the principle of action in secular totalitarian Gnostic movements:

⁷⁴¹ Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 7.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, Routledge Studies in Political Islam (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 101.p. 101

[..] The instrument of salvation is Gnosis itself, knowledge. Since according to the Gnostic ontology entanglement with the world is brought about by *agnoia*, ignorance, the soul will be able to disentangle itself through knowledge of its true life and its condition of alienness in this world.⁷⁴⁴

The main difference between the secular Gnostic *gnosis* and the Islamists anti-dote for *agnoia*, is that the latter can refer to a divine revelation; they need to discover or formulate their particular path to self- and world salvation. The Islamists, however, do not invent anything new when they claim that Jahiliyyah must eventually be erased from the earth. This idea is already present in numerous Quranic verses and hadith, such as Quran 8:39 “And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and polytheism: i.e. worshipping others besides Allah) and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]”. The main difference between orthodox Islam’s concept of jahiliyaah and the Islamist concept is that the latter see it as the axiomatic premise to which a process of strict logical deduction is applied; this results in what I described as an “ideology”, an inherently totalitarian phenomenon.

The core of Qutb’s Milestones is about this dichotomy between Islam and Jahiliyaah and Qutb quite literally intended his book to set milestones towards the path to world salvation.⁷⁴⁵ Inherent in the coming of Islam, according to Qutb, is the non-Islamic world’s declaration of war against Islam. History therefore is a continuing process of an existential struggle between Islam and *Jahiliyyah* in which one is either a Muslim or an enemy of Islam.

⁷⁴⁴ Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, pp. 255-256.

⁷⁴⁵ “In the world there is only one party of God; all others are parties of Satan and rebellion [..] There is only one way to reach God; all other ways do not lead to Him. [..] For human life, there is only one true system, and that is Islam; all other systems are Jahiliyaah. [..] There is only one law which ought to be followed, and that is the Shari’ah from God; anything else is mere emotionalism and impulsiveness [..] The truth is one and indivisible; anything different from it is error” Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 117.

Islam cannot accept any mixing with Jahiliyaah, either in its concept or in the modes of living which are derived from this concept. Either Islam will remain, or Jahiliyaah: Islam cannot accept or agree to a situation which is half-Islam and half-Jahiliyaah. In this respect Islam's stand is very clear. It says that the truth is one and cannot be divided; if it is not the truth, then it must be falsehood. The mixing and co-existence of the truth and falsehood is impossible. Command belongs to God, or otherwise to Jahiliyyah; God's Shari'ah will prevail, or else people's desires.⁷⁴⁶

Out of all the concepts which we have thus far treated, *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah*, *hakimiyyat* and *Jahiliyyah*, the last one is the most politically relevant to our study. Whilst the first three concepts explain the internal dimension of Islam, *Jahiliyyah* exemplifies the relationship between Islam and the non-Islamic world and the movement which aims to transform this non-Islamic world into an Islamic one. In other words Jahiliyaah exemplifies both the existential enemy against which a perpetual war is declared and the anti-thesis of the Islamic ideology and movement. With regard to the status of war and the permanency of war against the *Jahiliyyah* non-Islamic world, Qutb states:

There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari'ah is the authority and God's limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (Dar-ul-Harb). A Muslim can have only two possible relations with Dar-ul- Harb: peace with a contractual agreement, or war. A country with which there is a treaty will not be considered the home of Islam.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 130.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 118.

3.1.4 Islam as an ideological movement of transformation

In summary then the conceptual foundations of Islam, is constituted by *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah*, *hakimiyyat* and *Jahiliyyah*. The pivotal question is whether or not Islam can allow those who are not Muslim to remain Muslim, either by choice or on account of their being ignorant of the message of Islam. The fundamental assumption to a western audience which underlies this question is related to my earlier point about freedom. A western onlooker would assume that this question is essentially about choice and the freedom to choose one's own religion and destiny. This is however a fundamental flaw in the way in which we approach this question. The real heart of the matter, according to Qutb, is the denial of man's freedom to choose since they man is *a priori*, ill-informed and man knows not what is good for him.

Both Qutb and the secular totalitarian ideologues, in their description of the formula for self and world preservation, the law of nature or history, recognize that this formula is also a law of movement, an unfolding process, that runs through existence. Since nature, history or Allah has ordained, and this is without question, that in the end of times the edicts of the formula will come to dominate the order of being, the question arises on how to accelerate this process which is already inherent in being itself. To clarify this essential point I am trying to make: As I have indicated in part I of this book, the Nazi's were convinced that it was nature herself that already ordained from the beginning of time that the Aryan race would in the course of time would come to rule the earth exclusively. In other words, the death sentence of non-Aryan races was already pronounced at the beginning of history itself, this is the law of nature.. All that remained was for nature to carry out this death sentence, the law of movement, the unfolding of a process towards its natural end. It was however the freedom of humans to act as they pleased that formed an obstacle towards this law of movement. Arendt observes:

This movement, proceeding according to its own law, cannot in the long run be hindered; eventually its force will always prove more powerful than the most powerful forces engendered by the actions and the will of men. But it can be slowed down and is slowed down almost inevitably by the freedom of man, which even totalitarian rulers cannot deny, for this freedom –irrelevant and arbitrary as they may deem it- is identical with the fact that men are born and die and that therefore each of them is a new beginning, begins in a sense the world anew.⁷⁴⁸

The same amount of freedom and spontaneity that plagued secular totalitarian ideologies is observed by Qutb when he describes the nature of Islam as an ideology and law of movement, and the fact that human freedom has led to the halting of the law of movement:

Thus, there is no disturbance in it, no conflict between its parts; it does not move at random, nor does it depend on chance, nor is it devoid of an overall plan; neither is it a sport in the hands of human caprices, but runs smoothly on a precise, detailed and prescribed course. Conflict begins when man deviates from the truth which is hidden in the depths of his own nature, under the influence of his desires, and when he follows laws based on his own opinions instead of following God's commandments. When this conflict between man and his own nature, and man and the universe, spreads to human groups, nations and races, then all the forces and resources of the universe are utilized not for the benefit of all mankind, but for its destruction and for violence against others.⁷⁴⁹

In order for the forces of the law of movement to run freely throughout mankind, man has to become subservient to the Shari'ah and rendered nearly incapable of resisting the law of movement

⁷⁴⁸ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 398.

⁷⁴⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 91.

which is inherent in it. The central focus of man's position within the design of Shari'ah is therefore not man's freedom, but his obedience to Allah. Tyranny therefore is not man acting tyrannically towards other man, but disobedience towards Allah and opposition towards the Islam's 'law of movement'. Since everything that is *Jahiliyyah* is equal to tyranny, and Islam has come to end tyranny, the conclusion must be, Qutb asserts, that all those institution, rules, values and entities that obstruct this free reign of the law of movement must be destroyed so that nothing stands between mankind and the law of movement:

This Islam has a right to remove all those obstacles which are in its path so that it may address human reason and intuition with no interference and opposition from political systems. [...]. It has the right to destroy all obstacles in the form of institutions and traditions which limit man's freedom of choice. It does not attack individuals nor does it force them to accept its beliefs; it attacks institutions and traditions to release human beings from their poisonous influences, which distort human nature and which curtail human freedom.⁷⁵⁰

To Qutb and many classical and modern day Islamist scholars, the law of movement is natural to Islam itself, the outcome of its unfolding process is unavoidable, but *Jahiliyyah* in any shape or form opposes its unobstructed reign and thereby postpones the unfolding of this process. Milestones was written to overcome this obstacle.⁷⁵¹ The method by which to remove these obstacles, by which to let the law of movement reign freely and unopposed is *jihad*. Inherent in the formula for self and world salvation is this concept of jihad and it is important to point out a few basic assumptions that Qutb makes about the nature of jihad. In paragraphs five and six we will look at its practical implementation but we should first come to grips with its theoretical imperatives and limitations. In the last quote from Qutb

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., p. 12.

cited above there are a two elements which need some additional attention since they form the blueprint for the jihadist movements which claim to be inspired by Qutb and are very strong indicators of the totalitarian nature of Qutb's writing. First of all, it is true for even the most vehement jihadists that Islam does not and cannot force someone to accept Islam. The laws of Shari'ah simply do not permit it. Right of the bat that would imply a serious deviation from secular forms of totalitarian ideologies, but as we will see this discrepancy is far smaller than one would think. As we have seen in the beginning of this part of the book, Muhammad stated:" "I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that [...] None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and give Zakat so if they perform all that, then they save their lives and properties from me except for Islamic laws, and their reckoning [...] will be with[...] Allah".⁷⁵² This statement in Islamic legal reasoning gives the unbeliever the option of either converting or death, unless the unbeliever is one of the peoples of the book, *ahl al-kitab*, the *dhimmis* who have the third option of paying jizyah.⁷⁵³ Even then, the rules pertaining to these *dhimmis* are constructed in such a way as to ensure their slow demise if not their vanishing from the stage of humanity.⁷⁵⁴ Strictly speaking the option to choose therefore does exist since the choice between submission, conversion, and the sword is theoretically still a choice. As we will see shortly, Qutb circumvents the protection offered to the *dhimmis* by declaring Jews and Christians polytheists thereby in effect declaring

⁷⁵² Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari*. Volume 1, p. 66. Chapter 17

⁷⁵³ Apart from the Quranic and sunna references, see for the well established classical Islam fiqh on these three options: submission, jizyah or death: al-Tabari, *Al-Tabari's Book of Jihad, a Translation from the Original Arabic*. Ibn Kathir's tafsir, Ibn al-Naqib al-Misri and Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law Umdat Al-Salik.*, Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Political Shariyah on Reforming the Ruler and the Ruled*, pp. 179-182.

⁷⁵⁴ See for the rules and practice of the *dhimmi* legislation: the pact of Umar ca. 717 AD. In Bostom, ed., *The Legacy of Jihad*. Bat, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*.

war on them and removing the little protection the dhimmi regulation offered.

Given the fact that unbelief, or *kufr*, is the acting agent behind *Jahiliyyah*, Islam sees it as its mission to restrict the political movement and organizational capacity of the unbelievers to the minimum proscribed by Shari'ah law, which is: one cannot force a conversion but one can destroy all elements, symbols and institutions of the *Jahiliyyah* society. In effect this means that one denies the individual the freedom to live in a world which is non-Islamic and the freedom to design his own way of life. Freedom as a concept is minimized to the freedom of choosing one's own inner conviction, but one is not free to act upon these convictions if they are contrary to Islam and to the movement inherent in Islam, since that would constitute 'acting tyrannically' and thus would threaten the Islamic version of freedom of one's fellow man. This is the meaning of the sentence: " [Islam] attacks institutions and traditions to release human beings from their poisonous influences, which distort human nature and which curtail human freedom". Thus Islamic governance can be said to be in accordance with the dictum of totalitarian rule, which is that type of government whose principle of action is not derived from worldly considerations but from an ideological premise which is not falsifiable through human experiences. Qutb emphasizes this vertical obligation for servitude as the basis for political action when he states that: "Man's nature must become [...] malleable, transformable and capable of exposing its substance and its structures so as to lend itself to the pattern and purpose of creation".⁷⁵⁵ Herein lies the totalitarian impulse which demands of man not his autonomous consent, but his servitude to the edicts of nature, as in secular totalitarianism, or the edicts of God, as in Qutb's view on Islam.

Human life will not be rightly ordered until the balance and harmony of the fitrah is fully instituted, in accordance with the

⁷⁵⁵ Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 80.

law that organizes and governs the natural constitution of the universe, life and Man. Balance and harmony must be accomplished, for the welfare of humanity. Therefore, it is permissible to use force to bring those who deviate from fitrah back on the path of fitrah.⁷⁵⁶

As mentioned earlier, Qutb has a detailed plan through which man can be 'forced to be brought back onto the path of fitrah' through the process of jihad. In his description thereof he reveals the totalitarian essence of that process:

If we insist on calling Islamic *Jihad* a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom.⁷⁵⁷

The defence of man is therefore in effect a program of action that is designed to deny man the freedom to live in a world that is not dominated by the Shari'ah. And once this dominion of the Shari'ah as the embodiment of the law of Allah and the law of movement is established, all his actions will be judged by it, whether man desires it or not: "Truth is indivisible, and it is the name of that general law which God has ordained for all affairs; and everything in existence either follows it or is punished by it".⁷⁵⁸ The movement towards the defence of man is thus constituted as a process of eliminating everything that can form an obstacle to the law of movement which is inherent in the formula for self and world salvation. As Arendt rightly noted, this is the most radical denial of freedom and the hallmark of totalitarianism.

The second point which must be mentioned is the phrase: "with no interference and opposition from political systems. [...]. It has the right to destroy all obstacles in the form of institutions and

⁷⁵⁶ Qutb quoted in Ibid., p. 82.

⁷⁵⁷ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 62.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 90.

traditions which limit man's freedom of choice". What this means according to Qutb, is that inherent to Islam there is a movement of aggression against all those institutes, traditions and political systems which oppose it. This is not limited to the geographical realm in which Muslims reside but is in fact a global program for annihilation of all elements of *Jahiliyyah*.⁷⁵⁹

It is in the very nature of Islam to take initiative for freeing the human beings throughout the earth from servitude to anyone other than God; and so it cannot be restricted within any geographic or racial limits, leaving all mankind on the whole earth in evil, in chaos and in servitude to lords other than God. It may happen that the enemies of Islam may consider it expedient not to take any action against Islam, if Islam leaves them alone in their geographical boundaries to continue the lordship of some men over others and does not extend its message and its declaration of universal freedom within their domain. But Islam cannot agree to this unless they submit to its authority by paying Jiziyah, which will be a guarantee that they have opened their doors for the preaching of Islam and will not put any obstacle in its way through the power of the state.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁹ "Islam is not merely a belief, so that it is enough merely to preach it. Islam, which is a way of life, takes practical steps to organize a movement for freeing man. Other societies do not give it any opportunity to organize its followers according to its own method, and hence it is the duty of Islam to annihilate all such systems, as they are obstacles in the way of universal freedom. Only in this manner can the way of life be wholly dedicated to God, so that neither any human authority nor the question of servitude remains, as is the case in all other systems which are based on man's servitude to man." Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 73. Jizyah is the poll-tax imposed upon the *dhimmi's*, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians by which they are allowed to keep their religion under certain strict rules which place them in the position of second-class citizen. According to the Hanafi school the status of *dhimmi* can be accorded

Qutb envisions the mission of Islam to be a global revolt against *Jahiliyyah* which knows no concessions and must continue until all mankind is freed from all those obstacles that stand between him and the law of movement.

Islam uses force only to remove these obstacles so that there may not remain any wall between Islam and individual human beings, and so that it may address their hearts and minds after releasing them from these material obstacles, and then leave them free to choose to accept or reject it.⁷⁶¹

Once again one must keep in mind that the freedom to reject it is limited to an inner conviction. No sphere of the public domain in the largest sense may be allowed to be un-Islamic since this would only further the goal of tyranny.

However, this freedom does not mean that they can make their desires their gods, or that they can choose to remain in the servitude of other human beings, making some men lords over others. Whatever system is to be established in the world ought to be on the authority of God, deriving its laws from Him alone. Then every individual is free, under the protection of this universal system, to adopt any belief he wishes to adopt. This is the only way in which 'the religion' can be purified for God alone. The word 'religion' includes more than belief; 'religion' actually means a way of life, and in Islam this is based on belief. But in an Islamic system there is room for all kinds of people to follow their own beliefs, while obeying the laws of the country which are themselves based on the divine authority.⁷⁶²

to other groups as well except for Arab polytheists. See amongst others: Bostom, ed., *The Legacy of Jihad*, p. 184.

⁷⁶¹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 72.p. 72

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

In addition, it is highly unlikely that Qutb would deviate from the prophetic saying and Quranic sword verses that demand that one fights until the unbelievers accept Islam or die by fighting. It stands to reason then, that the very limited sphere of personal freedom that Qutb does allow is actually void. At best it could apply to the *ahl al-kitab* who are the only group in Islamic fiqh that are allowed to have the third option; paying *jizyah*.⁷⁶³

3.1.5 Doublespeak

As with secular totalitarian ideologies, particular attention has to be paid to their legal-political philosophical vocabulary. The vocabulary employed by Qutb is a familiar occurrence of *doublespeak* although be it without the intent to mislead. Whereas the western, I use that term liberally, or liberal concept of freedom implies the movement to design one's life to one's own accord, the concept of negative freedom, the Qutbian Islamist notion of freedom implies the exact opposite, namely a well-nigh totalitarian form of Utopian engineering. One may be allowed to disagree with Islam, but one may not voice it, act upon it or even communicate it since these actions would constitute aiding tyranny. Qutb just falls short of the totalitarian aspiration of even dominating an individual's most inner thoughts. The same applies to the concept of peace, which is often heard when used by modern day Islamists who proclaim that Islam equals peace. The regular non-totalitarian concept of peace is of course the absence of violence or armed conflict, that state of being in which the western notion of freedom is allowed to flourish and in which people, individually or as society are able to shape their lives and community as they see fit. Qutbian peace however, has an entirely different and altogether antagonistic meaning:

⁷⁶³ I once again repeat the exception of the Hanafi school which allows others than the *ahl al-Kitab* to pay *jizyah*. Ibn al-Naqīb al-Misri and Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law Umdat Al-Salik*, p. 603.

When Islam strives for peace, its objective is not that superficial peace which requires that only that part of the earth where the followers of Islam are residing remain secure. The peace which Islam desires is that the religion (i.e. the Law of the society) be purified for God, that the obedience of all people be for God.⁷⁶⁴

Insofar as the counterterrorism debate is concerned, it is paramount that one understands the principles that lie behind these ostentatiously peaceful and comforting words. They are oftentimes quite the opposite of the customary understanding of those terms of the intended audience. I will give an example of such doublespeak in the communications of Osama Bin Laden. In their propaganda directed at a *western* audience, unaccustomed to the Qutbian vocabulary, Al-Qaeda portrays itself as a pragmatic opponent that merely wishes to retaliate injustices incurred upon the Muslim world by the west. If the western hostilities would cease, so too would Al-Qaeda's self-defined *defensive* jihad. The key to understanding and interpreting these statements is by understanding the particular vocabulary which they employ and understanding their particular legal-philosophical, theological origin. If we take Qutb's following statement about the mission of Islam:

[..]Islam - that is, submission to God-is a universal Message which the whole of mankind should accept or make peace with. No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam. It should leave every individual free to accept or reject it, and if someone wants to accept it, it should not prevent him or fight against him. If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until either he is killed or until he declares his submission.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 63.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Defensive jihad therefore is the jihad aimed at the defence of man's freedom to accept Islam. Everything and everyone that stands between man and that freedom must be killed or be made to comply to Islamic standards. What then should we make of a secular state that does not allow religious laws to be implemented? About judges who are not allowed to wear the outer symbols of religion? How should we judge a prohibition on people acting against the institutes and mores of *Jahiliyyah* in the public domain whilst such behaviour would be prohibited by the laws of the land? All these things, according to the Qutbian way of thinking are instruments, policies and laws designed to enslave man in tyranny and to keep him from his servitude to Allah alone. They are designed to prevent the establishment of the sovereignty of Allah and the jihad against them is therefore defensive. If Man can only be truly free if he lives in a society in which everything is organized along the lines of the Shari'ah, everything else that does not comply with the necessity of *ubudiyyah* and recognition of Allah's *hakimiyyat* is *Jahiliyyah* and needs to be eradicated for the good of humankind and more importantly, for the sovereignty of Allah. Therefore in order for man to be really free, he has to be 'liberated' from these elements which stand in the way of achieving that goal namely the evil influences of the wrong kind of upbringing, the wrong type of society, the wrong type of thinking and judging and the influence of anything that is not Islamic. One has to force man to be free.

