

The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb

The theory of *jahiliyyah*

Sayed Khatab

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The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb is widely considered an ideologue of the radical Islamist movements in the present world. His writings and, in particular, his theory of *jahiliyyah* was viewed as a threat to the nationalistic regimes in the Muslim world from Egypt to Tashkent and is now viewed as a threat to the West.

Based on Qutb's own Arabic writings, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb* explains, along with other ideas of Qutb, the force and intent of the *jahiliyyah* concept, and explores its development until it became a mature confrontational theory. The issues addressed in this book include

- the political, economic and intellectual specifics that played a substantial role in the development of the *jahiliyyah* theory
- the role of America in the stages of the theory's development
- Qutb's intellectual life, his political activism and his relation with the British-backed Monarch in Egypt and Nasser's Republic

The book sheds light on Islamic radicalism and its intellectual origins by presenting new analysis of the intellectual legacy of one of the most important thinkers of modern Islamic revival. *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb* is essential reading for those with interests in Islam, philosophy and radical Islam.

Dr Sayed Khatab is a researcher in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University. His research interests focus on politics in the Middle East, and Islamic political thought and movements in the modern world. His publications include 'Arabism and Islamism in Sayyid Qutb's Thought on Nationalism', *The Muslim World*, 94, 2 (2004), 217–244.

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Sayyid Qutb at the Colorado State Teachers College in 1949.

Source: University Archives, University of Northern Colorado.

Note

This photo shows Sayyid Qutb on the right and Dr William R. Ross on the left examining Qutb's *Social Justice in Islam*, published in Cairo in 1949. This photo appeared in the College's 17 October 1949 Bulletin.

The world is an undutiful boy!

Sayed Kotb

History, the wayward child, has forgotten the examples of mother Egypt.

There was an ancient legend in Egypt. When the god of wisdom and knowledge created History, he gave him a great writing book and a big pen, and said to him: “Go walking on this earth, and write notes about everything you see or hear.”

History went down and did as his god had told him, but sometimes he did not understand some subjects or did not know some things because he was yet young. Then he asked his god who answered every question.

Once History was walking and writing in his great book when, surprised, he saw a beautiful young woman who was a wise woman, too; she had a little boy whom she was teaching in a gentle manner.

History looked at her with great astonishment and cried, “Who is it?”, raising his face to the sky.

“She is Egypt,” his god answered. “She is Egypt and that little boy is the world who is studying”—the god answered again.

“When was she born?” History asked.

“I don’t know”—the god of wisdom and knowledge said—“I should ask the headgod.”

“Oh, sacred chief, when was Egypt born?”

“I don’t remember”—replied the chief god—“my grandfather told me a long story about this matter but I don’t remember now. You may ask her about it. She knows that. She knows everything. She drank from the sacred Nile and learnt all.”

The god of wisdom and knowledge said to History: “You are allowed to ask her about her birth and about any other matter you have no knowledge of. Don’t ask me anything else. Sit down now to study this lesson, and I will listen.”

Why did those ancient Egyptians hold this belief? Because they were very advanced and possessed a great civilization before any other country. Egypt was a civilized country when other peoples were living in forests. Egypt taught Greece, and Greece taught Europe.

What happened when that little boy grew up?

When he grew up, he had thrown out his nurse, his kind nurse! He struck her, trying to kill her. I am sorry. This is not a figure of speech. This is a fact. This is what has actually happened.

When we came here to appeal to England for our rights, the world helped England against the justice. When we came here to appeal against Jews, the World helped the Jews against the justice. During the war between Arabs and Jews, the world helped the Jews, too.

Oh! What an undutiful world! What an undutiful boy!

The world is divided today into two large blocs, the Communist bloc in the East and the Capitalist bloc in the West. That is what appears on the surface, what everybody is saying and thinking. But we believe that it is a superficial division and not a real one, a division based on interests and not on principles, a struggle for goods and markets and not for ideas and convictions.... We should not be deceived by the fact that we see a strong and violent struggle between the Eastern and Western blocs, for both of them have a materialistic notion of life; each is similar to the other in its thinking, and neither struggles for ideas and principles but only for influence in the world and profits in the market. The real and profound struggle is between Islam on one hand and both the Eastern and Western blocs on the other.

(Sayyid Qutb 1949)

It is crystal clear that the real struggle in the future will not be between capitalism and communism and not between the Eastern camp and the Western camp, but it will be between the materialism visible throughout the world and Islam.

(Sayyid Qutb 1949)

**To the memory and the souls of my parents,
I dedicate this work**

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Introduction

What is *jahiliyyah*? This is a question that has been a puzzle at times, and has alarmed and often frustrated the media and political establishments in some countries at other times, and this book sets out to answer it once and for all.

Sayyid Qutb is widely considered the ideologue of the Islamic political movements of the modern world. His writings and, in particular, his theory of *jahiliyyah* have been viewed as one of his literary weapons and a threat to the nationalistic regimes in the Arab and Muslim worlds from Cairo to Tashkent and are now viewed as a threat to the West as well. It is through the prism of the theory of *jahiliyyah* that the Islamic political movements divide the world into two large blocs of potential clash. Islam and *jahiliyyah* are the real binary opposites and the real struggle in the future will be between them, not between the East and the West as such. The theopolitical and philosophical specifics of this theory were firmly rooted in the sociopolitical, economic, intellectual and moral conditions of the day. But the specifics of this theory have continued to break through the many complexities in its way, to win over the hearts and the minds of many individuals and groups out there and to empower many contemporary Islamic political organizations worldwide with an ideology that is not likely to go away soon.

Based on Qutb's own Arabic writings, this book explores the key ideas ingrained in his earlier writings, traces these ideas and their proliferation in the later writings within their time frames and sociopolitical context and systematically analyses the development of these ideas until together they became a full-fledged theory with religio-political and philosophical implications. In Qutb's analysis, this confrontational theory is certainly not separate from his concept of Sovereignty. These two concepts (*jahiliyyah* and Sovereignty) together form the hard core of the ideological and political tactics of many of the Islamic political organizations worldwide. It is for this reason that this book is paired with another book, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb*, London, Routledge (2006), to analyse the religio-political and philosophical relations between the two concepts, the impact of their force and intent on the ideological and political establishment of nationalism, capitalism, socialism, communism and democracy as well as their influence on Egypt's Jihad groups, with whom Ayman al-Zawahiri and his conspirators in what has later come to be called al-Qa'ida were ideologically trained. Thus, the two books are

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harmoniously interrelated and ideologically linked, and there is a great affinity between them.

Qutb's intellectual life spanned a period of more than forty years between 1921, when he published his first poem *al-Hayat al-Jadidah* (The New Life), and 1964, when he published his last controversial book *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones). In the period between 1921 and 1939, his writings comprised poetry, novels and articles dealing with sociopolitical and moral issues. During the later part of this period, and up to 1948, he also published essays and books on the Qur'an and culture such as *Critique of the Book of the Future of Culture in Egypt* (1939), *Artistic Portrayal in the Qur'an* (1945) and *Scenes of the Resurrection in the Qur'an* (1947).

By 1948, Qutb had completed a volume, *Social Justice in Islam*, but left it in Egypt, as he travelled to the United States. A year later, while he was there, his *Social Justice in Islam* was published in Cairo, in 1949. During his stay in America (1948–1950), Qutb wrote only a few letters to friends, colleagues and relatives dealing with issues of concern to him in America and Egypt, some of which were published in Cairo.

Qutb returned to Egypt on 20 August 1950 to begin another phase of his life. It was to be coloured by his various ordeals and conflicts with the Egyptian state. In 1954 he was gaoled for fifteen years and was finally executed in 1966. During the fifteen-year period of his detention, Qutb was writing prolifically and published several works, among which *In the Shade of the Qur'an* is a magnum opus. He died having produced a solid body of literature with an ideological legacy that all forms of official oppression, repression and humiliations have failed to contain.

Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah* has long been the subject of controversy in scholarly literature. However, apart from a few studies that have briefly touched on the concept of *jahiliyyah*, no systematic in-depth study has so far been made of this important theory, which influenced all shades of Islamic thought in the second half of the twentieth-century world. Studies that have engaged with the subject fall squarely into three categories:

- 1 The *jahiliyyah* is regarded as a period prior to Islam in Arabia. It also implies a human condition. In this context, *jahiliyyah* has two meanings. In the first, *jahiliyyah* represents the antithesis of knowledge (*'ilm*).¹ In the second, *jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of gentleness (*hilm*).² To Goldziher, the word group *hilm* (gentleness) describes 'the concept of firmness, strength, physical integrity and health, in addition to moral integrity, the "solidity" of a moral character, unemotional, calm, deliberation, mildness of manner'.³ In both cases, *jahiliyyah* means lack of knowledge. Goldziher considers that *jahiliyyah* is the condition of the periods between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He calls these periods 'the time of barbarism'. He noted that the term *jahiliyyah* describes 'arrogance, savagery, and brutality', or in one word 'barbarism'.⁴ For Goldziher, *jahiliyyah* is 'the contrast to what is called *din* in a religious sense. . . . What Islam attempted to achieve was, after all, nothing but a *hilm*'.⁵

- 2 The second understanding of the term *jahiliyyah* argues that Arabic values, culture and civilization, before Islam, cannot reflect their lack of knowledge (*jahiliyyah*); rather *jahiliyyah* characterizes that knowledge.⁶ These two opinions appear contradictory and are based on the use of the word. Linguistic, religious and historical grounds come into play in this dispute. If *jahiliyyah* is the period before Islam in Arabia, does it cover Jewish Arabs, Christian Arabs or pagan Arabs? If *jahiliyyah* refers only to pagan Arabs, what was the difference between the pagan Arabs in Arabia and pagans of other nations in a given period before Islam? If *jahiliyyah* means lack of knowledge ('*ilm*), what is knowledge then? What is the level at which lack of knowledge ends and becomes complete knowledge? Supposing knowledge is to equate to culture and civilization, does the 'knowledge' of the twentieth century answer all questions?

Does the condition of 'barbarism' in fact characterize what we know of the *jahiliyyah* and did this condition exist only in Arabia before Islam? Surely savagery, brutality and tribal wars were also evident in Europe during the fifth and sixth centuries before Islam? According to Hegel and Russell, 'arrogance, savagery, harshness, rudeness, brutality, barbarism, lack of knowledge, and moral confusion were among the significant features of the motion of human life in the fifth and sixth century'⁷ before Islam. The war between the Romans and the Persians lasted for almost four hundred years, until Islam brought about an end to this war.

- 3 The third view of *jahiliyyah* is that of Sayyid Qutb. For him, *jahiliyyah* is not the proper antithesis of knowledge; it means neither a particular period in time, before or after Islam, nor a particular place, race or state or society. It is, rather, a condition of any time and place where Allah is not held to be the highest governmental and legal authority. Allah does not descend Himself to govern but sent His Law to govern; therefore, *jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of the *Sovereignty* of Islamic Law. In this view, *jahiliyyah* and Sovereignty stand as antithetical concepts in the political, economic, social, intellectual and moral spheres.

This book will therefore seek to outline the definitions of the concept of *jahiliyyah* in early Muslim thought. This will be a guideline to assess the ideas that Qutb uses as basic principles in articulating his theory.

Chapter 1 provides a brief prologue to the literature's view about Qutb's thought on *jahiliyyah*.

Chapter 2 sets out the meaning of the term *jahiliyyah* as conceived by the Arabs (Jews, Christians and pagans) prior to Islam and contrasts this with their use of the term post-conversion. This chapter sets the framework within which Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah* will be analysed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 reviews Qutb's intellectual life and character. It explores aspects in Qutb's early life and their influence on his later productivity and political activism, his relationship with the British-backed government and then with Gamal Abd al-Nasser.

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Chapter 4 focuses on Qutb's early writings in the period 1925–1939, to explore the early key ideas and systematically trace their gradual development within this period. There is clear evidence that Qutb's distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah* was developing but that the theory was not yet articulated. The explicit term *jahiliyyah* was not mentioned, but its synonyms and some specific qualities of *jahiliyyah* frequently occurred.

Chapter 5 deals with Qutb's writings in the period 1939–1948. In this period, Qutb moved to Islamic writings in which the explicit term *jahiliyyah* and its immediate concept appeared a number of times to refer to the misconduct of some medieval and modern societies. He also sometimes used the term *jahiliyyah* in the historical sense.

Chapter 6 investigates Qutb's position in the period 1948–1950. This was the period of relaxation and rethinking in the United States. Nevertheless, Qutb confirmed his ideological position and his faith in the ideas of his book *Social Justice in Islam* (1949). It was in this book that some of Qutb's constructs including *jahiliyyah* and sovereignty were discussed. When he was in the United States, Qutb emphasized his interest in a programme of social reform when he returned to Egypt.

Chapter 7 focuses on Qutb's writings in the period 1951–1966. This is the final stage, not only in his intellectual life, but also of his life in this world. During this period, *jahiliyyah* and its condition were clearly stated in 1951 and further discussed in 1952 and 1953. The *jahiliyyah* finally appeared as a mature and full-fledged theory, with its theological, sociopolitical, intellectual and philosophical bases, in the last few years of Qutb's life.

Primary sources for this study are Sayyid Qutb's own Arabic writings. These consist of works such as his early poetry collection, *The Unknown Shore*, *Critique of the Book of the Future of Culture in Egypt*, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, *Social Justice in Islam* and his last book, *Milestones*. The large number of essays and articles that form the balance of his corpus from his extensive writing career are considered as a whole and are important as a primary source of this study. The significance of Qutb's work will be interpreted in the light of his experience, taking sociopolitical, economic and intellectual developments in Egypt into consideration and relating Qutb's distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah* to the environment within which he was functioning and to which he was responding.

1 Prologue

For over a century, Islamic society has felt the impact of various sociopolitical, cultural and philosophical ideas, the bulk of which are Western in origin. Muslim thinkers claim that the constructs of nationalism, secularism, socialism, secular democracy and modernism, together with the sociopolitical movements they spawned, have taken hold in Islamic society at the expense of Islamic values.¹ This has led to debates as to the cultural and sociopolitical role that Islam should play in dealing with the challenges implicit in these Western ideologies.

Sayyid Qutb was a prolific writer. His literary and ideological legacy was firmly established by his death in August 1966. Qutb advocated a strong sociopolitical role for Islam in the Muslim world. He claimed that the Islamic system was superior to all systems known before and after Islam. His claim was based on an understanding of the centrality to the notion of governance of *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty), which is practically the rule by Islamic law (*shari'ah*). In this context, Qutb published a large number of books and articles in scholarly journals.² Haddad (1983) divides Qutb's writings into two phases; the first comprises novels and poems, and the second represents Qutb's commentaries on the Qur'an.³ The latter are regarded by Haddad as a response to the British policies towards Arab Muslims in the region, the independence movement in Egypt after the Second World War and the creation of Israel.⁴ Nettler (1987) concurs with Haddad's chronological schema that regards the period 1949–1956 as Qutb's formative stage. Nettler considers Qutb's imprisonment in the 1950s as critical to the final articulation of his concept of *jahiliyyah*.⁵

A number of scholars suggest that Qutb borrowed *jahiliyyah* from Mawdudi's *Mabadi' al-Islam*.⁶ However, William Shepard (2003) pointed out that the term *jahiliyyah* is not a new term as it was there in Arabic literature. To him, *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) is a 'neologism' and it perhaps was 'coined by Mawdudi's Arabic translator'.⁷ In this context, Choueiri (1990) considers that the Indian Muslim thinkers were the first to use the concept of *jahiliyyah* to describe the paganism of Hinduism, but Qutb used it with reference to 'religious ignorance'.⁸ In his *What Has the World Lost as a Result of the Decline of Muslims* (1950), Abu al-Hasan al-Nadawi, as asserted by Choueiri, describes European civilization as 'pagan' and 'materialistic'. In the introduction to the second edition of the same book, published a year later, Qutb specifies *jahiliyyah* as 'religious ignorance' in

reference to European civilization: ‘Sayyid Qutb’s diagnosis was overwhelmingly uncompromising in its condemnation of the new aspects of religious ignorance...’⁹ According to Choueiri, Qutb pointed out that *jahiliyyah* is prevalent now that Islam has lost its leadership role.¹⁰

Leonard Binder (1988) noted that ‘the word *jahiliyyah*, often translated as “ignorance”, is the specialized term used to refer to the cultural and intellectual state of the Arabs before the Islamic revelation’.¹¹ In Haddad’s view, however, Qutb’s concept of *jahiliyyah* does not simply denote ignorance and it ‘is not a period in time, but a condition that is repeated every time society veers from the Islamic way whether in the past, the present or the future’.¹² The *jahiliyyah* of the pre-Islamic period can prevail again in a different form and shape. Haddad cites Qutb as saying that ‘the older *jahiliyyah* was based on “ignorance, naivete, and youth. As for contemporary *jahiliyyah* it is grounded in knowledge, complexity and scorn”. It is established on the principle of “aggression against God’s governance on the earth” under the rubric of the right to create visions and values and to legislate laws disregarding God’s Path’.¹³

Concerning the historical and contemporary *jahiliyyah*, Choueiri’s analysis of Qutb’s view argues that, before the birth of Islam, *jahiliyyah* was based on ignorance due to lack of knowledge of the world. In today’s world, human beings cannot claim lack of knowledge. Therefore, contemporary *jahiliyyah* cannot be based on lack of knowledge, but rather on ‘aggression against God’s governance on the earth’.¹⁴ Choueiri notes that the historical *jahiliyyah* was respectful of its deities and, in the case of the Arabian Peninsula, offered them gifts and sacrifices to intercede on its behalf with Allah. In the contemporary period, however, humankind elevates deities above Allah, obeying them and rejecting the commandments of Allah.¹⁵ Choueiri states that ‘Qutb readily acknowledges that the Muslim communities still believe in one God and worship Him in their devotional acts. But they relegate the most essential attributes of God – His legislative authority – to others who determine almost all the fundamental issues of their lives’.¹⁶

Choueiri emphasizes that the present knowledge, in Qutb’s view, would be of no value unless ‘faith in the unknown becomes an integral part of human life and thought’.¹⁷ Choueiri stresses the Islamic mentality in Qutb’s conclusion as both ‘metaphysical’ and ‘scientific’. It is metaphysical in the sense conveyed by the Qur’anic verses concerning God’s knowledge. For example, ‘He has the keys of all that is hidden: none knows them but He. He has knowledge of all that land and seas contain: every leaf that falls is known to Him’ (6:59). Islamic mentality is also scientific, Choueiri continues, because ‘it believes in the natural law, only the knowledge of some of their aspects is necessary for human life on earth. Moreover, scientific theories are relative, and liable to transformations. They could not, therefore, form a reliable basis of a comprehensive doctrine’.¹⁸

Commenting on Qutb’s book *Milestones*, Binder (1988) emphasizes that Qutb ‘contrasts abstract or speculative theory with practical wisdom, or practical experience (but not with pragmatism which he actually condemns in the *Social Justice volume*). In several places he describes Islam as practical, realistic, concerned with

life, down to earth. The rhetoric which he employs in these passages seems heavily influenced by existentialism'.¹⁹

In Binder's view, Qutb links the concept of *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) to 'human freedom'. Binder emphasizes that 'for Qutb divine sovereignty is so comprehensive that it precludes all human sovereignty and authority. Any non-divine authority is *taghut*, that is, illegitimate, irreligious and tyrannical. The purpose of Islam is to remove *taghut* and replace it with Islamic or divine authority. Human beings are totally bereft of any liberty *vis-à-vis* Allah and therefore, since all are equally slaves of God, none has any shred of authority over other human beings'.²⁰ Binder notes that Qutb stresses the need for an Islamic government, but the emphasis he makes on the 'organization' of the proposed Islamic state 'is less than he does on the opposition to the un-Islamic state'.²¹

Binder emphasizes that 'Qutb's underlying problem is the contradiction between divine sovereignty and humanity's disobedience. The separation of theory and practice is precisely what Qutb attacks as *jahiliyyah* – even perhaps worse, because it is *jahiliyyah* posing as Islam, while the ordinary form of *jahiliyyah* is strong precisely because it does not separate theory and practice, because it is, consciously or not, monistic, praxis-oriented and concerned with existential survival. Islam requires that thought and action be integrally related. Islam must be lived from the inside (i.e. from belief) out (i.e. to the collectivity)'.²²

Binder argues that Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah* follows from the failure to distinguish between spirit and matter. He claims that Qutb's distinction between spirit and matter, human and animal, shows the conflation of these contradictions as a characteristic of *jahiliyyah*. Binder emphasizes that Qutb recognizes spirit and matter as separate but equal, while humanity is quite clearly non-material and superior to the animal. In this regard, Binder notes that 'this dualism is not self-conscious. Qutb is rather concerned to maintain the separate and distinct existence of all essences. Most importantly, this concern is reflected in a virtually compulsive insistence that there can be no social circumstance or situation which is mostly Islam or partly *jahili*. Whatever is not Islam is *jahiliyyah*. The only Islamic society is one which is completely devoted to the worship of God alone, that is to say it cannot be partly anything else because it is totally Islamic'.²³

In his preface to Kepel's book *The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (1985), Bernard Lewis asserts that 'Islamic history, tradition and law embraced two distinct and indeed contradictory principles, one activist, the other quietist'.²⁴ Lewis refers to two aspects of the Prophet's life: the 'rebel in Makkah and the sovereign in Madinah'.²⁵ He suggests that these two aspects of the Prophet's life constitute the condition of 'activist' and 'quietist' and reflect parallel traditions in Islamic history: 'In this as in so much else the Prophet was seen as a model, and his career as setting a pattern. Many later political aspirants attempted to follow his example; some of them succeeded, others failed. The two traditions, the Prophet as sovereign and the Prophet rebel, often recur through the centuries of Islamic history. Both are still very much alive'.²⁶ This idea alerts Kepel to consider Qutb's ideas and movement as 'activist' and 'quietist', both rooted in early Islamic tradition. Thus, Qutb's interpretation of *jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty),

whether considered radical or otherwise, has its origin in early Islamic tradition.²⁷

Kepel emphasizes that Qutb saw the Prophet's Islamic State as a model to be implemented in today's societies. Qutb compares Makkan society before the *hijrah* with contemporary Egypt. Qutb pronounces Egypt to be *jahiliyyah*.²⁸ Kepel asserts that Qutb considers the Prophet's response to the *jahiliyyah* of the sixth century as a model for dealing with the contemporary *jahiliyyah* of Egypt.²⁹ This *jahiliyyah* must be overcome as was the historical one. In Kepel's view, Qutb sees the Prophet's *hijrah* from Makkah to Madinah as a temporary *hijrah*: a *hijrah* from the state of *jahiliyyah* in which Muslims were weak. When their strength grew in Madinah, the Muslims returned to Makkah to overthrow the *jahiliyyah* there and establish the Islamic State.³⁰

Kepel interprets Qutb's statements in his *Milestones* as revolutionary statements in preparation for Islamic action to overthrow the contemporary *jahiliyyah*. Kepel believes that Muslims should be wary of the constant innate struggle between Islam and *jahiliyyah*, between the believers in one God and polytheism.³¹ This conflictual situation is considered by Haddad to constitute Qutb's ideological view, which condemns any system other than Islam.³² For Haddad, Qutb's condemnation is based on the perception of these systems as ones that ignore God's guidance. They reflect human ignorance of God's order. This means that God must be in command of all life affairs.³³

According to Haddad, Qutb's ideological position was that Muslim societies were *jahiliyyah*, since 'they implemented foreign ideas into the ruling system, laws, education, government, traditions, and ignored God's law'.³⁴ Although they claimed respect for religion, by ignoring its laws they were, in fact, operating outside the law of God. Haddad notes that Qutb considers God to be the source of power, not the party, not the people, nor any human being.³⁵ This means that *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty) belongs exclusively to God. It is the human disobedience to the divine *hakimiyyah* that Qutb attacks.³⁶

Kepel claims that *hakimiyyah* and *ubudiyyah* are not Qur'anic terms. In this regard, Muhammad Saeed al-'Ashmawi (1992) considers that 'Qutb's view of *jahiliyyah* and of *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) has no Qur'anic basis'.³⁷ For Kepel, the concept of Sovereignty (*hakimiyyah*) is central to Qutb's notion of *jahiliyyah*. He sees *jahiliyyah* also as the cornerstone of Qutb's theory of movement. Kepel suggests that *jahiliyyah* represents the critical distinction between the traditional propagation of the Muslim Brotherhood and the revolutionary movements.³⁸ He further claims that 'Qutb believed himself to be carrying out a divine mission and this unique ideal transcended history, time, and place'.³⁹ This view echoes Choueiri's view that the mission of Islam is not reducible to a historical event.⁴⁰

According to Haddad, Qutb considers much of the knowledge emanating from Western culture as *jahiliyyah*. Modern science and technology were not condemned as ignorance. But explanations of nature without any reference to God and determinations on political or social questions divorced from religion were condemned as *jahiliyyah*. In this context, then, there are a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences based on a God-free perception of the world.

They include philosophy, history and psychology, ethics and comparative religion.⁴¹ Haddad emphasizes that Qutb rejected nationalism, capitalism, socialism, communism and modernity, as well as those Muslim societies which did not practise the Islamic law. He left the door open to the use of *fiqh* to guide interpretation of the Qur'an and the *sunnah* to make them relevant to everyday life.⁴²

After Qutb enunciated his theory of *jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyyah*, a number of intellectuals sought out the Islamic movement, especially Islamic groups in Egypt. They were attracted to the idea of *hakimiyyah* and *jahiliyyah*. For Adel Hammudah (1990), Qutb's ideas were behind the violence of the Islamic groups in Egypt.⁴³ Some of the Egyptian authorities believe that the source of the violence is Qutb's ideas. However, some other officials within the government believe that the source of violence is foreign.⁴⁴

Concluding remarks

Focusing on certain points in the discussion, there is a position that *jahiliyyah* was the period before Islam in Arabia and that *jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of knowledge. This view is dealt with in the second chapter. There is also an opinion that divides the intellectual activity of Qutb into two phases. His poetry and novels characterize the first, but the second was described directly as Islamic. The ground for this opinion is the claim that Qutb's concept of both Sovereignty and *jahiliyyah* is articulated in detention (1954–1966). Critics would argue that these concepts were developed in step with the development of his intellectual activity, and that these terms and their concepts appeared and were explicitly mentioned in works published before his detention. These issues and the relevant sociopolitical and religious implications from his early writings in 1921 onwards are detailed in the last four chapters in this book.

2 What the early Muslims meant by *jahiliyyah*

Introduction

The word *jahiliyyah* occurs regularly in Arabic literature, yet there has been no systematic in-depth study of this important concept to date. The concept of *jahiliyyah* has been the subject of some controversy in the literature. Discussion rests on two issues: its meaning and its referent. Is *jahiliyyah* the antithesis of knowledge (*ilm*),¹ or of gentleness (*hilm*);² is it a particular period in time, or a condition that can emerge at any time?³ If *jahiliyyah* means lack of knowledge, how is this lack defined? At what point does lack of knowledge end and complete knowledge begin? Can any one claim to know everything, that their knowledge is complete? Supposing knowledge to be culture and civilization, does the knowledge of the twentieth century answer all questions concerning issues such as the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind? If *jahiliyyah* is, in fact, the antithesis of *hilm* (gentleness), what is *hilm* then? If the meaning of *hilm* is the opposite of arrogance, savagery and brutality or, in one word barbarism, is this condition limited to a specific time or place?

This chapter seeks to investigate both the common meaning of the term *jahiliyyah* as used by the Arabs (Jews, Christians and pagans) before Islam, and its use after they became Muslims. This chapter argues that *jahiliyyah* does not refer to a particular period or place, nor does it refer to a particular race. Rather, it is the opposite condition to Islam, state and law.

This investigation will attempt to examine life in Arabia before Islam with special focus on political and social relations, beliefs and conceptions and usage of the term *jahiliyyah* literally and culturally prior and after Islam, analysing this term and its linguistic origins. The examination will endeavour to canvass the views for and against and to demonstrate which view confirms the already established facts in the classical and in modern Arabic literature. For the purposes of this chapter, classical Arabic is used to refer to the Arabic language before the advent of Islam. Also, for the purposes of this study, the time of the Prophet is the ideal period to discuss the meaning of *jahiliyyah*. Qutb's appeal is to establish an Islamic order based on the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet. According to Kepel, Qutb sees the time of the Prophet as a model to be implemented in today's societies. Kepel stresses that Qutb reduces today's society to the *jahiliyyah* and

demands that Muslims view it just as the Prophet viewed pre-Islamic society.⁴ In this regard, studying the time of the Prophet and how he himself dealt with the idea of *jahiliyyah* is appropriate to answer the question of what the early Muslims meant by *jahiliyyah*.

The Arabs before Islam

Prior to the advent of Islam, the Arabs were experiencing an unparalleled spiritually chaotic condition. They erred grievously and adopted extreme religious positions. The atheists denied the existence of the Creator. Others denied resurrection, while others believed in it and in the Hereafter but rejected the messengers. Further, other groups 'believed in God but denied the existence of angels; they worshipped statues and adopted them as intercessors. In fact "each household in Makkah had its own deity which it worshipped separately."⁵ This condition manifested itself in daily life and typified the lifestyle of Arabian society. In his view, 'the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era provide a noteworthy example of utter confusion regarding the criteria for making lawful or prohibiting things and actions. They permitted the drinking of alcohol, the taking of usury at exorbitant rates, the torturing and secluding of women, and many similar practices'.⁶

The word 'Arab' conventionally refers to all those whose mother tongue is Arabic.⁷ The original land of the Arabs, the Arabian Peninsula, is bound on the east by the Persian Gulf, to the south by the Indian Ocean, to the west by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Suez and to the north by the 'Mat. Amanus'.⁸ The Syrian Desert and Sinai are part of the Arabian Peninsula.⁹

A number of scholars divided the inhabitants of Arabia into two categories: the first, the old pure line of lost Arabs, descendants of 'Ad and Thamud, destroyed by God because of their unbelief;¹⁰ the second, the present Arabs, said to be descendants of the ancient tribe of Qahtan in Yemen and that of 'Adnan in the Hijaz.¹¹ The (pure) Arabs are descended from this tribe of Qahtan,¹² known in the Old Testament as Joktan the son of Eber, the older son of Sam or Shem, the son of Noah.¹³ The naturalized Arabs or the Arabists are said to have descended from 'Adnan in a direct line from Isma'il, the son of Ibrahim and his wife Hajar.¹⁴ There are various other genealogical theories about the present Arabs. In any event, the connection between the ancient and the present Arabs is Ibrahim the grandson of Qahtan. For the Jews, Ibrahim is their great Patriarch.¹⁵ For the Muslims, Ibrahim is the grandfather of all the Prophets. Muslims' knowledge of the ancient Arabs who settled in Arabia is derived chiefly from the Qur'an,¹⁶ which is a record of the errors of much of their lifestyle and conduct.¹⁷

Muslims believe that the cornerstone of Ibrahim's religion was *tawhid*, or the oneness of God as witnessed by the testimony 'there is no god but God'. This testimony means to the Muslims 'Islam'. In describing Ibrahim's religion as Islamic in essence, the Qur'an says 'Ibrahim was not a Jew nor yet a Christian, but he was upright in faith (*hanif*) and surrendered his will to Allah (*Muslim*) and he joined not gods to Allah (was not *mushrik*).¹⁸ In Arabic, the word *hanif* is synonymous with Islam and thus distinguishes Islam from other beliefs.¹⁹ The

Qur'an says that Ibrahim accused his idolatrous father, saying, 'O my father, why do you worship that which hears not and sees not and can profit you nothing.'²⁰ This implies that there were some people who neglected the religion of *tawhid*, while others believed it and had true faith in Allah. According to the Qur'an, Ibrahim and his son Isma'il erected the Ka'bah, the holiest place for Muslims.²¹ Ibrahim established the faith of *tawhid* in Arabia. However, during their long history, most of the Arabs deviated from the true path until the Prophet Muhammad, assigned to his mission in AD 610–611. At the advent of Islam, therefore, most of the Arab tribes were pagans. Also, their lifestyle in Makkah and Madinah was relatively simple, as they remained politically independent.²²

Arabian politics before Islam

The Arabs before Islam were a tribal society, with each tribe sovereign in its own territory. Some tribes formed coalitions and kingdoms in which members of the king's family dominated. Other tribes remained separate without entering any coalition. Neither the kingdom nor the tribe itself represented a state or political institution in the contemporary sense; rather, it was a social bond, based on blood relations and the tribal maxim of tribal solidarity (*'asabiyyah*). This enjoined one to 'stand by his tribesman whether he be the oppressor or the oppressed'.²³

As there was no government to impose order before Islam, a number of the Arab tribes took the law into their own hands. Ardour, disdain, haughtiness and capricious displays of power were among the features of their tribal life. It was not uncommon to wield the sword in reaction to any trivial incident.²⁴ This in turn could lead to ongoing and protracted warfare involving other tribes.

Blood-revenge was common in pre-Islamic Arabia. Some tribes believed that 'blood could not be washed away by anything but blood'.²⁵ In the case of murder, the murderer must himself be murdered as compensation for death. Should the original culprit be considered unequal in status to the victim in terms of bravery, reputation and tribal lineage, a more suitable person was targeted for death. There was no compromise in such cases. Reconciliation was not possible. The substitution of a fine rather than blood vengeance was considered a sign of weakness. Consequently, some tribes were constantly warring and killing each other.²⁶

Tribal society regarded certain months as sacred, and during this time all warfare was forbidden. During these months, enemies were to live with security, knowing they could face each other without violence.²⁷ The observation of an ironic period continued after Islam and, in fact, was articulated in the Qur'an and explained by the Prophet on his last pilgrimage.²⁸ The same idea, though not as observed by the Arab tribes in respect of these months, was adopted by the warring European tribes in the Middle Ages; it was known as the *Treuga Dei* (Truce of God).²⁹

Many Arab tribes were nomadic, moving from one territory to another in search of grazing land. If the tribe moved to another zone, the new zone became their new territory or homeland to be protected. This nomadic aspect led to outbreaks of conflict as the invasion and defence of territory became central to life.

Bloodshed between tribes invariably upset allegiances or involved new ones. Each tribe was thus dependent on either its own physical strength or that of its allies.³⁰ This condition of their lifestyle mirrored the pre-Islamic Arabs' understanding of concepts such as *jahl*, *ilm* (knowledge) and *hilm* (gentleness), as will be discussed in this chapter.

Another factor influencing their tribal solidarity (*asabiyyah*) was the influence of the superpowers of the time: the Romans and Persians. The Arabic kingdom of al-Ghasasinah, in Syria, was under Roman protection. It followed Roman policy with regard to the Arabian kingdoms of al-Manadhirah in Iraq, Kindah in central Arabia and Himyar in Yemen.³¹ The kingdom of al-Manadhirah, in Iraq, was also protected by the Persians and so followed the Persian policy on regional relations. The Romans and the Persians also called upon the troops of their Arab allies, and they, in turn, provided troops for the Arab kingdoms in their wars against each other.³² If they had no interest in such a war, they would refuse assistance.³³

Thus, bloodshed caused the early Arab tribes to function as separate territories without any form of central or national government. The subject of nationality was therefore tribal solidarity, that is, the loyalty to the tribe rather than to Arabia as such. Different tribes would vie in boasting with one another. To the tribal Arab, then, the tribe itself represented the lineage, race and identity of his people.³⁴

Belief and conceptions in pre-Islamic Arabia

Before Islam, the Arabs worshipped lifeless things and paid homage to the Ka'bah as a pagan shrine. When any one was going on a trip or leaving Makkah, the first thing he did before leaving home was 'to secure a stone from the walls of the Ka'bah to keep to worship wherever he went'.³⁵ The walls of the Ka'bah, therefore, were continually in need of repair.

Some of the Makkans bought idols from the people they met and placed these inside the Ka'bah. Some Arabs may have found it easier to carry the already-made idol rather than to damage the walls of the Ka'bah for stone. Clearly it was easier to replace the damaged or lost idol with a new one than to replace a stone of the Ka'bah once one was far away from Makkah.

Some Arabs regarded idols as devotional mediators interceding for them with Allah. Later these idols were elevated to divine status. The pagan Arabs believed in the existence and supremacy of Allah.³⁶ They continued to pay homage to the Ka'bah, circling it, performing *hajj* (pilgrimage). However, the deities polluted the purity of these rites.³⁷ As a result of these practices, the manufacture of idols then became a profitable industry in Arabia. Idols were stationed on the main roads and in the public squares of Makkah. The various Arab gods and goddesses swarmed across the heavens of Arabia as the Arab tribes swarmed on the earth, warring and killing each other. The idols had captured the land and the mind of the Arabs before Islam. Every tribe and household had its own idol: 'if someone was going on a trip, the last thing he did before leaving his house was to place his hands on the idol, seeking its blessing. When he returned from his journey, the first

thing he did on his entering his house was to place his hands on the idol in order to become imbued with it'.³⁸

Among the political outcomes of the Arab beliefs and conceptions was desire to achieve peace and unity in some form. This, however, was virtually impossible, since the conflictual lifestyle and bloodshed among the tribes had been long established. The ideal of unity originated from the Ka'bah, the place to which the Arab tribes paid homage. Thus, the tribes established and manifested a pattern of unity in the Ka'bah, where the gods and goddesses were united and lived in peace. It has been argued, therefore, that the gradual inculcation into the Arab mind of a literary taste of a high order and the capacity for expressing the finest shades of human thought also 'incarnated the idea of *tawhid* into 360 gods in the Ka'bah'.³⁹ The tribes eventually agreed that the Ka'bah was to represent a central point for all of them. The Ka'bah was to become a religio-political and social bond as the house of the united Arab deities, the symbol, the parliament and talisman of the majority of Arab tribes. This condition of Arabia continued until Islam.

Lexical origins of the term *jahiliyyah*

Etymologically, the term *jahiliyyah* comes from the Arabic root (*j h l*), the substantive *jahl* being the basic word from which the trilateral verb *jahala* and *jahila*, the perfect verb *yajhalu* and the noun *jahiliyyah* are derived. In other words, the term *jahiliyyah* is an abstract noun derived from the substantive *jahl*.⁴⁰ The word *jahiliyyah* can also be considered a *nomen verbi* (verbal noun) because (i) it is an abstract substantive that expresses the meaning of the verb without any reference to object, subject or time of the verb, and (ii) it can also be used without changing its form when it refers to a singular or plural. For example, one can say, *jahiliyyatu al-nizam* (system – singular), *jahiliyyatu al-nizaman* (dual – two systems), and *jahiliyyatu al-nuzum* (systems – more than two) without change in the form of the word *jahiliyyah*.⁴¹ The word *jahiliyyah*, which works as a *nomen verbi*, is also considered as an infinitive (*masdar*), but not a regular infinitive, as discussed later. It was from this irregular infinitive (*jahiliyyah*) that the corroboration or intensive form was derived. For example, 'the word *jahla*' is a corroboration form derived, specifically, from the word *jahiliyyah* to confirm it and strengthen its force and intent.⁴²

What should be noted here is also that sources of Arabic indicate that the regular infinitive of *jahl* is '*jahlan* and *jahalah*' (*jahiliyyah* is not mentioned).⁴³ The Arab grammarians, as Wright says, 'derive the compound idea [i.e. infinitive] of the finite verb from the simple idea of this substantive'.⁴⁴ However, deriving an infinitive from a trilateral verb (i.e. *jahala*) is not confined to one specific basis, but is in analogy to what is known as meters or rhythm forms. These forms are very numerous and were numbered by Wright as forty-four, but only five of them are frequently used.⁴⁵ For example, the infinitive (*masdar*) from the verb '*jahala*', in analogy to the meter or rhythm *fa'alalah*, is *jahalalah*. In all rhythm forms, none can be seen as analogous to the word *jahiliyyah* (i.e. *fa'iliyyah*). Thus, although the word

jahiliyyah sometimes works as infinitive (*masdar*), *jahiliyyah* is not a regular infinitive, because it had no specific basis or a rhythm form analogous to the word *jahiliyyah*.

Some view the Arabic *nomen verbi* as infinitive. However, unlike in English, in Arabic the *nomen verbi* cannot be considered infinitive. If the Arabic *nomen verbi* (*ism al-fi'l*: verbal noun) were grammatically equal to the infinitive (*masdar*), there would be no reason for both of them to exist in Arabic and be classified (i.e. *ism fi'l* and *masdar*). Among the characteristics that distinguish the infinitive from the *nomen verbi* are the following: (i) the infinitive has no *nomen deminutivum*. Thus, if the word *jahiliyyah* were a regular infinitive, one would find its *nomen deminutivum*. (ii) The infinitive cannot be terminated with 'ta'.⁴⁶ However, the word *jahiliyyah* can end with 'ta', such as in *jahiliyyat* (plural). In this regard, by contrast, the word *jahalat* (synonym of *jahiliyyah*) is a regular infinitive, but it also can end with 'ta', as in *jahalat*. Thus there is no basis to specifically define the term *jahiliyyah*, which is an abstract noun, only as an infinitive or only as a *nomen verbi* or verbal noun, but rhythm forms and analogy are involved.⁴⁷ The point then is that the word *jahiliyyah*, which is an abstract noun derived from the substantive *jahl*, can also be considered a *nomen verbi* and irregular infinitive (*masdar*).

For the sake of completeness, one should consider Wright's note that 'the feminine of the relative adjective serves in Arabic as a noun to denote the abstract idea of the thing, as distinguished from the concrete thing itself; and also to represent the thing or things signified by the primitive noun as a whole or totality. It corresponds therefore to German substantives in *heit, keit, schaft, tham*, and to English ones in *head, dom, ty*, etc.'⁴⁸ Here, Wright's definition emphasizes that Arabic terms such as *ilahiyah* (from God), *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), '*alamiyah* (worldwide), *insaniyyah* (humanity), '*aqlaniyyah* (rationality) and *kauniyyah* (universality) all are of this category. Based on Wright's definition, one could define the term *jahiliyyah* as one of what Wright calls the 'abstract nouns of quality'.⁴⁹ All of these terms are very important and were frequently used by Qutb in his conceptual and intellectual analysis, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The present participle, or the *nomen agantis*, is *jahil* (singular); the plurals are *jahilun, jahilin*, or *juhhal* and *juhala*.⁵⁰ Scholars such as Caussin, Michaelis and Weir consider that 'the term *jahiliyyah* is the plural of the singular *jahiliyy*, and thus relates to the pagan Arabs, particularly the poets of the first class'.⁵¹ Goldziher says that 'the plural of the substantive form *jahl* is *ajhal*'.⁵² Basic Arabic does not, however, confirm any of these opinions. Arabic grammar says that '*jahiliyyah* is a relational form of the substantive *jahl*, and that the term "*jahiliyy*" is a singular form related to *jahiliyyah*'.⁵³ According to Wright (1979), the term *ajhal* is derived from the substantive *jahl* to express more intensely the term *jahiliyyah*.⁵⁴

Lane (1972) provides an etymological history of the use of the word *jahl*. Thus, (i) 'mithli *la-yjhalu* mithlak' can be translated as 'the likes of me will not be ignorant of thee'; (ii) *jahala* 'ala ghayrihi, 'he acted in an ignorant/silly/foolish manner or wrongly towards the other'; (iii) *jahala* fulanun ra'yahu or safiha, 'he was ignorant/silly/foolish in his opinion/judgement concerning the other'; (iv) *jahala* al-haqq, 'he neglected the truth/right or he facilitated the destruction of the truth (*ada'ah*)'.⁵⁵

Lane, relying on earlier Muslim sources, argues that *jahl* is of two kinds. The simple one is the ‘non-existence of knowledge which should be known’. The complex is the ‘belief which is not agreeable with the fact or reality’. *Jahl* therefore includes ‘foolishness, wrong conduct, believing a thing to be different from what it is, and doing a thing in a manner different from that in which it ought to be done’.⁵⁶ Here, one should note that Lane’s sources concerning the term *jahl* as opposite to knowledge refer to early Muslims. Those Muslims, as asserted by Ibn Manzur, spoke of the knowledge referred to in the Qur’an as knowledge that should be known.⁵⁷ This knowledge impels submission to Allah and his *shari’ah* (Islam). Perhaps this is what most early Muslim lexicographers, grammarians and exegetes meant by ‘knowledge’ when used to oppose *jahl*. Similarly, Lane quotes traditional *hadith* sayings, such as ‘Doubt is sufficient *jahl*’ and ‘Verily, there is, among the varieties of knowledge, that which is *jahl*’.⁵⁸ He explains the latter by describing it as ‘learning what is not requisite and neglecting what is requisite, or the learned man’s affectation, or pretending knowledge of that which he does not know’.⁵⁹

Thus, Lane concludes that the term *jahiliyyah* also indicates a condition (*hal*). *Jahiliyyah* is thus associated with status, action, things or conduct, and may be used to describe humans, whether individuals or in a group.⁶⁰ According to Ibn Manzur, one can say, ‘This person is a *jahili* person, or *jahul*’.⁶¹ The two forms *jahili* and *jahul* are *nomina relativa* related (*nisbah*) to *jahiliyyah*, but the latter form *jahul* expresses the greater force and intent of the term *jahiliyyah*.⁶²

Turning to the Qur’an, we see in verses 2:273, 11:46, 12:33 and 39:64 the single and plural of the term as *jahl* and the term *jahil* used as a descriptive expression. Therefore, adjectival expressions such as ‘*jahili* man’, ‘*jahili* people’, ‘*jahili* mind’, ‘*jahili* society’, ‘*jahili* thought’, ‘*jahili* law’, ‘*jahili* system’ and ‘*jahili* behaviour’ are correct from an etymological perspective. In these and similar expressions, the term ‘*jahili*’ expresses the condition of *jahiliyyah* as implied by the context.⁶³

***Jahiliyyah* and knowledge (*‘ilm*)**

For many a scholar *jahiliyyah* is antithetical to knowledge or ‘*ilm*’.⁶⁴ As intimated above, the word *jahiliyyah* is found in the pre-Islamic poetry of ‘Antarah’.⁶⁵ He was a *jahili* knight and a *jahili* poet of the first class, but because he was also a black slave in a tribal pre-Islamic environment, his tribe disregarded him on account of his colour. Poetic articulation of his own position makes this point very clear:

Ta‘ibuna sawada lawni *jahalatan*
 Wa lawla sawadu al-layli ma-tala‘a al-fajru
 Your dishonoring of my black color is *jahalahtan*
 yet without the darkness of night, there is no daylight.⁶⁶

The word *jahalatan* in this verse is both a condition and relational. It expresses the condition of the substantive *jahl*. The immediate impact of this verse lies in the implied contrast between *jahl* and knowledge (*‘ilm*). Scholars, therefore, used

this verse as a reference point for the claim that *jahiliyyah* is the opposite of knowledge (*'ilm*).⁶⁷ However, this was perhaps not the case for two reasons. First, the term knowledge (*'ilm*) is not mentioned. Second, the *jahili* poet refers to the corrupt social order of his tribal society. The poet means that his masters who regard his black colour as a disgrace have abandoned what they know to be true: the fact that the black slave is their knight who brings them victory, and deserves to enjoy their recognition as such during the time of peace as on the battlefield. His right to recognition is as obvious as the natural phenomena of darkness and daylight. The *jahili* poet links his claim to the universal phenomena known to him and his masters. He emphasizes that those with a black skin are as important as the darkness of night is to the daylight. In other words, without this black slave (*'Antarah*) there was no victory and nobility for his masters, whose ignoring of this known fact is '*jahalatan*'. However, ignoring knowledge does not mean lack of knowledge or ignorance. The *jahili* poet used the term *jahalatan* to highlight the condition of his masters and underline their attempt to ignore what they knew. It so happens that '*Antarah* achieves the recognition he desires, because the pressure of war makes him indispensable as knight and champion of his tribe.⁶⁸ The point here, then, is that the poet is not contrasting *jahiliyyah* with knowledge (*'ilm*); rather the notion of *jahiliyyah* flows logically from attempts to neglect knowledge on the part of others.

The Qur'an identifies all parties, the pagan poet and his pagan masters, in this account as associated with *jahiliyyah*.⁶⁹ The pagan Arabs were inconsistent, since they acknowledged Allah as Creator of the heavens and the earth, and subjected the sun and the moon to His law, yet they disregarded His law.⁷⁰ The pagans followed their own vain desires and took for worship 'others besides Allah, as equal (with Him). They love them as they should love Allah'.⁷¹ It is this condition that is condemned in the Qur'an in the term *jahiliyyah*.⁷² Thus, *jahiliyyah* is not lack of knowledge on the part of the *jahili* poet or on the part of his *jahili* masters, but simply disobedience to God's law and order. This is why the poet, as well as his masters, is categorized as *jahili* in the Muslim consensus.⁷³

The tent-dwelling '*Antarah*, the nomad, the pagan and *jahili* poet, was known for his bravery and abstinence from perversion. He risked his life to marry the girl he loved in a manner both respectable and noble. His love was not secret, but was known among the tribes. The tribes knew that the girl returned his love and that they were cousins. However, her father, who was one of the nobles, ignored '*Antarah* and rejected his request to marry his daughter. The reason was because '*Antarah* was a black slave, but the girl was from the house of the nobles. '*Antarah* and his beloved did not act precipitately. Despite being a knight and becoming leader of the '*Abs* tribe,⁷⁴ he did not use his physical strength to induce either his beloved's compliance or her father's assent. His virtues were not only of the military kind, but also of the highest level of goodness.⁷⁵ His code of ethics is revealed in this example of his honourable demeanour: 'Whenever my neighbour comes out of her tent I cast down my eyes until she returns.'⁷⁶

Thus, when '*Antarah* sees a woman, he looks away until she is beyond the range of his sight. Such ideal men existed in the Arabic literature of the seventh century

prior to Islam, according to Clouston, yet rarely are they found among individual figures in the modern world.⁷⁷ Elsewhere in his poetry, speaking of himself, 'Antarah notes that 'I could be starving and acquiescent until I found lawful food'.⁷⁸

The immediate meaning of this verse is that starving is better than indulging in unlawful food obtained by unlawful means. When this verse was later repeated to the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet reportedly said, 'There is no man of the tent dwellers I liked to see as much as 'Antarah.'⁷⁹ 'Antarah's message is that the sensibility of humankind to moral values will bring about justice and equality. It excludes the harsh domination of one human over another. The one who knows this cannot be a *jahil* but must be a knowledgeable person.

A similar example is provided by another pagan poet of the first class, Tarafah Ibn al-'Abd (born in 538 and died in AD 552, 564 or 560). 'What you do not know, the days will bring to light and provide you with news you were not supplied.'⁸⁰ Time will thus reveal what is unknown. One is ignorant of what will happen in the future. In this case, the cause of lack of knowledge lies not in a particular situation or a particular period but applies to all human beings at any time. For Muslims, the one whose knowledge is complete and who knows the future is Allah the Creator of the universe, time, life and human beings. Thus the basis underlying the principle of Tarafah's poetical verse is Islamic. The Prophet is said to have referred to this verse as an ideal and to have repeated its content to others. Ibn 'Abbas (d. AH 68/AD 687) considered it 'a prophetic word that contains wisdom and ideal'.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Tarafah was relegated as a *jahili* poet of *jahiliyyah* by Muslim consensus.

Another pagan poet, King Zuhayr Ibn Abi Sulma (d. AD 609 or 615 or 631), was a *jahili* poet of the first class, although he died in the time of Muhammad, 1 year before or 4 years after the revelation began. Zuhayr was known for his goodness and decency. His poetry implies Islamic notions as follows:

Do not hide from Allah aught evil in your soul
 You cannot hide what you hold from Allah: He knows.
 The time to Judge will come, for in the Book the wrong is stated down
 And Judgment comes: a vengeance swift and stern.
 I know what today unfolds, what before it was yesterday
 But blind I stand before the knowledge of what tomorrow brings.⁸²

In these verses, the poet does not contrast *jahl* with human knowledge ('*ilm*), but expresses knowledge of the Sovereign, Allah.

It should be noted at this point that the above poetry was by pagan poets. It serves to illustrate that *jahiliyyah* as used in poetry of that time is not the antithesis of knowledge ('*ilm*). It also indicates that the poets, though learned, were still *jahili* people. Their *jahiliyyah* was not due to lack of knowledge but to the fact that they were not following God's order. Critics may argue that the Qur'an called the pre-Islamic Arabs *jahili* people merely because they worshipped idols. Though this was generally so, it was not the exclusive reason. Some Arabs did not worship idols, as the following example illustrates.

Before the advent of Islam, al-Nabighah al-Dhubyani was a celebrated poet and ambassador of his people, speaking for them to the monarchs in Arabia and the surrounding Byzantine and Persian kingdoms. He died in AD 603 or 610 during the time of Muhammad but shortly before the revelation. This poet, according to Ibn Habib, 'renounced paganism and prohibited wine during the time of *jahiliyyah*'.⁸³ There are many who prohibited wine during *jahiliyyah*. A number of them are mentioned by Shahrastani, who also presented some of their poetry and their views about paganism and wine. For example, al-Aslum al-Yali the renowned poet is one of those who prohibited 'wine and adultery', as he says:

After long dispute, I have made peace with my people.
Retaining the peace is the best for this life.
I have renounced adultery and my darling wine.
I have renounced them, Oh Umaymu, as honor and dignity.
This is what the honest and wise man should do.⁸⁴

Similarly, Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl renounced paganism in the period prior to Islam. He stopped belief in the idols *al-Lata* and *al-Uzza*, the chief deities in Arabia. This is illustrated in his poetry, which pays tribute to his conviction: 'I have renounced to the *al-Lata* and *al-Uzza*, as the wise man should / Believing not in *al-Uzza* or its daughters, nor visiting to the idols of the Ghanm tribe.'⁸⁵

The concept of *jahiliyyah* reflected here is not concerned merely with adultery, wine or paganism, or the type and form of belief in general. In the latter example, the pagan poet was preaching and calling: 'O people: come to me, there is no one holding to the religion of Ibrahim except me'.⁸⁶ Similarly, al-Nabighah al-Dhubyani was also one of those who believed in *tawhid* and the Day of Judgment, as he says: 'O my Lord! I do pray to you... You are the eternal and absolute.'⁸⁷ Others of those who believed in *tawhid* and the Day of Judgment were the preacher 'Qiss Ibn Sa'idah al-Ayady, one of the nobles of Makkah, whose house was known as '*Dar al-Nadwah*' (the house of symposium). Speaking to his audience, Qiss says, 'The Lord of the Ka'bah is one God. He begot none, nor was he begotten. He creates and reinstates and to Him is our return.'⁸⁸

This, together with some other accounts of Qiss Ibn Sa'idah before Islam, was to be confirmed in the Qur'an. Similarly, 'Amir Ibn al-Zarb al-'Udwani believed in *tawhid* and the Day of Judgment. He says, 'I have never seen anything created itself. Whatever comes will surely go... Medicine cures the people if they die only of malady... I know various things until the dead come alive, and the thing turns to nothing. It is therefore the heaven and the earth that were created.'⁸⁹ Among those who believed in 'Allah', the Creator of the world, and 'Adam' were the slaves Tabikhah Ibn Tha'lab and Burrah Ibn Quda'ah. The latter says in poetry:

Oh my Lord, I pray to You the prayer of
one who is sinking and seeking Your protection.
Praise to only You, You are the Most Gracious.
You are the Eternal one to Him we should pray.

You are the only One Who created the People.
 You are the only One Who created the time and the day.
 You are the Eternal Who created me.⁹⁰

These accounts of influential figures before Islam are some of many which clearly suggest that the concept of *jahiliyyah* does not exclusively mean pagan belief. This is further defined in the following account concerning the believers before Islam.

The Christian poet Umayyah Ibn Abi al-Salt (d. 8/630) was known among the early Muslim believers for his wisdom.⁹¹ Umayyah's accounts of the destruction of the Arab tribes 'Ad and Thamud, as Taha Husayn says, were to be confirmed in the Qur'an. Husayn pointed out that the Prophet reportedly said, about Umayyah: 'His tongue believes, but his heart is *kafir*.'⁹² This *hadith* was mentioned also by exegetes, among them al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1272), who says that Umayyah was one who did read the Scriptures and 'knew that there was a Messenger still to be sent and he was hopeful to be the chosen one'. According to al-Qurtubi, to 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As (d. 65/684) and to Zayd Ibn Aslam (d.136/753) Umayyah was the man meant by the Qur'anic verse (7:175) which declares: 'Tell them of the man to whom We vouchsafed Our signs and who turned away from them: how Satan overtook him as he went astray.'⁹³ The same account is mentioned by al-Wahidi (d. AH 468).⁹⁴ This context reveals that the antithesis of *jahiliyyah* is not knowledge ('*ilm*) or any member of this word group.

The pre-Islamic Arabs were not '*jahili* people' in the sense of 'lack of knowledge', for 'their civilization as mentioned in the Qur'an does not suggest this'.⁹⁵ The Arabs of the *jahiliyyah* were aware of areas such as astronomy, the arts,⁹⁶ philosophy, wisdom,⁹⁷ trade,⁹⁸ medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacology,⁹⁹ writing,¹⁰⁰ industry, architectural engineering,¹⁰¹ mining¹⁰² and other areas beyond the scope of this study.¹⁰³ They also had knowledge of jurisprudence that grew out of their tribal culture, their inter-tribal relations and contact with the Roman and Persian cultures.¹⁰⁴

Despite this knowledge, the Qur'an describes their condition as disbelievers, using the terms *jahiliyyah* (3:154), *jahil* for individuals (2:273), and *jahilin*, *jahilun* and *juhlhal* for them as a group (39:64). In this latter verse, Allah commands the Prophet to ask the disbelievers, 'Is it some one other than Allah that you bid me worship, O you *jahilun* ones?'¹⁰⁵ These *jahilun* are defined elsewhere in the Qur'an (5:50) as those who neglect Islamic laws as follows: 'Is it the laws of *jahiliyyah* that they wish to be judged by?' In this context, the term *jahiliyyah* is not antithetical to knowledge ('*ilm*), or to any associated meanings of knowledge such as science and civilization. The history of humankind indicates that 'there is no one who could say that Man lived one day without knowledge in general'.¹⁰⁶ These Qur'anic texts suggest that those who are grounded in knowledge yet do not follow God's order or submit themselves completely to His sovereignty the *shari'ah* remain *jahilun*, or *juhlhal* in the status of *jahiliyyah*.

What is known of the ancient Egyptians strongly suggests their civilization was a knowledgeable one. However, a considerable number of questions remain

unanswered with regard to Egyptian civilization and continue to challenge us today.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the statement of the Pharaoh who ruled during the time of Moses¹⁰⁸ suggests he was a knowledgeable man, for when Moses says to him ‘My Lord knows best... the Pharaoh replied: “O people! You have no other god that I know of except myself...”’¹⁰⁹ Here, the Pharaoh used the expression ‘I know’. He claimed to be the only god not one amongst many: ‘I am your Lord Most High’.¹¹⁰ If *jahiliyyah* is used to mean lack of knowledge (*‘ilm*) or is the opposite of science and civilization, this Pharaoh was not a *jahil*, nor his political, social, economic and moral system a *jahili* system. However, the Qur’an describes the Pharaoh using the term *jahl* and the term *taghut*, yet his wife is described as Muslim, for she submitted herself to Allah (*aslama*).¹¹¹ Here, the Qur’an clearly contrasted Islam with both *jahl* and *taghut* (transgressor: transgresses the Sovereignty of God). Also, the Qur’an distinguished between husband and wife, not on the basis of their knowledge, but on the basis of submission to the Sovereignty of God.

The Qur’an thus relegates the Pharaoh to the same category as Satan. Both the Pharaoh and Satan claim to be distinguished by their knowledge. Al-Qurtubi points out on the basis of the Qur’anic verses 7:11–12 that ‘although Satan knows and testifies that Allah is the Creator and Sustainer, he, Satan, will not comply with Allah’s command’.¹¹² This means that lack of knowledge is not the basic cause of rebellion against God’s order. One must submit the whole self to Allah and obey His order. The Qur’an expresses the similarity between Satan and the Pharaoh, calling them both (*taghut*)¹¹³ purveyors of mischief (2:257, 20:43). The concept of *jahiliyyah* is thus represented in the Qur’an as a state of mind manifest in behaviour that follows vain desires, that is, rejecting full submission to God’s law and order.¹¹⁴ The point here is that the concept of *jahiliyyah* envisaged by the Qur’an is related not to knowledge or lack of it but to unequivocal submission to God’s law and order.

Variations of the *jahiliyyah* concept in pre-Islamic Arabic

The concept of *jahiliyyah* in classical (pre-Islamic) Arabic cannot be used as a point of reference to discuss the concept *jahiliyyah* manifest in the Qur’an. This is because the term *jahiliyyah* in pre-Islamic Arabic has several contradictory meanings due to linguistic variations.¹¹⁵ The cultural and economic status of each tribe, the state of peace and war between the tribes themselves, their relations with Persia and Byzantium, the emigration of the poets from one tribe to another – all were factors that contributed to linguistic variations and different understandings of the term *jahl*.¹¹⁶ This problematic situation ‘preceded Qur’anic linguistic unification’.¹¹⁷ The Qur’an standardized Arabic terms and concepts such as the right to private property, investment, the method and the meaning of pilgrimage, adoption, the concept of marriage, *‘ilm* (knowledge), *hilm* (gentleness) and the concept of *jahiliyyah*. In pre-Islamic Arabic, one word might have contradictory meanings. For example, the word *masha* means (i) to walk; (ii) a large number of animals; and (iii) suffering from colic. In the dialect of the Tamim tribe, the

meaning of the word *al-sadafah* is darkness, but it means light in the dialect of the Qays. The meaning of the word *al-lanq* in the dialect of Banu 'Uqayl is 'to write', but it means 'to wipe out' in the dialect of Qays. The pagan Arabs of each tribe adhered to their dialect in their communication and recorded their thought according to a particular grammatical basis. When the tribe of Saba' dominated over the others, the dialect of Saba' also dominated and became the official dialect of this area of Arabia until Islam. On the other side of Arabia, the dialect known as (*al-*) dominated until the revelation came with (al-Islam).¹¹⁸

Al-Samurra'i (1994) pointed out that 'Arabic dialects were, basically, languages; each of them had its own grammar'.¹¹⁹ Abu 'Amr Ibn al-'Ala' (d. 154/772) of the Tayy tribe reported that 'the language of Himyar [tribe] is not our language and their Arabic is not our Arabic'.¹²⁰

In pre-Islamic Arabic, the term *jahl* was used to convey a few meanings; some of them contradict each other. For example, the word *jahl* was used to mean lack of knowledge,¹²¹ but could adequately signify 'the learned or those rejecting knowledge'.¹²² In other words, *jahl* means (i) lack of knowledge; (ii) knowledgeable or learned people; and (iii) rejecting knowledge. The question here is whether 'rejecting knowledge' constitutes 'lack of knowledge'. In fact, rejecting knowledge does not necessarily mean lack of knowledge. This is because the act of rejection may be merely a reaction to the knowledge operating in the mind, that is, awareness. If this is lacking, there is nothing to reject. For example, the Quraysh tribe and its allies rejected and even fought the Prophet after they became aware of the commands of Allah. In pre-Islamic Arabic, the word *jahl* could signify illiteracy. It could also mean lack of experience.¹²³ However, lack of experience does not imply illiteracy in Arabic, as will be detailed shortly.