If we insist on calling Islamic *Jihad* a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom.⁷⁶⁶

Let us now look at the statement by bin Laden. In "why we are fighting you," a statement addressed to Americans, bin Laden describes Islam as:

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

the religion of showing kindness to others, establishing justice between them, granting them their rights, and defending the oppressed (...) and total equality between all people, without regard to their color, sex, or language".⁷⁶⁷

In a statement directed at the Islamic world, more specifically Saudi-Arabia which was already familiar with the puritanical Wahhabi creed of Islam, the emphasis is shifted from toleration, peace and kindness to a more threatening: convert, submit or die. In this statement, bin Laden does away with doublespeak and veiled vocabulary aimed at a western audience, and admonishes those who seek to portray Islam as being tolerant, peaceful or acting in defence of non-totalitarian concepts of freedom:

Thus our talks with the infidel West and our conflict with them ultimately revolve around one issue [...] Does Islam, or does it not, force people by the power of the sword to submit to its authority corporally if not spiritually? Yes. There are only three choices in Islam: either willing submission; or payment of the jizyah, thereby physical not spiritual submission to the authority of Islam; or the sword- *for it is not right to let him [an infidel] live*. The matter is summed up for every person alive: either submit, or live under the suzerainty of Islam or die.⁷⁶⁸

Both statements are true although the true meaning of the first statement would definitely elude an audience that is not familiar with the Qutbian meaning of those concepts. The establishment of Shari'ah would do all the things that bin Laden claims it will do in his first statement, provided one accepts their meaning as I have laid out in the preceding paragraphs. The second statement merely describes the options that are open to those who are 'forced to be free'. There is therefore no contradiction between these two statements. What is

⁷⁶⁷ Osama Bin Laden, "Why We Are Fighting You," in *The Al Qaeda Reader*, ed. Raymond Ibrahim (New York: Doubleday, 2007), p. 202..

⁷⁶⁸ Bin Laden, "Moderate Islam Is a Prostration to the West," p. 42.

wilfully misleading about the first one is that it was directed at an audience that, as I'm sure bin Laden knew very well, was unacquainted with this particular legal-philosophical-theological background. It is therefore not unsurprising that once in a while voices come to the front in the public debate about counter-terrorism and multiculturalism that state that if only the west would disengage from the middle east, would not interfere in Islamic countries or would not have such a hard tone of debate concerning Islam, then terrorism would stop. This notion betrays a thorough lack of understanding of the mission of Qutbian organizations such as al-Qaeda or Hamas or their Shi'a equals such as Hizbullah. The fight between these groups and non-Islamic orders of being is an existential struggle between the essential natures of both. To quote Qutb; "this is a natural struggle between two systems which cannot co-exist for long."⁷⁶⁹

3.1.6 Summary: is Qutb's formula for self and world preservation totalitarian?

To Qutb, and those that follow his line of reasoning, which include as we shall see al-Zawahiri and Khomeini, the elements of *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah*, *hakimiyyah* and *Jahiliyyah*, are part of an exclusivist, monolithical explanation of an order of being, Islam, whose origins and arguments are, due to their being a representation of a transcendent law of nature or history, impervious to real world experiences or human faculties of questioning and judgement. As such the order of being is clarified, explained and ordered by the Shari'ah and divided into two realms of existence which cannot by definition co-exist: the realm of Islam and the realm of *Jahiliyyah*. Whether or not this model of the order of being corresponds to any reality is of no consequence since the Shari'ah itself has declared it to

⁷⁶⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 73.

be so. This type of thinking is exemplary of totalitarian ideologies in that they have fully ‘become emancipated from the reality’⁷⁷⁰

Proceeding from the axiomatic premise that its sources, the Quran and the sunna, are the embodiment of the divine, a process of logical deduction is applied to these sources in order to arrive at the elements of *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyah* whose existence indicate an universal perpetual war against *Jahiliyyah* which can only find its end state in the eradication of the latter. The truth value of this exclusivist monolithical model of the order of being cannot be called into question and cannot be adapted to conform to any real world experience. Rather, real world experiences are interpreted to conform to the model. Having come to the logical deduced conclusion that the order of being must be transformed in order to conform to the system’s prescribed order of being, the actions of man are judged based solely on loyalty or enmity to this system, thereby dividing mankind and all possible actions into categories of friends or enemies. And since Islam and *Jahiliyyah* cannot co-exist, so too can these categories of man not co-exist and the war between them must be waged in order to bring mankind as a whole in line with the order of being proscribed by the system. The acting agent behind this process of transformation is the Shari’ah, the living embodiment of the will of Allah to whose sovereignty mankind must become subservient in order to live in harmony with his own nature and the universe. In other words the Shari’ah is the system which declares and pursues man’s freedom regardless of his own individual consent. The mechanism by which men are freed is proscribed by the system as a ‘defensive jihad’ which will reign until ‘all religion is for Allah’. This process of transformation, and the laws of the system that guides it,

⁷⁷⁰ “[..]In this capacity ideological thinking becomes independent of all experience from which it cannot learn anything new even if it is a question of something what has just come to pass. Hence ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality.” Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 470.

must be able to run freely and unopposed through mankind and therefore requires the destruction of all those elements that stand between it and man. It's realm of action therefore extends to every facet of life on a global scale and needs to be imposed on reality in order to fabricate Utopia, *not* for the sake of mankind, but for the sake of Allah, for the religious variant of the secular totalitarian law of nature or history. Jihad thereby becomes, in principle, but we will look at that in the coming paragraphs, the religious variant of the secular totalitarian law of movement. Man accordingly has no autonomous realm of decision making, of judging, or even of doubt outside of the boundaries of the conceptual system⁷⁷¹ Man is in that sense not an author nor can he be an author of his own destiny. The amount of movement allowed to the individual within society is limited by the boundaries imposed by the ideology which do not exist to serve the interests of the individual or society's interest, as in a democracy, but exist to safeguard the implementation of the edicts of the ideology through the law of movement. Since the Qur'an and the sunna are taken to form the symbolical seats of power, law and knowledge which are both symbolically as actually occupied by the Shari'ah, only those rulers and institutions that work towards the implementation of the Shari'ah in every sphere of being are deemed legitimate. In effect

⁷⁷¹ Qutb quoted in Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 78. Compare for instance Voegelin's statement about Marxism and National-Socialism: "The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all question." Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, p. 247. With: "None of Allah's creation has the right to ask Him –may he be exalted- why He has chosen all this and willed it to be [...] None of Allah's creation has the right to ask why He has chosen to create man with the fitrah he has, why He has chosen to make the operation of this fitrah permanent and uninterrupted; and why He has chosen to make the divinely ordained program for human life be realized through human existence, rather than enforcing it miraculously, through obscure, hidden means."

the rulers lack any sovereignty of their own and are as susceptible to the edicts of the ideology and law of movement as everyone else is.

Accordingly, the formula for self and world preservation as described by Qutb in *Milestones*, and as adopted by Khomeini, al-Zawahiri and a plethora of other ideologues, is essentially totalitarian. The designation of this ideology as totalitarian is of the utmost importance to policy and lawmakers in the counter-terrorism and multiculturalism debate since this totalitarian nature implies that these movements are not susceptible to dialogue, to concessions or to negotiations. All of these would imply a horizontal, pragmatic dimension which is the anti-thesis of the very nature of the ideology which these movements ascribe. Any deviation from this ideological path would amount to apostasy and unbelief. In the coming paragraphs in general and in the chapter on al-Zawahiri in particular we will see how the deviation from the prescripts of the ideology are the main reason for the state of chaos and anomie which Qutb claims to witness in the world. As a result of this observation of disorder, Qutb wrote *Milestones* so that the Islamic world could be rallied under the banner of revivalism and bring mankind into the fold of Islam. *Milestones* in that sense is on equal footing with the mission, not the content, of Lenin's *What is to be done?* and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

In the end all that matters is that on the micro level the individual, and on the macro level humanity itself, submit and conform to Allah. Moreover, since Allah's program for human life cannot possibly coexist with un-Islamic *Jahiliyyah* systems, any possibility for appeasement or pacification is by definition impossible.⁷⁷² This leads to the observation that those who adhere to the views of Qutb are by definition politically active and engaged in transforming society, if they were not, they would be as Qutb stated people who call

⁷⁷² "The chasm between Islam and Jahiliyaah is great, and a bridge is not to be built across it so that the people on the two sides may mix with each other, but only so that the people of Jahiliyaah may come over to Islam" Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 140.

themselves Muslims but in fact are not.⁷⁷³ This classification as inherently politically active is of importance when it comes to the question of constitutional safeguards on the right of expression, belief, congregation and organization to which we will return at the end of this chapter.

3.2: Exile: the observation of disorder

Whereas the original Gnostic speculation starts with the observation of disorder, my adapted schematic started with the formula for self and world preservation since this is a given in the framework of Islamic thought. Qutb observes the disorder of the world as follows:

Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head-this being just a symptom and not the real disease -but because humanity is devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress.⁷⁷⁴

The reason for this is the dominance of *Jahiliyyah* over the order of being:

If we look at the sources and foundations of modern ways of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in Jahiliyyah, and all the marvellous material comforts and high-level inventions do not diminish this ignorance. [...] Thus the humiliation of the common man under the communist systems and the exploitation of individuals and nations due to greed for wealth and imperialism under the capitalist systems are but a corollary of rebellion against God's authority and the denial of the dignity of man given to him by God.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷³ See Ibid., pp. 86-90. Mauwdudi, Khomeini and al-Zawahiri all make the same point about true Muslims and the hypocrites (*munafiqun*).

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

According to Qutb both Communism and capitalism have failed because they are inherently opposed to *fitrah*.⁷⁷⁶ Qutb not only observes the essentially *Jahiliyyah* nature of Communism and capitalism but goes on to famously state that Islam in general has ceased to be of any prominence on the world stage, thereby arriving at the typical Qutbian pessimistic assertion that there no longer any Muslim societies at all:

Lastly, all the existing so-called 'Muslim' societies are also *jahili* societies. We classify them among *jahili* societies not because they believe in other deities besides God or because they worship anyone other than God, but because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe In the Unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life.⁷⁷⁷

From these brief statements it becomes clear that any society that does not honour the *fitrah* of man, does not require man's servitude to Allah and does not submit itself wholly to the sovereignty of Allah is in fact *Jahiliyyah*. The significance of this is that Qutb has declared a jihad against all *Jahiliyyah* societies. In a fashion which is rather typical

⁷⁷⁶ "But now Marxism is defeated on the plane of thought, and if it is stated that not a single nation in the world is truly Marxist, it will not be an exaggeration. On the whole this theory conflicts with man's nature and its needs. This ideology prospers only in a degenerate society or in a society which has become cowed as a result of some form of prolonged dictatorship" [...] "Democracy in the West has become infertile [...] It is essential for mankind to have new leadership! [...] The leadership of mankind by Western man is now on the decline, not because Western culture has become poor materially or because its economic and military power has become weak. The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind." Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

for totalitarian thinking, Qutb asserts that the *Jahiliyyah* society acts along the same parameters as his own logicity of ideological thinking. As we saw in the previous paragraph, the thinking of Qutb is deeply ideological in Arendt's sense of the word and Qutb seems unable or unwilling to acknowledge that there is even a remote possibility that the world actually does not operate on the premise of logically deducted edicts from an axiomatic premises. In the same way as in the ideology of the Nazi's the Jews were described as a single collective entity that opposed another single collective entity, the Aryans, and which had the same desire for domination as the Nazi's had, so too Qutb posits that *Jahiliyyah* societies are out for domination:

This *Jahiliyyah* is not an abstract theory; in fact, under certain circumstances it has no theory at all. It always takes the form of a living movement in a society which has its own leadership, its own concepts and values, and its own traditions, habits and feelings. It is an organized society and there is a close cooperation and loyalty between its individuals and it is always ready and alive to defend its existence consciously or unconsciously. It crushes all elements which seem to be dangerous to its personality.⁷⁷⁸

This point is of paramount importance in the work of al-Zawahiri when it comes to the question of whether or not certain acts of violence may be perpetrated against those who represent or are affiliated with the *Jahiliyyah* societies. As we shall see, al-Zawahiri maintains that in general all those who do belong to that category are by default legitimate targets since they 'form one community'. We'll return to that in the next chapter. What is important here is the total dichotomy between Islamic societies and *Jahiliyyah* societies which in the view of Qutb are entwined in an epic battle for domination. Whether this is in reality the case is not in question since it is the ideology which has declared this to be true and therefore this fact

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

cannot be called into question. Hence the idea that one can negotiate or come to a compromise with such movements is a grave misunderstanding:

The chasm between Islam and Jahiliyyah is great, and a bridge is not to be built across it so that the people on the two sides may mix with each other, but only so that the people of Jahiliyyah may come over to Islam.⁷⁷⁹

Qutb gives a number of examples of elements, institutions, political systems and values of society that belong to the category of *Jahiliyyah* and which epitomize the state of disorder the world is in. When one reads the works of contemporary jihadist literature, one will find these arguments rehashed in an almost unaltered manner. I will briefly go into these categories so the reader can be acquainted with them and so can understand what criticism is levelled against each of these in the jihadist discourse. In addition, these accusations of *Jahiliyyah* also provide counter-terrorism and multiculturalism debaters with the required background information to ascertain whether or not a 'moderate' Muslim is actually a moderate at all depending on his acceptance of these accusations.

3.2.1 Examples of *Jahiliyyah* societies

First and foremost amongst Qutb's accusations of *Jahiliyyah* is, unsurprisingly, the atheistic point of view. Apart from the non-political privately held atheistic point of view, which is according to Qutb unforgivable in itself, Qutb accuses in particular Communism and western capitalism of being the harbingers of *Jahiliyyah*; an accusation which is repeated by Khomeini and al-Zawahiri in most of their writings.⁷⁸⁰ These categories are quite to be expected. Some extra attention must however, be given to the following categories that can function as an early warning of an underlying current of Qutbist thought.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8, 81.

3.2.1.1. *Jewish and Christian societies*

Unlike strictly atheistic societies, one would expect Qutb to have some sort of respect for Jewish and Christian societies based on the fact that Jews and Christians belong to the *ahl al-kitab*. This is especially relevant if we call in mind the oft heard expression that Islam respects all religions since most of the prophets of the Jews and Christians are prophets in Islam. As I have stated in the beginning chapters of this part of the book, this profession of tolerance is skin-deep. It is true that the *ahl al-kitab* hold a special place in Islam for they are allowed to live under the rule of Muslims in exchange for the jizyah poll tax unlike polytheists or unbelievers. However, this privilege does not infer that they are equals in any sense. The Jews and Christians that hold fast to their own scriptures are in fact on the same footing as the unbelievers as far as *Jahiliyyah* goes: “[..] because their forms of worship their customs and manners are derived from their false and distorted beliefs. They are also *jahili* societies because their institutions and their laws are not based on submission to God alone.” [..] All Jewish and Christian societies today are also *jahili* societies. They have distorted the original beliefs and ascribe certain attributes of God to other beings.”⁷⁸¹ In addition and most importantly, Qutb characterizes Jews and Christians as polytheists rather than monotheist on the basis of Quran 9:31 and a hadith given by Tirmidhi:

⁷⁸¹ I believe it is paramount to note that Qutb does not invent the basis for his statements himself but derives them from the canonical sources of Islam. It would be all too easy to dismiss Qutb as a radical thinker who distorts the message of Islam for some political gain, but this is something which is highly questionable. Concerning the unbelief of the Jews and Christians, Qutb, along with a myriad of other Islamic scholars and thinkers offers verses from the Quran as part of his evidence to validate this claim of unbelief. I have taken a few of those as an example here: 9:30, 5:73, 5:64, 5:18, and 5:31. With regard to Jews Christians and secular Muslims Qutb additionally adds: “Those who do not judge according to what God has revealed are unbelievers.” and concerning the ruled: (5:44). Ibid.p. 81-82

They (the People of the Book) have taken their rabbis and priests as lords other than God". `Adi reports: "I said, 'They do not worship their priests.' God's Messenger replied, "Whatever their priests and rabbis call permissible, they accept as permissible; whatever they declare as forbidden, they consider as forbidden, and thus they worship them.

Qutb then states: "This explanation of the above verse by the Prophet-peace be on him - makes it clear that obedience to laws and judgments is a sort of worship[...]. Taking this meaning of worship, when the Jews and Christians 'disobeyed' God, they became like those who 'associate others with God'. "⁷⁸² Qutb thereby classifies the Jews and Christians as polytheists a category which does not offer any protection under Shari`ah law and only offers the choice between conversion and death. This practice of declaring Jews and Christians *mushrikun*, polytheists thereby equates to a declaration of war.

3.2.1.2. *Secular non-atheist societies*

Every society in which the *hakimiyyat* of Allah is not established, in which certain domains remain free from its influence such as a secular state, are by definition *Jahiliyyah* societies.⁷⁸³ Qutb appear especially frustrated with those Muslims who fail to turn their own society into an Islamic society. This applies to all those Islamic societies whose inhabitants call themselves Muslim but who in reality have 'relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every

⁷⁸² Ibid., p. 60.

⁷⁸³ "Sometimes it appears in the form of a society, in which God's existence is not denied, but His domain is restricted to the heavens and His rule on earth is suspended. Neither the Shari`ah nor the values prescribed by God and ordained by Him as eternal and invariable find any place in this scheme of life. In this society, people are permitted to go to mosques, churches and synagogues; yet it does not tolerate people's demanding that the Shari`ah of God be applied in their daily affairs. Thus, such a society denies or suspends God's sovereignty on earth." Ibid., p. 93.

practice of life.⁷⁸⁴ Qutb then comes to the definition of what, in his opinion, differentiates a *true* Islamic community from an un-Islamic one. It is that community 'which is a practical interpretation of the declaration of faith and all its characteristics; and the society which does not translate into practice this faith and its characteristics is not Muslim'.⁷⁸⁵ Note that Qutb asserts that people by definition derive their traditions, customs, values and standards from the fact that something else than Allah holds legislative authority. This type of thinking again illustrates the ideological way of thinking. If the Shari'ah proclaims that its laws create values, customs and standards, then the same must be true of other systems of law. In addition, since all other systems are of unbelief then so too must be their values, customs and standards that are derived from it. In other words, it is impossible for man to arrive at Islamic values, customs and standards outside of an Islamic state thus reinforcing the need to annihilate all institutes, laws and values that are not Islamic and stand between man and his fitrah. In essence, since every *Jahiliyyah* society is an abode of war, Qutb has declared war on every society that does not implement *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyat*.

There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari'ah is the authority and God's limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (Dar-ul-Harb).⁷⁸⁶

3.2.1.3. Moderate Islamic societies

What then is the worth of the denominator "Muslim society" or "Islamic society"? Under what conditions does a society become Islamic? Some commentators and analysts of the Middle-East and Islamic world refer to any of the countries in which Muslims hold a

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

majority position as an Islamic country.⁷⁸⁷ The definition Qutb uses however seems to be more valid in that it offers a more telling criterion than just an undifferentiated percentage. According to Qutb it is not sufficient that in a given country 'prayer, fasting and Hajj are regularly observed', a society in which 'people invent their own version of Islam other than what God and His Messenger-peace be on him-have prescribed and explained' cannot be an Islamic society. According to Qutb, only when the Shari'ah is applied as a whole to the totality of the social, political, economic, public and private life can a society be truly called an Islamic society: "Before adopting this purity of attitude no group can be a Muslim group, and before organizing its system of life on this principle no society can be a Muslim society."⁷⁸⁸

We must remember that *Milestones* was written in a period following the decolonization of Egypt and large parts of the Islamic world. As I have shown in chapter four, the Islamic region of north-Africa was on a crossroads between adopting modernistic values of nationalism, constitutionalism and secularism on the one hand, or the ummah focussed principles of Islam, Shari'ah and a revival of Islam. Qutb here clearly shows his adherence to the latter, although it must be noted that he was not at all opposed to the blessing of modernism.⁷⁸⁹ However, those Muslims who desire to build a society on the basis of secular political and scientific western achievements are clearly outside of the scope of Islam.⁷⁹⁰ The idea of the possibility of

⁷⁸⁷ Otto., "Sharia En Nationaal Recht." for instance uses the percentage of 55%

⁷⁸⁸ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 78.

⁷⁸⁹ "It is necessary for the new leadership to preserve and develop the material fruits of the creative genius of Europe, and also to provide mankind with such high ideals and values as have so far remained undiscovered by mankind, and which will also acquaint humanity with a way of life which is harmonious with human nature, which is positive and constructive, and which is practicable." Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁹⁰ "Among Muslim societies, some openly declare their 'secularism' and negate all their relationships with the religion; some others pay respect to the religion only with their mouths, but in their social life they have

appeasement or compromise that is commonly held, especially with regard to groups as the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Sayyid Qutb was a leading ideologue, is flatly rejected by Qutb. A society can only become Islamic by virtue of its adherence to the concepts of *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyat* and its rejection of *Jahiliyyah* and within this framework there is no room for a 'Muslim democracy' or like minded innovations and digressions from Islam. One should not follow the guidance of those who: "[...]present Islam to the people under the names of 'Islamic Democracy' or 'Islamic Socialism', or sometimes by saying that the current economic or political or legal systems in the world need not be changed except a little to be acceptable Islamically. The purpose of all this rationalization is to appease people's desires!"⁷⁹¹

3.2.2 Takfir and Taghut

The observation Qutb made about Muslim societies brings us to two very difficult topics which are shrouded in controversy and I shall only touch upon it only briefly. The concepts of takfir⁷⁹², declaring another Muslim an infidel or unbeliever, and taghut⁷⁹³, declaring a ruler an

completely abandoned it. They say that they do not believe in the 'Unseen' and want to construct their social system on the basis of 'science', as science and the Unseen are contradictory! This claim of theirs is mere ignorance, and only ignorant people can talk like this" Ibid., p. 83.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid., p. 183.

⁷⁹² See for a detailed study on the controversy of takfir in jihadist circles: Brian Fishman Assaf Moghadam, "Self-Inflicted Wounds: Debates and Divisions within Al-Qa'ida and Its Periphery," (New York: Combating Terrorism Center, 2010). See also the detailed explanation of why takfir is not allowed in for instance the Shafi'i school of law: Ibn al-Naqib al-Misri and Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law Umdat Al-Salik*, p. 950.

⁷⁹³ The meaning of the word taghut is divers. It can refer to Satan, as in Quran 4:76, false judges Quran 4:60, all that is opposed to Allah and Islam, Quran 2:256 or false deities, Quran 39:19. The Islamists use of the word taghut can mean any of these concepts but is usually reserved for rulers that oppose Islam, prevent Islam from being implemented or are not truly followers of Islam, at least not in the eyes of the Islamists. By serving their own interest such as political power, wealth or any other object besides

pleasing Allah, these rulers are deemed to worship false deities, judge according to their own whims instead of Islam and serve the cause of Satan, hence the reference to taghut. The reluctance amongst the ulama to accept the Islamist concept of taghut stems in part from a prophetic hadith Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet said, "Whoever notices something which he dislikes done by his ruler, then he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the company of the Muslims even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance" Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari*. Volume 9, Book 92, Number 7053. In addition the Islamists concept of taghut is feared to cause fitna or infighting, something which Islam in general seeks to avoid at almost any cost. It is for this reason that the Khawarij sect, which in the 7th century AD, engaged rather freely in deeming other Muslims unbelievers or taghut has been deemed heretical by the orthodox Sunni and Shia Islam. See for instance Ibn al-Naqīb al-Misri and Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law Umdat Al-Salik*, pp. 594, 686. However, the *Reliance of the traveller* also notes that rebellion is obligatory when the Caliph commits acts of unbelief, *kufr* and if success is reasonably attainable. *Ibid.*, p. 640. Yet at the same time it deems accusing anyone of unbelief a grave sin. *ibid.*, p. 950-953. Thus a logical impossibility is created which is relieved by the fact that accusing someone of unbelief is only allowed when that person denies Islam, prophethood or is a polytheist. These extreme cases of unbelief illustrate that in orthodox Sunni Islam a Caliph has considerable leeway and can indeed be unjust as long as he remains within the boundaries of extreme acts of unbelief. Designating a Caliph as a taghut, which would necessitate rebellion, is thus limited to such extreme cases and could in reality occur only rarely; especially since the ulama often times depended on the Caliph for their livelihood. As the case of Ibn Taymiyyah illustrates, some ulama were willing to designate a Caliph as a taghut with all the consequences that entails. Modern day Islamist who see themselves as the continuation of Ibn Taymiyyah's example deem any leader a taghut who judges according to something other than what Allah has ordained and thus do not implement the Shari'ah in full. A democratic legal order for instance, which Islamists see as a form of *shirk*, would be an expression of *kufr* and thus make any democratic leader a taghut thus necessitating rebellion. In fact, Islamist literature is full of references to democracy as taghut and calls for rebellion. In addition, any Muslim who agrees with the democratic principle is deemed to be opposed to Islam, is subjected to the act of *takfir* and thus becomes a potential target of both defensive and offensive jihad. It is for this reason that some have deemed modern day Islamists to be a new variety of the khawarij, In short, the issue of takfir and taghut is one of the hotly debated items between orthodox Muslims and Islamists. Both orthodox Sunni Islam

infidel and thus legitimizing revolt, are probably two of the most contested parts of Milestones even when seen from the perspective of Islamic scholars themselves. If one is looking for a reason to validate the name of 'radical' Islam, then the concepts of takfir and taghut would be a good starting point. Most of what we have discussed about the work of Sayyid Qutb thus far would not be deemed unorthodox in any sense by most Sunni scholars. *Fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyat* and their implications can all be found in the works of *fiqh* predating Sayyid Qutb and form part and parcel of the standard Islamic legal-political philosophical heritage. That is not to say that unanimity exists amongst all scholars on all of these subjects, but one would be hard-pressed to find opinions that divert significantly from what we have discussed so far. In that sense, none of what we have discussed would warrant the label 'radical' from an Islamic point of view. Not so, however, with the concept of takfir and taghut. When one reads the rules that Shari'ah puts on the rulers and the ruled, what behaviour it expects from the ummah in terms of loyalty and obedience, one notices quite frequently an almost Hobbesian insistence on order and a need to avoid internal struggle or dissent, *fitna*. This pertains to prohibitions on Muslims fighting each other, on restriction regarding the judgement of another Muslims sincerity in belief and on the prophetic ruling that Muslims living under a tyrannical leader who has not committed a grave sin, such as denying Allah's existence, should be patient and in trust in Allah and thus not revolt.⁷⁹⁴ Qutb on the other hand as we have seen, has little trouble in naming those Muslims who do not live by his concept of Islam unbelievers. In addition, the whole meaning of Milestones is to

and Sunni Islamism agree on the possibility of takfir and taghut. Where they disagree is on the conditions under which these concepts become a cause for action and the extent of such actions. See chapter six for a discussion on these issues between Sayyid Imam, a reformed jihadist, and Al-Zawahiri.

⁷⁹⁴ See for different variations of these ruling Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari*. Volume 9 book 92: the prohibition of infighting, numbers 7070-7072 and 7083, the warning against fitna 7081-7082 and volume 9 book 88 on the rules against accusing fellow Muslims of disbelief.

bring people back into the fold of Islam and change their societies into Islamic societies, even if this means revolting against the rulers whom Qutb equally does not see as Muslims. It were ideas such as these that ensured Qutb's arrest and eventual execution in 1965-66. The allegations that were made against Qutb at his trial stemmed in great part from the work we are currently analyzing, in particular the seditious nature of *takfir* and *taghut* which were deemed especially seditious. Qutb's ambition can perhaps best be understood most as an unrelenting resolve to revitalize the Islamic faith which he saw as being in a miserable state of decay. Knowing full well the price he would have to pay for his critique on the ruling elite, both political and religious, Qutb nevertheless never recanted during his trial in 1964, the same year of the publishing of *Milestones*. With regard to the concepts of *takfir* and *taghut* Qutb stated as we saw earlier:

The jahili society is any society other than the Muslim society; and if we want a more specific definition, we may say that any society is a jahili society which does not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas in its observances of worship, and in its legal regulations. According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are jahili."⁷⁹⁵ [...] "The question in essence is that of unbelief and belief, of associating others with God and the Oneness of God, and of Jahiliyyah and Islam. This ought to be made clear. Indeed, people are not Muslims, as they proclaim to be, as long as they live the life of Jahiliyyah. [...] This is not Islam, and they are not Muslims. Today the task of the Call is to return these ignorant people to Islam and make them into Muslims all over again."⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 80.

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

His proclamation of takfir is thus not solely directed at Muslims individually, but also against the state in which they live and the rulers and ulama of that state. We shall in paragraphs five and six the measures and the amount of violence Qutb deems legitimate to end this state of *Jahiliyyah* and which would give birth to a host of Islamist movements.

3.2.3 Summary

As we have seen Qutb is very pessimistic about the state of Islam in the world. In this appraisal of the situation he is not alone but is accompanied by Muhammad Abduh, Abul al-Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyyah before him, and Khomeini and al-Zawahiri after him. It is not clear from Milestones what other factors might have played a role in Qutb's observation of the world in a state of disorder than those we have mentioned. One could imagine that the disgrace of western colonialism, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1924, the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the ensuing Arab defeats, and the general inescapable observation that the Islamic world had lost nearly everything of its former glory and leadership position, all must have played a part in this pessimistic evaluation.⁷⁹⁷ Like the ideologues and writers of the romantic-counter revolution and the fascist movements, Qutb seems particularly appalled by western and communist materialism, the reduction of man into production factors, stripped of spiritual meaning and the demystification of the universe, but his critique against those factors is never as clear as it was with his European counter figures. Rather than addressing each of these factors on their own merit, Qutb categorizes them as elements of *Jahiliyyah* and with that observation, it seems, he needs no further elucidation. Qutb's Milestones is in that sense a condemnation of any order of being that is not Islamic, and confronted with the observation that there are no Islamic societies, Qutb is forced to

⁷⁹⁷ Gilles Kepel stresses the importance of the defeat of the Arabs in 1967 against Israel as one of the defining moments in the evolution of Islamist movements. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Chapter three

acknowledge that the world in general is in disorder and in need of salvation.

The important thing to take notice of from this paragraph is Qutb's radical doctrine of *Jahiliyyah* culminating in the doctrine of takfir. Any society that is not fully imbued by Islam and the Shari'ah is a non-Islamic *Jahiliyyah* society which must be overthrown and subjected to *jihad* in order to 'force men to be free'. This includes secular societies, even those in which Muslims are free to practice their faith and 'moderate' Islamic societies which neglect any part of the body of Shari'ah. In the next paragraphs we will continue our analysis of Milestones according to the revised schematic of the Gnostic Speculation by looking at Qutb's idea of the causes of disorder, his belief in the possibility of salvation and the shape of the movement he hopes will bring about the required change in the order of being.

3.3: The causes of Exile

Qutb is very clear about the reasons underlying the disorder in the world. They are twofold namely internal enemies and external enemies. Before going into the details of Qutb's analysis we can infer from the ideological way of thinking that Qutb has displayed thus far that the internal enemies must be enemies due to their lack of ideological purity and their lack of a desire to implement the edicts of the ideology *i.e.* the formula for self and world preservation. In this respect Qutb does not disappoint:

Conflict begins when man deviates from the truth which is hidden in the depths of his own nature, under the influence of his desires, and when he follows laws based on his own opinions instead of following God's commandments. Instead of submitting to his True Master along with the rest of the universe, he rebels and revolts.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁸ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 91.

In this brief statement we clearly see the elements of respectively *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah*, *hakimiyyat* and the beginning of *Jahiliyyah*. In his explanation of the root causes of this departure from the ideological necessities for order, we see a number of arguments which form the staple of what nowadays is known as the Salafi movement. As I have described briefly in the opening of this part of the book, the *salafiyaah*, the time of the prophet and the first three generations after him, represent the golden age and pinnacle of Islam. The revivalist movement which Qutb's *Milestones* aims to bring to life is moulded on the example of these *salafiyaah* and it is therefore very common to see modern day Salafist literature being imbued with the spirit of *Milestones*, although references to Qutb therein would be rather uncommon since the Salafists tend to rely and refer to the classical sources and classical ulama almost exclusively. With regard to this era Qutb states:

The society was freed from all oppression, and the Islamic system was established in which justice was God's justice and in which weighing was by God's balance. The banner of social justice was raised in the name of One God, and the name of the banner was Islam. No other name was added to it, and "*ilaha illa allah*" was written on it.⁷⁹⁹

Mankind was uplifted in its social order, in its morals, in all of its life, to a zenith of perfection which had never been attained before and which cannot be attained afterwards except through Islam."⁸⁰⁰ This statement is in effect the entire religious version of the Gnostic speculation from the observation of disorder to the path to self and world salvation. This first part of this description portrays the era of the *salafiyaah* as the proverbial Garden of Eden, comparable to the national-socialist age of Aryan purity or the Khmer Rouge's age of self sufficient rural Cambodia. The last sentence states that the path that will lead mankind back into the Garden of Eden, the law of

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

movement, is Islam. If and how this law is supposed to accomplish this is the subject of the last three paragraphs of this chapter. What caused man to leave the Garden of Eden, the internal and external reasons for disorder, are the subject of this paragraph.

3.3.1 The fall from Eden: three causes

3.3.1.1 *first cause: shirk and bid'a*

Shirk and bid'a represent respectively associating partners with Allah, a major sin since it breaks with the idea of *tawhid* thus constituting apostasy, and innovation, adding elements to Islam or the Islamic society that run counter to Islam.⁸⁰¹ Qutb's policy of Puritanism can be compared to the national-socialist concept of disorder being caused by Aryans and non-Aryans mixing their blood line and thus corrupting society, resulting in the infamous Nuremberg laws on racial hygiene. Qutb likewise states that in order to halt the disintegration of society, Muslim culture must be purified and returned to the original order of being as exemplified by the prophet and the era of the salafiyaah.⁸⁰²

⁸⁰¹ Wahhabi Islam especially is concerned about bid'ah and was itself born out of a desire to purify Islamic society of western influences and innovation. When one visits a website affiliated with this particular creed one is struck by the painstaking amount of attention that is given to the smallest details of life in order to assure the believer that he is not engaging in acts of bid'ah. This can range from fatwa's on the heresy of Valentine's Day, birthdays or democracy, to long discussions on the correct way to brush one's teeth. A puritanical adherence to the Quran and sunna typifies this creed and the believer will try to emulate the era of the salaf as closely as possible choosing for instance to use the traditional twig of a tree, *miswak*, to brush one's teeth instead of a toothbrush since the prophet himself used the former and the latter is a later invention.

⁸⁰² Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 16-17. "In fact, the Messenger of God-peace be on him-intended to prepare a generation pure in heart, pure in mind, pure in understanding. Their training was to be based on the method prescribed by God Who gave the Qur'an, purified from the influence of all other sources. This generation, then, drank solely from this spring and thus attained a unique distinction in history. In later times it happened that other sources mingled with it. Other sources used by later generations included Greek philosophy and logic, ancient Persian legends and their ideas, Jewish

This movement of purification can be likened in a very loose manner to the protestant revolt against roman-catholic customs, traditions, laws and institutions which, according to the protestants, had no place in Christianity. The roots of this movement in Islam can be traced back to the earlier mentioned Ibn Taymiyyah and Wahhab.⁸⁰³

3.3.1.2. Second cause: studying Islam instead of acting upon it

An observation which is mirrored most clearly in the works of Khomeini and Mauwdudi is the notion that Islam was relegated to the study room and religious institutions but found no expression in daily life, had become inert. Qutb views the Quran and the Sunna as a guide to life in all its aspects and above all as a programme for action, a manifesto which can be likened to Lenin's 'what is to be done?'⁸⁰⁴ Using a vocabulary that reminds us of Bergson's '*elan vital*', and the Sorellian desire for political action, Qutb clearly states that there is a movement within Islam towards increasing political action and implementation of Islamic laws in society. Muslims, according to Qutb, are obliged to follow this programme in their own lives as if they were reading a strategic guide intended for use in the battlefield.

The Quran and Sunna are not merely objects of study to be read and interpreted by the few, but they are mobilizing agents for an ideology which aims to change the world. This point is very explicit in both Qutb's Mauwdudi's, al-Zawahiri's and Khomeini's work. The Muslim

scriptures and traditions, Christian theology, and, in addition to these, fragments of other religions and civilizations. These mingled with the commentaries on the Qur'an and with scholastic theology, as they were mingled with jurisprudence and its principles. Later generations after this generation obtained their training from this mixed source, and hence the like of this generation never arose again. Thus we can say without any reservations that the main reason for the difference between the first unique and distinguished group of Muslims and later Muslims is that the purity of the first source of Islamic guidance was mixed with various other sources, as we have indicated."

⁸⁰³ See Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, ed., *An Explanation of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab's Four Principles of Shirk*. And — — —, *Kitab at-Tauhid*.

⁸⁰⁴ Lenin, *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*.

who studies but does not act, who keeps Islam to himself, what we today would call a moderate Muslims, is considered a very weak Muslim indeed. Qutb calls upon the Muslims to emulate the era of the Salaf who:

turned to the Qur'an to find out what the Almighty Creator had prescribed for him and for the group in which he lived, for his life and for the life of the group. He approached it to act on what he heard immediately, as a soldier on the battle-field reads "Today's Bulletin" so that he may know what is to be done. The Qur'an became a part of their personalities, mingling with their lives and characters so that they became living examples of faith - a faith not hidden in intellects or books, but expressing itself in a dynamic movement which changed conditions and events and the course of life.⁸⁰⁵

3.3.1.3 Third cause: abundance of (voluntary) Jahiliyyah

The last cause and the one which requires the most drastic action on the part of the believer is the total separation of any meaningful bonds with between the believer and the non-Islamic world. Whilst the removal of shirk and bid'ah, and the implementation of Islam are all directed at the Islamic teachings, the separation Qutb proposes is directed at the person of the believer himself. In what appears to be a sort of sacrifice required as a testament of faith, the believer must purify his own existence of all the bonds with *Jahiliyyah*, even if those bonds are of friendship, family or nation. A radical separation between a human life and an ideological life is thereby constituted to further underline the absolute dichotomy that runs through Qutb's line of ideological thinking. This type of thinking has all the bearings of cult thinking and it is not unsurprising then that secular and religious Gnostic speculative theories have been described as cults due to this

⁸⁰⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 18.

requirement of separation.⁸⁰⁶ The requirement for this radical separation stems from Quranic verse 9:24 which states: "Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your relatives, and the wealth which you have acquired, and the commerce in which you fear decline, and the homes in which you take delight, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until God brings His judgment; and God does not guide the rebellious people." Qutb goes on the underline that Islam and *Jahiliyyah* cannot co-exist, not in theory and not in everyday life and that the believer thus must withdraw from it as far as he can.⁸⁰⁷ It should be noted that what is implied in this type of thinking predates Qutb considerably. In the Mardin fatwa of ibn Taymiyyah, Taymiyyah already stated that a Muslim who lives in a non-Islamic society has the duty, insofar as he is capable, of emigrating from that society either physically or spiritually. This duty is constructed upon the example of the prophet when he emigrated from Mecca to Medina, the *Hijra*. An episode in the founding of Islam which is so vital to the narrative that it forms the symbolic year 1 of the Muslim calendar. The importance of this obligation for a separation, *hijra*, returns in the work of al-Zawahiri. When asked why he deems it lawful to endanger the lives of Muslims in terrorist attacks such as 9/11 al-Zawahiri replied "I have made it clear that a "Muslim" in their midst by choice and desire who acquires their nationality and who enters into complete or virtually complete loyalty to them is, if not a non-believer, close to non-

⁸⁰⁶ See Andrea Ullrich, Das Versprechen des magischen Bewußtseins in: Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch, Peter Berghoff, and Reinhard Sonnenschmidt, "Wer Religion Verkennt, Erkennt Politik Nicht": *Perspektiven Der Religionspolitologie* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).