In pre-Islamic Arabic, the term *jahl* was used to convey a raft of associated meanings, including 'pride, arrogance, lowness, haughtiness, baseness, obscenity, vulgarity, indecency, stupidity, foolishness, scurrility, dirtiness, abusiveness, impudence, shamelessness, wasting, and profligacy'.¹²⁴ Similarly, as Lane notes, *jahl* could mean 'arrogance, silly, foolishness, neglecting the truth, or the right, or working to ruin the truth. [It means also] wrong conduct, believing a thing to be different from what it is, and doing a thing in a manner different from that in which it ought to be done'.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, none of these terms or conducts suggests lack of awareness. Therefore, the general term *jahiliyyah* used in the Qur'an should not be judged by such a multiplicity of contradictory meanings of the word *jahl* as is reflected in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. The translation of *jahiliyyah* as 'lack of knowledge' is not accurate without appropriate qualification to indicate the boundaries of that knowledge or what is meant by *complete* knowledge.

To the Muslims, the Qur'an established a new system of life. It corrected the contradictions of a pre-Islamic world, where thought, belief and conceptions regarding political, economic, social, intellectual and moral spheres were in error. Islam prohibited conceptions that did not fit with the Islamic system. It reshaped others to ensure their incorporation in the new era.

Some wholly new concepts were introduced.¹²⁶ For example, Islam established a new concept of government. It is no longer this or that emperor. Allah is the Sovereign of all Sovereignty at any time or place. Submission to His Sovereignty is but to implement His Law. The state then is the state of Law. Islam prohibited *usury* and practices associated with wealth management and investment. New concepts for investment and property ownership were introduced.¹²⁷ This meant that the language and concepts of the Qur'an reshaped pre-Islamic language and concepts. Dialects were unified and their meanings and concepts developed in this process of linguistic cohesion.¹²⁸

The Prophet himself used the Qur'an to discuss *jahiliyyah* and its related beliefs and concepts. Ibn Hisham (d. 218/834) reported that the Arab poet Labid Ibn Abi Rabi'ah, who was 106 years old at the time,¹²⁹ challenged the revelation.¹³⁰ He wrote a long poem and presented it at the annual assembly in Makkah. The assembly approved the poem and gave Labid permission to write it upon silk in characters of gold and affix it to the gate of the Ka'bah.¹³¹ In this poem Labid put up these verses challenging the revelation:

Yes, everything is vain, except only Allah alone
and every pleasant thing will be one day surely gone
And among all the race of humankind shall surely come
a fearful woe, whereby their fingers palely grow
And every person will know one day his conduct's worth
when his record is cast up on the Judgment Day.¹³²

The tone of these verses is Islamic, yet Labid was not seeking to express what he knew so much as seeking to challenge the language of the Qur'an. He remained a *jahili* person until he finally renounced his *jahiliyyah* and submitted himself to the law and order of God. He became a Muslim.¹³³

Therefore the term *jahiliyyah* mentioned in the Qur'an has a connotation of its own. Ibn 'Abbas (d. 68/687) advised, 'If you want to know about the *jahiliyyah* read the Qur'an.'¹³⁴ Ahmad Amin (1886–1954) claims that the Arabs have no 'authentic' documentation of the concept of *jahiliyyah* other than the Qur'an.¹³⁵ *Jahiliyyah* is a 'term given by Islam'¹³⁶ that refers to 'deviation from the command of Allah and His Apostle and submission to other than Allah'. *Jahiliyyah* also includes 'barbaric customs like that of tribal pride, oppression, injustice, cruelty, and wild mentality'.¹³⁷

The Prophet constantly contrasted *jahili* ideas with Islamic ideas. In the early days of Islam, the Quraysh in Makkah tried to defeat the Prophet by offering him the kingship and wealth in order to stop him preaching Islam. Abu Lahab formed a committee of the leaders of Quraysh and approached Abu Talib, the elder and protector of Muhammad. They said to Abu Talib, 'Your brother's son declares that we are fools (*yusaffih ahlamana*)¹³⁸ and deviant (*dalal*) people. He curses us and mistreats our gods. If you cannot stop him, you should stay away from him and let us deal with him. Our religion is also yours, but he has deviated from your religion and the religion of your forefathers...' ¹³⁹ Abu Talib

turned his face to Muhammad and pleaded to him to stop preaching Islam. Muhammad replied:

My uncle, even if they brought the sun and placed it in the palm of my right hand, and brought the moon and placed it in the palm of my left hand, I shall never give up this matter [preaching Islam] until it prevails or I die in its cause.¹⁴⁰

According to al-Tabari, ‘in another attempt to persuade the Prophet, Quraysh said to him: “You should worship our deities, *al-Lat* and *al-Uzza* for a year, and we will worship your God for a year.” The answer of the Prophet was “Let me see what Allah will reveal to me.” The revelation came to him: “Say: Unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship . . .”’ (Qur’an 109:1–6).¹⁴¹

The Qur’an has never defined *jahiliyyah* as a lack of knowledge of the sciences. The Qur’an presents the idea of *jahiliyyah* in contrast to the idea of Islam:

Allah is the Creator of all things. He is the Guardian. His are the keys of the heavens and the earth. Those that deny the signs of Allah will surely be the losers. Say [O Muhammad]: Is it some one other than Allah that you order me to worship, oh *jahilun ones*?

(Qur’an 39: 63–64)

The Qur’an refers to them in the Qur’anic command to the Prophet to ‘Pronounce judgement among them according to what Allah has revealed and do not be led by their desires. Take heed lest they [*jahilun ones*] turn you [O Muhammad] away from a part of that which Allah has revealed to you. If they reject your judgement, know that it is Allah’s wish to scourge them for their sins. A great many of mankind are evildoers. Is it the law of *jahiliyyah* that they [*jahilun ones*] want to be *judged* by?’¹⁴² This point is explained further, as follows: ‘The religion before God is Islam. So if they dispute with you [the Prophet] say “I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me.”’¹⁴³ The point is that the concept of *jahiliyyah* is antithetical to the concept of Islam.

Jahiliyyah and ummiyyah

In pre-Islamic Arabic, the term *ummiyyah* conveys various unacceptable qualities: ‘illiteracy, ignorance, stupidity, *jahl*, foolishness and dumbness.’¹⁴⁴ The argument here is that the Qur’anic term *jahiliyyah* does not imply *ummiyyah* as such.

The term *ummiyyah* is mentioned in the Qur’an with reference to the Arabs¹⁴⁵ and to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁴⁶ Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad was non-literate or *ummi*, which is confirmed by al-Tabari (d. 310/922), who notes that the Prophet remained so until the treaty of *Hudayybiyah* (AH 6/April AD 628). Then ‘the Prophet took the paper from Ali, and with difficulty wrote “Muhammad Ibn Abdullah” in place of his title “the Apostle of Allah.”’¹⁴⁷ This was apparently because the Quraysh would not accept his title Apostle of Allah and refused to write it down.

It is therefore necessary to examine the concept of the term *ummi* in pre-Islamic Arabic more closely and compare it with the concept used in the Qur'an. As indicated above, in pre-Islamic Arabic, the Arabs (Jews, Christians and pagans) used the term *ummi* to signify general stupidity and lack of education. This, however, is misleading since the Qur'an uses the word *ummi* in the following very different contexts:

- 1 The Qur'an used the term *ummi*, as asserted by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, to refer to people who have not received a Book or Scriptures.¹⁴⁸ Yet the Qur'an also refers to 'the People of the Book', that is, Jews and Christians, as *ummiyyin*.¹⁴⁹ The Qur'an advises all (those who have received Scriptures or have not) to surrender to Allah:

And if they argue with thee (O Muhammad), say: I have surrendered my purposes to Allah and (so have) those who follow me. And say unto those who have received the Scriptures (*al-kitab*) and those *ummiyyin* (who have not received Scriptures): Have ye (too) surrendered? If they surrender, then truly they are rightly guided, and if they turn away, then it is thy duty only to convey the message (unto them). Allah is Seer of (His) bondmen.¹⁵⁰

Here, the term *ummi* refers to the people who have not received a Book or Scriptures. This does not mean that those people who have not received a Book or Scriptures are illiterate. The point here is that the word *ummi*, according to Muhammad Abduh, 'does not mean disparagement'.¹⁵¹ He also pointed out that 'the *ummi*' can be 'a learned person or a scholar'.¹⁵²

- 2 The term *ummi* in the Qur'an sometimes refers only to Arabs; for example, 'It is He Who has sent forth amongst the *ummiyyin* an Apostle from among their own.'¹⁵³
- 3 The term *ummi* is, sometimes, used in the Qur'an to refer only to some of the *learned* people of the Book:

And there are among them [the people of the Book],¹⁵⁴ *ummiyyun* who know not the Book except (their own) desires (lies and vague fancies). Therefore, woe be unto those who write the Scriptures by their own hands and then declare 'this is from Allah', that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for that their hands have written, and woe unto them for that they earn thereby.¹⁵⁵ Those individuals or groups who could 'write the Scriptures by their own hands' are not illiterate but learned people or, in Muhammad Abduh's words, 'scholars'.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, in this group of Qur'anic texts, the word *ummiyyah* is used to refer (i) to Arabs and non-Arabs; (ii) to the Arabs only; and (iii) to some of the learned people of the Book. Thus the word *ummiyyah* in the Qur'an cannot simply mean illiteracy, because 'illiteracy' does not exhaust the meanings of this group of verses.¹⁵⁷ Nor does it fit the given context.¹⁵⁸ The people of the Book (Arabs and

non-Arabs) cannot thus be described as lacking knowledge, because they have the Scriptures; as the Qur'an says, 'Ye people of the Book! Why do you deny Allah's revelations when you know that they are true? Ye people of the Book! Why do ye confound Truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the Truth?'¹⁵⁹

***Jahiliyyah* and gentleness (*hilm*)**

The term *hilm* is the substantive of the Arabic root (*h l m*) from which the trilateral verb *haluma*, the perfect past of *yahlumu*, is derived.¹⁶⁰ Neither *'ilm* nor *hilm* can adequately be defined, despite a variety of derivatives. The most we can do is describe signification and context. According to Wehr (1979), the word groups of *hilm* describe the following concepts: 'gentleness, clemency, mildness; forbearance, indulgence; patience; insight, discernment, understanding, intelligence, reason'.¹⁶¹

Lane (1972) renders English equivalents (both nouns and verbs) of *hilm* as: 'to deliberate, think over, meditate on meekness, patience, forbearance, calm, solidity of moral character, unemotional, gentleness, insight, prudence, firmness, or moral integrity'.¹⁶²

These meanings, as asserted by Ibn Manzur, 'were used in the pre-Islamic Arabic, in contradistinction to *jahl*'.¹⁶³ Use by pre-Islamic Arabs of words associated with the concept of *hilm* reflects the conditions of unrest and tribal disputation in pre-Islamic Arabia. Speaking of pre-Islamic poetry, Sir William Jones stated that

The poems entitled *al-Mu'allaqat*¹⁶⁴ exhibit an exact picture of their virtue and their vice, their wisdom and their folly; and show what may be constantly expected from men of open hearts and boiling passions, with no law to control, and little religion to restrain them...¹⁶⁵

This implies that a sociolinguistic relationship can be assumed. Thus, where pre-Islamic Arabs use the term *hilm* to suggest moral characters or moral integrity, these meanings reflect their understanding within a pre-Islamic world. The Arabs' understanding of the term *hilm* is a reflection of their belief and conceptions, and a reflection of their political, economic, social, intellectual and moral life in Arabia before Islam.

The character and conduct of a *jahil* and *halim* in pre-Islamic Arabia can be seen in the following quotation from the pre-Islamic poet of the first class 'Amr Ibn Kulthum (d. AD 600):

Wa law *sha'a* qawmi kana *hilmi* fihimu
 Wa kana 'ala *juhali* a'da'ihim *jahli*
 If my people show me *hilm*, I would show them *hilm* too
 and practise my *jahl* against their *jahili* enemies.

Some view this verse as a significant point of reference in discussing the contradistinction between *jahl* and *hilm*. They see the word *hilm* in the first line as

contrasted with *jahl* in the second line, setting the two in opposition to each other, and suggesting that *jahiliyyah* is the actual antithesis of *hilm*.¹⁶⁶

One might, however, disagree on the basis of Arabic grammar and the sociopolitical context. Linguistically speaking, the verse consists of two independent statements; one in the first line, the second in the second line. In the Arabic form, the first line of the verse contains two forms of *hilm*, the first (does not show but implicit in the first line) being conditional, demonstrated by the hypothetical and conditional particle *law* (if) and its conditional verb *sha'a* (want). This conditional verb needs a response, which comes in the second form of *hilm*: *hilm* contrasted with *hilm*. With this, this statement of the first line is complete. The latter part of the verse contains two forms of *jahl*: ascription of violence to the enemy and the revenge of the poet: *jahl* contrasted with *jahl*. Thus, the first statement and the second are independent statements; that is, the one does not need to be explained through the other. The contrast of the term *hilm* in the first half of the verse is already mentioned in the first half of the verse. Similarly, the contrast of the term *jahl* in the second half of the verse is already mentioned in the second half. As the response to the conditional verb of the first statement already exists in the first statement, there is no reason to disregard it and go searching for another in another statement. Therefore, contrasting the term *hilm* in the first half of the verse with the term *jahl* in the second half of the verse is not appropriate in Arabic grammar.

Critics could argue that the two independent statements are joined by the connective particle *wa* (and) at the beginning of the second half of the verse. This is true; however, the function of the connective particle is not to change the nature of the two statements, that is, to reduce the independence of any of the two statements or to make one statement dependent on the other.¹⁶⁷ In other words, the two statements will remain independent and the one does not need to be explained through the other. According to Wright, the connective particle *wa* (and) works as 'a simple coordinative'.¹⁶⁸ It coordinates the two independent statements and causes them to work in order. Coordination between the two statements does not mean that the one is the antithesis of the other. However, the particle *wa* sets the two statements in order, one after the other with no change or effect on their independence. This, in regard to the verse in question, means that *hilm* faces *hilm* in the first statement, and *jahl* faces *jahl* in the second. Thus, the co-coordinative particle serves to set in order the two independent statements one after the other, not to set them against each other. Because the response to the conditional particle *law* (if) is found adjacent to its verb in the first half, there is no legitimate reason to ignore it and go to the second half to find the response.¹⁶⁹

Critics might further argue that the two statements of the verse in question that are connected to each other with a connective particle are not necessarily dependent on each other. But they may be linked to such an extent that two simple statements become one complex statement. Common sense dictates that this is how the above verse is to be understood. Nevertheless, one should note that even within this complex statement the existence of the two simple statements will remain grammatically complete, working in order and in an independent manner.

There is no reason to think of the two simple statements of the verse in question as a complex statement, whereas each of those two statements is complete and sufficiently satisfies its purpose of grammar and sociopolitical context, as previously detailed. The link between the two statements, as discussed above, does not cause them to contrast each other but to function in order, one after the other. Also, the verse in question was not written to reflect the common sense and the logic of the twenty-first century, but rather to reflect the common sense and the logic of a 'lawless society' in pre-Islamic Arabia, as Sir William Jones says.¹⁷⁰ In this society, according to Goldziher, the *jahl* was not condemned but was appreciated by the logic of people like 'Amr Ibn Kulthum,¹⁷¹ as in the following discussion.

Turning to the sociopolitical context, the verse under discussion, according to William Jones, 'mirrors what may be constantly expected from men of open hearts and boiling passions, with no law to control, and little religion to restrain them'.¹⁷² The sociopolitical context of the verse in question is familiar ground in the literature. Suffice it to note that the poet was the king of the Taghlib tribes. There was political conflict between the Taghlib, Bakr, Manadhirah and Ghasasinah tribes. Biographers agree that the poet was the political leader of Taghlib, and he personally was behind the wars between these tribes. Disputes between the poet and his people were common. This verse was part of a long poem about such tribal disputation in pre-Islamic Arabia.¹⁷³

The verse indicates the following. (i) The poet described himself using both *hilm* and *jahl*. (ii) He was proud to express *jahl* to mean physical strength and *hilm* to mean calmness and gentleness. (iii) The first half of the verse shows that the poet contrasts *hilm* with *hilm*. (iv) In the second half of the verse, the poet contrasts *jahl* (physical violence) with *jahl* (physical revenge). This means that the poet was not contrasting *jahl* with *hilm*, but *hilm* with *hilm* and *jahl* with *jahl*. This can be seen in Arabic style as *mushakalah* (i.e. similarity).¹⁷⁴

Critics could, further, argue that the same person could be *jahil* and *halim*, happy and sad, but that does not mean they do not contrast. This is logically and, generally, correct, but in the example under discussion the king (the poet) was so eager to show his care of his people with nobility and dignity that he was prepared to respond to their *hilm* with *hilm* if they wished. Logically, in the sense of the conflict between the king and his people, if the king's appeal for peace with his people was that he would respond to their *hilm* with his *jahl*, the appeal then would not be for peace. This is clearly seen from the grammatical structure of the verse and its sociopolitical context. For example, despite the king's appeal that he would respond to their *hilm* with his *hilm*, he expected that his people would not accept his initiative. Therefore, the king started the whole verse with the hypothetical particle *law* (if). This particle, which is called, according to Ibn 'Aqil, *harf intina' li intina*,¹⁷⁵ serves to suggest that the response to the conditional verb was mostly unlikely to occur.¹⁷⁶ This means that the response to his offer that he would face his people's *hilm* with *hilm* was likewise unlikely to occur. Therefore, one cannot assume that the king, who described himself using both *hilm* and *jahl* and who wanted to make peace with his people, would tell them that he would respond to their *hilm* with his *jahl*. This means that, in the verse under discussion,

‘Amr Ibn Kulthum was not contrasting *hilm* with *jahl*. This is not to say that *hilm* and *jahl* cannot be contrasted, but which (*hilm*) and which (*jahl*)? The answer to this question is in the following.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, as is apparent in the verse under discussion, *jahl* was not condemned. According to Goldziher (1966),

jahl was neither a virtue to the Arabs of an older time – it was appropriate to a young and impetuous character – nor was it entirely condemned. Part of the *muruwwa* was knowing when mildness was not befitting the character of a hero and when *jahl* was indicated: ‘I am ferocious (*jahul*) where mildness (*tahallum*) would make the hero despicable, meek (*halim*) when ferocity (*jahl*) would be unfitting to the noble’, or as is said in the spirit of paganism.¹⁷⁷

This suggests that tribal pride, tribal conflict and sociopolitical and economic factors influenced the pre-Islamic understanding of the terms *hilm* and *jahl* in Arabia.¹⁷⁸ This is also expressed in some verses translated by Goldziher as follows: ‘Though I need mildness, at times I need wildness (*jahl*) even more. I have a horse bridled with mildness and I have another bridled with wildness.’¹⁷⁹

This means that the character and manner of action of a *halim* were constrained by the power of individuals or groups. Among the proverbs of the pre-Islamic Arabs was *la hilmā liman la safiha lahu* (he who has no *jahl* has no *hilm*).¹⁸⁰ The word *safih* means ‘*jahil* (fool) and unjust’.¹⁸¹ In this regard, Goldziher pointed out that ‘the word *safih* (fool) is a synonym of the word (*jahil*) and belongs to that group of words which, like *kesil* and *sakhal* (in Hebrew), describe not only fools but also cruel and unjust men’.¹⁸² Thus, the meaning of the proverb indicates that he who has strength to act violently or unjustly is *halim*. This character of the *safih* also points to the *jahl* described by ‘Amr Ibn Kulthum, as previously detailed.

Thus, the *halim* in the context of a tribal and lawless society sometimes need to be *jahil* (ferocious).¹⁸³ This is their understanding of *hilm* and *jahl* as found and expressed by ‘Amr Ibn Kulthum in the previous and in the following examples. The king ‘Amr Ibn Kulthum, again in his *mu‘allaqah* (poem), proudly showed, not in stormy words but also in deeds, the strength and power of his tribe and then went on lavishly threatening revenge in the wild ‘way of *jahiliyyah*’¹⁸⁴ by saying:

ala la *yajhalan* ahadun ‘alayna
fa *najhalu* fawqa *jahli al-jahilina*
Beware violence (*jahl*) against us!
For our revenge (*jahl*) will surpass
The folly (*jahl*) of the most foolish (*jahl*).¹⁸⁵

Here, ‘Amr Ibn Kulthum’s logic contrasts *jahl* with *jahl*. This means that *jahl* contrasted with *jahl* and *hilm* contrasted with *hilm* in pre-Islamic Arabia, as previously detailed. In other words, this verse supports the suggestion that the logic of this poet was contrasting *hilm* with *hilm* and *jahl* with *jahl* in the previously mentioned verse. Similar to the previous verse, the present is also used as

a reference for what is known in Arabic style as *mushakalah* (similarity). The poet 'recommended *jahl* to be recompense (reward, not punishment) for *jahl*'.¹⁸⁶ The meaning of this verse reveals the sense of the pagan *hilm*, as is further illustrated in the following verses:

When we come to a water source, we drink the clearest
 Forcing others to drink it muddy from our soiled rest
 When a tyrant oppressed his people
 We disdained honorably to submit to his will
 The world with what is on the face of it is ours
 When we do attack, we do with irresistible powers
 When a child of our tribe is weaned
 The tyrannical thrones prostrate, and pay him homage
 Beware violence (*jahl*) against us!
 For our revenge (*jahl*) will surpass
 The folly (*jahl*) of the most foolish (*jahl*).

In these verses, the poet 'Amr Ibn Kulthum celebrates his tribe's physical strength, calling it *jahl*. He makes a clear warning that violence (*jahl*) against his tribe will call forth revenge (*jahl*). This means that *jahl* is contrasted with *jahl*, and he who is capable of a greater revenge (*jahl*), that is, coupled with irresistible power, is the *halim*. This confirms Goldziher's previous claim that '*jahl* was not condemned'.¹⁸⁷ This means that the concepts of *halim* and *jahlil* reflect the tribal society. Zuhayr Ibn Abi Sulma (d. AD 631) provides us with a further example of *jahl* and *hilm* in the following:

He who flatters not on many events
 will be bitten by sharp teeth, and stepped on by hoofs.
 He who shields his honour by courtesy, will preserve it;
 and he who guards not himself from censure will be censured.
 He who defends not his dam by his weapon, will see it demolished;
 and he who oppresses not others himself be oppressed.¹⁸⁸

These verses show that the concept of *halim* in pagan Arab thought encompassed the capacity to oppress others or mount violent revenge. According to Goldziher, while *jahl* was not entirely condemned, *hilm* was not entirely appreciated, as in this proverb *al-halim matiyyat al-jahul* (the meek is the pack animal of the ferocious).¹⁸⁹ In pre-Islamic Arabic, the concepts of *hilm* and *jahl* were different from the conceptions of the same terms mentioned in the Arabic language of the Qur'an. According to Goldziher, 'Muhammad's teaching thus brought about a change in the meaning of *hilm* and hence we can understand that his pagan fellow-citizens, who opposed his teaching, constantly accused the reformer of declaring their *hilm* to be folly (*yusffih ahlamana*), branding as barbaric acts (*jahiliyyah*) deeds which in their eyes were of the highest virtue . . .'.¹⁹⁰ The term *halim* is a Qur'anic

term which has connotations of its own and cannot be judged by the pagan Arab values associated with *hilm*, which reflected the social circumstances of the times and were to be corrected by the Qur'anic Revelation.

The Qur'anic concept of the term *hilm*

Among the social values and concepts corrected by the Qur'an are the terms *hilm* and *jahl*. The Qur'an tells that the actual meaning of the *halim* is Muslim. This point is also made by Van Gelder (1988).¹⁹¹ The Qur'an declares that the concept of *hilm* is to follow God's order. It also declares that he who obediently follows God's order is a *halim*.¹⁹² The Qur'an described the Prophet Ibrahim as *halim*¹⁹³ because he submitted himself completely (*aslama*) to Allah and obediently followed His order (*Muslim*).¹⁹⁴ The title *halim* in the Qur'an also applied to Ibrahim's son, Isma'il, to indicate the patient way in which both the father and the son cheerfully offered to suffer any self-sacrifice in order to obey the command of Allah.¹⁹⁵

The Qur'an recounts the story of Shu'ayb calling upon his people, the Madyanites, to obey the command of Allah in their lives. The people, however, rejected the command, mocked Shu'ayb and rejected his title of *halim*. The Qur'an thus notes: 'To [the people of] Madyan, We [Allah] sent their brother Shu'ayb. He said "O my people! Worship Allah; you have no god but Him. Do not give short weight or measure. . . . O my people! Give just weight and measure in all fairness. Do not defraud others of their possessions and do not corrupt the land with evil". . . . They replied "Shu'ayb, did your prayers teach you that we should renounce the gods of our fathers and that we ought not to conduct our affairs in the manner we pleased? Truly, you are the *halim*."'¹⁹⁶

Exegetes pointed out that Shu'ayb was known among his people as a *halim*.¹⁹⁷ However, when he called upon his people to comply with God's command and to be kind, forbearing and just, 'the people rejected his demand and went on their *jahili* way of recklessness. Although they said to him "Truly, you are the *halim*", they did not mean that he was a *halim* or a right-minded person but a *jahil*'.¹⁹⁸ Here, the pagans used the term *hilm* to mean *jahl*. The *jahl*, here, is not ordinary ignorance, but emanates from their abysmal ignorance, which is similar to the ignorance of any time or society where God's order is ignored. This can be illustrated by the following example. The Qurayzah tribe once said to the Prophet Muhammad 'Ya Muhammad, ma 'alimnaka *jahula*: Oh Muhammad, we have not seen you *jahula*'.¹⁹⁹ The word *jahl* here is not ordinary ignorance but illustrate the abysmal ignorance of the tribe, its time and culture. This means that the meaning of both the terms *hilm* and *jahl* had been altered from their correct meanings ascribed by Ibrahim and Isma'il. The logical implication that should be noted here is that the pagans themselves contrasted the act of submission and obedience to the (Sovereignty) of Allah with their (*jahiliyyah*).

Therefore, the word *jahiliyyah* cannot be described as the antithesis of science (*'ilm*), knowledge (*ma'rifah*) or civilization (*hadarah*). It does not mean simply illiteracy (*ummiyyah*). Neither is *jahiliyyah* the antithesis of *hilm* (gentleness) or any of this word

group. The *jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of Sovereignty, and the Qur'an is the most authentic ancient Arabic source concerning this subject.²⁰⁰

***Jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of Sovereignty**

The important point that should be remembered here is that the word *jahl* and its derivations were mentioned in the Qur'anic verses, which were revealed in Makkah and Madinah. However, the very term *jahiliyyah* was used in the Qur'an only in Madinah, not in Makkah. The word *jahiliyyah* is used in surahs 3, 5, 33 and 48.²⁰¹ Muslim scholars unanimously agree that these surahs were revealed in Madinah.²⁰² This means that the Qur'an used the term *jahiliyyah* after the immigration (*hijrah*) to Madinah. However, it does not exclude its use during the Makkan period before *hijrah*. The earlier Muslim sources reported that the term *jahiliyyah* was used by Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib prior to *hijrah* and it was later confirmed by the Qur'an in Madinah, as will be detailed later. It is important to note that the Qur'an used the term *jahiliyyah* after the *hijrah* to Madinah, where the Islamic laws were revealed to govern the newly established Islamic state. In referring to the Makkan period, some historians suggest that the Islamic state preceded the *hijrah* and developed in Madinah.²⁰³ In either case, there was an Islamic state at Madinah where the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept were revealed. The historical events of the period in which the concept of *jahiliyyah* appeared suggest that the religio-political connotations of the term *jahiliyyah* were critical. In other words, the term *jahiliyyah* was a religio-political concept used oppositionally to the Islamic constitution, state and laws.

In the early Makkan period of Islam, the term *jahl* and its derivations, not *jahiliyyah*, were used in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an says: 'Show forgiveness, speak for justice, and avoid *al-jahilin*' (Qur'an 7:199). 'And the servants of the Merciful are those who walk humbly on the earth, and when *al-jahilun* (ignorant) accost them, they say: "Peace!"' (Qur'an 25:63). 'I am here to convey to you the message. But I can see that you are people *tajhalun*' (Qur'an 46:23). 'We seek not *al-jahilin* (ignorant)' (Qur'an 28:55). 'Had God pleased, He would have given them guidance, once and for all. So do not be amongst those *jahilun*' (Qur'an, 6:35). The *jahili* ideas were therefore contrasted to the political, economic, social, moral and intellectual changes brought about by Islam at that time. Initially that contrast was of a dialectical nature and followed from the use of the concept of *jahl* and its derivations in the Qur'an. Opposition to the *jahili* ideas was mostly religious, since the focus was on the authority of the Qur'an.²⁰⁴ The Revelation represented the unequivocal affirmation that the source of the Qur'anic message was the Allah; He is the Sovereign of all Sovereignty. At that time, the Prophet was debating with the *jahili* elements of the Quraysh tribe by reciting what was revealed to him of the Qur'an. People were to renounce *jahili* ideas and embrace Islam.

As Islam attracted greater following among the Makkans, the Quraysh reshaped the nature of their opposition. In the meantime, polytheists were condemned in the Qur'an, particularly for their lack of socioeconomic responsibility

for the poor, widows and orphans.²⁰⁵ The contrast between Islamic and *jahili* ideas gradually began to take political and socioeconomic shape. During this Makkah period, the word *jahl* and its derivations appeared in the Qur'an and were generally used, rather than the explicit term *jahiliyyah*. This term was used by the Qur'an later, in Madinah. It follows that the term *jahiliyyah* reflects a more advanced stage of sociopolitical development. In other words, the *jahiliyyah* reflects a more socially and politically organized stage and thus organized at least partly in reaction to the appearance of the Islamic state. Therefore, when the early Muslims said 'Islam' has replaced *jahiliyyah*, they meant the political, economic, social, moral and intellectual conduct common to the *jahiliyyah* which was outlined in the Qur'an.²⁰⁶

What should be noted here is that the Muslims used the term *jahiliyyah* during the Makkan period, but the Qur'an used the term *jahiliyyah* in Madinah. There is no evidence to suggest that the Arabs (Jews, Christian and pagans) used the term *jahiliyyah* prior to Islam. The word *jahl* and its derivations, not *jahiliyyah*, were mentioned in the Arabic translation of the Old Testament. For example, under the title Ecclesiastics the term *jahalah* is used explicitly in 5:2, 7:26 and 10:1,5,14, and the term *jahlan* is used in 2:19.²⁰⁷ Etymologically, these two forms, *jahlan* and *jahalah* are infinitives of the word *jahl*, but the word *jahalah* is also a synonym of the word *jahiliyyah*.

This account of the Old Testament, together with that of the pre-Islamic poetry, can be seen to indicate that most of the pre-Islamic Arabs (Jews, Christians and pagans) were aware of the term *jahl* and its derivations, including the synonym *jahalah*, but not the explicit term *jahiliyyah*. It has been suggested that 'the word *jahiliyyah* is a term given by Islam'.²⁰⁸ The Qur'an transformed pre-Islamic Arabic to express Islamic ideas. Because *jahl* and its derivations and associated terms were entirely condemned in the Qur'an as 'foolishness, wrong conduct... [etc.]',²⁰⁹ the Arabs who converted to Islam were able to distinguish what they knew of the concept of *jahl* and its derivations before Islam from the conception of the same terms after Islam. The point is that the Muslims used the term *jahiliyyah*, during the Makkan period before the *hijrah*, in contrast to what had been revealed of Islamic ideas at that time. However, the Qur'an had another plan in using the term *jahiliyyah* only in the Madinan period. Therefore, the usage of the term *jahiliyyah* by the Qur'an in the Madinan period can be seen as a confirmation of the usage of the term by the Muslims in the Makkan period, but with more teachings about the extended meaning of the term.

After he converted to Islam during the Makkan period, Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib expressed the term *jahiliyyah* and its associated concept in contrast to God's Sovereignty and Islamic ideas of the time. In AD 615 a group of the Makkan Muslims (men and women) who were being persecuted decided to immigrate to Abyssinia (then Ethiopia) because of their harsh treatment by the non-Muslim majority (the Quraysh) in Makkah. Among these people were 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan (later third Caliph in the period AD 644-656) and his wife Ruqayyah (the Prophet's daughter), Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib (Prophet's cousin) and his wife, Abdullah Ibn Jahsh and his wife (daughter of Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb, the leader of the

opposition in Makkah).²¹⁰ A Qurayshi delegation was sent to the Negus of Abyssinia, in an attempt to have this group return to Makkah. The delegation was led by ‘Amr Ibn al-‘As and Abdullah Ibn Abi Rabi’ah.²¹¹ At their meeting with the Negus, the leader of the Arabian delegation ‘Amr Ibn al-‘As is reported to have said:

Oh King, some *sufaha*’ (foolish) young men have come to you from our country. They have rejected the religion of our people without accepting your religion. They brought a religion that they invented and that neither you nor I know. The nobles of our people, including their parents and Tribal elders, have sent us to you to request that you send these people back to their families. These families are of the highest status and know best about the things for which their relatives were condemned.²¹²

The language and concepts used here convey the nature of *jahiliyyah* and its religio-political and social significance.

One of the would-be émigrés, the Prophet’s cousin, Ja‘far Ibn Abi Talib (brother of Ali the fourth Caliph), made his testimony in the presence of both the Abyssinian King and the Arabian delegation. In his statement, Ja‘far described *jahiliyyah* as follows:

Oh King, we were people of *jahiliyyah*, worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing gross indecencies, breaking family ties, mistreating guests and the strong among us devouring the weak. We continued that way until God sent us an Apostle, one from among us, one whose lineage, trustfulness, honesty and purity we knew. He called upon us to acknowledge that there is only One God and to serve Him, and renounce the stones and idols that our fathers and we had been worshipping instead of God. The Apostle commanded us to speak the truth, to keep our trust, to fulfil the ties of kinship and the obligations of hospitality, and to refrain from crimes and the shedding of blood. He forbade us to commit abominations, to speak lies, to consume the wealth of orphans and to slander chaste women. He commanded us to worship God and not to associate anything with Him, and he commanded us to perform salat (prayer), to pay *zakat*²¹³ and to fast...²¹⁴

The Qurayshi delegates did not raise any objection to the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept and did not deny any of these claims concerning the nature of *jahiliyyah* or the nature and form of Islam. This suggests that the Arabs, both pagans and escapers, understood the term *jahiliyyah* as a sociopolitical and religious concept. The difference between the two parties rests in their understanding of the ideological nature of the term *jahiliyyah*. Thus, conduct inconsistent with submission to God’s Sovereignty by following His order was *jahiliyyah*, while the Makkan delegates saw their role in political terms, that is, as ideological, which was referred to derogatorily as *jahiliyyah* by the Muslims.

The Abyssinian king accepted the case presented by the Muslim refugees and gave them political asylum in Abyssinia. When the Arabian delegation returned to Makkah, the leaders joined with various other Arab tribes and clans in a tribal league. The Arab Tribal League was established in the year AD 616. This military and political organization issued an official general sanction against the Muslims, which banned all means of trade and political or social relations with the Muslims from AD 616 to 619.²¹⁵ In effect, the *jahiliyyah* elements, which were described by Ja'far, became a military and political organization able to function in the sociopolitical and economic domain. This political organization was further developed and came to be called, in the Qur'an, 'Confederates', as will be detailed below.²¹⁶ It should be noted here that Ja'far's testimony in Abyssinia distinguished between *jahiliyyah* and Islamic ideas of that time.

These early Islamic laws, which were in contrast to *jahiliyyah*, were among the rules laid down in the first and second treaties of the converts who had come from Madinah to meet the Prophet at al-'Aqabah. Regarding the link between the events in Abyssinia and al-'Aqabah, Goldziher says, 'This is the point of view from which older Islam [early days of the revelations, but there were more to come] contrasts the *Jahiliyyah* [as mentioned by Ja'far, not by the Qur'an] with Islam. The ritual laws of Islam are also mentioned [in the treaty], but the main point in a life contrary to the *Jahiliyyah* lies in turning away from worshipping lifeless things and more especially putting an end to immoral and cruel actions . . .'²¹⁷

Here, Goldziher should suggest that *jahiliyyah* is opposite to Sovereignty. The turning away here is but a turning away from submission to the Sovereignty of God that is but to submit to His law, ritual or other edicts. Goldziher, however, is of the view that *jahiliyyah* is opposite to those ritual duties of this early Makkan period, as used by Ja'far in Abyssinia. Prayer, tax (*zakat*) and other things mentioned by Ja'far are not only rituals, but also political, social and economic. Nevertheless, at that time, the exact term *jahiliyyah* had not yet appeared in the Qur'an. Therefore, the concept of *jahiliyyah* cannot be arbitrarily limited to this early period; the explicit term would come later in Madinah, with specific details as more of the Qur'an was revealed.

The two treaties which are known as the Allegiance of al-'Aqabah took place before the immigration to Madinah and started with the pledge of women in AD 619. In coming from a pagan society into Muslim society, especially in the conditions of these early days of Islam, a pledge on these points would reveal the women's real motives: (i) to worship none but Allah; (ii) not to steal; (iii) not to indulge in sex outside marriage; (iv) not to commit infanticide; (v) not to indulge in slander or scandal; and (vi) generally, to obey loyally the law and principles of Islam.²¹⁸ The last point was comprehensive and meant to obey Islamic law. These are the laws mentioned in the Qur'an (60:12): 'Prophet, if believing women come to you and pledge themselves to serve no other deity besides Allah, . . . accept their allegiance . . .' These rules also were the basis of the first treaty concluded with men the following year, in March AD 620.²¹⁹ Those rules also were some of the laws which were used by Ja'far to explain the term *jahiliyyah*.

However, the law of Islam was developed on the basis of the Revelation. The second treaty, in April AD 621, was based on the same rules as the earlier treaties, but the Prophet also added some new rules and specified that:

- 1 The people of Madinah should protect the Makkan Muslims emigrating to Madinah.
- 2 The people of Madinah should support them financially.
- 3 As they became Muslims, the people of Madinah should join the Muslim camp and be ready to fight, should a war with Quraysh break out.²²⁰

As soon as this treaty was established, the leaders of the Arab Tribal League quickly dispatched their delegates to persuade the new Muslims to break the treaty. They hoped to bring them back from Islam into the *jahili* camp.²²¹ When the mission of the delegates failed in AD 621, the Council of the Arab Tribal League planned to assassinate the Prophet on the eve of his immigration to Madinah (AD 622/AH 1).

In view of these events and their development from AD 615, when Ja'far used the term *jahiliyyah* in Ethiopia, up to the Arab Tribal League's attempt on Muhammad's life in AD 622 we can understand the ideology of the *jahili* group to be operating as the antithesis of the Sovereignty of the Islamic state. As for the Muslims, they viewed the Islamic orders as opposite to the ideology of the *jahili* group. At this point, the term *jahl* and some of its derivations were used by the Qur'an.

The nature of the confrontation between Islam and the *jahili* group during the Makkan period outlined the concept of the term *jahl* and some of its derivations known at this time. The full understanding of the *jahiliyyah* concept would come later in Madinah, where more was revealed.²²² We can thus note two points. The first is that the Qur'an linked the notion of *jahl* to the sociopolitical and religious conditions that opposed Islam in both Makkah and Madinah. The second is that the Qur'an linked the concept of the *jahiliyyah* to the more advanced stage of the sociopolitical and religious conditions that opposed Islam in Madinah. With this in mind, Madinah witnessed political unity among the Muslims for the first time, and it was then that the nature of the *jahiliyyah* appeared to them in the Qur'an. When the Muslims emigrated to Madinah in AD 622 the scope of the Islamic venture widened. The Muslims focused on the formation of an Islamic state, where the application of *shari'ah* confronted the Arab Tribal League. Consequently, the revelations dealt more extensively with political, social, economic and moral issues. They included laws to regulate the Madinan Islamic State and all inter-communal and international relations.²²³ It was in this context that the term *jahiliyyah* appeared in the Qur'an and the Prophet contrasted the concept of *jahiliyyah* with the concept of Sovereignty, the highest governmental and legal authority.²²⁴

In the sayings of the Prophet, transmitted by Anas Ibn Malik (d. 93/712) and Ibn 'Umar (d. 73/693), there is reference to a law which prohibited wine. When this law appeared, the Muslims immediately broke their wine containers and disposed of what they had stored.²²⁵ Like alcohol, reference was also made to usury,

gambling, adultery and idols. The abolition of these areas as a source of income had a significant impact on employment, on social relations and on the intellectual and political situation in Arabia. The pagan Arabs as a whole responded negatively, but the Muslims persisted in implementing the commands of the *shari'ah* despite the political, social, economic and intellectual consequences. This indicates that the Prophet and his companions saw the practices of the *jahiliyyah* as antithetical to Islamic ideals.

The leader of the *jahiliyyah* in Makkah, Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb, along with some others, prevented al-A'sha (d. 8/630) the poet from going to Madinah to see the Prophet and declaring Islam. Abu Sufyan advised the council of the Arab Tribal League that 'if al-A'sha embraced Islam his poetry would mobilize the rest of the Arabs against us'.²²⁶ At that time, poetry was rather influential, like the press today. Traditional poetry had the power to reach the soul and to impact on sociopolitical life.²²⁷ Therefore, the coalition of *jahiliyyah* told al-A'sha to return. They informed him that 'Muhammad prohibited wine, [he said], "I have not much left, I will finish what I have and quit", adultery [he said] "I am old man", gambling, and *riba* [he said] "I have none to do so."²²⁸ They gave al-A'sha one hundred red camels of a highly valued breed. Al-A'sha accepted the camels and planned to go back, but on his way back, he fell off his camel and died in AD 629. This act of preventing al-A'sha from reaching his destination and professing Islam indicates the political and economic aims of the *jahil* side. It also indicates that these individuals were fully aware of the opposition of Islam, not only to their gods but also to their domination and sovereignty in the land. The Makkans had prevented al-A'sha, because of his intellectual influence on the sociopolitical life and public opinion of the *jahiliyyah*, from becoming a Muslim. The *jahiliyyah* elements used their economic strength and succeeded. Thus, the *jahiliyyah* elements sought to use their political, social, economic and intellectual capabilities against Islam.

The Prophet established a military organization to protect the Muslims and the application of *shari'ah*. There were a few serious skirmishes between Islam and the *jahili* forces in AD 622–623 in the early years after the *hijrah*.²²⁹ The Muslims had become aware that the concept of *jahiliyyah* existed as more than simply opposition to Muslim beliefs. The Prophet led an expedition against the *jahili* caravans as they returned from Damascus in June AD 623.²³⁰ The aim of this campaign was not only economic, but also political, and led to a full-scale military confrontation. The Battle of Badr in the following January was the first battle between the *jahiliyyah* elements and the new Islamic state.²³¹

The Muslims won the war and their Islamic state became stronger and able to implement the Islamic rules in Madinah, where Muslims and non-Muslim others were living. Under the circumstances which emerged as a result of the Battle of Badr, *jahiliyyah* was used by the Qur'an as a sociopolitical concept. The Qur'an clarified this in these words: 'And pronounce judgement among them in accordance with what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires. . . . Do they wish to be judged by the laws of *jahiliyyah*?' (Qur'an 5:49–50). This is one of the Qur'anic verses in which the term *jahiliyyah* is explicitly mentioned. This verse is specifically concerned with the sovereignty of the Islamic state, its system and

laws. Exegetes view this verse as ‘an order from Allah to the Prophet to implement Islamic laws among the people, Muslims and non-Muslims who have or who have not Scriptures’.²³² Ibn Kathir added that

anything other than Islamic law is but the law of the *jahiliyyah*. . . . Any form of laws like that of the Tartars [Mongols] and their royal polity is *jahiliyyah*. Their King Jankizkhan wrote and issued the Constitution Al-Basiq [also called al-Yasiq and Yasa]. This contained a variety of laws from Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources. Some were derived by the king himself. He had interwoven all of these laws according to his vain desires. The king enforced the application of Al-Basiq, making it more important to the nation than the book of Allah. This is *jahiliyyah*, and he who does similarly is a *kafir*. . . .²³³

According to al-Tabarsi (d. 549/1154), ‘He who demands any *hukm* [rule] other than the *hukm* of Allah moves himself to the *hukm* of *jahiliyyah*.’²³⁴ Concerning this verse, Ibn Kathir refers to a hadith in al-Bukhari, transmitted by Ibn ‘Abbas (d. AD 687) which says: ‘The Prophet said: “Those whom Allah hates most are those who seek the way of *jahiliyyah*.”’²³⁵ In this context, *jahiliyyah* can be seen to be antithetical to the sovereignty of the Islamic state.

The second Qur’anic text in which the term *jahiliyyah* appeared is related to what is known as the Battle of Uhud (March AD 625). Like those of other battles, the account of the Battle of Uhud is familiar in the literature. However, in order to locate the term *jahiliyyah* within its context, a brief summary seems appropriate. In the aftermath of their defeat at Badr, the Arab Tribal League gathered around their leader Abu Sufyan to decide on avenging their defeat at the hands of the Muslims. Armed financially, the council of the Arab Tribal League engaged two poets to influence the tribes against the Muslims. This indicates why Abu Sufyan prevented the poet al-A’sha from seeing Muhammad and declaring Islam, as previously discussed. It also indicates the intellectual dimension of the force which opposed Islam. Abu Sufyan began to organize his ranks in preparation for war against the Muslims. Meanwhile, Muhammad had learned about this news from his uncle al-Abbas.²³⁶ After consulting his companions, Muhammad organized his fighting force and moved them to the area of Mount Uhud, where his army occupied a strategic position on the slopes. Thus, the cavalry of *jahiliyyah* would have literally an uphill task in attacking the Muslims. On the left of the slope was a narrow ridge. Muhammad stationed his archers there with strict instructions to guard the ridge and on no account whatsoever to leave their position: ‘Protect our backs, and if you see the enemy killing us, do not come to help us, and if you see us winning do not move.’²³⁷

At the beginning of the engagement, the Muslims launched an attack at three points, penetrating deeper into the enemy ranks. The commanders were ‘Ali and Hamzah on either side and, in the middle, Muhammad himself in full armour. As the Muslims advanced, a great number of the enemy were killed and the others were forced to retreat, leaving behind them their equipment and material (booty). When the men who were deployed on the ridge saw the success of their

comrades, they became excited and thought the battle was completely over. Desirous of worldly goods, most of them forgot the order of their commander (the Prophet) and left their positions and ran for the booty. Khalid Ibn al-Walid,²³⁸ who was on the right side of the *jahili* camp, seeing the ridge without Muslim archers, galloped his cavalry across the ridge and attacked the Muslims from the rear. In the confusion, the Muslim forces were surrounded and were not able to distinguish friend from enemy. Muslims killed Muslims. Muhammad was wounded, and soon there were cries of ‘Muhammad is dead’. Muslims were in total disarray and demoralized until ‘Ali came to the rescue. Muhammad recovered and the Muslims managed to retreat back to the slopes. Abu Sufyan, having heard that Muhammad was dead, saw no point in pursuing the Muslims.²³⁹

It is significant to note that, had those who were ordered not to leave their positions on the ridge remained there and obeyed the order of their commander, the Prophet, the Muslims would not have been defeated. In this regard the Qur’an (3:150–154) pointed out a warning for the Muslims. They should follow God’s order. God is their protector and their best helper. The Qur’an also pointed out that God fulfilled His promise to them, the victory of the Muslims in the first stage of the battle, but it also showed them the change and the reason for the change in the second stage. It was within the context of these events that the term *jahiliyyah* appeared, as in the following:

Believers, if you yield to the infidels they will drag you back to unbelief. . . . But Allah is your protector. He is the best of helpers. We will put terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. . . . Allah fulfilled His promise to you [on the day of Uhud]²⁴⁰ when, by His leave, you defeated them. But afterwards your courage failed you; discord reigned among you and you disobeyed the Apostle after he brought you within sight of what you wished for. Some chose this world; others chose the world to come. He allowed you to be defeated to test you. . . . Remember how you fled in panic while the Apostle at your rear was calling out to you. Therefore, He paid you with sorrow for every vexation. . . . Then, after sorrow, He let peace fall upon you – a sleep that overtook some, while others lay troubled by their wrong suspicions of Allah – suspicions of the *jahiliyyah*. They asked ‘Have we any hand in the matter [of defeat]?’ Say to them: ‘All is in the hands of Allah.’ They conceal in their minds what they do not disclose to you. They complain, ‘If we had had anything to do with this matter, we should not have been slain here’. Say to them ‘Had you stayed in your homes, those of you who were destined to be slain would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; for it was Allah’s will to test your faith and courage. . . .’

(Qur’an 3:150–154)

Based on this text, Muslim scholars referred to some of those who broke the order of the Prophet and left their positions as hypocrites.²⁴¹ Also, Ibn Abbas pointed out that the Muslims who left their positions erred in doing so. In referring to them, Ibn ‘Abbas used words such as ‘rebellious’ and ‘disobedient’ (*‘Asi*). Words such

as ‘disobedience’ and ‘disputation’ or ‘argument’ are used in the Qur’anic text earlier. The text pointed out that God forgave those Muslims who erred, but the hypocrites who left their positions and argued over the war were described as *jahiliyyah*. This distinction, according to Ibn Abbas, occurred on the battlefield, as mentioned in the verses under discussion: ‘Then, after sorrow, He let peace fall upon you – a sleep that overtook some, while others lay troubled by their wrong suspicions of Allah – suspicions of the *jahiliyyah*. They asked “Have we any hand in the...matter” Those true “Muslims” have felt “safely in a sleep”, but the hypocrites did not. They remained “alert to feel the pain of their own wounds, the terror of war and death, and to suffer the pain of the defeat”.²⁴² The term *jahiliyyah* can be seen as antithetical to the sovereignty of the Islamic state.

The third Qur’anic text in which the term *jahiliyyah* occurs is in surah (33), Confederates. In this surah, the Arab Tribal League had come in AD 627 to be labelled by the Qur’an *Ahzab* (Confederates: coalitions). The Qur’an says, ‘When the true believers saw the Confederates, they said: “This is what Allah and His apostle have promised us...”’ (Qur’an 33:22). ‘They think that the Confederates would never withdraw...’ (Qur’an 33:20). In these and other verses, the word Confederates, as Ibn Abbas says, refers to all of the The Arab Tribal League.²⁴³ In the context of this event involving the Confederates, the Qur’an 33:25–33 contrasted *jahiliyyah* with the obedience to the Sovereignty of Allah, His Law.

The Confederates realized that the power of the sovereignty of the Islamic state was increasing daily and represented a danger to them. The Confederates collected their forces, prepared them and their army marched towards Madinah. As soon as Muhammad heard this news he gathered his consultative council and sought their advice. Muslims were all frightened by the size of the enemy and his forces. However, a shrewd individual named Salman the Persian, who was knowledgeable in matters of war, suggested to the Prophet digging a trench around Madinah, thus constituting an obstacle to the enemy. The Prophet liked the idea. All began to implement this strategy and the Prophet joined in the operation of digging, which was completed in six days. When the Confederates arrived in February AD 627 they were stunned by the strategy, for they were unfamiliar with it. Both sides camped with the trench between them. The city of Madinah and its citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, remained secure. Exchanges across the trench began, but the Confederates realized that they would be unable to cross the trench to capture the city of Madinah. The case then is the case of Sovereignty; the Sovereignty of God’s law or the Sovereignty of the law of *jahiliyyah* (one system or the other). After about a month, the Confederates gave up and turned back to Makkah.²⁴⁴ The victory for Muslims enabled their Islamic state to become stronger and more influential.

It was within this context that the term *jahiliyyah* appeared in the Qur’an. After telling the story of the war which ended with the discomfiture of the Confederates, the Qur’an laid down some salutary principles to safeguard women’s honour, position and dignity in the new Islamic state. The Qur’an says:

God turned back the infidels in their rage, and they went away empty-handed. He brought down from their strongholds those who had supported

them. . . . He made you masters of their land. . . . Prophet, say to your wives: 'If you seek this nether life and all its finery, come, I will make provision for you and release you honorably. But if you seek God and His Apostle and the abode of the hereafter, know that God has prepared a rich recompense for those of you who do good works.' Wives of the Prophet, those of you who clearly commit a lewd act shall be doubly punished. . . . But those of you who obey God and His Apostle and do good works shall be doubly recompensed. . . . Wives of the Prophet, you are not like other women. If you fear Allah, do not be too complaisant in you speech, lest the lecherous-hearted should lust after you. Show discretion in what you say. Stay in your homes and do not display your finery as women used to do in the days of the first *jahiliyyah*. Attend to your prayers, give alms and obey Allah and His Apostle. (Qur'an 33:25–33)

Muslim scholars view the command in this verse as a general command to include, within the Prophet's household, Muslim women in general.²⁴⁵ The opinion of the exegetes is that the Prophet's household had a special position and special responsibilities in the matter of guiding and instructing women who came into the fold of Islam. While those of the Prophet's household were to be kind and gentle to all, they were to be guarded in their special position lest people take advantage of their kindness. They were to make no vulgar worldly displays as in the times of the first *jahiliyyah*. Thus, the power of *jahiliyyah* in this text contrasts the power of Sovereignty, that is, the highest governmental and legal authority of the Islamic state.

Based on earlier Muslim scholars, al-Qurtubi pointed out that 'the Qur'anic expression "first *jahiliyyah*" does not mean there is second or other *jahiliyyah*, but points to the condition of *jahiliyyah*. The Qur'an made it [*jahiliyyah*] first to express the darkness of *jahiliyyah*. The expression "first *jahiliyyah*" is like your saying *al-jahiliyyah al-jahla*' in order to express the multitude of *jahl*. . .'.²⁴⁶ Similarly, al-Zamakhshari emphasized that the phrase 'first *jahiliyyah*' is an expression mirroring the intensity of *jahiliyyah* as one says *al-jahiliyyah al-jahla*. He also stressed that 'the *jahiliyyah* before Islam was *jahiliyyat al-kufr* (disbelief), but after Islam the *jahiliyyah* was deviation, profligacy and going astray from the right path'.²⁴⁷ Al-Baydawi, as asserted by Goldziher, pointed out that 'the first *jahiliyyah* comprised the whole of the pre-Islamic time and the new *jahiliyyah* refers to relapses into paganism after the Prophet's appearance'.²⁴⁸ This means that the concept of *jahiliyyah* is not a particular period in time or place, nor is it confined to a particular race; rather, it is a condition that can appear at any place at any time.

The fourth Qur'anic text in which the term *jahiliyyah* occurs is in surah 48. The Qur'an used the term *jahiliyyah* in the context of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which was conducted with the Quraysh in April AD 628. This is also simply a political context and relates to a matter of Sovereignty. Six years after the immigration to Madinah, the Prophet with his companions decided to visit the Holy Mosque in Makkah and perform *hajj* or pilgrimage. This duty is one of the pillars of Islam, as stated in the Qur'an (3:96–97). On their way to Makkah, the Muslims became

aware of the news that the Quraysh members were determined not to allow them to visit the holy sites and achieve their purposes. The Muslims camped in an area called Hudaibiyah. The negotiations between the two sides resulted in an agreement, which included the following: (i) a ten-year cessation of hostilities; (ii) the Prophet would not visit Makkah that year but might do so the following year along with whomever he wished on the condition that they came armed with swords and bows only; (iii) the two parties mutually agreed not to interfere in the affairs of the other and to allow people to express their loyalty freely to either Muhammad or Quraysh; and (iv) if anyone from Quraysh adopted Islam, the Muslims had to send the person back to Quraysh. The Quraysh, however, did not have to return any Muslims who came over to their tribes.

The Quraysh were blustering and agitated, but also objected to introductory words such as ‘In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. . . . This is from Muhammad the Apostle of Allah. . . .’ The Quraysh refused to include these titles in the treaty. The prophet remained calm, and got the substance of Quraysh’s demand embodied in the Treaty without worrying about words. Although the terms of the Treaty appeared to the companions at first to be unfair to the Muslims, they remained faithful to their leader. In this regard, the Qur’anic verse 48:26 in which the term *jahiliyyah* appeared, brought to the Muslims calmness and tranquillity as a gift of Allah. They had earned a right to tranquillity by their obedience to their leader and to his better judgement.²⁴⁹ In this regard the Qur’an says,

Those were the disbelievers who debarred you from the Sacred Mosque and prevented your offerings from reaching their destination. . . . And while bigotry – the bigotry of *jahiliyyah* – was holding its sway in the hearts of the unbelievers, Allah sent down His tranquillity on His Apostle and on the faithful and made the word of piety binding on them, for they were most worthy and deserving of it. Allah has knowledge of all things.

(Qur’an 48:25–26)

As is clear from the texts above, the Qur’an used the term *jahiliyyah* only in the Madinah period. It used the term *jahiliyyah*, specifically, in the context of the extreme difficulties that faced the Islamic state and its order. The Qur’an used the term *jahiliyyah* in the contexts of the Battle of Badr (January AD 624), the Battle of Uhud (March AD 625), the Battle of the Confederates (February AD 627) and finally in the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah (April AD 628). The term *jahiliyyah*, then, appeared in the Qur’an in the final years of the Madinan period. The time and the context in which the Qur’an used the term *jahiliyyah* as detailed above suggests that the political connotation of the concept of *jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of Islam, its state and its law.

The Muslims saw Islam also as a universal system of life not confined to a particular nation or specific generation.²⁵⁰ This may have been the reason the Prophet sent letters to monarchs and chiefs in the rest of the world at that time. In AH 7/AD 629 the Prophet wrote to Heraclius, the Emperor of the Roman

Empire, to Chosroes, King of Persia, to Muqawqas, the Roman Governor of Egypt, and to Najashi, the Negus of Abyssinia.²⁵¹

After the death of the Prophet, his successor Abu Bakr understood that *jahiliyyah* represented opposition to the sovereignty of the Islamic state. Following the death of the Prophet, some of the newest converts lapsed in their allegiance to Islam and refused to pay tax (*zakat*).²⁵² Those who were considered apostates retained their Islamic belief that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet, but rejected one of Allah's *shari'ah*. This act and the like are known in the literature as apostasy, which simply means *jahiliyyah*.²⁵³ The point then is that the concept of *jahiliyyah*, as conceived by the first Muslims, was a political, economic, social, intellectual and moral concept, opposing the sovereignty of the Islamic state.

Concluding remarks

The word *jahiliyyah* is a term given by Islam. The term *jahl* and its derivations including *jahalalah*, not *jahiliyyah*, are evident in pre-Islamic Arabic. Scholars have used the word *jahl* and its derivations to investigate the concept of *jahiliyyah*, which was later used by Islam in a different context. The word *jahl* has been observed in pre-Islamic Arabic to have had several meanings, most of them contradicting each other. Therefore, the concept of *jahiliyyah* in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is different from the concept of the same term in the Qur'an. This is because the explicit term *jahiliyyah* did not exist in Arabian literature before Islam but was given by Islam.

Thus the difference is between something that did exist and something that did not. In the Qur'an, the term *jahiliyyah* is not antithetical to knowledge (*'ilm*), gentleness (*hilm*) or any of their word groups, and it does not mean lack of knowledge. The term *jahiliyyah* was itself used by the Qur'an in Madinah after the migration (*hijrah*) of Muhammad and his followers to Madinah and during the founding of the Islamic state. In this context, the Qur'anic usage of the term clearly expressed the political, social, economic, intellectual and moral connotations of the term *jahiliyyah*. In short, the Qur'anic concept of *jahiliyyah* is exclusively used as antithetical to the concept of Sovereignty, the highest governmental and legal authority. Submission to this Sovereignty is simply Islam.

3 Qutb's intellectual life and character

This chapter explores important aspects of Qutb's formative years during his rural life in his village and then in modern Cairo, where he graduated, was employed and was engaged in the affairs of modern Egypt. The discussion will focus on his early ideas and responses that found their way into his later writings, his involvement in sociopolitical activism, and his uneasy relationship with the British-backed government in Egypt and later with Gamal Abd al-Nasser.

Rural phase

Sayyid Qutb Ibrahim Husayn Shadhili was born on 9 October 1906 in the village of Musha in the Province of Asyut, 375 km south of Cairo.¹ The decade of his birth was a remarkable period in the history of modern Egypt. In June 1906, several Egyptian peasants were executed in Dinshawai following a clash with British soldiers who had shot the wife of a local official. This incident triggered a spate of anti-British activity. Political, social and religious organizations were established. The nationalist party, established in 1907, called for independence, and advocated parliamentary government in Egypt.² Reaction against British occupation and Western ideas became visible.³ Egypt then regained partial independence, but full independence was not achieved until 1954. In this context, Qutb's life witnessed the most significant phase of colonialism, political struggle and intellectual diversity in Egypt. It was, as Abu Rabi says, 'a time of collision and struggle between opinions and parties'.⁴

To appreciate his later position and the reasons that led him to critically assess his surroundings in Egypt and take an Islamic role in his response, it is necessary to consider his rural life experience. In *Tifl min al-Qaryah* (A Child from the Village), Qutb depicts a typical picture of how life in an Egyptian village was in the early decades of the twentieth century. This is an eye-witness account, not only of the time and the place, but also of his early activity and response to events that remained in his mind for later reference. Qutb's later writings could be seen as a result of his rural experience and 'social commitments to the plight of the poor in society'.⁵ The association between his experience of rural life and his later writings is evident, as he also admitted.⁶

Qutb says that he came from a notable rural Muslim family in a village of mixed Muslim and Christian populations. His parents were good practising Muslims.⁷ Qutb's father was also a local leader of the National Party in Asyut province, and sponsor of the Party newspaper *al-Liwa'*. The family home was a political centre where nationalists usually came to read the Party newspaper and discuss the political issues of the time.⁸ Within this environment of politics and Islamic values, Sayyid Qutb grew up in an atmosphere of awareness of his sociopolitical environment.

In 1912, Qutb was sent to the village primary school. To encourage him, his father bought him a uniform, which gave Qutb a sense of his 'distinguished personality and dignity'.⁹ On his first day, a former army officer visited the school to teach 'sports and gymnastics'.¹⁰ The man was very strict and Qutb, afraid of him, absented himself from school for about a month or so. A year later, shaykh Ahmad, the teacher of the Qur'an, was replaced because 'he was not familiar with mathematics and other aspects of modern curriculum'.¹¹ This caused the teacher to claim that the government was planning to cease teaching the Qur'an to students.¹² The shaykh had his own *kuttab* (traditional school) and wanted the children to leave the government school and go to his *kuttab*.¹³ Qutb's father gave his word to the shaykh and Qutb was duly transferred to the *kuttab*. However, Qutb himself missed the modern education and the facilities of the government school, and he finally won his struggle to receive a modern education. Although this was secular, the school became a 'holy place' to him, 'like the mosque'.¹⁴

This antipathy between traditional and modern schooling resonated through the village and came to be seen as an impasse between traditionalism and modernism. Curriculum areas became the basis for an ideological dispute in which Qutb participated by defending the 'modern system', while supporting the notion of the memorization of the Qur'an, which he had done himself at the age of ten. Thus, the young Qutb found himself balanced between modernism and traditionalism.¹⁵ This is reflected in his interest in modern sciences, in his desire to seek a *via media* between modern sciences and the classics. It was a path he continued to tread as he sought to reconcile the Qur'an with modern science. These early observations developed with him throughout his life. Later, Qutb did not reject modern sciences as such, but identified the 'critical problem of civilization detached from God and His arrangement for life'.¹⁶

The government decided to develop the village primary school and to accommodate the education of girls, a significant social change for the village of Musha in Upper Egypt. Seven girls under the age of ten were duly enrolled. They caused a stir amongst the boys, who wanted to know more about these 'strangers'.¹⁷ One day after school, some boys gathered outside the school and tried to engage the girls in conversation. The young Qutb was interested to know more about this new world of girls but he found himself unable to go along with the boys. He was very aware that this type of behaviour simply did not fit in with the customary traditions of his family. His silence drew attention to him and, consequently, as he notes later in his autobiography, had the effect of attracting 'the girls to his house

asking to play with his older sisters'.¹⁸ He was soon aware that they had not come to play with his sisters but with him. He responded to their trust and soon became the object of respect and love. One of the girls was a relative. According to Qutb, she was not beautiful by village standards – 'she was rosy cheeked'¹⁹ – but her beauty lay in 'her distinctive character'.²⁰ She was his first love, which even modern Cairo failed to change. After a few years in Cairo, he returned to seek her hand, only to find it was too late. She was married.²¹ Qutb's conservative background and his religious family may have influenced his views regarding women. His own thinking on women's issues and his substantial insights into their needs suggest that this is the case.