⁸⁰⁷ "Islam cannot accept any mixing with Jahiliyyah, either in its concept or in the modes of living which are derived from this concept. Either Islam will remain, or Jahiliyyah: Islam cannot accept or agree to a situation which is half-Islam and half-Jahiliyyah. In this respect Islam's stand is very clear. It says that the truth is one and cannot be divided; if it is not the truth, then it must be falsehood. The mixing and co-existence of the truth and falsehood is impossible. Command belongs to God, or otherwise to Jahiliyyah; God's Shari'ah will prevail, or else people's desires." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 130.

belief”⁸⁰⁸ The doctrine of the obligation of separation under the penalty of being marked an unbeliever is essential to the movement called *takfir wal hijra*, which due to its insistence on *takfir* is deemed even radical on the verge of apostasy by radical Islamist groups. Qutb derives from this notion of *hijra* a programme of action that starts with separation and purification from all *Jahiliyyah* influences:

Our first step will be to raise ourselves above the jahili society and all its values and concepts. We will not change our own values and concepts either more or less to make a bargain with this jahili society. Never! We and it are on different roads, and if we take even one step in its company, we will lose our goal entirely and lose our way as well.⁸⁰⁹

The issue of *hijra* has considerable meaning for multicultural societies which harbour a Muslim population. For the believing Muslim, the issue of living under a system which is basically non-Islamic creates a necessity to bring into harmony these two states of being: being a Muslim and not living under Shari’ah law. I suspect that a large part of the Muslim population will be afflicted by what I referred to in the beginning of this chapter as the “catholicization of Islam”, meaning that their faith is largely symbolic and not of the order Qutb would deem worthy of the name Islam, although a 2006 poll indicated 40% of the Muslims in the UK wanted to live under Shari’ah law.⁸¹⁰ About those Muslims living in *Jahiliyyah* societies and their duty towards Islam Qutb states:

Our mission is not to compromise with the practices of jahili society, nor can we be loyal to it. Jahili society, because of its jahili characteristics, is not worthy to be compromised with. Our aim is first to change ourselves so that we may later change the society. [...] “Our foremost objective is to change

⁸⁰⁸ al-Zawahiri, “Exoneration,” p. 202.

⁸⁰⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 21.

⁸¹⁰ Melissa Kite Patrick Hennessy, “Poll Reveals 40pc of Muslims Want Sharia Law in UK,” *The Telegraph*, 19 february 2006.

the practices of this society. Our aim is to change the Jahili system at its very roots -this system which is fundamentally at variance with Islam and which, with the help of force and oppression, is keeping us from living the sort of life which is demanded by our Creator.⁸¹¹

There are those Muslims however, that do feel that they are in the territory of the enemy, of *Jahiliyyah* and thus of Dar al-Harb and need to engage in Qutb's jihad against *Jahiliyyah*. A modern-day example of this is the American offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, the *ikhwan*, of which Qutb was the ideologue, and who declared in their mission statement "General Strategic Goals for North America":

The process of settlement is a "Civilization-Jihadist Process" with all the word means. The Ikhwan must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions. Without this level of understanding, we are not up to this challenge and have not prepared ourselves for Jihad yet. It is a Muslim's destiny to perform Jihad and work wherever he is and wherever he lands until the final hour comes, and there is no escape from that destiny except for those who chose to slack. But, would the slackers and the Mujahedeen be equal.⁸¹²

Here we can clearly see how Qutb's analyses of the causes for disorder are turned into a program for action and that the real world consequences of his type of thinking do in fact exist. In other words, this analysis of Qutb's Milestones is not a mere exercise in academic nitpicking but the analysis of a manifesto that fuels much of the

⁸¹¹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 21.

⁸¹² Stephen Coughlin, "Federal Court: U.S. V Holy Land Foundation Trial: Analysis of Muslim Brotherhood's General Strategic Goals for North America Memorandum," ed. Federal Court. (2007).

world's Islamist movements today. The pessimistic appraisal of a world in disorder is countered by Qutb's hope that Milestones will form the basis of a program for action that will revitalize the Islamic community.⁸¹³ This revival movement relies heavily on the idea of *palingenesis*; a concept which we explored in the first part of this book and which is vital to understand the movement inherent in secular totalitarian ideologies.

3.3.2 Palingenesis: internal and external enemies

Palingenesis can be construed as a movement directed at a return to the Garden of Eden. This movement can move backwards, as in Arendt's definition of revolution, or forwards, as can be seen in Marxist-Leninist dialectical analysis of history. The end state of the palingenetic movement is always the imagined Utopia. Qutb describes this as follows:

If Islam is again to play the role of the leader of man-kind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form. It is necessary to revive that Muslim community which is buried under the debris of the man-made traditions of several generations, and which is crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings, and which, in spite of all this, calls itself the 'world of Islam.'⁸¹⁴ [...] This is essential so that we may not commit any blunders at the very first stage of its reconstruction and revival.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹³ "According to our unvarying definition of civilization, the Islamic society is not just an entity of the past, to be studied in history, but it is a demand of the present and a hope of the future. Mankind can be dignified, today or tomorrow, by striving toward this noble civilization, by pulling itself out of the abyss of *Jahiliyyah* into which it is falling. This is true not only for the industrially and economically developed nations but also for the backward nations." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 103.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

The palingenetic movement for revival must therefore begin with an act of purification. This purification in the work of Qutb is directed both inwardly, at the resurrection of a truly Islamic community, and outwardly, at identifying and combating the external enemy.⁸¹⁶ We have seen in the previous paragraphs how Qutb views those Muslims whose faith is weak and whose implementation of Islam is lacking. In the next paragraph we will be looking at how Qutb envisions to create a vanguard movement comparable to those of the Italian *Fasci di Combattimento*, Hitler's SS or Lenin's vanguard, that will be tasked with spearheading the Islamic movement towards revivalism and jihad. To close of this paragraph however, I must say a few words on the external enemy which is in every sense of the word an existential enemy. That is, they are not an enemy because of their real world actions, but because of the actions that Qutb's ideology type of thinking ascribes to them.⁸¹⁷ The following descriptions of these enemies shed light on some of the driving forces behind the violence of Islamist movements such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hizbollah, and Islamist states such as Iran.

⁸¹⁶ Ian Buruma and Avishal Margalit show how many of the elements of the fascist and romantic mentality with their deep disdain of the West and Western post-Enlightenment society are paralleled in non Western societies. The critique of Qutb et al. towards western societies can be seen in this larger frame of reference. Buruma and Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*.

⁸¹⁷ "However, history tells us that the *jahili* society chooses to fight and not to make peace, attacking the vanguard of Islam at its very inception, whether it be a few individuals or whether it be groups, and even after this vanguard has become a well-established community. From Noah to Muhammad - peace be on them-without exception, this has been the course of events at every Islamic call. It is clear, then, that a Muslim community cannot be formed or continue to exist until it attains sufficient power to confront the existing *jahili* society. This power must be at all levels; that is to say, the power of belief and concept, the power of training and moral character, the power to organize and sustain a community, and such physical power as is necessary, if not to dominate, at least to hold itself against the onslaught of the *Jahili* society." Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 79-80.

The Jahiliyaah order of being

As has become clear from the first two paragraphs, the *Jahiliyyah* order of being is the first and foremost existential enemy of Islam. This not only applies to Qutb but to Islamic teachings in general. What is a very Qutbian notion, however, is that Jahiliyaah is by definition fighting against Islam. There is no *Jahiliyyah* with which one can make an agreement or come to a peaceful form of coexistence. Islam is always on the defensive against it. This is however not due to any real world experience, there is no representative of 'world *Jahiliyyah*-dom' no party program or anything of that sort other than Islam's definition of *Jahiliyyah* as an enemy. An Qutb's addition of it being an eternally adversarial enemy. This in effect is one of the hallmarks of ideological thinking.

Because this religion proclaims the freedom of man on the earth from all authority except that of God, it is confronted in every period of human history-yesterday, today, or tomorrow - with obstacles of beliefs and concepts, physical power, and the obstacles of political, social, economic, racial and class structures. In addition, corrupted beliefs and superstitions become mixed with this religion, working side by side with it and taking root in peoples' hearts.⁸¹⁸

Jews and Christians

Concurrent with national-socialism and in part Communism, Jewry is accused of being a single communal entity bent on subverting Islam. The anti-Semitism of Qutb has roots in Islamic teachings as well as in adoptions of western notions of anti-Semitism.⁸¹⁹ Hatred of Jews is

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸¹⁹ See for the Islamic roots: Sayyid Qutb, "Our Struggle with the Jews," in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism : From Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, ed. Andrew G. Bostom (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2008). See for modern day roots: Schoenfeld, *The Return of Anti-Semitism*. See for a conflation between the two: Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin El-Husseini* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1965), MEMRI, "Palestinian Friday Sermon by Sheik Ibrahim Mudeiris:

rife in Islamist literature as well in the works of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is by some considered a moderate.⁸²⁰ Its language has evolved from the Islamic depiction of the Jews as weak and seditious, to the Jews being the acting agent of evil incarnate. In this development it has adopted numerous western notions of anti-Semitism and recently, in the speeches of Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad of Qaradawi and a host of Middle-eastern broadcasts aimed at Europe in the form of holocaust denial or even of appraisal of the holocaust as a punishment brought about by Allah for the wickedness of the Jews. Qutb voices his anti-Semitism in milestones as follows:

The statement that "Culture is the human heritage" and that it has no country, nationality or religion is correct only in relation to science and technology-as long as we do not jump the boundary of these sciences and delve into metaphysical interpretations, and start explaining the purpose of man and his historical role in philosophical terms, even explaining away art and literature and human intuition philosophically. Beyond this limited meaning, this statement about culture is one of the tricks played by world Jewry, whose purpose is to eliminate all limitations, especially the limitations imposed by faith and religion, so that the Jews may penetrate into body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs. At the top of the list of these activities is usury, the aim of which is that all the wealth of mankind end up in the hands of Jewish financial institutions which run on interest.⁸²¹

Muslims Will Rule America and Britain, Jews Are a Virus Resembling Aids," in *TV monitor project* (Jerusalem: MEMRI, 2005). See for an Islamic counter-argument: Fatah, *The Jew Is Not My Enemy: Unveiling the Myths That Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism*.

⁸²⁰ Gräf and Skovgaard-Petersen, *Global Mufti: The Phenomenon of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*.

⁸²¹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 111. The idea Qutb postulates, of Jews using the concept of culture to overcome the limitations set upon them and further

To anyone familiar with the European tradition of anti-Semitism this statement will seem all too familiar. There is however a Quranic basis that forms the ideological assumption, wholly divorced from reality, of the wickedness of Jews and Christians.⁸²² In general it can be said that Jews outdo the Christians in their wickedness. The latter being referred to as misguided, whilst the former are often referred to as the corrupters of revelation. Since the Quran and sunna themselves refer to the Jews and Christians in this fashion, Qutb can do no other, on account of his logicity of ideological thinking, than to view the realities of the world through this lens of ideological thinking:

In a separate publication "our struggle with the Jews", Qutb describes the Jews through this lens of theological ideological thinking:

The Muslim community does not take advantage of the Islamic sources which its ancestors used. Only in this way were the ancestors able to overcome the Jewish conspiracy and

their 'evil designs' has been mirrored in 2003 by the then prime minister of Malaysia Mahatir Muhamad. In his opening speech to the Annual OIC conference, which was laden with anti-Semitic rhetoric, Muhamad stated that 'Jews invented socialism, Communism, human rights and democracy' to avoid persecution and gain control of the most powerful countries. BBC News, "Malaysia Defends Speech on Jews," (2003), bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3196234.stm.

⁸²² Qutb refers to a number of verses from the Quran to prove this: "Many among the People of the Book wish to turn you back from your faith toward unbelief, due to their envy, even after the truth has been known to them; but forgive and excuse them until God brings about His decision. Indeed, God has power over everything." (2:109) "The Jews and Christians will not be pleased with you unless you follow their way. Say: 'Indeed, God's guidance is the true guidance'. And if, after this knowledge has come to you, you follow their desires, then you will find no helper or friend against God." (2:120) "O you who believe! If you follow a party of the People of the Book, they will return you to the state of unbelief after you have believed." (3:100) Ibid., pp. 126-127

double-dealing in Medina. [...] The Jews continue –through their wickedness and double-dealing – to lead this (Muslim) community away from its religion and to alienate it from its Quran. (They do this) in order to prevent the community from utilizing its traditional Quranic weapons and its perfect Quranic readiness for struggle. (The Jews) are secure so long as this (Muslim) community is estranged from the sources of its real power and the roots of its pure knowledge. Anyone who leads this community away from its religion and its Qur'an can only be a Jewish agent.⁸²³

As such Qutb posits the Jews, and secondarily the Christians, as existential enemies, meaning, that the Jews and Christians are always working against the cause of Islam and the two cannot co-exist peacefully. Ayatollah Khomeini and Zawahiri adopt the very same logic as we will see. National socialist anti-Semitism fundamentally has the same depiction of the Jews as Qutb puts forward here. The community, whether it is the Aryan *volk*, or the Islamic *ummah*, are weakened and assaulted by the Jews and their conspiracies for global domination. The very existence of the *volk* or *ummah* thus depends on the annihilation or subjugation of this existential enemy.⁸²⁴

⁸²³ Sayyid Qutb, "Our Struggle with the Jews," p. 335. Qutb reiterates this conspiratory worldview in *Milestones* as follows: "After this warning to the Muslims from God concerning the ultimate designs of the Jews and Christians, it would be extremely short-sighted of us to fall into the illusion that when the Jews and Christians discuss Islamic beliefs or Islamic history, or when they make proposals concerning Muslim society or Muslim politics or economics, they will be doing it with good intentions, or with the welfare of the Muslims at heart, or in order to seek guidance and light. People who, after this clear statement from God, still think this way are indeed deluded." Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 113-114.

⁸²⁴ Bassam Tibi goes further in his analysis of the link between Islamism and anti-Semitism than I am doing in this research. I'm foremost concerned with identifying the logicity of ideological thinking in Islamists writings. Tibi rightfully points out the endemic and unconditional anti-Semitism and the hatred of anything that is not Islamic in Islamist writings when he states: "Die islamischen Djihadisten sind gegen alle Juden und den gesamten Westen als

To movements that are inspired by Qutb, the Jews and Christians, irrespective of their actual behaviour, will always be seen as conspiring against Islam. Whilst it is unclear to what limit Qutb and his likes will go in combating the Jews and Christians, they are protected to some degree under Shari'ah law depending on interpretation, it is clear that Qutb discerns a movement within history that has elevated the Muslims to the position of Allah's representatives on earth:

The people who are really chosen by God are the Muslim community which has gathered under God's banner without regard to differences of races, nations, colors and countries. "You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and you believe in God."⁸²⁵ (Quran, 3:110)

The Islamist ideology dictates that the ummah, in its path towards spreading the reign of Islam, will at every step of the way be opposed by Jews and Christians; thus constituting permanent war within the limits of the Shari'ah. As we will see, al-Zawahiri claims, as do many Islamist movements, that the Jews in particular form one collective entity in their support of the humiliation and oppression of Muslims and thus lose their rights of protection under Shari'ah law making every Jew a legitimate target of violence. Once again this is not due to any real world actions on the part of the Jews but a necessary outgrowth of the logicity of ideological thinking.

Zivilisation" and "Die Politisierung der Religion im Islam ist eine djihadistische Bedrohung der jüdischen Existenz", in Tibi, *Der Neue Totalitarismus: "Heiliger Krieg" Und Westliche Sicherheit*, pp. 33, 86. See in this regard also: Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11* (New York: Telos Press Pub., 2007), ———, *Unholy Hatreds: Holocaust Denial and Antisemitism in Iran*, Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism (Jerusalem: Vidal Sasson International Center for the Study of Antisemitism : Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007).

⁸²⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 126.

The Western world

Probably as an outgrowth of colonialism and historical tension between the Islamic world and the Christian west, Qutb sees the entire western world, which remains largely undefined, as an enemy of Islam:

“The Western ways of thought and all the sciences started on the foundation of these poisonous influences with an enmity toward all religion, and in particular with greater hostility toward Islam. This enmity toward Islam is especially pronounced and many times is the result of a well-thought-out scheme, the object of which is first to shake the foundations of Islamic beliefs and then gradually to demolish the structure of Muslim society.⁸²⁶

This culminates in a description of the west as the basis of secularism and thus of the realm of war, Dar al-Harb. Al-Zawahiri will go into this subject in more detail, describing certain acts which are so intractably woven into the fabric of democratic liberal societies that one cannot separate them, but which constitute in the eyes of these ideologues acts of war. In the words of Qutb:

Any country which fights the Muslim because of his belief and prevents him from practicing his religion, and in which the Shari'ah is suspended, is Dar-ul-Harb.⁸²⁷

The phrase ‘prevents him from practicing his religion’ may sound benign enough. One would suspect that a Muslim is free to practice his religion in modern day Europe to his liking but this is not what Qutb or organizations modelled after his ideas mean. As we have seen Qutb makes a clear point in stating that a true Muslim must endeavour in any way possible to change the *Jahiliyyah* society into an Islamic one. Every obstacle, law, institution or custom that prevents him from doing so, including laws pertaining to the secular

⁸²⁶ Ibid., p. 116.

⁸²⁷ Ibid., p. 125.

nature of the public space, is constituted as an attack against Islam. It is therefore the very nature of Western liberal democracies which is a declaration of war.

3.3.3 Summary

The causes of disorder, according to Milestones, are a mixture of internal and external enemies. Internally Qutb blames Muslims for having incorporated non-Islamic traditions, teachings and innovations into the pristine Islam of the era of the prophet and the salafiyaah. This pristine Islam is the proverbial garden of Eden, the epitome of order to which Qutb wants to return or at least approximate as closely as possible. In order to accomplish this, a movement of revivalism and purification has to be initiated which requires a total separation of anything that is deemed *Jahiliyyah*. Any Muslim who does not do so runs the risk of being branded an unbeliever with all of the legal implications belonging to that category. External reasons for the reign of disorder are to be found in the ideologically presumed and thus necessary animosity of Jews and Christians towards Islam. Whether or not this has any basis in real world facts appears to be quite inconsequential since Qutb forms his opinion on those sources from which all authority and knowledge flow namely the Quran and sunna. As I have stated in the first part of this book, totalitarian ideologies do not adapt themselves to reality, they adapt reality to the ideology. Facts from the non-totalitarian world are therefore interpreted to conform to the premise of the ideology whilst the ideology itself is impervious to change. This is why I refer to those categories as existential enemies. They must exist because the ideology says they exist. No real world behaviour can thus change this perception of animosity, and the Islamist movement can thus not be appeased by any actions from those categories of enemies. The references to the western world at large as an existential enemy are vague and undefined but I have given some historical reasons that might underlie these accusations. The reader of Milestones is for the most part left in the dark about them. There are however some interesting overlaps between Qutb's discourse and that of the radical left and

right of Western or politics. Qutb's dismissal of capitalism as a system that undermines human values and solidarity and his dismissal of western imperialism are sure to attract some favourable attention from left wing radicals. His anti-Semitism and rejection of Communism have proven to have been attractive ideas on which to form alliances with right wing radical movements from before and after Qutb's lifetime.⁸²⁸

The pessimistic appraisal of an Islamic world in decay beset on all side by external enemies is alleviated with the hope of revitalizing the Islamic movement which we look analyze in the next paragraph.

3.4. The belief that salvation and a return to Eden is possible

Concurrent with the classical Islamic narrative in which Islam came to correct the corruption of Allah's revelation by the Jews and the misguided interpretation of the Christians, Qutb holds that the prophet Muhammad was sent by Allah to take leadership of mankind. For this he need not look further than the Quran which explicitly states: 3:110 "You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God." 2:143 "Thus We have made you a middle community, so that you be witnesses for mankind as the Messenger is a witness for you."