The relationship between the sexes is part of human nature, and the two sexes cannot prevent this relationship, because they cannot stand against their nature. Qutb dealt with this issue with maturity even as a boy. He was clearly advanced for his age. He was also able to appreciate Islamic principles on issues relating to life, and to remain in harmony with his family's Islamic background. He felt no need to rebel against the customary standards of his family or of the families of girls he knew at the school.

Qutb's quiet demeanour and desire for education helped him to build a good relationship with the teaching staff at school. The principal even lent him books on poetry and religious topics.²² Qutb collected blank paper from previous years and transferred the books onto it in his own handwriting before he returned the books to the principal.²³ It was a considerable effort that reflected his determination and desire for education and knowledge. He became familiar with the poetry of famous Egyptian nationalists.²⁴ This was the starting point of his growing interest in poetry, and through these influential figures he learned of other social and political issues. In 1919, at the age of 13, he experimented with writing poetry, a skill he was to develop gradually until he published his first poem 'The New Life' in 1921.²⁵

As a young man yearning to learn, Qutb came into contact with Salih, a travelling salesman who used to come to Qutb's village selling books. The young Qutb became a valued customer, who usually bought a variety of books. His library at the time contained some twenty-five books, which included poetry, novels, detective stories, Islamic history and biographies of heroes such as 'Antarah'.²⁶ It also contained a copy of *A Thousand and One Nights*, books of instruction in magic and augury, such as *Fortune Telling* and exorcism, incantations, charms and incense burning.²⁷ Qutb would also exchange books with other people. He became well known among the intellectuals of his village.²⁸ He was even more well known when he took up soothsaying. Boys and girls, even the older ones, were soon making appointments for the young Qutb to tell their fortunes.²⁹ Qutb was usually applying his knowledge to practical ends. It was to become one of the hallmarks of his character.

The Islamic teachings on moral conduct that Qutb absorbed from his parents and from school were put into practice, as with regard to the relation between the sexes. When he started learning poetry, he started to write it. His reading on the occult led to fortune telling. When he learned how to read and write formal

Arabic, he started to read newspapers and attend nationalists' meetings and listen to their discussion about Egypt's struggle for independence from Britain.³⁰ He would have asked who the British were and why they were in Egypt. What were the nationalists about? These and other questions found their way to his mind and had to be answered.

Qutb's reading probably gave him some of the answers. He tells that he became acquainted with influential nationalist figures.³¹ He was so impressed with a volume of poetry by Ali al-Ghayati, *My Nationality*, published in July 1910, that he memorized the entire book. The book's subject was Egypt's independence. It criticized occupation and promoted the cause of Egyptian autonomy in the form of parliamentary government.³² *My Nationality* had considerable sociopolitical impact in the decade of its publication, as did Qutb's own book *Milestones* in the 1960s. Al-Ghayati was prosecuted and jailed by a British judge.³³ These episodes can be seen as Qutb's initiation into the world of politics.

Qutb's intellectual pursuits led him to an awareness of political and social problems, including those represented by the nationalist struggle for independence. Even at 13, the young Qutb acted as if he was a member of the Nationalist Party, to which he was later affiliated and in which he was viewed as critical to the struggle for Egypt's independence.

His own experience of leadership as a young man stood him in good stead during the 1919 revolution.³⁴ He took an active role in the student rallies, demonstrations and processions that sprang up in most Egyptian towns and villages. Qutb wrote speeches that included his 'somewhat childish poetry, and he addressed various groups in his village'.³⁵ His support for the 1919 revolution would suggest that, despite his youth, Qutb was aware of complex issues well beyond his understanding. He could see that the success of the revolution meant independence and freedom for Egypt. He expressed his own desire for responsibility. He did what he could and began to form a notion about the power of the people and their inalienable right for social reform.³⁶ For this, he would finally pay the ultimate price.

Qutb's experience of rural life was not limited to his home. He was also involved in village life. This, although it was prosperous, did not mean there was no evidence of what he later termed ignorance (*jahl*), a fact observed and retained for later reference. For instance, a dervish (*waliyy* or *shaykh*) was buried in his village, Musha. He was a holy man in the eyes of the credulous villagers. They used the dervish's name as an alternative title for Qutb's village. Consequently, Qutb's village Musha had unduly come to be called the village of the *waliyy*.³⁷ The holy *waliyy* created an unholy identity crisis for Qutb's village. While his burial was the end of the history of Musha, the buried *waliyy* was survived by a chain of followers. Among them one also lived in the village. He was recognized by most people also as a holy man with the power to cast out devils. It was also believed that the *waliyy* could go to Madinah, in Saudi Arabia, to visit the Prophet and return the same night.³⁸ This was a strange story to Qutb, who, at his age, was mystified as to how the dervish could accomplish such a feat.

Among the acts that Qutb later termed *jahli* customs, in both the general and technical meanings of the term *jahl* associated with the dervish, was the custom of

villagers to kiss his hands and to assume that his ecstatic state and psychological disorder gave him the power to control devils. He would walk around the village in bare feet and even sometimes without clothes, the sun of Upper Egypt beating down directly on his bare skin.³⁹ He carried a staff that came to be likened by the credulous villagers to the staff of Moses. It was considered 'a holy staff from the paradise'.⁴⁰ These residues of *jahili* attitudes took the form of religion. Since these people were Muslims, they assumed their conduct towards their *waliyy* was Islamic. This struck the young Qutb as wrong and caused him to prefer secular education over the traditional Islamic education.⁴¹ Qutb's early responses to what he considered as *jahl* may have remained in his mind to be articulated in later years. Such issues and their implications for religio-political relations attract a great deal of emphasis in Qutb's later writings.

Qutb later declared that, in Islam, there is no recognition of either shaykhs or dervishes as religious figures, although they are popularly known as men of religion. In this regard, Qutb, in the 1950s, emphasized that

In the souls of this generation, there are dark doubts about the rule of Islam. Some of these doubts emanate from the ignominious *jahl* about everything in this religion. . . . Some other doubts emanate from confusing the idea of religion itself with what is called the 'men of religion'. . . . These people are the farthest of Allah's creations to represent Islam and its idea.⁴²

There are some people who think that the rule of Islam is meant to be the rule of *shaykhs* and *dervishes*! Whence have they got this? [It is] from their superficial and shallow knowledge and the associated circumstances of this generation. There is nothing of these in the pure and correct Islam. There are no special clothes for *shaykhs* and *dervishes*.⁴³

In the words of Ibrahim Abu Rabi, 'Qutb's rejection of the mediation role of the *shaykh* was transformed later on in his life to a severe critique of the role of the religious establishment in society. . . . It was a triumph for rationality. . . [it] illustrates the wider social concern that Qutb became committed to as a young man. Later, his concern is translated into a deep sympathy with and commitment to uncover the plight of the poor in Egyptian society. As a result, Qutb seeks solutions to this overwhelming social problem and finds them in Islam.'⁴⁴

Modern phase

Qutb left village life behind him. His family had wanted to send him to Cairo to complete his education but the plan had to be postponed due to the 1919 revolution.⁴⁵ The following year, Qutb set off for Cairo, where he was to live with his maternal uncle, himself a graduate from al-Azhar now working as a teacher and journalist. His uncle, like Qutb's father, was an active nationalist.⁴⁶

It was 1920 and Qutb was just 14 years of age when he came to Cairo to further his education; that was to last for 11 years. Initially he enrolled in a teacher training school. Three years later, after qualifying as a teacher in the government

primary school, he opted for further education and enrolled at the *Dar al-'Ulum*, preparatory to university studies. He was there from 1925 until 1929. This period provided a good general education in applied science, history and humanities, as well as Arabic and Islamic studies. On completing the course, he enrolled in the Faculty of *Dar al-'Ulum*. This combined Arabic and Islamic literature with secular orientation, a cross between al-Azhar and a modern Western university. He graduated in 1933 at the age of 27 with a Licentiate in Arabic Language and Literature. His curriculum had included logic, philosophy, political history, economics, Arabic, Islamic studies, scholastic theology and languages such as ancient Hebrew. Qutb was not satisfied with *Dar al-'Ulum's* curriculum and pointed out its deficits, such as the lack of teaching of foreign languages.

The lack of modern foreign languages at the *Dar al-'Ulum* at this time caused Taha Husayn to label its graduates *jahl* (ignorant of foreign languages). In response, Qutb told Husayn

No one should assume that we are happy with *Dar al-'Ulum's* curriculum. There is no doubt that the *jahl* (ignorance; deficiency) in [modern] foreign languages decreases not only the teaching capability of its graduates, but also hinders them in upgrading themselves by following and being aware of the development and intellectual advances in the world.⁴⁷

Qutb took the issue a step further and put into practice what he had learnt about curriculum planning. He prepared a proposal to develop the student curriculum and handed it, personally, to the Dean of the Faculty of *Dar al-'Ulum*.⁴⁸ Such action by a student in 1930, particularly in Egypt, indicates Qutb's confidence in the rightness of his thinking. It is an action that reflects both his initiative and his capacity to follow through ideas with action.

Qutb was a scholarly student known for his debates in the fields of poetry, novels and literary criticism. On 28 February 1932, a year before his graduation, he gave a lecture in *Dar al-'Ulum* entitled 'The Task of the Poet and the Poetry of the Present Generation'. His lecturer, Mahdi 'Allam, introduced him warmly. After Qutb had finished, his lecturer commented: 'Sayyid Qutb has made me feel proud that he is my student. Having heard his lecture, I have to say that if Qutb were my only student, it would be enough for me to feel proud.'⁴⁹ This lecture was published as a book in the following year and was described by William Shepard as 'a significant work of criticism'.⁵⁰

In 1933, Qutb commenced work with the Ministry of Education in varying capacities, first at the Faculty of the *Dar al-'Ulum* as a 'Repeater' for about three years, before being transferred to Cultural Affairs and Inspection, which took him to various regions until he was returned to Cairo.⁵¹ On 3 November 1948, Qutb was sent to the United States on an educational mission. Upon his return in August 1950, Qutb secured a position in the office of the Minister of Education and worked there until his resignation on 18 October 1952.⁵²

From his early days in Cairo Qutb was a supporter of the Nationalist Party, which was associated with national independence, parliamentary government

and social reform. He participated in literary debates and published in the literary journals.⁵³ His articles were sharply focused and highly critical of the British-backed royal government, causing him to become the focus of attention. The government began to move him around within the Ministry of Education. In 1935, for instance, they moved him twice. On 1 September 1935, he was sent to Dumyat in eastern Egypt, and, three months later, to Bani Suwayf in South Egypt. In November 1936, he found himself once again in Cairo. This constant displacement made Qutb feel like a vagrant without a permanent home. Even his function within education had varied from teaching in *Dar al-'Ulum*, to cultural affairs, to translation and then to school inspection. The Minister's view of Qutb was that he should be 'dismissed, expelled, or sent into exile'. He informed Qutb that the 'General Security has notified me [the Minister] that you [Qutb] are working for the opposition and your file is not clean. We have had two warnings about your political articles while you have been an employee'.⁵⁴

In his response to the Minister, Qutb said

General Security? What is the General Security? An employee? Who is this employee? Is this employee a slave? Has he no opinion on the issues that concern his country? . . . The Minister then told me that I would be exiled, therefore, I decided to resign, but Taha Husayn rejected my resignation.⁵⁵

Taha Husayn was then a consultant to the Ministry of Education.⁵⁶ He discussed this matter with Qutb, who records it as follows:

Husayn: You cannot resign while I am here in the Ministry.

Qutb: But I am not one to be subjected to the whim of the Ministry. Confront me with their accusations. The Minister can do whatever he likes and I will do what I like.

Husayn: What are you going to do if you resign? I know of your heavy responsibilities.

Qutb: I will do what I can. I am not incompetent like those in the Ministry.

Husayn: You cannot do anything these days. Martial law means you can be arrested anywhere, or you will be under house arrest even if you have resigned from a government job. So, staying within the system as an employee is better for you than to live outside it as a displaced person.

Qutb: I prefer to be displaced. Then . . . [I] will be a hero in the reign of the next government. Why not? Has not heroism so deteriorated in our country that one acquires it through exile and displacement or through the lack of promotion in such a regime?

Husayn: Do you reject their allegations against you?

Qutb: Do I know their allegations against me?

Husayn: Things you said to friends and others in the coffee shop *al-Liwa'*. This was about some of the ministers, and about underground opposition to the previous government.

- Qutb:* I am in the habit of publishing my opinions with a signature. Also it is not my habit to chat in public places or even to work underground.
- Husayn:* For me, you are trustworthy. Leave this issue to me and I will see what I can do.⁵⁷

Qutb reported on the result of Husayn's mediation as follows:

Because of the Minister's inflexibility, I was appointed to the role of inspector in Upper Egypt for two months. I was free to choose the schools and areas. I then had to write a comprehensive report about the teaching method of the Arabic language, explaining my view of reform and general development. In addition to the generosity of Husayn, I found encouragement in this mission. Therefore, I fulfilled my duty.⁵⁸

Character and social relations

Qutb's character and social interaction at work were indicative of his integrity, independence and confidence. He was a man of penetrating insights and ideas. Since early boyhood, Qutb seemed eager to achieve intellectual maturity. He was described by some of his friends as 'a man more likely to listen than to speak, but when he does, speaks calmly and modestly; an extremely conscientious person'.⁵⁹ Qutb was a man who held fast to his conviction and who spoke the truth openly, cost what it may. At work he was a friendly conversationalist and strategist. This is clearly seen in his arguments with Taha Husayn, who himself described Qutb as having two characteristics 'idealism (*mithaliyyah*) and moral rectitude (*'inad*)'.⁶⁰ Qutb was also an easygoing and warm person with a sense of humour that expressed itself in an apt way. He wrote of politicians at the time, calling them

Those men of the past generation, all of them are unqualified to work for the present generation – their mentality is of halfway solutions. They have been raised on the notion that Britain is indefatigable and that poverty is as inevitable as disease. All of them believe – if any of them have enough energy to believe a thing – that Allah created the world in six days.⁶¹

He was particularly critical of the government for its stand on the anti-British militias in the Canal Zone towns. The government had sought to bring the militias under its control. This would effectively place the public militias under British control. Qutb expressed such criticism ironically, saying,

The government thinks with a pacifist mentality in the midst of the battle. It is still working diplomatically while Egyptian blood pours into the ground. I am not saying to the government to declare war or move its army in such circumstances, but I do say that the government should let people do their duty. The people will do their duty whether the government stands with them or against them. Otherwise the government will be responsible for creating civil war in the country.⁶²

Qutb was perspicacious, able to utilize a given idea as well as express it ironically. His dialogue with Taha Husayn is one of many examples. Qutb's interaction with the minister also reveals that Qutb responded with a sense of irony to the matter of his activism. Analyzing al-'Aqqad's poetry in 1938, Qutb selected an ironically amorous title *Ghazal al-Aqqad* (Lyrics of al-'Aqqad), for a series of articles.⁶³ This title illustrates that language is greater than the limited mould of words. Language is culture. His intention was not the dry translation of the word *ghazal* 'lyrics', as many perhaps have thought. The intention behind his selection of this title lies in the cultural tone of the phrase itself. It is to draw attention to his critical series and, specifically, to the quality of lyrics written by one in old age. It is here the culture of language enters to suggest al-'Aqqad's emotion and love at his age. Considering al-'Aqqad's eminent position in the Arab world, we can understand Qutb's point behind his chosen title *ghazal*. In this sense, Qutb analysed the relationship between *age*, *love* and *quality* (the influence of emotional experience and age on the quality of lyrics). To Qutb, age reduces the proficiency and the quality of lyrics. The relation between these three elements had been a subject of discussion between Qutb and al-'Aqqad since 1928. In this year Qutb was 22, and al-'Aqqad 39 years old. Their discussion included the lyrics of Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), who also wrote his inspiration after he turned 70.⁶⁴ Al-'Aqqad appreciated Hardy's lyrics and published his opinion in *Al-Balagh al-Ushbu'i* in March 1928.⁶⁵ The following week, Qutb's response to al-'Aqqad's view was also published in the same journal *Al-Balagh* under the title *Ghazal al-Shuyukh of Ra'y al-'Aqqad* (The Lyrics of the Aged in al-'Aqqad's opinion).⁶⁶ This title also conforms the tone of Qutb's intention in the previous title *Ghazal al-Aqqad* (Lyrics of al-'Aqqad).

However, later al-'Aqqad published a volume of his own poetry *Wahy al-Arba'in* (Inspiration of the Fortieth), to express his feelings at this age. Qutb critically analysed this volume in a special lecture for the Rabitat al-Adab al-Jadid (The League of the New Literature). This lecture, as Qutb indicated, was published in the *Al-Fihad* journal (1934).⁶⁷ In his lecture, Qutb again questioned the ability to write lyrics of good quality in old age. In this sense, Qutb analysed *Inspiration of the Fortieth*, about which was written by al-'Aqqad when he turned forty. In his analysis, Qutb also renewed his question about al-'Aqqad's earlier opinion about Thomas Hardy's proficiency in writing lyrics (*ghazal*) in his seventies. In his response to Qutb, al-'Aqqad's opinion at forty confirmed his earlier opinion about the relation between *lyrics*, *love* and *age*. In his introduction to another volume of his own poetry, *A'sir Maghrib* (Storms of Evening), al-'Aqqad answered Qutb as follows:

When I look in the mirror and see this weak skin, I pray to Allah to save my heart from weakness. . . . Since I feel the response of the hearts around me, I feel no pain or sorrow. . . . I will remain collected and with silent veneration, I will keep waiting for my eternal rest. However, the time which refuses but to steal [i.e. years of his life], does not steal or leave everything. It continues to quiver this weak structure [body] in its evening more than when the body is in its noon disorder. . . . My opinion about *Shaykh Hardy's ghazal* (lyrics) is not

new nor it is because I have my own *Inspiration of the Fortieth*. I appreciate his *ghazal* (lyrics) because I see that the feelings and expressions do not stop at a certain age but continue after the age of youthfulness. The feelings and expressions are the essence of *ghazal* (lyrics) and singing. . . .⁶⁸

I said in response to the writer Sayyid Qutb (*al-adib al-ustath*) that the case is not theories of different views and arguments. The reality is that the proficiency in lyrics comes in old age sometimes. We know that Hardy wrote his lyrics after he turned seventy. It was excellent and appreciated by many. . . . In my view, lyrics are something other than love, even if love is the subject and the meaning about which lyrics revolves. Love is a feeling common to Man and other creatures. . . . There is no doubt that the poet cannot produce excellent lyrics without love. I do not mean physical relations. Love is not physical relations. . . . I mean the relationship between two souls. . . . There is no doubt that the poet cannot produce excellent lyrics without love, but also there is no doubt that love can get stronger when lyrics are weak.⁶⁹

As this reflects Qutb's sense of humour and constructive argument, it also created a special atmosphere in intellectual circles. These theories were like a big bang for Arabic readers. Because of public demand, Qutb shifted his critical analysis to another series called *Ghazal al-Shuyukh* (Lyrics of the Seniors) that carried the same ironical romantic meaning and constructive argument concerning lyrics (*ghazal*) previously used in al-'Aqqad's case.

Following the Revolution of July 1952, Qutb sent an open letter to President Muhammad Naguib asking him to eradicate corruption and prepare for a new Constitution within six months. Qutb ironically described the process of cleaning up as a 'just dictatorship'. He said:

The Constitution of 1923 has brought about the corruption of not only the King and his collaterals, but also political parties and the politicians. This Constitution will not be able to protect us from the return of corruption if you have not established a complete and comprehensive program to prevent these corrupted figures from further parliamentary activity. . . . Should not the people who have suffered the oppressive dictatorship for decades tolerate six months of a just dictatorship? We are assuming that any action of cleaning-up is but a dictatorship anyway.⁷⁰

President Muhammad Naguib was delighted with this ironic missive, laughing and showing it to his inner circle, and thereafter describing himself as a 'just dictator'.⁷¹ He described Qutb as 'the master of the Revolution'.⁷²

Despite his capacity for criticism, Qutb enjoyed friendships with a large number of influential politicians, intellectuals, poets and literary figures, both of his own age as well as those whom he usually described as 'the older generation'. In this sense he wrote to Ahmad Amin, saying, 'I wrote about all of you without exception. I expounded your opinions, introduced your books and analysed your works.'⁷³

However, Qutb's place in Egyptian literature and the appeal of his ideas were to be downplayed because of his later ordeal. This has served as an opiate that the Egyptian regime exploited to lull the intellectuals as well as to numb the masses. From the mid-1940s, many of Qutb's writings were officially among the curricula of schools, colleges and universities until all his writings were officially banned in October 1965.⁷⁴ Some of his works were even burned. Intellectuals were not allowed to refer to Qutb's works or mention his name.⁷⁵ Researchers who used his works had to refer to him indirectly as a 'student of al-'Aqqad'⁷⁶ or 'one of the literary critics said'.⁷⁷ Those who used Qutb's works in their publications before his ordeal removed his name from the later editions.⁷⁸

This policy, however, led to a harmful result, as banning Qutb's works drew attention to the importance of his appeal. Forcing intellectuals to keep silent and not to discuss Qutb's works left the field completely open for the younger individuals and groups to interpret Qutb's thought as they wished. Consequently, waves of violence in the decades after Qutb's death, were inescapably the result of ignorance and stupidity. This situation has improved somewhat recently, as some of Qutb's works have reappeared in the market. However, these works are few, and much still needs to be done, such as to debate his ideas on all levels in the media and academic circles.

During Qutb's literary debate with the schools of thought which were on the opposite pole to al-'Aqqad's, some writers claimed that Qutb was under al-'Aqqad's influence.⁷⁹ However, what they meant by influence is not clear. Did Qutb imitate al-'Aqqad's thinking? Or did al-'Aqqad dictate Qutb's works from 1921 onwards? Their reasoning may have been based on the fact that al-'Aqqad was the first man Qutb came to know when he first arrived in Cairo in 1920. Qutb was living with his uncle, and he and al-'Aqqad were close friends. Both were journalists, nationalists, literary figures and both came from the same region in South Egypt.

It was through his uncle that Qutb came to know al-'Aqqad, who also gave Qutb access to the popular press and to al-'Aqqad's personal library. Qutb noted his appreciation of al-'Aqqad in a letter to Ahmad Amin, saying: 'I was a disciple, in all senses of the word, of a man of your own generation.'⁸⁰ Qutb was one of al-'Aqqad's 'School of Thought'. In 1928, he was able to convince al-'Aqqad to return to *Al-Balagh* journal after al-'Aqqad had distanced himself from it for a time.⁸¹ His friendship with al-'Aqqad developed to the point where Qutb saw him as a unique thinker, a first-class poet and an eminent literary critic of his era.⁸² This admiration was interpreted as influence, rather than recognition of merit. Qutb's admiration indicates his confidence and capability to guard his close friendship with al-'Aqqad. Qutb had begun to make his own name as a poet, writer and literary critic during his period at *Dar al-'Ulum*. He was able to prevent his character from being subsumed into al-'Aqqad's personality, as Qutb himself admitted in a letter to Ahmad Amin in 1944:

It was only of the influence of al-'Aqqad's personality that I was afraid. But today I'm more confident to say that my personality has always seemed indissoluble. I used my friendship with al-'Aqqad but I did not imitate him. I know my way and I can see its milestones.⁸³

Qutb appreciated al-'Aqqad's writings but did not imitate him, and each had his own personality and integrity, reflected in their inner-most thoughts and ideas. Qutb's writings on al-'Aqqad suggested he was able to assess al-'Aqqad with the detachment appropriate to a critic. In 1930, three years before his graduation, Qutb's first critique focused on al-'Aqqad's poetry collection *Gift of the Curlew and Storms of Evening*.⁸⁴ After this, Qutb's critiques on al-'Aqqad's writings continued in separate articles which were then collected and published in 1946 in a single volume *Books and Personalities*.

Qutb pointed out that personal integrity, confidence and independence of mind were fundamental characteristics of al-'Aqqad's school of thought. Such qualities should exemplify work seeking to follow al-'Aqqad's style, but could not simply be imitative. This would be to breach the basic ethics of the school, which assumed personal integrity, and individuality was part of the writer's ethics.⁸⁵

Focusing on Qutb's publications, which are still an issue of debate in the literature, one should note that Qutb's intellectual life, as Qutb says, was not less than 40 years, from 1921 to 1964.⁸⁶ Qutb's first published work was the poem 'The New Life' (1921), when he was 15.

This poem was later analysed by 'Ali Ahmad 'Amir.⁸⁷ In 1922, Qutb published his first article, 'Teaching Methods'.⁸⁸ In this year, Qutb published more poems and used some of them as reference in his later writings.⁸⁹ In 1924, at 18, he was elected to the editorial committee of *Al-Balagh*. In 1929, he published his poem 'The Past'. In 1932, one year before his graduation, he published a significant work of criticism, *The Task of the Poet and the Poetry of the Present Generation*. In 1935 he published a volume of poetry, *The Unknown Shore*. In 1939, he published another important *Critique of the Book of the Future of Culture in Egypt*, in which he took issue with Taha Husayn's book of a similar title. Around this time, he also published several papers containing his debate, with various key figures, on issues related to Arabic literature, poetry, religion and Egypt's identity.⁹⁰ During this period, Qutb worked briefly as a freelance writer for Taha Husayn.⁹¹ Qutb was able to establish his intellectual standing on political, economic, social and moral issues. According to Ahmad 'Amir:

Qutb's life had impelled him to early maturity and adulthood while still a youth. Readers used to buy the paper, confident they would find an older man whose long years of experience had revealed to him the secret of life. However, they would have been shocked had they seen Qutb during the day, sitting at his desk in the classroom, hunting through the dictionary for the right Arabic word or the exposition of *uhud*. Or if they had seen him, at night, doing his homework, then writing his article for the paper and, in between, jotting his secrets down in verses of poetry for later publication. If they had seen these different aspects of him, they would have not believed that this boy of 15 was the author of the articles they read with such interest. Sayyid Qutb is unique in the field of youthful creative journalism.⁹²

The experience Qutb received in journalism may have played a significant role in reshaping his later intellectual output in various areas. He established his journal

The Arab World in April 1947, *The New Thought* in January 1948, and later edited the journal of the *Muslim Brotherhood*.

The precise quantity of Qutb's articles is not known. However, 455 articles were collected by Abd al-Baqi (1986). But this is not the precise number written by Qutb over a period of thirty-three years and which appeared in print from 1921 until the time he was arrested in 1954. If Qutb wrote a single article a week, the 455 articles would be the product of about eight and a half years.⁹³ Qutb wrote for daily and weekly newspapers as well as periodicals. In addition, there are thought to be numerous essays, articles and books that have not been traced. Among these essays, for instance, *Fi Zīlal al-Sirah* (In the Shade of Islamic History) was similar in text to that of Ibn Hisham, but with a new approach and reading of Islamic history. There also were 'The Qur'anic Style', 'Shawqi's Poetry', 'Iqbal's Poetry', 'Images and Shadows in the Arabic Poetry' and 'Woman in the Novels of Tawfiq al-Hakim'.⁹⁴ His 'The Islamic Conception of Life and Man' has been lost.⁹⁵ Some periodicals have also been lost completely and others were burnt.⁹⁶ The secretary of Egypt's *Rose el-youssef* magazine pointed out that

After 1965, the government collected all Qutb's works in the schools and destroyed the pages of poetry. For this, an official committee was established and its members signed an official report that was passed on to the higher officials. . . . Dar al-Ma'rif, the publisher of Qutb's works, collected what it had of Qutb's works and burnt them. This action was odd in comparison with that of the Security Apparatus. [The police] collected the books they found in the houses of those who were arrested and passed all of them [books] to Dar al-Kutub [government bookstore] which did not burn them, but left them in humid storage under the responsibility of careless employees. . . .⁹⁷

With reference to Barakat, Yvonne Haddad (1982) emphasized that Qutb published 'several volumes of poetry', and also that some 'works were announced but not published'.⁹⁸ As to poetry, Qutb published only three volumes: first, *The Unknown Shore* (January 1935). Second was *Echoes of Time* (December 1937). It is most likely that the latter volume was published: (i) in the first volume, Qutb pointed out that 'the poems in the present volume were selected. Because of the large size of this volume, the rest of the poems will be published later in other groups';⁹⁹ that is, the poems were already written and were enough for another volume; (ii) Abd al-Baqi had found a 'few poems published in *Al-Risalah* and referred to this second volume'; (iii) the librarian officials of the Higher Institute of Arabic Studies in Cairo affirmed that '*Echoes of Time* was in the Institute's library collections, but disappeared during the time of Qutb's ordeal';¹⁰⁰ (iv) Barakat notes that Qutb published 'several volumes of poetry', as indicated above. These clues are sufficient to suggest that this second volume was published but disappeared. The third volume was recently published under the title *Divan Sayyid Qutb*, in 1989, by Dar al-Wafa' in al-Mansurah City. The confusion then arises perhaps because some writers referred to some single poems as a title for volumes of poetry. For example, Haddad referred to Barakat and noted among the books which were not

published '*Hulm al-Fajr* [The Dream at Dawn] and *Qafilat al-Raqiq* [Caravan of Slaves]'. These two titles were counted by some as books, and as volumes of poetry by others. However, each of these two titles is but a single poem (only 1–2 pages each): 'The Dream at Dawn' was published in *Al-Risalah* (1944),¹⁰¹ 'Caravan of Slaves' was published in *Al-Kitab* (1946).¹⁰² Other than these three volumes of poetry, Qutb had only single poems scattered in periodicals.

Furthermore, Qutb wrote a book entitled *Towards an Islamic Society*. This book, Barakat says, 'was written', but 'not published' and 'we do not know whether the book is still well-kept'.¹⁰³ However, careful investigation suggested that Qutb used this book as reference and quoted from it in his writings from 1951 until 1964.¹⁰⁴ This book is not the existing one of the similar title, because this latter book was published after Qutb's death.

Qutb also established a literary journal *The New Thought*, which after three months was closed down by the government.¹⁰⁵ An order was issued for Qutb's arrest. However, Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi intervened and Qutb was offered study leave in the United States.¹⁰⁶ He left Egypt in 1948 to study Western methods of education.¹⁰⁷ While he was away, his book *Social Justice in Islam* was published in 1949. In this work, Qutb distinguished between the sociopolitical system in Islamic and other ideologies.

On his return to Egypt in 1950, Qutb's writing reflected a new emphasis on the need for social reform in Egypt. This drew the attention of the Muslim Brothers both in the army and outside it to him. These Brothers in the army (later Free Officers) visited him on a regular basis. Their photographs, which show Gamal Abd al-Nasser and others with Qutb at Qutb's house, indicate that he was closer to these Muslim Brothers of the army than to the civilian members.¹⁰⁸ He was later linked with the Free Officers' *coup d'état* of July 1952. He then was appointed as adviser to the Revolutionary Command Council. However, he left the Free Officers because, as he notes, he felt 'they were not prepared to establish an Islamic system'.¹⁰⁹ Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood and became one of its thinkers. On 15 October 1954, the government dissolved the Organization of Muslim Brothers and 450 of its members, including the Supreme Guide and Qutb, were arrested.¹¹⁰ Qutb spent most of the rest of his life in prison.

In detention, Qutb continued to write prolifically and produced the bulk of his work, including a commentary on the Qur'an, *In the Shade of the Qur'an* (*Fi Zīlal al-Qur'an*), a multi-volume opus. His last book was *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones), published in January 1964.

Qutb was released in May 1964, but was re-arrested for what has been called treason, based on the published work *Milestones*.¹¹¹ Speaking of Qutb's trial, the Free Officer Amin Huwaydi, the Minister and then the president of Egypt's General Intelligence under Nasser, said 'The Court of al-Digwi'¹¹² prosecuted the Ikhwan and one of their leaders Sayyid Qutb. . . . It is evident that the Ikhwan (Muslim Brethren), the *shuyu'iyyin* (communists), and al-Iqta'iyyin (feudalists) were tortured.¹¹³ In this regard, Abd al-'azim Ramadan, who wrote the history of the revolution, says: 'The prosecutions of the Ikhwan at the hands of al-Digwi or Hilal all were fabrications.'¹¹⁴ Qutb was executed on 29 August 1966.

Concluding remarks

In modern Egypt, 1906 was a remarkable year. It witnessed the birth of the two pioneers of the Islamic revival: Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna. Both died believing social reform on the basis of Islamic *shari'ah* was necessary. Both were born in the year of the Dinshawai incident, which resulted in the trial of ten Egyptian peasants, four of whom were executed, and four sentenced to life imprisonment. The incident, which was led by Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) and others, struck the nation. In the same period, Egypt's political parties rose to resist British control of the country. It was a time of questioning and exploration of identity and what it meant to be an Egyptian Muslim in the twentieth-century world.

Within this context, Qutb grew, influenced by the political climate and involved in political life. It was an environment bound to shape the young Qutb. He developed an early confidence that was to express itself in a precocious maturity.

These formative years provided Qutb with a focal point and the emotional resolution and the confidence required in his later adventures. Language, common social tradition and religion are among the phenomena that were incorporated into him by his social and cultural environments. Natural and geographical environments and, specifically, the area where he grew up and the area where he chose to settle – all invariably had some sort of linguistic, social and cultural influence on his thinking.

Qutb's later writings are a reflection of his life experiences. From his youth, he witnessed the growth of an active movement for national independence. He noted the diversity of Egyptian thought and intellectual life, in which he participated through debates on a range of sociopolitical issues. His Islamic background and his appreciation of the Qur'an caused him to envisage the future life of Egypt from an Islamic perspective and to present a reform ideology based on a new reading and interpretation of Islamic history.

4 The *jahiliyyah* theory's first stage: 1925–1939

Introduction

This chapter focuses on Qutb's writings in the period 1925–1939. It will explore the early key ideas and trace, analyse and demonstrate their development towards the formation of his theory. Investigation here will be based only on Qutb's writings within this period, so that one might expect that the ideas will develop to a certain stage from which they cannot further develop through any writings from this timeframe.

Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah* was developed in step with his concept of Sovereignty. The root of these two ideas, which are central in Qutb's political thinking, is clearly established in his early writings of this period (1925–1939). It was in this period that the term *jahalal*, the synonym of *jahiliyyah*, was explicitly mentioned. In this early period, Qutb also found what he called 'the great unity', a notion that signifies the concept of Sovereignty (the highest legal and governmental authority). These ideas were further developed in his writings of the mid-1940s, and in 1949 he gave these two central ideas special attention, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Qutb's conflict with the state, particularly about his last book *Milestones* (1964), drew the attention of a number of intellectuals to this book, in which the concept of *jahiliyyah* was also mentioned. Some have viewed the *jahiliyyah* as a product of the harsh treatment Qutb received once he had ceased to support Nasser. Others have said that Qutb got the term *jahiliyyah* from both Abu al-A'la Mawdudi and Abu al-Hasan al-Nadawi, since the writings of Mawdudi and al-Nadawi became available in Egypt in the mid-1950s.¹

However, recent research has found nothing to support such a claim. As Shepard says, 'we have nothing to support it', although some of Mawdudi's works were translated from Urdu to Arabic in the mid-1950s.² William Shepard (2002) has recently shifted this claim away from Mawdudi and made it clear that the term *jahiliyyah* was there in the Qur'an and Arabic literature.³ It was then easier for Qutb (who was closely familiar with the Qur'an and its literary structures) to take those concepts from the Qur'an and Arabic literature, as discussed here and in the following chapters, instead of waiting until translations from Urdu could make these terms available in the mid-1950s. It is sufficient here to note that both

Mawdudi and al-Nadawi occupy a unique position in contemporary Islamic thought, although 'Arabic was not among the skills' of these two Indian Subcontinent scholars.⁴ By contrast, Qutb was well versed in Arabic, and that his 'influence' and 'repetition' in India from the 1930s was outlined and explicitly stated by al-Nadawi himself.⁵ The present chapter shows that the concepts of *jahiliyyah* and even Sovereignty were both in Qutb's writings in the mid-1930s, decades before his detention and before the translation from Urdu to Arabic was made in the mid-1950s.

Language is culture, and his formative years provided Qutb with the focal point, the emotional resolution and the confidence required in his new adventure. Language, common social tradition and religion are among the phenomena that were incorporated into him by not only education but also social and cultural environments. Natural and geographical environments and, specifically, the village wherein he grew up and Cairo, where he settled and to which he moved all invariably had some sort of linguistic, social and cultural influence on his thinking. Cultural and sociopolitical languages, to which Qutb was exposed in Cairo, provided him with different types of morals and emotional resolutions of both present and past events. On the whole, Qutb employed these languages to declare that there is a definite link between the present and the past history. Past and present are, in fact, the two parts of an everlasting course. The past is the seed from which the present and the future grow. Neither the present nor the future is meant to be divorced the past or from the great achievement of man.

Language is culture, and the views which claim that Qutb got some term or the other from Mawdudi are but, as suggested by Ibrahim Abu Rabi, 'dichotomizing' Qutb's earlier thought (i.e. 1925–1952) from his later thought (1952–1962). Abu Rabi contends that those claims 'employ the "young-mature Qutb" dichotomy in studying his thought, without shedding any real light on the inner connection and continuities of Qutb's thought'.⁶ I agree with Abu Rabi that 'while it is helpful to discuss the different phases in a scholar's thinking, it is also important to keep sight of two other factors – namely, the inner continuities of thought, and the historical context in which thought is produced. Qutb's phase of thought during the period of 1952–1962 is an extension, and not a negation, of the previous phase'.⁷

Justice and harmony

Qutb's works were classified by Ibrahim Abu Rabi into six categories: 'poetry and literature; Qur'anic aesthetics; philosophy of social justice; sociology of religion; Qur'anic exegesis; and Islam and the West'.⁸ For the purpose of this study, the focus of this chapter is on the first category. Qutb's intellectual production in the period between 1925 and 1939 comprised poetry, novels and a number of essays dealing with some sociopolitical and moral issues. His poetry collection, *al-Shati' al-Majhul* (*The Unknown Shore*), for instance, comprises his first poetical works. It was written during the period 1925–1934. However, a considerable number of poems were written in 1934, and published in this volume in January 1935.⁹ In

this volume of poetry, Qutb deals with philosophical and scientific notions such as matter, reason and spirit, Einstein's Theory of Relativity and the relationships between matter, space, time and unity. This work reveals Qutb's unique and independent lines of thought and attempts to find a theory that he called *al-wahdah al-kawniyyah al-kubra* (the great universal unity).¹⁰ The concept of the great unity will be discussed later in this chapter, but here and, as explained by Qutb, the great unity is an overall integrated conception concerning the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. His view of the great unity also signifies the highest legal and governmental authority over the universe, life and humankind.¹¹ He also says that the concept of the great unity is expressed in his poems 'Al-Shati' al-Majhul' (The Unknown Shore)¹², 'Al-Laiyyah al-Mab'uthah' (The Emissary Night)¹³ and 'Al-Insan al-Akhir' (The Last Man).¹⁴

In the period during which his poetry collection was written, Egypt was largely under British control. The British occupation of Egypt (1871–1952) had enormous impact on the lives of Egyptians. According to Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, later President of Egypt (1971–1981), this led 'to a life of contradiction in everything. Millions of Egyptians suffered from poverty and deprivation, whilst a few individuals on the other side controlled the country's wealth and resources'.¹⁵ This situation was attributed directly to *jahiliyyah* in the following verses by al-'Aqqad:

Jahiliyyah was widespread, atrocity overflowing
The goodness and Truth were whispering,
but the voice of deviation was very loud.¹⁶

Al-'Aqqad (Qutb's mentor) used the term *jahiliyyah* to describe the condition of social injustice and to distinguish between truth (*al-haqq*) and deviation (*dalat*: straying) from the truth. This indicates how the word *jahiliyyah* was being used in Qutb's environment.¹⁷

Qutb condemned this condition and expressed his view about social disorder in his country. Qutb used words such as 'tyranny', 'savagery' and 'barbarity'. In a poem titled 'Ma'sat al-Badari' (Sorrow of Badari), written in 1933,¹⁸ Qutb pointed out that the Egyptians knew 'the dark and extinct era (*al-'ahd al-muzlim al-ba'id*). . . . The censorship of this odious era (*al-'ahd al-baghid*) refused to publish this and other poems'.¹⁹ This poem was to be later published in his first volume of poetry *Al-Shati' al-Majhul* (1935). In this poem, Qutb says:

In which country are we living?
Which dark age is 'al-Kinahah'²⁰ passing through?
Is it the age of tyranny; that oppresses and persecutes us if we protest?
Is it the barbarity, which is unveiled by time?
No, it is darker and harsher than the action of savages
The savage attacks only if he is hungry and stops after he eats.

In Egypt, the offender is not punished,
but rewarded and honoured for his offence.

In Egypt, [there is] what is difficult for the history to remember of vulgarities;
swarmed across the land and others are hidden.

In Egypt! If there were some dignity, Egypt would show its anger,
and the blood would be flowing on its sides.

What else are we caring about! No dignity remains and there is no honour!
Death! Oh death! It is the more honourable way than what we are passing
through.²¹

In these lines, Qutb captures the sense of disorder in the political, economic, social, moral and intellectual spheres of Egyptian society in the 1930s. He distinguishes between two conditions: social equality and inequality. Qutb does not imitate al-'Aqqad in using the explicit term *jahiliyyah* to label the condition of disorder. One cannot say that al-'Aqqad borrowed the term from Mawdudi at this point of time. Nor does this mean that Qutb was not aware of the writings of al-'Aqqad, who is widely considered as Qutb's mentor.²² Although the term *jahiliyyah* and its applications were ready at Qutb's hands, in his language, not in Urdu, he did not use it. However, Qutb uses words such as 'tyranny', 'oppression', 'barbarity', 'savagery' and 'vulgarity' to label this condition of sociopolitical disorder. Goldziher uses these labels in his definition of the word *jahiliyyah*. For example, Goldziher uses the word 'barbarism' as follows: 'In this book, we have explained the word *al-Jahiliyyah* as "time of barbarism" ... branding as barbaric acts (*jahiliyyah*)...' ²³

The word 'barbarity' also appears in the translation of the word *jahiliyyah* mentioned in a quote in Qutb's first and last editions of *Social Justice in Islam*, first published in 1949 and translated into English by John B. Hardie in 1953²⁴ and by William E. Shepard in 1996.²⁵ Shepard also uses the word 'barbarism' as a definition of the word *jahiliyyah*.²⁶ Nevertheless, Qutb appeared to be unsatisfied with the immediate meaning of those terms to label the condition of injustice in his society.²⁷ The immediate negative notion emanating from those words was made more efficacious by adding to them comparative words such as 'darker' (*azlamu*) and 'harsher' (*ashaddu*). Qutb used these comparative words quite intentionally; as he admitted, 'this is an adjective meant for accusation (*dham*)'.²⁸ He uses these words in a superlative form to express most intensely the meaning of 'barbarity', 'savagery' and 'vulgarity' as diacritical labels of the condition of injustice. The point that should also be made here is his call upon his fellow Egyptians to show their anger. It indicates the motivational character of his ideas at the time.

Furthermore, Qutb uses words like 'barbarity' as diacritical marks, not to label only the condition of injustice in his society but also the behaviour of imperialism.²⁹ This can be clearly seen in his poem 'al-Batal' (The Hero), published in 1931 and republished in this volume *Al-Shati' al-Majhul* (1935). In this poem, Qutb commemorates the political Sudanese al-'Abid, the head of the White Flag Organization in Sudan.³⁰ Despite imprisonment, al-'Abid continued to adhere firmly to his cause and paid with his life for what he believed was right. In the

longest introduction in this volume, Qutb celebrated al-'Abid as a hero of his time, but criticized Egyptian youth, and the 'imperialism which represented modernism'. He says:

In such difficult circumstances as Egypt is passing through, there are some important events but nobody pays attention. Egypt is busy with its own general calamity (*nakbah 'ammah*), not only with the limited ones. Among these events is the death of al-'Abid, the young man who was struggling to unite the binary of the cherished homeland and its sacred unity... But, the cruel and barbarous treatment reached its zenith by gaoling him, while he was a 'politician', in a humid jail surrounded by all images of death. This also was not enough in the eyes of imperialism, 'the imperialism which represents modernism!!!' It added hard labour, that is, that he and his associates should crush rocks...³¹ This is al-'Abid, of whose death nobody in Egypt is conscious. The Egyptians, the stupid (*tafilh*) and soft (*na'im*) youth; who are busy with softness (*tatriyah*) and cosmetics (*zinah*); who are busy with psychological baseness and lowness; and who have lost their masculinity and forgotten their past, pay no attention to this martyr hero... This poem is an inspiration of a young man [Qutb] who is trying to execute the responsibility of the youth...³²

These words from 1931, when Qutb was 25, mirror his view of freedom, justice and equality. They reflect Qutb's earlier negative view of the West, which represented modernism at this point of time. They express his view about modernism and imperialism, which he labelled 'cruelty' and 'barbarity'.³³ This was also expressed poetically as follows:

I wish the people of the world to know what
the usurpers have done with the innocent man.
Should I call it [action of usurpers] savageness
in the darkness of a cave that never saw light.
Savageness will be darker if you compare it
with Western savages which suck the blood.
The savage attacks only to live, but the Westerner's
selfishness attacks to become wealthy.³⁴

Qutb expressed his negative view of the West not in only poetry but also in articles of the early 1930s. At this time, Qutb was also calling for a return to the East and its message and heritage of morals and tranquillity. In 1933, Qutb published an article titled *Al-'Alam Yajri* (The World on the Run),³⁵ reflecting on the identity of Egypt and its heritage. He says:

In Egypt today there is a fervent and dangerous call to imitate the West, and run behind the West. The West itself is straying in all mazes of life and does not know its own direction. Thus, imitating the West means that we will run (*najri*) behind the one who is running (*yajri*) with no idea of his own destination! There should be a warning about such a call... It is not

appropriate for the East to leave its tranquility and run behind the West, which gravitates and is attracted to what the West itself does not know. The East has its own message and this, probably, is the time for this message. The message is based on the actual characteristics of the East. This message will be the East's obligation. It is, perhaps, the right time to carry this obligation now because the West is apparently exhausted from its excessive running and collisions.³⁶

Qutb's distaste for Western slogans of modernism, liberty and the like comes from the behaviour of Western occupation in Sudan and Egypt, as can be seen in the extract. Qutb saw that the liberty the West was talking about meant only liberty in Western terms, not the liberty of Egypt and Sudan. Western oppression and exploitation may explain Qutb's call for *jihad* at that time to liberate his country. We see him also speaking of blood and welcoming 'death as a more honourable *shir'atin* (way) than what we are passing through'.³⁷ The British influence in Egypt's domestic affairs and support of the class of wealthy absentee landowners who dominated parliament resulted in poverty, and this condition was becoming increasingly desperate. To Qutb, life under this condition of injustice was like 'hellfire' and 'fierce blast of fire'. The poet Qutb did not surrender to this condition, but challenged it and called on Egyptians not to surrender but to reject it. He says:

Is it the life or the hellfire
with its fierce blast of fire?
Oh, do not complain. Do not grieve
Do not lose strength: Never.
My feelings cannot be revealed
just intensify the struggle. Be strong.
To whom should one complain
To whom can one explain?
From the *jihad* I do flee not
I never was weak-hearted.³⁸

In addition to those burning labels in the first two lines, Qutb uses the word *jihad*. This word appeared a number of times in this early work ('Al-Shati' al-Majhul'),³⁹ and in later ones, in addition to the last, *Ma'alim* (Milestones).⁴⁰ In these poetical texts, Qutb emphasizes that he has found nobody to whom he can explain his hidden feelings or reveal his accumulated complaints about social disorder.

For him, social injustice in Egyptian society is an indication of cultural confusion, contradiction and diversity of thought, a point also made by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872–1963), who pointed out the political, economic and social disorder and then stated that

We all are complaining about ourselves. Every one of us is complaining about our associates, our leaders and those who are under our leadership.

Every one of us is complaining about both our friends and enemies. Every one of us is complaining about those who are standing by our side and those who are fighting against us. We want to get out of this psychological disorder...⁴¹

This 'psychological disorder' was the result of social injustice and contradiction in 'general opinion' in society.⁴² In Qutb's terms, 'the contradiction of social mentality' was endemic in societies where 'personal desires and self-interest' had run rampant.⁴³ It is a point also made by Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898–1989). He classified those people of 'personal desires and self-interest' under the umbrella of *Al-shahhadhun* (Beggars). In his book *Tahta Shams al-Fikr* (Under the Sun of Thought), published in 1938, al-Hakim describes the political disorder in Egypt as follows:

There is a considerably large number of politicians who do nothing but wait in the squares (*mayadin*) of politics. They stretch out their hands and wait. What are they waiting for? They are waiting for their turn to ride (*rukub*). Yes, the rule (*hukm*) has come to be like a carousel [*urjuhat al-khuyul al-khashabiyyah al-da'irah*: merry-go around] on which children ride for a millim.⁴⁴ If a child has been given a thousand millim, he will spend it all on this pleasant fun. He likes to ride (*rukub*), only for the ride on those gold-painted wooden horses. . . . There is nothing behind this except personal desires and self interest. . . . Life in Egypt is only entertainment (*lahw*),⁴⁵ disruption (*ta'attul*), and void (*faragh*). All the youth and politicians, rulers and ruled, have nothing more to do than look for the rotations of the wooden horses of the 'governmental positions'.⁴⁶

Qutb classified those *Al-shahhadhun* (beggars) under the umbrella of 'the world of selfishness'. He condemned the world of selfishness, but he himself could not cure the problem of corruption, social stress and economic inequality. Qutb's poetical feeling stressed the 'misperception' between himself and 'the world of selfishness.' He questioned his own conscience; was he right or wrong to condemn corrupt people or 'the world of selfishness'? Qutb expressed this as follows:

Conscience, tell me do I not understand the world,
or does the world not understand me?
Tell me. I am listening.
What if the people are heedless?
What if they pay no heed?⁴⁷

In these verses, Qutb seeks justice. He takes his personal judgement against 'the world of selfishness' to the court of conscience. His question portrays the conscience as a judge, the symbol of justice. The judge implements justice and makes it prevail over injustice. Injustice is an evil resulting from a weak conscience. Qutb implies that human conduct, whether good or evil, is reflected in the strength or weakness of the conscience. Weakness of both the will and the mind means stupidity and foolishness.

Qutb contrasts such conditions of general disorder with a world in which humanity takes its place in the harmony of the universe, which cooperates with others according to laws that harmonize their role, place, thought and behaviour. To Qutb, all particles in the universe work in harmonious and orderly measure. There is a harmonious relationship between all living particles and the air, water, sun, plants and between each part in the universe. This natural justice is the expression of the One Divine Will.⁴⁸

On the opposite side is the condition of injustice. According to Qutb, this is expressed by a multiplicity of wills, rules and judgements. This condition of multiplicity reveals different rules and laws that lead to confusion, and chaos, destroying the harmony between all sections of the universe. This was expressed poetically in 1934:

Barrenness has wrapped the autumn
 No breezes, no flowers or roses
 Silence has wrapped the chanters of life
 Neither the birds nor the stream in the creeks are singing
 The fertile things have become fruitless
 No fertile [thing] is there and no brightness
 Clouds are moving with feeble steps like those of the captives
 Brightness of life is depressed and
 the hearts are either wounded or chained⁴⁹

In this poem, the poet seeks freedom, justice, equality and harmony. Reflecting on corruption and general social disorder in society, the poet links those of 'personal desires and self-interest' to their surrounding universe as he portrays the universe's objection against oppression and injustice. The 'autumn has become fruitless', 'the chanters of life hushed' and the 'clouds are moving like captives'. This condition of the universe mirrors the condition of those oppressed, imprisoned, chained and those of the wounded hearts when the condition of injustice prevails over the condition of justice in society. Thus, injustice oppresses the natural course of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. This idea of the relationship comes to be one of Qutb's central ideas in his later writings.

Influenced by the ideas of the modern time, the 'worshippers' (*al-'ubbad*) have come to forget reverence and to 'neglect glorification (*al-tasbih*) and consecration (*al-taqdis*)'. They have come to view following 'rituals' (*al-sha'a'ir*) as 'having no value'. They have come to deal with the holy texts in an irreverent and impure manner. Qutb expresses these ideas as follows:

Influenced by the epochs, the worshippers have come
 to forget glorification and consecration.
 Rituals are devalued and their texts are
 touched by all that is irreverent and impure.⁵⁰

Qutb reflects on sociopolitical, economic, intellectual and moral conditions. The condition of injustice that has resulted in spiritual degradation is the outcome of humanity's ideas concerning life and the relationship with the surrounding universe. In other words, the condition of disorder will continue until people return to worship and to ritual guidance, and take their place in the harmonious universe. At that time, those negative images will be reversed, the universe will be fruitful, and people will be able to live in harmony with the surrounding universe and enjoy freedom, justice and equality. Thus, there is a relationship between spiritual degradation and the condition of social disorder. Qutb emphasizes social inequality as a destructive force polluting the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humanity. Such widespread inequality has a much 'heavier effect on the earth' than any 'mind can imagine'. To Qutb, the destructive weight of oppression and atrocity perpetrated by evil has its impact on the earth, and the universe. Animals, winds, seas and people condemn and protest against such evil. Qutb expresses this condemnation poetically in these lines:

The earth becomes unlike the earth in its rotation,
as though it is just about to stop.
Breezes become unlike breezes in their roving
as if they are about to stop.
The birds are not warbling but crying with loud hoots.
And human beings no longer follow dreams
as they themselves become hopeless.⁵¹

Qutb portrays the condition of spiritual degradation as a disease that infects the harmonious integration of the universe, life and humanity. He describes the people who are politically and intellectually responsible for this condition as 'infectious bugs or parasites infecting the harmonious universe'. People and societies of this condition, says Qutb, see morality as a sign of 'lowness, reactionism, deterioration, ignoble and uncivilized conduct'. They have never understood that morality and the moral order are a revelation from Heaven:

Do I see humans or bugs
deforming the beauty of the universe?
They seem human but their
evil and atrocity are running as a flood.
They understand life as only food, drink,
and coming or going whenever they desire
Their senseless souls are empty caves
They consider morals and fairness a sort of lowness.⁵²

With these images, Qutb implies that the nature of the human soul cannot be ignored and cannot be elevated without morals or a transcendental belief. A person can school his conscience, cultivate and improve it by his own initiative in the light

of transcendental religion. Qutb's view is that life was never meant to be only food, drink, sex and shelter.

These ideas about the meaning of life and human responsibility were to be further developed into significant ideas in his later writings. For instance, in *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, published in 1961, Qutb writes: 'The purpose of life is not and never was only food, drink, sex and shelter, as Marx believed. Marxism is completely ignorant of the human consciousness, human nature, and the nature of history...'⁵³ Similarly, in *Milestones* his last book, published in 1964, Qutb states that 'The civilized society – the Islamic – does not detest Matter neither in the form of the theory...nor in the form of material production. But, Matter is not the higher value for which the characteristics of humans should be spilled in vain...'.⁵⁴ Thus life does not mean only material development and production or civilization. In *Al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (Islam and the Problems of Civilizations) published in 1962, he writes 'Civilization or development without spiritual morals is a destructive force working against the harmonious integration of the universe, life and humanity.'⁵⁵

In his poetry, earlier, Qutb emphasizes that civilization was never meant to neglect glorification and consecration or spiritual guidance. Following spiritual guidance is neither 'reactionism or uncivilized conduct'. Thus, the idea of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humanity, and the issue of human responsibility for justice or injustice in this world, which came to be a theme in Qutb's later works, emerged here in his poetry.⁵⁶

Islam versus *al-jahalat*

In a poem written in 1934 and published in *Al-Shati' al-Majhul* (1935), Qutb elaborated further on human responsibility and portrayed the dual nature and dual ability of humans. He emphasizes two valleys: the one of *al-iman* (belief) contrasted with the other of *al-kufr* (unbelief). The latter valley is labelled *al-jahalat* (singular *jahal* = conditions of negative quality). Humans have the capacity to choose either valley. If humans opt to walk in the valley of *al-kufr* (unbelief), they walk in the valley of *al-jahalat* (conditions of *jahiliyyah*). Humans have no excuse to walk in the valley of *al-jahalat*. The light of *al-iman* makes it difficult for humans to hide their activity of *kufr* or to walk stealthily in the valley of *jahal*. The light of *al-iman* uncovers the *jahal* of all eras:

Is it not that your elements are *al-iman* (belief) and *al-tuhr* (purity)?
 If not so, you belong to *al-kufr* (unbelief) and *al-rijs* (enormity).
 In which valley, then, are you walking stealthily?
 And which 'ahd (era) of the *al-jahalat* is *mubham* (uncovered)?⁵⁷
 You have a [tendency] for victory; and one for defeat.
 They are side by side in your crowded essence.
 You have a [tendency] for despair; and one for hope.
 How many declines and assents have occurred?
 You have a [tendency] for love; and one for hate.

You have a [tendency] to deviate from the inspired guidance to darkness.
Within you is a carnival of what the earth has in its motion.
You have the secret and the splendor of the eras.⁵⁸
And you have conflicts in every era.
In you, the humans are united since they have been created.
In you, the spiritual (*al-rawhiyy*) and the beastly (*al-hayawaniyy*) are united!⁵⁹

In these verses, Qutb distinguishes between pairs of qualities: (i) *al-iman* (belief) and *al-kufr* (unbelief); (ii) *al-tuhr* (purity) and *al-rijs* (enormity); (iii) inspired guidance and darkness; (iv) *al-rawhiyy* (those who follow spiritual guidance) and *al-hayawaniyy* (those who follow their animal instincts). Also, the conditions of the valley of *al-kufr* (unbelief), like that of the valley of *al-rijs* (enormity) and that of those who follow their animal instincts, are labelled using the term *al-jahalat*.

In this poetical text, Qutb also points out the unity of humanity in its origin and destination. This idea came to be one of Qutb's significant ideas in his later works.⁶⁰ He also stresses that human beings are unitary creatures of a dual nature, with the capacity to follow spiritual guidance or to follow animal instincts. There is only one way or the other. There is *iman* (belief) or *kufr* (unbelief). There is Islam on the one hand or *al-jahalat* on the other. These early key ideas developed and came to be among the significant notions in his later discussion of the *jahiliyyah* theory.⁶¹

Furthermore, Qutb did not use the explicit term *jahiliyyah* but the term *al-jahalat*, the plural form of the singular word *al-jahal*. The term *jahiliyyah* and its derivations were previously discussed in Chapter 2. Here, suffice it to note that both terms, *jahal* and *jahiliyyah*, are synonyms. In this regard, intellectuals sometimes use the word *jahal* to emphasize the concept of *jahiliyyah*,⁶² as previously discussed in Chapter 2, specifically in relation to the poetry of 'Antarah, who used the exact term *jahal*. The usage of the term *jahal* by intellectuals to emphasize the term *jahiliyyah* confirms the special etymological affinity between the two terms. Among the elements of the affinity, for example, both *jahal* and *jahiliyyah* (i) are derived from the same root *j.h.l.*; (ii) form the substantive *jahl*; (iii) denote the abstract idea of *jahl*; (iv) have plural forms ending with 'ta' (i.e. *jahalat* and *jahiliyyat*) and (v) are Qur'anic terms.

The Qur'an uses the term *jahal* twice in Makkah and twice in Madinah, but uses the term *jahiliyyah* four times only in the Madinan period.⁶³ Both terms are synonyms, and have special affinity in their opposition to Islam, but while the term *jahiliyyah* is a specific term, *jahal* is a general one. The term *jahiliyyah* is specifically concerned with events Islam faced only in Madinah, but the term *jahal* is generally concerned with events Islam faced in the early and later periods in both Makkah and Madinah.⁶⁴ In Makkah, the Qur'an uses the term *jahal* as follows: 'If any one among you commits evil through *jahal* and then repents and mends his ways, he will find God forgiving and merciful' (Qur'an 6:54). 'To those who commit evil through *jahal*, and then repent and mend their ways, your Lord is forgiving and merciful' (Qur'an 16:119). In the Madinan period, the Qur'an uses the term *jahal* as follows: 'God forgives those who commit evil

through *jahalāh* and then quickly turn to Him in penitence. . . . But He will not forgive those who do evil and, when death comes to them, say: "Now we repent!"' (Qur'an 4:17–18). 'Believers, if an evil-doer brings you a piece of news, inquire first into its truth, lest you should wrong others through *jahalāh* and then regret your action' (Qur'an 49:6).

As for the meaning of the term *jahalāh* mentioned in those Qur'anic texts, Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi, al-Tabarsi and Ibn Manzur all referred to earlier sources and emphasized that 'He who disobeys God's law is a *jahil* and will remain so until he repents. Disobeying God's law intentionally or unintentionally is *jahalāh*. Every error (*dalalah*) is *jahalāh*'.⁶⁵ Thus, the term *jahalāh* in those Qur'anic texts can be seen as a conditional (*hal*) adjective that describes the state of mind at the time when a person breaks the law. In other words, the term *jahalāh* means intentional or unintentional ignorance of the law. In either case, ignoring the law is evil (*dalalah*) and *jahalāh*. He who does not repent quickly will remain a *jahil* in the status of *jahalāh*. In this context Qutb's poetical intent would indicate that the term *al-jahalāh* meant intentional or unintentional ignorance of *al-iman* (belief). Ignoring the *iman*, Qutb says, is *al-kufrān* (unbelief).

The word *al-kufrān* is also a Qur'anic term, occurring only once in the Qur'an: 'Whoever works any act of righteousness and has faith, there will be no *kufrān* to his endeavours' (Qur'an 21:92). Explaining the verse, Muslim exegetes say that 'God will not deny any act of righteousness'.⁶⁶ The word *al-kufrān*, as asserted by Wright, is an infinitive (*masdar*).⁶⁷ Similarly, al-Qurtubi says that *kufrān* is the infinitive (*masdar*) of *kufr*. He also emphasizes that the word '*al-kufr* means to deny. It is opposite to *al-iman*. They say *kafara*, *kufr wa kufrān*. Ibn Mas'ud says, "the *kufrān* is *kufr* unbelief."⁶⁸ Elsewhere, al-Qurtubi adds that the word '*al-kufrān* is a synonym of the word *kafura* (Qur'an 17:67; 76:3, 24) and indicates a multitude of *kufr* (unbelief)'.⁶⁹ This means that the notion of *kufr* (unbelief), which emanates from the word *kufrān*, is not a simple 'denial, or unbelief, infidelity, or atheism',⁷⁰ but is a multitude of *kufr*. The point then is that the words *kufrān* and *jahalāh* explain each other; that is, the word *kufrān* conveys the notion of *jahalāh*. On the other hand, *jahalāh* conveys the notion of *kufrān*.

Based on these etymological and exegetical meanings, Qutb's poetical text earlier indicates that the *jahalāh* (intentional or unintentional ignorance of *iman*) is *kufrān*, that is, a multitude of *kufr* (unbelief). It will remain so until the status of *kufr* disappears by repentance, that is, is changed to *iman*. The *iman*, Qutb says, uncovers the *al-jahālat* and its eras.

Despite his awareness of the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept in earlier or contemporary Arabic sources,⁷¹ or at least in the literature of his mentor al-'Aqqad as we have seen earlier, Qutb did not use the exact term *jahiliyyah* at this time but chose its synonym *jahalāh*. This, perhaps, is because (i) he had no intention of using the word *jahiliyyah* or (ii) the meter (rhyme) of the poem made it difficult for him to use the exact term *jahiliyyah*. It was for the latter reason that Qutb used the word *al-kufrān*, instead of the word *kufr*, to squarely fit in with the rhythm of the word *al-iman*.⁷² It was also for the rhythm, elsewhere, that Qutb derived from

the substantive *kufir* the word *kawafir* (singular *kafir*: unbeliever) to describe doubts (*al-shukuk al-kawafir*).⁷³ In either case, the etymological and conceptual aspects of those synonymous terms, *jahalalah* and *jahiliyyah*, indicate their special etymological and conceptual affinity. In the poetical text under discussion, the ignorance emanating from the term *al-jahalat* is not ordinary ignorance, but is distinguished by the particle 'al-' (the) in the word *al-jahalat*. This type of *al-jahalat* is further defined by the term *al-kufran* (unbelief). Thus, the two concepts *al-jahalat* and *al-kufran* explain each other as detailed earlier. The opposite of those two concepts is the concept of *al-iman* (belief).

Furthermore, in the poetical verses under discussion, Qutb contrasts the light of spiritual guidance with the darkness of *al-jahalat* and *al-kufran*. He also contrasts *al-rawhiyy* (he who follows spiritual guidance) with *al-hayawaniyy* (he who follows his animal instincts). The latter, as asserted by Goldziher, is the definition of the word *jahil* or, 'in one word, a barbarian'. In his discussion of the concept of *jahiliyyah*, Goldziher defined the concept of *jahil* as 'a wild, violent and impetuous character who follows the inspiration of unbridled passion and is cruel by following his animal instincts; in one word, a barbarian'.⁷⁴ The term 'barbarism' is used by Goldziher in his definition of the term *jahiliyyah*, as previously detailed.

As for the link between Qutb's ideas in the poem under discussion and in the later works, one should note that quoting later materials here is appropriate only to emphasize no more than the link between these ideas in his earlier and later writings. The term *jahalalah* is frequently used and interchanged with the term *jahiliyyah* in Qutb's later works.⁷⁵

In the 1950s, Qutb emphasized communism as a 'reaction to the austerity (*tazammut*) of Christianity as portrayed by the Church in the medieval period. Science's unbelief in religion was also a reaction to the behaviour of the Church towards the scholars'.⁷⁶ He then pointed out European action against Islam in Spain and emphasized the 'austerity (*tazammut*)', noted earlier, as *al-jahalatu al-ula* (first *jahalalah*).⁷⁷ Here, Qutb reflects on the Qur'anic phrase *al-jahiliyyah al-ula* (the first *jahiliyyah*) in its darkness and harshness.⁷⁸

In the 1950s, Qutb also stressed the role of Islam in the development of Europe. He pointed out that Islam was a revolution that liberates the thought (*al-fikr*) as well as the spirit (*al-ruh*), while 'Europe was in *jahalatiha* (i.e. its *jahalalah*)'.⁷⁹

When discussing the *jahiliyyah* concept in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (1952–1959),⁸⁰ Qutb defined the word *jahalalah* as *kufir* (unbelief) and *dalalah* (deviation from guidance).⁸¹ Elsewhere, Qutb pointed out that the 'meaning of the word *al-jahalalah* in the consensus is deviation from guidance (*al-dalalah 'an al-huda'*) for long or short periods'.⁸²

In his last book, *Ma'alim* (1964), Qutb used the word *al-jahalalah* to label the old and new Darwinism and similar views about the concept of humankind. Such views were described twice as *al-jahalalah al-'ilmiyyah* (literally: *jahalalah* of science).⁸³

Based on the poetical text under discussion, (i) Qutb distinguished between *al-iman* (belief) on the one hand and *al-kufran* (unbelief) on the other. (ii) He used the term *jahalalah* (the synonym of *jahiliyyah*) to define *al-kufran*. (iii) The usage of the

word *al-kufrān* (unbelief) as the antithesis of *al-īmān* (belief), at this early time of his life (28 years, that is one year after his graduation) indicates his close contact with the Qur'an. This is because the Qur'an and Muslims do not use the word *al-kufrān* frequently, like the word *kufir*. Qutb's close contact with the Qur'an can also be illustrated by his usage of terms such as *kawāfir* (singular *kāfir*: unbeliever).⁸⁴ His emphasis on the dual ability of man is reflected in the Qur'an (91:8–10). (iv) Qutb's ideas of the unity of humanity, the nature of man and his dual ability reflect the relation between matter and spirit, and reflect the freedom of *al-ʿaql* (human intellect) in decision and belief. These ideas follow naturally from his search for a great unity, a theme appearing in his early poetry. Qutb used some verses from the poem under discussion and said of himself that his 'feeling of the great universal unity is clearly seen in this poem'.⁸⁵

The body, intellect and unity

Qutb's idea of unity or, as he called it, *al-wahdah al-kawaniyyah al-kubra* (the great universal unity) is one among other ideas singled out by him in his first volume of poetry *Al-Shahī' al-Majhūl* (1935). As a literary critic, Qutb introduced this volume and critically analysed his own ideas. However, Qutb distinguished his views on a number of ideas from the views of 'ancient Philosophy' on the basis of his 'belief in the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*)'. He emphasized, among other ideas, the relation between matter and spirit and the responsibility of human intellect (*al-ʿaql*) in this life. He pointed out the position of those elements in the 'great universal unity'. In expressing his view, Qutb speaks of himself in both forms as a speaker (i.e. I), or as a third person (i.e. he, him, the poet or the author), as follows:

I know the author of this volume. My knowledge of him is deep and firm. No body knows more about him than I do. We have been friends for ten years or more. I have been watching his feelings, his secrets, and have experienced his ways and inclinations. My view of him is the nearest to his actuality. Dispute between us on some feelings and poems occurs sometimes. We agree on things, but sometimes we cannot find such agreement. Now, the dispute between us is that he is happy with the poems in this volume, but I am looking for higher models...⁸⁶

The claim of separation between body (*jism*) and spirit (*ruh*) regularly occurs in ancient Philosophy, but the poet is inclined to take the general spirit, not the texts of ancient Philosophy in the distinction between those two things, because he believes in the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*). In his view, there are two distinct things, 'body' and 'spirit', but there is a connection between them...⁸⁷

At this time, Qutb does not trust philosophy as a means to explain the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*). This has come to be one of the significant ideas in his later writings, as in his book *Social Justice in Islam* (1949) and the later *The Islamic Concept and Its Characteristics* (1962). The idea of the relationship between matter

and spirit, which appeared here in poetry, was also discussed in his later writings as part of his idea of the great universal unity.⁸⁸ Thus, Qutb's idea of philosophy and the relation between matter and spirit found in his later works is rooted here in this early volume of poetry. In this volume, Qutb also pointed out the responsibility of human intellect and its limited capacity in managing the affairs of human life in place of revelation. Qutb speaks of himself again as a speaker (i.e. I) or as a third person (i.e. he, him, the poet or the author), as follows:

What should be noted here is that the poet distinguishes between the power of human intellect (*quwa 'aqliyyah*) and the spiritual powers (*quwa ruhiyyah*). In other words, between the power of awareness (*quwa wa'iyah*) and the power of inspiration (*quwa mulhimah*). The latter is not the instincts (*ghara'iz*), but power of which we know neither its essence nor function, and we do not feel its work in elevating humanity. The poet sees the human intellect is able to manage the daily affairs of humanity and what is nearer to it, but has no capacity to connect humanity with the world of the unknown (*'alam al-ghayb*) and cannot unite or integrate (*idmaj*) humanity into the 'great universal unity' (*al-wahdah al-kawniyyah al-kubra*). This issue is explained in the first poem of this volume. This poem has another phenomenon, which is the poet does not trust the power of the human intellect. He strongly believes in the spirit and what is related to it of intuition, engrossment, objectiveness and mysticism (*sufiyyah*)...⁸⁹

The spiritual powers (*al-quwa al-ruhiyyah*) are the connection between the poet and the great universal unity (*al-wahdah al-kawniyyah al-kubra*)... This view, perhaps, relates to Einstein's Theory of Relativity and the theories of Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf Islami*), but this is the poet's feeling that repeatedly occurs in most of his poems. The poet's view of the great universal unity is clearly seen in the poem 'Al-Insan al-Akhir' (The Last Man). His feeling of the unity of humanity is clearly mentioned in many parts in this poem. The last man, then, tries to discover the secrets of the unknown (*asrar al-ghayb*) as a continual effort of the human struggle for this goal.⁹⁰

These ideas confirm Qutb's search for a great unifying theory, which he calls the 'great universal unity'. The notions implied by Qutb's words emphasize the great universal unity as a relationship between humans and all powers that we know or feel, and that 'we know neither its essence or function, nor do we feel its work in elevating humanity'. Also, the means for this relationship is not the power of human intellect, but the spiritual power which guides humans to maintain these relations when they deal with the other surrounding powers. Qutb's words emphasize the great universal unity as an overall integrated conception concerning the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind.

The great unity

As to the great unity, Qutb uses these phrases: (i) 'the great universal unity',⁹¹ (ii) 'the universal unity',⁹² (iii) 'the great unity',⁹³ and (iv) 'the unity'.⁹⁴ These should

not be confused with each other. The distinction between these phrases depends on the context. Qutb uses the first two phrases in his explanation of the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. He uses the last two phrases to refer to the 'Great Unity, [and/or] the Unity who conceals secrets'. With this in mind, it should also be noted that, in his later writings, Qutb sometimes uses the phrase 'the great unity' to mean the same as 'the great universal unity'.⁹⁵ This means that he uses the phrase 'the great unity' to refer to the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. The great unity is also used by Qutb to refer to the highest governmental and legal authority of the universe, life and humankind. This is the Great Unity, who conceals secrets as Qutb states in the discussion.

In one of his poems, which emphasizes the last man's attempts to discover the secrets of the unknown (*asrar al-ghayb*), Qutb calls on people to believe in the Great Unity and forget their philosophical arguments (*hija*).⁹⁶ In this sense, he reflects on the relation between matter, spirit and human intellect. Qutb stresses the failure of humans' continual attempts to discover the unknown (*al-ghayb*) through their limited intellect without spiritual guidance. He emphasizes that humans and their intellect are limited in time and space. In a reverential poetical style, he portrays his experience that his soul is 'packed' with all types of 'inspirations'. His soul disagrees with some of those inspirations, but 'agrees' with those which he calls 'yearnings'. 'Charms they are, and kindly they have raised the soul':

To the unknown shore, the world I yearned to see
 To the other shore
 to where you do not know
 to where you cannot see signs of place or space
 where boundaries cease to be
 where you lose a sense of people, world and time
 where you perceive the 'part' and the 'whole' in one
 and the intuitions merged with the thoughts
 There is neither 'yesterday' nor 'tomorrow' or 'today';
 the time is a great circle.
 There is no 'other' and no 'I'
 there is only the (Great Unity) who conceals secrets.⁹⁷

Qutb stresses that spiritual power, not human intellect, is the only qualified power able to connect humans with the great unity. The presence of both 'body and intellect' is the cause behind humanity's feeling of 'space and time' zones. By contrast, the spirit (*al-ruh*) is not limited in time or space; the spirit feels the 'absolute existence (*wujud mutlaq*)'. The poet tells of his experience, that when he freed himself from both body and arguments (*hija*), the spiritual power dominated and raised him above the limits of the body, space and time. From this higher horizon, Qutb tells us that the spiritual power elevated his soul to the 'unknown

shore, to the world he yearned to see', to where there are no limits of any type or form, but 'everything is absolute (*mutalq*)'.⁹⁸ There is only the 'Great Unity':

Full of Majesty (*Jalalun*) as if the Face of Allah appeared on it
The consciences humbled and settled in the souls
The universe is hushed; no voice or minor echo
Not a pulse with it the universe could live
Intuitively the *Last Man* perceives this as the end of all things
Has enough of his own sorrow, he has not thought of any friends.⁹⁹

Everything in the universe is in complete submission to the sovereignty of Allah. Everything other than the One Eternal Sovereign Allah is but His creature and in complete submission to Him. There is one Creator and there are creatures. There is Divinity that belongs to the Sovereign Allah and there is complete submission to Him alone. The total authority of Allah reflected here is the early seed of Qutb's later concepts of *uluhiyyah* (divinity), *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) and *'ubudiyyah* (servitude or complete submission to Allah alone).¹⁰⁰ Qutb's idea here stresses that the complete submission to the highest legal and governmental authority is the end of history and the last man.

The notions and the words of this poetical text indicate Qutb's close contact with the Qur'an. In these poetical verses, Qutb reflects on the scenes of the Day of Judgement.¹⁰¹ He tries to portray Qur'anic notions: 'All that lives on earth is doomed to die. But will abide forever the Face of your Lord Full of Majesty and Glory' (Qur'an 55:26–27). 'On that day men will follow their truthful summoner, their voices hushed before the Lord of Mercy' (Qur'an 20:108). 'Faces shall be humbled before the Living the ultimate Sovereign' (Qur'an 20:111). On that day 'Each Man will forsake his brother, his mother and his father, his wife and his children: for each one of them has enough sorrow of his own' (Qur'an 80:34–37). Qutb goes further to reflect on the scenes of the Day of Judgement with more ideas, such as what man could do if he owned the universe.¹⁰² In this sense, Qutb's poetical text under discussion expresses the total sovereignty of Allah over the universe, life and humankind in this world and the hereafter. Thus, in the latter two poetical texts mentioned here, the 'Great Unity who conceals secrets' is the Sovereign Allah, the one Full of Majesty. This indicates how Qutb, at this point of time (1930s), was endeavouring to articulate the concept of Sovereignty. This effort is quite intentional, as also admitted by Qutb himself in the Introduction to this volume.¹⁰³ The ideas of Sovereignty, the end of history and the last man at this point of time were all to be developed in his later writings into one of the central elements in Islamic theories of government, laws, commandments, provisions for worship and social relations. The point is that this great unity here emphasizes the nature and the meaning of what he later called *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), the ultimate governmental and legal authority.¹⁰⁴

As for the link between those early ideas and the later ones, the great unity in terms of harmony and sociopolitical aspects will be discussed in Chapter 5.¹⁰⁵

Here, however, suffice it to say that it was within the scope of his thinking at this point of time merely to underline what can be seen as an immediate link between those early and later ideas. In addition, quoting later materials not within the timeframe of the period under discussion is meant to do no more than link these ideas to his later writings.

In his book *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, which was published in the early 1960s, Qutb presents Islam as a universal and harmonious system of greater unifying theory. He states:

Islam is a complete way of life, stands as a universal, everlasting attestation for all successive generations. Since any universal phenomenon affects the universe in totality, whenever humans overlook this or contradict it they draw pain and destruction to themselves. Accordingly, either people strictly follows this system and thus becomes Muslims, or they adopt some other man-made way of life and embrace the *jahiliyyah* of atheism . . .¹⁰⁶

According to Qutb, there is no reason for humankind to separate itself from the harmonious system that regulates all aspects of the universe. There must be a correct interpretation of existence, of the position of humanity therein and its ultimate goals in this life. Only this is compatible with the factual realities of life, rather than the faulty impressions people have as a result of their limited minds. Because of its intellectual limits, lusts and desires, humanity has alienated itself from the divinely balanced system that harmonizes all aspects of life in the universe.¹⁰⁷

Humans tend to be dependent on and guided by their minds, but the human mind is limited. It cannot comprehend the unknown (*al-ghayb*); it cannot go beyond its own functional capacity. This was poetically expressed in 1935 when Qutb emphasizes that consulting the mind in everything without discrimination can only drive humankind further from the truth. Qutb says:

The mind (*al 'aql*) that we do consult is not able to tell the truth that is greater than our small truth.¹⁰⁸ Oh man; forget about the *hija* (arguments), here is the world of spirit in which luxury and comforts are waiting for you.¹⁰⁹

In his introduction to *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, Qutb cited this poetical text and used it as a reference to support his emphasis on the limited capacity of human intellect in contrast with spiritual power.¹¹⁰ In his view, spiritual power is the only means of setting humans' relationship with the surrounding universe on the right track for their own benefit. As part of this existence, humans cannot live out of this harmonious system. Their place, role and life is ordained by God the Creator of all. To Qutb, believing in the unseen or the unknown (*al-ghayb*) is a critical principle distinguishing between *al-iman* (belief) and *al-kufr* (unbelief) or *al-jahalat* of all eras.¹¹¹ Once people believe in the unknown, their questions and arguments (*hija*) concerning existence and metaphysical issues will be answered. According to Qutb, 'believing in the unknown annihilates the *jahl* about the meaning of life'.¹¹²

Since the human intellect (*al-'aql*) is not the absolute source of knowledge, it should not be the final and absolute consultant on the future life of humankind. In 1935, Qutb says:

The idea that confines the ways of knowledge to the power of the human intellect, is not safe from objections and blame; even in the most intensive eras of materialism.¹¹³ The human mind (*al-'aql*) is able to deal with daily affairs but cannot comprehend the unseen and the unknown worlds.¹¹⁴

Qutb emphasizes that 'he does not trust the power of the human intellect'. Humanity has within its reach the 'ability' to contact the 'eternal' source of knowledge and through it alone to comprehend the universe.¹¹⁵ People can only be in harmony with the universe through belief in the unknown (*al-ghayb*). As long as humanity continues to bind itself to this eternal source of knowledge, it can enlarge its capacities.¹¹⁶ Complete submission to God's will and determination is thus fundamental. By complying with His order, people will be able to comprehend the universe and be in harmony with it. Qutb is distinguishing between two ideologies: the belief in God's will and determination, on the one hand, and the belief in the ability of the will and determination of human intellect (*al-'aql*), on the other; in other words, between the Sovereignty of Allah and the sovereignty of human intellect (*al-'aql*). This distinction later became the basic principle of his concept of *hakimiyah* (Sovereignty) as discussed in his later works.¹¹⁷

Concluding remarks

In the period 1925–1939, Qutb considered that human life should be in harmony with the universe. This was based on his idea of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. This kind of relationship is repeatedly called 'the great unity' and represented his grand unifying theory. The theory links the part to the whole so that life's small details obtain a permanent and lasting meaning. Humanity appears in harmony with the universe; the motion of life is in harmony with all life; all are subordinated to the Divine Will. Qutb's emphasis on the great unity also signifies the highest legal and governmental authority whose rule is immediate; Allah's law regulates the universe and binds all its parts in a harmonious and orderly sequence. Qutb's ideas in most instances discussed in this section reflect his close contact with the Qur'an at that time.

In most cases, Qutb's writings differentiate between pairs of qualities or ideas. Belief (*al-iman*), glorification (*tasbih*), sanctification (*taqdis*) and rituals (*sha'a'ir*) all, for him, exemplified one of these conditions. The others were unbelief (*al-kufr*: multitude of *kufir*), deviation from spiritual guidance (*dalalah*) and *al-jahalat*, which stood for an ideology to which he attributed a variety of terms. He sometimes simply used the terms *al-kufr* (unbelief), *al-kawafir* (singular *kafir*: unbeliever), *jahl* and *al-jahalat* (singular *jahalah*: synonym of *jahiliyyah*).¹¹⁸ At other times he used words which implied a range of attributes which, paradoxically, implied total

contradiction, worthless pleasure, worldly selfishness, tyranny, savagery, barbarism, the devaluing of rituals, the dark and extinct era, the odious era, vulgarities swarming across the land, injustice, deviation, intensive eras of materialism.¹¹⁹ These meanings and the diacritical emphases that he used were made more efficacious by adding words such as darker, harsher, hellfire, fierce blast of fire.¹²⁰ He may have used this range of expressive terms, rather than simply *jahiliyyah*, to express the wide gap between *al-iman* (belief) and *al-kufrān* (unbelief), that is, between Islam as a unitary ideal and the multifaceted evil of *dalalah* and *jahalah*. This condition connotes sociopolitical totalism, since contradiction or injustice applies to all spheres of life covered by the terms 'unity of humanity in origin and destination',¹²¹ and 'human relations'.¹²² Qutb did not use the explicit term *jahiliyyah* but distinguished between *al-iman* (belief) and *al-kufrān* (unbelief). The latter was identified by the words *dalalah* (deviation from spiritual guidance) and *jahalah*, the synonym of *jahiliyyah*.

5 The *jahiliyyah* theory's second stage: 1939–1948

This chapter deals with the development of Qutb's key ideas during the period 1939–1948, which marks the second phase of his distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah*. This chapter will trace the key ideas that were discussed in the previous chapter and their development during 1939–1948. It will explore the shift in Qutb's interest towards Islamic themes and the focus on the future of Egypt. It will also investigate Qutb's ideas as he closely focuses on the Qur'an. The need for social reform, the ideas that mirror his moral concern and his awareness of the Egyptian problem will be outlined. His theory of society, which reflects his ideological position, will be analysed. The discussion will be based on his published works only within the period under discussion. Among these works are *Naqd Kūtab Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* (Critique of the Book of the Future of Culture in Egypt, 1939), *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an* (Artistic Portrayal in the Qur'an, 1945), *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an* (Scenes of the Resurrection in the Qur'an, 1947) and *al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam* (Social Justice in Islam, 1949).

Before proceeding to investigate in detail his key ideas of the distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah*, it would be appropriate to make some preliminary observations on the environmental factors that contributed to Qutb's growing focus on religious affairs.

Qutb and the future of Egypt

The political, economic, social and moral disorder in Egypt during this period stimulated a diversity of thought on questions of national identity and future life in Egypt.¹ At this time, Qutb was very much involved in the political arena. He moved from one political party to another, from the Wafd party to the Sa'adists. Like most Egyptian intellectuals, he participated in debates focusing on the future life of Egyptians and their cultural heritage. The more he focused on society and relevant issues, the more a clear definition of the distinctive Islamic society seemed necessary. Eventually he was to distinguish between Islam and other ideologies by means of his theory of *jahiliyyah*.

The events of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936–1937 were one significant event that impacted significantly on Egyptian intellectuals. The Treaty officially signalled the end of British occupation of Egypt and initiated a new perspective

on Egypt amongst intellectuals, who were forced to focus on the future life of Egyptians.² Taha Husayn, in 1938, states, 'I felt, as other Egyptians did... that Egypt was beginning a new period of her life: she had obtained some of her rights, and must now set herself to important duties and heavy responsibilities.'³ As well as a significant increase in intellectual activity, this new focus triggered the growth of a variety of interest groups. These groups were not only those identified with al-Azhar, the Muslim Brotherhood or the Nationalists.⁴ There were also the Communists, financially supported by the USSR.⁵ The British-backed monarchy, which was capitalist oriented, had its own complex agenda. The government also was aligned with feudal lords who owned most of Egypt's resources⁶ and the press.⁷

In an attempt to attract the attention of public opinion, most of these groups were advocating their views about the future life of Egypt in the name of Islam. This point was made also by Tawfiq al-Hakim in 1938⁸ and by Sadat in 1965.⁹

As Islam became the focus of intellectuals, writings about Islam increased and were widely welcomed by the reading public. Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1889–1957), 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad (1889–1964), Ahmad Amin (1886–1954), Taha Husayn (1889–1973) and Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898–1989) wrote books on Islamic topics. Al-Hakim published a play, *Ahl al-Kāhf* (People of the Cave), in 1933, based on the Qur'anic story of the same title. This was followed by *Awdat al-Ruh* (Return of the Spirit) in 1934, *Muhammad* in 1936, *Tahta Shams al-Fikr* (Under the Sun of Thought) in 1938 and then *al-Rabat al-Muqaddas* (The Sacred Bond) in 1944. Al-'Aqqad published *Abqariyyat Muhammad* (The Genius of Muhammad) in 1942. This was followed by similar biographical studies on other early Muslim leaders such as Abu Bakr and 'Umar. In 1947 al-'Aqqad published a volume entitled *Allah*. Muhammad Husayn Haykal wrote *al-Imbraturiyyah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Empire), *Fi Manzil al-Wahy* (In the House of Revelation), *al-Siddiq Abu Bakr* (Abu Bakr the Trustworthy) and *al-Faruq 'Umar* ('Umar Ibn al-Kattab). All of these works by Haykal appeared in the period between 1935 and 1945.

These works indicate the return of the spirit of Islam. The relevant ideas were 'expressed in more Islamic terms'.¹⁰ They emphasized Islam as a valid way of life and rational for the modern era.¹¹ Haykal's analysis of Islamic government in *The Life of Muhammad*, or *al-Siddiq Abu Bakr*, or *al-Faruq 'Umar*, as Qutb says, emphasized 'some real and deep-seated differences between the nature of Islam and the nature of the other systems familiar to the world'.¹² For Haykal 'it is not impossible to return to the Islamic system and to establish the Islamic rule (*hukm Islami*) in our time'.¹³ There also were the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood, the *ulama* and the school of Muhammad Abduh led by his disciples, which all dealt with religious and sociopolitical issues. For example, Rashid Rida (d. 1935) emphasized that 'Muslims cannot truly think that their religion exists without a strong and independent Islamic state based on the laws of Islam'.¹⁴ Thus, Islamic themes and associated historical views were dominant in the writings of this period. Whether the writers were liberals, traditionalists or fundamentalists, there was a general return to the discussion of Islamic notions and the future life of Egyptians.¹⁵

Qutb was one among those who began to write about Islam and he was also among the participants who displayed their moral concern and awareness of the Egyptian problem at the time. In the debate, there also was a group that considered European thought and culture as the best basis for the future of Egypt. One such person was Taha Husayn (1889–1973), a Sorbonne Professor who was a very influential literary critic and prolific writer. Husayn's perspective was considered radical since he stressed the Mediterranean influence on Egyptian culture.¹⁶ In 1926 he published *al-Shi'r al-Jahili* (Pre-Islamic Arab Poetry), which attracted the condemnation of religious authenticists in Egypt.¹⁷ The book had to be withdrawn because of its critical method, which, if applied to the texts of history, might cast doubt on their authenticity.¹⁸ Husayn responded by attacking the *'ulama* and his mentor al-Marsafi (d. 1931), who endorsed the Council's decision against him. This matter was the subject of debate in the Parliament in 1932. The government dismissed Husayn from his position as Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Fu'ad I, the then University of Cairo. However, the new government restored Husayn to the position in 1936. He thereupon began work on another book, *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* (The Future of Culture in Egypt). This book was 'written in 1937 and 1938 in France' and published in Cairo in 1938.¹⁹ According to Albert Hourani, this book was 'derived to some extent from Ibn Khaldun, but more fundamentally from the French masters of his thought, Comte, Renan, Durkheim and Anatole France'.²⁰ The context in which the book appeared is particularly significant. Various political events combined to shape public opinion on the question of Egyptian cultural identity. A treaty with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon followed the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in 1936.²¹ In 1937, Turkey announced its new secular constitution. In the same year, representatives of Muslim Arab nations met in Cairo in an attempt to revive the Caliphate.²²

For many, Husayn's book marked the demarcation of Egypt from the Arab world and linked it with the Mediterranean. Husayn had divided the world into East and West and he advocated the identification of Egypt with secular Europe. He saw Egypt as essentially European and Western rather than part of the East. In this regard, Husayn told his readers that 'we must follow the European path in government, administration, and legislation. . . . We must follow Europeans for good and ill in what they like and dislike'.²³ Husayn suggested that the Egyptian mind was closer to the European mind than it was to 'China, Japan, or India'.²⁴ Thus Egypt should separate religion from politics, establish Western secular systems, create a liberal political domain and accept the values of European thought and culture.²⁵ In his view, 'the West is not materialistic as Orientals think; its material triumphs are the products of its intellect and spirit'.²⁶ This means that Egypt should not be concerned to imitate the West or accommodate Western ideas. Another example of Husayn's view can be seen in *Qudat al-Fikr* (Masters of Thought, 1925) and *Min Ba'id* (From a Distance, 1935). To Pierre Cachia (1956), Husayn's biographer, Husayn portrayed Islam as engaged in a losing battle with Reason. Cachia notes that the period 1923–1950 was one in which Husayn's work had critical impact and caused both 'al-Azhar and the Manar to declare him an apostate'.²⁷

Ahmad Amin (1886–1954) was another eminent Egyptian thinker of the time. He published an article *Bayna al-Sharq wa Al-Gharb* (Between the East and the West) in 1939. Amin's article was in response to Husayn's book, but also divided the world into East and West. Unlike Husayn, Amin saw the West as materialistic. But he emphasized

the need for the East to adopt Western ideas with regard to economics and science. Muslims reject Western ideas only because the West tried to force the Muslim world to accept them. Western force, exploitation, the crusades and the weakness of Muslims all caused Muslims to panic and fear accepting Western ideas. They also rejected Western slogans. However, Muslims accepted Greek and Persian civilizations.²⁸

Although Amin's article was in response to Husayn's book, and was also used by Qutb in his response to Husayn's book,²⁹ such ideas (by Husayn and Amin) struck Qutb deeply, since they were initiated by influential figures. These and similar writings, as Qutb asserts, propelled Egypt from its Islamic identity and cultural heritage. At that time, as asserted by Abu Rabi, 'Qutb defines himself as an independent intellectual with a distinct method that does not subscribe to parties and denominations'.³⁰ Yet, Qutb responded to these arguments in a series of essays reflecting his Islamic emphasis regarding Egyptian identity. The longest of them was one entitled *Naqd Kitab Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* (Critique of the Book of the Future of Culture in Egypt), published in the literary journal of *Dar al-'Ulum* in 1939.³¹ This article was developed into a book published under the same title, in the same year (1939). In this book, Qutb discussed Husayn's views of Egyptian cultural origins and affinities. He did not reject all of Husayn's ideas, but described Husayn's book as 'the book of the season', or 'the only book after independence'.³² Qutb summed this up in the introduction to *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah* (Future of Culture) in these words: 'In this book is what we agree and disagree on with the Doctor [Husayn]. There is also what can be subjected to discussion.'³³ Qutb's response drew the attention of the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood), and consequently the book was published in their journal.³⁴ The Muslim Brotherhood's appreciation of Qutb's response confirms Qutb's Islamic position at that time.

Husayn's ideas drew Qutb's attention to focus on the identity and cultural heritage of Egypt.³⁵ He made it known that he would produce a few books on Islam and establish a 'Library of the Qur'an'.³⁶ After publishing *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah* (The Future of Culture) in 1939, Qutb wrote a couple of articles on *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an* (Artistic Portrayal in the Qur'an), published in 1939 in *al-Muqtataf*.³⁷ In 1945, he wrote a few more articles for *al-Risalah*.³⁸ These and the earlier articles evolved into his book *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an*, published in April 1945. This was followed by *Kutub wa Shakhsiyyat* (Books and Personalities) in 1946, and *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an* (Scenes of the Resurrection in the Qur'an) in 1947, *al-Naqd al-Adabi* (Literary Criticism) in 1948 and *al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam* (Social Justice in Islam) in 1949.

In these works, Qutb moved more clearly towards distinguishing between social, political and cultural ideas of Islam and those of what he later called *jahiliyyah*. His objective, as he asserted, was to remind Egyptians of their Islamic identity and Islamic heritage, and 'to recover for the modern readers the original powerful charm of the Qur'an that the Arabs felt on first receiving it and falling under its spell'.³⁹ Thus, from 1939 until 1947, the Islamic theme in Qutb's writings began to take shape. His ideas in this period represent a uniform attitude with absolute commitment to cultural, educational, religious, social and ideological issues. By 1948, Qutb had arrived at a point where he clearly saw any adoption of European laws as a secular threat to the Islamic identity and culture of Egypt.⁴⁰

In addition to his surrounding environment, there also were some personal reasons for Qutb's focus on Islamic writing. He began writing *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an* (Artistic Portrayal in the Qur'an, 1945) at the time when he felt that he had reached a point of intellectual maturity. He noted that 'my turn has come to publish books, having published articles, essays and poetry. I delayed because I preferred not to climb the minaret without steps but to wait until I reach my intellectual maturity. . . . My first real book was *al-Taswir al-Fanni*'.⁴¹ After *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, Qutb's writings took form in various spheres of Arabic and Islamic studies. Over a 26 year period, from 1939 to 1965, he added to what he had already published 26 books, including his multi-volume *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an).

Qutb focuses on the Qur'an

Qutb was in close contact with the Qur'an, since he had learned it by heart during his childhood. The words of the Qur'an, the images, the rhythm and the music of the words and style enchanted him before he even knew its meaning.⁴² When he grew older and entered an institution of higher learning, where he 'read books of exegesis' and heard Qur'anic 'exegesis from his scholars', he could not 'find the same thrill as that of his childhood in what he read or heard'.⁴³ In this sense, Qutb was disappointed and continued his search for the Qur'an which had enchanted him. His search took time until he 'reached his intellectual maturity' and 'studied the Qur'an on his own'. His reference, this time, was not the books of exegesis but 'only al-Mushaf' (the Qur'an). He 'found the Qur'an'; that is, he regained his early enchantment with the Qur'anic images and meanings, the rhythm and music of its words – 'Praise be to Allah that I have found the Qur'an'.⁴⁴ He published what he found in *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an*.

Qutb explains how the Qur'an has a continual effect on the minds and hearts of human beings and wins them over to its message. In addition to its literary and artistic values, the book *Taswir*, as Qutb asserts, is a significant Islamic book with regard to the field of literary structures of religious meaning that was concerned with the many religious purposes in the Qur'an.⁴⁵ However, the book is not 'Islamist' in the sense that *Adalah* (Social Justice) and *Ma'alim* (Milestones) are. The book *Adalah*, as described by John Hardie, who translated it into English,

is a 'provocative' and 'challenging book'.⁴⁶ It challenges other sociopolitical systems and calls for a return to Islamic order. In *Taswir*, Qutb emphasizes the Qur'anic style and method, which challenged the Arabs and established the Islamic order. The psychological influence that the Qur'an had on the feelings and behaviour of the Arabs is not less significant than were the sociopolitical and economic development in the life of Arabia and in the world at large.⁴⁷ The challenge of the Qur'an is not limited to a specific time, space or to a specific race.⁴⁸ In addition, some ideas used by Qutb in *Taswir* were also used in his later discussion of the theory of society.⁴⁹ For example, the idea of the unitary theory and that of human intellect, the idea of comprehensiveness (*al-shumul*) and that of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind were all used in this book and in his later works.⁵⁰ In *Taswir*, Qutb was not 'preaching art for art's sake', as such, but 'argues for a religious, social, and even ideological use of the Qur'an as an artistic document'.⁵¹ When he was discussing his theory of society, Qutb took up these ideas and some of the literary issues and repeatedly referred his readers in footnotes to the relevant chapters in the book *Taswir* for further details.⁵² Also, *Taswir* developed Qutb's capacity and ideas concerning explanation (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an. He practised, for the first time, the idea of *Taswir* to comment on Qur'anic aesthetics in 1946.⁵³ As stated by Boullata (2000),

There is no doubt that Sayyid Qutb hit on a powerful idea when he came upon the concept of *al-taswir al-fanni fi al-Qur'an*. Earlier Muslim writers like 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, al-Khattabi (d. 998) . . . and a few others, including Mustafa al-Rafi'i (d. 1939) in modern times dealt with some of the literary aspects of the Qur'an that Sayyid Qutb concerned himself with. But they never conceived of them in the same forceful way as he did, nor did they see them integrated in a unitary theory in the manner he did.⁵⁴

Qutb approaches the Qur'an from a functional perspective to clarify its relationship to literature (*adab*). He points out that the Qur'an has a specific and very effective method of using language. When a person reads the Qur'an or listens to it, he is transported, through its words, to a higher level of reality in which he forgets that he is being exposed to words; he imagines he sees actual scenes as they unfold, watches real events as they happen, and witnesses existing persons as they act. In his view, the Qur'anic text 'offers life with its motion, not description of life'.⁵⁵ Qutb emphasized that the Qur'an came to establish a 'comprehensive' creed, that is, the creed of *tawhid*. The Qur'an was faced by denial and arguments, but it successfully affirmed the 'creed and established Islamic credal values of *tawhid*'.⁵⁶ The general tools of the Qur'anic method in debating with the Arabs, as Qutb says, were those of '*al-mantiq al-wijdani*' (emotive logic) and '*al-jadal al-taswiri*' (dialectic portrayal).⁵⁷ He contends that this method or quality of the Qur'an was what impressed the Arabs when they first heard the Prophet Muhammad recite the earliest revealed verses from it. There were 'those who were impressed and converted and there were those who were impressed and

ran away, but all spoke of the influence of the Qur'an on their minds and souls'.⁵⁸ In this regard, Qutb cites the reactions of such strong opponents of the Prophet as 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab and al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah in the early Islam; how the former was impressed and converted to Islam and how the latter turned away from Islam but declared the Qur'an's powerful effect on the minds and the souls. According to Qutb,

'Umar Ibn al-Khattab said of himself, 'I was far away from Islam. In the *jahiliyyah*, I was a close friend to wine; I like it, and I drink it. . . . When I have heard the Qur'an from the Prophet my heart elevated, and giving tears I felt Islam installed in my heart.'⁵⁹

Here is the word *jahiliyyah*. It also reflects the condition of the historical past. However, citing this particular account at length from various sources reflects Qutb's main concern. His main concern is certainly not the society and the people of the past but those of the present. He uses the past to reflect on the present condition, as he commonly does. This line of discussion is determinative for Qutb's thoughts in the earlier and later writings. The earlier writings were discussed in the previous chapter.⁶⁰ As to the later writings, William Shepard suggests that 'Qutb's main concern, of course, is the present. . . . There are, to be sure, some places where the word *jahiliyyah* appears in the conventional historical meaning. But these are relatively infrequent and not determinative for his thinking. Often they represent holdovers from his earlier usage'.⁶¹

In this account, Qutb suggests that the Qur'an, which challenged *jahiliyyah* in the past, is still the Qur'an which is challenging the present *jahiliyyah*. Emphasizing this challenge, Qutb tends to contrast Islam and *jahiliyyah*. The contrast is not only on a conceptual level, but also on the level of people (individuals and groups), as in the account of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab and that of al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah.⁶² The Qur'an impressed both of them, but Ibn al-Mughirah turned back to *jahiliyyah*.⁶³ The difference between these two strong personalities depicts the difference between Islam and *jahiliyyah* of any epoch.⁶⁴ This contrast is not to be judged in terms of quantity or measure but, rather, in terms of quality and influence.⁶⁵ Thus, Qutb distinguished between Islam and *jahiliyyah* on the basis of the ideas in *Taswir* from 1945. The distinction was not only on the conceptual level but also on the level of human personalities or, as Qutb calls it, *namazij insaniyyah* (human types).⁶⁶ Qutb expresses his main concern as follows:

It is here that the story of *kufri* (unbelief) meets the story of *Iman* (belief) in acknowledging the influence of the Qur'an. The difference between the story of *kufri* and that of *Iman* is the difference between those two strong personalities: 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab and al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah. The piety (*taqwa*) elevated 'Umar to Islam, but the arrogance of Ibn al-Mughirah turned him back [to *jahiliyyah*]. Both men went in opposite directions after they met on one point, that is, the point of their acknowledgement of the influence of the Qur'an.⁶⁷

Thus the way of Islam is completely opposite to the way of *jahiliyyah*. Each way leads to a society opposite to the other. Also, he who turned back to *jahiliyyah* could not eradicate what his mind and soul had heard and perceived of the Qur'an.⁶⁸ The Qur'an was working on Ibn al-Mughirah's mind and heart and, after deep thought, he advised that he should say 'this is nothing but magic handed down from the old.'⁶⁹ In this regard, Qutb refers to the Qur'an: 'He thought and he determined. Woe to him! How he determined! Yes, woe to him: How he determined! Then he reflected; Then he frowned and he scowled; Then he turned back and was haughty; Then he said "this is nothing but magic derived from of old..."'⁷⁰ This is, Qutb asserts, 'the saying of a man turned away from Islam. He was proud of his own lineage, wealth and offspring and haughtily he did not surrender to Muhammad'.⁷¹ Qutb's distinction between the two societies was not only on the conceptual level but also on the level of human personalities, *namazij insaniyyah*. Qutb says:

The Qur'an portrayed tens of *namazij al-insaniyyah* and they appeared in texts concerned with many religious purposes. This is easily and simply done as it takes no more than one or two phrases to see a 'human type' portrayed and stood up a living being with eternal characters. These types represent the human race sometimes or a repeated type of individuals. In either case, they are eternal types that cannot be missed in any society or generation.⁷²

Qutb goes on to distinguish between these types and reflect on their behaviours and characters. His analysis can be summarized in two categories, namely, the believers and the unbelievers. He provided several Qur'anic texts to illustrate these categories, as follows:

- 1 The Believers: This human type, Qutb says, confirms that 'there is still goodness in humanity. There are those of piousness, bravery, generosity, forbearance and openhandedness'.⁷³ Among this type are 'the true believers whose hearts are filled with awe at the mention of Allah, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to His revelations. They are those who put their trust in their Lord' (Qur'an 8:2). They are 'those who walk on the earth in humility, and when *al-jahilun* address them, they say, "Peace"' (Qur'an 25:63). They are those early Muslims who have been driven from their homes and their possessions in Makkah and those Muslims (*ansar*: helpers) who stayed in their city Madinah and helped those emigrants, as in Qur'an 59:8–9.⁷⁴
- 2 The Unbelievers (infidels and hypocrites): Among this type are
 - (a) those who reject the truth⁷⁵
 - (b) those who 'run away from the truth (*haqq*) and hate to know anything about it because of their haughtiness and weakness'⁷⁶
 - (c) those of personal desires and self-interest who 'know only their own interest and do not walk in the way of truth unless their interest is obvious'⁷⁷

- (d) those 'who eat on all tables and show that they are supporters of all parties'⁷⁸
- (e) those 'who run away from the truth in this way: "As if they were affrighted asses fleeing from a lion!"'⁷⁹

Qutb presented more examples and concluded that 'these are some types presented here unclassified but scattered in line with their presence in human society of all time and space'.⁸⁰ This confirms that Qutb's usage of the term *jahiliyyah*, in 1945, was not confined to the historical past, as such, but reflected on any time and place, including the present. Then, examples of belief and unbelief, Islam and *jahiliyyah* are there in human society of all time and place. These types of distinction were also based on various aesthetic forms of *Taswir*, explained by Qutb as follows:

al-taswir is the preferred tool in the style and expression of the Qur'an. By the portrayed fancied images, *taswir* designates intellectual meanings, psychological states, perceptible events, visual scenes, human types, and human nature. *Taswir* then elevates these portrayed images and grants them living presence; whereupon intellectual meanings become forms or motions, psychological states become tableaux or spectacles, human types become vivid and at hand, and human nature becomes visible and embodied. As for events, scenes, stories, and sights, *al-taswir* renders them actual and immediate, pulsating with life and movement. When *taswir* added dialogue to them, they appear in full play with all the elements of imaginative representation in them.⁸¹

Using his tools, Qutb pointed out that the Qur'an dealt with the idea of the other world, but the problem also was human types.⁸² The people were strongly denying the Qur'anic ideas. All those who opposed the Qur'an 'were not only of the naïve polytheist Arabs, but also the people of the Book who hate to see a new religion replaces their religion'.⁸³ How then did the Qur'an deal with them on these issues? The preferred method is again *al-mantiq al-wijdani* (emotive logic) and *al-jadal al-taswiri* (dialectic portrayal).⁸⁴

Qutb emphasized the effectiveness of this method in the argument on a number of concepts, among which is the concept of *tawhid*, that is, the oneness of Allah in His existence, acts, and in His attributes such as sovereignty or total authority and knowledge. In this regard, he emphasized the idea of comprehensiveness (*al-shumul*) and referred to Qur'anic verse 6:59: 'With Him are the keys of all that is hidden: none knows them but He.' Qutb draws on this verse, which declares the sovereignty, the total authority and knowledge of Allah, to emphasize the limited power of human intellect. In this sense and with reference to the words of the latter verse, Qutb noted

In these words, a strong expression about the total knowledge of the deity (*al-Ilah*). The words were selected to portray this concept... this is *al-mantiq al-wijdani* (emotive logic) and *al-jadal al-taswiri* (dialectic portrayal). Where is, then, *al-jadal al-dihni* (dialectic reasoning)?⁸⁵

Thus, the 'emotive logic' and 'dialectic portrayal' served the religious purposes and the establishment of the Islamic creed. This means that logical reasoning is not among the preferred methods of the Qur'anic style, not because 'truth in the Qur'an cannot be verified by logical reasoning, but because the limited power of Reason cannot establish a Creed that transcends Reason'.⁸⁶ Reason must acknowledge this reality, Qutb says. If Reason claimed knowledge of everything, this would elicit no respect because Reason has no full awareness of itself and cannot apprehend other concepts. This means not that Islamic Creed disregards the freedom of human Reason but that it respects the Reason which acknowledges the limits of human Reason.⁸⁷ In this sense, Qutb does not support the idea which confines the explanation of 'religious theories' to only 'logical reasoning or experimental science'. He says:

Nowadays, there are some people who elevate the value of Reason. They have been attracted by those new discoveries and industries. Among the people of religion, some who are naïve and who may get excited by the new discoveries, then, believe in them and try to support religion by explaining its theories on the basis of logical reasoning or experimental science! In my belief, these people elevate human intellect to horizons above its horizons. . . . Human intellect must leave a share to the unknown (*al-majhul*). . . . Human intellect is able to deal only with the daily events or what is nearer to this life, but Creed is in its higher horizon there. Nobody can reach this position through a way other than intuition and preparation to perceive the light of guidance.⁸⁸

The point here is that human Reason is incompetent to be the only source of knowledge because knowledge is not within the power of human reasoning alone; there are some things with explanations that human reasoning cannot grasp.⁸⁹ This suggestion is in agreement with that of the quantum physicist⁹⁰ Paul Davies, who says:

It is a fact of life that people hold beliefs, especially in the field of religion, which might be regarded as irrational. That they are held irrationally does not mean they are wrong. There is perhaps a route to knowledge that bypasses or transcends human reason. As a scientist, I would rather try to take human reasoning as far as it will go. In exploring the frontiers of reason and rationality we will certainly encounter mystery and uncertainty and, in all probability, at some stage reasoning will fail us and will have to be replaced either by irrational belief or agnosticism.⁹¹

This means that human intellect and experimental science are not the ultimate source of knowledge.

According to Qutb, true knowledge is knowledge that emphasizes that the unity between spiritual and material forces is a fact of life.⁹² In humans, spirit and matter cannot be separated; a human is not human only on account of his physical (material) being, nor only by virtue of the spirit. Unity between matter and spirit

is fundamental to life. Leonard Binder contends that an animal is also matter and spirit and the unity between them is fundamental.⁹³ This is true, but this truth must be a reminder that behind every creature there is some higher purpose of the Creator. This is the case with everything that exists in any shape of solid, liquid or gaseous form; each has its own significance for the survival and sustenance of life.⁹⁴ Humankind was created with certain basic needs that have to be satisfied for survival. These needs are material and spiritual, not only material as with animals. Human life is not only 'food and drink like animals'.⁹⁵ Thus, human Reason is charged with and obliged to fulfil God's order of justice: the balancing of material and spiritual needs.⁹⁶

Consequently, people must work to balance their spiritual and material needs. Work is one of the relationships between religion and all aspects of human affairs. Religion has something to say to guide human life affairs – their economy, work, arts (*adab*), culture etc. – because unity is the basis of existence. There is no separation between religion and human life; that is, religion is a way of life. In this regard, Qutb emphasized the relation between *Taswir* and the purposes of religion in this life. To Qutb 'the Qur'an unites the heaven and the earth in one system, and unites the scenes of nature with the scenes of life in a "broad unit" (*al-wahdah al-kabirah*) instead of a "small unit" (*al-wahdah al-saghirah*)'.⁹⁷ Among those purposes also are the unity of God, the unity of the revealed religions in the religion of God, the unity of the prophets and the unity of their purpose.⁹⁸ To Qutb, the universe, life and humankind, the religions, the messengers and their purposes, all are in the hands of the Sovereign of all Sovereignty: 'The Great Power (*al-Quwwah al-Kubra*), as the Qur'an portrays "The Mighty of The Able" (*al-Qudrah al-Qadirah*) Who says to a thing "Be and it is."⁹⁹ Here is the concept of Sovereignty. It was not only expressed in his writings in 1935, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also here in *al-Taswir* (1945). This indicates that Qutb's thought was going steadily in one direction.

Qutb concludes that 'the Qur'an is the only source of balanced knowledge for a balanced life, even if the Qur'an is viewed merely as a history book. There is no book in the history of humanity that is as authentic or as verifiable, on a practical level, as the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the only worthy consultative source as a guide for human ideas and the realm of aesthetics'.¹⁰⁰

Qur'anic conceptions versus *Jahili* conceptions

The limits of human Reason and the clarity and universality of the message of the Qur'an provide a background for Qutb's book *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an* (Scenes of Resurrection in the Qur'an, 1947). This is 'the second book in [his] library of the Qur'an'.¹⁰¹ It deals with the Qur'anic texts from the point of view of aesthetics to emphasize the harmonious relationship between the arts (*adab*) and religious purposes.¹⁰² In this context, Qutb discussed the concept of the other world in pre-Islamic literature; this is contrasted with his discussion of the other world in the Qur'an. This indicates Qutb's intention to distinguish between Islamic and non-Islamic views on this important issue of religious belief. He

pointed out the standpoint of the pre-Islamic condition from which the Qur'an elevated the whole of humanity to the higher horizons of the other world, for the first time in the history of humanity.

This comparative study covers Ancient Egypt, Zoroastrianism, the Greek and Roman empires, Buddhism and Hinduism. Qutb then discusses the concept of the Afterlife in the Old and in the New Testament, Divinity (*al-uluhiyyah*), resurrection, the concept of justice and the final judgement, Hell and Paradise.

Qutb outlined the defects in pre-Islamic views about the other world, but his treatment of the pre-Islamic ideologies is relatively dispassionate and even positive in some ways. The belief in the judgement after death, known to human conscience, began first in Ancient Egypt.¹⁰³ The deceased had first to face the divine tribunal. The supreme god 'Osiris and 42 judges that represent the 42 provinces of Egypt at that time' judged the earthly deeds of the deceased.¹⁰⁴ To Qutb, the idea of justice in 'Ancient Egypt's creed distinguished itself by its high horizons in the midst of those pagan creeds which appeared 2000 years later'.¹⁰⁵ He concluded:

One might think that the defects in the idea of the other world in Ancient Egypt's creed reduce its value. But we should remember that this idea was established in the shade of a pagan creed before the dawn of history. There about five thousand years passed for this idea; therefore the idea itself can be seen as great. And if we attach to this early idea the later one of *tawhid*, which was established by King 'Akhenaton' three thousand years ago, we can imagine the greatness of the conscience (*damir*) which had arrived to all of this before the dawn of history.¹⁰⁶

As for the concept of the other world in Greek culture, Qutb discussed the views of Homer, who is said to have lived in the ninth century BC. Qutb analysed this period until Plato (427–347 BC) and concluded, 'Thus Plato had come back to consider what was missed by Homer and arrived at the shore of Ancient Egypt's creed, which appeared 2500 years before him'.¹⁰⁷

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, Qutb says, there is nothing that can be called other world. There is only 'al-Nirvana'. It is a 'complete absorption of oneself into the supreme spirit despite the difference between the two religions in their means to get to this stage'.¹⁰⁸

Regarding Hinduism, there are some books containing several types of belief, the best of which is Vedanta (the end of Veda).¹⁰⁹ Vedanta is based on the idea that 'human soul and Allah is one thing. Human beings cannot feel such unity because of their limited ability and they will remain in the state of error (*dalal*) until they extinguish the limits of the self'.¹¹⁰ Those who are able to 'torture their body' and avoid the uncontrollable satisfaction of human desires will be absorbed into the supreme spirit.¹¹¹ Here, Qutb says, 'the idea of reincarnation (*tanasukh*) serves to achieve this goal. When a human being dies, his spirit will be transferred to the body of an animal or human being and experiences all types of agony until it is purified and finally reaches al-Nirvana, and will then rest from reincarnation'.¹¹²

Reincarnation, in Qutb's view, is also the core of Buddhism, established in 500 BC. Qutb asserts that 'Buddha, on his death, pointed at his body and said to his student that "this mixture must be deceased and analysed to its primary elements. Oh Ananda, you should continue your spiritual struggle and you will be able to eradicate the sin of the pressing lusts, the sin of individual being, and the sin of superstitions and *al-jahalah*."'¹¹³ Qutb concluded that there is but 'reincarnation and agony in Hinduism; and resistance to the pressing lusts and disengagement from the self in Buddhism in order to reach al-Nirvana'.¹¹⁴

As for the Old Testament, Qutb pointed out that 'the other world was not explicitly mentioned, but it can be understood that both reward and punishment occur in this life'.¹¹⁵ In this regard, Qutb drew on some texts from the Book of Job and emphasized the doubts about reward and punishment, which began to infiltrate religious belief at that time. Qutb stresses that 'the actual events of daily life did not confirm this naïve belief. The evil doers were not punished and the righteous people were not rewarded.... Did he [Job] doubt the Divine Justice? ... The idea of the other world was not yet articulated. It must be developed in the long history of the Israelites after the Old Testament was written. We have found in Matthew (22:23) that "On that day came to him Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection..." Thus there was a group during the time of the Messiah still believing that there was no resurrection. However, we know that the Pharisees believed in resurrection.'¹¹⁶ Qutb concluded that 'the other world was not mentioned in the Old Testament, but the indications in the New Testament are enough to verify the later existence of the idea of resurrection, as we have already seen'.¹¹⁷

As to the idea of the other world in the New Testament, Qutb pointed out that Christianity has both 'the kingdom of the Lord' and 'eternal life' for happiness. It has 'hellfire' (*jahannam*), 'fire' (*nar*) and 'darkness' for punishment. It also has 'the day on which the Son of Man, the "Messiah", will come with the angels of Allah. But we do not know when: is it the Day of Resurrection or the day of his resurrection after three days of his death and burial?'¹¹⁸ With reference to some texts, Qutb emphasized that there is 'no more than these brief indications for happiness in the kingdom of heavens, and agony in hellfire or in the outer darkness. But, we have found some detail, mentioned only once, in Matthew' (25:31).¹¹⁹ With reference to some texts, Qutb concluded that 'this is the only detailed account about resurrection and judgement, happiness and torment that we have found in the Books (*Anajil*) which are in our hands and on which Christianity is based to date'.¹²⁰

Given these specifics, the idea of the other world, as Qutb says, could not spread in Arabia despite the presence of Jews and Christians there. This idea 'remained foreign and faced strong denial when Muhammad (Peace be upon him)¹²¹ came with the Qur'an'.¹²² In this regard, the Qur'an says: 'The unbelievers say [in ridicule]: Shall we show you a man [Muhammad] who claims that when you have been scattered to pieces in disintegration you will be raised in a new creation? Has he invented a lie about God, or is he mad?' (Qur'an 34:7). 'They say: "there is this life and no other. We die and live; nothing but Time destroys us"'. Surely of

this they have no knowledge' (Qur'an 45:24). Here Qutb makes his point of clear distinction between Islam and other ideologies as follows:

It was from here that the Qur'an elevated them to the horizons of the other world for the first time in the history of humanity... The presentation of the scenes of the other world [in the Qur'an] will clearly indicate to what extent Islam elevated the Arabs. They have come to believe in another world of Paradise and Hellfire, happiness and torment, absolute justice and all-embracing mercy in a more perfect and pure manner than that of all previous imaginations in the long history of humanity. This world is defined in the following sections.¹²³

The idea of social justice in some of these ideologies, in contrast with Islam, was also discussed in his *Social Justice in Islam* (1949) and in later writings.¹²⁴

In contrast to the concept of the other world in pre-Islamic ideologies, Qutb discussed the concept of the other world in the Qur'an. This task forms the second and major part of the book *Mashahid* and contains the Qur'anic texts on the concept of the other world. Each text presents an eschatological scene about the Day of Resurrection, Judgement and Afterlife. Qutb surveys 150 scenes selected from 80 of the Qur'an's 114 surahs: 63 from the Makkan period and 17 from the Madinan period. He might take more than one scene from one surah, the length of each scene depending, as he says, on the context of the religious purposes of the surah and the artistic exposition. He pointed out that 'with this multitude of scenes, there is no repetition; each scene differs from the others in general and in details. This is another type of inimitability (*i'jaz*) similar to the *i'jaz* in the creation of those millions of people: all are human beings but every individual has his own distinguished feature and appearance in this wonderful divine exhibition'.¹²⁵

In analysing the Qur'an's expressions relevant to the scenes of Resurrection and Judgement, and of the ensuing Afterlife in Hell and in Paradise, Qutb shows how the Qur'an has described the other world as a living and moving reality in a perceptible and graphic way and how it has rendered it perpetually present and visible to human beings at all times. He emphasized that 'Muslims have lived with these scenes in their minds, alternately frightened and comforted by them, but always knowing this other world well before its promised day arrives'.¹²⁶

Accordingly, the concept of the Afterlife is simple and clear with the characteristic clarity of the Islamic creed, and thus death and resurrection, judgement, happiness or torments are quite specifically detailed. For those who believe in Allah and whose deeds are righteous, according to the Islamic creed, their portion is Paradise, where they will dwell in happiness. However, those who reject faith in Allah and treat His Signs as falsehoods will be companions in Hell and will dwell therein in torment. There is no intercession, no ransom and no sacrifice to free any from the Fire, and 'not a hair's breadth of error in the balance of absolute justice'.¹²⁷

How does the Qur'an express its truth? How does it impact on the human being? In his exposition, Qutb emphasizes, in addition to the idea of Sovereignty or the total authority of Allah, the idea of harmony, the freedom of human

intellect, the balance between material and spiritual needs and the link between this world and the other world, as in the discussion later.

According to Qutb, the Qur'an works on the human soul, activating the depth of human conscience and the spirit it is seeking to reform. At the same time, the Qur'an recognizes both the practical side of life and the power of the soul.¹²⁸ It seeks to rouse the desires and highest aspirations in human nature and use these to strive for the complete liberation of the soul.¹²⁹ The Qur'an reaches every part of the human soul as well as mundane life. It stimulates people to work, to develop relationships among themselves, and to be in a harmonious motion with a universe regulated by the Law of the Sovereign.¹³⁰ Allah created man and 'endowed him with hearing and sight, and showed him the right path and endowed him with freedom so that he could decide for himself. Be he thankful or oblivious (*kafura*) is the end of this scene.'¹³¹

The link between this world and the other world is not beyond Qutb's book *Mashahid*, as some might think. He draws on the link between the present life and the Hereafter to emphasize the sovereignty of the Creator over His creation in the present world and in the other. According to Qutb, life in this world and that in the other world form the basis for the Qur'anic eschatological scenes. Their general feature is the link between this world and the other world.¹³² In this regard, Qutb comments on the Qur'an 50:19–30 and states that 'this scene begins in "this world" and ends in the "other world"'. The present world and the other world are not separated and the distance between them is not that far any way'.¹³³ As this scene ends, Qutb says, 'another one [Qur'an 50:16–18] begins to emphasize the sovereignty and supervision of the Creator over His creations when they are alive preparing for Judgement after death. . . . Man was not left out in vain but two guardians register all his deeds. . . .'¹³⁴ On the Judgement Day, every soul will come 'with two guardians; one driver (*Sa'iqa*) and the other to bear witness (*shahid*)'. Record will be produced, Justice will be done, and 'The Ultimate Power'¹³⁵ will issue the 'decree that nobody could reject'.¹³⁶

In another eschatological scene based on Qur'an 74:1–51, Qutb pointed out that this scene portrays Hellfire and begins with 'fear and *al-tajhil*: "Would that you knew what the Fire is like!"' (Qur'an 74:27).¹³⁷ Qutb's word *al-tajhil* here attributed those of the Hellfire to *jahl*.¹³⁸ In this regard, Qutb contrasts the situation of the believers and unbelievers on the Day of Judgement. Based on the Qur'an 20:102–104, Qutb says:

Those who are sinful (*mujrimun*) will be gathered together and their faces will turn blue from terror and sorrow.¹³⁹ They murmur among themselves and ask every other about the duration they have spent in the graves. They were deceased people and lost the sense of time.¹⁴⁰ On this day, they say, 'We lingered in the grave only ten days.'¹⁴¹ Here *al-jahilun* and the learned of them are equal in their disorder. Their wiser heads go even deeper in *al-jahl* and say 'that it was only a brief day'.¹⁴²

In the following scene, Qutb explains the fearfulness of those sinful people (*mujrimun*), their submission and the similarity between their situation and the

situation of the destroyed mountains. This account mirrors the sovereignty of Allah and His authority over everything. Qutb says:

Then the hurricane stopped and everything is calm and all listening to the summoner calling upon them to Allah. In complete submission they all follow him immediately and straightly without a glance to right or left. Their complete submission is expressed in that they 'follow the caller with no crookedness [straight]'. This is in harmony with the mountains – they were leveled to the ground, straightened and without crookedness. Then deep silence and calmness spread all over the scene. 'And all voices hushed before the Lord of Mercy: only you hear *hams*.'¹⁴³ 'All faces humbled before the Living One (*al-Hayy*), the Sovereign (*al-Qayyum*).'¹⁴⁴ In this way, silence, fearfulness, humbleness, and calmness all covered the scene. The talk is but murmuring (*hams*), the question [among themselves] is but whispering, humbleness is predominant, the voices hushed, and the Glory (*Jalal*) of the Living One, the Sovereign covers the souls. There is no intercession will avail except from Him that has received the sanction; He is the All Knowing. Those oppressors shall carry their oppression and come to grief, but those who have believed and done good shall fear no tyranny of injustice.¹⁴⁴

Qutb tried to portray an example of this scene and some of its ideas in his poetry (1935), as previously discussed.¹⁴⁵ This clearly shows how Qutb was in close contact with the Qur'an and how he was steadily moving in one direction from the mid-1930s, although some have perceived Qutb's saying, when he was writing *Taswir* in the mid-1930s, that he has 'found the Qur'an' to suggest that in the mid-1930s Qutb was an unbeliever (*mulhid*).¹⁴⁶ Belief is a personal matter. Nevertheless, Qutb's words and language of this specific period make it harder to support such a claim. In the previous chapter, which dealt with his earliest writings of the period 1925–1939, up to this period under discussion, we did not find him to be an 'unbeliever', but rather a young scholar living and writing with the Judgement day in his mind and perception, as expressed explicitly in words and language. As contended by Ibrahim Abu Rabi, 'Qutb reaches a new intellectual synthesis in the late 1930s, and begins to discuss such concepts as balance, integration, and aesthetics. Those ideas are best illustrated in his two works on the Qur'anic aesthetics. In general terms, he goes beyond preaching art for art's sake at this stage in his life – in the second half of the decade of the 1940s – and argues for a religious, social, and even ideological use of the Qur'an as an artistic document'.¹⁴⁷ Qutb's analysis reflects the feeling of not only a 'humble scholar living with these scenes in his mind and facing an overwhelming task in studying the Qur'anic style, but also one recognizing his human limitations and inviting others to pursue and develop his line of investigation'.¹⁴⁸ Qutb pointed out the difficulties that faced him in this study and emphasized that he was 'well prepared to listen to new ideas'.¹⁴⁹

To further reflect the Sovereignty of Allah in this world and in the other, the following scene shows that those polytheists who deny the Hour of Doom and

who associate others with Allah will be gathered together with what they have worshipped. In Qutb's words:

The worshippers and their worshipped (*al'ibad wa al-ma'budin*)¹⁵⁰ all equally stood up before the Creator, the One Sovereign (*al-Wahid al-Qahhar*). Their deities will be asked: 'Was it you who misled these My servants, or did they choose to go astray?' Allah knows. But the question itself in this place [i.e. The Divine Court] is fearful. The answer is a complete submission from those deities to Allah the One Sovereign. The deities will disavow the *kuf*r and *dalal* of those ignorant deniers (*al-jahidin al-juhhal*). . . . At this moment, the argument will be directed to those ignorant slaves (*al-'bad al-Juhhal*): 'Your deities have denied your charges. You cannot avert your doom, nor can you be helped.'¹⁵¹

In his analysis, Qutb links the ideas of each scene with present world events and conditions. Such links, he says, are a Qur'anic way: links between 'the present world and the other world, between the scenes of happiness and those of torments. The style in these scenes communicates the souls and the feelings in order to achieve a religious aim'.¹⁵² Thus there is no separation between religion and the affairs of human life.¹⁵³ The link between the present world and the other world is not beyond the scope of Qutb's book *Mashahid*, if not the very core of this book. This link is frequently stated in *Mashahid*.¹⁵⁴ Briefly, in addition to other concepts, the concept of *jur*m (crime) is repeatedly used in *Mashahid*. The word *Mujrim* (criminal) or its plurals *mujrimun* and *mujrimin* (criminals) frequently occurred in both the Qur'anic texts and in Qutb's analysis. The word *mujrim*, as Ibn Manzur says, comes from the word *jur*m (crime). The *mujrim* is the 'transgressor (*mu'tadi*) who transgresses the law of God'.¹⁵⁵ Thus the *mujrim* is a lawbreaker. The law in the context of *Mashahid* is only God's law. Breaking the law of God cannot occur in the other world but in the present world. The law of God in the context of the discussion in *Mashahid* is the law laid down in the Qur'an. The Qur'an declares those who break the law of God *mujrimun* (criminals), and they will be brought to Justice in the other world which *Mashahid* concerned itself with.¹⁵⁶ Thus the link between the law of God laid down in the Qur'an and worldly affairs is not outside the context of *Mashahid*.¹⁵⁷ This idea is also the core of Qutb's argument in his later works such as *Social Justice*.