Qutb's hope for self and world preservation is entirely modelled after the life of the prophet and the salafiyaah. I will not go into very much detail about that life for it is a matter that would sidetrack us too much. I have already given a brief summary of it in the beginning of

⁸²⁸ See for examples of these types of cooperation: Emerson Vermaat, *Nazi's, Communisten En Islamisten. Opmerkelijke Allianties Tussen Extremisten*, Schoenfeld, *The Return of Anti-Semitism*, Martin Cuppers Klaus-Michael Mallmann, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for Extermination of the Jews of Palestine* (New York: Enigma, 2005), Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin El-Husseini*.

this part of the book. The events that transpired in Mecca, when Muhammad and the early Islamic community were weak saw the revelation of certain verses in the Quran that preached patience and tolerance. After the *hijra* and the founding of the first Islamic polis the nature of the revelations changed culminating in the sword verses which commanded the faithful to fight until all religion belongs to Allah. This struggle in the path of Allah can be summarized as follows: "As it is now obvious, at first "the fighting" was forbidden, then it was permitted and after that it was made obligatory [...] against them who start "the fighting" against you [...] and against all those who worship others along with Allah [...]"⁸²⁹

The chronology of the revelations of the Quran typifies for Qutb a movement which should be emulated.⁸³⁰ Sura nine, which is one of the last Suras to be revealed in Medina, contains the sword versus and has established jihad as the fundamental relationship with the non-Islamic world.⁸³¹ However, it may be that Islamic communities are

⁸²⁹ The former Chief Justice of Saudi-Arabia Humaid, *Jihad in the Qur'an and Sunnah*. Ibn Taymiyyah follows the same schematic in his main work "al-Siyasa al-shariyya fi Islah al-rai wa-al-raiyya: Governance according to God's law in reforming both the ruler and his flock" Quoted from Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam : A Reader*, pp. 44-45.

⁸³⁰ "Thus, wherever an Islamic community exists which is a concrete example of the divinely-ordained system of life, it has a God-given right to step forward and take control of the political authority so that it may establish the divine system on earth, while it leaves the matter of belief to individual conscience. When God restrained Muslims from *Jihad* for a certain period, it was a question of strategy rather than of principle; this was a matter pertaining to the requirements of the movement and not to belief. Only in the light of this explanation can we understand those verses of the Holy Qur'an which are concerned with the various stages of this movement. In reading these verses, we should always keep in mind that one of their meanings is related to the particular stages of the development of Islam, while there is another general meaning which is related to the unchangeable and eternal message of Islam. We should not confuse these two aspects" Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 76.

⁸³¹ I reiterate my earlier explanation of the progression from Mecca to Medina in the light of the commandment to fight the unbelievers as

in a position comparable to that of Muhammad in Mecca and thus they should act accordingly although with the sole objective of empowering themselves to live up to the sword verses. Revitalizing the Islamic movement should therefore start with purifying one's heart and belief:

When belief in "*la ilaha illa allah*" penetrates into the deep recesses of the heart, it also penetrates through the whole system of life, which is a practical interpretation of this faith. [...] Indeed, the spirit of submission is the first requirement of the faith. Through this spirit of submission the believers learn the Islamic regulations and laws with eagerness and pleasure. As soon as a command is given, the heads are bowed, and nothing more is required for its implementation except to hear it.⁸³²

Two observations are relevant here: Firstly, the change of the order of being which is pivotal to the Gnostic speculation first has to take place inside the person. Whilst this may sound as an obvious fact, the second point sheds another light on this. One could expect that to become a true believer one would have to devote oneself to years of study in order to fully come to grips with the theological legal implications of Islam. The second point however contests this and

summarized by Rudolph Peters: and Joseph Schacht: "Classical Muslim Koran interpretation [...] regarded the Sword verses, with the unconditional command to fight the unbelievers, as having abrogated all previous verses concerning the intercourse with non-Muslims." Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam : A Reader*, p. 2. "The basis of the Islamic attitude towards unbelievers is the law of war; they must be either converted or subjugated or killed. [...] the third alternative, in general, occurs only if the first two are refused." Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, p. 130. The consensus of the classical ulama on this issue can be found in Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab at-Tauhid*. However, as Tibi and Taha argue, such interpretations are the result of human endeavour and may be contested. See: Tibi, *Islam between Culture and Politics*, Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*.

⁸³² Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 32-33.

simply states that one should “hear and obey”. Qutb assumes that Islam is mostly or entirely self-explanatory and requires little individual effort, *itjihad*, to explain or understand. The critique that has been levelled against Qutb from some ulama is that this is in fact impossible. The reasons for that critique may be genuine but might also be influenced by Qutb’s statement of takfir against those ulama and the ulama’s fear of losing their position. However that may be, Qutb can bring to the fore a basis from the Quran and sunna: 24:51 “The answer of the Believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this: they say, “We hear and we obey”

Once faith is established inside the heart of the believer, Qutb assures us, as we have seen, that the *Jahiliyyah* society will attack him, for such is nature of that society. He remarks that the believer being aware of this impending life of adversity, is willing to do so because his mind is not fixed on this world but on pleasing Allah, and inter alia on the rewards of the afterlife, on his admission into the garden i.e. paradise.⁸³³ This is an important point to note since secular totalitarian systems were infamously non-transcendent. With this I mean to say that the afterlife was something that had no place in secular totalitarian thought if it wasn’t bordering on secularized form of heresy. If anything this was a handicap. It is difficult to mobilize people for a transformation of the order of being, at huge personal costs and risks if the only thing you have to offer them is the hope

⁸³³ “All this was possible because those who established this religion in the form of a state, a system and laws and regulations had first established it in their hearts and lives in the form of faith, character, worship and human relationships. They had been promised only one thing for the establishment of this religion - not victory or power, not even that this religion would be established by their hands, not related to anything of this world:-one promise, that of the Garden. That was the only promise given to them for all their striving, for all the trials which they had endured, for their steadfastness in the face of the opposition of the forces of Jahiliyyah to that call, “There is no deity except God,” which is abhorrent to those who are in power in any age and place.”Ibid., p. 30.

that after their death things will be better for other people that, unlike them, are not dead. Secular totalitarian paradise does not extend to the afterlife. This lack of zeal therefore had to be compensated and was often compensated by fear, intimidation and above all indoctrination in order to achieve conformity. Qutb makes clear that religious totalitarian thought does not need, in principle, such methods of coercion since there are rewards in the afterlife, a claim which is of course not verifiable outside of the logic of the ideological system and thus all the more attractive. If one reads jihadist literature there is often great jubilation at the idea of martyrdom given the immensity of the rewards. The pessimistic attitude towards a non-Islamic world is replaced by the optimism of pleasing Allah and reaping the rewards. The idea which is often heard, that terrorism stems from political social and economic frustration seems rather moot when confronted with the reality of jihadist literature which seems rather enthralled by the idea of giving one's life for Allah.⁸³⁴ Perhaps there is some ideological thinking in this argument of destitution as a motor for terrorism as well.

Comparable to the fascist esprit de corps, the Muslim vanguard which Qutb hopes to see arise as the outcome of the purification of Islam and the separation from the *Jahiliyyah* environment, is seen as being made up of those individuals who are the most steadfast, pure and devoted to the cause at hand. Their suffering and self-sacrifice is not something to be pitied but rather to be rejoiced over since it grants

⁸³⁴ See this oft cited hadith on the prophet's won willingness to die in battle: Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "The person who participates in (Holy battles) in Allah's cause and nothing compels him to do so except belief in Allah and His Apostles, will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr). Had I not found it difficult for my followers, then I would not remain behind any sariya going for Jihad and I would have loved to be martyred in Allah's cause and then made alive, and then martyred and then made alive, and then again martyred in His cause" A sariya is an army unit. Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari*. volume 1 book 2 number 36

them the favour of Allah and proves their worthiness.⁸³⁵ Qutb reflects on this esprit de corps when he describes the mission of revitalizing Islam in a particularly warlike tone:

Islam did not come to support people's desires, which are expressed in their concepts, institutions, modes of living, and habits and traditions, whether they were prevalent at the advent of Islam or are prevalent now, both in the East and in the West. Islam does not sanction the rule of selfish desires. It has come to abolish all such concepts, laws, customs and traditions, and to replace them with a new concept of human life, to create a new world on the foundation of submission to the Creator.⁸³⁶

The belief that salvation is possible through the creation of 'a new world on the foundation of submission to the Creator' thus rests on the shoulders of the Muslim vanguard. This vanguard through their virtue, dedication and submission are entrusted with the guardianship of the political authority so that they may establish divine law and justice. In the works of al-Zawahiri and Khomeini we see exactly the

⁸³⁵ "When God tried them and they proved steadfast, relinquishing their own personal desires, and when God Most High knew that they were not waiting for any reward in this world, now were they desirous to see the victory of this message and the establishment of this Religion on earth by their hands, when their hearts became free of pride of lineage, of nationality, of country, of tribe, of household-in short, when God Most High saw them to be morally pure-then He granted them the great trust, the conscious assumption of being God's representative on earth. Since they were pure in faith, the requirement for which is that God's sovereignty alone extend over hearts and consciences in human relationships and morals, in lives and possessions, in modes and manners, God Most High knew that they would be true guardians of the political authority, which would be entrusted to them so that they would establish the divine law and the divine justice. He knew they would not use it to benefit their own selves or their families or tribe or nation, but would dedicate this authority purely to the service of God's religion and laws, as they knew that the true source of authority is God alone and that they were only trustees." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 31.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

same line of reasoning. It is not the ulama which are backed by the puppet governments of the West, the 'imams of defeat' or 'the imams of the dinar and dollar' who are the vice-regents of Allah, but the mujahedeen, the militant fighting vanguard of Islam. This elitism of the trenches bears direct and strong resemblances to the anti-intellectual inverted virtues of the European 'trenchocracies', namely sacrifice, war and struggle that characterized the vanguard of fascism Nazism and bolshevism. One can think of the rare prestige that was accorded to the fascist *Fasci di Combattimento*, the national-socialist 'alte Kämpfer' or the bolshevist vanguard, although the latter ones were quickly bestowed the less favourably honour of being purged once the revolution was successful. The purpose of the vanguard is not to engage in any form of co-existence with the *Jahiliyyah* environment, but rather to transform all that is *Jahiliyyah* into a new order of being through revolutionary action.

3.5. The agent of salvation: the Revolutionary Vanguard

As we have seen, the model for the new order of being is a given: Islam. Whilst one may in reality argue about what Islam is and is not, to Qutb Islam is a monolithic exclusive and autonomous ideology that not only has the right but the duty to set the parameters and boundaries on all forms of human interactions. The object of this law is not to serve the interest of the individual but to serve the interest of the species. The species as such however, does not have the capacity to know what is in its best interest. Qutb does not deny the Hayekian uncertainty principle but uses it as an argument to deny the freedom of the individual to become a source of power law and knowledge. Because man is incapable of knowing what is right and wrong on an individual level, let alone agreeing on such standards on the level of the species, Qutb proceeds to conclude that the source of power law and knowledge has to be derived from a source other than man itself. Islam and its acting agent, Shari'ah law, perform the same function to Qutb as the law of nature did for the national-socialists

and the law of history performed for the Marxist-Leninists. In each case the totalitarian ideologue assumes that this law of nature or history came into being as soon as mankind as a species came into being. It's existence is inseparable from the fact that mankind exists so that to deny its existence is to deny the nature of 'being' itself. In that respect it is quite irrelevant if the individual or even the species as a whole agrees on its nature or existence for it does not require voluntary human recognition in order to exist. This law governs all of man's actions whether he realizes it or not and hidden within the law is a movement, an unfolding process whose movement can only be slowed down by the freedom of man to act in opposition to this movement. The quintessential essence of totalitarianism is therefore to stabilize men, to render them incapable of resisting this movement. The concept of justice is no longer derived from the realm of human interactions and experiences but from that which transcends them, the law of nature. Everything that is in accordance to the law of nature is just; everything that opposes it is unjust. Freedom is not the ability to do as one pleases, but to become the living embodiment of the law of nature. The ethical validity of all positive laws therefore is not dependent on whether or not it serves the interest of man, but on the question of whether or not it forces man to become the living embodiment of the law of nature. The function of positive law therefore is not to create a stable realm in which humans can move freely, but to stabilize man so that the law of nature and law of movement can move freely. The change in the order of being, which is the subject of this paragraph, demands two things: An ideology and a movement. I have detailed the foundations of this ideology, its nature and inherent law of movement in the preceding paragraphs and we will now look at the vanguard movement which is to become the spearhead that will accelerate the inherent law of movement in Islam. Qutb describes this twofold requirement of changing the order of being as follows:

This is where the roads separate, and this is that new concept which we possess and can present to mankind this and the

way of life which this concept organizes for all the practical aspects of man's life. [...] Without doubt, we possess this new thing which is perfect to the highest degree, a thing which mankind does not know about and is not capable of 'producing'. But as we have stated before, the beauty of this new system cannot be appreciated unless it takes a concrete form. Hence it is essential that a community arrange its affairs according to it and show it to the world. In order to bring this about, we need to initiate the movement of Islamic revival in some Muslim country. Only such a revivalist movement will eventually attain to the status of world leadership, whether the distance is near or far. How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam?⁸³⁷

3.5.1 Forming the Vanguards

3.5.1.1 Ideological foundations of the Vanguard movement

As we have seen in the preceding paragraphs Qutb argues that man's *fitrah* demands to live in a world governed by the Islamic law of nature, the Shari'ah. This demands that man becomes wholly isolated from everything that is not in accordance with the edicts and requirements of this law of nature, the *Jahiliyyah* order of being, so that he may live in total submission, *ubudiyyah*, to the sovereignty, *hakimiyyat*, of Allah. By positing Islam as the epitome of freedom and the essence of humanity, Qutb created a radical eschatological dichotomy between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

Islam, then, is the only divine way of life which brings out the noblest human characteristics, developing and using them for the construction of human society. [...] Those who deviate from this system and want some other system, whether it be

⁸³⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

based on nationalism, color and race, class struggle, or similar corrupt theories, are truly enemies of mankind!⁸³⁸

The Islamic order of being thus divides man into two irreconcilable categories, the acting agents of freedom and of tyranny, and between them here can be no peace for justice and freedom require that the tyrant be slain. The whole purpose of Milestones is to constitute and inspire this movement of liberation, a revolutionary vanguard movement against the *Jahiliyyah* order of being.⁸³⁹

Qutb is very meticulous about the *modus operandi* and requirements imposed upon this vanguard movement. I will describe its external dimensions, the nature of their actions, in paragraph six. In this paragraph I will describe the internal composition and the nature of the vanguard movement. Qutb, like Khomeini and al-Zawahiri, is vehemently opposed to the idea of religion as an inert privately held conviction that has neither the inclination nor power to change the order of being.⁸⁴⁰

It is an error and what an error! - to think that Islam can evolve in the form of an abstract theory limited to intellectual

⁸³⁸ Ibid.p. 51

⁸³⁹ "They knew very well that the proclamation, "there is no deity except 'Allah,' was a challenge to that worldly authority which had usurped the greatest attribute of God, namely, sovereignty. It was a rebellion against all modes of behavior which have been devised under this usurpation and was a declaration of war against that authority which legislates laws not permitted by God. It was no secret to the Arabs-who knew their language very well and knew the real meaning of the message, "La ilaha illa Allah"-what its significance was in relation to their traditions, their rule and their power. Hence they greeted this call -this revolutionary message - with anger, and fought against it with that vigour which is known to everyone." Ibid.p. 25

⁸⁴⁰ "When we try to make Islam into a 'theory' to be studied, We remove the divine method and divine outlook from its character, and we reduce it to the level of a man-made system of thought, as if the divine method were inferior to man's methods, and as if we wanted to elevate the system of thought and action ordained by God to the level of the systems of His creatures! This point of view is extremely dangerous, and this defeatism is ruinous."Ibid., p. 41.

learning and cultural knowledge. Beware of this danger, beware!⁸⁴¹

The nature of the vanguard movement should be of particular interest to those in law and policymaking in multicultural societies. The vanguard that Qutb envisions, and he is joined in this by al-Zawahiri, does not engage in outright *jihad*, this being but the endpoint of a multistage development. Like the Muslim Brotherhood, henceforward MB) in Egypt under Mubarak, or the numerous MB offshoots outside of Egypt, the vanguard movements are above all rallying points and preparatory stages of the movement towards jihad. The whole idea of revitalizing Islam is that Islam must be active engaged in and with society. This activity can take the form of be social services, cultural institutions or student bodies that appear benign on the outside but operate on the Qutbist principles of preparing for jihad on the inside. This forms a challenge to law and policymakers since in principle these organizations can function perfectly without breaking any laws and thus remain under the radar for a long time. The concept of jihad, as we have seen, is more than mere fighting. According to the subdivision given by Ibn Taymiyyah's student Ibn Qayyim it can take shape of preaching, *da'wa*, fighting through wealth, charity work or sponsoring jihadist organizations, and actual fighting. The vanguard Qutb proposes is supposed to be the rallying point for all these different types of jihad and one often finds in actual practice that a benign cultural institute or 'interfaith dialogue' organization can be the front organization of a multilayered network of Qutbist groups that are often linked to and actively supporting violent jihadist groups.⁸⁴²

The stages which the vanguard movement goes through in its organizational development are modelled on the life of the prophet

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁸⁴² See Coughlin, "Federal Court: U.S. V Holy Land Foundation Trial: Analysis of Muslim Brotherhood's General Strategic Goals for North America Memorandum."

and his first companions. Qutb is explicit in stating that Islam as an ideology has quite literally its own law of movement. This movement is encapsulated within the Quran and Sunna and thus these sources can be read as a textbook on how to organize the vanguard movement itself. All one has to do is to stick to the sources:

this religion has come to change not only the beliefs and practices of people but also the method of bringing about these changes in beliefs and practices. [...]this religion has a particular method of action. Now we ought to know that this method is eternal. [...]this religion cannot be established-at any time-except through this method. Its method is divinely-ordained and is entirely different from all the valueless methods of short-sighted human beings. We cannot receive the divine guidance or live according to it unless we adopt the divinely-ordained method, the method which God intended for reforming human thought and practice.⁸⁴³

The first stage of changing the order of being through vanguard movements is focussed on revitalizing Islam in society. As we have seen this focuses primarily on purifying one's belief and separating oneself from the *Jahiliyyah* surroundings.⁸⁴⁴ The mission of the Qutbian vanguard therefore is to become the acting agent, the embodiment of the law of movement that will transform the framework of the *Jahiliyyah* order of being into an Islamic one. This separation from everything that is non-Islamic is quite radical in itself and bears the hallmarks of the social dynamics of a cult. Based on the following Quranic verse 9:24 "Say: If your fathers and your sons and

⁸⁴³ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 40.

⁸⁴⁴ "It is therefore necessary that Islam's theoretical foundation-belief-materialize in the form of an organized and active group from the very beginning. It is necessary that this group separate itself from the *jahili* society, becoming independent and distinct from the active and organized *jahili* society whose aim is to block Islam.[...] He will have to give his complete loyalty to the new Islamic movement and to the Muslim leadership [...]"Ibid., p. 48.

your brothers and your spouses and your relatives, and the wealth which you have acquired, and the commerce in which you fear decline, and the homes in which you take delight, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until God brings His judgment; and God does not guide the rebellious people.", Qutb insists on the total separation of the individuals from his former *Jahiliyyah* life and his *Jahiliyyah* surroundings. This also extends to the bonds of the direct family. Qutb brings into memory prophetic example:

We see that the blood relationships between Muhammad - peace be on him - and his uncle Abu Lahab and his cousin Abu Jahl were broken, and that the Emigrants from Mecca were fighting against their families and relatives and were in the front lines of Badr, while on the other hand their relations with the Helpers of Medina became strengthened on the basis of a common faith. They became like brothers, even more than blood relatives.⁸⁴⁵

When in our society, we see Muslims separating themselves in such a radical manner from the non-Islamic society then that should at least be a warning to pay close attention. It in no way implies that Muslims are about to commit terrorist attacks or are even remotely connected to such things, but it does indicate a rejection of the non-Islamic society which in the first place hampers integration, but more importantly can be the foundation for the Qutbist vanguard we are discussing. It is within isolation, divorced from any experiences of the non-cultist outside world that man becomes most vulnerable for indoctrination. Whilst indoctrination has a negative connotation to most people, it is for Qutb an essential aspect of faith itself:

⁸⁴⁵ "Islam came to establish only one relationship which binds men together in the sight of God, and if this relationship is firmly established, then all other relationships based on blood or other considerations become eliminated" Ibid., pp. 123, 117.