The study of *Taswir* and *Mashahid* brought to Qutb, among other ideas, the idea of the relationship between Arts (*adab*) and Islam. The Qur'an presents Islam as a dynamic system of life, and Qur'anic scenes become 'life itself, not merely the story of life'.¹⁵⁸ In all the Qur'anic scenes the expressive form always links aesthetics with religion. Qutb articulates this as follows:

We realize that the Qur'anic expression united the aim of religion with the artistic aim in every scene presented in the Qur'an. We come to realize that the splendour of the Qur'anic style is the influential instrument in the Qur'an, reforming the human soul and giving it the Islamic character. . . . Religion and aesthetics are twin in the human soul. . . .¹⁵⁹

Islam, as Qutb articulates in *Mashahid*, does not deny that there is weakness and strength in humanity or that humans can become spiritually weak or are sometimes spiritually strong. Humanity's task is to make strength prevail over weakness. Here comes the idea of *Taswir* and of *Mashahid*, Qutb says:

The facts could be presented in a complete aesthetic presentation. This is not difficult if we free ourselves, for a moment, from the 'translated mentality' (*'aqliyyah mutarjamah*) with which we are living. And free our conception (*tasawwur*)¹⁶⁰ from the mere Western images (*namazig gharbiyyah bahtah*) and deal with the terminologies (*mustalahat*) in a comprehensive and objective manner.¹⁶¹

The idea of the relationship between arts and Islam developed and appeared in his later writings. For example, in his *al-Naqd al-Adabi* (Literary Criticism, 1948), Qutb says:

The task of arts (*adab*) or aesthetics is not to present the human personality or present life in an ideal form. The task is to present the real capacities latent and evident in man and to truly describe life... An artistic image should not be content with the existing reality in any moment or generation. It cannot excuse it or beautify it simply because it is reality. The principle task of the arts is to change this reality, to improve it, to continually inspire its movement towards a new form of life...¹⁶²

This points at the underlying differences in the arts based on the Islamic conception and based on non-Islamic conception. Qutb thus implies that if everyday life is typified by a sense of disjunction, Muslim artists and writers must face this problem and express it through their artistic and literary work in order to reform society and harmonize its practical life. This is further stated in the first edition of his *Social Justice in Islam*, completed in 1948 and published in 1949:

Literature (arts) is the emotional response to life. It issues from the same wellspring whence flow in any culture all the philosophies, the religious belief, the experiments and the influences. Literature (arts) is the most important factor in the establishment of a moral philosophy of life, and in the production of any specific influence on the human mind. Hence we must exercise care in the choice of Western literature which we make available to our youth, alike in their Arabic and their foreign studies.¹⁶³

As for Qutb's approach in *Taswir* and *Mashahid*, he used several key terms of ideological significance that could be taken in a fairly Islamist sense. For the purposes of this study, one might note some of these key terms.

In *al-Taswir* (1945), the term *jahiliyyah* appeared three times (pp. 11, 27, 52). He used a few derivations of *jahl* such as the infinitive *jahlan* (pp. 23, 43), the plural

jahilin (p. 102), the past tense and participle of the verb *jahila* in the plural form *jahilu* and *yajhalun* (pp. 44, 186) and *tajhil* (p. 222). Terms such as *uluhiyyah* (Divinity, pp. 72, 132, 194), *rububiyyah* (Lordship, p. 28) and complete submission (p. 59) were repeatedly used. For the Sovereignty of Allah, there are terms or phrases such as 'The Great Power whose authority is predominant over life and Man' (p. 54), 'In the Hand of the Great Power' (p. 131), 'The Mighty of The Able' (p. 132), the 'Sovereign' (pp. 28, 85). The idea that 'life is not only food and drink', which he used in his earlier writings (1935), is also used in *al-Taswir* (p. 91).

These and other key terms also occurred in *Mashahid* (1947). Here, Qutb did not use the exact term *jahiliyyah* but its synonym *jahalalah* (p. 30) and some other derivations of the substantive *jahl* (ignorance) as follows: *al-jahl* (ignorance) and *al-jahilun* (plural of ignorant), *al-'ibad al-juhhal* (the ignorant people), *jahilhim* (their ignorance) and *tajhil* (to make a person ignorant).¹⁶⁴ The ignorance here is not an ordinary one but a certain type of ignorance that Qutb speaks about, as explained in the previous, the present and the following chapters. The phrase *al-'ibad wa al-ma'budin* (worshippers and the worshipped in a negative sense), the doom of *al-juhhal* (ignorant people), *kufir* (unbelief), *dalal* (error) and *kufuran* (complex unbelief) were frequently used;¹⁶⁵ likewise, words such as 'submission, justice, injustice, harmony, *uluhiyyah* (Divinity), Sovereign (Al-Malik, al-Qahhar, al-Qayyum) to Him is the high command (*al-amr al-'ali*)'.¹⁶⁶ In the context of Divine Judgment, he used the root of *hukm* (to govern and to judge) in words of a modern sense: '*hayyithiyyat al-hukm* (considerations of the court ruling),¹⁶⁷ *muhakamah* (trial), *lam yuhakimuha* (without trial)'.¹⁶⁸ 'The argument is finished, the crime authenticated, the convict pleaded guilty, and the sentence is issued: So to the Hell-Fire.'¹⁶⁹ He used the modern phrase *al-inqalab al-shamil* (overall destruction).¹⁷⁰ There are key words such as *taghiyah* (tyranny, pp. 212, 213), *Adalah* (justice, p. 14), *Adalah Ilayiyyah* (Divine Justice, p. 33), *uluhiyyah* (Divinity, p. 13). These are some (not an exclusive list) of the key terms in *Taswir* and *Mashahid* that were to be used in his later discussion of *jahiliyyah* and *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty).

One might conclude that in his *Taswir* and *Mashahid* of the mid-1940s, Qutb discussed some balanced, integrated and aesthetic concepts of his 'new intellectual synthesis' that he had just reached in the mid-1930s.¹⁷¹ In those two books, Qutb contends that the Qur'an is the complete and most legitimate source of knowledge available. It provides the highest proof of the meaning of this life and the next. The Qur'an 'speaks the truth which deserves to be followed, and those who deviate from the truth are liars and tyrants (*taghut*)'.¹⁷²

As explicitly stated in the mid-1930s, Qutb maintains, with further illustration, that religion transcends human intellect (*al-'aql*). The unity between matter and spirit, religion and worldly affairs is the foundation of life. Human intellect is obliged to comply with the divine order to strike a balance between matter and spirit. The great unity or Qutb's grand unifying theory posits a relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humanity. This idea of the mid-1930s developed here in the mid-1940s to include not only the relationships between the Qur'an and literature (*adab*) and arts (*funun*), but also

between this world and the next; between Heaven and earth. The justice envisaged by the Qur'an for this world is perfect and absolute (*mullaq*), as is justice in the Afterlife, because that this type of justice was ordained only by the One Sovereign who is the highest legal and governmental authority in both worlds.

To Qutb, the cultural arts are equivalent to the political, economic and social spheres. Literature in any sphere of knowledge is a piece of artistic work and inspired expression of living values that reflect the character of the human soul. Thus, there is a firm relationship between Islam and all spheres of human life (political and other). Islam does not oppose artistic expression, as long as this recognizes an Islamic framework, namely, the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humanity.

Both *al-Taswir* and *Mashahid* can be seen as a significant mark in his turning to Islamic themes. Shepard, Musallam and Calvert emphasized that 'Qutb was turning to Islamic themes from at least 1947'.¹⁷³ The more accurate is that Qutb's Islamic themes are clearly there in his writings of the 1930s, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. These themes were further developed in the writings of the mid-1940s, as discussed earlier. In the words of Ibrahim Abu Rabi:

Qutb reaches a new intellectual synthesis in the late 1930s, and begins to discuss such concepts as balance, integration, and aesthetics. Those ideas are best illustrated in his two works on the Qur'anic aesthetics. In general terms, he goes beyond preaching art for art's sake at this stage in his life – in the second half of the decade of the 1940s – and argues for a religious, social, and even ideological use of the Qur'an as an artistic document.¹⁷⁴

Qutb's appreciation of his culture

As seen in some of his articles (1933), or in his poetry *al-Shati' al-Majhul* (1935), *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah* (1939), *Taswir* (1945) and *Mashahid* (1947), the influence of Qutb's religious background on his analysis was significant.¹⁷⁵ This was also the case with regard to his analysis of some works of the leading influential figures. He tended to call some of them

the older generation who had breached the trust of not only the younger generation, but also of the country, the society, humanity and the artistic conscience as a whole. It is a strong allegation and I am the first to dislike it because of my respect to elders, but this is the truth. It is a merciless truth.¹⁷⁶

In his *al-Taswir*, Qutb argued Taha Husayn's view about the Qur'an, as in the following:

Doctor Taha Husayn says: 'The Qur'an is neither verse nor prose but Qur'an'. We are not in need for such play of expressions. If we consider the Arabic terminology (*mustalahat*) as it should be, the Qur'an is prose but of an excellent rhetorical and inimitable type of prose.¹⁷⁷

In *Mashahid*, Qutb appealed to the intellectuals to free themselves from the 'translated mentality' and from 'mere Western images' and to 'deal with the terminologies (*mustalahat*) in a comprehensive and objective manner'.¹⁷⁸

With this in mind, Qutb critically analysed the novels of Abd al-Hamid Gudah al-Sahhar, particularly *Hamazat al-Shayatin* (Instigation of the Devils, 1946). In discussing this novel, Qutb focused on the relationship between arts and religion in society. He strongly contends that there is no inherent enmity between Islam and arts (*adab*: literature). The poet or the novelist should seek to represent the reality of human life in society. He should also suggest the concept of life and the responsibility of humankind in this world. Based on this notion, Qutb urged al-Sahhar to illumine writings so that like all authors, he 'is able to throw all his other writings into the sea and stand by this artistic work alone'.¹⁷⁹ Qutb dealt similarly with other works such as the poetry of 'Umar al-Khayyam (d. 1123), Taha Husayn's book *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* (The Future of Culture in Egypt, 1939), Yahya Haqqi's novel *Qandil Umm Hashim* (Lantern of the Mother of Hashim, 1941), Tawfiq al-Hakim's novels *Sulyman al-Hakim* (Solomon the Wise, 1943) and *al-Rabat al-Muqaddas* (The Sacred Bond, 1944) and Naguib Mahfuz's *Khan al-Khalili* (1946) and *al-Qahirah al-Jadidah* (The New Cairo, 1946).¹⁸⁰

In *al-Naqd al-Adabi* (Literary Criticism, June 1948), Qutb tried to protect Arab/Islamic culture from the negative effects of Western culture. Here, Qutb is certainly not against modernity and modernization, as such, but expounds some rules. He called upon intellectuals to adhere to their cultural heritage and to 'modernize in ways that were true to the essence of Arabic culture: "The question for me is my honour, my language, and my culture"'.¹⁸¹ In this sense, he pointed out his method of literary criticism:

In Arabic literary criticism I do not like to use any method other than Arabic because of the historical and cultural differences. But if I was forced to quote from the European method, I would do so if this method would develop Arabic culture without manipulation or assumption.¹⁸²

Here, Qutb distinguishes between two types of society of different cultures (Islamic and non-Islamic cultures). When the Arabian and European had things in common they both were non-Islamic. After Islam, the difference between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures emerged. Qutb explains why this is so by reference to Plato's metaphysical theory: 'Plato sees the external world (*al-'alam al-khariji* or *al-ghayb*: the unseen) as existing only in the mind or imagination, not in reality. We should not apply this theory literally in our works of Arabic literary criticism...'¹⁸³ However, Qutb left the door open between the Islamic and non-Islamic cultures for exchange of ideas in a way that does not harm the identity of Islamic culture. This ideological idea was further elaborated in *Adalah* (Social Justice, 1949). The idea also reappeared, with further details, in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an), and the last controversial book *Ma'alim* (Milestones)¹⁸⁴ and will be discussed in Chapter 7. Suffice it here to note that Qutb was distinguishing between Islamic and non-Islamic values at this point of time.

Qutb analysed the writings of the British Thomas Hardy,¹⁸⁵ the Persian ‘Umar al-Khayyam,¹⁸⁶ and the Indian Tagore, and many others in the East and West, including Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, but from the Islamic perspective.¹⁸⁷ Qutb criticized some of their ideas about the universe, life and humanity. For example, the world of Thomas Hardy is a ‘distressed world with no goodness to be seen in this life’.¹⁸⁸ The Divine Will in Hardy’s view is a blind force that Hardy felt moves the universe, life and humanity: ‘Thomas Hardy brings us to a desperate and hopeless world in which the Will exploits the humanity.’¹⁸⁹ Humankind’s view of the unseen (*al-majhul*) relies on an understanding of the relation between the Creator and His creations. In this sense, the ‘problem’ of humanity’s view of the unseen is ‘not of a specific era’ or environment, says Qutb, but of ‘all humanity with regard to the relation between the universe, life and humankind’.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, the Persian ‘Umar al-Khayyam’s poems, in which he expressed his view of the relation between the Creator and His creation, provided Qutb with a substantial target of criticism. Al-Khayyam writes:

I was molded to the circle of life, not consulted
Knowing neither its beginning nor the end is visible
Nor can I rightly tell whence is our coming and whither is our going
So, I shall simply comply with what I was inclined!¹⁹¹

In these verses, al-Khayyam admits that he was created without being consulted. He searches for explanations, but he is soon confused. Ignorant of why he came to this world, and unable to escape, he must simply accept life as it is. To Qutb, the Qur’an is the complete and most legitimate source of knowledge available. It provides the highest proof of the meaning of this life and the next. So there is no reason for al-Khayyam’s confusion. Qutb saw al-Khayyam’s questions of the meaning of creation as evil: ‘In his repeated quatrains, al-Khayyam expresses another evil picture that this miserable humankind is brought into existence from eternal darkness and will go to eternal darkness without a spot of light to guide him along the way.’¹⁹²

Al-Khayyam also says:

When the Lord molded His creatures out of diverse elements
why did He subject them to decay?
If they are well shaped, why does He shatter them?
And if these forms are ill shaped, whose fault is it?¹⁹³

Qutb criticizes this type of thinking about the relation between the Creator and the creation, the universe life and humankind. Qutb emphasizes that the unknown (*al-majhul*) is the problem of humankind. Since it was created, ‘humankind stood at the door of the unknown and will continue to stand there for ever. Al-Khayyam stood at a closed door knocking and getting no response. This was expressed in painful expressions in the world of art and life. He sees people are ignorant of where they have come from and where they are going, and

they are never consulted.¹⁹⁴ Al-Khayyam sees the life of his miserable world is nearly over and the death stands at his doorstep. Having found no response to his inquests of the unseen (*al-ghayb*), al-Khayyam plunged himself into the syncope (*ghybutat*) of wine. He resorted to wine in order to forget his perplexity and confusion. This is the world of al-Khayyam:

Before the dawn visits the sky
I heard a voice within the tavern cry
Awake, oh sleeping ones and fill the cup
Before the cup of life filled by the fate, dry.¹⁹⁵

As a literary critic, Qutb similarly analysed biographies (*tarajim*). He emphasizes biography as a science 'separated' from the science of 'History' and entering the world of 'Art' (*adab*) from 'the door of the energy of sensibility' which the writer presents with the aesthetic values in his expressions. In this way biography contains the two principle elements of artistic work: (i) 'conscience experience (*tajriba shu'uriyyah*)', that is, the author's feeling of the life, the environment and the psyche of the personality whom the author writes about; and (ii) the phrase which transfers this experience. If one of these two elements is missing, 'the biography will be History, faraway from Art'.¹⁹⁶ On this basis and its relevant factors, Qutb considers all the biographies in the Arabic language unqualified to be labelled by the technical term *Tarjamah* (Biography). For example, al-'Aqqad's *Abqariyyat* (Geniuses)¹⁹⁷ are 'the best of his works . . . but the method is very sensitive and any small mistake will change the whole issue'.¹⁹⁸ Qutb's ideas here were to appear in more detail in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949).¹⁹⁹

Opposite to al-'Aqqad's method, Qutb asserts, was the method used by Muhammad Husayn Haykal in his *Hayat Muhammad* (The Life of Muhammad), *Al-Siddiq Abu Bakr* (Abu Bakr the Trustworthy) and *Al-Faruq 'Umar* ('Umar ibn al-Kattab). Qutb seems to appreciate Haykal's method as safer than that of al-'Aqqad, but also 'Haykal lacks the poetic sensitivity (*hasasiyyah sha'iriyyah*) which is an essential element in biography. A biography is not narrated events but a life that wants to be repeated. He lacks the spirit of the period in which these personalities were living. Thus he cannot correctly realize the elements which were working in the conscience of Muhammad or Abu Bakr or 'Umar and other figures who lived in their circle'.²⁰⁰ Later, Qutb's argument about Haykal was further detailed in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949).²⁰¹ But here in 1948 Qutb's used literature (*adab*) as a diagnostic device to examine the present life in Egypt and make suggestions about its future:

From the study of literature (*adab*) in Egypt in the modern time, we can realize that literature is passing through confusion and a search for an undefined way. We see that there are some opinions on the far right and others on the far left. Some search for models in our old history of the Islamic ascendancy era. Some praise Pharaohism (*fir'uniyyah*), some are going toward Europe and

America while others are going toward Russia, and there are some others who seclude themselves from the society and whatever is in it. This situation of disorder may result in a revolution (*inqlab*).²⁰²

Qutb's literary criticism of Haykal or al-Sahhar, Taha Husayn or al-Khayyam has ideological connotations distinguishing between Islamic and non-Islamic values. Qutb's criticism of those works at least was consistent with his later works, *Adalah* (1949), *Fi al-Tarikh Fikrah wa Minhaj* (1951), *Zilal* (1952–1961)²⁰³ and *Ma'alim* (1964).²⁰⁴ For example, comparing Qutb's early and later views, alongside his reading of al-Khayyam, it is salutary to recall a passage in *Zilal*. Quoting from later writings here does not mean anything more than to emphasize the direction in which Qutb's thought was developing. In *Zilal*, Qutb says:

The universe is the visible book of God, while the Qur'an is His legible book. Both give signs and irrefutable proof of their creator. The universe, including life and man, issued from the absolute will of God, regulated by His law. . . . All parts are in harmony, and every part has a reason for being related to this harmony. There is nobody associated with God, neither in His *mashi'ah* (will) and *qadar* (determination), nor in His law and *manhaj* (system).²⁰⁵

In his *Fi al-Tarikh* (1951), Qutb stated that

al-Khayyam has a special conception about life and the relations between the universe and man. From this conception, all the values of life emerged in his soul. He thought that the universe is a closed book and human knowledge cannot be attained. Al-Khayyam writes as if the universe were unknown, as if humankind stood at a closed door, knocking, and getting no response. Of course, in this deviation no one knows where he comes from, or why he came, and cannot see where he is going. . . .²⁰⁶

In the later writings, Qutb detailed these essential criteria of his theory of society in the political, economic, social, intellectual and moral spheres. These are detailed in my book *The Power of Sovereignty*. Here, however, suffice it to note the following:

In the political sphere Qutb says:

In the Islamic system the Muslim nation (*ummah*) chooses the ruler (*hakim*) and gives him the legitimacy to administer his government (*hukm*) on the basis of the Islamic Law (*shari'ah*). The Muslim nation, however, is not the source of *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), which gives the Law its legitimacy. The source of *hakimiyyah* is Allah.²⁰⁷

In the economic sphere, Qutb claimed that

In the world of economy, an individual who already has funds does not resort to borrowing before reviewing his funds to see whether or not they are

sufficient. . . . But we in Egypt and in the 'Islamic world' as a whole do not refer to our own spiritual capital or intellectual heritage before we think of importing principles and plans and borrowing systems and laws from across the deserts and beyond the seas!²⁰⁸

In the case of culture and knowledge, Qutb noted his distinguishing criteria, as follows: 'It is true to say that knowledge or culture does not know place, nationality, or religion. This applies only to the experimental sciences but not the philosophical and metaphysical interpretation of the results.'²⁰⁹

Social reform

In the political, social, intellectual and moral spheres, Qutb's analysis clearly expressed a moral concern and a lively awareness of the need for social reform in Egypt. In this context, some of his articles will be outlined as precursors for his major work *Social Justice in Islam* (completed in 1948 and published in 1949), which crystallized his theory of society and which will also be examined. But before proceeding to investigate in detail Qutb's key ideas, it would be appropriate to make some preliminary observations on the environmental factors that contributed to his ideas of sociopolitical reform as well as his ideological position about Islamic identity in Egypt.

When Qutb published his book *Mashahid* in 1947, Egypt was under the influence of the two superpowers: the United States and its allies on one side, and on the other, what was then the Soviet Union. The Cold War and the containment of Marxism–Leninism was a factor in the perception of Egypt by the United States and its allies as relevant to US strategic interests.²¹⁰ The United States supported the continuity of British bases in the Canal Zone, saying 'it would be essential to our common strategic plans to have the British on the spot'.²¹¹ Pentagon officials insisted on endorsing Britain's position in Egypt and pointed out that 'any action that threatens Britain's control of the Suez Canal and deprives her of a sizeable portion of the Middle East oil fields threatens the position of the United States as a world power'.²¹² The United States interceded on Britain's behalf in the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations and endorsed Britain's maintaining its troops in Egypt. This involvement strengthened Britain's position and led the extensive Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in late 1947 and beyond to fail to achieve a settlement.²¹³ American support of British and French involvement in Egypt thus constituted foreign influence on political, economic, cultural and social conditions in Egypt in the 1940s.

Meanwhile, the USSR supported Egypt's Communist movement, first established in Alexandria in 1921,²¹⁴ by providing financial help for writers, newspapers and journals.²¹⁵ Thus, the Communist movement in Egypt 'was able to transmit its ideas to a number of intellectuals and skilled trade unionists it managed to recruit'.²¹⁶ By 1947, Egypt's Communist movement provided a well-organized front against political parties such as the Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood. However, according to Muhammad Jalal Kishk (1984),²¹⁷ the communists were able to enter into negotiations with the Wafd on the future of Egypt.

Their aim was to establish an alliance with the Wafd Party against the Brotherhood. Kishk reported that 'the communists held secret meetings with the Wafd twice in the house of the Wafd's leader al-Nahas to discuss their ideologies, philosophical principles, their political programmes, and planned to divide the seats of the Egyptian parliament between themselves in the coming election'.²¹⁸ The future of Egypt was thus the object of the conflicting interests of various groups vying for control, each with different agendas and priorities.

The role of the media in this sociopolitical tug-of-war is culturally significant. In this area also the foreign influences of the 'U.S.A., Britain, France, and USSR were present'.²¹⁹ Efforts by the media widened the cultural gap separating cosmopolitan intellectuals from religious conceptions and culture. It also influenced the more humble Egyptians, and the indigenous political, economic, social, moral, cultural and ideological environment.

Concerning the relationship of the press and public opinion, Qutb addressed a group of Egyptian and overseas scholars in a special debate in Cairo. The panel comprised Qutb, the eminent writer and broadcaster Hafiz Mahmud and the royal biographer Fikry Abazah. Yusuf Al-'Azm, who was in the audience, reported that Qutb referred to secret financial support received by members of the press and claimed that 'both the media and public opinion are influenced by secret financial support, paid by the capitalist monarchy and foreign countries. If you want to know more about specific figures and names and other affairs ask... Here Qutb glanced at Fikry Abazah who said nothing'.²²⁰ In this regard, 'Isa Salah says that 'the salaries of a number of intellectuals and journalists working in Egypt were being secretly paid by the Egyptian monarchy, Britain, France, and USSR through their embassies in Cairo'.²²¹

Conflicting interests of political parties resulted in political, economic, social, intellectual and moral discontent in Egypt.²²² With regard to the Islamic identity of Egypt, politicians and intellectuals were divided among themselves, but all were advocating their views in the name of Islam²²³ through the press or the radio to reach the Egyptian masses.²²⁴ The result was further deterioration in social cohesion, morals and social relations. Social discontent became evident in the 'daily life among the ordinary people and even at the coffee shops in Cairo'.²²⁵

Consequently, the dominant orders, the government and laws in Egypt failed to provide answers to the sociopolitical problems facing a society struggling for autonomy. The Islamic identity of Egypt remained a matter of controversy. The failure to clarify this issue or to solve it was not due to lack of knowledge, nor was it caused by the illiterate masses. According to Tawfiq al-Hakim, 'the fault in Egypt lies in the desires of those corrupt officials, the politicians and the owners of capital who monopolize the rule and order in Egypt'.²²⁶ In 1941, al-Hakim also pointed out that 'we are on the way of return to the first atheist human society (*al-mujtama' al-bashari al-awwal al-wathani*). The leaders persecute the heavenly religions and detain its peoples'.²²⁷ Al-Hakim's words and language captured the concept of *jahiliyyah* as used by al-'Aqqad and contemporary scholars.

Similarly, a contemporary of al-Hakim and Qutb's, the writer and poet Muhammad al-Tuhami, described the sociopolitical climate of this time as

destructive *jahl*. This is expressed by al-Tuhami in a long poem, *al-Huda wa al-Dalal* (Guidance and Going Astray), as follows:

Sirna dahaya *al-jahli* bata yughriquna
wa *al-jahlu* yaqtulu fi al-dunya dahayahu
We are the victims of the *jahl* in which we have sunk
In this world, the *jahl* kills its victims.²²⁸

The reason behind sociopolitical deterioration is to be found in the destructive *jahl* in which the Egyptians are drowning. The *jahl* destroys its victims and the Egyptians are the victims of their own *jahl*.

Likewise, al-'Aqqad repeatedly labelled this period as a time of *jahiliyyah* and noticed its destructive nature. In his *Yaqazat Sabah*, which was analysed by Qutb, al-'Aqqad says: 'We are in the time of *jahiliyyah*. . . I consider its breeze impure and its seas will never be purified. . .'²²⁹ This feeling is reminiscent of Qutb's own poetry, as previously discussed.

It is interesting here then to outline the sense in which the word *jahl* and its derivations were used in Qutb's environment. As for al-Tuhami, the sense in which he used the word *jahl* is clearly ignorance which 'kills its victims'. This type of ignorance is not ordinary or innocent ignorance but a guilty type of ignorance. It is ignorance of a destructive nature. In this sense, al-'Aqqad also pointed out that the *jahiliyyah* infected the seas and breeze, that is, air and water, the essential elements for survival on this planet.

In this sense of destruction, the term *jahl* is also used by eminent intellectuals contemporary to Qutb and both al-'Aqqad and al-Tuhami. Among those intellectuals is Ahmad Shawqi (d. 1932). He was grounded in Arabic language and literature and distinguished by the title 'Prince of Poetry'. Shawqi, about whom Qutb wrote and lectured,²³⁰ expresses the word *jahl* thus:

Do not listen to the deceivers and their *jahl* (*jahlhim*)
The affliction of Islam is his *juhhal* (*juhhalih*)²³¹

He attributed *jahl* to those Muslims who mislead others and made it clear that those Muslims with their *jahl* (*jahlhim*) are the affliction (*musibah*) of Islam. The notion that emanates from this poetic verse is also explained in a book titled *Islam Between the Jahl of Followers and Incapable Scholars*. In this book, Abd al-Qadir 'Awdah,²³² the Chief Justice and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, says:

I can see Muslims are going from weakness to weakness and from *jahl* to *jahl*. . .
I am writing this concise essay in which I have gathered those necessary principles of Islamic law every educated Muslim should know, showing the correct views about the issues which have been demeaned by certain *juhhal*. . .²³³

This means that the *jahl* here is not ordinary ignorance and cannot be seen as lack of knowledge. I should note that Shawqi and 'Awdah used the term *jahl* here in a similar way to the use of same term by Abduh, as we will see shortly.

Elsewhere, Shawqī described the world as being with *dalal* (error) and *jahla'*. The latter, which is an infinitive, is derived specifically from the noun *jahiliyyah* to strengthen its force and intent. He says:

The East is like the West become dark under Caesar
and the world was wrapped with darkness.
The world in its error (*dalal*) continues to suffer
the destructive attack (*yafṭik*) of *al-jahl* and *al-jahla'u*.²³⁴

In Shawqī's view, the world (East and West) is in the status of *dalal* (error), *jahl* and *jahla'u*. To portray the action of these labels, Shawqī used the word *yafṭik* (to kill and to destroy). In this poetical text, the last word, *al-jahla'u* is the only adjective that is specific to the word *jahiliyyah*. According to Ibn Manzur, 'The Arabs say *al-jahiliyyah al-jahla'u*. The latter confirms the former. The [word] *al-jahla'u* was derived specifically from the word *jahiliyyah* to confirm and express more of its force and intent.'²³⁵ For this Shawqī did not use the explicit term *jahiliyyah* but its specific adjective *al-jahla'u* instead to confirm and express more the force and intent of *jahiliyyah* and its destructive nature. In this sense, Qutb's theory of *jahiliyyah* is a literary weapon of a lethal force.

In the following, Shawqī used the word *jahl* in the sense of opposite to life:

On *al-jahl*, there is no life for any group
How can life continue in the hand of 'Izrael?²³⁶

Here, the word *jahl* is used in the sense of a lethal force that stops human life. Shawqī also supported his view by an irrefutable proof; that is, life cannot continue in the hand of the Archangel of death ('Izrael). In one word, the *jahl* is but 'death'. In this sense, Shawqī further expressed the word *al-jahalal* (synonym of *jahiliyyah*) as a destructive force:

Oh aggressors, the riders of *al-jahalal* and blindness
Who are stirring the war for the love of expansions
Who are claiming the right to own and rule the world
Those who are killing and destroying without distinction²³⁷

Here the vehicle of those aggressors who kill and destroy is *al-jahalal* and blindness. The term *jahalal* as a synonym of *jahiliyyah* as well as the opposite of *Iman* (belief) is discussed earlier in Qutb's poetry, as shown in the previous chapter, which dealt with the first stage of *jahiliyyah* as used in Qutb's writing in 1925–1939.

Muhammad Farid Wajdi was an eminent Egyptian philosopher and chief editor of al-Azhar's literary journal in the period 1933–1952. He expresses the term *jahiliyyah* in a modern context as follows: 'Whenever the word *jahiliyyah* is mentioned, the minds go back to those Arabs before Islam. This is because the word *jahiliyyah* itself is Arabic and regularly occurs in Arabic literature. However, there also was *jahiliyyah* for the Ancients such as the Egyptians, Indians, Chinese and

the Persians. Similarly, there was *jahiliyyah* for those later nations such as Greeks, Romans and whatever came after them of the European nations.²³⁸ In the same article (1934–1935), Wajdi says ‘he who reads the situations of the modern time he will find the remnants of *jahiliyyah* still exist today even in the most modernized nations. The rule (*hukm*) of *jahiliyyah* was the dominant rule in Europe until the French Revolution. However, did Europe annihilate the remnants of *jahiliyyah*? There are wine, gambling, and movies, cruelty... all of these are the *jahiliyyah*.’²³⁹

Those intellectuals were living in Cairo during the time of Qutb’s intellectual activity, and all were aware of the writings of Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), the Rector of al-Azhar, nationalist and leader of reform in Egypt. Abduh’s school of thought, led by his disciple Rashid Rida (1865–1935), was working in Egyptian society during the intellectual life of all these figures. Speaking of the influence of philosophy on the Islamic discourse of *Kalam* (*‘ilm al-kalam*), Abduh used the word *jahl* as follows: ‘As a consequence, a complete intellectual confusion beset the Muslims under their *jahhal* rulers. Ideas which had never had any place in science found sponsors who asserted things Islam had never before tolerated.’²⁴⁰ Here is the similarity between Abduh, Shawqī, ‘Awdah and al-Tuhami in the use of the term *jahl*. Those figures agreed upon the idea that the ‘affliction (*musiba*) of Islam is his *jahhal*’.

Also, there is similarity between Wajdi and Abduh in their use of the term *jahiliyyah*. We have seen earlier how Wajdi used the term *jahiliyyah*. Similarly, Abduh used the term *jahiliyyah* in the modern sense, as follows: ‘For all of these we would say that the *jahiliyyah* today is harsher (*ashaddu*) than the *jahiliyyah* and those who went astray (*dallin*) during the time of the Prophet.’²⁴¹

Here is another account, written earlier than Abduh and Qutb’s time, that mirrors perfectly the received condition for which Abduh and other scholars used the term *jahl*. In the early decades of modern Egypt, the Egyptian and historian al-Jabarti (d. 1822) described the condition of Egypt under the Ottomans as *jahiliyyah*. He says, ‘During the Ottoman State and its leaders in Egypt, the prevailing *jahiliyyah* and satanic heresies divided the nation and its troops into two parties.’²⁴²

These examples are sufficient here to illustrate the sense in which the word *jahl* and its derivations, including the word *jahiliyyah*, were used in Qutb’s environment in modern Egypt. They also indicate that the term *jahiliyyah* was in Cairo earlier than the Indian Subcontinent Muslim scholars Abu al-‘Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979) and Abu al-Hasan al-Nadawi (d. 1999) had any opportunity to think of it. The terms *jahl* and *jahiliyyah*, as expressed by those intellectuals, were not ordinary ignorance but ignorance of a specific nature. This confirms the view that *jahiliyyah* is not confined to a specific period in time, or place, or to a particular race, as previously detailed in Chapter 2. It also indicates that Qutb was not the only one who used the term *jahiliyyah*, but that other Egyptian intellectuals used the term from the early decades of modern Egypt. They also used the term *jahiliyyah* to label the condition of sociopolitical disorder, misleading and deviation from Islam, in general, and in the society in which they moved and to which they responded, in particular.

With this in mind, and despite his awareness of the concept of *jahiliyyah* in at least the writings of his contemporaries, Qutb in 1945 expresses his concern for sociopolitical reform in the following command:

Social reform in a society like Egypt should have priority. Thinkers should be concerned about it and give it their time. There is not an issue more pressing than that of the affairs of those millions who lack sufficient food and clothing; those *juhhal* who form the majority of the people are dying of hunger and disease. The miserable situation of those millions of humans who are living in rural areas is making the core of the human soul shiver, if there is a soul that can feel, a soul that knows the correct way for reform and arouses the latent senses of humanity.²⁴³

With the spirit of this command, Qutb wrote about social reform, pointing out social problems, explaining their causes and how the problem could be fixed. For instance, he dealt with issues such as

Righteous society and the society of equality;
 Importance of honesty and virtue between the individual and the group;
 Factors of success in society or the value of honesty;
 Social mentality;
 Message for al-Azhar;
 Language of *al-‘abid* (slaves);
 The sacrosanctity of humans and nationalism;
 Wishes for the future;
 The new world;
 Education of Egyptian women;
 School books;
 National direction in educational affairs;
 Obstructions in the way of educated men;
 Correcting history from lies;
 In the heart of the countryside;
 The policy of wasting time;
 The confused generation;
 Plans for reform;
 Cairo the deceiver;
 The function of literature (*al-adab*) and journalism;
 Social justice.²⁴⁴

The previous list indicates Qutb's response to the situation of disorder in Egypt. It is the situation which was labelled *jahiliyyah*, as detailed earlier. Therefore, he called for a return to the East and for the establishment of 'righteous society based on social justice and equity between its members. The righteous society is the balanced society. It is not the society in which its organs are moving in opposite directions like a broken apparatus'.²⁴⁵ He portrayed the righteous society and gave his opinion on how the just society could be established.²⁴⁶ This indicates at this

stage that Qutb also distinguished between two things and two ideas, or two societies, one of which described 'righteous society', 'balanced society' and 'justice'. The other society must be something opposite to these concepts.

Topics concerning women also have a share in Qutb's ideas of social reform. Among the topics he discussed were 'Marital problems', 'The effects of mixed genders in the countryside' and 'Women's education'. He discussed these and similar issues on the basis of the relationship between '*fitrah* and human responsibility'. *Fitrah*, is the unchangeable constitution that Allah made innate to the universe, life and humankind.²⁴⁷ To Qutb, woman is best equipped, physically and intellectually, for the function of motherhood. In 1940, he says:

Woman's natural function is to establish a house, to nurse and take care of her children. Therefore education should facilitate her function and be reformed accordingly. Otherwise, it will be abnormal and a deviation from the *fitrah* (innate) and the natural aim of her life. She will be sacrificed on the altar of knowledge and labour. For further [reference], see this program of her education.²⁴⁸

At that time (1940), Qutb was responding to some writers who were calling upon women to abandon their Islamic traditions.²⁴⁹ Those writers, according to Muhammad Qutb, 'never lost the opportunity to disparage Islam overtly or covertly in their weekly journals. Their open message to women was "shake off your well-worn traditions! Come out of your houses and mix with men..."'.²⁵⁰ This reveals Qutb's position and indicates that his argument distinguishes between two conditions: Islam and what he saw as deviation. What did he mean by deviation from Islam at this point of time in 1940?

It is important to note that in 1935 Qutb emphasized deviation in this way: 'rituals were devalued' and 'the worshippers neglected glorification and sanctification'.²⁵¹ In 1935 he also defined deviation from *Iman* (belief) as *kufuran*, that is, the multiform of *kufir* (unbelief) which Qutb labels *jahalat* (plural of *jahalah*, the synonym of *jahiliyyah*).²⁵² In 1941, with his sweeping style, Qutb sums up deviation as a 'vulgar life of contradictions' in the following:

In Egypt we note what is difficult for history to remember from the flood of vulgarities and contradictions. There is contradiction in everything: There is overwhelming poverty, burdensome vulgarity and wealth, overwhelming deprivation, ostentatious possessions, and worthless pleasure...²⁵³

In these lines Qutb captures the sense of disorder in the political, economic, social, moral and intellectual spheres of Egyptian society. He distinguished between two things: social equality and inequality. In the same year (1941), Qutb attributed the condition 'vulgar life of contradictions' to *jahl*. He used the oppressed and deformed Cairo, this time, as a vehicle to express his moral concern and underline the overarching problems in Egypt as follows:

But you! Oh Cairo – your actuality is ugly and deformed, cheerless and miserable, poor and tortured, *jahilatun* and ignorant (*mutakhallifah*). From you

emanate the deformity (*al-asa*) and your sorrow is clearly seen. Your cries of sorrow resonate in your quarters. Your whines of pain are residing in between your ribs. Your gloomy and sick appearance, your bleeding and ailing body all are seen by he who is searching within and around you; he who unveiled the outer layer of your overlaid garment.²⁵⁴

In this mood, Qutb in 1941 wrote 'Anger is a Sign of Freedom'. In this article Qutb pointed out the condition of corruption and deviation in the Egyptian society and encouraged his fellow Egyptians to 'show their freedom', that is, 'to protest and show their *sukht* (anger) in the face of the corruption which dominates this society'.²⁵⁵ In the following year (1942), in an article entitled *al-Muqaddasat al-Insaniyyah wa al-Qawmiyyah* (The Sacrosanctity of Humanity and Nationalism), Qutb also portrayed the deviation and corruption in Egypt as follows:

In Egypt, there are ignoble people '*halafit*'²⁵⁶ carrying pens able to write few lines, but tempting and destructive lines. They call for *al-ghariza* (i.e. sex inclination) and put fuel to burn their victims of both sexes . . .

In Egypt, the press plays with all virtuous things in this country: religion, ethics, principles, and human goodness. The press disgraces the goodness of the human soul in general, and the Egyptians in particular. Religious obligations (*fara'd al-din*) became a subject of derision; the goodness of life became a subject of derision; the dignity of family, its privacy and hidden secrets became a subject of derision . . .

In Egypt, movies are shown on the white screen and most of the international movies are based on love. Some of the international movies portray this human desire in a noble and precious image that reflects on human dignity and the goodness of human soul. We do not mean by human dignity that the image is a spiritual (*udhriyyah*) and Platonic image. But we mean that the image is a live image of this human desire, not that of the excited animals or that of the cheap harlotry (*al-baghy al-rakhis*). Some other movies portray this human desire in a vulgar image. Some of these movies unfortunately are purely Egyptian. The Egyptian movie is known as the lowest of the low of the known movies in the world. The lover becomes effeminate, soft and flabby and has nothing more than weeping and grieving. Such movies are disastrous and dangerous to humanity . . .²⁵⁷

In an article entitled 'Images from the New Generation' (1945), Qutb condemned deviation and pointed at corruption and immorality in society. He studied these cases: females – student, virgin, fiancée, wife, mother – and father. On these cases Qutb says:

Who is he! Who stands behind all of this evil? Who leads this generation to the verge of hell (*al-hawiyah*)? Who allows those evil images to pass before his eyes without condemnation? There are *mawakhir*.²⁵⁸ Some call themselves magazines, others are called films, a third type are called songs that enter the

houses from the roofs, and there are some ignobles (*halafit*) who call themselves the carriers of the pins (*hamalat al-aqlam*)!!!²⁵⁹

A year later, in 1946, Qutb developed his earlier idea of 'anger', which appeared in his poetry (1935) and in an article 'Anger is a Sign of Freedom' (1941), to 'Schools of Anger' (*Madaris al-Sukht*). He proposed a special educational programme to teach the Egyptians how to develop their political maturity, how to observe their freedom and how to be angry in the face of corruption. Qutb's proposed programme, which reflects his motivational intention, was articulated as follows:

I told my friend that if I were in charge, I would open twice as many schools as there already are in Egypt to teach this generation one thing – *sukht* (anger) in the face of a corrupt, distorted reality that dominates this generation. . . . Yes, if I were in charge, I would open (i) a school to teach *sukht* at the politicians . . . (ii) a school to teach *sukht* at writers and journalists . . . (iii) a school to teach *sukht* at ministers . . . (iv) a school to teach *sukht* at those *Basha*²⁶⁰ and those who are not, but are associated with the boards of the companies and exploit the people . . . (v) a school to teach *sukht* at those aristocrats. They know who they are and know the source of their wealth . . . (vi) a school to teach *sukht* at those whom the nation educated and placed in the ministries . . . (vii) a school to teach *sukht* at those who are working in the dissolute radio, television and cinemas . . . (viii) a school to teach *sukht* at this dissolute journalism . . . (ix) and finally, a school to teach *sukht* at those who accepted this corrupt and distorted reality . . .²⁶¹

Qutb notes that those who attain their political maturity and graduate from this anger programme must come to believe in both their Islamic heritage and in themselves before doing anything.²⁶² Here, critics would say that Qutb emphasizes Islam as a matter of heritage. Thus Qutb's emphasis at this point of time is still secular. However, secularism does not mean the absence of religion; that is, one who believes in Islamic heritage (i.e. the Qur'an and its commands; *shari'ah* and its rules) cannot be seen as a secular person. In the context of the above quotation, Islamic heritage is the 'energy' which will charge those graduates with the power of reform, as Qutb says. This indicates fairly well that Qutb was a social reformist long before his affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Qutb's close contact with the Qur'an nourished him spiritually and literarily. The accumulated spiritual energy reflected in his writings in the mid-1930s, as discussed in his previous injunctions, can also be seen here. In 1942 Qutb called for *al-Mujtama 'al-Salih wa al-Mujtama 'al-Mutawazin* (The Righteous and Balanced Society).²⁶³ In 1944, Qutb wrote an article *al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah* (Social Justice), portraying the righteous and balanced society.²⁶⁴ The righteous and balanced society, which was based on social justice, as portrayed by Qutb in most of his social articles of the time (1945–1949), can be seen as Islamic. In 1947, he called for 'spiritual leadership' in the face of imperialism and the local corruption of all

types and forms. In his view, spiritual leadership would restore what had been lost since al-Afghani (d. 1897) and Abduh (d. 1905). As Qutb says:

It is not difficult for a researcher to restore what has been lost from our civilization and to overcome the corruption and divisions which are happening at the expense of the country. It is not difficult to overcome the political disputes that degraded the spiritual energy in this country. The accumulated spiritual energy and its resources were never renewed since the time of Jamal al-Din. Similar to him, we can correct much of what we see of this moral degradation on the level of the individual and society. We can restore the glorified flame (*shu'lah muqaddasah*) in the face of the waves of the corrupt Europe which become a machine without heart. Now we should be aware of the danger. . . . However, political awareness cannot continue or live by itself, nor can its level be elevated without the breath and support of spiritual energy. Where is the spiritual leadership (*al-qiyadah al-ruhiyyah*) of this generation? The leadership which creates great personalities (*shakhsiyyat 'azimah*) similar to those who were created by al-Afghani [i.e. his students Abduh, Sa'd Zaghlul and others].²⁶⁵ The leadership which elevates the individuals and groups from the transitory requirements to the higher horizons. Will this condition of degradation result in a great spiritual leadership, as we have learned from the spirit of Islam (*ruh al-Islam*) over centuries? We hope that there is a leap in the near future during our time.²⁶⁶

I could argue that these words are not Islamic, because spiritual leadership is not quite the same as Islamic leadership. Nor is the return to the East like the return to Islam. But one might disagree on the grounds that the meaning of Qutb's words, the context, and the names of the spiritual leaders were explicitly mentioned. In short, Qutb's words here should be interpreted in context. Both Afghani and Abduh were spiritual leaders calling for Islamic rule, values and justice. The force and intent of Qutb's words are very Islamic and bring us to the heart of Qutb's Islamic mood of the time. Five years later, in July 1952, the change became reality and Qutb was one of its pulses, but the sun of the Revolution quickly enlivened his opportunity for reform. Qutb felt the opportunity in his hands once he was very close to the decision-makers. It was, however, difficult for him to come to terms with the situation when he saw himself losing the opportunity he had been waiting for.

Before the change, Qutb was calling upon the Egyptian intellectuals to carry their responsibility and lead the return to the East. This also is not a new idea; it appeared in Qutb's writings of the 1930s and 1940s. In the previous chapter, I presented evidence of Qutb's negative view of the West and his call for a return to the East and its message in 1933.²⁶⁷ In the period 1939–1946, as asserted by Calvert, Qutb emphasized that 'Egypt's cultural traditions had instilled within the Egyptian people a spiritual disposition which contrasted markedly with what he considered to be the materialistic and aggressive nature of the Western nations and those who followed their ways in the colonial world. . . .'²⁶⁸ In 1946 (two years

before his trip to America), Qutb repeated his call in *'Udu ıla al-Sharq* (Return to the East), a title which explains the article's contents. He pointed out the style of Western life and called upon Egyptians to return to the East and its way of life. He says:

Undoubtedly, life on the Western style is pleasant, but it is not a pleasant or developed life on the scale of humanity. The life in which both sexes are completely free is a pleasant life, undoubtedly, but this free life is far away from the life of human beings. It is a reactionary life in the development of humanity. Yes, there is freedom, a complete freedom, but not the freedom of spirit (*ruh*). There is freedom of bodily desires (*jasad*), animal freedom, and not the freedom of human beings. He who wants this cheap freedom, he can find it in the Western style. He who wants human freedom, he can find it in the East, where the freedom of spirit is above the freedom of the body and the freedom of intellect. This life will triumph one day, when those who are swelled by Western modernity have disappeared from the scene.²⁶⁹

The disappearance of these people did not help much with Qutb's cause. The 'glorified flame' was extinguished by the winds of change. The champions of the change came to be like their predecessors, divorced from their heritage and 'swelled by Western modernity'.

Social reform in the rural areas is one of Qutb's concerns. He drew from his rural experience and called upon those social reformers to come to the countryside and see the actual condition there. Those planners were living in Cairo and planning for rural areas unknown to them and had no experience of their conditions. Therefore, Qutb insists on his negative view of Cairo's mentality as expressed in the following, in 1943:

Oh social reformers, you should come to see the countryside, but do not come with the mentality of Cairo. If you come with the mentality and the soul (*nafsiyyat*) of Cairo, do not come. You will never understand the rural areas and they also will never understand you. You should come and mix yourselves with the environment, feel the difficulties, think with the rural mentality, and, then, not before all of this, draft your programs to improve the condition on the basis of experience, not on the basis of imitation.²⁷⁰

Qutb criticized colonialism and imperialism in Egypt and abroad, in the Muslim and non-Muslim countries. His style of criticism is harsh and revolves around the 'means to liberate Egypt. He rejects the idea of local nationalism (Egyptian and Arab) and calls for an Islamic league as a political organization to represent Muslim countries in the face of the two superpowers of the time.'²⁷¹ Examples illustrate his view. As for colonialism, Qutb says:

Colonialism is a savage and barbarous movement (*al-Isti'mar harakah mutabarbirah hamajiyah*) that knows only its desires and does not glorify (*yuqaddis*) anything

of what humanity is glorifying (*tuqaddis*).²⁷² The British exploited our country, made it poor to the stage that the farmer cannot live as a human being. They spoiled the country in the shares of the Suez Canal, in the price of cotton, and in exports during and after the War.²⁷³

His criticism of colonialism was not confined to that in Egypt, but followed colonialism abroad in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. For example, he says:

After 300 years of British rule, India is still the poorest nation on the face of the earth. The British fought China because the latter wanted to prohibit the use of opium. But the human law of Great Britain wanted the Chinese to remain dizzy under the effect of opium. Britain stands against freedom not only in its colonies, but also in the colonies of others, as in Indonesia. The crimes of the British in Palestine in 1937 are disturbing.²⁷⁴

Likewise, in many articles French colonialism was not forgotten or spared from Qutb's harsh criticism. In an article 'This is France' (1945), Qutb reads history as follows:

I have reviewed the history of France in the East, but I have found no more than pages of barbarism and savageness. I have found no more than lakes of blood wherever France put its foot... In the days of Napoleon the artillery on the mountain-hill bombard the houses and civilians in Egypt. Barbarously the French forces with their horses entered al-Azhar. The blood ran on the streets and the dignity of religion was trodden on with their feet... In 1905, they bombard Damascus and the blood ran on the streets... Before and after 1931, the blood ran on the streets of the Arabic Casablanca in Morocco because the French were forcing people to enter Christianity and leave their Islam. Since then the Moroccan leaders are still in exile...²⁷⁵

To summarize, these examples illustrate Qutb's moral concern and his call for a return to the East and its message. This message is but Islam. In 1933, Qutb emphasized the bankruptcy of Western ideas; he called on Egypt to return to the East and carry its message. He referred to the year 1933 as an appropriate time for Egypt to carry its message. This notion from the 1930s continued to develop. Ibrahim Abu Rabi contended that these notions of the 1930s continued to develop with Qutb until in the mid-1940s he arrived at a 'new intellectual synthesis'.²⁷⁶ Calvert explains why:

One almost certain reason for Qutb's distaste for Western culture was the deep-seated influence upon him of the primordial ties of religion and custom... Qutb drew upon the Arab-linguistic and Islamic religious traditions of Egypt's collective heritage (*turath*) in order to assert that part of himself inherited from past generations which enabled him to challenge the political

legitimacy of Egypt's cultural westernization with dignity and conviction. In a spate of articles written in the late 1930s and into the middle 1940s, Qutb explained how Egypt's cultural traditions had instilled within the Egyptian people a spiritual disposition which contrasted markedly with what he considered to be the materialistic and aggressive nature of the Western nations and those who followed their ways in the colonial world. In order to protect Egypt from the destructive effects of contemporary Western civilization, Qutb enjoined his countrymen to be cognizant of their cultural roots, and to modernize in ways that were true to the essence of Egypt's indigenous culture, not in ways which mimicked the civilization of Egypt's Western oppressors. As Qutb stated succinctly in 1946: 'The question for me is my honour, my language, and my culture'.²⁷⁷

These factors and the sociopolitical conditions in Egypt convinced Qutb that social justice in Islam is the only answer to the Egyptian problem. The idea of 'just' and 'unjust', in the sense of deviation from Islam, was to form the basis of his text *Social Justice in Islam*, discussed in the following section.

Social justice in Islam

Qutb's *al-Adalah al-Ijima'iyah fi al-Islam* (Social Justice in Islam) was completed in 1948, published in 1949 and republished five times during Qutb's life. The second edition was in 1950; the third was in 1952 (before the July revolution in Egypt); the fourth was in 1954; the fifth was in 1958; and the sixth edition was in 1964.²⁷⁸ William Shepard stated that 'all six editions of *Social Justice in Islam* may be described as radically Islamist; they trace a development from a less extreme to a more extreme version of this position'.²⁷⁹ Each edition, Shepard says, 'shows changes from the preceding one and these changes move in a consistent direction'.²⁸⁰ Shepard notices that in 1953, John B. Hardie translated the first edition of *Social Justice in Islam* from Arabic to English.²⁸¹ The last edition of 1964, which has been in circulation since Qutb's death in 1966 to the present, was translated into English by Shepard and published in 1996.²⁸² In this translation, Shepard provided comprehensive coverage of the previous editions and the variations between them. For the purposes of this study in general, and the time frame of this chapter in particular, the discussion here is based particularly on the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), as translated by Hardie and covered by Shepard. The last edition of Qutb's actual Arabic text, which was published by Dar al-Shuruq in 1983 (ninth print), is also consulted and referred to in the footnotes as a cross-reference only to convince the reader that Qutb's arrival at the ideas considered as radical was certainly not after 1949. Qutb's ideological view had been developing in a consistent direction since the mid-1930s.

The book *Social Justice in Islam* is Qutb's first Islamist book in the ideological sense, as Shepard suggests. Its appeal is to establish an Islamic order. The subject matter of this work, as seen by Hardie, is of 'sufficiently universal interest to warrant an appeal not merely to the Middle East specialist but also to the thoughtful man

or woman to whom social conditions throughout the world are of living concern'.²⁸³ Qutb presented Islam as a 'worldwide'²⁸⁴ and ideal system of life. This is the idea that 'Islam has one universal theory that covers the universe, life, and humanity'.²⁸⁵ In this regard, the idea of 'comprehensiveness' (*al-shumul*), which previously appeared in the poetry (1935) and in *al-Taswir al-Fanni* (1945), has come to be one of his central ideas here in *Social Justice* (1949). This idea emphasizes the concept of the great unity, Sovereignty and the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humanity. In 1949, Qutb expresses this as follows:

Man lived for long ages without achieving a comprehensive theory of his Creator and the universe, or the universe, life, and mankind. That is to say, man has never reached the point of working out such a universal and comprehensive theory until the birth of Islam. The relation between the Creator and His creation is to be found in the power of the word, the Active Will from which all creation came.²⁸⁶

Qutb contrasts Islamic sociopolitical system with other systems known to humanity before and after Islam.²⁸⁷ He calls for the establishment of Islamic society based on the Islamic law: 'We call for the restoration of an Islamic life governed by the Islamic spirit and Islamic law . . .'.²⁸⁸ In his view, 'Islam is a flexible social system that can keep up with the times and conditions while preserving its spirit and general principles and assuring the achievement of a sound, virtuous, strong and growing life'.²⁸⁹

For Qutb, the variety of imported ideas such as nationalism, socialism, communism and liberal capitalism or secular democracy were all to blame for the confusion and contradictions in the social and political spheres in Egyptian society. These contradictions were the result of the blind acceptance of Western thought and culture in the hope that its ideas would cure the social and political problems of Egypt despite historical and spiritual differences between Egypt and Europe, where these ideas originated and were developed.²⁹⁰

The sociopolitical conditions prevalent in Egypt thus helped Qutb develop his theory of society. In the first edition of *Social Justice in Islam* (1949) Qutb moved the present society out of the frame of Islam to something other than Islam and defined the condition of non-Islamic society as follows:

Islamic society today is not Islamic in any true sense. We have already quoted a verse from the Qur'an which cannot in any way be honestly applied today: 'whoever does not judge (*yahkum*) by what Allah has revealed is an unbeliever' [Qur'an 5: 44]. In our modern society we do not judge by what Allah has revealed; the basis of our economic life is usury (*riba*); our laws permit rather than punish oppression; the poor-tax (*zakat*) is not obligatory, and is not spent in the requisite way. We permit the extravagance and luxury which Islam prohibits; we allow starvation. . . . We permit this and similar things which

have long been the subject of vain protest. Yet the Qur'anic text is undeniably applicable to such things; it refers to the existence in our modern society of such laws as those which permit usury, adultery, and refusal to pay poor-tax (*zakat*), which thereby prove themselves to be in opposition to divine laws laid down in the Qur'an.²⁹¹

In these words, the condition of the present society is opposite to God's law. The society cannot be Islamic unless the society practises Islam in the social, legal and economic spheres. The society is not Islamic, but the opposite of the law of Islam.²⁹² Here Qutb pointed out some conditions and backed them with a Qur'anic statement. Based on these conditions and the Qur'anic text, this type of society is one which Qutb calls, in the same edition of this book, '*al-mujtama'at al-dallah al-jahilah al-Mustaslimah*: misguided, *jahili* submissive societies.'²⁹³ This condition is also explained in the following Qur'anic texts: 'whoever does not judge (*yahkum*) by what Allah has revealed is a transgressor' (Qur'an 5:45). 'Whoever does not judge (*yahkum*) by what Allah has revealed is an evil-doer' (Qur'an 5:47). 'Is it the *jahiliyyah* laws that they wish to be judged by' (Qur'an 5:50). These three Qur'anic texts together with that used by Qutb in the quotation earlier are all from the same surah and explain each other, as they are in this order (5:44, 45, 47, 50). The Qur'an explained the Qur'an. This means that the society of those conditions is the society of *jahiliyyah*, which Qutb used earlier in an adjectival form (i.e. *jahili*).

Qutb's criticism of Muslims at that time derives from their claiming to be Muslims without living up to Islamic law. In this regard, Qutb says:

We profess Islam as a State religion; we claim in all sincerity to be true Muslims. . . . Yet we have divorced our faith from our practical life, condemning it to remain in ideal isolation, with no jurisdiction over life, no connection with its affairs, and no remedy for its problem. For, as the popular saying goes, 'Religion concerns only a man and his God'. But as for ordinary relationships, the bonds of society and the problems of life, political or economic theory – religion has nothing to do with these things, nor they with it; such is the view of those who are not actively hostile to religion. . . .²⁹⁴

As for the non-Muslims, Qutb stated that 'they say: do not mention this religion to us, for religion is nothing but an opiate that the capitalists and the tyrants exploit to lull the working classes and numb the deprived masses.'²⁹⁵

Those types of societies, which Qutb classified as opposite to Islam, have common views about the relationships between religion and the affairs of human life. The common view among them, as Qutb asserts, is also summed up in their common query of 'who can assure us that this unified twofold system that Islam set up in a particular historical age still has for us the same potentialities of development and renewal? Can we be sure that Islam is suitable to be applied in other historical ages whose basic factors may differ to a greater or lesser degree from

those of the historical age in which Islam arose?²⁹⁶ This is the main question addressed in Qutb's *Adalah* (1949).²⁹⁷

Qutb dealt with similar questions in a few articles, among them two Islamic plans for sociopolitical reform in Egypt. Both *The Project of Islamic Law Number (1)* and *The Project of Islamic Law Number (2)* were published in January 1948. He began his project number (1) by saying, 'We have promised our readers that we will interpret the basic principles of Islam and its rules into systems and laws and this is our promise.'²⁹⁸ The question about the capacity of Islam for development and renewal was, perhaps, a point of challenge on all levels and Qutb promised his readers to answer it. The idea of those projects can also be seen in *Adalah*.²⁹⁹

Qutb's argument in *Adalah* alludes to the time of the Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib and 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Aziz.³⁰⁰ Qutb deliberately focused on this early period to demonstrate that the Islam of this early period has the capacity to promote development in any historical period and that today's problem is not due to Islam as such, but to what he calls 'translated mentality' (*aqliyyah mutarjamah*),³⁰¹ or the 'mental twist' (*al-iltiwa' al-'aqli*)³⁰² of the 'misguided, *jahili* submissive societies.'³⁰³ Their foregrounded fundamental question, as Qutb asserts, reflects that 'there is a wide *jahl* (ignorance) of the nature of this religion; there is a psychological and intellectual laziness which keeps us from reviewing our older resources; and there is a ridiculous tendency to imitate European trends of separating religion from life.'³⁰⁴ The term *jahl* here is used in a similar sense to that previously used by Abduh and 'Awdah, as discussed above. The *jahl* of the 'translated' or 'twisted mentality' is not ordinary ignorance or lack of knowledge. Qutb defined this as he made it clear that his book *Social Justice in Islam* was the answer to these people.

There is nothing strange in this. Those who live in luxury are avid to keep their soft, perverted and sick lifestyle, avid for their passions and pleasures, and avid to have a retinue of hangers-on subject to their control. Right guidance, religion and faith forbid them much of what they so avidly desire, and so limit for them the ways of permitted pleasure – which seem to them by comparison paltry and insignificant, not satisfying their sick souls and their bloated passions... They are also deprived of the myths, illusions and legends with which they surround themselves and which they exploit in the misguided, *jahili* submissive societies [i.e. people living in *jahiliyyah*]. Thus, they are enemies of all true guidance and knowledge...³⁰⁵

Here, the word *jahili* is an adjective and relates what it describes to *jahiliyyah* in force and intent, as previously discussed in Chapter 2.³⁰⁶ What is also significant in this book is that Qutb wanted to distinguish between Islamic and those misguided, *jahili* societies in all spheres of life, that is, to distinguish between Islam and *jahiliyyah* as distinct ways of life, in fact as ideologies. This impetus drove him to articulate and define the concept of *jahiliyyah*.