Indeed, the spirit of submission is the first requirement of the faith. Through this spirit of submission the believers learn the Islamic regulations and laws with eagerness and pleasure. As soon as a command is given, the heads are bowed, and nothing more is required for its implementation except to hear it.⁸⁴⁶

The earliest group then that separates itself from its non-Islamic surroundings forms the seed from which the vanguard may grow. Radically isolated from any experience or bond of kinship that does not conform to the ideology of the group, the process of isolation and eventually atomization is accelerated by the introduction of the notion that this group is under constant attack from the outside world with which it lives in permanent hostility.

The callers to Islam should not have any superficial doubts in their hearts concerning the nature of Jahiliyyah and the nature of Islam, and the characteristics of Dar-ul-Harb and of Dar-ul-Islam, for through these doubts many are led to confusion. Indeed, there is no Islam in a land where Islam is not dominant and where its Shari'ah is not established; and that place is not Dar-ul-Islam where Islam's way of life and its laws are not practiced. There is nothing beyond faith except unbelief, nothing beyond Islam except Jahiliyyah, nothing beyond the truth except falsehood.⁸⁴⁷ Only this is Islam, and only this is Dar-ul-Islam- not the soil, not the race, not the lineage, not the tribe, and not the family.⁸⁴⁸

Having thus set the stage for the nucleus of the vanguard movement, beset on all sides by a hostile environment, the element of indoctrination and isolation are allowed to mould the person into the unfailing carrier and embodiment of the ideology. Qutb does not see

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 126-127.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

this as a negative phenomenon but praises it as the foremost quality of the salafiyaah:

The Qur'anic training of the first noble generation of Muslims was of this character to the highest degree. They lost their personalities and identities in this matter, acting as workers for the One in authority, and were pleased with God in every decision and in every condition.⁸⁴⁹

Thus begins the project of the Qutbian process of fabricating mankind, the Islamic *homo faber*.⁸⁵⁰ Using this vanguard group as the basis from which to spread the message of Islam in words and in deeds, Qutb describes the various stages through which the young movement must go.⁸⁵¹

3.5.1.2 The practical foundation of the Vanguard

Like his secular totalitarian counterparts, the stringent logicity of ideological thinking which dominates the minds of the Vanguard is flanked by a finely tuned sense of practicality when it comes to their interactions with the outside non-totalitarian world. Especially when the power to enforce is lacking, these movements are extremely adept in using the liberties, freedoms and possibilities of the non-Islamic system to their own advantage. Qutb points out this practical nature and the adaptability of the vanguard movement by referring to the life and practice of Muhammad himself. I have gone into this in

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁸⁵⁰ "The first function of Islam is that it moulds human life according to this concept and gives it a practical form, and establishes a system in the world which has been prescribed by God; and for this very purpose God has raised this Muslim nation to be a practical example for mankind." Ibid., p. 129.

⁸⁵¹ "When Islam, according to the method described above, starts a Muslim community on this basis, forms it into an active group, and makes this faith the sole basis for the relationship between the individuals of this group, its ultimate aim is to awaken the humanity of man, to develop it, to make it powerful and strong, and to make it the most dominant factor among all the aspects found in man's being. It seeks to implement this purpose through its teachings, its rules, its laws and injunctions" Ibid., pp. 48-49.

detail in the chapter on the evolution of theories in jihad. When the young Muslim community was outnumbered and persecuted in Mecca, Muhammad appeared peaceful and tolerant, and judgement about the unbelievers lay with Allah, see for instance Q 15:90-92. From this period stems the oft heard statement 'there is no compulsion in religion' from Q. 2:256 Yet, when the first polis was established in Medina and the number of followers increased Muhammad's defensive capability fighting in self defence became allowed. Q. 22: 39-41. This process ended with the commandments for offensive jihad from sura 9. Qutb emphasizes that this development is concomitant with the motion of law itself and urges his followers to take heed of this development, adjusting their strategies accordingly.^{852 853}

⁸⁵² "In Mecca the Muslims were not autonomous, nor did they have any influence in the society. Their practical life had not taken a permanent form so that they could have organized themselves according to the divine Law (*al-shari'ah*); hence no regulations and laws were revealed to them by God. They were taught only belief and those moral principles which follow from this belief after it penetrates the mind. Later, when an autonomous state came into existence in *Madinah*, general laws were revealed and that system came into existence which satisfies the needs of a Muslim community, and the power of the state was behind its enforcement. God Most High did not desire that all laws and regulations be revealed during the Meccan period so that Muslims would have a ready-made system to be applied as soon as they reached *Madinah*; this is out of character for this religion. Islam is more practical than this and has more foresight; it does not find solution to hypothetical problems. It first looks at the prevailing conditions, and if it finds a viable society which, according to its form, conditions or temperament, is a Muslim society, which has submitted itself to the law of God and is weary of laws emanating from other sources, then indeed this religion provides a method for the legislation of laws according to the needs of such a society." Ibid., p. 34.

⁸⁵³ "if fighting had been allowed, this limited warfare would have resulted in the complete annihilation of the Muslims; even if they had killed a great number of their opponents, they would still have been completely annihilated. Idolatry would have continued and the dawn of the Islamic system would never have arrived and would never have reached its zenith,

This also means that in times in which the Islamic community is on the defensive, or is outnumbered, it will need to look for ways in which to enlarge its power base and prepare for the time in which it can wield its power. This phenomenon is identical to the fate which bestowed secular totalitarian vanguard movements in those periods in which they too were on the defensive or simply incapable of imposing their will. The solution to that predicament can be found in the example of the prophet and the salafiyaah as well and Qutb applies it to his own vanguard accordingly namely the development of parallel organizations. Parallel organizations emulate already existing organizations in order to prepare and provide their own community with the required resources and know-how for the day that they can exert themselves. This can take the shape of exact copies of non-Islamic organizations such as Islamic legal offices as we can find in the illegal Shari'ah courts in the UK and France, or, and this is more often the case, through numerous front organizations that serve as recruiting and financing organizations aiding more radical jihad inclined organizations that thus remain undetected.

the Islamic movement had to produce parallel resources to confront this *Jahiliyyah*. This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs and it uses physical power and *Jihad* for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the *Jahili* system [...] This movement does not confine itself to mere preaching to confront physical power, as it also does not use compulsion for changing the ideas of people. These two principles are equally important in the method of this religion. Its purpose is to free those people who wish to be freed from enslavement to men so that they may serve God alone.⁸⁵⁴

while Islam is revealed to be a practical way of life for all mankind" Ibid., p. 67.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 55-56.

The network of Qutbist vanguard movements therefore consists of a myriad of organizations ranging from benevolent charities, cultural exchange societies and interfaith dialogue groups to money funnelling and terrorist organizations. As could be seen in the Holy Land Foundation trial, a foundation which claimed to be a charitable organization but was secretly funnelling money to Hamas, this network of Qutbist organizations has one central theme: jihad.⁸⁵⁵ All of its parallel organizations have a share in bringing about this goal in the same way as the separate limbs belong to one body. It is therefore a grave mistake to judge a Qutbist organization on the merits of its outward appearance and official statutes.

The mother of all Qutbist organizations is the MB. While its motto is still "Allah is our objective, the Prophet is our leader, the Qur'an is our law, Jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope" many observers amongst whom the MB itself and a very critical al-Zawahiri have claimed that the MB is now more or less a peaceful social organization.⁸⁵⁶ What few observers note, however, is the mechanism emphasized by Qutb, the chief ideologue of the MB, which stated clearly that one should adapt to circumstances according to prophetic example. It is no wonder that the MB in Egypt was indeed peaceful when under the rule of consecutive Egyptian presidents which persecuted them gravely. The MB, as is clear from the writings of al-Zawahiri who used to belong to the MB, was in no shape to oppose the persecutions and was therefore obliged to relinquish its jihadist ambitions and direct its energy towards building a wider base amongst the population in the hope of rising up when

⁸⁵⁵ Coughlin, "Federal Court: U.S. V Holy Land Foundation Trial: Analysis of Muslim Brotherhood's General Strategic Goals for North America Memorandum."

⁸⁵⁶ See for instance al-Zawahiri critique on the MB's abandonment of jihad against un-Islamic rulers in Egypt in Mansfield, ed., *His Own Words, a Translation of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, p. 167. In addition the English media outlet of the MB www.ikhwanweb.com features numerous articles in which they distance themselves from Al-Qaeda, although, it must be said, with the expected amount of Qutbian doublespeak.

persecutions would soften to the point enough to do so.⁸⁵⁷ One the main reasons for the birth of Islamist movements such as Al-Qaeda was the pessimistic observation that jihad and a change in the order of being were not possible in Egypt. This pessimism translated in a desire to pursue the life of those early salafiyaah in a realm which did offer these possibilities. It was this desire for 'fighting in the way of Allah' and a realm in which to do so with the possibility of success which spawned organizations like Al-Qaeda and Hamas.⁸⁵⁸ They both originated from the MB but chose to operate from a different arena. These choices were not inspired by the MB's lack of militancy, but by opportunity. This history of the first Muslim vanguard in modern times and the blueprint that Qutb gives on the basis of prophetic example should therefore be of the upmost importance to policy and lawmakers and those engaged in the counter-terrorism and multicultural debate. Qutbist vanguard movements are highly adaptive, opportunistic and deceptive since their goal is not compromise or acceptance or even friendship with the *Jahiliyyah* society, but the implementation of the law of nature and the unopposed dominion of the law of movement. Qutb leaves no doubt as to the nature of this movement and governments, parliamentarians and analysts alike would be wise to take notice of Qutb's clear mission statement:

How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam? It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of Jahiliyyah which has encompassed the entire world. During its course, it should keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing Jahiliyyah and should also keep some ties with it. [...]they ought to be aware of their position as opposed to this

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁸⁵⁸ See chapter five of this research on al-Zawahiri's "Knights under the prophet's banner".

Jahiliyyah, which has struck its stakes throughout the earth: when to co-operate with others and when to separate from them: what characteristics and qualities they should cultivate, and with what characteristics and qualities the Jahiliyyah immediately surrounding them is armed; how to address the people of Jahiliyyah in the language of Islam, and what topics and problems ought to be discussed [...] The milestones will necessarily be determined by the light of the first source of this faith-the Holy Qur'an - and from its basic teachings, and from the concept which it created in the minds of the first group of Muslims, those whom God raised to fulfil His will, those who once changed the course of human history in the direction ordained by God. I have written "Milestones" for this vanguard.⁸⁵⁹

3.5.1.3 False Vanguard

There are according to Qutb a number of groups who pose as Islamic vanguards but are in fact outright deceiving or misguided. The deceiving vanguards are Muslims who which to befriend the Jahiliyaah societies in which they reside. It stands to reason that very few Muslims have the appetite or the stomach to pursue the path that Qutb has laid out. It is a path of isolation, hardship, rejection and very likely criminal prosecution. Qutb, like Khomeini and al-Zawahiri, argues that these Muslims therefore seek to weaken Islam by portraying it, and consequently believing it themselves, as something which is not radically antithetical to *Jahiliyaah*. That tolerance, acceptance and friendship towards it are commendable virtues and that Islam does not need to be implemented in its totality in daily life as Qutb suggests or even worse, that Islam can be 'reformed', something which we today would call 'moderate Islam'. About these groups for which Qutb has nothing but utter disdain he states:

⁸⁵⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 12.

It is the duty of Muslims to expose these tactics and reduce them to dust, to reject this ridiculous proposal of the reconstruction of Islamic law for a society which is neither willing to submit to the law of God nor expresses any weariness with laws emanating from sources other than God.⁸⁶⁰

The misguided ones form a very strange category in the thinking of Qutb. He argues that Islam and the Shari'ah should be accepted on nothing more than the basis of loving Allah and wanting to submit to him unconditionally. This love should go so far as to accept Shari'ah law without know its details, so that one avoids comparing divine systems of law with manmade systems of law. Comparing those two in itself is shirk and thus if one loves Allah, one does not need to know the details of the law in order to accept them. Putting those laws into practice is a different matter. Therefore Qutb argues that those movements that hope to recruit people for the cause of Allah through the dissemination of the fundamental of Islamic law are sincere, but misguided.⁸⁶¹ This is one of the very points in Milestones that seems utterly impractical. We know that totalitarian vanguards and their demands of indoctrination, loyalty and sacrifice are possible. Therefore I do not consider them unpractical. However, those movements all were able to rally supporters through an intricate scheme of pseudo-science and propaganda. Even the most charismatic leaders had to 'sell' their message and Qutb rejection thereof seems rather impractical. Then again, it may be precisely due to the ideological *religious* nature of Qutb's Milestones that questioning, comparing and debating the will of Allah is deemed unacceptable in the first place. One should be reminded that *ubudiyyah*, from which the implementation of the Shari'ah follows is first and foremost based on the belief in Allah.

3.5.2 Practical examples of the Vanguard

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

3.5.2.1 Da'wa and the model of the Muslim Brotherhood inside Egypt

Qutb argued that the correct way or perhaps the only viable way in lieu of the brutal repression of his time was to proceed through a program of *da'wa*. This should be done via mosques, charitable organizations, universities, student organizations, social programs, health programs and in any number of ways that introduces people to the Islamic program and hopefully would lead to the formation of truly Islamic societies. The course set out by Qutb was most notably adopted by the MB which was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949). The MB adopted the Da'wa program and opted to cooperate with the regime in Egypt by entering into the elections, which drew criticism from more hardlined groups who saw elections as manmade instruments not authorized by the Quran or *sunna* and thus as *shirk*. Thus they chose to re-Islamize society from the bottom up, in the mould of their own view on Islam, instead of seeking a direct confrontation with a regime they could not challenge in any realistic way.⁸⁶² Qutb argues to this point:

The Islamic movement should not waste its time by engaging in the current political affairs, or try to overthrow the government, or to establish the Islamic system by force. The people themselves will ask to establish the Islamic system when they know the accurate meaning of the Islamic creed.⁸⁶³

This is also the strategy advocated by the reformed 'grandfather of radical Islam' Sayyed Imam who wrote the document *Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt and the World*, mentioned earlier.⁸⁶⁴ The fact that the

⁸⁶² Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 88.

⁸⁶³ Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, p. 160.

⁸⁶⁴ Sayyid Imam, breaking with his previous calls for Islamic jihad, summarizes his pessimistic appraisal of the situation by prescribing six options for Muslims worldwide: 1) emigration (*hijra*) ; 2) isolation (*hijra*) ; 3) forgiving; 4) turning aside; 5) patience; and 6) hiding one's faith (*taqiyyah*) an he

MB chose to avoid a direct confrontation with the Egyptian regime does not entail that they are a pacifist or quietist movement which can be overlooked by policy and lawmakers outside of Egypt. Staying true to the ideological foundations of the vanguard movement, the aim has remained unchanged from the days of the prophet; the means however, remain dependant on the circumstances in which the movement finds itself. Originally created to combat social injustice, colonialism and western influences in Muslim societies it aimed at the resurgence of a great Islamic past, *Palingenesis*, and the exclusive role of the Quran and *Sunna* as a totalist model for society. The MB over the years has become the largest voice of opposition within Egypt and large parts of the Arab world and has served as a model for other political Islamic movements around the world. The doctrine of the MB in the words of its founder were as we saw as follows: "*Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader, Qur'an is our law, Jihad is our way, Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.*"⁸⁶⁵

One of its main goals is plainly titled "Mastering the world with Islam."⁸⁶⁶ Although the MB in the last few decades has rejected outright violence and claims to have embraced inter-faith dialogue, this seems somewhat unreliable, if not an application of *doublespeak* judging by its former members and associates:

Sayyid Qutb, Amin Al-Husseini, chief Mufti of Jerusalem and associate of Adolf Eichmann, Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen, founder of Hamas, Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, patron of Osama bin Laden, ideologue of the jihad in Afghanistan and Ayman al-Zawahiri, second in command and ideologue of Al-Qaeda, to name but a few. However well organized and potentially influential the MB might be in the Arab world, their

concludes : " , dear reader, it is not just jihad about which you need not speak to me, but about any Islamic or popular activity -- and that's the end of the matter." al-Zawahiri, "Exoneration," p. 181. Hence Zawahiri's taunting reference to Sayyid Imam and others like him as the "Imams of defeat".

⁸⁶⁵ MB homepage: <http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/>

⁸⁶⁶ <http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/> main objective number 6.

mission of regime change and implementation of *hakimiyyat* has largely failed as has the jihadist attempts at forcing change from above. The failure of political Islam⁸⁶⁷, to quote Olivier Roy's book, to bring substantial change within the Arab world had two distinct consequences: Firstly it spawned the creation of more radical groups such as the Al-Qaeda whose principal of action departed from the Islamists futile attempt at regime change and who now pursue jihad and martyrdom for the sake of purification of the self and for the sake of performing a religious duty regardless of the outcome. In this scenario, which is infinitely more disastrous, jihad is carried out for the sake of jihad, not for some obtainable immanent goal. The secondly consequence is the export of the *modus operandi* of the MB to the western world and in part, the Asian continent. Unhampered by too much knowledge about the nature of Islam or the MB, thanks to the West's far greater political and civil liberties and lastly an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist anti-Zionist audience welcoming new crusaders for the cause,⁸⁶⁸ the MB found a welcoming home and unparalleled opportunities in Western societies.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁷ Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*.

⁸⁶⁸ Emerson Vermaat, *Nazi's, Communisten En Islamisten. Opmerkelijke Allianties Tussen Extremisten*, Buruma and Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*.

⁸⁶⁹ See for a detailed report on the influence of the MB in the USA: W. J. Boykin, Soyster, H. E., Brim, C., *Shariah: The Threat to America the Threat to America* (Washington: Center for Security Policy Press, 2010), Coughlin, "Federal Court: U.S. V Holy Land Foundation Trial: Analysis of Muslim Brotherhood's General Strategic Goals for North America Memorandum." For MB related activity in Europe see: Tibi, *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe: Democratic Peace and Euro-Islam Versus Global Jihad*, Brigitte Maréchal, *The Muslim Brothers in Europe: Roots and Discourse*, Muslim Minorities, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, "From Dawa to Jihad.", ———, "Saudi Influences in the Netherlands - Links between the Salafist Mission, Radicalisation Processes and Islamic Terrorism," (2004), ———, "The Violent Jihad in the Netherlands," (2006). For MB related activity in Islamic societies outside of Egypt see: Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State*

As we have seen, the MB and its affiliates arose from the Qutbist assertion that the re-Islamization of society, according to the Islamist view on Islam, would come from a vanguard programme of “education, teaching and wide scale Islamic cultivation of individuals and groups”.⁸⁷⁰ Others groups however, were of the opinion that matters could not be postponed and chose to confront the regime of *Jahiliyyah* directly. Although they differ in their methods, the object stays the same: fighting against *Jahiliyyah* with the aim of restoring *hakimiyyat* and *ubudiyyah*. As such they are the militant expression of the ideals that lie at the heart of Qutbist da’wa groups. Yet, it should be reiterated that Qutb’s postponement of armed jihad was only due to the historical setting of his time in which the MB was severely on the defensive. In western societies this situation does not exist and nothing will guarantee that the oppression of the MB in the Arab world will continue indefinitely. It is therefore wise to keep in mind Qutb’s ultimate mission statement: Jihad is not fought “because of any threat of aggression against Islamic lands or against the Muslims residing in them. The reason for jihad exists in the nature of its message and in the actual conditions it finds in human societies, and not merely in the necessity for defence.”⁸⁷¹

Thus, this struggle (Jihad) is not a temporary phase but an eternal state... as truth and falsehood cannot co-exist on this

Power in Jordan (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), Shmuel Bar, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan* (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1998), Sabah El-Said, *Between Pragmatism and Ideology: The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, 1989-1994* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1995), Ziy ad Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad*, Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁸⁷⁰ Excerpt from the trial against Qutb in 1965, Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, p. 197.

⁸⁷¹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 71.

earth. The eternal struggle for the freedom of man will continue until the religion is purified for God.⁸⁷²

3.5.4 Summary

Milestones as a guide for the construction of vanguard movements has been one of the fundamental cornerstones of numerous Islamic organizations that have appeared worldwide since its publication in 1964. In terms of its content and capacity for mobilization it can be compared to Khomeini's *velayat e-faqih* and Mauwdudi's *jihad in Islam*.⁸⁷³ There are some similarities between the secular totalitarian vanguard movements and those as proposed by or modelled after Qutb's Milestones or the comparable works of Khomeini and Mauwdudi. The seminaries in general are based on the existence of an ideology of totalitarian nature that forms the principle of action. Some of the similarities with secular totalitarian vanguard movements are as follows:

First of all, all these works reiterate the need to challenge and uproot the existing order of being which is perceived as the root cause of the disorder in the world.

Secondly, the vanguard is formed around a nucleus of people that are the personification of the ideology and the movement contained within it. This personification is built upon a radical rejection of and separation from the existing order, a complete submission to the edicts of the ideology and the willingness to make the necessary sacrifices through the rejection of any compromise unless dictated by necessity. The compromise can only be of a temporal nature since the order of being of the ideology and the existing order are mutually exclusive.

⁸⁷² Ibid., p. 65.

⁸⁷³ Khomeini, *Velayat-E Faqeeh, Governance of the Jurist.*, Mauwdudi, *Jihad in Islam*.

Fourthly, these vanguard movement are characterized by a strict internal discipline and uncompromising adherence to ideology, whilst at the same time being able to adapt to and even appear to appease the outside world when needed. *Doublespeak* and the hiding of one's intentions can be a part of this strategy.

Fifthly, an emphasis is placed on the struggle and romantic notions of martyrdom and sacrifice whilst intellectual debate with and attempts to win favour from the hostile society is disregarded or seen as weakness. Furthermore, those that have suffered for the movement are seen as the new elite of a new order of being.

Sixthly, the *modus operandi* of the vanguard is such that it seeks to establish itself in every layer of society through the development of social, cultural, legal and political institutes that may or may not openly declare their intentions. Whether they do this is dependent on their power position within the society whose order of being they aim to overthrow. There is furthermore no reason within the ideological framework to see this as weakness, it is rather a strategic necessity to develop parallel organizations that can aid in enlarging the power base and introduce sympathizers into the nucleus of the vanguard.

There are however also some discrepancies between the nature of secular totalitarian and Qutbist vanguard movements.

The first is that secular totalitarian movements have always been led by a charismatic leader, the *Führer Prinzip*. Qutbist vanguard movements have a clear lack of leadership. Insofar as leadership is needed Qutb points out that the Quran and Sunna are the only leadership required and that one should follow the example of Mohammad and the salafiyaah. Exceptions to this phenomenon are the Pakistani Mauwdudi and the Iranian Khomeini although it should be said that neither engaged in the cult of personality to the degree which we know of secular totalitarian regimes since they too acknowledged the primacy of the Quran, sunna and Muhammad and would have judged such adoration of a leader as constituting *shirk*.

Secondly, with the coming of the internet and the decentralization of mass media, the dissemination of Islamist thought has reached a degree of accessibility and an audience which was unthinkable to secular totalitarian regimes. Whilst this in itself does not constitute a meaningful discrepancy it should be noted that dissemination of secular totalitarian literature was either channelled through the state or potentially susceptible to state enforced restrictions, thus creating the necessity of either befriending the state or gaining control over the state. The internet has removed such requirement and limitations and these movements therefore do not need to rely on strictly hierarchical movements aimed at gaining control over the state.

A third difference is situated in the fact that secular totalitarian movements were most often engaged in open war against the state from the moment of their conception. Islamist vanguard movements, however, particularly if they do not employ violence, can operate under the radar of the state whilst being protected by the constitutional rights of freedom of religion, organizations, speech and congregation. This lack of open conflict and the presence of constitutional freedoms mean that their potential for organizing parallel organizations is far greater than with their secular counterparts. In addition, the transnationalism of these movements often means that law enforcement and counter-terrorist agencies have limited oversight of the networks involved and therefore limited insight into the true nature and goals of these movements. As was shown in the Holy land trial case in the United States of America, seemingly innocuous Islamic organizations can thus operate as perfectly legitimate front organizations for terrorist organizations outside of that country's borders and jurisdiction.

Fourthly, the lack of a charismatic figurehead of the movement is both a drawback and an advantage. The drawback lies in the fact that without a clear identifiable leader, it becomes difficult to bring some sort of order and hierarchy into the multitude of organizations. Without such a hierarchy the movements will unavoidably lack a clear

sense of direction, priority and coordination. In addition, a charismatic leader figure will be able to mobilize supporters and confront the *Jahiliyyah* society as the spearhead and mouthpiece of the wider network of movements. The benefit of not having a leader or any strict coherence amongst the different movements, however, lies in the fact that these movements are therefore able to survive and adapt to adversity in a much more fluent way; the cell structure of terrorist organizations being a good example. Additionally, given the fact that Islamist movements rely to a great extent on a strict adherence to classical Islamic teachings means that need for a leader who needs to expound and clarify the ideology is largely unnecessary. Islamist movements are movements of revival of classical teachings and of a purification of innovations. The examples and symbols of purity to which these movements refer, the prophet and the *salafiyyah*, are held in the highest esteem throughout the Islamic world and the body of literature on their teachings is freely available and easily accessible for all.

The differences between the Qutbian and the secular totalitarian vanguard model are mostly of a practical and not ideological or essential nature. Most of these differences originate in the dawn of the decentralization of mass communication and in the practical circumstances of the place and time in which these movements operate. The lack of outright conflict with the state, the availability of constitutional freedoms, the multicultural nature of western societies and the political discourse are all factors that pertain to the *modus operandi*. On the level of the ideological nature however, the Qutbian and secular totalitarian vanguard movements perform the same function: they are the spearhead and rallying point of a movement aimed at overthrowing the order of being in order to make the formula for self and world preservation the exclusive and dominant model for a new order of being which must permeate every level of existence in order for the forces of the law of motion to function freely and unopposed.

The practical means and methods that the vanguard movements aim to use can be described as *jihad* in the largest sense of the word and is the final subject of this chapter

3.6. The mechanism of salvation: Jihad

I have used the word existential requirements since it is in man's nature, in his *fitrah*, to return to the proverbial Garden of Eden. In order to accomplish this, the order of being, as we have seen, has to be changed through the vanguard movement's effort or *jihad* which is entrusted with vice regency and ordered to conduct the struggle against the Islamic community's internal and external enemies.

3.6.1 What is jihad?

As we have seen in the introductory chapters dealing with theories on jihad, jihad can be described, especially in classical Islam as a 'war waged for the sake of God'.⁸⁷⁴ There is consensus amongst the four Sunni schools and Shi'a schools on this definition and the *jus ad bellum* of jihad although the agreement on the details of *jus in bello*, the rules and procedures of jihad, can differ. Qutb defines jihad simply as: "simply a name for striving to make this system of life dominant in the world."⁸⁷⁵ The model for the forms of jihad and the intended targets of jihad is in general in compliance with the consensus of the Sunni *Madhab*. Qutb does differ on the conditions under which jihad can take place but we will come to that shortly. The goal of jihad again is not different from that of the established classical Sunni and Shi'a doctrines, namely to make the religion of Allah supreme over all others.⁸⁷⁶ Qutb, in his formulation of Islam as equal to freedom states: "this religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires,

⁸⁷⁴ al-Tabari, *Al-Tabari's Book of Jihad, a Translation from the Original Arabic*, p. 2.

⁸⁷⁵ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 76.

⁸⁷⁶ Quran 9:33, 61:9 61:9 "He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religion however much idolaters may be averse."

which is also a form of human servitude".⁸⁷⁷ A second formulation of the aim of jihad in Milestones is decidedly less poetic about freedom and bears the echoes of Robespierre: "The foremost duty of Islam in this world is to depose Jahiliyyah from the leadership of man, and to take the leadership into its own hands and enforce the particular way of life which is its permanent feature."⁸⁷⁸ As we have seen, Qutb sees the unfolding process that lies within the logic of ideological thinking of Islam, as a movement to free mankind. This process, a struggle in every sense of the word jihad, is global, permanent and eschatological:

The reasons for *Jihad* [...] are these: to establish God's authority in the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them. These reasons are sufficient for proclaiming *Jihad*.⁸⁷⁹ [...] Thus, this struggle is not a temporary phase but an eternal state - an eternal state, as truth and falsehood cannot co-exist on this earth. The eternal struggle for the freedom of man will continue until the religion is purified for God.⁸⁸⁰

Having thus described the existential struggle which is inherent to existence itself, as a permanent, universal and apocalyptic struggle which must result in the defeat of *Jahiliyyah*, the resemblance to secular totalitarian ideologies' conception of struggle becomes clear. The reason for this struggle is not so much the presumed hostility of the non-Islamic world, it is rather the fact that Islam proposes an order of being which cannot co-exist or tolerate any other order of

⁸⁷⁷ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 58.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

being. Because Islam does not tolerate any other order of being, the whole world whether it wants to or not, is engaged in this existential struggle the moment Islam came into being. Moreover, since Islam comes from the highest authority, Allah, and is in terms of the totalitarian vocabulary, the law of nature, it is the destiny of mankind to yield to its edicts regardless of the needs and desires of the individual. All those forces which oppose the edicts of this law of nature and the unfolding process inherent in it, the law of motion, must be annihilated: “[..]and hence it is the duty of Islam to annihilate all such systems, as they are obstacles in the way of universal freedom [..]”⁸⁸¹

This process of ‘freeing mankind’ must take place regardless of the desires of the individual and the *Jahiliyyah* community at large. First of all because man himself does not know what is good for him, and second of all because Allah decides what is good for him. Translated In the totalitarian vocabulary, the law of nature is the source of all authority, power, law and knowledge. To oppose these is to oppose nature itself. With the law of nature is a law of motion which is the unfolding process of a movement towards a Utopian world created in the image of the ideology, the law of nature. Human desires, inclinations and choices can only slow down this movement towards the prophesized Utopian end state of being and mankind therefore must be fabricated in such a fashion as to be unable to resist this law of motion. Since this Utopia is in the best interest of mankind, the need to stabilize man and restrict his actions is in effect in the cause of his freedom and well being. The individual and mankind as a whole do not have the freedom to escape this law of movement, any form of opposition to it is a declaration of war against the freedom of mankind and the authority from which it springs, Allah:

It may happen that the enemies of Islam may consider it expedient not to take any action against Islam, if Islam leaves

⁸⁸¹ Ibid., p. 75.

them alone in their geographical boundaries to continue the lordship of some men over others and does not extend its message and its declaration of universal freedom within their domain. But Islam cannot agree to this unless they submit to its authority by paying Jizyah, which will be a guarantee that they have opened their doors for the preaching of Islam and will not put any obstacle in its way through the power of the state.⁸⁸²

There were however considerable obstacles to this mission of Islam as Qutb perceived it, that were a result of a conflict of interests between the worldly powers and the ulama that strove for ideological purity. This conflict centred around the question of whether jihad is offensive or defensive, a distinction with large legal implications, and the question of who should participate in, and who can declare jihad.

3.6.2 A new formulation of jihad

Rather directly Qutb confronts the ulama of his day, the 'imams of defeat', who propose that the classical doctrine of jihad is a doctrine of defence, not offense. Defensive jihad has always been construed as a defence of the land of Islam and thus has no ideological component but is strictly territorial. Insofar as offensive jihad in the form of conquest has existed, which in modern ulama have been rather hesitant to admit, it would require the presence of a caliph to lead the ummah into battle. Since there is no caliph there can be no offensive jihad.⁸⁸³ This argument bears some similarities to the Shi'a doctrine which states that only the prophet or one of the twelve infallible Imams could wage jihad. This argument is a rather strong one and it has deep roots both in fiqh and in the history of Islam itself going back to the first and second *fitna*. The demand for a caliph to lead any offensive jihad has many benefits in terms of solidifying the young Islamic states and preventing the undermining of a unified foreign

⁸⁸² Ibid., p. 73.

⁸⁸³ See In chapter five and six the arguments made by Sayyid Imam against Al-Qaeda in al-Zawahiri, "Exoneration."

policy at the hands of men all too eager for booty or glory. Yet even when a caliph was present, the demands of real world politics and trade with the non-Islamic world often won over the demands for religious purity on the side of the ulama. Moreover, since the ulama were most often paid by the state, the argument for offensive jihad died a quiet death. Numerous ulama outside of the fray of the state however, insisted on a revival of the doctrine of offensive jihad, foremost of these being Ibn Taymiyyah. The question that was raised was what to do with the Quranic and prophetic injunction to fight in the cause for Allah and to purify religion for Allah when there was no caliph willing to do so? I have commented on this discrepancy between the worldly needs of the ruler and the religious needs of the ulama in the previous chapter. The heart of the matter is thus as follows: does the fact that offensive jihad can only take place under a caliph, and the caliph is either not present or not willing, mean the end of the doctrine of offensive jihad? And if so, is that not in direct violation of the Shari'ah intrinsic dictates and motion of law? Does the Islamic community itself thus become part of those forces of *Jahiliyyah* that oppose the law of motion? This was the question that was of upmost importance to Qutb and ideologues like him. In answer to these questions and in a bid to uphold the ideological edicts Qutb perceived in the Quran and Sunna, Qutb devised a new model of jihad which seeks to maintain offensive jihad whilst staying within the boundaries of Shari'ah law, being careful not to institute a *bid'ah*.

The solution in Qutb's view is the following. Only defensive jihad is an individually binding obligation meaning, binding upon every Muslim thus mobilizing the entire Islamic ummah. A caliph cannot refuse a defensive jihad and his consent is not needed in order to engage in it. Therefore even if the caliph is weak or bordering on apostasy, the Islamic ummah would be *obliged* to engage in jihad as a single body. But this doctrine is merely limited to the event in which a non-Islamic army enters the lands of Islam and is therefore of little use in accelerating the law of motion inherent in Islam i.e. offensively fighting until all religion is for Allah. This last part is the essence of

offensive jihad which *does* require caliph and furthermore is only a communal obligation, meaning that if a number of Muslims partake in it, then the whole of the community's obligation is fulfilled. And since the caliph is either absent or unwilling, offensive jihad has become extinct. What Qutb wants to achieve is a third type of jihad which is an individually binding obligation which does not require the consent or leadership of a caliph and has an offensive character. If such doctrine is possible then the woe Islamic ummah would be obliged to engage in an offensive jihad against the *Jahiliyyah* order of being. In order to achieve this he will have to amend the definition of 'defence' so that its character is basically offensive. What Qutb does is the following: the rules which stipulate the need for a caliph and the communal nature of offensive jihad are basically a result of fiqh, a human endeavour and oftentimes the result of real world politics rather than ideological purity. The fundamentalism of Taymiyyah, and which is adopted by Qutb, as we saw is directed at removing this *shirk* and *bid'ah* from Islam and Qutb decidedly operates within this train of thought. Qutb therefore looks at the original sources and the example of the prophet and the *salafiyyah* to come to two conclusions.

The first conclusion: Islam by its very nature is a revolutionary movement which exists in a permanent and *unavoidable* state of war with *Jahiliyyah*. There can be no compromise or co-existence since 'truth and falsehood cannot co-exist'. Islam is therefore permanently engaged in a war of defence.

No doubt this religion must defend itself against aggressors. Its very existence [...] is sufficient cause for the surrounding *jahili* society, which is based on human authority in some form or another, to rise against it for its own preservation and for the suppression of Islam. Clearly, under these conditions, the newly-organized Islamic community will have to prepare itself for defense. These conditions inevitably occur and come into existence simultaneously with the advent of Islam in any society. There is no question of Islam's liking or disliking such a

situation, as the struggle is imposed upon Islam; this is a natural struggle between two systems which cannot co-exist for long. This is a fact which cannot be denied, and hence Islam has no choice but to defend itself against aggression.⁸⁸⁴

The second conclusion: Islam is a global universal and permanent struggle for the freedom and *defense* of *mankind* against tyranny, *Jahiliyyah*:

Since the objective of the message of Islam is a decisive declaration of man's freedom, not merely on the philosophical plane but also in the actual conditions of life, it must employ *Jihad*. It is immaterial whether the homeland of Islam - in the true Islamic sense, Dar al-Islam - is in a condition of peace or whether it is threatened by its neighbours. When Islam strives for peace, its objective is not that superficial peace which requires that only that part of the earth where the followers of Islam are residing remain secure. The peace which Islam desires is that the religion (i.e. the Law of the society) be purified for God, that the obedience of all people be for God alone, and that some people should not be lords over others.⁸⁸⁵

This argument culminates in one of the most famous statements from *Milestones* with a distinct Robespierrian invocation:

If we insist on calling Islamic *Jihad* a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom.⁸⁸⁶

Through these two arguments, Qutb comes to a model of jihad which is within the framework of Islam defensive, but in practice offensive. Since defensive jihad does not require a caliph, and unlike offensive

⁸⁸⁴ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 73.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

jihad, is an individually binding obligation, Qutb thereby arrives at a doctrine of communally obligatory offensive jihad. Thus Qutb sets the stage for an apocalyptical, eschatological, global defensive jihad of freedom, defensive and freedom in the Qutbian sense that is.⁸⁸⁷ This global jihad is not limited in geographical terms and not limited in time, it is in effect a permanent war binding upon every individual of the Islamic ummah that can only end by the annihilation of either Islam or *Jahiliyaah*.

In addition, and this is particularly important if we are to understand Qutb concept of *jihad* and the role of vanguard movements in non-Islamic societies, the Islamic ummah does not know any territorial boundaries, wherever a Muslim lives, he is part of the ummah. The call to jihad in the Qutbian sense applies to him regardless of where he lives:

But any place where the Islamic Shari'ah is not enforced and where Islam is not dominant becomes the home of Hostility (Dar-ul-Harb) for both the Muslim and the Dhimmi. A Muslim will remain prepared to fight against it, whether it be his birthplace or a place where his relatives reside or where his property or any other material interests are located.⁸⁸⁸

Therefore, when law and policymakers or participants in the debate about multiculturalism or Islam are confronted with the words 'freedom' and 'peace', they would be wise to take notice of this Qutbian interpretation of these words since they permeate the whole Islamist discourse and are aimed at Muslims wherever they live. The

⁸⁸⁷ "Of course, in that case the defense of the 'homeland of Islam' is the defense of the Islamic beliefs, the Islamic way of life, and the Islamic community. However, its defense is not the ultimate objective of the Islamic movement of *Jihad* but is a means of establishing the divine authority within it so that it becomes the headquarters for the movement of Islam, which is then to be carried throughout the earth to the whole of mankind, as the object of this religion is all humanity and its sphere of action is the whole earth." *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

point essentially being that to Qutb and the Qutbian vanguard movements, it does not matter how respectful you treat them, the mere fact that you are 'of them' of a non-Islamic order of being, and are not an Islamic society is enough to be declared the target of this 'defensive' jihad.⁸⁸⁹

These arguments are exemplary of ideological thinking. The real world actions of this presumed single organism called *Jahiliyyah* do not matter and the actual desires of the people Islam claims to free from the bonds of *Jahiliyyah* do not matter. Islam itself states that this is how *Jahiliyyah* acts and that freedom is the mission of Islam thus it must be so. Qutb is by no means an exception to the thinking of the classical and medieval ulama however:

⁸⁸⁹ The phrase 'they are of them' refers to a hadith in which Muhammad attacked the town of Ta'if. When asked why he used catapults, weapons that cannot distinguish between those which can be legally killed and those who cannot, such as women and children, the prophet replied that the use of catapults was legal because 'they are of them', thus setting the precedent for the designation of the unbelievers as a single nation. See al-Zawahiri, "Exoneration." p. 42: "Those who claim that killing innocent persons is absolutely forbidden are in a position of accusing the prophet, may God's peace and prayers be upon him, his companions, and the generation following them that they were killers of innocent persons, as they see it. The prophet used catapults in his war on Al-Ta'if and you know that catapults cannot distinguish between the innocent and guilty. The prophet killed all the males of the Jewish Banu-Qurayzah tribe and made no distinction between one person and another. Ibn-Hazm commented thus: On the Banu-Qurayzah day I was with the prophet when he killed every male among them. He left none of them, no merchants, tillers, or old men. Ibn-al-Qayyim, may he rest in peace, narrated: The prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, if he made a truce or a peace agreement with a tribe or a community and some of them endorsed it while others violated it, he invaded everyone and considered them all violators just as he did with Banu-Qurayzah, Banu-al-Nadir, and Banu-Qunayqa and just as he did with the people of Mecca. That was his policy with those who abrogated or violated the peace" The rules of jihad derived from the example of Ta'if are also discussed by the founders of the Shafi'i, Hanafi and Maliki madhabs in: Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab at-Tauhid*. See in addition my chapter on Zawahiri and the legal dimension of jihad.

most of the opinions expressed by jurists and their reasoning in deducing certain rules concerning the cases in question do not show any reliance on the principle of reciprocity. In other words, it appears that what the enemy does towards Muslims does not factor into the jurists' decision making process. They seem to be more concerned with how to reach decisions that are aligned with Islamic teachings as represented in the Quranic verses, prophetic traditions and traditions from later authorities.⁸⁹⁰

This is where the similarities between the Sunni ideologues we discussed, Qutb, Mauwdudi and al-Zawahiri and the Shi'a ideologue Khomeini split ways. For the Shi'a an offensive jihad cannot take place without the prophet or one of the twelve infallible imams, which thereby postpones offensive jihad until the 12th imam, the Mahdi returns from the occultation.⁸⁹¹ The solution offered by Qutb would require a level of legal acrobatics that is virtually impossible within the confines of traditional Shi'a fiqh.