Qutb distinguished between Islamic and *jahili* societies in all spheres (political and other). He analysed and demonstrated the capacities and potentialities of the

Islamic system in the development and renewal of Muslim society in general. In his analysis, Qutb emphasized that the Islamic ideal will not eventuate unless that society is Muslim. Separation between Islam and society is not in the nature of Islam. He stresses that there is 'not a single reason to make any separation between Islam and society, either from the point of view of the essential nature of Islam, or from that of its historical course'.³⁰⁷ Islam has laid down 'the nature of the relation between the Creator and His creation, the nature of man's relation to the universe and to the world, and of man's relation to his own soul; it has laid down the relation between the individual and society, between different societies and mankind as a whole, and the relation between one nation and another'.³⁰⁸ The centre of the nature of Islam and that of its action is 'human life in its entirety, spiritual and material, religious and worldly. Such a religion cannot continue to exist in isolation from society, nor can its adherents be true Muslims unless they practise their faith in their social, legal and economic relationships. And a society cannot be Islamic if it expels the civil and religious laws of Islam from its codes and customs'.³⁰⁹

The political, economic, social and intellectual goals of society need to be established as Muslim. Qutb says:

The Islamic idea about life is the most perfect idea the world has known because it unites all the material and spiritual factors and creates from them a unity. This unity guides it toward a highest level and aims at ideals which it realizes in practical life even though they seem to be woven from the imagination.³¹⁰

The nature of Islam 'contains the universal and harmonious thought concerning the universe, life and man that replaces struggle and conflict with social solidarity in the human sphere, and that gives life a spiritual idea that links it to its Creator in heaven and controls its worldly tendencies so that it does not realize purely material goals, even though productive material activity is a form of worship (*'ibadah*) in Islam'.³¹¹

In arguing that Islam provides a system in which all material and spiritual spheres are perfectly balanced and harmoniously united, Qutb was declaring that 'justice', in Islam, includes all aspects of human 'life' and its components and not merely justice limited to 'economics'. Justice deals with all the phenomena of life and all aspects of its activity, just as it deals with feelings and behaviour, with conscience and emotions.³¹² In other words, Qutb's theory of society involves a comprehensive social analysis and is not confined to a specific sphere of human affairs.

Qutb's theory distinguished between the concept of justice in Islam and the concept of justice in sociopolitical systems before and after Islam. In contrasting Communism with Islam, for example, Qutb says:

This breadth of vision in the Islamic view of life, together with the fact that it goes beyond merely economic values to those other values on which life depends – these things make the Islamic faith the more powerful to provide equity and justice in society, and to establish justice in the whole of the human

spheres. It also frees Islam from the narrow interpretation of justice as understood by communism. For justice to the communist is an equality of wages, in order to prevent economic discrimination; but within recent days when theory has come into opposition with practice, communism has found itself unable to achieve this quality. Justice in Islam is a human equality, envisaging the adjustment of all values, of which the economic is but one.³¹³

Thus, there is a difference between the nature, foundation and means of justice in the Islamic system compared with other systems before or after Islam.

To Qutb, sociopolitical conducts derive from the relationship of belief to society. He compared the Islamic view of the relation of religion to the state with that of Christianity. In this regard, he writes:

Christianity left 'what is Caesar's to Caesar and what is God's to God' and directed itself entirely to spiritual purification and inward discipline, and shaped itself on the basis that religion is 'a relationship between man and the Lord' and that law is a relationship between the individual and the state.³¹⁴

Qutb demonstrated how and why separation between religion and state was established in Europe. In this regard, he analysed the historical origins and relevant development that separated religion from politics. He emphasized that Christianity with its purity and denial of the material world crossed the seas to Europe, where it found the inheritors of the 'pagan' and 'materialistic Greek culture'. Those inheritors, Qutb says, were

slaughtering each other in immense numbers over narrow pieces of earth, barely emerged from barbarism, by nature harsh, rough, avaricious, and greedy. . . . When these nations saw that religion [Christianity] was not suitable for life, they said that religion is a relationship between man and his Lord and it is all right to take shelter in it when in church and to seek respite in the holy sanctuary. Then they would face the struggle of life in society with their traditional barbarism, calling on the sword for judgment during their age of savagery and calling on civil law for judgment after they became civilized. As for religion, it remained where it was, isolated in the sentiments of people's hearts and souls, and in the holy sanctuary and the confessional!³¹⁵

Qutb's analysis of the circumstances which led to separation between religion and state in Europe involves two stages. The first is to stress Islam is the seal of all religions, that Islam provides a comprehensive and all-encompassing civilized system for every aspect of life. Second, Qutb claims that European systems and their laws were not as a whole derived from religion, but from the pagan Roman law rooted in the pagan Greek law. He concludes that the West is materialistic, morally exhausted, and that any attempt today to imitate European laws and systems is only imitating paganism.³¹⁶ They separated their societies from religion because of circumstances related to their own history. By contrast, there is no

good reason for Muslims to separate Islam from society or to follow the European or communist notion and ideas.³¹⁷

Qutb backs a firm relationship between Islam and society, the foundation of which is social justice. The method and way to achieve social justice in Islam are represented as milestones in the journey to Islamic society from the condition of 'misguided *jahili* society'. To Qutb, the following concepts describe the foundation of social justice in Islam:

- *al-taharrur al-wijidani al-mutlaq*: absolute liberation of the conscience
- *al-musawah al-insaniyyah al-kamilah*: complete human equality
- *al-takaful al-ijtima'i al-wathiq*: firm social solidarity.³¹⁸

Qutb focused on the liberation of the conscience as critical to the process of achieving social justice. Qutb's idea of conscience and its sociopolitical connotations in relation to social justice is not a new idea, but appeared in his earlier writings. For this, an outline of his use of the idea of conscience in his earlier and later writings is appropriate. His idea of conscience later came to be strongly linked to his key ideas such as *jahiliyyah*, *'ubudiyyah* (servitude or servanthood, and *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), as in the following outline.

Qutb's earlier writings emphasized a number of interrelated ideas all communicating the idea of conscience. Using the idea of conscience (*damir*), he distinguished between justice and injustice. In a poem published in 1928, Qutb portrayed the conscience as a judge distinguishing between right and wrong or between good and evil. This quality slammed the gate wide open for Qutb to link the idea of conscience to more ideas such as the dual ability of man, his freedom of conscience and his freedom of intellect. Linking these ideas to society, in 1928, Qutb emphasized that human conduct, whether good or evil, is an indicative reflection on the strength or weakness of the conscience.³¹⁹ This implies the relationship between conscience's decision and freedom in the wide sense of the word. These decisions manifest themselves in the relationships between individuals and groups; between them all and their belief, conceptions and conduct in society. Thus, there is a relationship between conscience and human conduct in society.³²⁰

In 1935 Qutb took these ideas a bit further. Focusing on the freedom of conscience, the freedom of human intellect within the context of the nature of man, Qutb pointed out that the freedom of human intellect is limited in time and place. Thus, the ability of human intellect is limited and it cannot go beyond the daily affairs of man.³²¹ In this, Qutb 'does not trust the power of human intellect'.³²² In his view, the human being is a 'unitary creature of a dual nature'; that is, man has the capacity to 'follow the spiritual guidance or to follow his animal instincts'.³²³ Thus, human intellect cannot be trusted in an absolute sense along the way. Therefore, human intellect is in need of guidance in its decision towards the right path, for the welfare of individuals and society as well.

In 1946, Qutb used the idea of conscience and its relevant notions as a device to examine a number of contemporary societies. He shared his observation with his readers, through a number of published articles, among which is his article

'The American Conscience' (1946). Here, the idea of conscience took a political connotation, as he linked the pulses of the American conscience to the growing support to both Britain in Egypt and the Zionist in Palestine.³²⁴

In 1947, the idea of conscience also reappeared in his essay on the concept of the other world in human conscience. Qutb expressed the idea of the other world as an indicator of the pulses of human conscience. He says, 'the idea of the other world is deeper in human conscience and it can be considered as an indicator of the awakening of human conscience (*yaqazat al-damir al-bashari*)'.³²⁵ This implies that occupation, repression, oppression and humiliation, on the one hand, and freedom, justice and equality, on the other hand, are all dependent on and influenced by the perception of the other world in the conscience of humankind.

Consequently, using the idea of conscience in 1947, Qutb outlined the concept of humanity and the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. Qutb pointed out the relationship between the concept of humanity, justice and Divinity. He then pointed out the relationship between Divinity and humankind in this world and the world to come. His analysis of these relationships in the long history of human conscience as demonstrated in his book *Mashahid* (1947) can be summarized as follows:

- 1 The life of the individual in this evanescent world is short, but his ambitions and aims are uncountable. Man dies and leaves his desires and his loved ones behind: 'Will they meet again after this long absence and separation?'³²⁶
- 2 Qutb then reflects on justice and the eternal battle between good and evil. He notes that, in most cases, evil prevails over good. Man sometimes cannot see the action between good and evil in his lifetime. This was not Man's concern when he was living in the age of 'the law of the jungle (*shari'at al-ghab*)' when command was for the powerful, and life was only for the stronger. However, when human conscience began to 'arise, he dearly loved to see the good prevail over evil. Evil must be punished. The belief in the existence of a Just Divinity (*uluhiyyah 'adilah*) usually implies reward for good and punishment for evil. If this does not happen on the Earth in this world, it must be done there in the other world'.³²⁷
- 3 Qutb then emphasized that the purposes of the existence of Man, his position in this vast universe, his life and destiny are not like those of an animal. Here enter some more concepts to conclude his discussion on these three points. He emphasized the relationship between Man and the universal powers, the concept of humanity and the concept of justice, as in the following:

It was from these three springs which exploded one after the other in human conscience the stream of the idea of the other world flowed out. As the first point mirrors Man's feeling of the value of life, the third point reflects his pride in his human race, and his confidence that the universal powers (*quwa kawmiyyah*) are taking care of him and making for him another life, not this

short one. Also, the second point indicates the wakefulness of human conscience, his feeling, his love of justice, and his confidence of the fate of evil. These three springs are 'The Humanity' (*al-Insaniyyah*) in the depth of its deepness and the highest of its horizons.³²⁸

Qutb demonstrated the difference between the concept of justice in the Egyptian conscience, in the Greek and the Indian consciences and in the conscience of religions before Islam. Despite its pagan essence, the concept of justice in the Egyptian conscience was more developed than that in the conscience of other creeds of the time.³²⁹ Because of the relationship between the freedom of conscience and justice, the Egyptian conscience was more free than the Greek or Indian conscience. These all, however, were of pagan essence, and submitted themselves to other than the Just Divinity (*al-uluhiyyah 'adilah*), the Creator of the universe, life and humankind. From 'here, the Qur'an elevated humanity and its conscience to higher horizons' of freedom and justice.³³⁰

With this in mind, Qutb completed his book *Social Justice in Islam* in 1948 and published it in 1949 to demonstrate a significant development of Qutb's view of conscience and the concept of *uluhiyyah* (Divinity) and '*ubudiyyah* (servitude). He pointed out that the '*ubudiyyah* (servitude) of conscience to the Just Divinity (*al-uluhiyyah al-'adilah*) is the only way to the *absolute freedom of conscience* which Qutb considers together with 'complete human equality' and 'firm social solidarity' as fundamental principles of all spheres of social justice in Islam.³³¹

To him, the complete social justice cannot be achieved unless it emerges from the conscience. Social justice must be claimed by the conscience of the individual, by the conscience of society, and 'there must be a creed (*'aqidah*) that guides to the highest purposes of humankind'.³³² The conscience, according to him, was the first basic principle on which Islam was established. In this regard, Qutb emphasized the link between the freedom of the conscience and the concept of '*ubudiyyah* (servitude) of humanity to Allah. To Him alone is the 'authority' over the universe, life and humankind. This is expressed as follows:

Islam began by liberating the human conscience from service (*'ibadah*) to anyone other than Allah and from submission to anyone other than Allah. There is no authority anywhere except in Allah... Allah is the only possessor of power, all others are servants (*'abid*) who have no power over themselves or others. When Allah is recognized as one, His worship (*'ibadah*) is also one, and to Him alone must all men turn.³³³ But the human soul may be liberated from servitude (*'ubudiyyah*) to sacred institutions and from the servitude (*'ubudiyyah*) of fear for its livelihood or its reputation, and yet still suffer from servitude (*'ubudiyyah*) to social values, such as money, fame, or lineage. If the soul feels a moral servitude to any of these values, it will lack complete freedom because of this and it will not feel true equality with its fellows. At this point Islam addresses all these values and puts them in their true places, neither underrating them nor overrating them.³³⁴

Justice in Islam begins from within and is dependent on the freedom of conscience. Distinguishing between Eastern and Western concepts of justice, Hegel described Western justice as follows: 'Justice is administrated only on the basis of external morality, and Government exists only as the prerogative of the compulsion. Our civil law contains indeed some purely compulsory ordinances.'³³⁵

As this implies fear of government, it also implies submission to man-made laws. In short, *al-'ubudiyyah* (servitude) is only to government, not to Allah. This is the crossroads between Islamic and non-Islamic theories of society. Anything other than Islamic society, in Qutb's view, is but 'misguided, *jahili* submissive societies'.³³⁶ Thus the '*ubudiyyah* to other than Allah leads to deviation and ignorance. In this sense, and similar to Qutb, the Egyptian intellectual Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872–1963) emphasized '*ubudiyyah* to the government as paganism. In 1908, he says:

Some Indians have idols usually made by their own hands. When one gets up in the morning the first thing he does before he goes to work is to go to the idol, which he has made with his hands, to glorify it and place his hands on it and seeks its blessing. This is the morning prayer for them. On this story, I think we cannot hold ourselves from laughing. However, if we go back to ourselves we will find that we do things that also make us laugh. Everyday, we do things in their essence not different from what the Indians do. The government is our representative (*wakilah*). We have brought her [government] to this place to work for us. We pay her wages from our money. We defend her with our children. With all of this in mind, we also deal with her individuals in the same way as the Indians do with their idols. Our dealings with the government sometimes reach the level of worship (*ila had al-'ibadah*). This is because the worshipper (*al-'abid*) does not work for what he worships (*al-ma'bud*), but submission (*khudu'*) and wishes. Will we, after that, be able to laugh: Who worships what he made by his own hands...?

If the Egyptian employee lets his future be dependent on his submission to his president, worships him, and is worshipped by others, it will be shame on not only Egypt but also humanity.³³⁷ If an individual of the authorities or employees sees that he could achieve higher rank or upgrade by worshipping things other than Allah (*'ibadatu ghayri Allah*), his rank will be a label that separates him from nobility and dignity...³³⁸

This form of '*ubudiyyah* existed in Egypt in 1908 (when Qutb was two years old). It did not go away but continued to exist in the society during the time of Qutb's intellectual productivity. Speaking of the '*ubudiyyah* to government in 1945, Tawfiq al-Hakim says 'our economic and financial problems are the product of our "political system" (*nizamuna al-siyasi*) and this "parliamentarian handcraft" (*al-hirfah al-parlamaniyyah*) which accommodates the '*ubudiyyah* and despotism (*istibdad*).'³³⁹ These words of al-Hakim in 1945 echo those words of Lutfi al-Sayyid of 1908 as regards the '*ubudiyyah* to government. This condition, before and after 1908, is labelled *jahiliyyah* by a number of intellectuals, as previously detailed.

Qutb learned from the older generation terms and phrases such as *jahiliyyah*, *ubudiyyah* (servitude), *ibadatu ghayri Allah* (worship other than Allah), *al-'abid wa al-ma'bud* (the worshipper and the worshiped). Qutb learned from the older generation for about four decades, and when he reached his 'intellectual maturity',³⁴⁰ he used the same phrases and supported the view of the older generation that 'ubudiyyah to the government or to anything other than Allah is *jahiliyyah*. He also learned from his professors in *Dar al-'Ulum* that paganism of all sorts and forms was condemned by the Qur'an as *jahiliyyah*.³⁴¹ The point is that the terms 'ubudiyyah and *jahiliyyah* were in use in modern Egypt before Qutb, Mawdudi and al-Nadawi came to use them. The other point that should be noted is that the intent of those words of Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid and of al-Hakim is in line with Qutb's view that liberation of conscience from submission to the government or to anything other than Allah is the crossroads between Islamic and *jahili* ideas. The third point to be made here is that complete social justice, as Qutb asserts, 'cannot be assured, nor can its efficiency and permanence be guaranteed, unless it arises from the conscience', which must be liberated from submission to anything other than Allah.³⁴²

As with Qutb's view of the foundations of justice in Islam, Hegel emphasized Eastern morality as follows:

Morality is in the East likewise a subject of positive legislation, and although the moral prescriptions (the *substance* of their Ethics) may be perfect, what should be internal subjective sentiment is made a matter of external arrangement. There is no want of a will to command moral actions, but a will to perform them since commanded from within. . . . Since the external and the internal, Law and Moral Sense, are not yet distinguished – still form an undivided unity – so also do Religion and the State.³⁴³

As this reflects the unity between religion and state, it also implies the link between the conscience and society in Islam. Here enters Qutb's view of liberty that liberation of the society from submission to anything other than God should begin from within, that is, with the liberation of the conscience of individual and society. Qutb emphasizes this as a basic principle on which Islam was established.³⁴⁴

Concerning liberation of the conscience, Qutb contrasts Islam with other ideologies and religions. As for Christianity, Qutb asserts, it conceives the free conscience as to liberate humans from the pleasures of life, turning them towards the kingdom of heaven and despising this earthly life. Qutb, however, argued that the impulses of this life cannot invariably be suppressed. Nor can all worldly needs be suppressed for ever.³⁴⁵ Indeed suppression is not always healthy. This world was not created to suppress humanity or to be suppressed by human beings. Likewise, human nature was not created to be a destructive nature but a force of development and renewal. There is a harmonious relationship and solidarity between the universe and humanity for the continuity of life. Therefore, liberation of the conscience in ecclesiastical Christianity and Buddhism involves

prevention, deprivation and isolation of humanity from this earthly life in the hope of finding something in heaven.³⁴⁶

As to Communism, the communist's view of liberation means freedom from economic constraints. All members of society will have equal access to social goods. It is argued that it is financial pressure that causes individuals to violate the laws which govern society. Qutb argued that equality itself cannot guarantee its own survival in society if there is no freedom of the conscience, that equality cannot survive by only external rules.³⁴⁷ This implies the necessity for the liberation of the conscience to enable equality to survive as a value in society. In his conclusion, Qutb prophesied the end of Communism as follows:

In the communist view, life is a continual strife and struggle between the classes, a struggle which must end in one class overcoming the other; at which point the communist dream is fulfilled. From this it appears that Islam is the dream of an eternal humanity embodied in a living faith, working in this world, while communism is the evil of human nature, limited to a single generation.³⁴⁸

In Islam, however, there is no separation between the heavenly and the earthly values, between religion and worldly affairs. The basics of this unity were divinely inspired, and the Qur'an liberates the human conscience in every way – a liberation not based on either political, economic, social, moral or other such spheres, but based on all of them as a one unit. The Islamic system takes care of the entire existence, ensuring the prosperity and the progress of the individual, society and humanity at large.

Qutb emphasizes Islam as a comprehensive and coherent theory, uniting all parts in this vast universe, and uniting the Earth with Heaven, this world and the world to come.³⁴⁹ In his explanation, Qutb stresses the concept of the great unity, the concept of God's Sovereignty and the concept of universality, as in the following:

Then came Islam, bringing with it a new, comprehensive, and coherent theory. . . . Islam gave a unity to all powers and abilities, it gave an identity of purposes to all desires and inclinations and leanings, and it gave coherence to all men's efforts. In all these Islam saw one embracing unity which took in the universe, the soul, and all human life. Its aim was to unite earth and Heaven in one world; to join the present world and the world to come in one faith; to link spirit and body in one humanity; to correlate worship (*'ibadah*) and work (*'mal*) in one life. It sought to bring all these into one path which led to Allah. . . . But beyond all this, there does exist one eternal and unchanging power, which has no beginning and no comprehensible end. To it belongs the government of the world, of mankind, and of life; it is the power of Allah. . . .³⁵⁰

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, the unity

of all the religions in the religion of Allah, and the unity of the Apostles in preaching this one religion since the dawn of life.³⁵¹ . . . Islam is the religion of unity between worship and social relations, the creed and behavior, spiritual and material things, economic and spiritual values, this world and the other world, and earth and heaven. From this great unity issue its Islamic laws and commands, its moral directives and restrictions, and its options for the conduct of government and finance, for the distribution of income and losses, and for [determining] rights and duties. In that great principle are included all the particular and details.³⁵²

As for the system of government, Qutb emphasizes Islam as a completely independent system that has no connection with others either when they agree with it or when they differ from it. In this regard, he argued against Haykal's statement that Islam is an 'imperial power' and noted that this statement is open to correction, since it is foreign alike to the spirit of Islam, its theory and history: Qutb advised that Haykal would be more accurate and appropriate if he said that Islam is 'broadly human (*insani*) in its tendency' because of its strong idea of the unity of humanity and its goal of gathering all humanity under its banner of equality and brotherhood.³⁵³

By contrast, Taha Husayn in *The Great Civil War*, as Qutb says in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), 'was more precise' in his 'definition' than Haykal. Qutb apparently appreciated Husayn's discussion of the Islamic system of government, his comparison between Islam and all other systems and his suggestion that the Islamic system differs in its basic nature from others. This discussion of Husayn's is, for Qutb, 'the truth when one looks at the spirit and nature of government and not at its outward details'.³⁵⁴ In the last edition of *Social Justice* (1964), Qutb added, to his previous opinion, a warning that Husayn's 'conclusion is dangerous', and this is that Islam in the form it achieved in the time of the Prophet and the two leaders after him was a lofty anomaly which humanity could not sustain for long. This, for Qutb, 'is the tune sung by the orientalist and their disciples in Islamic countries as a preface to the claim that Islam is not suitable to be the system of government in these days'.³⁵⁵ Thus Qutb's basic idea, that Islam is different from other systems and that Islam is capable of leading human life of any age and generation, remained stable, but the argument was shifted – and this also in a consistent direction.

In the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), the political system is based on two fundamental conceptions, both of which originate in its universalist idea of the universe, life and man. One is the idea of the 'unity of humanity in race, nature and origin; the other is the idea that Islam represents the eternal system for the world throughout the future of the human race'.³⁵⁶ In his discussion, the general idea of Islam and the term *jahalah* were expressed, as in the following extract from Hardie's translation:

In granting this extent of freedom to others Islam is prompted by its general and universal spirit; it believes that when they have the opportunity of

examining Islam, their examination will then be careful and assiduous, since it will owe nothing to the intervention of material force or intellectual ignorance [*jahalalah fikriyyah*].³⁵⁷

The term *jahalalah*, as a synonym of *jahiliyyah*, has been detailed in the previous chapter. It is sufficient here to note that the term *jahalalah* appeared a number of times in Qutb's earlier and later writings, as previously discussed.³⁵⁸ The point is that the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept exist in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949).³⁵⁹

Qutb concludes his discussion on the basis of an Islamic system of government by stressing the idea of universality and comprehensiveness.³⁶⁰ He also outlined the relationship between the ruler and the ruled: 'Political theory in Islam rests on the basis of justice on the part of the ruler, obedience on the part of the ruled.'³⁶¹ But he stresses the Sovereignty or the authority of Allah above the authority of the ruler. Therefore, obedience to one who holds authority is derived from obedience to Allah and the Messenger. The ruler is not to be obeyed because of his own person; he is to be obeyed only by virtue of holding his position through the law of Allah and His Messenger; 'his right to obedience is derived from his observance of that law, and from no other thing'.³⁶² The idea of Sovereignty of God exists in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949). This Sovereignty in a practical sense has one meaning: the sovereignty of the Law. This Law is the authority of Allah.³⁶³ Qutb also says: 'The ruler and the ruled together must bow to the authority of Allah in all things.'³⁶⁴ Here Qutb also states that 'there is no authority anywhere except in Allah. . . . Allah is the only possessor of power, all others are servants (*'abid*) who have no power over themselves or others'.³⁶⁵

As for the management of wealth in Islam, it represents the implication of the doctrine of complete submission to God alone.³⁶⁶ The circulation of wealth is subject to *Shari'ah*, the law of God which provides for the welfare of the individual as well as of society. It stands between Man and society, guiding them; it neither harms Man or his society nor violates the laws of God. However, social justice in Islam means far more than the management of wealth. The economic system in Islam is based on humanitarian ethics whose impetus is the *Shari'ah* of God, the ultimate Owner of wealth and the universe.³⁶⁷

It is precisely for this reason that Qutb delays his discussion of wealth management to the sixth chapter of his book *Social Justice*. He pointed out that 'wealth management' is perhaps the most essential thing in a discussion of 'social justice'; hence this topic should come first in this book. But this did not happen. Many readers may have found this book slow to get to wealth management. So, why did Qutb deliberately delay the topic of economy in his book? Qutb tells us why:

This delay has been intentional . . . to present the Islamic idea of justice, its nature, bases and methods in their broader context, rather than seeing them just in economic terms as is done by those who follow the materialistic principle of reduction of all values of life to economic ones.³⁶⁸

This comment supports the suggestion that Qutb fully intended to distinguish between Islamic and what he calls 'misguided, *jahili* submissive societies'³⁶⁹ when he began to write *Social Justice in Islam*.

As for the 'historical reality of Islam', Qutb used the explicit term *jahiliyyah* a number of times in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949). He emphasized that Islam has never been a collection of barren ideas or warnings and maxims, but a practical system that left its marks on the course of history and the reality of human life. Islam as a creed and a conception turned into various personalities and events. Islam 'ceased to be just abstract theories, a collection of moral directives and preachings, or ideals and dreams; instead it became human models that actually lived, events that actually happened, behavior and activity witnessed by the eye, heard by the ear and leaving their mark on practical life and on the various stages of history'.³⁷⁰

The change caused by Islam reflects on the difference between Islamic and *jahili* societies. The difference is not to be judged in term of quantity or measure, but rather in terms of quality and influence. The difference, as Qutb asserts, can be seen in the conquest of the great empires of Chosros and Caesar by Muslims in a very short space. The difference between Islam and *jahiliyyah* can also be seen in the endurance of Bilal, who was persecuted by *jahili* elements in attempt to force him to abjure his religion. They 'burned him with red-hot stones placed on his stomach and chest, they left him hungry and without water, and they tortured him; yet even in the heat of that unbearable torture he would say no more than, "Allah is One, Allah is One"'.³⁷¹ To estimate the difference between Islam and *jahiliyyah*, Qutb cited some of the descriptions that were given, in early Islam, by witnesses from both sides in the presence of the Negus of Abyssinia. From the speech of the opposition of Islam, Qutb cites the following:

O King some foolish young men have come to you from our country who have rejected the religion of their people without entering your religion, but have brought a religion which they invented and which neither you nor I know...³⁷²

According to Qutb, 'When the ruler asked, "What is this religion for which you have separated from your people without entering our religion or any other religion?"', the reply of the Muslim Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib was: "O king, we were people of *jahiliyyah*, worshiping idols, eating carrion, committing gross indecencies, breaking family ties, mistreating guests, the strong among us devouring the weak... etc."³⁷³

This is the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept as cited by Qutb in his first edition of *Social Justice* (1949). These two accounts were previously detailed in the second chapter under the last subtitle, '*Jahiliyyah* is the antithesis of Sovereignty'. In the present discussion, however, suffice it to note that the phrase 'people of *jahiliyyah*' in the latter quotation is found in the first edition of *Social Justice* and it was translated by Hardie as 'people of ignorant barbarity'.³⁷⁴ The same phrase is also found in the last edition and it was translated by Shepard as 'ignorant and barbarous people'.³⁷⁵ Both translations then confirm that the word *jahiliyyah* remained in all

Arabic editions unchanged, as also pointed out by Shepard.³⁷⁶ For the purpose of this study, both translations of the phrase at hand mean that a couple of notes need to be made. The first is that the purpose of Hardie's translation of the first edition of *Social Justice* is not technical, as he also emphasized in his one page 'Foreword', but only to make the book available for English readers. By contrast, the second note is that Shepard's translation is purely technical and intentionally made, as he also said in his 'Introduction' (p. x) to highlight the technical terms that characterize Qutb's theocentrism, the development of his thought and the changes between the six editions of *Social Justice*. The pattern in this technical translation is to mention the technical term in its Arabic form next to its proposed English translations (in the case of the word *jahiliyyah*, see Shepard's translation, p. 157 middle). As to the phrase under discussion, where the term is technically significant, this pattern was not followed, so that readers or researchers could miss the term. This is perhaps a typographical error; but consulting the original text and the earlier translation of Hardie has restored it here. The word *jahiliyyah* in the quotation under discussion is not Qutb's word, but he agreed on the intent of the word and its concept, as in the quotation. Qutb cited the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept from this early Muslim as a witness on the difference between Islam and *jahiliyyah*. In this sense, Qutb notes the following:

Now the two Quraysh envoys were present and one of them was 'Amr, who was neither unable to speak nor deficient in shrewdness; yet neither of the envoys contradicted Ja'far's description of the state of Arabia [*jahiliyyah*] before Islam, or of the nature and form of the new religion [Islam]. Therefore, this must be a true and reliable description of the former state of affairs [*jahiliyyah*] and of the new [Islam]. That is evident from history itself, the history of Arabia. And here is another piece of evident from one who is not a Muslim, and who lives in the modern age. J. H. Denison speaks of the world in general when he says in his book *Emotion as the Basis of Civilization*: 'In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world was on the brink of total collapse... dissolution and disintegration, and that mankind would be forced to return to the former barbaric state...'³⁷⁷

This also confirms that Qutb was intentionally distinguishing between two societies, Islam and *jahiliyyah*, in his first edition of *Social Justice* (1949).

Qutb apparently borrowed the idea from the earlier Muslim Ja'far and applied it to the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Mongols and to the modern age. For example, in his analysis of the Umayyads Qutb emphasized most of their rule as *jahiliyyah*. They were weak in their faith and 'dreaming of a kingdom from the time of the third Caliph 'Uthman' (d. 35/656).³⁷⁸ In this regard, Qutb says:

If the faith, piety and gentleness of 'Uthman had stood as a barrier to the Umayyads, this barrier had collapsed and this dam had broken and the Umayyads reverted without restraint to what was their heritage in both the *jahiliyyah* and Islam.³⁷⁹

Qutb's critical analysis of the Umayyads begins with Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb,³⁸⁰ as follows:

Abu Sufyan is that man whose actions against Islam and the Muslims fill the pages of history and who did not become a Muslim until the victory of Islam was decided. He became a Muslim only with his lips and his tongue, having no faith in his heart or soul. Islam never penetrated to the heart of that man, so he kept hoping for defeat of Muslims and rejoiced to see it at the Battle of Hunayn and later on in the fighting between the Muslims and the Byzantines, while he pretended outwardly to be Muslim. The tribal feeling (*'asabiyyah*) of the *jahiliyyah* continued to dominate his heart . . .³⁸¹

When Mu'awiyah [the son of Abu Sufyan] came and made the Islamic caliphate a kingdom based on force in the line of the Umayyad clan, that was inspired not by Islam but by the *jahiliyyah*.³⁸²

The Umayyads in Islam were still the same Umayyads as in the *jahiliyyah*. They had been the only ones to hold back from the Pact of Fudul in the *jahiliyyah*.³⁸³

Qutb's words of 1949 clearly confirm that he brought the *jahiliyyah* concept from Ja'far and applied it to the Umayyad dynasty (661–750). Thus, the *jahiliyyah* concept is not confined to a specific period or place, but it is a condition on the opposite side of Islam. The concept was taken a step further to the Abbasid dynasty (750–1258). Qutb emphasizes that by the end of the Abbasid caliphate, the idea of government had completely moved away from Islam and Islamic teachings. He says:

Al-Mansur the Abbasid gave his address – when the Umayyad wave had done its work on the conception of government and then finally in the days of the Abbasids it had become a theory of sacred divine right – and he said: 'Oh people I am the authority (*sultan*) of Allah on His earth, governing you with the support and assistance of Allah, and I am the custodian of His wealth, administering it according to His good pleasure and His will and giving it by His permission. He has made me its lock; if He wills to open me, he opens me to give it to you and divide it among you as sustenance, and if he wills to close it up he closes me.' With this, government (*siyasat al-hukm*) finally moved out of the Islamic sphere and away from the teachings of Islam.³⁸⁴

This also was the case with the idea of wealth management. It had moved away from Islam and Islamic teachings since the time of the Umayyad, 'when the caliphate became a tyrannical monarchy . . .'.³⁸⁵ The historical reality of the Umayyads and the Abbasids after them indicates 'how much those kings who were called caliphs usurped the public funds, and how far their management of wealth (*siyasat al-mal*) was from the principles of Islam. How much wealth and luxury had increased on the one hand and misery and suffering on the other, and how seriously Islamic society had been distorted as a result of its distance from

the Islamic path and its rejection of Islamic principles'.³⁸⁶ It should be noted here that the deviation from Islam during the Umayyad and Abbasid was not complete but occurred in the spheres of government and economy. This partial deviation was also labelled *jahiliyyah*. Thus if the deviation from Islam is complete, the present society, as Qutb says, 'is by no means Islamic',³⁸⁷ and 'in our present age the last living principle of Islam was abolished';³⁸⁸ this society, then, is one of what Qutb calls in the same book in 1949 'misguided, *jahili* submissive societies'.³⁸⁹

Referring to Muslim society in history, Qutb emphasizes that so long as Muslim society adhered to Islam it manifested no weakness and no tendency to abdicate its control of life. It was only when it fell away from Islam that these things took place. Also 'the spirit of Islam has survived all these attacks which have been launched against it from the earliest period of its life right up to the present'.³⁹⁰ The Umayyad allowed a process of moral decline to begin. The Abbasid state relied on 'Turks, Circassians, Dailamites and others' who began to be integrated into Islam but with their 'hearts uncircumcized' and who continued to 'oppose the spirit of Islam'.³⁹¹ Corruption of the Abbasid rulers and their supporters brought an end to their dynasty at the hands of 'the destructive Tartar invasion, which flooded over the Islamic world with savage barbarity (*barbariyyah mutawahhishah*)'.³⁹²

As for the present and the future of Islam,³⁹³ the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949) painted the present situation in dark colours. Qutb discussed the factors which marred the relations between Europe and Islam. The crusades, the conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Spain, the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks, and then imperialism were the main factors that damaged the relations between Europe and Islam. In his analyses, Qutb used the term *jahiliyyah* and emphasized the cultural clash as follows:

The evil stirred up by the crusaders was not confined to the clash of arms but was first and foremost a cultural evil. The European mind was poisoned by the slurs which the crusaders' leaders cast on Islam as they spoke of it to their *jahili* masses in the West. . . . The seeds of hatred were sown. The bigotry of the *jahiliyyah* of the crusaders (*hamiyyat al-salibiyyin al-jahiliyyah*) had its sequels in many parts of Europe and encouraged the Christians of Spain to go to war to deliver their country from the yoke of the idolators! But the downfall of Muslim Spain (*Asbania al-Muslimah*) was to require many centuries before it was completed; when this protracted struggle and the constraint which it involved lasted so long, a hostility to Islam started to take root in Europe, and ultimately became permanent. Finally it took the form of a complete extirpation of Islam throughout Spain, after a conflict which reached a pitch of ferocity and bitterness hitherto unknown. The cries of joy which all over Europe greeted this event were unfortunately uttered in *jahl* of the consequences which would arise; for the result was that science and learning were blotted out, and in their place came the *jahl* and barbarity of the Middle Ages.³⁹⁴

Here is the explicit term *jahiliyyah* with its qualities which illustrate Qutb's intention at this point of time. Alongside this, the term *jahili* in this text is an adjective related to *jahiliyyah* in its force and intent. This etymological and conceptual affinity between these two terms has been previously discussed in Chapter 2. Here, however, the Arabic phrase *hamiyyat al-salibiyyin al-jahiliyyah* in the quotation under discussion was translated by Hardie as 'the ignorant masses of Crusaders'³⁹⁵ and translated by Shepard as 'the enthusiasm of the ignorant crusaders'.³⁹⁶ Shepard also notices that there is 'no change' in this paragraph from the first to the last edition. This confirms the occurrence of the term *jahiliyyah* in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949). In addition, this study has previously presented what would fairly suggest Qutb's intention of distinguishing between Islam and *jahiliyyah* when he was writing *Social Justice in Islam*. The concept of *jahiliyyah* in this book derives from the intent of this book, which was widely considered an 'Islamist' call for establishing Islamic society based on Islamic law.³⁹⁷ This means that the *jahiliyyah* concept is the antithesis of Islam and the sovereignty of its Law.

Furthermore, translating the Arabic phrase *hamiyyat al-salibiyyin al-jahiliyyah* into 'ignorant masses of crusaders' or 'enthusiasm of the ignorant crusaders' is accurate, but Qutb's intention regarding the force and the intent of the word *jahiliyyah* in this phrase is more than these translations could reveal. Briefly, in the context of Qutb's style of criticism, his phrase *hamiyyat al-salibiyyin al-jahiliyyah* mirrors the force and intent of the Qur'anic phrase *hamiyyat al-jahiliyyah* (the bigotry of *jahiliyyah*), which condemns the Arab confederates who fought Islam during the time of Muhammad.³⁹⁸ This phrase was mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: 'And while the bigotry – the bigotry of *jahiliyyah* – was holding its sway in the hearts of the unbelievers, Allah sent down His tranquility on His apostle and on the faithful...' (Qur'an 48:26). Qutb applies this Qur'anic phrase of condemnation to the crusaders to make a similarity between the *jahiliyyah* of the old confederates of the Arabs and the *jahiliyyah* of the new confederates of the crusaders. This also indicates that Qutb was aware of the Qur'anic use of the term *jahiliyyah* at this time.

The crusades, as Qutb asserts, increased the anti-Islamic feeling in Europe and helped significantly to eradicate the Muslims in Spain after 'the most savage and brutal persecution the world had ever seen. Echoes of rejoicing reverberated through Europe in the wake of this, even though they knew that the result was the destruction of learning and culture and their replacement by medieval ignorance and crudeness (*jahl al-'usur al-wusta wa khushunatiha*)'.³⁹⁹

The event was then followed by, as Qutb says, the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks. As this 'gateway to Europe was thrown open to the flood of Islam', anti-Islamic feeling in Europe increased. In the following centuries the 'hostility of Europe to Islam became a matter not only of cultural but also of political significance'.⁴⁰⁰ Qutb emphasized the gulf between the West and Muslim worlds in the modern age and used the term *jahiliyyah* as follows:

Europe profited from this [conflict] more than the Islamic world did, but it did not recognize the favour by diminishing its hatred of Islam. On the

contrary, that hatred grew with the progress of time and hardened into custom. . . . Stranger than all this, it [hatred] survived through all the stages of cultural change. Then came the age of the Reformation when Europe split into sects and every sect was armed to the teeth against every other sect, but hostility to Islam was common to them all. After that there came a time when religious feeling in Europe began to vanish, but hostility to Islam continued. One of the most outstanding examples of this is the fact that the French philosopher and poet, Voltaire [1694–1778],⁴⁰¹ who was one of the most vigorous enemies of Christianity and its church in the eighteenth century, was at the same time extreme in his hatred of Islam and the Apostle of Islam. After some decades there came a time when learned men in the West began to study foreign cultures and approach them with some degree of sympathy, but so far as Islam was concerned, the traditional scorn crept as an irrational partisanship into their scholarly investigations, and the gulf that the history had dug between Europe and the Islamic world remained unbridged. Then contempt for Islam became a basic part of European thinking. The fact is that the first orientalists in modern times were Christian missionaries working in Islamic countries. The distorted picture which they drew from Islamic teachings and history was calculated to influence the Europeans' attitude toward the 'heathen'. But this mental twist has continued even though the orientalist sciences have freed themselves from missionary influence and no longer have the excuse that *ignorant religious fanaticism (hamiyyah diniyyah jahiliyyah)* misguides them.⁴⁰²

This quotation is Shepard's translation. The last phrase 'ignorant religious fanaticism' was translated by Hardie as 'ill-informed religious zeal'. Shepard also said that there was 'no change' in this paragraph from the first to the last edition of *Social Justice*.⁴⁰³ This is a further confirmation that the term *jahiliyyah* in this quotation occurs in the first to the last edition of *Social Justice*. It needs to be noted here that the last phrase *hamiyyah diniyyah jahiliyyah* in the quotation confirms the previous view about the phrase *hamiyyat al-salibiyyin al-jahiliyyah*, which indicates Qutb's intention of drawing the similarity between the *jahiliyyah* of the old confederates of the Arabs and the *jahiliyyah* of the new confederates of the crusaders. This also indicates that *jahiliyyah* does not refer to a specific period or place, nor to a specific race. Rather, it is the opposite condition to Islam, state and law.⁴⁰⁴

Qutb further discusses European imperialism and its influence on modern Muslim and Arab countries. He emphasizes the Crusades and Western imperialism as two sides of the same coin. In his view, there is no difference between imperialism and crusaderism in their mentality and hatred towards Islam. European hostility toward Islam 'is latent in the European soul'.

The claim that Europe is not fanatically Christian today as it was at the time of crusades . . . is deception and error. Lord Allenby was only one example of the whole European conscience, when he entered Jerusalem during the previous world war he said, 'Only today have the Crusades ended!'⁴⁰⁵

Qutb means that the imperialist mentality of the twentieth century is directly descended from the mentality of the medieval crusaders. This implies that those diacritical marks, which are used by Qutb to label the behaviour of the crusades, are appropriate to imperialism in the twentieth century.⁴⁰⁶ European imperial interests, Qutb asserts, can never forget that the 'spirit of Islam' is firmly opposed to the 'spirit of imperialism'. Such as opposition must be 'crushed or diverted'.

France declared open war on Islam in the western Arab world... England acts more deviously and stealthily influences the teaching institution in Egypt to create a general mentality that scorns the Islamic elements in life... and when it has created a generation of teachers with this mentality it sends them into the schools and the offices of the Ministry of Education to influence the mentalities of the following generations and to produce the programs and the plans that lead to the formation of this mentality, with great caution to keep the elements that represent Islamic culture from the centers of control in the Ministry.⁴⁰⁷

To summarize, Qutb's first edition of *Social Justice* (1949) emphasizes that 'the Islamic society of today is not Islamic'⁴⁰⁸ and even that when 'Western civilization came to dominate in our present age, the last living principle of Islam was abolished.'⁴⁰⁹ Qutb sees *Social Justice* as capable of establishing a model of modern Islamic society. He emphasized his absolute belief in the possibility of the restoration of Islamic life. He also believes in the 'suitability of Islam to be a Worldwide (*'alami*), not just local system (*nizam*), in the future. I would not want to be so impetuous as to claim that this will be easy or simple'.⁴¹⁰ Qutb views 'Islam as complete system rooted there in the nature of the universe.'⁴¹¹

Islam offers to humanity a comprehensive and integrated idea about the universe, life and humankind. It satisfies the needs of thought; it presents to humanity a clear, simple and profound creed, in which it satisfies the heart (*wijdan*); and it offers to societies legislative and economic foundations, so that it satisfies the needs of work and government (*nizam*).⁴¹²

As for Qutb's analysis of Islam as a 'system' (*nizam*), Shepard says, 'whether in relation to the universe, human history, religion or his own writings [it] is one of the most important ways in which he may be described as "modern"'.⁴¹³

In the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), Qutb used the term *jahiliyyah* explicitly and also several key terms which could be taken in a fairly Islamist sense.⁴¹⁴ Also, among the technical terms which are central in Qutb's thought are *'ubudiyyah* (servitude), *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), and all occur in the first edition of *Social Justice*, as in the following examples:

- 1 As for *'ubudiyyah* (obedience or submission to Allah; also servitude or servanthood), it is mentioned in the first edition of *Social Justice* translated by John Hardie (pp. 94, 95) and in Shepard's translation (p. 43, lines 1–2).

Shepard also noted that all editions have both '*ubudiyyah*, and *uluhiyyah* in chapter 1 and chapter 3 respectively (Shepard, p. xxv ff. 21).

2 As for *hakimiyyah*:

- (i) The phrase 'Authority of Allah' is mentioned in Hardie (p. 99); 'No one other than God has authority' Shepard (p. 43, line 3); 'God alone has the power' Shepard (p. 43, line 6). Qutb also states: 'There is no supreme authority anywhere except in Allah'.⁴¹⁵ 'Behind all this is the everlasting and eternal power, to which no beginning and no end can be attributed. To it is the ultimate authority over the universe, life and humans. It is the power of Allah.'⁴¹⁶
- (ii) Shepard says (p. xxv ff. 21): 'these terms "*ubudiyyah*, *uluhiyyah*, *hakimiyyah* enshrine the main point in Qutb's theocentrism, that God alone, by virtue of His being God and the only God, has ultimate authority, or Sovereignty, over all human affairs. God's sole *uluhiyyah* and *rububiyyah* necessarily entail His sole *hakimiyyah* [Sovereignty]. This point [Sovereignty] is made again and again in additions to the last edition'.⁴¹⁷ 'This is not to say that God [Sovereignty] is absent in the earliest editions [plural], but only that He is made more explicitly present later. A very noticeable manifestation of this tendency is seen in the use of several key terms related to God that appear only occasionally in the earlier editions [plural] but are very frequent in the last, as well as in other later works such as *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* and *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami*. These are *uluhiyyah*, *rububiyyah*, *hakimiyyah*, *rabbani*, and '*ubudiyyah*'.⁴¹⁸

These two statements by Shepard together with John Hardie's translation indicate that *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty) was occasionally used in the earlier editions but was frequently used in the last edition.

Concluding remarks

The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936–1937 and related events, together with social disorder and discontent due to economic inequality and the continuing foreign occupation of Egypt, resulted in various social organizations motivated by the desire for renewal and reforming Egypt. Social debates involved discussions on the place of Islam in public life. The variety of factions and lobby groups provoked a diversity of opinions and serious questioning of social parties by Egyptians at large.

In this atmosphere, Qutb participated in these debates and focused on Islamic identity as a culturally viable option for the future of Egyptians. He made it clear that he would focus on the Qur'an and he did approach the Qur'an from a functional perspective, but he came up with some ideas and arguments for a religious, social and ideological use of the Qur'an. He called for 'righteous society'⁴¹⁹ and 'spiritual leadership'.⁴²⁰ The more he focused on social reform and moral issues, and sought for definitions of the distinctive 'righteous' and balanced society, the

closer he came to Islamic themes and the more he began to distinguish between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures and ideologies. In the period under discussion, the term *jahiliyyah* occurred a few times to label the opposite to the Islamic condition and to refer to deviation from Islamic law. Whether the deviation was complete or incomplete, to him, it was *jahiliyyah*. The deviation from Islamic law only in the spheres of government and wealth management, which appeared in the medieval Caliphates, was labelled *jahiliyyah*. Consequently, *jahiliyyah* is a comprehensive concept that can exist in any sphere of human conduct, in any society where Islamic law is not implemented. In this sense, Qutb distinguished between Islamic society and what he calls 'misguided, *jahili* submissive societies'.⁴²¹

6 The *jahiliyyah* theory's third stage: 1948–1950

The third phase of Qutb's distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah* covers the period 1948–1950, when he was in the United States. He had left Egypt after the completion of *Adalah (Social Justice in Islam)*, in which he distinguished between Islamic and what he called 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies',¹ as discussed in the previous chapter. The present chapter examines the question of whether Qutb, having left Egypt for the first time, came into direct contact with Western civilization, an experience that influenced his ideas regarding his 'Islamic theory of life'.²

Over the two-year period, Qutb did not write more than a few letters to his relatives, friends and colleagues in Egypt. By focusing on these letters, it will be possible to trace his analysis of Western civilization, including the United States, from his vantage-point of an observer within the society.

On the eve of his trip

The political climate in Egypt and throughout the Middle East was a turbulent one in 1948. Eveland (1980) attributes responsibility to 'the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States for intervention in the Middle Eastern arena that resulted in the imposition of a new religious community in the midst of the non-Jewish population of Palestine'.³ The Palestinian issue and its relevant developments are familiar ground in the literature.⁴

There is no doubt that the double standards concerning Palestinian issues were excused in 1948 by the Western Allies.⁵ These issues, together with the sociopolitical and economic problems in Egypt, were perhaps among the reasons that led Qutb to write quite critically of both the British-backed government in Egypt and the West, including the communists.⁶ Qutb also resigned as editor of the Journal *al-'Alam al-'Arabi (The Arab World)*, to be replaced by Muhammad al-'Azab Musa, one of Qutb's colleagues. Qutb established another journal, *al-Fikr al-Jadid (The New Thought)*, to deal with the developments in Egypt and in the Middle East. The Moroccan politician 'Alal al-Fasi⁷ and Egypt's later Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfuz cooperated with him in this venture.⁸

Qutb made a point when he favoured calling his new journal *al-Fikr al-Jadid (The New Thought)*. It indicates a new stage in the development of Qutb's thinking.

He began to address issues such as poverty, oppression, colonialism, capitalism, corruption and ideas of sociopolitical reform in general, but from an Islamic perspective, since he was at that time one who had formed his Islamic view. For example, the journal published its first issue in January 1948. In the same month, the second and the fourth issues of the journal dealt with the 'first' and 'second' project of Islamic law, written by Qutb.⁹ The ideas of these two projects appeared also in the later part of the main text *Social Justice*, which Qutb completed before he left Egypt for America in November 1948 and published in the following year.¹⁰ These writings mirror the Islamic themes of the new journal as well as the new stage in the development of the thought of Qutb, who was in charge of the journal.¹¹

Because of its sharp criticism of the government, *al-Fikr al-Jadid* (*The New Thought*) was closed down in 1948, and an order was issued to arrest Qutb. Shepard (1996) notes that *The New Thought* was 'closed down when Martial Law was declared after the start of the war in Palestine in 1948'.¹² Other observers pointed out that *The New Thought* was closed in March, before the war.¹³ The British withdrew from Palestine on 14 May 1948, and the next day the war began.¹⁴ It was not in the government's interest to close down any journal that supported governmental policy. In either case, Qutb's style of criticism of the British-backed governmental policy concerning issues in Egypt and Palestine was harsher.¹⁵ This can be clearly seen from the issues that the journal was writing about. The following examples may illustrate the point. In addition to the two projects of Islamic law, Qutb dealt with 'The topsy-turvy status in the prizes of Fu'ad I: A lesson in ethics to our eminent teachers'¹⁶ and 'Oh slaves of Americans, Russians and British, liberate yourselves: Is the *ummah* the source of authority established by a police soldier to lash the earth?'.¹⁷ The Royal Palace issued a decree to arrest him, but there was no legal reason for this arrest.¹⁸ It was later decided to send him to the United States instead. His official trip was to last for at least two years to study the system of education.¹⁹ For this enigmatic change in the government's attitude to Qutb, and because he was writing quite critically of Communism, the Egyptian communists claimed that Qutb had become an 'American agent'.²⁰ However, his works before and after his visit to the United States strongly and perfectly reject this claim. Apparently, the change in the government's decision, from arresting Qutb to sending him to the United States, was in the hope that the trip would change him. This puzzling shift in the government's decision regarding Qutb occurred during Martial Law, which allowed arbitrary arrests on an *ad hoc* basis. The trip was rumoured to be the result of a secret plan between the American and Egyptian governments.²¹

Qutb in the United States

It was with a clear vision about Islamic and 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies'²² that Qutb left Egypt for the United States on 3 November 1948.²³ He arrived in North America as a committed Muslim thinker, believing that Islam was the only system able to deal with the sociopolitical problems of Muslim countries

and the world at large. Qutb was quite decided regarding his responsibilities as a Muslim thinker before he left. At that time, his Islamist view, which distinguished between Islamic and other ideologies, was articulated in his *Social Justice*.

For Qutb, the distinction was not only conceptual, but also on the level of what he called 'human type' (*namazij insaniyyah*), an idea that Qutb used in the distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah* in 1945, as previously discussed.²⁴ Here, however, he added some more qualities to those 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies'. He puts these qualities, as he usually does, in a phrase that is difficult to translate using a limited mould of words. He says:

Do I go to America like a normal emissary? Or am I to be distinguished by a particular character? Besides all, is there anything better than Islamic characteristics, qualities and attributes, ethics and a practical system of life to hold fast to in the midst of this *al-ma'ma'an al-mutraf* (i.e. excessive luxuries of all types and forms), which are supplied by all means of desires, pleasures and prohibitions (*haram*)?²⁵

Qutb has his unique dictionary of his own terms and words, and all are comprehensive and technically ideological. This undoubtedly contributed to misunderstanding of Qutb by many, as we have seen in the translations of some of his terms in the previous two chapters, and as we will see further in the following chapter. Here, Qutb's phrase *al-ma'ma'an al-mutraf* is another comprehensive one that indicates how Qutb was solidly grounded in language and culture. Like many of Qutb's terms and words, this phrase cannot be translated into English without the risk of seriously misconstruing or losing its force and intent. The most we can do is to describe signification and context. With reference to earlier sources, and a number of traditions (*hadith*), Ibn Manzur pointed out that the word *al-ma'ma'an* means 'the noise of the intense heat of the fierce blast of bush-fire'.²⁶ The other word, *mutraf*, 'is an adjective and refers to excessive luxuries of all types and forms [not only of] worldly desires and pleasures [but also] beliefs and conceptions'.²⁷ Thus the meaning of the phrase *al-ma'ma'an al-mutraf*, 'which supplied by all means of desires, pleasures and prohibitions (*haram*)', implies a range of attributes that fit fairly well the context of 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies', as explained by Qutb in his 1948 article and his book *Social Justice* (1949).²⁸

With this in mind, Qutb departed Alexandria for New York on 3 November 1948, at the age of 42.²⁹ Qutb faced some temptations on the ship and later on in the United States. He told his friend Sayyid Salim about these temptations and said 'all the attempts of the United States concerning him had ended in failure'.³⁰ Qutb also referred to these incidents in his works such as *Amerika al-lati Ra'ayt* (The America I Saw),³¹ *al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (Islam and the Problems of Civilization)³² and *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an).³³ According to him, there were various attempts to persuade him sexually.³⁴ He was also tempted to check his opinions and compromise his ideology. Money was also involved. However, he was able to resist these beguilements.³⁵

On arrival, Qutb began to study American society from within. His mission was not to obtain a specific degree, but simply to investigate the American system of education, its methods and curricula, a task for which he was prepared as an educator in Egypt. Qutb was free to choose the city or the area in which he would live in the United States and the educational institutions which he would attend. He affiliated himself with a number of social clubs in areas where he lived, from Washington in the east to California in the west. He also visited educational institutions, hospitals, factories and restaurants, read the daily press, watched television, visited theatres and cinemas, and went to watch wrestling, American football and boxing. He even attended services at various churches and met people of different occupational levels, social classes, capacities and responsibilities. He thus was able to understand American society in its diverse forms and analyse both its virtues and defects, as he did in Egypt. He expressed his view of American society in a number of letters posted to his colleagues and published in Egypt.³⁶ He also wrote an article published in America.³⁷

When he was in the City of Greeley in Colorado, Qutb expressed his views about America in a single-page article *al-'Alam Waladum Aqq* (The World is an Undutiful Boy), published in *Fulcrum*, the literary magazine of the Colorado State Teachers College. Using the past to assess the present, Qutb based his article on an ancient Egyptian legend concerning a 'beautiful young and wise woman' teaching and nursing her beloved 'little son' in a wise and 'gentle manner'. When History asked about them, the deities answered that the wise woman was 'Egypt' and the 'little boy was the World'.³⁸ Reflecting the view that Egypt was the cradle of civilization, Qutb asked: 'Why did those ancient Egyptians hold this belief? Because they were very advanced and possessed a great civilization before any other country. Egypt was a civilized country when other peoples were living in forests. Egypt taught Greece, and Greece taught Europe.'³⁹

Qutb then commented that, when the little boy (i.e. the World) attained his physical and intellectual maturity, he forgot all about his wise teacher; 'he had thrown out his kind nurse [Egypt]! He struck her, trying to kill her'.⁴⁰ Qutb's point here is that the lack of gratitude shown by the 'boy' (the World) towards his mentor the 'mother Egypt' was not, as some might think, 'a figure of speech', but what had actually happened in history:

When we [i.e. the Egyptians] came here [i.e. to the United Nations] to appeal to England for our rights... the world helped England against the justice. When we came here to appeal against the Jews, the world helped the Jews against the justice. During the war between the Arabs and the Jews, the world helped the Jews, too.

Qutb concludes the piece by exclaiming: 'Oh! What an undutiful World! What an undutiful boy!'⁴¹

In New York, Qutb closely observed the materialistic way of life as it unfolded. In his article *Hama'im fi New York* (Pigeons in New York), which was published in the Cairo journal *al-Kutab* (December 1949), Qutb critically described New York

as a 'huge workshop' and a 'noisy' environment. He also revealed how he was surprised to see pigeons living 'joylessly' in this noisy environment.⁴²

Qutb's analysis of American society reflects some of his earlier key ideas in *Taswir, Mashahid, and Social Justice*. He brought his own constructs such as *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *'ubudiyyah* (servitude),⁴³ which distinguished between Islamic and what he called 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies',⁴⁴ to measure the sensibility and consciousness of American civilization on the conceptual level and on the level of what he called human types (*namazij insaniyyah*). He explored the faith, timidity, obedience and imagination of Americans with a view to assessing the nature of humans, the meaning of life and the feelings with regard to death and the other world. He portrayed his impressions in a few letters posted to his colleagues. Among these was a letter to Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898–1989), in which he described America as follows:

America – the New World that captures the imagination of all humankind occupying more mental space than America's vast plot occupies on the earth! The New World has captured the hearts of peoples from every corner of the planet, all races and colours, with varying interests, aims and dreams. America – this vast area from the Atlantic to the Pacific, inexhaustible materials and resources, powers and men, this huge industrialization which is not known to any other civilization. America – the countless variety of productions, the educational institutions and laboratories everywhere, the brilliant planning and management that stimulate wonder and admiration. America – this luxurious dream of a promised paradise, the fascinating putty of nature – faces and bodies, and pleasure free from any form of restriction or custom. America – the embodied dream in place and space...⁴⁵

Qutb added that

America has forgotten one thing: one thing has no value here – the spirit (*ruh*). Here, a PhD student submits a thesis on the best method for washing the dishes. This is more important than a thesis on the Bible, if not more important than the Bible itself...America is good as a workshop for the world...but, certainly, it will be a disaster for humanity if the world became America.⁴⁶

Qutb emphasized that America has a fascinating civilization, but that 'absolute pleasure that is free from any form of restriction or customs' tends to forget to balance material and spiritual needs. The balance that distinguishes humanity⁴⁷ from other beings, as Qutb noted, could not be achieved because the Americans were 'exhausted'. Speaking generally, Americans did not 'have a balance as regards either their own assets, or their Greek and Roman intellectual heritage'.⁴⁸ Despite this, Qutb pointed out that Muslims could benefit from the American civilization in mere science, for example 'chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, medicine, industry, agriculture and methods of administration; in both their

technical and administrative aspects as well as practical methods of war, fighting and other similar activity...⁴⁹

When Qutb began to compare the United States with Egypt, his style of criticism began to take on a forceful character. In his letter to Abbas Khidir, Qutb stated:

The United States has utilized and continues trying to utilize its capital assets (intellectual heritage). Egypt, however, is ignoring its capital (intellectual heritage) as if Egypt had nothing or had gone bankrupt. The reality of present life in Egypt cannot be accepted by anyone. The capacity of Egypt is enormous, if only Egypt believed in its heritage. Egypt has arrived at the crossroads of history.⁵⁰

Qutb here reflects on the political, social, economic, intellectual and ethical systems of the United States that are the result of their 'brilliant planning and management', of their hard work in developing and renewing their own intellectual heritage over a period of centuries. By contrast, Qutb describes the whole American civilization as materialistic but deeply believing in its heritage. It did not import systems from overseas but developed its own systems from its own heritage. In contrast with Americans,

Egyptians ignored their own heritage, casting aside their spiritual and intellectual capital, and imitating America, Russia, Britain, France, China and others. Egypt imported principles, systems, theories, laws and solutions from these countries. Furthermore, because they stopped believing in their Islamic heritage, Egyptians thought that this imported mixture would solve their problems. After all of this laziness with regard to their Islamic heritage, Egyptians still claim to be Muslims; that is their religion is Islam and their system is Islamic!⁵¹

Qutb summed up the similarities and differences in these words: 'We are materialistic like the Americans. All the difference lies only in that their materialism is organized but we are in anarchy (*fawda*).⁵² Qutb's condemnation of Egypt's sociopolitical system was harsher than his condemnation of the United States. This is simply because Americans believed in their heritage⁵³ but the Egyptians did not, nor were Egyptians fully aware of the difference between the genesis of their heritage and that of the American heritage. Qutb defined those Egyptians as the government and those who were planning, commanding, dominating and monopolizing Egypt's affairs. Qutb labelled this human type and related it to *jahiliyyah* in this way: 'We do not condemn our country but those hand-ful, *jahili*, mutinous and selfish [people] who hold the affairs in their hands and do nothing for it [Egypt].'⁵⁴ The term *jahili* here equates this human type with *jahl* and, at the same time, relates it to *jahiliyyah*. This human type, as Qutb described it in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), meant those who had their 'soft, perverted and sick lifestyle'. They also knew that the 'right guidance, religion and

faith forbid them most of what they so avidly desire'. They are 'living in luxury...and surrounding themselves with illusions and legends...in the misguided, *jahili* submissive societies'.⁵⁵ The term *jahili* here also links the condition of the given society with *jahl* and relates the society of this condition to *jahiliyyah*.

In dealing with this *jahiliyyah* from America, he sends an open message to Egypt's intellectuals, writers and others encouraging them to condemn that *jahili* condition in their writings. They should show their anger, and expose to the public the sickness and selfishness of 'those *jahilun* who think that the religion is meant to be asceticism and renunciation and leave the affairs of the earth to those who make mischief (*mufsidun*)'. This intention on Qutb's part was developed to encourage Egyptians to act rather than to remain silent. Qutb attempted to develop the capacity of the people to break the silence and do something. In a letter exposing the corruption in Egypt, Qutb stated:

I do not believe in the prevarication which prevents professionals from getting their rights and indicates the extortion by opportunists. . . . If those people are really professionals . . . they would not keep silent, but they should stand in the face of corruption and in the face of these twisted methods in Egypt. . . . Whoever kept silent, and does not assert his rights, fears to cross a minister or a president, and leaves those lackeys⁵⁶ jumping over his head, lacks the most important ethical quality which is courage. . . . [Qutb here openly prescribes civil disobedience or sedition asking] what will happen if those hundreds stand up in the face of this or that Minister and get him to hear their voice of anger at his wrong decision. . . . I know that there are many employed people who are trustworthy and distinguished by their honour and dignity, have families and other responsibilities, but this also does not mean to keep silent. We need to express our anger and this means to shake our fists with desperation at this matter. . . .⁵⁷

Qutb concluded that civil disobedience could not be carried out by a politically immature nation governed by a British-backed corrupted government. The nation of Egypt was still under British control. The continuing condition is a sign of this 'immaturity': 'the political experience of the people is not mature yet so that they can educate those in power as it should be.'⁵⁸ Qutb's view of civil disobedience here mirrored his earlier writings in Cairo, where his plan of action was published in few articles, among them *al-Sukht dalil al-hurriyyah* (Anger is a Sign of Freedom, 1941) and *Madaris al-sukht* (Schools of Anger, 1946), as discussed in the previous chapter.⁵⁹ America then did not change Qutb's plan of action, and he continued to speak about it from America: 'I would like to see that despair (*qaraf*: disgust) changed to anger (*sukht*). We are very much in need of this anger in the face of our present situation, not to disguise it.'⁶⁰ At this time (1949), verbal criticism of 1930s and early 1940s was not enough. By the end of the 1940s, he saw that the situation did not need words but action. However, political maturity was important before doing anything. To attain their political maturity, people needed

to learn how to express their anger, and should be trained to believe in their Islamic heritage and in themselves. If this were achieved, Qutb's second step would be, as he tells his friend, that

this angry generation will be recruited to establish a new political system. Do not expect the prefabricated solutions from Moscow or elsewhere. . . . Our solutions must originate and be developed from our culture, in our environment and our circumstances. . . . We must first study our actual situation and then find the local solutions appropriate to us. I can assure you that I personally have absolute faith that the solutions we have are more calm and appropriate than those imported from London or Washington. . . . We have *al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam* (*Social Justice in Islam*). This is capable of establishing for us a new society that is completely different from that in which we are living. The *Adalah* is capable of establishing a civilized Muslim society that believes in the Heaven and the Earth. . . .⁶¹

This confirms that Qutb distinguished between Islamic and 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies' in the first edition of *Social Justice in Islam* (1949). Qutb's words in the latter quotation indicate that he was considering his ideas in *Social Justice* as the answer to Egypt's problem, instead of those ideas that were imported from beyond oasis and seas.

His words can also be seen as a direct testimony, clarifying that the motivational character of his ideas began during his visit to the United States, rather than during his later detention in Egypt, as Barakat has claimed.⁶² According to Ayubi (1991), 'Qutb was not at all impressed by what he saw in the United States. Indeed, his American visit seems to have sparked in him the desire to seek sources of cultural and moral authenticity.'⁶³

During his stay in the United States, Qutb analysed what he saw of the Americans' impressions regarding the assassination of Hasan al-Banna, the Supreme Guide of the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood), in February 1949. The ways in which the American and British press dealt with the assassination, the consequent dissolution of the Brotherhood organization and their detention at that time all gave Qutb a sense of the importance of the Ikhwan and its role in Egypt. He found a large number of published materials, both in book form and in the media, that considered Islam in general and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular a dangerous force against Western interests in the region.

Hammudah (1990) noted that 'Qutb analyzed Western attitudes towards Islam for almost two years [in the United States] and the result of all of that brought to his attention the importance of the Brotherhood in the eyes of Zionism and Western colonialists'.⁶⁴ Qutb stated, 'I will devote the rest of my life to a complete social program that will engross the life of many.'⁶⁵ This statement quite reasonably marked his mission in the next stage of his thought, the mission that engrossed his life and the life of many.

Concluding remarks

Qutb's visit to the United States was for him a period of relaxation in that he did not write much except a few letters to friends. His visit, however, gave him the opportunity to reshape his thought about the theory of society. From America, he himself confirmed his ideological position and his absolute faith in the ideas of his book *Social Justice*, in which he distinguished between Islamic and 'misguided *jahili*, submissive societies'. It should also be noted that the ideological position he shifted to assume can be called a motivational character, and with more determination on Islamic affairs. This typified Qutb's thought on his return to Egypt in 1950 and up to his death in 1966.

7 **The *jahiliyyah* theory's fourth stage: 1950–1966**

This fourth phase traces the key ideas that Qutb used in his distinction between Islam and *jahiliyyah* in the period between his return from the United States to Egypt in 1950 and his death in 1966. This chapter intends also to identify the term *jahiliyyah* and trace its development until it became a mature and fully fledged concept. My investigation will also provide brief coverage of some of Qutb's works of the period under discussion.

The concept of *jahiliyyah*

Qutb returned to Cairo on 20 August 1950. His colleague Abbas Khidr in his weekly arts column in the *al-Risalah* journal announced Qutb's arrival in advance. For a few days, Qutb was receiving visitors and meeting his friends and literary colleagues. Amongst those visitors were the revolutionaries who were interested in reading Qutb's writings. According to Qutb, 'the Ikhwan in the army' and 'outside' came to 'congratulate' him 'for his book *Social Justice in Islam*' (1949).¹ Qutb at this time was not a member of the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood). However, his experience in the United States, his observation of Western attitudes towards the Ikhwan and Islam, together with the Ikhwan's appreciation of his writings,² all helped to draw his attention to their cause. Qutb had decided, from America, 'to devote the rest of his life' to a 'social program' in his country.³ With this in mind, he resumed his old position as 'assistant observer in the office of Isma'il al-Qabbani, the Minister of Education'.⁴ Qutb finally resigned on 18 October 1952, but because of his expertise, his resignation was not accepted until 13 January 1954.⁵

Soon after resuming his job, Qutb set out from Egypt in early November 1950, this time to Saudi Arabia for Hajj. It was there in Saudi Arabia that Qutb met, for the first time, the Indian Muslim thinker Abu al-Hasan al-Nadawi (d. 31 December 1999).⁶ It has been said that al-Nadawi influenced Qutb. However, al-Nadawi pointed out that he himself 'was very much interested and had been reading Qutb's writings since the 1930s', but there had been no opportunity to meet Qutb in person. This was not 'until God willed for the first meeting to be in the shade (*zilah*) of the Ka'bah, so that the meeting would be a noble plant in a noble place'.⁷ Al-Nadawi was not specific as to the exact date of the meeting

but, as he says, it was 'in the winter of 1950, in al-Ta'if City, during the time of Hajj'. They were three, Qutb, al-Nadawi and Ahmad 'Abd al-Ghafur 'Attar, the literary (*adib*) figure of Hijaz, who also was interested in Qutb's writings.⁸ The winter usually begins in Saudi Arabia in late November, when temperatures throughout the country are slightly lower than in summer.⁹ Because Qutb left Egypt for Saudi Arabia in early November and did not stay there after Hajj, the meeting must have been during those two months, November and December 1950.

Their meeting, as indicated by al-Nadawi, was a conference of 'information exchange' and 'discussion' about the 'condition of the Muslim *ummah*'.¹⁰ It was during this meeting that Qutb's newly published *Social Justice in Islam* (1949) became available to al-Nadawi, who says:

It was a great honour for me, that is, to be gifted by his book *Social Justice in Islam*. In this holy place, I concentrated on reading the book in this peaceful and pleasant atmosphere. I have found in the book a new style of writing, of research and exposition that I have not found in the writings of the Islamist writers in general, and in the writings of the Arabs, in particular. This requires some details...¹¹

In this regard, one would presume that al-Nadawi's book *Madha Khasira al-'Alam bi-Inhital al-Muslimin* (What Has the World Lost as a Result of the Decline of Muslims), which was published in early 1950, became available to Qutb at this meeting.¹² This can also be seen from al-Nadawi's explanation of how he met Qutb in Egypt, as detailed later.

Al-Nadawi began to read Qutb's book *Social Justice in Islam*, just as Qutb read al-Nadawi's book. Later, a second meeting came in 23 February 1951, also during winter. The meeting was in Egypt, at Qutb's house, and attended by friends, intellectuals and academics.¹³ Al-Nadawi noted that 'it was a meeting that I would never forget. I felt that he [Qutb] spoke to me openly as he had read my book which interested him and appeared to be closer to his soul and spirit and in harmony with his style and ideas'.¹⁴

According to al-Nadawi, Qutb discussed al-Nadawi's book and explained it to 'his audiences' of the 'learned youth', 'intellectuals' and 'academics' in the 'weekly seminar usually held at his house'. In this regard, al-Nadawi says that he himself 'witnessed this discussion and realized Qutb's interest in the book'. Here, al-Nadawi found the opportunity to 'ask Qutb to write the introduction to the second edition'.¹⁵ This was because

the introduction [of the first edition] written by Ahmad Amin – may Allah forgive him – decreased the intellectual value of this book. The introduction was not written with enthusiasm and zealotry, but was merely a response to my request. He did not believe in the essential idea of the book, or at least did not support it. The Jordanian King 'Abdullah, who had read the book, pointed out that 'this introduction reduced the value of the book's idea'.¹⁶

In 1951, Qutb wrote the introduction of the second edition of al-Nadawi's book *What Has the World Lost as a Result of the Decline of Muslims*. Qutb brought his constructs to emphasize what he has previously discussed in his book *Social Justice*, that Islam is a worldwide system and that Islam existed to liberate humanity from the 'ubudiyyah (servitude) to anything other than Allah.¹⁷ Islam existed to lead the 'caravan of life', not to be a 'camp follower'. Qutb pointed out the rise and fall of Islamic leadership. It was since the fall of Islamic leadership that the world had reverted to *jahiliyyah*. Eight times the term *jahiliyyah* was used by Qutb to describe the present condition of the world. At this point of time, these technical constructs are not new; they had appeared in Qutb's writings of the 1930s and 1940s, as previously discussed. Specifically, Qutb's use of the term *jahiliyyah* here, in his introduction to al-Nadawi's book, is not new, as it appeared in its explicit form in Qutb's writings in 1949 and 1945, while its synonym (*jahiliyyah* has only one synonym) appeared in 1934. As he did in these writings, Qutb used the past to assess the present and to compare the present condition with that of the historical *jahiliyyah*. He described the concept of *jahiliyyah* as a condition, not a period in time or place. The following quotation from Qutb's introduction to al-Nadawi's book is only to confirm that what Qutb said at this point of time was there in his previous writings:

Islam is a creed for leadership and world welfare. . . . The age before Islam was steeped in *jahiliyyah* in which the mind and spirit of man had become benighted and high standards and values of life debased. It was the age of tyranny and 'ubudiyyah (servitude) in which the very roots of humanity were being corroded by a criminally luxurious and wasteful life on the one hand, and hopelessness and frustration and despair on the other. In addition to this, clouds of scepticism and agnosticism and infidelity were hovering overhead and the religions of the world were helpless to dispel them. . . .

Islam played a significant role in the reconstruction of humanity. When Islam had the opportunity, it liberated the soul of man from superstitions and banalities, emancipated him from the evils of 'ubudiyyah (servitude) and degradation, and lifted him out of the slough of faith and disease. . . . All this was done when Islam had a controlling hand in the affairs of the world and had an opportunity of fashioning life according to its own special genius. . . .

Since Islam is pre-eminently a faith that inspires leadership, its real mettle is tested and proven only when it assumes responsibility. It can lead the caravan of life. It cannot be a camp follower. . . .

Then came a period in which Islam lost its leadership due mainly to the failure of the Muslims to sustain and discharge efficiently the great responsibility of the trusteeship of mankind which Islam enjoined upon them and which was associated with them all along at each turning of life. . . .

What should be noted here is that whenever the author [al-Nadawi] speaks of the general depravity of humankind (the depravity that has come because Muslims have failed in their leadership), he calls it *jahiliyyah*. . . .

This precise expression clearly shows the author's understanding of the essential difference between the spirit of Islam and the spirit of materialism which prevailed before the advent of Islam and which has been prevailing in the world ever since Islam lost its world leadership. As a matter of fact, this is the *jahiliyyah* in its essential nature. The *jahiliyyah* is not confined to any particular interval between two periods of time. It is a typical attitude of mind and comes to the forefront when those standards and norms of behaviour sanctioned by Allah give way to those inspired merely by sophisticated and debased appetites. The world is enduring this *jahiliyyah* today as it did in the days of first barbarism (*al-barbariyyah al-ula*)...

The supreme importance of the message of Islam today is obvious and easier to appreciate in the present age, in which the *jahiliyyah* stands exposed and its hidden evils unmasked. The whole world has become tired of it. It is therefore precisely the time when the world could turn from the leadership of the *jahiliyyah* to the leadership of Islam...

The Europeans have written the history of the world from their own Western point of view. They could not, naturally, escape from being influenced by their materialistic culture and philosophy, and their Western fanaticism (*'asabiyyah*) and religious fanaticism...¹⁸

The above sums up the term *jahiliyyah* and its concept, at this time, that is, the condition of any place that departs from the principle values of human life sanctioned by Allah. What should also be noted here is that Qutb uses, as equal to the *jahiliyyah* concept, the phrase *al-barbariyyah al-ula* (first barbarism), which appeared a number of times in his earlier poetry collection (1935) and other writings prior to February 1951, when he wrote this introduction. This has been previously discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.¹⁹ The point is that the concept of *jahiliyyah*, which appeared a number of times in Qutb's writings, was concluded here in a brief statement. This statement does not mean that Qutb borrowed the concept of *jahiliyyah* from al-Nadawi, as such, but rather confirms (i) the concept of *jahiliyyah* which occurred in his poetry in the mid-1930s and later writings such as those of the mid- and late 1940s; (ii) that Qutb was moving in a consistent direction; (iii) and the intercontinental similarity of Muslim thought and ideological response to the conditions Muslims faced at the time.

Development of the concept of *jahiliyyah*

In February 1951, when he wrote the introduction to al-Nadawi's book, Qutb published *Ma'rakat al-Islam wa al-Ra'smaliyyah* (The Battle between Islam and Capitalism), published in Cairo by Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi (February 1951). This was followed by *al-Salam al-'Alami wa al-Islam* (Islam and Universal Peace, October 1951). In these works, Qutb continued to focus on a distinctive Islamic society, with a watchful eye on the intellectual diversity, corruption and the mounting political problems in Egypt. In his discussion, Qutb uses terms such as *hakimiyyah*

(Sovereignty), 'ubudiyyah (servitude), uluhiyyah (divinity), sultan (power and authority) and similar of his unique constructs and terms.

In his *Islam and Capitalism* (February 1951), Qutb pointed out the problem of the royal capitalist system and its negative impact on Egyptian society. He drew on the sociopolitical problems in Egypt to emphasize the incapacity of the capitalist system to continue in Egypt. As he predicted the near end of the royal regime in Egypt, Qutb stressed Islam as a system of life capable of resolving the Egyptian problem. In his analysis, diacritical marks such as the word *jahl* and its derivatives were used.²⁰ The explicit term *jahiliyyah* did not appear, but its synonym (*jahalah*) did (pp. 84, 100), a term he previously used in 1934.²¹ His ideological position in early 1951 can be seen from the following:

Today we are at the crossroads. All of us have come to recognize that the present situation cannot continue. All of us are agreed on this fact. We do, however, differ in our opinions about the system that should replace the present system. Thinking about this matter is obligatory because a specific social system must be ready to replace a system hammering, every day, with its hand or with the hands of its supporters, a nail in its own coffin. The last nail is very soon. Amongst us, a team shares socialism, a team dreams of Communism, and the third is calling for Islam, but the present situation stands against all.²²

Qutb saw the diversity of thought on the national level as reflecting the diversity at the international level. In this regard, he pointed out the difference between the Eastern and Western blocs in their aims and obligations. Both camps exploited the rest of the world. The 'communist camp in the East' and the 'capitalist camp in the West' made it difficult for the rest of the World to stand free from the influence of either camp. Qutb drew on the Palestinian and Egyptian issues to make a point that Egypt should not trust either side, because they do not respect freedom and social justice.²³ Thus, Egypt should not trust the sociopolitical ideas or systems propagated by either:

We have tried – even our people – those manufactured models (*qawalib jahizah*) for which we entreated them, like beggars (*shahhadhun*), from here and here and there. We tried them in all spheres of our life, intellectual, social, and legislative, until we have come up with a comic carnival of fashions (*azya'*: clothing) – no difference between the fashions of the thought and the fashions of the body. Let us take an example from the legislation that we have borrowed firstly from France and have continued to borrow from everywhere whenever we come to legislate for this life. There is a conflict between the spirit of the legislation that we have borrowed and the spirit of the people. . . . The borrowed law did not originate in our social situation, historical circumstances, feelings and creeds, customs and traditions.²⁴

Qutb stresses that his call for Islamic rule does not mean 'separation' from the 'caravan' of life. In this sense, he condemns the life of begging: 'We are on the table of humanity in the place of beggars (*shahhadhun*), not in the place of a giver.'²⁵ In pointing out why Egypt should not trust the West, Qutb discussed America, Britain, France and those in their circle. His criticism reflects his views in *'Adalah* and other writings, discussed in the previous chapters.²⁶

Qutb offered Islam as the only 'system' able to 'resolve' Egypt's problem.²⁷ The state then cannot be called Islamic unless the laws of the state were derived from the *Shari'ah*. This is his position in the 1940s, but many have thought of this position and assigned to it a series of labels, such as fundamentalist, Islamist, Islamicist and so on, particularly when he refers to the Egyptian state and its constitution as not Islamic.²⁸ The state gets its identity from the system. A state cannot be communist unless its laws and codes are derived from Communism. The Bolshevik cannot be called democratic. In this sense, Qutb presents his modern view of reform and renewal as follows:

The present constitution decrees the official religion of the state [Egypt] is Islam. This however has no meaning unless all the laws are derived from the *Shari'ah*. The Islamic *Shari'ah* is capable of answering the demands of the modern society, and develops and renews it continually. We should benefit from our own experience and the experience of the whole of humanity. We should consider what is not in conflict with the comprehensive view of Islam and its basic principles about life and society.²⁹

Here, Qutb's view can be seen as liberal; that is, the view is not rigid. His call for Islamic rule does not mean 'separation' from the 'caravan' of life. Qutb's Islamic state based on *Shari'ah*, can 'benefit from the experience of the whole humanity', Muslims and non-Muslim others. Thus the Islamic state based on *Shari'ah* is not rigid but flexible and can adopt from the experience of other states and nations whatever implements of freedom, justice and equality are sanctioned by *Shari'ah*. This view in 1951 had been previously discussed in his *Social Justice* (1949).

Focusing on the defects of the capitalist system in Egypt, Qutb discussed social classes, unemployment, the wages problem, corruption, exploitation and low production. All these were factors were used by Qutb to criticize the royal capitalist system in Egypt at the time. His method was to analyse the problem and show how Islam would resolve it. Qutb concluded: 'Islam must govern.'³⁰ He meant that Islam could not work or resolve the Egyptian problem as long as it stayed in the heart of the Mosques or in the hearts of the people, and was prevented from entering the Palace. Islam 'came to rule life, and reform the society on the basis of the complete Islamic idea about life, not by theoretical guidance (*wa'z wa irshad*), but also by a systematic and organized legislation (*tashri' and tanzim*)'.³¹ Qutb's idea that 'Islam must govern' can be seen as having a significant influence on the later Islamic groups of the 1970s and 1980s after Qutb's death. They took the idea, but turned a blind eye to Qutb's educational programme, and tried to open the door of the Palace to Islam by force.

Qutb stated his belief that there was no decent life for this *ummah* (nation) unless the *ummah* returned to a great 'aqidah (creed): 'This great 'aqidah today, in the case of Egypt, is not anything but Islam.'³² This ideological position developed a step further as Qutb drew on the 'aqidah to emphasize the inability of patriotism and local or secular nationalism to protect the interest of the nations. In this regard, Qutb stressed Islam as a national identity with the capacity to protect the 'life' of the nation in place of secular patriotism:

Patriotism (*wataniyyah*) failed to stand in the face of Communism in many countries. This is because the idea of social justice among individuals in the life of society has come to dominate over the view of patriotism (*al-na'rah al-wataniyyah*) in many countries where the people are divided into masters and slaves (*sadah* and 'abid). Only Islam is capable of evolving the two ideas altogether without contradiction: the idea of patriotism (*wataniyyah*) in the larger Islamic country (*al-watan al-Islami al-akbar*) wherever Islam extends its shade, and the idea of complete social justice in this large country (*al-watan al-kabir*).³³

In 1951, Qutb did not endorse the idea of secular patriotism. This text shows his tendency to read patriotism on the basis of religion. This idea was further detailed in the writings of 1952 and 1953 and, in the later writings, Qutb emphasized that the identity of Muslims was their creed.³⁴

As for the rule of Islam, Qutb, in 1951, expressed his modernist view of reform. With his harsher style, Qutb pointed out that the doubts about the rule of Islam mirrored the *jahl* of those who thought that the 'rule of Islam' (*hukm Islami*) was to go back to the 'naïve life of tents' and 'destroy fourteen centuries of development'.³⁵ He emphasized that the Islamic system could take tens of forms or models. This was expressed as follows:

Many people are mixing the historical existence of Islam with the pure Islamic idea, which has the capacity of expansion and comprehensiveness (*shumul*) in its branches and practices. When they hear the word *al-hukm al-Islami* (Islamic rule), there jumps to their imagination the picture of the naïve tents in the desert, the picture of the migrant Arabs on their camels, or the picture of those tent dwellers. They naïvely imagine the meaning of the Islamic rule is this simple and naïve life that is empty of the human civilization which developed over the past fourteen centuries. . . .³⁶

In the souls (*nufus*) of this generation, there are dark doubts about the rule (*hukm*) of Islam. Some of these doubts emanate from the prevalent *jahl* (*al-jahl al-fadîh*) about everything in this religion. . . . Other doubts emanate from confusing the idea of religion itself with what is called the men of religion 'rijalu al-dîn'. . . . These people are the farthest of Allah's creations to represent Islam and its idea. . . .³⁷

Some people think that the rule (*hukm*) of Islam is meant to be the rule of *shaykhs* and dervishes! Where they got this? [It is] from their superficial and

shallow knowledge (*thaqafah*) and the associated circumstances of this generation. There is nothing of these [doubts about the rule of Islam] in the pure and correct Islam. There are no special clothes for *shaykhs* and dervishes...³⁸

The Islamic system (*nizam Islami*) does not mean this specific form of the first Islamic society, but any social model based on the total Islamic idea of life. The Islamic system has the capacity to accommodate tens of models to answer the requirements of society and age...³⁹

For Qutb, the government in Islam is not theocratic, which means, according to him, that a 'tyrannical rule' cannot be applied to the government in Islam. The idea of theocracy comes from, as Qutb says,

the courts of inquisitions (*mahakim al-tafish*) in the Dark Ages... It came also from some of the present governments that present themselves today in the name of religion in some Muslim countries. However, none of these is Islamic or depends on Islam, but on the prevalent *jahl* (*al-jahl al-fashi*), mental retardation, and intellectual reactionariness...⁴⁰

Qutb pointed out that if any ruler says 'he rules in the name of religion, his claim is a charge against this type of rule and must be removed from life (*hayah*)'.⁴¹ With this pattern of criticism, Qutb pointed out the *jahal* of the claims against the Islamic criminal law,⁴² the texts (*nusus*),⁴³ the *harim*,⁴⁴ the Islamic view of minorities,⁴⁵ and Islamic rule.⁴⁶ These ideas indicate Qutb's ideological position, as illustrated in his book *Islam and Capitalism* published in February 1951.

In October 1951, Qutb published *al-Salam al-'Alami wa al-Islam* (Islam and Universal Peace).⁴⁷ This book has been reprinted several times since then. It begins with a chapter entitled 'Belief and Life' in which Qutb discusses the function of religious belief and its effect on the human soul. This is followed by the 'Nature of Peace in Islam', in which Qutb explains the comprehensive idea of Islam about the universe, life and man. Qutb then devotes four chapters to discussing 'Peace of Conscience', 'Peace at Home', 'Peace in the Society' and 'Peace in the World'. His discussion distinguishes between Islam and other ideologies known to the world before and after Islam. In most of his analysis, Qutb stresses ideas that appeared in his previous writings (i.e. *Social Justice*) in a way that makes them appropriate for the subject under discussion. For example, he emphasizes the 'comprehensive' idea of Islam about 'the universe, life and man' in a way that serves his objective of universal peace.⁴⁸ This idea was stressed in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949),⁴⁹ as confirmed by Qutb:

The comprehensive idea of Islam about the universe, life and man is not the subject of this book [*Islam and Universal Peace*], nor was it the subject of the book *al-'Adalah* (*Social Justice*). However, as all parts of the Islamic system are closely correlated, a study of any field in this religion inevitably requires

a study of its comprehensive theory. This is because Islam does not treat life's problems in fragments. . . . It makes from its comprehensive theory an axis around which all other problems revolve. Thus the different issues are tightly linked to the axis by both visible and fine lines, and the whole complex forms a unified theory of Islam. The nature of peace in Islam, in particular, requires a general study of this comprehensive theory. . . . As we have reviewed this theory before discussing 'The nature of social justice in Islam', let us then review this theory in a few lines before discussing 'The nature of peace in Islam'.⁵⁰

Qutb stressed Islam as a religion of the 'great unity' in this vast universe.⁵¹ This idea implies the relation between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. Qutb views Islam as a unique system with the ability to provide guidance for the entire range of human activity. Islam does not separate spiritual from secular life, for 'what seems to belong to the citizens and to Caesar, in the Islamic 'aqidah (creed), belongs to Allah. . . . Islam is comprehensive and covers all aspects of life, just as capillaries and nerves direct themselves to all parts of the body'.⁵²

Discussing the sovereignty of Allah, Qutb emphasized that all creation issued from the one Will and there was no intercession or mediation between the Will and the creation. There was harmony among all parts in this universe. The idea of Islam about the universe, life and humankind was used by Qutb to emphasize that the notion of peace was interwoven into the nature of Islam and its teachings. In his view, 'all Islamic systems, doctrines, legislation and rituals are built on this fundamental idea'.⁵³ Qutb also drew on the idea of the relationship between the Creator and the creation to emphasize the concept of government in Islam,⁵⁴ social balance⁵⁵ and the concepts of peace and war in Islam.⁵⁶ In this regard, Qutb says:

Islamic faith was not spread by force as the *jahilun* alleged. The only use of force throughout the long history of Islam, as already explained, was in order to eliminate (*izalah*) the oppressors (*al-tawaghith*) who deny the right of the people to have access to Islamic teachings. The war was to eliminate the oppressors (*al-tawaghith*) who claim the right of the *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and usurp the divine attributes. . . .⁵⁷ Muslims are ordered to establish the sovereignty (*sultan*) of Allah on Earth and to repel any aggression against it. Those who claim the right to legislate for people and exclude Allah's law are claiming the right of divinity (*haqq al-'uluhiyyah*), and establishing themselves lords with Allah. . . . Muslims are commanded to repel the lordship of the aggressors and their sovereignty (*rububiyyat al-tawaghith* and *hakimiyatihim*) . . . and establish the lordship of Allah and his sovereignty and justice (*rububiyyat Allah wa hakimiyatih* wa 'adlihi').⁵⁸

Qutb concludes that Islam, unlike secular ideologies, is divinely inspired guidance and is able to establish both justice and peace in the world.

Qutb proclaims this as follows:

From this summit of Islamic legislation, in peace and war, we could observe the despicable conditions (*mustanqa' asin*) in which the Western civilization is living.⁵⁹ We would perceive the difference between a system prescribed by Allah to the people and a system prescribed by people to the people. We would also perceive what the world has lost by disregarding the system of Allah and pretending that what man desires for himself is better than what Allah desires for him. Humanity shall continue to suffer increasing injuries at the hands of the atheists beguiled and misguided by corrupted civilization (*hadarah kafirah maghrurah dallah 'an Allah*) unless Islam receives the leadership to lead the perplexed (*ha'ir*) humanity to justice, order and peace.⁶⁰

As for the key terms used in *al-Salam al-'Alami wa al-Islam* (October 1951), the following words and phrases serve as examples. Qutb used the word *jahalalah*, the synonym of *jahiliyyah* (p. 12), *jahilin* (p. 30), and *jahiliyyah* in the historical sense (pp. 32, 33), *jahilun* (p. 34), *jahilun wa jahilat* (p. 97), *juhhal* (p. 155). He used words such as *uluhiyyah* (pp. 24, 34, 170), *'ubudiyyah* (p. 151), *rububiyyat Allah wa hakimiyyat-ihi* (lordship and sovereignty of Allah, pp. 170, 171), *rububiyyat al-tawaghit wa hakimiyyatihim* (lordship and sovereignty of oppressor, p. 170), *rububiyyat al-'ibad li al-'ibad* (lordship of people over people, p. 171), savageness (p. 187) and barbarism (p. 187).

These and similar phrases have been previously discussed.⁶¹ The point is that the term *jahiliyyah* and the key ideas of its concept were in place in 1951.

At this time, *jahiliyyah* was not a fully fledged theory with detailed sociopolitical, economic, intellectual, philosophical and religious bases. These definitions came later, but in 1951 Qutb pointed out *jahiliyyah* as a 'condition' of any place departing from the *Shari'ah* 'sanctioned by Allah. The world is enduring this *jahiliyyah* today as it did in the days of first barbarism (*al-barbariyyah al-ula*).⁶²

The concept of *jahiliyyah* was further detailed in some of his articles which were written and published in periodicals just a little before and after the Egyptian Revolution in 1952. These were collected in a book entitled *Dirasat Islamiyyah (Islamic Studies)*, published in 1953. In the introduction to the first edition, Muhib al-Din al-Khatib called the book 'the voice of religion' (*lisan al-din: tongue of religion*). He described Qutb's literary style as 'the literature of power (*adab al-quwwah*)'.⁶³ During this time of political change in Egypt, Qutb's style was neither apologetic nor defensive, but took the lead in attacking the social conditions and in preparing the ground for social reform. This is clearly seen in *Social Justice* (1949). John Hardie, who translated the first edition of this book, described it as 'provocative, or challenging book'.⁶⁴ The notion of challenge can also be seen in his *Islam and Capitalism* (1951). Similarly, Qutb's articles in his book *Dirasat Islamiyyah (Islamic Studies)* were written with an inspired and harsh style of criticism.

His article *Adab al-Inhital* (Literature of Degradation), Qutb says, was written for Egyptian radio, which was supposed to broadcast it on 10 August 1952 (two weeks after the Revolution). The radio staff of the old regime rejected the article because the 'atmosphere of the station was not purified (*tatahhar*) yet to be able to broadcast such an article. Most of them thought of themselves as the "‘*abid*'" (slaves) [about whom the article was talking]. Also, there was still protection for the voices who broadcast "the world is a cigarette and a glass".⁶⁵ The article was then published in *al-Risalah* (1952)⁶⁶ and republished with other articles in *Dirasat Islamiyyah* (1953). This book was reprinted a few times, and the ninth printing was in 1993. In this printing, the article *Adab al-Inhital* (Literature of Degradation) criticized those intellectuals who devoted their time and writings to support the royal regime, the corrupt officials and the present social condition. Qutb called on the new regime to clean up the atmosphere of the radio station from the 'slaves' (*‘abid*): broadcasters, writers, singers and others:

The literature of degradation (*adab al-inhital*) is mostly the literature of slaves (*‘abid*): the slaves of oppression and slaves of desires. . . . In this sense, the literature of degradation is the literature of *‘ubudiyyah* (servitude), which prevails when the peoples do not strive for higher horizons. . . .⁶⁷ When the world becomes 'a cigarette and a glass' . . . you find writers, singers, and poets appear and take their position in this vacuum to represent reversion in the heat of desires and the heat of *‘ubudiyyah*. And there are people who listen to them. . . . Those writers play their role to lull the people. . . .⁶⁸

Qutb pointed out that the oppressors of any time helped such writers, poets and singers and facilitated their work of degradation. Qutb found history on his side. He analysed some accounts from the Umayyads and Abbasides, which were discussed in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949). Using the past to assess the present, Qutb asserts that the Umayyads consolidated themselves in power, secured themselves from the people of Hijaz and diverted society, through gifts to flatterers, entertainers and singers and the facilitation of their work.⁶⁹ Comparing this condition with that in modern Egypt, Qutb criticizes the royal regime, which facilitates the work of those 'writers, poets and singers who in turn glorify his majesty. . . . This is the literature of degradation. It is the *‘ubudiyyah* of the same nature: *‘ubudiyyah* (servitude) of desires and *‘ubudiyyah* of oppression. . . .'⁷⁰

The following examples illustrate how he was presenting his ideas in a sweeping style: "Those who understand this [Islam in this way] are wrong of all the wrong (*kul al-khata*'), or hypocrites of all hypocrisy (*kul al-nifaq*), or *jahilun bi al-Islam kul al-jahalah*."⁷¹ "It is Islam or no Islam."⁷² "The fashion (*muda*) of local nationalism is over (*intahat al-qawmiyya al-mahalliyyah*), and the fashion which is based on race (*jins*) is also over."⁷³ "The oppressors of all types and names were demolished (*huttimat al-tawaghit ‘ala ikhtilafi asma’iha*) . . . of polytheism . . . and fanaticism of all types and colours . . . religious fanaticism, and racism. . . ."⁷⁴ In this spirit of command, he says: "Take the whole Islam or leave it all."⁷⁵

This was the position long before his detention. Under the title *Intisar Muhammad Ibn Abdullah* (The Victory of Muhammad),⁷⁶ Qutb emphasized that Islam is not Islam without practising it in daily life. The idea cannot stay alive without being practised. The victory of Muhammad occurred because he in practice followed the Revelation. Thus, the victory of the present Muslims depends on their practical adherence to the Revelation in the way of Muhammad. Qutb concludes:

Text itself cannot do anything. The Mushaf (Holy Qur'an) itself does not work unless it becomes a man. The principles themselves cannot live unless they become a behavior... The idea of Islam is the responsibility of the Qur'an, but the work of Muhammad was to make from the idea real men (*rijal*) who could be touched by the hands and seen by the eyes... Muhammad was victorious because he made, from the idea of Islam, personalities, transferred their Islamic belief to practice, and printed from the Mushaf (Holy Qur'an) tens of copies, not by ink on pages of paper, but by the light on the pages of the heart.⁷⁷

Muhammad was victorious because he made from the *Shari'ah* of Islam a system (*nizam*) that governs (*yahkum*) life, guides society, organizes human affairs, and dominates over men and things altogether. Islam is a *'aqidah* (creed), and from it emanates a *Shari'ah* upon which is established the system. The *'aqidah*, and the *Shari'ah* together with the system, all form the tree of Islam... Therefore, Islam firmly adheres to the idea that, this life must be ruled (*hukm*) by the *Shari'ah*: 'Those who do not judge by Allah's revelation, they are unbelievers' (Qur'an 5:44).⁷⁸

Qutb's constructs such as *'ubudiyyah* (servitude), *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty),⁷⁹ *'alamiyyah* (universality),⁸⁰ *jahalah*⁸¹ and *jahiliyyah*⁸² were occasionally used in his discussion. These ideas were previously outlined, but here it is sufficient to note that these ideas were occasionally used in *Dirasat Islamiyyah* (1953). For example, in discussing his programme of how to prepare the people for social reform, Qutb outlined the way of the Prophet and drew on this to authorize his own programme. Qutb says: 'Muhammad began his mission by liberating the human soul from the *'ubudiyyah* to the different lords (*arbab mutafarriqah*)...'⁸³

In this regard, there is no difference between our present condition and the condition of Arabia during the time of the Prophet. Some people think that the call for liberation of the people from the *'ubudiyyah* to the lords is nonsense today. No! The worship (*'ibadah*) of the sundry lords today is not less than the worship (*'ibadah*) of the sundry lords in the *jahiliyyah*. What has been changed is only the type of the lords, not the worship of the lords...⁸⁴

Qutb drew on early Islam to emphasize his educational programme and ideological training of the individuals and groups in society. His programme is not to change the government, but to reform Islamic thinking and discourse. At that

time, Qutb with Nasser and other Free Officers were all enjoying the honeymoon of the Revolution. To draw the attention of the new regime, Qutb provided his programme for reform as follows:

What is required today is not only to reform the Muslim individual, from the perspective of *‘aqidah* and behaviour, but also, and at the same time, we should demonstrate social programmes based on the Islamic idea (*fikrah*) and derived from the Islamic *Shari‘ah*. These programmes should not be delayed. We should not wait until the Muslim individuals are reformed. We should not plan this programme part by part, or day after day, as did happen in the early days of the *da‘wa*. This is the only difference in the plan (*khittah*), and it was based on the nature of the circumstances the *da‘wa* is facing today and the changes of the New Age. . . .⁸⁵

When the Prophet began his mission, there was no stable Arab government in Arabia, and there were no theories to direct government, economics and social life in the world as we have today. Islam has built its system step by step. . . . With its complete system and with the power of its idea, not with the power of armament, Islam dominated over the other systems of the time. . . . It was an upward liberation leap, the likes of which humanity had never seen. This leap today still stands in advance of the steps of humanity. This is our task, which we want to verify to the people in a form suitable to the contemporary mentality. . . .⁸⁶

The world today is governed by detailed social theories. . . . Thus to invite people to Islam, they must know the Islamic social theory. Yes, theory itself does not help if there is not the Muslim who believes in this theory, cares for it and works to implement it in practical life. But reforming Muslim individuals today requires them to have detailed knowledge about the Islamic social theory. Without demonstrating and completely implementing this theory in the present life, the religious conscience and human awareness will be incomplete. . . .⁸⁷

Those whom we invite to Islam find other systems govern their life and deprive them of a complete Islamic behaviour. The present life is not based on Islamic bases. Therefore, there is conflict between the religious conscience and the practical life of the people. . . . Thus, it is not sufficient, today, to generally invite people to Islam, or to the Qur’an, or to the rule (*hukm*) of Allah, or to the Islamic *Shari‘ah*, or to the system of Islamic rule (*nizam hukm Islami*), to the end of the list of these comprehensive issues, while these issues are not yet detailed and have not yet a clear meaning in the mind of the people. There must be places to train and educate the people Islamically. This is the foundation. In these places, people must know, in some detail, the picture of the complete Islamic life, which they want to implement. . . . This picture should be presented to people in a detailed social theory, so they know about it before anything. . . . This is not out of date, and its date is not the establishment of Islamic government. Islamic government cannot be established before the people or the majority of them

are aware and convinced by the form of Islamic life. . . . As Islam has theories more advanced than any theories known to humanity today, why do we not present these theories to the people in a practical form encompassing the present life with its circumstances and needs; when we call people to Islam?⁸⁸

Thus Islamic rule or Islamic government is not urgent and it will come by itself from the people when they are Islamically educated and ideologically trained. Individuals and groups should be trained in social programmes that are based on the fundamentals of Islamic ideas and are derived from the *Shari'ah*. This idea was the foundation of Qutb's educational and ideological programme in the 1950s and in the 1960s. In the 1960s, however, Qutb added a point of 'retaliation' in order to protect the Muslims from attack by the regime. In the 1960s he said:

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. In the meantime, while this programme [education and ideological training] is working in the society, there is must be some protection for the movement against any attack from outside. What had happened to the Brothers in 1948 and 1957 . . . should be not repeated.⁸⁹

In 1952, Qutb began to publish *Fi Zīlal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an). This commentary on the Qur'an is a multivolume opus. The book initially began to appear in February 1952 in a series of articles under the same title in *al-Muslimun*, a periodical edited by Sa'id Ramadan in Cairo.⁹⁰ Before the Revolution of July 1952, Qutb published seven articles in which he completed the first surah, 'the Opening' (*al-Fatihah*), and some of the second surah until the verse numbered 2:103.⁹¹ This means that the first volume of the Qur'an was published in a series of articles in *al-Muslimun* before July 1952. At the end of the first volume, Qutb announced he would write a thirty-volume book under the same title dealing with the whole Qur'an, one volume to appear every two months and to be published in Cairo by Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah.⁹² In October 1952, after the July Revolution, Qutb completed the second volume and it was published, this time, by Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, not by the *al-Muslimun* journal. Between October 1952 and January 1954, sixteen volumes were published including volume 1, the articles originally published in *al-Muslimun*.⁹³ Qutb was arrested in January 1954, as a leading member of the Muslim Brothers, when the organization was dissolved. While in prison, he managed to publish volumes 17 and 18 before his release in April 1954. Between April 1954 and August 1954, Qutb was busy as editor in chief of the *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* weekly until it ceased publication in August 1954. In November 1954, Qutb was arrested and sentenced to 15 years' hard labour in July 1955. His publisher successfully obtained a court

permission for Qutb to meet his contractual obligation. Qutb then completed the remaining 12 volumes (19–30) of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* in 1959.⁹⁴ His ideas in the last three volumes (28, 29 and 30) of the first edition were written with a spirit that is more active than that in all 27 earlier volumes. In the second edition, which was published in 1961, Qutb 'revised the first 13 volumes to match the more active spirit with which the latter three volumes had been written in prison'.⁹⁵ In other words, Qutb completed the first edition of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* in 1959, but 13 volumes were revised in the second edition, which appeared in 1961. This means that, from the beginning of surah 15 to the end of the *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, none of these volumes has been revised, and they represent Qutb's ideas in the 1950s. Surah 1 to the end of surah 14 in the *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* represent Qutb's ideas in the 1960s. Because of this revision, one would note that this multivolume book, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, which is in circulation, represents Qutb's views while in prison. It is fair to note that all volumes of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* were officially checked and approved by an official committee from al-Azhar before the volumes were published.⁹⁶

In this magnum opus, Qutb does not involve himself in the complex grammatical and linguistic discussion known in other books of *tafsir* but focuses on issues of his main interest such as belief, jihad, government, wealth management, laws, nationalism, human intellect and other issues and concepts such as *jahiliyyah*, *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *'ubudiyyah* (servitude). He uses the past to assess the present. He discusses the social conditions of the pre-Islamic societies and then the change made by Islam. In his analysis, Qutb draws on the Qur'anic suggestion to treat the social conditions of contemporary Muslim and other societies. He strongly condemns societies, regimes, even individual people and groups and calls them all *jahiliyyah*, similar to the *jahiliyyah* before Islam.

In those volumes of *Zilal* which reflect Qutb's views in the 1950s, he draws on the Qur'an (23:84–98) and emphasizes some *jahili* forms of which 'the *jahiliyyah* of the Arabs before Islam is an example (*namuzaj*) from many *jahiliyyat* (plural of the singular *jahiliyyah*) of all times including our present time'.⁹⁷ As he did in the 1930s and 1940s, he asserts *jahiliyyah*, sometimes, without mentioning it explicitly, as in 'the Arab nation (*ummah*) remained unknown in the history of the world until Islam. They became known throughout the history as long as they adhered to Islam. When they departed from Islam, they became unknown. Nobody would recognize them unless they come back to their big title [i.e. Islam]'.⁹⁸ Here, Qutb stresses that Islam is the identity, the passport of the Arabs to the world and history. His words indicate the *jahiliyyah* concept, but the term is not explicitly mentioned.

In a direct statement Qutb pointed out the concept of *jahiliyyah* as follows: 'The *jahiliyyah* is not a specific period in time, but indicates specific social conditions and specific conceptions about life. This condition and this conception are symptoms (*dakil*) of *jahiliyyah* and can appear in any place at any time'.⁹⁹ This statement is comprehensive, as it applies *jahiliyyah* to all spheres of life. Speaking of the situation of women in the present modern society, Qutb says, 'With these

examples, we find ourselves, at present, are living in a blind *jahiliyyah* of coarse sense, and bestial conception (*hayawaniyyat al-tasawwur*)¹⁰⁰

In the revised volumes of *Fi Zīlal al-Qur'an*, which represent Qutb's views in the 1960s, the *jahiliyyah* concept was further defined. In his view, the Qur'anic verse 'Is it the *jahiliyyah* laws that they wish to be judged by' (5:50) defines the concept of *jahiliyyah* fairly well. With reference to verse 5:50, Qutb emphasized that this text

brought the people to the crossroads to choose between the rule of Allah and the rule of *jahiliyyah*: one way or the other. Other than the rule of Allah, the *Shari'ah* of Allah, and the programme of Allah, there is the rule of *jahiliyyah*, the *Shari'ah* of desires (*hawa*), and the programme of *'ubudiyyah* [submission to anything other than Allah]. The meaning of *jahiliyyah* is defined by this text. The *jahiliyyah*, as described by Allah and defined by His Qur'an, is the rule of people by people. This is because [*jahiliyyah*] is submission (*ubudiyyah*) of people to people and the turning away from submission (*ubudiyyah*) to Allah: denying His Divinity but acknowledging the divinity of some people and submitting themselves to them.¹⁰¹

The concept of *jahiliyyah* was further developed in various spheres, with a final division of the world into four categories of *jahiliyyah*. The first is the 'atheist' (*mulhid*), the second is the 'pagan' (*wathani*), the third is the 'people of the Book' (*ahl al-Kītab*), and the fourth is 'the people who call themselves Muslims but they follow the systems and programs of the people of the Book'.¹⁰² Thus Qutb developed the concept of *jahiliyyah* in various spheres of life through his discussion in *Fi Zīlal al-Qur'an* and in other works of the time.

In 1957 (two years before completing *Zīlal*), Qutb wrote *Bawakir al-Kīfah* (Firstling of Struggle), a poem published by *al-Kīfah al-Islami* in Jordan.¹⁰³ This poem created some opposition. Yusuf al-'Azm, the Chief Editor of *al-Kīfah al-Islami*, wrote his own poem of 61 verses in opposition to Qutb's poem.¹⁰⁴ The Iraqi Walid al-'Azam also wrote a poem of 24 verses in opposition to Qutb's.¹⁰⁵ Qutb's poem was written in 1957, coloured by the prison episodes of the time, when 21 of the Muslim Brothers were shot dead in their cells.¹⁰⁶ The authors of the magnum opus *Shu'ara' al-Da'wah al-Islamiyyah* (The Poets of Islamic Call) noted that Qutb saw a hand waving to and greeting him, through the bars of the window, but he could not identify the person. This incident, in the atmosphere of bloodshed in the darkness of prison, touched Qutb and inspired this poem.¹⁰⁷

At the beginning of the poem, Qutb greeted that person and called him brother. Qutb then told him that the 'armies of the darkness (*juyush al-zalam*)' would be eradicated. The sunlight would arise again and dominate the universe. In this mood, Qutb stressed that he was standing on the 'way' firmly and steadfastly, despite his imprisonment:

Brother, I am not fed-up with this struggle
And I have not given up my weapon

If the armies of the darkness encircle me,
I believe that the sunlight will be rising.¹⁰⁸

Qutb then tells his brothers to continue his struggle and stay firm on the 'way' without 'fear' or a 'glance' to the 'rear'. They should not 'fear' anything but 'Allah'. The way of 'our struggle' is long and coloured with 'blood'. 'We are not weak hearted.' Qutb then heeds the voice of blood calling from behind the horizons to continue his struggle. The rights of those 'tyrannized' people cannot go without 'price'. Qutb concludes that he had accepted the challenge to continue his struggle. For the sake of his Lord and his Religion, Qutb would seek 'revenge' against the tyrants:

I will avenge but for my Lord and my Religion
I will continue to stand firmly on my way for victory
Or to the paradise of Allah, I shall return.¹⁰⁹

This mirrors Qutb's position in 1957, two years before completing the first edition of *Zilal* in 1959, as discussed above. Qutb's position in this poem is the same position in his earlier ones of 1928 and 1929 in which he said: 'From the *Jihad* I do flee not – I never was weak-hearted.'¹¹⁰ This also supports our suggestion that Qutb's thinking was developing in a consistent direction from the mid-1930s onwards. Without doubt, the intellectual and sociopolitical environment in Egypt played a significant role in the development and the direction of Qutb's thinking. As stated by Taha Husayn, Qutb has two characteristics: 'idealism' (*mithaliyyah*) and moral rectitude (*'inad*).¹¹¹

The bloodshed in the prison shifted Qutb's moral rectitude and his focus on social reform so that he moved from social and political critic to include a socio-religious and political activism. His programme of ideological and educational training of the 1950s was shifted, in the 1960s, to include a point of 'retaliation' in order to protect the Muslims from attack by the regime. Here, his theory of society became physically, intellectually and ideologically active. The concept of vanguard began to appear with an open eye on the sociopolitical surroundings.¹¹² With this in mind, Qutb's review of the past, as is usual for him, was not only to assess the present but also to ideologize for the future. Representing this shift in Qutb's focus are his writings from 1960 to 1964, especially *This Religion, Islam: The Religion of the Future* and the last, *Milestones*.

Because of the harsh treatment and bloodshed in the prison, the younger detainees began to question not only their commitments, but also their religion. Inquiries were spreading in the detentions, in and outside Cairo and within Egypt. It was for this urgent matter that Qutb depicted his response in two small books. Both *This Religion* and *Islam: The Religion of the Future* explain the point.¹¹³

In 1960, *Hadha al-Din (This Religion)*, a small book, was published by Dar al-Qalam in Cairo; it has been printed a few times since then by Dar al-Shuruq in Cairo. The copy dated 1995 by al-Shuruq is a volume of 100 pages

and eight chapters, including 'Path for humankind', 'A unique path', 'An easy path', 'The potential of human nature', 'Resources of experience', 'Traces and effects', and 'Finally'.

Qutb maintains that *This Religion* is divinely inspired but it cannot establish itself in human life without human effort.¹¹⁴ This idea had appeared in his previous writings,¹¹⁵ but here Qutb was writing it with a mind to the harsh treatment of the Ikhwan (Muslim Brothers) in the prisons at the time. Some, according to Qutb, saw that the Islam which was revealed by Allah to manage human life could operate in the society in an 'extraordinary' and 'magical' manner without any regard for 'human effort'. They were, however, discontented when they saw Islam did not work in this manner, and saw themselves as the defenders of Islam, imprisoned and harshly treated. When they realized this, they encountered 'an unexpected disappointment, and their trust in the seriousness and reality of the religious way of life was damaged. They may even be afflicted by doubts concerning religion as such'.¹¹⁶ This indicates the objective of Qutb's discussion in the book. Strengthening the spirit of the people was the central point around which Qutb's treatment revolved. In the first chapter, he drew on a number of texts from the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet to support his discussion, which sought to strengthen the spiritual confidence of the people. Qutb went on, in the other chapters, to distinguish between Islam and other social systems of all types and forms. He emphasized Islam as 'the unique' system of life and pointed out the characteristics which distinguish between Islam and the *jahiliyyah* of all types and colours.¹¹⁷

The line of discussion in *This Religion* was further developed in the next book, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*. This book contains seven chapters and begins with Qutb's argument that Islam is the ideal system of life. This is followed by a quite lengthy discussion that emphasizes Qutb's viewpoints about the conflict between the Church and science in the Western world. This conflict, Qutb asserts, has separated Religion from the State, and created a condition that Qutb calls 'hideous schizophrenia'.¹¹⁸ He stresses that Western civilization is exhausted and has no system able to guide human life. A number of Western scholars are quoted in support of his view,¹¹⁹ and to raise the alarm of the need for a 'saviour' with certain features. These features and properties, he says, belong only to Islam.¹²⁰ Qutb stresses the end of the white man's leadership.¹²¹ The turn now is for the leadership of Islam. Islam is the religion of the future.¹²² As in the previous book, here Qutb does not forget to use the term *jahiliyyah* frequently to label societies, including those within which he moved.¹²³ These two books are widely read and translated into English, French and a number of other languages.

In 1962, the first part of *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami* (*Characteristics of the Islamic Conceptions and Its Foundations*) was published. This volume contains only the *Khasa'is* (characteristics), but the *Foundations* were later published in a separate book.¹²⁴ The book *Khasa'is* was published by Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah and reprinted a few times by Dar al-Shuruq in Cairo. Print 13 (1995) shows the book to have 207 pages, nine chapters, and an introduction. The subject of the book is to contrast philosophy with the Islamic conception of the nature of

the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. This comprehensive 'idea' was rooted in his early poetry (1935) and developed in his later writings. Qutb's discussion showed a few interrelated dimensions. For example, Qutb expressed this 'idea' in the dimension of the great unity, as previously discussed in his poetry (1935).¹²⁵ The religious dimension was discussed in *Taswir* (1945) and *Mashahid* (1947).¹²⁶ The social side of this 'idea' was discussed in *Adalah* (1949), as Qutb admitted.¹²⁷ In 1951, this 'idea' was also discussed in relation to the universal peace, as Qutb also said.¹²⁸ This 'idea' was also discussed in *Zilal*, at least, where Qutb refers his readers in footnotes to the relevant chapters in the book *Khasa'is*.¹²⁹

When this 'idea' developed and Qutb found it was reasonable to discuss it in a separate book, he announced that he would do so. Discussing this 'idea' in 1949, Qutb announced that he would soon present to his readers a 'complete study of the Islamic idea concerning the universe, life, and humankind'.¹³⁰ Again, in *Islam and Capitalism* (February 1951), Qutb announced that he 'would discuss the Islamic idea of the universe, life and humankind in a separate book'.¹³¹ This announcement also reappeared at the end of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*.¹³² Thus the book *Khasa'is* (1962) took more than 10 years from when Qutb announced his plan in 1949.

Qutb pointed out that the Islamic conception of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind is as important to Muslims as the faith is to them. This is because, Qutb asserts, the Islamic conception provides Muslims with a comprehensive explanation of all that exists:

This explanation brings him [the Muslim] closer to an understanding of the great realities that confront him, and of the nature of the relationships and connections that exist among these realities, namely, the reality of the *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and reality of *'ubudiyyah* (servitude), the latter including the universe, life and man, and their mutual relationships and interconnections. The Muslim must know the reality of his position in this universe and the ultimate purpose for which he is created...based on this definition the Muslim defines his way of life and the kind of system established by this way of life...¹³³

Qutb pointed out how the Islamic philosophy and the discourse of the *Kalam* (*'ilm al-Kalam*) were established during the Abbasids on the basis of Greek philosophy, especially the commentaries on Aristotle. He then stressed that the Muslims abandoned the Islamic concept and the pure and independent format which suited its nature perfectly.¹³⁴ Instead,

they took the mould of philosophy and tried to pour the Islamic concept into it. They borrowed various philosophical concepts...even their terminology was almost entirely borrowed. Because there is a genuine disharmony between the methodology of philosophy and that of belief, between the style of philosophy and the style of belief...The so-called Islamic philosophy

was nothing more than a discordant note in the harmonious melody of the Islamic belief. . . . The Islamic philosophy and the discourse of the *Kalam* are foreign to Islam and to its nature, method, style, and teachings.¹³⁵

The overall Islamic idea about the universe, life and humankind, in place of philosophy, was not a new idea that appeared only in *Khasa'is* (1962); it was discussed earlier in the first edition of *Social Justice* (1949).¹³⁶

Qutb then moved to a chapter called *Tih wa Rukam* (Wilderness and Darkness).¹³⁷ He quoted a Qur'anic verse in the beginning to indicate the idea of the chapter, that is, a distinction between those who follow the light of the divinely inspired guidance and those who have gone astray in the accumulated darkness. He explains this by saying:

At the advent of Islam there were in the world a huge *rukam* of beliefs, concepts, philosophies, myths, superstitions, traditions, and customs in which falsehood was mixed with truth, wrong with right, nonsense with religion, and mythology with philosophy. Under this *rukam* (darkness), the conscience of man was groping in darkness (*zulumat*) and speculations without finding any certainty. . . .¹³⁸

Qutb then discusses the concept of *uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *'ubudiyyah* (servitude) in various ideologies before Islam. Emphasizing the misguided beliefs and conceptions of those religions, Qutb outlines the reasons why the human conscience was living under the *rukam* of darkness.¹³⁹ The concept of the other world in those religions that Qutb discussed here was previously discussed in *Mashahid* (1947).¹⁴⁰

Turning to the 'Characteristics of Islamic Conception', Qutb ascribed to it seven characteristics: *al-rabbaniyyah* (divinely sourced), *al-thabat* (firmness and permanent realities), *al-shumul* (comprehensiveness), *al-tawazun* (balance), *al-ijabiyah* (dynamism), *al-waqi'iyah* (realism) and *al-tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah).¹⁴¹ Some of the ideas implied by these characteristics were discussed in the previous chapters. What should be noted here is that Qutb's discussion of these characteristics clearly distinguished between Islam and the *jahiliyyah* of all types and forms or *al-jahiliyyat* (singular *al-jahiliyyah*) in various spheres of human life.¹⁴² However, in this book, the explicit term *jahiliyyah* did not as frequently occur as in the later writings such as *Ma'alim*, or in the previous writings such as *Zilal*, *This Religion or Islam: The Future of this Religion*. One explanation of this is that the book *Khasa'is* (1962) represents a later stage of Qutb's thinking. Thus, Qutb, perhaps, thought that he had already said, in the previous writings, what he wants to say of *jahiliyyah*, and that at this stage, the *jahiliyyah* concept had reached its maturity, particularly in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (1952–1959). However, for the purpose of this study, the *jahiliyyah* theory could not be seen as complete while there were still more works to come. Another explanation could be that *jahiliyyah* is 'specific social conditions of specific conceptions about life, and it can appear at any time and place'.¹⁴³ For this reason, and at this stage, Qutb, perhaps, sees that it is not necessary to

consider the term *jahiliyyah* as part of this concept. According to him, 'the appearance of those specific social conditions and conceptions are symptoms (*dalil*) of *jahiliyyah*'.¹⁴⁴ Those 'specific social conditions' imply *jahiliyyah*, so he does not need to use the term explicitly. In this sense, Qutb pointed out the conditions of *jahiliyyah* without frequent use of the explicit term.¹⁴⁵ This can also be clearly seen in *al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (1962).

In 1962, *Khasa'is* was coupled with *al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (*Islam and the Problems of Civilization*), published by Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah. The book was then reprinted a few times by al-Shuruq in Cairo. In 1983, reprint number eight had 198 pages, six chapters, and an introduction. The second chapter, entitled *Takhabbut wa Idtrab* (Stumbles and Confusion), consists of three sections.

At the beginning, Qutb points out that the continuity of human life is dependent on human qualities.¹⁴⁶ He emphasizes that the present 'life' is going, day after day, towards the destruction of the characteristics of human beings. This life cannot continue unless the basis (*qa'idah*) upon which this life is based is changed.¹⁴⁷ For this problem of human life, Qutb pointed out four reasons:

- (1) Our complete *jahl* about Man – despite this development... we have failed to give him [Man] a comprehensive system deals with all his life. A system that is in harmony with his nature and his characteristics and able to renew and develop his life in a harmonious and balanced manner...
- (2) Human life is stumbling because it was based on this *jahl*...
- (3) A civilization that is not suitable to Man and does not respect his human characteristics in dealing with him...
- (4) The prevailing effects of this civilization in the most developed nations...¹⁴⁸

Qutb then discussed the reality of these problems, which confront human life and human qualities. His style was to portray the problem and discuss its effects on human life in the political, economic, social, intellectual and moral spheres. He quoted a number of Western scholars and specialists in support of his view on each problem that he discussed.¹⁴⁹ Then he offers Islam as the answer to the problem, and further discusses how Islam deals with the given problem. Qutb concludes that Islam is the only programme with the capacity to rescue humanity. He emphasizes that the Islamic conception of life must be practised in a *Mujtama' Islami* (Islamic Society).¹⁵⁰ He stresses that 'if the Islamic society cannot be established today, it will be established tomorrow, and if not here [i.e. Egypt], it will be there... But the way to Islamic society is long and difficult, and made worse with spikes. The greatest difficulty lies in how we elevate our conceptions and ideas, our ethics and behaviour, and then the reality of our materialism to the level of Islam...'¹⁵¹

In his discussion of how the Islamic society would deal with the realities of the present life, Qutb emphasizes that any attempt for Islamic legislation to deal with the problems of the present society, which is not Islamic, is not right. The *fiqh*

(jurisprudence) cannot develop and deal with the problems of life unless the society is Islamic. 'It is not appropriate to try to find Islamic jurisprudence rules (*ahkam fiqhiyyah Islamiyyah*) to the social and economic realities in America or Russia, while both countries do not avow the *hakimiyyah* of Islam.'¹⁵² According to Qutb, 'The society does not reform Islam. When Islam came, it reformed the *jahili* society of the time. The standpoint of Islam will not change, today, in the face of the modern *jahili* society.'¹⁵³

Regarding the issues of how the Islamic society would deal with the present problems, Qutb announced that he would present to the readers a comprehensive and detailed study under the title *Nahwa Mujtama' Islami* (Towards an Islamic Society).¹⁵⁴ Qutb wrote this book and discussed a number of issues, including women's:¹⁵⁵ 'I have dealt with this issue on a wider scale in the chapter *haqiqat al-insan* (reality of Man) in *Khasa'is*, and in the chapter *nizam insani* (a human system) in the book *Nahwa Mujtama' Islami*.'¹⁵⁶ This book disappeared at the publisher.¹⁵⁷

The last book in Qutb's life, called *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Millstones), was published by Wahbah in Cairo (1964) and reprinted a number of times by al-Shuruq.¹⁵⁸ Reprint 17 (1993) contains 202 pages, 12 chapters and an introduction. The book *Ma'alim* is widely read and considered one of the most important reasons behind the verdict of the Military Court against Qutb.¹⁵⁹ In this book, the motivational character of the concepts of *jahiliyyah* was reshaped into a plan meant to establish an Islamic society.

In the introduction, Qutb pointed out the bankruptcy of the ideas of both Western and Eastern blocs. The Western 'democracy' began to 'borrow' from the 'Eastern bloc' under the name of 'socialism'. Similarly, 'Marxism' is 'belated' and 'moved away' from the fundamentals of 'the idea', 'Russia which represents social systems... selling its own gold for food'.¹⁶⁰ In his view, the fundamentals of the ideas and social systems of the two Western blocs were in conflict with human nature. Because of those fundamentals, the world was now living in *jahiliyyah*, he said:

The fundamentals upon which the components of life and its systems are based indicate that the world today is living in *jahiliyyah*. It is the *jahiliyyah* which could not be reduced by anything of this huge material facility, or by this magnificent material development. This *jahiliyyah* is based on transgression. It transgresses the authority of Allah on the Earth. It transgresses the rights of *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), the most specific characteristics of *uluhiyyah* (divinity). It depends on the *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty) of people and makes a number of them lords to the others. This is not in the naïve fashion known to the first *jahiliyyah*, but in the form of the claim that they have the right to design conceptions, and values, laws and system separable from the program of life sanctioned by Allah.¹⁶¹

Qutb emphasizes that, under any social system other than that of Islam, the people are worshipping themselves in various forms. The Islamic social system is

the only worldwide system that liberates people from worshipping anything other than Allah.¹⁶² In Qutb's view, all social systems in the world are exhausted and have nothing to 'offer to humanity'. The 'turn' now is for 'Islam', but it cannot resume the 'leadership' without human effort.¹⁶³ Here the idea of 'human type' (*namazij insaniyyah*), which was used in *Taswir* (1945),¹⁶⁴ has come to be used in *Ma'alim* (1964) to refer to the human type which was inclined to carry the burden. In this regard, Qutb stresses that there must be a group of people able to carry the responsibility to establish an Islamic society. Those people, as he says, must be well practising Muslims, who 'know their way and how they should face the *jahiliyyah* on the basis of the Qur'an and the way of the Prophet'.¹⁶⁵ The book *Ma'alim* (*Milestones*), then, was not meant to be for all people, but for a specific human type. He says: 'To the vanguard I wrote the *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*. It contains four chapters extracted from *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* with some changes...'¹⁶⁶ The book, as Qutb says, is 'a programme of the Islamic movement (*Manhaj al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah*)'.¹⁶⁷

In a chapter *Jinsiyyat al-Muslim wa Aqidatuh* (Nationality of Muslim and His Creed), Qutb emphasizes that the 'homeland of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) is the land where the Islamic state is established and the *Shari'ah* of Allah is practised'.¹⁶⁸ Thus 'the homeland of Muslim is only where the *Shari'ah* of Allah is implemented... For the Muslim, there is no nationality other than his '*aqidah* (Islam)'.¹⁶⁹

The idea of how to deal with the *jahiliyyah* is the point around which the ideas of *Ma'alim* revolve. The ideas of *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty) and of *uluhiyyah* (divinity), *'ubudiyyah* (servitude), *'alamiyyah* (universality) and nationalism, *al-fitrah*, *al-'aql* (human intellect), *jihad* and of harmony all are key in the discussion of *Ma'alim*. The point here is that the book *Ma'alim* reviewed various types of societies and explained why each was part of *jahiliyyah*. At the top of the list stands the 'communist societies'. Next, come the 'pagan societies', then the 'Jewish and Christian societies'. Finally, 'the societies that proclaim themselves Muslims must also be placed in *jahiliyyah*... because in the course of their existence, they do not practically confine the '*ubudiyyah* (servitude) to Allah alone. They have faith in Him, but bestow characteristics that belong exclusively to the *uluhiyyah* (divinity) upon others besides Allah. They believe in a *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty) other than His. From this *hakimiyyah* they derive their systems, laws, values, judgements, habits and traditions... and nearly all the principles of their existence'.¹⁷⁰ These categories previously appeared in *Zilal*, as outlined above.¹⁷¹

The book *Ma'alim* (*Milestones*) was the last published book in Qutb's life, but it was not the last work. After his death on 29 August 1966, two poems by him and three by the Egyptian poet Hashim al-Rifa'i were all published in a single book, in Jordan, under the title *Lahan al-Kifah* (The Tune of Struggle).¹⁷² In this book, Qutb's poems are entitled *Akhi* (Brother) and *Hubal.Hubal*.¹⁷³ The former is the same poem that was published in Jordan's *al-Kifah al-Islami* (1957) under the title *Bawakir al-Kifah* (The Firstling of Struggle), as discussed above.¹⁷⁴ The latter work, *Hubal.Hubal*, was first published after his death. This poem cannot be positively attributed to Qutb, because it was written in the closed world of prison. Equally, there is no reason to attribute this poem to anyone other than Qutb. The bulk of

Qutb's works were also written in gaol. In these writings, however, there is no indication of this poem. The authenticity of this poem rests with the journal *al-Kīfah al-Islami* and the editorial staff led by Yusuf al-'Azm. Also, no researcher who has collected and studied Qutb's poetry has doubted the authorship of this specific poem.¹⁷⁵ If it is true that Qutb was the author of this poem, then the work *Hubal.Hubal* represents the final touch of Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah*.