The resurgence of offensive jihad in this Qutbian formulation of jihad can be traced back, albeit *inter alia*, to Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim. As we saw ibn Taymiyyah revolted against the concessions made to real world demands by the caliph and the ulama he employed, at the cost of religious purity. There has therefore been an ongoing debate about this doctrine, and accusations of heresy and *bid'ah* have been made against both sides of the divide.

3.6.3 Rebuking the 'imams of defeat'

It is often said, in particular by those who either have little knowledge of classical fiqh of jihad, or those ulama who Qutb's dubbed the imams of defeat, that Islam does not engage in offensive jihad, all jihad in the classical non-Qutbian sense, is defensive, and was merely

⁸⁹⁰ al-Tabari, *Al-Tabari's Book of Jihad, a Translation from the Original Arabic*, p. 29.

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

a reaction of the prophet and his companions to the aggression of the non-Islamic world of his time.⁸⁹² As I have shown in an earlier chapter, this is simply not true. There is ample consensus amongst the *mahdabs* to confirm that offensive jihad is part and parcel of and even essential to Islam and was indeed performed by Muhammad himself on authority of Allah. It is especially important for law- and policymakers and participants in discussion about Islam to understand this fact. Qutb reacts to these ulama who try to cleanse Islam of the doctrine of offensive jihad as follows:

Thus, when they speak about *Jihad*, they speak clumsily and mix up the various stages, distorting the whole concept of *Jihad* and deriving from the Qur'anic verses final principles and generalities for which there is no justification. This is because they regard every verse of the Qur'an as if it were the final principle of this religion. This group of thinkers, who are a product of the sorry state of the present Muslim generation, have nothing but the label of Islam and have laid down their spiritual and rational arms in defeat. They say, "Islam has prescribed only defensive war"! and think that they have done some good for their religion by depriving it of its method, which is to abolish all injustice from the earth[.]The causes of Islamic *Jihad* should be sought in the very nature of Islam and its role in the world, in its high principles.⁸⁹³

⁸⁹² "As to persons who attempt to defend the concept of Islamic Jihad by interpreting it in the narrow sense of the current concept of defensive war, and who do research to prove that the battles fought in Islamic Jihad were all for the defense of the homeland of Islam - some of them considering the homeland of Islam to be just the Arabian peninsula-against the aggression of neighboring powers, they lack understanding of the nature of Islam and its primary aim. Such an attempt is nothing but a product of a mind defeated by the present difficult conditions and by the attacks of the treacherous orientalists on the Islamic Jihad." Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 62.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

3.6.4 Qutb and the means of Jihad

Jihad is often construed as being merely physical fighting. As I have shown in the beginning of this part of the book, this is an oversimplification. Physical fighting is the ultimate form of jihad which is preceded by a number of other forms such as fighting by one's tongue, wealth or heart. Qutb adopts this same sub division which was first clearly formulated by Ibn Qayyim. The jihad Qutb refers to then can be of several types and not necessarily has to take the shape of fighting. However, it is clear to Qutb that preaching, or *da'wa* meaning jihad by one's mouth, cannot take place unless all obstacles towards it have been annihilated by fighting.

It would be naive to assume that a call is raised to free the whole of humankind throughout the earth, and it is confined to preaching and exposition. Indeed, it strives through preaching and exposition when there is freedom of communication and when people are free from all these influences, as "There is no compulsion in religion; but when the above- mentioned obstacles and practical difficulties are put in its way, it has no recourse but to remove them by force so that when it is addressed to peoples' hearts and minds they are free to accept or reject it with an open mind."⁸⁹⁴

When Qutb uses this word 'fighting' he clearly states that this is a physical act which, if need be, results in the death of those who oppose this movement for the freedom and defence of man:

[..]No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam [..]. If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until either he is killed or until he declares his submission.⁸⁹⁵

The vanguard movement which Qutb envisioned is therefore a combination of both preaching and fighting. It may choose, depending

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

on the circumstances and its position of power, to refrain from violence as this would be detrimental to the movement at such a point in time but the main objective remains the same, to annihilate all that stands between man and the Islamic order of being.⁸⁹⁶

This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs and it uses physical power and *Jihad* for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the *Jahili* system which prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs but forces them to obey their erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord. This movement does not confine itself to mere preaching to confront physical power, as it also does not use compulsion for changing the ideas of people. These two principles are equally important in the method of this religion.⁸⁹⁷

In this statement are the clear signs of totalitarianism. Firstly, Qutb talks about reforming ideas and beliefs. Apparently, mankind cannot be trusted to return to his *fitrah* when handed a Quran, he must be placed in an order of society, an order of being, which is wholly constructed to bring him into the fold of Islam. Everything that hinders that process is seen as a construct that 'forces them to obey their erroneous ways' which 'make them serve human lords'. The jihad which aims to tear down the walls that stand between the individual and preaching is a jihad aimed at the entire non-Islamic order of being:

⁸⁹⁶ "If fighting had been allowed, this limited warfare would have resulted in the complete annihilation of the Muslims; even if they had killed a great number of their opponents, they would still have been completely annihilated. Idolatry would have continued and the dawn of the Islamic system would never have arrived and would never have reached its zenith, while Islam is revealed to be a practical way of life for all mankind" Ibid., p. 67.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 55-56.

If through 'preaching' beliefs and ideas are confronted, through 'the movement' material obstacles are tackled. Foremost among these is that political power which rests on a complex yet interrelated ideological, racial, class, social and economic support.⁸⁹⁸

There is a decidedly totalitarian arrogance in the belief of the justness and validity of Islam as Qutb sees it. Wholly divorced from human will, experience and ratio, Islam as the law of nature *is* the only order of being that is worthwhile considering and *any* opposition to it is a sign of tyranny and a declaration of war which immediately prompts a defensive jihad which ultimately can get one killed. The oft heard accusation of 'a war against Islam', directed at the non-Islamic world by a myriad of imam's, vanguard organizations and Islamic religious scholars, thus takes on a whole new meaning: everything that opposes the Islamic order of being *is* by definition a war against Islam. This accusation however, is only valid within the confines of the inner logic of the totalitarian ideology, and if one values one's freedom one should not take the accusation, but the arrogance and threat underlying it seriously.

3.6.5 The prohibition on forced conversions revisited

Whilst Qutb maintains that one is free to accept Islam within the constellation of the Islamic order of being, this freedom as I explained is restricted to holding an inner conviction. Qutb never states it so clearly, but it does amount to this since voicing criticism of Islam, and how can voicing a dissenting opinion not be criticism, has been seen as a declaration of war since prophetic times. As I have stated in earlier paragraphs of this chapter, it is true that Islam does not force its beliefs on anyone, the Shari'ah won't allow it. Nor does Qutb see his version of defensive jihad as an attempt to force Islam on people:

However, one should always keep in mind that there is no compulsion in religion; that is, once the people are free from

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

the lordship of men, the law governing civil affairs will be purely that of God, while no one will be forced to change his beliefs and accept Islam.⁸⁹⁹

That is not to say that there were no occasions in which did this happen, but nevertheless according to Shari'ah it is forbidden. However, confronted with the choice between death and conversion, or paying the jizyah and becoming a second-class citizen a *dhimmi*, it would seem that this command to refrain from force is more about semantics than content and not very credible. Ibn Qayyim already stated that the development of the doctrine of jihad under the prophet Muhammad ended with a division of the world in three categories:

the unbelievers were of three kinds: adversaries in war, people with treaties, and Dhimmis. The people with treaties eventually became Muslims, so there were only two kinds left: people at war and Dhimmis.⁹⁰⁰

The people at war were the polytheists and unbelievers, and for them war entailed either submission, meaning conversion, or death. Therefore, the only category *in theory* that could appeal to the prohibition of compulsion in religion, were the dhimmi's. As we have seen the rights of the dhimmi's to actually live a normal religious life have been curtailed to the point in which their eventual demise is almost guaranteed thus making their 'freedom' rather void and more a soft rather than forced conversion.

In addition, and this is one of the contradictions if not wilfully misleading elements in Milestones, Qutb as some scholars of great reputation before him, has declared the Jews and Christians polytheists. In doing so he has in fact made the whole category of dhimmi's empty. It does not contain any people. Commenting on the principle of polytheism, Qutb uses the standard definition:

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 52-53.

Anyone who serves someone other than God in this sense is outside God's religion, although he may claim to profess this religion. The Prophet- peace be on him - clearly stated that, according to the Shari`ah, 'to obey' is 'to worship'. Taking this meaning of worship, when the Jews and Christians 'disobeyed' God, they became like those who 'associate others with God'.

A hadith by Tirmidhi reports a prophetic example of this declaration of polytheism in the side of Jews and Christians:

The Prophet - peace be on him-was reciting the verse: "They (the People of the Book) have taken their rabbis and priests as lords other than God". `Adi reports: "I said, 'They do not worship their priests.'" God's Messenger replied, "Whatever their priests and rabbis call permissible, they accept as permissible; whatever they declare as forbidden, they consider as forbidden, and thus they worship them.

From which Qutb then draws the logical conclusion:

"This explanation of the above verse by the Prophet-peace be on him - makes it clear that obedience to laws and judgments is a sort of worship, and anyone who does this is considered out of this religion. It is taking some men as lords over others, while this religion has come to annihilate such practices, and it declares that all the people of the earth should become free of servitude to anyone other than God."⁹⁰¹

The end result then is that the Qayyim's classification of the unbelievers as either dhimmi's or people with whom Islam was at war, has been reduced to one category: that of people with whom Islam is at war. Since polytheists and unbelievers only have two options, either conversion or being killed, the prohibition on forced conversions is nothing more than a theoretical entity which only

⁹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 60.

makes sense within the confines of the logicity of ideological thinking.

3.7 Summary and conclusion

The core of Qutb's Milestones that forms the principle of action is the totalitarian logicity of ideological thinking. It operates on the basis of Islam as the unquestionable, unverifiable the law of nature. The Shari'ah and its concomitant concepts of *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and *hakimiyyat* are the foundations that define the Islamic order of being and the Gnostic speculative formula for self and world preservation. The Shari'ah thus both constitutes and occupies the symbolical seat of power, law and knowledge, and everything that is outside of its borders amounts to a heterodoxy whose existence is seen as a declaration of war which validates a defensive jihad.

The chaos which is rampant in the world is an emanation of the non-Islamic order of being, *Jahiliyyah*. Islam, as the law of nature, is intrinsically a law of movement, the unfolding process inherent in Islam whereby the *Jahiliyyah* order of being is to be replaced by an Islamic order of being which is the only order of being which can dissolve the disorder of the world and bring salvation to mankind.

As in secular totalitarian ideologies, disorder, *Jahiliyyah*, has become rampant due to two factors: internal and external enemies.

Firstly, the internal enemy is the freedom of man to choose his own destiny. This freedom halts the law of movement and is thus construed as the quintessential obstacle to the totalitarian concept of man's freedom, his unrestricted servitude to the edicts of the law of nature and movement. The internal enemy with regard to Muslims are those Muslims who have altered Islamic teachings through *shirk* and *bid'ah*, or who have relegated Islam to a mere theory rather than having embraced it as a movement directed towards the establishment of *hakimiyyat Allah*. These impurities must be purged from Islam and all those institutes, customs, traditions and laws that support it must be annihilated. This process of restoring purity and

conformity to the law of nature, *Islamic revivalism*, is equal to the secular totalitarian concept of *palingenesis*. The movement towards the fabrication of mankind into the mirror image of the law of nature therefore depends first of all on this movement of purification directed at the internal enemies. Those that stray from the pure path of Islam are subjected to *takfir*, a judgment that carries the penalty of death on the grounds of apostasy. The object of returning to the pure law of nature, is not to establish a stable realm within whose boundaries men can move freely, but to stabilize men, through *fitrah*, *ubudiyyah* and the complete internalization of Allah's *hakimiyyat*, so that the law of movement can move freely towards its ultimate goal of fabricating the Islamic order of being and the 'Islamic man'. In that sense the Shari'ah which is the acting agent of the law of movement, is the epitome of totalitarian lawfulness. The Islamic order of being which this movement aspires to is not the Islamic state, which is but a facet of its realm, but the *nizam al-Islam*, the Islamic society, which, comparable to the secular totalitarian society, has fabricated every facet of life into the mirror image of the law of nature.

Secondly, the external enemy is an existential enemy. This means that the Islamic equivalent of the law of nature operates on the basis of the logicity of ideological thinking which is wholly divorced from reality. The law of nature has decreed that there exists both an internal enemy who together with the external enemy is responsible for the disorder in the world. The external enemy is in no objective way guilty of any crime against the Islamic order of being. His guilt is constituted by the logicity of ideological thinking which deduces its judgments from the law of nature and law of movement and is wholly impervious to any facts emanating from the outside world. In Qutb's view the existential enemy is an enemy which must be defeated in order for the Islamic order of being to reign supreme and uncontested. In practice, the existential enemies in Qutb's view are first of all by definition atheists and polytheists. The external enemies that actively act against the Islamic order however, are predominantly the Jews, and in a larger yet ill-defined sense Christians. The centre of

the existential enemies' order of being is the Western world and its ideologies of Communism and liberal –democratic capitalism. Apart from his critique against these systems which is based on ideological thinking, Qutb uses some of the arguments devised by the European counter-enlightenment romantic movement.

The acting body which is supposed to purge Islam of its internal and external enemies, and accelerate of the unfolding process of the fabrication of the Islamic order of being, is the vanguard movement. This movement consists in its primary stages of a nucleus of ideologically pure and dedicated man, conforming to the ideal type of the prophet and the *salafiyaah*, the vanguard. The virtue of the vanguard is not its intellectual capacity for theological debate, but its unlimited servitude to the edicts of the laws of nature and movement. As such great emphasis is placed on the image of the vanguard as a self-sacrificing group of men who give their life for the cause of Islam. This mirrors the examples of the prophet and the *salafiyaah* and the ulama of the first revivalist movements, most prominent of those Ibn Taymiyyah. These virtues are concomitant with the virtues of the 'elites of the trenches' of the secular totalitarian vanguard movements. The practical aim of the vanguard movements is to be the first nucleus around which the Islamic masses can be trained, purified, and mobilized towards the movement of fabricating the new order of being. The vanguard has as its first objective the creation of a realm in which the law of nature and the law of movement are implemented to the fullest. Internally, the vanguard is characterized by a fanatical adherence to ideological purity, its long term objectives are derived *solely* from the laws of nature and movement and impervious to man's desires or to the realities of the world in which it operates. The practical means by which these objectives are to be realized, however, are highly pragmatic, adaptable and opportunistic. They encompass doublespeak, deception, and the threat or actual application of violence depending on the amount of power of the movement and the benefits that can be gained by them. Contrary to secular totalitarian vanguard movements, the Qutbian vanguard

movements are not necessarily hierarchical, often operating on the basis of a cell structure, they often lack a charismatic leader and due to the decentralization of mass communication capabilities and the constitutional freedoms accorded to these movements in non-Islamic societies, they often do not have the need to violently confront the existing order early on in their development.. The liberties and capabilities they thus have are used to spawn a network of parallel organizations whose aim is to infiltrate the non-Islamic order of being in as many areas as possible with the aim of shifting the balance of power to such a degree that the fabrication of the Islamic order of being is accelerated. Whilst on the surface these organizations may take the form of benign charitable, cultural or religious organizations, their ultimate aim however is this fabrication of the Islamic order of being. Thus they will often use their legally allowed and trusted front organizations to funnel personnel, capital or other valuable assets to one of their transnational subsidiaries that operate outside of the law or jurisdiction of the front organizations host country. These practical differences in environment notwithstanding, the Qutbian vanguard has all hallmarks of the nature and modus operandi of secular totalitarian vanguard movements.

The process of accelerating the law of movement inherent in the law of nature is jihad. Jihad according to Qutb is a permanent, universal, eschatological jihad against the entire non-Islamic order of being which is individually binding upon all members of the Islamic ummah. Its main objective is to forcefully annihilate all the laws, customs, values, institutions and ideological, economic and social foundations of the non-Islamic order of being so as to pave the way for preaching. Whilst in theory preaching, *da'wa*, leaves the individual person the option of not converting to Islam, this freedom is deceptive if not non-existing. Under classical Islamic law, only the *dhimmi's* have the right to retain their own religion, the polytheists and atheists have only a choice between conversion or death. However, Qutb asserts that the Jews and Christians are in fact polytheists and thus the end result of his theory of jihad is that the world is divided between Muslims and

people with whom Muslim are at war, with the latter only having the option of conversion or death. Jihad therefore, is a process aimed at the total conversion or annihilation of the non-Islamic order of being and its inhabitants. In the event that fighting is not possible then jihad by means of the tongue, da'wa, or wealth, financing of jihadist vanguard groups, becomes the *modus operandi* but only as a necessary substitute until such a time in which fighting is possible.

In conclusion, based on the theories and practice of the totalitarian phenomenon as analyzed in part I on this book, and the theory of Qutb I come to the conclusion that Qutb's ideology is a classical totalitarian ideology which prescribes and describes a blueprint for a totalitarian movement which aims to fabricate a new order of being. The main difference between secular totalitarianism and Qutbist totalitarianism however is significant: Unlike Nazism or Communism, which have no interest and are impervious to the personal choices of those under its reign, Qutbist totalitarianism insist on the possibility that one can convert and thus save his life. Bound by the Shari'ah and its fundamental rights accorded to Muslims, Qutb neither has the capability or the desire to turn his movement into a movement which " [...] results in the same "law" of elimination of the individuals for the sake or progress of the species."⁹⁰² That is not to say the Qutbist movement cannot turn into a terrorist organization that practices widespread violence and intimidation comparable to the reign of terror under secular totalitarian rule. It does however mean that it can never be as limitless as secular totalitarian rule has been since it is founded upon the Shari'ah which has boundaries that Qutb cannot and will not cross. Even the most fanatical of jihadists, such as al-Zawahiri, have to abide by the rules of Shari'ah which automatically eliminates certain possibilities on which secular totalitarian movements relied.

⁹⁰² Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 341.