The poem reflects Qutb's feelings and his wounded heart in prison. In a direct style, Qutb emphasizes his view about his opponents who jailed him. He uses harsh and mocking words to criticize them. He portrays his opponents as the idol *Hubal*, the worshipped and glorified deity of the Arabs of the *jahiliyyah* before Islam.¹⁷⁶ Qutb sees his opponent, the idol *Hubal*, as worshipped by the masses. Also, those masses are but a flock (*qati'*) of sheep. They do not know the reality of their leader, but they follow regardless:

Hubal . . . Huba,
the sign of humbug and foolishness
An idol leads their masses! Oh shamefulness!
Oh my friend, do not ask those masses.
To whom should they turn in worship?
To whom should they turn in repentance?
To whom should they turn in obedience?
Leave them; they are but sheep in a flock.

Qutb thus shows that the masses raise what they worship (*ma'budihi*) above the messenger of God, if not an angel of God. However, the reality of the idol is uncovered, as Qutb asserts, by the liberals (*ahrar*) of the nation (*ummah*) who are distinguished from this flock and do not bow or worship the idol. The result is prison and torture. Those liberals, as Qutb says, believe that 'the *taghut* (oppressor) will go one day'.¹⁷⁷ In this poem, Qutb does not use the explicit term *jahiliyyah*, but '*jahalah* (the synonym of *jahiliyyah*), *sakhafah* (foolishness), '*amalah* (treachery)'.¹⁷⁸ The point that needs to be noted here is that Qutb distinguished between two human types (*namazij insaniyyah*). The 'liberals' who, as Qutb says, 'uncovered the reality of the idol' are the Muslims who 'do not bow or worship the idol'. The other type represents those who 'raise what they worship (*ma'budihi*) above the messenger of God, if not an angel of God'. Thus, Muslims and those who think of themselves as Muslims exist side by side in a society where Islam no longer exists. The other point is that the character of his criticism, the words and mood in this poem, can be seen as harsher, as in his 1935, poetry collection where the term *jahalah*, barbarism and the distinction between *Iman* (belief) and *kufrian* (multitude of *kufri*: unbelief) occur, as previously discussed in Chapter 4.

Concluding remarks

Qutb arrived in Egypt from the United States with a distinctive vision that he would devote the rest of his life to social reform. As soon as he arrived, he began

to write as usual, but with a watchful eye on the mounting political disorder in Egypt. His harsh and focused style of criticism drew the revolutionaries to him.

Qutb then went on *hajj*. In Saudi Arabia, he met al-Nadawi for the first time. The second meeting was after *hajj*, when Qutb returned to Egypt. On al-Nadawi's request, Qutb wrote the introduction to al-Nadawi's book. Here, Qutb used the term *jahiliyyah* and stated its concept in a direct statement. He also showed his interest in al-Nadawi's book in a published article of the same title in 1951.

The concept of *jahiliyyah* was further detailed in later writings. The major discussion of the *jahiliyyah* concept appeared in the works that were written during his imprisonment. The more he focused on a distinctive Islamic society, the more ideas appeared in the context of *jahiliyyah*. Terms such as *uluhiyyah* (divinity), *'ubudiyyah* (servitude), *rububiyyah* (lordship), *hakimiyyah* (Sovereignty), *'alamiyyah* (universality) and other of Qutb's constructs were included in his discussion of the *jahiliyyah* concept.¹⁷⁹

In later writings, the motivational character of the mature or fully fledged concept of *jahiliyyah* was reshaped into a plan meant to establish an Islamic society. It was this plan which brought its architect to the gallows on 29 August 1966. Qutb's thinking on *jahiliyyah* began in 1934, when he used the synonym and the condition of *jahiliyyah* as opposite to *Iman* (belief).¹⁸⁰ The explicit term and its concept appeared in the mid-1940s.

Glossary

<i>Adab</i>	Art or literature
<i>ʿAlamiyyah</i>	Universality
<i>Al-ʿAql</i>	Human intellect
<i>ʿAlim</i>	(Plural <i>ʿulama</i>) also used to refer to scientists, scholars and experts in any sphere of knowledge. <i>ʿAlim</i> derived from the same root of <i>ʿilm</i> literally means ‘those who know’
<i>Al-Kāwān</i>	The universe, life and Man
<i>Allah</i>	God the Creator
<i>Aqidah</i>	Creed
<i>Badr</i>	The place at which the first military confrontation between the Muslims and the <i>jahiliyyah</i> took place in (January 624) the second year of the <i>hijrah</i>
<i>Dimuqratiyyah</i>	Democracy
<i>Dustur</i>	Constitution
<i>Fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence; law
<i>Fitrah</i>	The unchangeable constitution that Allah made innate to the universe, life and humankind
<i>Funun</i>	Arts in general
<i>Hakimiyyah</i>	The highest governmental and legal authority
<i>Hilm</i>	Gentleness, patience, forbearing, calm
<i>Hukm</i>	To govern and to judge
<i>Hukumah</i>	Government
<i>Ijmaʿ</i>	Consensus of Islamic scholars on a point of Islamic law
<i>ʿIlm</i>	Science, or knowledge
<i>ʿImaniyyah</i>	Secularism
<i>Ishtrakiyyah</i>	Socialism
<i>Jahiliyyah</i>	The condition of any place or society where Allah is not held to be the sovereign being or His law is the sole authority in human life and society
<i>Jihad</i>	Struggle, holy war
<i>Jinsiyyah</i>	Nationality
<i>Khilafah</i>	Vicegerency
<i>Kufr</i>	Non-belief

<i>Mashi'ah</i>	Will
<i>Mujtahid</i>	A person who is expert in <i>Shari'ah</i>
<i>Mutlaq</i>	Absolute
<i>Qanuni</i>	Legally valid
<i>Ra'smalyyah</i>	Capitalism
<i>Sha'b</i>	People
<i>Shar'i</i>	Islamically valid
<i>Shari'ah</i>	Everything that Allah revealed to manage the affairs of human Life
<i>Shurah</i>	Consultation
<i>Shuyu'iyyah</i>	Communism
<i>Sunnah</i>	Behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad: his sayings and deeds
<i>Tabi'ah</i>	Nature
<i>Taghut</i>	Tyranny, oppressor (ruler, law and system)
<i>Tasawwur</i>	Conception
<i>Thaqafah</i>	Culture, literature, civilization
<i>Thawrah</i>	Revolution
<i>'Ubuliyyah</i>	Servitude: complete submission
<i>'Ulama</i>	(Singular <i>'Alim</i>) scholar, expert in Islamic law and theology
<i>Uluhiyyah</i>	Divinity
<i>Ummah</i>	Nation, the Muslim community
<i>Ummi</i>	Singular of the plural <i>ummiyyin</i> and <i>ummiyyun</i> . It refers to the pre-Islamic Arabs and non-Arabs who have no Scriptures
<i>Usuliyyah</i>	Fundamentalism

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Farrukh, 'Umar, *Khamsat Shu'ara' Jahiliyyun*, Beirut: Dar al-Ilm, n.d., p. 7.
- 2 Goldziher, Ignaz (1966), *Muslim Studies*, Albany, NY: University of New York Press, pp. 202–208.
- 3 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 202.
- 4 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 202.
- 5 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 207.
- 6 Husayn, Taha (1962), *Al-Adab al-Jahili*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p. 80.
- 7 Hegel, George William Friedrich (1956), *The Philosophy of History*, New York: Dover Publication, pp. 360–365; see Russell, Bertrand (1961), *History of Western Philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin, pp. 339–340.

1 Prologue

- 1 Samarah, Ihsan (1991), *Mafhum al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Fikr al-Islami al-Mu'asir*, Beirut: Dar al-Nahdah al-Islamiyyah, 2nd edn, pp. 5–6.
- 2 For example, *al-Muqtataf* established in 1876 by Ya'qub Suruf (d. 1927); *al-Hilal* established in 1892 by Gorge Zaydan (d. 1914); *al-Siyasah al-usbu'iyyah* established in 1926 by Muhammad Husayn Haykal (d. 1957); *al-Balagh* established in 1926 by Abd al-Qadir Hamzah; *al-Risalah* established in 1933 by Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat; *al-Thaqafah* established in 1939; *al-Azhar* established in 1930; *al-Riwayah* established in 1937 by Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat. For Qutb's published articles in the period between 1929 and 1954 see al-Khabbas, Abdullah (1983), *Sayyid Qutb, al-Adib al-Naqid*, Al-Zarqa: Maktabat al-Manar, first edition, pp. 361–398; also see Abd al-Baqi, Muhammad (1986), *Sayyid Qutb: Hayatuh wa Adabuh*, al-Mansurah, Egypt: Dar al-Wafa, first edition, pp. 401–444.
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- 4 Haddad, 'The Qur'anic Justification of an Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb', *Middle East Journal*, (37) (1983), vol. 2, pp. 68–77, cf. p. 17.
- 5 Nettler, L. Ronald (1987), *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, pp. 25–31.
- 6 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 85.
- 7 Sheppard, William, 'Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyyah', *International Journal Middle East Studies*, 35 (2003), pp. 521–545, esp. 522–523 and ff. 35.
- 8 Choueiri, Youssef M. (1990), *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Pinter Publisher, p. 95 for Hinduism; and p. 96 for Qutb's use of *jahiliyyah* as religious ignorance.
- 9 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 96.

- 10 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 95; al-Nadawi, Abu al-Hasan (1990), *Shakhsīyyat wa Kitub*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, pp. 101–111; al-Nadawi, Abu al-Hasan (1975), *Mudhakkirat Sa'ih fi al-Sharq*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, pp. 88–90, 150.
- 11 Binder, Leonard (1988), *Islamic Liberalism: A Critic of Development Ideologies*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 177–178.
- 12 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 85.
- 13 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 85.
- 14 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 122, 124.
- 15 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 124.
- 16 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 124.
- 17 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 122.
- 18 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 122.
- 19 Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, p. 178.
- 20 Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, p. 176.
- 21 Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, p. 177.
- 22 Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, p. 180.
- 23 Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, pp. 180–181.
- 24 Kepel, Gilles (1985), *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, p. 15.
- 25 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 15.
- 26 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, pp. 15–16.
- 27 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 15.
- 28 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 46.
- 29 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 46.
- 30 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 45.
- 31 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 46.
- 32 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 86.
- 33 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 47.
- 34 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 87.
- 35 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 87.
- 36 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 88.
- 37 Ashmawi, Muhammad Saeed (1992), *Political Islam*, Cairo: Sina, p. 49.
- 38 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 47.
- 39 Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 47.
- 40 Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 94.
- 41 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', p. 85.
- 42 Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue', pp. 67–89.
- 43 Hammudah, 'Adel (1990), *Sayyid Qutb mina al-Qaryah ila al-Mishnaqah: Tahqiq Watha'iq*, Cairo: Sina li al-Nashr, 3rd edn, pp. 170–172.
- 44 *Ros el-Youssef* [Egyptian journal], n. 3403, 30 August (1993), p. 9.

2 What the early Muslims meant by *jahiliyyah*

- 1 Al-Bustani, Abdullah (1927), *al-Bustan*, Beirut: al-Matba'ah al-Amrikiyyah, p. 424; Farrukh, Umar, *Khamsat Shu'ara' Jahiliyyun*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malayin, n. d., p. 7.
- 2 Goldziher, Ignaz (1966), *Muslim Studies*, Albany, NY: University of New York Press, pp. 202–208; Ibn Durayd, Abi Bakr Muhammad (1978), *Kitab Jamharat al-Lughah*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malayin, vol. 1, p. 494.
- 3 Qutb, Sayyid (1992), *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol. 3, pp. 1256–1257.
- 4 Kepel, Gilles (1985), *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, University of California Press, p. 46.
- 5 Al-Sharastani, Abi al-Fath Muhammad, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, Muhammad Sayyid al-Kilani (ed.), Beirut: Dar Sa'b (1986), pp. 241–244.

- 6 Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1985), *The Lawful and The Prohibited in Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, p. 12.
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- 10 Husayn, Taha (1962), *Al-Adab al-Jahili*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p. 80; Qur'an 11:58–60, 61–68, 54:18–20.
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- 12 Husayn, Taha, *Al-Adab al-Jahili*, p. 80.
- 13 Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad (1994), *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, vol. 1, p. 25; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 126; Old Testament (Genesis 10:25).
- 14 Ibn Hisham, Abd al-Malik (1995), *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, vol. 1, p. 41.
- 15 Old Testament, 11:24–26; Amir, Ali (Sir) (1951), *Short History of the Saracens*, London: Macmillan, p. 3.
- 16 Qur'an 22:78; for further details, see Ali Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 1–36; Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 80–92; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 1, p. 587.
- 17 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 70–80.
- 18 Qur'an 3:67, 95; 2:35; 4:124; 6:79,162; 10:105.
- 19 Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 27.
- 20 Qur'an 19:42.
- 21 Qur'an 2:128.
- 22 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 261–293.
- 23 Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman (1971), *Al-Muqaddimah*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at, p. 138.
- 24 Amin, Ahmad (1928), *Fajr al-Islam*, Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjamah, vol. 1, p. 43.
- 25 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 4, p. 339.
- 26 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 167, 221–123; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 370, 380.
- 27 Ibn Kathir, al-Hafiz Abi al-Fida'Isma'il (1988) *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, vol. 2, p. 355.
- 28 Al-Qurtubi, Abi Abdullah Muhammad (1985), *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath, vol. 8, p. 133; vol. 3, p. 43.
- 29 Clouston, W.A. (ed.) (1986), *Arabian Poetry*, London: Darf Publisher, p. xxviii.

As a consequence of a pretended revelation of a bishop of Aquitaine, it was published in the time of a general Calamity and it made so deep an impression on the minds observed, we are told, for seven years; and a resolution formed, that no man should in time to come molest his adversary from Thursday evening till Monday morning. The *Pax Regis*, or *Roya Truce*, was an ordinance of Louis VIII king of France, AD, 1245; by which the friends or vassals of murdered or injured person were prohibited from commencing hostilities till forty days after the commission of the offence.

- 30 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 4, p. 408.
- 31 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 357–359.
- 32 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 420–425.
- 33 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 167, 221–223; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 370, 380.
- 34 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 167, 221–223; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 370, 380.
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- 37 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 112.
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- 38 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 113; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 4, p. 253.
- 40 Martin Hinds and El-Said Badawi (1986), *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic: Arabic-English*, Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, p. 179 and pp. xiii, xiv for entries; Ibn Manzur (1994), *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 130; al-Bustani, Abdullah (1927), *Al-Bustan*, Beirut: al-Matba'ah al-Amrikiyyah, p. 424.
- 41 Ni'mah, Fu'ad (1973), *Mulakhkhas Qawa'id al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah (Summary of Arabic Grammars)*, Cairo: Nahdat Misr, 15th edn., n.d., vol. 1, p. 129; the first edition was in May (1973).
- 42 Al-Bustani, Abdullah, *Al-Bustan*, p. 424; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 130.
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- 44 Wright, W. (1979), *Grammar of the Arabic Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 110.
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- 46 Ibn Hisham, *Shudhur al-Dhahab*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, p. 381.
- 47 Ibn 'Aqil (1993), *Sharh Ibn 'Aqil*, 3rd edn, vol. 1, pp. 275–278.
- 48 Wright, *Grammar of Arabic*, p. 165.
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- 50 Wehr, Hans (1979), *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p. 170.
- 51 See Basset, R. (1880), *La Poesie Arabe, Anteislamique*, Paris, pp. 7–39, cf. Caussin, *Essai Sur L'histoire des: de Perceval Arabs (1847–1848)*, Paris, p. 65.
- 52 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 204.
- 53 Al-Suyuti, Jalal al-Din Abu al-Fadl Abd al-Rahman (AH 1326), *Al-Muzahhar fi 'Uthum al-Lughah wa Anwa'iha*, Cairo: Gad al-Mawla wa Rifaqih, vol. 2, pp. 192–194.
- 54 Wright, *Grammar of Arabic*, p. 116, see pp. 135, 219.
- 55 Lane, Edward William (1972), *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Book 1, part 2, pp. 477.
- 56 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, part 2, p. 477.
- 57 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, pp. 129–130.
- 58 This tradition attributed to the Prophet, see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 130.
- 59 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, part 2, p. 477.
- 60 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, part 2, p. 477.
- 61 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, pp. 129–130.
- 62 Wright, *Grammar of Arabic Language*, pp. 110–112.
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- 65 Arnold and Menil published 'Antarah's poetry. No data about his date of birth, but his death was in the year AD 611 or 615. This was about the time when the Prophet Muhammad began his mission in AD 611. For more detail, see Qumayyah, Mufid (1994), *Sharh al-Mu'allaqat al-Ashr*, Beirut: Matabat al-Hilal, p. 267; al-Jumahi, Muhammad Ibn Salam, *Tabaqat Fuhul al-Shu'ara'*, Muhammad Shakir (ed.), Cairo: Matba'at al-Madani n.d., vol. 1, p. 125.
- 66 Al-Shintimari, Yusuf (1982), *ash'ar al-Shu'ara' al-Sittah al-Jahiliyyin*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, p. 461.
- 67 Farrukh, *Khamsat Shu'ara' Jahiliyyun*, p. 7.
- 68 Clouston, *Arabian Poetry*, p. 213.
- 69 Qur'an 7:199; 39:64.
- 70 Qur'an 29:61.
- 71 Qur'an 2:165.

- 72 Qur'an 5:47, 50.
- 73 Ibn Kathir, al-Hafiz Abi al-Fida' Isma'il, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 176.
- 74 Al-Zayyat, Ahmad Hasan, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Rayyan li al-Turah, 1st edn, n.d., pp. 58–59.
- 75 Dayf, Shawqi (1981), *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi: al-Asr al-Jahili*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p. 374.
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- 78 Dayf, Shawqi, *Tarikh al-Adab: al-Asr al-Jahili*, p. 372.
- 79 Al-Asbahani, Abu al-Faraj Ali (1992), *Al-Aghani*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islmiyyah, vol. 7, p. 151.
- 80 Al-Shintimari, *Al-Shu'ara' al-Jahiliyyin*, p. 409; Ibn Abd Rabbuh, Abi 'Umar Ahmad, *al-Iqd al-Farid*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, pp. 255, 261.
- 81 Qumayhah, *Sharh al-Mu'allaqat*, p. 99; al-Shintimari, *al-Shu'ara' al-Jahiliyyin*, p. 390.
- 82 Al-Shintimari, *Al-Shu'ara' al-Jahiliyyin*, pp. 282, 283, 287.
- 83 See Qumayhah, *Sharh al-Mu'allaqat*, p. 393.
- 84 Al-Shahrestani (1986), *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 243.
- 85 Ibn al-Kalbi, *Asnam*, p. 22; also see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 262–263.
- 86 Al-Shahrestani, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 241.
- 87 Al-Shahrestani, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 243.
- 88 Al-Shahrestani, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 243. The word 'Qiss' in a title means priest. His house of symposium (*Dar al-Nadwah*) remained until the Muslims returned to Makkah. It was at this house that the Muslims elected Abu Bakr to be the first successor of the Prophet.
- 89 Al-Shahrestani, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 242, for further detail and examples about those who believed in *tawhid* and the day of Judgement, see pp. 238–244.
- 90 Al-Shahrestani, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, vol. 2, p. 243.
- 91 Al-Zayyat, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi*, pp. 75–76; for further examples from the poetry of Umayyah, as reported by Ibn 'Abbas, see Ibn Abd Rabbuh, *al-Iqd al-Farid*, p. 261.
- 92 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, p. 144; also see Ibn Abd Rabbuh, *al-Iqd al-Farid*, p. 262.
- 93 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 7, p. 320.
- 94 Al-Wahidi, Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn Ahmad (1986), *Asbab al-Nuzul*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, p. 186.
- 95 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 70–80.
- 96 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 5–33, 66–90.
- 97 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 336–353.
- 98 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 4, pp. 5–127, 128–157.
- 99 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 389–414.
- 100 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 248–291, see pp. 144–201, vol. 1, pp. 46–99.
- 101 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 34–90.
- 102 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 189, 192–196.
- 103 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 7, p. 289, see vol. 8, pp. 380–422.
- 104 Al-Marajhi, Abdul Aziz (1947), *Majallat al-Azhar*, vol. 18, p. 27; see, Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 5, pp. 469–525.
- 105 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 15, p. 276.
- 106 Wajdi, Muhammad Farid, *Islam fi Asr al-'Ilm*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, p. 80.
- 107 Maspero, Gaston (1910), *The Dawn of Civilisation*, London: London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 5th edn, pp. 30–35; Michael A. Holtmon (1979), *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, New York, pp. 22–25; William (1899), *Prehistoric Egypt*, vol. 1, pp. 12–14.
- 108 Kings ruled Ancient Egypt during most of its long history. Somewhere between 1554 and 1304 BC. Egyptians began to call the king pharaoh. The word pharaoh means

- great house. Ibn Ishaq, Tabari, and al-Mas'udi called the pharaoh who ruled during Moses 'al-Walid Ibn Mus'ab'. He was also known as 'Ramses (1279–1212 BC.)' See Jacq, Christian (1995), *Ramses*, London: Simon & Shuster, vol. 2, pp. 1–5; Ansari, Nasser (1987), *Mawsu'at Hukkam Misr mina al-Fara'nah hatta al-Yawm*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 32–33; Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 231; Ibn Khaldun, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, p. 75.
- 109 Qur'an 28:23.
- 110 Qur'an 79:24.
- 111 Qur'an 66:11.
- 112 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 7, p. 170, see pp. 170–176.
- 113 See Qur'an 2:257 for the role of these 'false gods' cf., Qur'an 20:43 described the pharaoh as 'impious and transgressor', see Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, 1985, vol. 11, p. 199.
- 114 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 67; Qur'an 73:16, 79:17.
- 115 Al-Samurra'i, Ibrahim (1994), *Fi al-Lahajat al-Arabiyyah*, pp. 112–113.
- 116 Lyall, Charles, *Ancient Arabic Poetry*, p. xxxiv.
- 117 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 70–80.
- 118 For further contradictory meanings of words and concepts, see Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 555–556; al-Samurra'i, Ibrahim (1994), *Fi al-Lahajat al-Arabiyyah al-Quadimah*, Beirut: Dar al-Hadathah li al-tiba'ah, pp. 111–116; Amin, Ahmad, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 52; al-Zayyat, Ahmad, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyyah*, p. 14.
- 119 Al-Samurra'i, Ibrahim, *Fi al-Lahajat al-Arabiyyah*, p. 6, see pp. 7–17.
- 120 Al-Zayyat, Ahmad, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyyah*, p. 14.
- 121 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 129.
- 122 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 38.
- 123 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 38.
- 124 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 13, pp. 498–499.
- 125 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 477.
- 126 Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 561.
- 127 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 1, pp. 69–78, see pp. 4–5, 24.
- 128 Al-Zamakshari, Abu al-Quasim Jar Allah Muhammad (1856), *Al-Kashshaf 'an Haqa'iq al-Tanzil*. Calcutta: Matba'at al-Laysi, comments on verse 12:35, esp. Ibn Mas'ud's reading this verse and what Umar Ibn al-Khatib said to him.
- 129 Labid became a Muslim at the hands of the Prophet. Labid then stopped to write poetry until he died in AH 41/AD 662 (at 157 years of age) during the Caliphate of Mu'awiyah. For further details see al-Zayyat, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi*, pp. 68–69; Qumayyah, *Sharh al-Mu'allaqat*, p. 182.
- 130 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 4, p. 223; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabadat*, vol. 1, p. 212; Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, p. 203.
- 131 Clouston, *Arabian Poetry*, p. 39.
- 132 Labid, *Divan*, Poem 36, verse 8, see Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 551.
- 133 Clouston, *Arabian Poetry*, p. xlv.
- 134 Al-'Asqalani, al-Hafiz (1987) *Fath al-Bari li Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, Cairo: Dar al-Rayyan li al-Turath, vol. 6, p. 636; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 181, Ibn al-Kalbi, *Tashil*, p. 5.
- 135 Amin, Ahmad, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 52; Husayn, Taha, *Adab al-Jahili*, p. 70, see pp. 71–80.
- 136 Farrukh, *Khamsat Shu'ara' Jahiliun*, p. 7.
- 137 Ibn Kathir, *Bidayah*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 177–178; see *Tafsir* (verse 140 *surah* 6).
- 138 In Goldziher's view, the expression (*yusaffihu ahlamana*) 'branding as barbaric acts (*jahiliyyah*)...' Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 207.
- 139 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 303.
- 140 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 303, vol. 4, pp. 302–303.
- 141 Al-Tabari, Abi Ja'far Muhammad (1997), *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, vol. 1, p. 550.
- 142 Qur'an 5:49–50.
- 143 Qur'an 2:19, 20.

- 144 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 34.
- 145 Qur'an 2:78; 3:20, 75; 62:2.
- 146 Qur'an 7:157; 62:2.
- 147 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 122; al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 13, pp. 352, 3; vol. 7, p. 298.
- 148 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 354; also see al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 4, p. 45.
- 149 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 116; al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 2, p. 5.
- 150 Qur'an 3:20 those who received Scriptures are the people of the Book, but those who have not received Scriptures are *ummiyyin*, see comments on this verse in *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. Mushaf al-Madinah al-Nabawiyah, King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex (n.d.) p. 145; for further details, see al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 4, p. 45; also see al-Tabarsi, Abi Ali al-Fadl. *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, five volumes, vol. 1–2, p. 719.
- 151 Abduh, Muhammad, *Tafsir al-Manar*, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2nd edn, n.d. vol. 1, p. 359.
- 152 Abduh, Muhammad, *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. 1, pp. 358, 359; also see vol. 3, pp. 254–260.
- 153 Qur'an 62:2.
- 154 Abduh, Muhammad, *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. 1, pp. 358–359, 361.
- 155 Qur'an 2:78–79; see al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 2, pp. 6–7 the fourth point 'our scholars said...' also the analysis of 'our scholars...' refers explicitly to the 'Jews and Christians' or the people of the Book. Also, al-Tabarsi, reported that 'Abu 'Ubaydah said "al-ummiyyun are the peoples (*umam*: nations) who have no Book or Scriptures." ' Al-Tabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayan*, 1st edn vol. 1–2, p. 290 (commentary on the Qur'an 2: 78). Also, compare 'Ikrimah's narration from Ibn 'Abbas, mentioned in al-Tabarsi, *Majma'*, vol. 1–2, p. 292, with 'Ikrimah is al-Dahhak's view, mentioned in al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 2, p. 5. These two narrations fairly well suggest that the verse refers to the learned people of the Book (Christians and Jews).
- 156 Abduh, Muhammad, *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. 1, p. 358.
- 157 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 4, pp. 45, 118, vol. 18, pp. 91–92 see the word *ummi* in these pages.
- 158 Al-Wahidi, Abu al-Hasan Ali, *Asbab al-Nuzul*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, pp. 90, 94, 2nd edn; Ali, Jawad, *Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 95, 105.
- 159 Qur'an 3:70–71.
- 160 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 146.
- 161 Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 236.
- 162 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, pp. 623–624.
- 163 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 146.
- 164 Mu'allaqat (plural) as applied to the Ancient Arabic Prize Poems, refers to those poems which were considered as the most excellent poem. After they were approved by the annual assembly, they were then written upon silk, in characters of gold, and hung up in the Temple (*Ka'abah*). For further detail see Clouston, *Arabic Poetry*, introduction, p. xxxii.
- 165 Clouston, *Arabic Poetry*, p. 2.
- 166 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 203.
- 167 Ibn 'Aqil, *Sharh Ibn 'Aqil*, vol. 2, p. 126.
- 168 Wright, *A Grammar of Arabic Language*, vol. 2, p. 290.
- 169 For further details on these grammars, see Ibn 'Aqil, *Sharh Ibn 'Aqil*, pp. 124–126.
- 170 Clouston, *Arabic Poetry*, p. 2 view of Sir William Jones.
- 171 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 205.
- 172 Clouston, *Arabic Poetry*, p. 2.
- 173 Al-Zayyat, Ahmad, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyyah*, pp. 64–65, 66–68 esp. opinion of the poet; also see Qumayyah, *Sharh al-Mu'allaqat*, pp. 212–231.
- 174 Al-Hamawi, 'Ali Taqiyy al-Din Abu Bakr Ibn (1991), *Khazant al-Adab wa Ghayat al-Irab* (by 'Isam Shi'itu), Beirut: Dar wa Maktabat al-Hilal, vol. 2, chapter 'Mushakalah' (Similarity), pp. 252–253, esp. 252.

- 175 Ibn 'Aqil, *Sharh Ibn 'Aqil*, vol. 2, p. 210.
- 176 Wright, *A Grammar of Arabic Language*, vol. 2, p. 294.
- 177 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 205.
- 178 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 167, 221–223; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 370, 380; also see Gibbon (1969), *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, London: The New English Library, pp. 302, 305, 306.
- 179 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 204.
- 180 Ibn Abd Rabbuh, *al-'Iqd al-Farid*, vol. 1, pp. 135–136.
- 181 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 13, pp. 497–499; see Qur'an 2:13, 130, 142; 7:66, 67, 72.
- 182 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, pp. 207–208.
- 183 Ibn Qutaybah, Abu Mohammed Abdullah (1977), *Al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'ara'*, Ahmad Shakir (ed.), Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif on AH 1363, pp. 137–138.
- 184 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 203.
- 185 'Amr Ibn Kulthum, *Mu'allaqah*, line 53; Husayn, Taha, *Adab jahili*, pp. 222–223; al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 207.
- 186 Al-Hamawi, *Khazant al-Adab*, vol. 2, chapter 'Mushakalah' (Similarity), pp. 252–253, esp. 252.
- 187 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 205.
- 188 Al-Shintimari, *Al-Shu'ara' al-Sittah al-Jahiliyyin*, p. 287.
- 189 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 205.
- 190 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 207.
- 191 Van Gelder (1988), *The Bad and the Ugly*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 18; also see Gibb, H.A.R. (1982), *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, ch. 11 'The Animistic Substrate'; also Izutsu, Toshikiko (1964), *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung*, Tokyo: The New Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, pp. 52–57, also see ch. 8, 'jahiliyyah and Islam', pp. 203–205.
- 192 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 146; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 4, p. 14, Qur'an 37:99.
- 193 Qur'an 11:75.
- 194 Qur'an 3:67, 95; 2:35; 4:124; 6:79, 162; 10:105.
- 195 Compare the word Muslim in the Qur'an 2:135; 3:67; 4:125; 6:79 with the Qur'anic word *halim* 9:114; 11:75; 37:101.
- 196 Qur'an 11:84–91.
- 197 Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 9, p. 87; vol. 16, p. 151; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 456; also see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 146.
- 198 Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 9, p. 87; vol. 16, p. 151; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 456; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 146.
- 199 Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 9, p. 87.
- 200 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 70–80.
- 201 Qur'an 3:154; 5:50; 33:33; 48:26.
- 202 Ibn al-Kalbi, *Tashil*, p. 5.
- 203 Brockelman, Karl (1949), *Tarikh al-Shu'ub al-Islamiyyah*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm Li al-Malayin, p. 38.
- 204 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 306–307.
- 205 Qur'an 6:56, pp. 150–152.
- 206 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 70–80.
- 207 For further derivations of the term *jahl*, see *al-Kitab al-Muqaddas* (The Holy Book), Dar al-Kitab al-Muqaddas fi al-Sharq al-Awsat [Arabic n.d.], pp. 972–985. The word ignorance or ignorant appeared in some of the English editions, but fool or foolish appeared in others. In the Arabic version the root 'J.H.L.' (*jahl*) and its derivations are explicitly mentioned.
- 208 Amin, Ahmad, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 52; Husayn, Taha, *Adab al-Jahili*, p. 70, see pp. 71–75.
- 209 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, part 2, p. 477.
- 210 For further detail, see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 358–370.

- 211 'Amr Ibn al-'As converted to Islam in AD 626. In AD 640, 'Amr led a Muslim army to Egypt. He ruled Egypt in the period AH 20/AD 640–AH 25/AD 646, and again from August 38/659 until his death in January 43/664, see al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 549.
- 212 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p.372.
- 213 The term *Ṣakat* means purification, growth, blessing and praise. In Islamic jurisprudence *Ṣakat* is incumbent on individuals of wealth or property.
- 214 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, pp. 373–374.
- 215 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 549; Brockelman, *Tarikh*, p. 41.
- 216 Qur'an 33:20, 22.
- 217 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 207.
- 218 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 2, p. 44, fn. 3, p. 45.
- 219 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 2, pp. 44–47.
- 220 Ibn Kathir, *Bidayah*, vol. 2, p. 157.
- 221 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 2, p. 61.
- 222 Words used in the Qur'an in Makkah, *jahilin* (singular *jahil*), Qur'an 6:35; 7:199; 11:46,47; 12:33; 38:55. Another plural form is *jahilun* (singular *jahil*), Qur'an 2:89; 25:63; 39:64. The word *jahl* used in the Qur'an in Makkah: Qur'an 6:11; 11:29; 46:23. Adjective: Qur'an 6:54; 16:119. The singular (*jahil*) used in the Qur'an in Madinah: Qur'an 2:273. For plural (*jahilin*) used by the Qur'an in Madinah, see, Qur'an 2:67. Adjective used by the Qur'an in Madinah: Qur'an 4:17; 33:72; 49: 6. For the word (*jahiliyyah*) used by the Qur'an in Madinah, see Qur'an 3:154; 5:50; 33:33; 48:26.
- 223 Peter, F.E. (1994), *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 71.
- 224 Qur'an 3:154; 5:50; 33:33; 48:26.
- 225 Al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 8, pp. 126, 127.
- 226 Al-Zayyat, Ahmad, *Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabi*, pp. 56–58, cf. p. 56.
- 227 Husayn, Taha, *Adab Jahili*, pp. 231, 234.
- 228 Al-Asfahani, Abu al-Faraj Ali (1992), *Aghani*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, vol. 9, p. 125; Shawqi, Dayf, *Tarikh al-Adab*, p. 337.
- 229 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 11–12; Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 414.
- 230 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, pp. 20–21.
- 231 Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, p. 414.
- 232 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 66; see also, al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 6, pp. 210–211.
- 233 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 67.
- 234 Al-Tabarsi, *Mujama' al-Bayan*, vol. 3–4, p. 316.
- 235 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 94, see his report from Ibn Hatim.
- 236 Al-Abbas was the Prophet's paternal uncle and the grandfather of the Abbasid Caliphs who ruled in the period (750–1258). He was two or three years older than Muhammad was. Al-Abbas fought against the Prophet in the battle of Badr and became one of the war prisoners, but paid ransom to free himself and two sons of his brothers. He then embraced Islam in the year of the conquest of Makkah AD 630, see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, vol. 2, pp. 220–222; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, vol. 4, p. 168.
- 237 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 547.
- 238 Later, Khalid Ibn al-Walid embraced Islam in AD December 629.
- 239 Summary from Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, pp. 58–73.
- 240 Ibn Abbas, Abdullah (1951) *Tanwir al-Miqyas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas*, Abi Tahir al-Fayruzabadi (ed.), Beirut: Dar al-Jil, n.d. p. 47.
- 241 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 555; al-Tabarsi, *Mujama' al-Bayan*, vol. 1–2, p. 863; al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 4, p. 244.
- 242 For further detail, see Ibn Abbas, *Tanwir al-Miqyas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas*, Abi Tahir al-Fayruzabadi (ed.), Beirut: Dar al-Jil, n.d., p. 46.
- 243 Ibn Abbas, *Tanwir al-Miqyas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas*, p. 260.
- 244 Summary, cf. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, pp. 90–94.

- 245 See Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 14, p. 179.
 246 See Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 14, p. 180.
 247 Al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf*, p. 1129 esp. comments on verse 33:33.
 248 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 202, fn. 3.
 249 Summarized from Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, vol. 3, pp. 336–353.
 250 Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 6, p. 30; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 2; see Qur'an 5:3; 4:79; 2:107; 34:28; 3:45–49; 37:139–147; 11: 6, 25, 50, 97; 71:1; 26:123–125.
 251 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 547, 549–551.
 252 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, pp. 245–267.
 253 Al-Ajuz, Ahmad Muhyi al-Din (1969), *Manahij al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, vol. 1, p. 249.

3 Qutb's intellectual life and character

- 1 Qutb, Sayyid, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, El-Minya, Egypt: Matba'at al-Sadiq, n.d., p. 15.
 2 Al-Sayyid, Ahmad Lutf, 'Al-Qalaq al-Fikri', *Al-Jaridah*, n. 1665, 31 August, 1912, pp. 1, 3.
 3 Shepard, William (1996), *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. xiv.
 4 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim (1996), *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 95.
 5 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 109.
 6 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 5.
 7 Qutb, Sayyid, *Tijl mina al-Qaryah*, Jaddah: al-Dara al-Sa'udiyyah, n.d., p. 80, it was published in Cairo, in 1946 with dedication to Taha Husayn.
 8 Qutb, *Tijl mina al-Qaryah*, pp. 37, 33, 156, 207.
 9 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 22.
 10 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 26.
 11 Qutb, *Tijl*, pp. 36–37.
 12 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 37.
 13 'Kuttab' is a traditional school for reading, writing and memorizing the Qur'an.
 14 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 39.
 15 Qutb, *Tijl*, pp. 41–43.
 16 Qutb, Sayyid, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, trans. International Islamic Federation, p. 69.
 17 Qutb *Tijl*, p. 53.
 18 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 54.
 19 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 55.
 20 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 55.
 21 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 55.
 22 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 147.
 23 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 149.
 24 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 149, among these: al-Barudi (1840–1904); Shawqi (1868–1932); Hafiz Ibrahim (1870–1932).
 25 See 'Amir, Ali Ahmad, 'Tahta al-Misbah', *Al-Ussu'*, n. 35, Wednesday, 25 July (1934), p. 8.
 26 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 131.
 27 Qutb, *Tijl*, pp. 127–128; magic written by Abu Ma'shar Ja 'far Ibn Muhammad al-Balkhi (d. 272/886).
 28 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 131.
 29 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 141.
 30 Qutb, *Tijl*, pp. 146–147.
 31 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 146.
 32 Egypt's Ministry for Information, *Muhammad Farid*, pp. 17–18.

- 33 Al-Ghayati, Huda, 'My Father Ali al-Ghayati', *al-Azhar Magazine*, November (1994), vol. 67, part 6, pp. 787–790.
- 34 The year 1919 associated Qutb (1906–1966) with al-Banna (1906–1949), al-Hudaybi (1891–1973) and Naguib Mahfuz (1911–) in active participation in the nationalist revolt led by Sa'īd Zaghlul against British occupation of Egypt. Nasser (1918–1970) who will come in the 1950s and 1960s to embody Egyptian nationalism much as Zaghlul in 1919 was about one year old. See Munson, Henry (1988), *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East*, London: Yale University Press, p. 76; see *Majallat al-Jil al-Jadid* (1954), 19 November, pp. 7,10; cf. Mitchell, Richard P. (1993) *Society of Muslim Brothers*, Oxford: Oxford University press, p. 19.
- 35 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 151.
- 36 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Al-Islam wa al-Ra'smaliyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 5–6.
- 37 See Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 87.
- 38 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 12.
- 39 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 12.
- 40 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 12.
- 41 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 41.
- 42 Qutb, *al-Ra'smaliyyah*, p. 63.
- 43 Qutb, *al-Ra'smaliyyah*, pp. 69–70; also see pp. 71, 85, 105–106.
- 44 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, pp. 99–100.
- 45 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 217.
- 46 Qutb, *Tijl*, p. 207.
- 47 Qutb, Sayyid (1969), *Naqd Kitāb Mustaqbal al-thaqafah fi Misr*, Jaddah: al-Dar al-Saudiyyah, p. 63.
- 48 Qutb, *Naqd Kitāb Mustaqbal al-thaqafah fi Misr*, p. 63. In 1933, the year of Qutb's graduation, the Dean of the Faculty of *Dar al-'Ulum* was Zaki al-Muhandis who also was the deputy president of the Academy of Arabic. He was the maternal uncle of Kamal Hasan Ali the Prime Minister of Egypt in 1984–1985. See Ali, Kamal Hasan (1994) *Mashawir al-'Umr: Asrar wa Khafaya Sab'ina 'aman min 'Umr Misr fi al-Harb wa al-Mukhabarat wa al-Siyasah*, Cairo: al-Shuruq, p. 26.
- 49 Qutb, Sayyid, *Muhimmat al-Sha'ir fi al-Hayah wa Shi'r al-Jil al-Hadir*, Cairo: al-Shuruq, n.d., pp. 9–10; Qutb, *Naqd Kitāb Mustaqbal al-thaqafah fi Misr*, p. 9; also see al-Khabbas, Abdullah (1983), *Sayyid Qutb al-adib al-Naqid*, Al-Zarqa': Maktabat al-Manar, p. 112; Al-Khalidi, Salah (1994), *Sayyid Qutb Min al-Milad ila al-Istishhad*, 2nd edn, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, pp. 79–80.
- 50 Shepard, William, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xv.
- 51 Abu Bakr, Muhammad al-Awwal (1992), *Sayyid Qutb wa al-Naqd al-Adabi*, Riyadh: Dar al-Rifa, p. 16, his source is Muhammad Qutb; also see the introduction of Qutb's *Ma'alim* which translated into Urdu by Hamidi Khalil Ahmad, p. 35.
- 52 Abd al-Baqi, Muhammad Husayn, *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa Adabuh*, al-Mansurah, Egypt: Dar al-wafa', p. 43.
- 53 See list of his works in al-Kabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 367–389; Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 401–444.
- 54 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 30–31.
- 55 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 30–31.
- 56 Husayn was a Consultant from 26 May 1942 to 16 October 1944.
- 57 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 30–31.
- 58 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 30–31.
- 59 Abu Bakr Muhammad, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 32.
- 60 For Qutb's characters, see Qutb, Sayyid, 'Bayna al-'Aqqad wa al-Rafi'i', *Al-Risalah*, n. 256, 30 May (1938), p. 8; Qutb, Sayyid, 'M'rakat al-Naqd al-Adabi wa Dawafi'aha al-Asilah', *Al-Ushu'*, n. 31 (1934), p. 17. Taha Husayn's response was published in *al-Wadi*, 4 July (1934) under the title 'Awdah ila Akhlaq al-Udaba' (Return to the Ethics of the Men of Letters).

- 61 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Laghw al-Sayf (Nonsense of Summer)', *al-Risalah*, n. 681, 22 July (1946), pp. 5–6.
- 62 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 110.
- 63 See Qutb's 8 articles under the title 'Ghazal al-'Aqqad', *al-Risalah*, n. 265 (pp. 1263–1266), n. 266 (pp. 1294–1297), n. 268 (pp. 1380–1383), n. 269 (pp. 1425–1429), n. 271 (pp. 1506–1509), n. 272 (pp. 1541–1542), n. 274 (pp. 1615–1617), n. 276 (pp. 1703–1705).
- 64 Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was a novelist and a poet, a Victorian and a modern inheritor of the high Romantic tradition of Great Britain. He says:

In 'Molly Gone': No more singing by Molly to me
 In the evening when she
 Was in mood and in voice

In 'Lost Love': I sing my songs once more,
 And presently hear
 His footstep near
 As if it would stay;
 But he goes his way
 And shuts a distant door.

- See Mallet, Phillip (ed.), *The Achievement of Thomas Hardy*. London: Macmillan Press (2000), pp. ix, 123. Hardy wrote so much with great standing about women. He made a special appeal to feminist critics. His criticism was sharply focused on his own society and was especially revolutionary in his criticism of marriage and the conventional ethics of sexuality. His criticism is appealing to radical critics. In most of Hardy's works 'Fate' is the villain. This is clearly seen in both of his novels *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) where he summed up his anger at the unfairness of life in general. In these novels, Hardy treated the theme of sexual attraction with a frankness that shocked the people of his time. The public was angry and the outcry against these novels was great. He stopped writing novels and turned to poetry. He wrote lyrics of high quality, three-part epic drama in verse, *The Dynasts* (1903–1908). He also wrote some poetry centred around Napoleon. Hardy used abstract figures to symbolize 'Immanent Will' as a blind force that he felt moves the world. Critics view Hardy's characters as people with psychological weakness. See, Hardy, Thomas (1974) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, introduction by Ian Gregor and notes by Bryn Caless, London: Macmillan, pp. 12–15; also see Langbaum, Robert (1995), *Thomas Hardy in Our Time*, London: Macmillan Press, p. vii.
- 65 Al-'Aqqad Abbas, *Khamsat Dawawin li-al-'Aqqad*, Cairo: al-Hayy'ah al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah li- al-Kitab, p. 92, ff. 1.
- 66 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Ghazal al-Shuyukh fi Ra'y al-'Aqqad', *Al-Balagh*, n. 67, 2 March 1928, pp. 32–33.
- 67 See Qutb, Sayyid, Bayna al-'Aqqad wa al-Rafi 'i', article number 5, *Al-Risalah*, n. 256 (1928), p. 906.
- 68 Al-'Aqqad, *Khamsat Dawawin Li al-'Aqqad*, p. 91.
- 69 Al-'Aqqad, *Khamsat Dawawin Li al-'Aqqad*, pp. 92–93.
- 70 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 112.
- 71 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 113.
- 72 Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 303.
- 73 Qutb, 'Ila Ustadhina Dr. Ahmad Amin', *Al-Thaqafah*, n. 663 (1951), pp. 7–8.
- 74 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 111.
- 75 See a document dated 02/010/1965, register number 6, library of *Dar al-'Ulum*.
- 76 See Abu al-Anwar, Muhammad (1971), *Al-Ma'arik al-Adabiyyah fi Misr*, PhD Thesis, Cairo: Dar al-'Ulum Library code no. 50/1971, pp. 327–362, cf., Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 114.
- 77 See al-Fiqi, Ali (1977), *Ibrahim Naji*, Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Misriyyah li al-Kitab, p. 277.

- 78 See Mandur, Mūhammad, *Al-Shi'r al-Misri Bada Shawqī*, vol. 3, (Cairo: Dar Nahdat Misr. n.d.), and the earlier edition of the same volume published in 1958 by The Institute of Arabic Studies, Cairo.
- 79 See al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 135–164.
- 80 Qutb, 'Ila Ustadhina Dr. Ahmad Amin', *Al-Thaqafah*, n. 663 (1951), p. 8.
- 81 Abu Bakr, Muhammad, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 16.
- 82 Qutb, 'Bayna al-'Aqqad wa al-Rafi'i', *Al-Resalah*, vol. 1, n. 201, 25 April (1938), p. 694.
- 83 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Rabat al-Muqaddas li Tawfiq al-Hakim', *Al-Risalah*, vol. 2, n. 598, 11 December (1944), pp. 2010–2012.
- 84 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Kutub wa Shakhsiyyat', *Al-Thaqafah*, vol. 4, n. 193 (1942), pp. 13–15.
- 85 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Siddiqah bint al-Siddiq', *Al-Risalah*, n. 551 (1944), p. 91.
- 86 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 203; Shepard's trans., p. 305, para. 166.
- 87 'Amir, Ali Ahmad, 'Tahta al-Misbah', *al-Usubu'*, p. 8.
- 88 This was published in *al-Balagh* and referred to by Qutb in 'Al-Sahifah wa al-Madrasah: Ayyuhuma Tu'aththir wa-limadha?' *al-Balagh Al-Usubu'*, 23 May (1934), n. 26, p. 14.
- 89 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Mar'ah Lughzun Basit', *Al-Usubu'*, n. 45, Wednesday, 3 October (1934), p. 9.
- 90 Debates involved al-Rafi'i, Taha Husayn, Mandur, al-'Aqqad and others. For further details see Abd al-Baqi (1986), *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 78–90; al-Khabbas (1983), *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 256–273 also see Qutb, 'Qimat al-Fadilah Bayna al-Fard wa al-Jama'ah', *Al-Usubu'*, vol. 3, n. 28 (1934), pp. 16–18.
- 91 Abu Bakr Muhammad, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 16.
- 92 *Majallat al-Usubu'*, Wednesday, 25 July (1934), n. 35, p. 8, also see al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 94–95.
- 93 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 41.
- 94 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 575–580; al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 363–364, 367–398; Moussalli, Ahmad (1993), *Al-Usubiyyah al-Islamiyyah: Dirasah fi al-Khitab al-Aydiyuluji wa al-Siyasi 'inda Sayyid Qutb: Bahth Muqaran li-Mabadi' al-Usubiyyin wa al-Islahiyyin*, Beirut: al-Nashir li al-Tiba'ah, 1st edn, pp. 44–57.
- 95 Khalil, 'Imad al-Din (1994), *Al-Manzur al-Tarikhi fi Fikr Sayyid Qutb*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1st edn, p. 6.
- 96 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 15, 114–117, for more about Qutb's works see pp. 401–445.
- 97 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 111.
- 98 See Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck (1982), *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History*, New York: State University of New York, p. 225, chapter 7, fn. 1.
- 99 Qutb, *al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 16.
- 100 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 131, 138.
- 101 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Hulm al-Fajr', *Al-Risalah*, vol. 2, n. 588, October (1994), p. 917.
- 102 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Qafilat al-Raqiq', *Al-Kitab*, vol. 2, n. 8 (1946), pp. 290–291.
- 103 Barakat, Muhammad Tawfiq, *Sayyid Qutb: Khulasat Hayatih, Minhajuh fi al-Harakah wa al-Naqd al-Muwajjah ilaiyyh*, p. 4, fn. 3; also see, Haddad, *Contemporary Islam*, p. 227.
- 104 For cross examination see Qutb, *Ra'smalyyah*, p. 66, fn.1; (1995) and Qutb, Sayyid (1995), *Hadha al-Din*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 32, fn.1; 'Adalah (1983), p. 83; William Shepard's trans. p. 117 ff. 87.
- 105 al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 105–106.
- 106 al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 99.
- 107 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 40.
- 108 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 105–107.
- 109 Qutb, Sayyid, *Limadha A'damuni*, Jaddah: al-Sharikah al-Saudiyyah li al-Abhath wa al-Taswiq, pp. 13–14.

- 110 See Amin, Hasan, 'Abd al-Nasser Kon Za 'im Sufi', *Rose el-Youssef*, n. 3427, 14/2/1994, p. 59; Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, Oxford, p. 127.
- 111 See *Rose el-Youssef*, no. 3507, 28/8/1995, p. 57.
- 112 Al-Digwi was the head of the Military Court, which carried the execution verdict against Qutb.
- 113 Habib, Tariq (1997), *The Files of July Revolution: Testimonies of 122 of its Designers and Contemporaries*, Cairo: al-Ahram, 1st edn, p. 277.
- 114 Habib, Tariq, *The Files of July Revolution*, (1997), p. 277.

4 The *jahiliyyah* theory's first stage: 1925–1939

- 1 See Binder, Leonard (1988), *Islamic Liberalism: A Critic of Development Ideologies*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 174–178; Haddad, Yvonne, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival', in John Esposito (ed.), *Voice of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford University Press (1983), p. 85; Choueiri, Youssef M. (1990), *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London, Pinter, p. 96; Kepel, Gilles (1985), *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and The Pharaoh*, California: University of California Press, pp. 44, 48; Shepard, William (1996), *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. xxv.
- 2 William Shepard in a meeting with him during his visit to Monash University (19 June 2004).
- 3 Shepard, William, 'Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyyah', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35 (2003), p. 541 ff. 35.
- 4 See Singh, N.K. and Agwan, A.R. (ed.) (2000), *Encyclopaedia of the Holy Qur'an*, Maujpur, Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, Tarun Offset Press, 1st edn. (2000 – on Mawdudi, see vol. 3 L-O, pp. 9–11, 808; vol. 1 A-E p. 4347 – on Qutb, see vol. 4 P-S-I, pp. 1331–1344).
- 5 See al-Nadawi, Abu al-Hasan (1990), *Shakhsiyyat wa Kutub*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, pp. 101–102.
- 6 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim (1996), *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 139.
- 7 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 139.
- 8 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 93 and ff. 2–7.
- 9 Qutb, 'Al-Sirr (The Secret)', *Dar al-'Ulum*, n. 3, (1935), p. 82.
- 10 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, El-Minia, Egypt: Matba 'at Sadiq, n.d. pp. 5–8.
- 11 See Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 5–6 esp. under the title '*al-Jism wa al-Aql wa al-Ruh*' (Body, Intellect and Spirit), also see pp. 7–8 esp. under the title '*al-Jism wa al-Zaman wa al-Wahdah*' (Body, Time and Unity).
- 12 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 18–20.
- 13 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 87–90.
- 14 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 32–37.
- 15 Al-Sadat, Muhammad Anwar, *Al-Bahth 'an al-Zat*, Cairo: al-Maktab al-Misri al-Hadith n.d. p. 17, see pp. 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 62, 86, 100; also see Al-Sadat Muhammad Anwar (1965), *Qissat al-Thawrah Kamilatan*, Cairo: al-Dar al-Qawmiyyah, li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, p. 32.
- 16 Abd al-Baqi, Muhammad Husayn (1983), *Sayyid Qutb: Hayatuh wa Adabuh*, al-Mansurah, Egypt: Dar al-Wafa', 1st edn, p. 25.
- 17 This will be further detailed in Chapter 5 under subtitle 'Social reform'.
- 18 Qutb, *al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 203 fn. 1.
- 19 Qutb, *al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 203 fn. 1.
- 20 The word '*al-kinanah*' is usually used as an alternative to the word 'Egypt'. It means that Egypt is divinely protected '*Kinanatu Allah fi Ardih*', see al-Kilani, Sami (1973), *Ma'a Taha Husayn*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p. 77. Qutb used the phrase to reflect

- more of his respect and love of the country. The word ‘*kinanah*’ can be explained through the concept of ‘preserve, protect, sustain, defend, and guard’, see Ibn Manzur, Abi al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Muhammad (1994), *Lisan al-Arab*, Beirut: Dar Sadir, 3rd edn, vol. 13, pp. 361–362; also see Qur’an 56:23.
- 21 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, pp. 204–205.
- 22 For the relationship between al-Aqqad and Qutb, see Chapter 3.
- 23 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 202, p. 207 second last line.
- 24 See Kotb, Sayed, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. John B. Hardie, Washington, DC: American Council of Learned Societies (1953), reprint New York: Octagon Books (1970), p. 143, also see p. 144.
- 25 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 186.
- 26 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 366 (glossary).
- 27 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 204 ff.
- 28 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 204 fn. 2.
- 29 Later, in his first edition of *Social Justice* (1949), Qutb stressed crusades and imperialism with no difference between them in their hostility to Islam. His treatment was harsher. See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, pp. 283–284, paragraph 65–66, pp. 284–285, paragraph 68.
- 30 The young al-Abid, Qutb says, established this organization after the Egyptian army departed from Sudan in 1924, see Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 188.
- 31 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, pp. 188–189.
- 32 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 189.
- 33 Later, Qutb used these words also in 1947 to label the ‘imperialism movement’ as a ‘savage barbarous movement’ (*al-Isti’mar harakah mutabarbarah hamajjiyyah*). See, Qutb Sayyid, Lughat al-Abid (Language of Slaves), *Al-Risalah*, n. 709, February (1947), p. 134. See chapter 5 for further details.
- 34 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 191.
- 35 The notion of this article (of 1933) explains the notion in a later article entitled ‘The World is an Undutiful Boy’ which was written in the USA, during his visit in the period 1948–1950. It means that ‘the world’ which is ‘on the run’ in the earlier article became ‘undutiful boy’ in the later one. I have made this latter article available in this book. More about the article see Calvert, John, ‘The World is an Undutiful Boy’: Sayyid Qutb’s American Experience’. *Islam & Christian Muslim Relations*, Abingdon: Curfax Publishing Company; Marsh (2000), vol. 11, n. 1, pp. 87–103.
- 36 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Al-‘Alam Yajri’, *Al-Risalah*, n. 17, 15 September (1933), p. 13. The notion of this paragraph is similar to the first paragraph of his last book *Ma‘alim* (1964), only two years before his death in 1966, see Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Ma‘alim Li al-Tariq*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn, p. 5.
- 37 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, pp. 204–205.
- 38 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Ittirabun Haniq’, *Al-Balagh*, n. 108, April (1929) p. 27. Later, Qutb was in prison and received the Military Court’s decision of execution on the gallows. But he rejected the opportunity, which was given to him to save his life by only saying ‘sorry’. He did not surrender: ‘when said to him to say sorry to Abd al-Nasser, Qutb said “This index-finger which witnesses in the prayers that Allah is One, rejects to write anything authorizing the rule of a tyrant (*taghiyah*)”’. For further detail see al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 471–476, esp. p. 474.
- 39 He used the word *jihad* also in the context of events in Palestine in 1931. In this and other poems, Qutb’s criticism of both Egypt and the West was harsher, see Qutb *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, pp. 188–196.
- 40 See Qutb, *Ma‘alim*, p. 62.
- 41 Al-Sayyid, Ahmad Lutfi (1963), *Mabadi’ Fi al-Siyasah wa al-Adab wa al-Ijtima’*, Cairo: Silsilat Kitab al-Hilal (Series of al-Hilal Book) n. 149, August, pp. 106–112, esp. p. 106.

- 42 Al-Sayyid, Ahmad Lutfi (1963) *Mabadi' Fi al-Siyasah wa al-Adab wa al-Ijtima'*, pp. 106–107.
- 43 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, April (1929), n. 108, p. 27.
- 44 Egyptian currency's basic unit is 'Pound'; 1 Pound = 100 piaster; 1 piaster = 10 Millims which disappeared since 1960s.
- 45 The word *lahw* is play or entertainment, but it is in the negative sense here; means waste of time and carelessness.
- 46 Al-Hakim, Tawfiq (1938), *Tahta Shams al-Fikr* (Under the Sun of Thought), Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab wa Matba'atiha, pp. 183–186, cf. 183–184; republished under the title 'al-Shahhadhun (Beggars)', *Majallat Akhir Sa'ah*, December 4 (1938); republished under the same title with other articles in *Al-Shahhadhan'*, in Tawfiq al-Hakim (ed.) *Qultu Dhata Yawm* (One day I have said), Cairo: Mu'assasat Akhbar al-Yawm, Series of Kitab al-Yawm, 1 August (1970), pp. 115–117, cf. 115–116, he also noted that Abu Bakr (the first successor of the Prophet of Islam) distinguished between his responsibility as a ruler and his work to earn something for living, see p. 117.
- 47 Qutb Sayyid, 'Safhah min Safahat al-Isti 'mar', *Al-Balagh*, n. 89, August (1928), pp. 14–15.
- 48 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, April, n. 108, p. 27.
- 49 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 38–39.
- 50 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 39; the notion here is similar to that of Imam al-Mawardi (d. 450/1058). In the language of his era, al-Mawardi says in poetry: 'I can see that ill conduct caused the epoch to slope towards all types of *jahl*', see al-Mawardi, Abi al-Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad (1988), *Adab al-Dunia wa al-Din*, Beirut: Dar wa Maktabat al-Hilal (1988), p. 47.
- 51 Qutb, *Al-shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 39, 40.
- 52 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, April (1929), p. 27.
- 53 Qutb, Sayyid, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Trans International Islamic Federation, n.d., p. 65, see p. 66; also see Qutb Sayyid (1983), *Al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 91.
- 54 Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, p. 121.
- 55 Qutb, *Mushkilat Hadarah*, pp. 122–128; also see pp. 91, 122–128; for further details of this link, see *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol. 4, p. 2144 (this is of the revised part which reflects Qutb's view in the 1960s); *Islam: the Religion*, pp. 59–60, 65; *Adalah*, p. 126; *Ma'alim*, p. 121.
- 56 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, April, n. 108, pp. 27–28.
- 57 The word *mubham* can be translated *obscure*, but I translated it *uncovered* to fit in Qutb's idea that the *Iman* uncovered the *jahalat* of all eras in the same poem.
- 58 Qutb's word is '*abad*' (singular '*abid*' or Era), see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 3, p. 68.
- 59 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 43 for the purpose of this study, the translation is almost literal.
- 60 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 38; *Zilal*, vol. 6, pp. 3915–3919.
- 61 See Chapter 6 in this text; also see Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 6, p. 3917, vol. 3, pp. 1391–1394, 1400.
- 62 Farrukh, *Khamsat Su'ara' Jahiliyyun*, p. 7.
- 63 As for the word *jahiliyyah*, see (Qur'an 3:154; 5:50; 33:33; 48:26). The word *jahalat* appeared in Makkah see (Qur'an 6:54; 16:19), in Madinah (Qur'an 4:17; 49:6).
- 64 See Chapter 2 for further details.
- 65 Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 5, p. 92; vol. 6, p. 436; for similar notion and words in the quote, see Ibn Kathir, al-Hafiz Abi al-Fida' Isma'il (1988), *Tafsir al-Qur'an al 'Ayim*, Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1st edn, vol. 1, p. 463; vol. 2, p. 134; p. 590; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 129; Tabarsi, Abi Ali al-Fadl (1986), *Mujama' al-Bayan*, vol. 3, p. 36, esp. the Qur'anic verse mentioned in the text mentioned earlier.
- 66 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 3, p. 97; al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami'*, vol. 11, p. 339.
- 67 Wright, *A Grammar of Arabic Language*, p. 111.

- 68 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 11, p. 339.
- 69 Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'*, vol. 19, p. 122 and ff. for further detail.
- 70 Al-Ba 'labaki, Rohi (1996), *Al-Mawrid: A Modern Arabic-English Dictionary*, Beirut: Dar al-'ilm li al-Malajin, 8th edn, p. 897 esp. word *kufuran*.
- 71 For the use of the term *jahiliyyah* by early Muslims, see Chapter 2. For the use of the term *jahiliyyah* in Qutb's environment, in modern Egypt, see Chapter 5 section 'Social Reform'.
- 72 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 14.
- 73 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 69.
- 74 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, p. 203.
- 75 See Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Al-Islam wa al-Ra'smaliyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn, pp. 84, 100; *Nahwa Mujtama' Islami*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 33; *Mushkilat Hadarah*, p. 109; *Zilal*, vol. 2, pp. 1095, 1099; vol. 4, p. 2200; *Ma'alim*, p. 58.
- 76 Qutb, *Mujtama'*, pp. 31–32.
- 77 Qutb, *Mujtama'*, p. 33.
- 78 Qur'an 33:33.
- 79 Qutb, *Mujtama'*, p. 35.
- 80 Qutb completed the first edition of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* in 1959 and revised some parts in the second edition, published in 1961, see Boullata J. (2000), 'Sayyid Qutb's Literary Appreciation of the Qur'an', in Boullata J. (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*, Richmond, Surrey Curzon Press, pp. 354–371, esp. 361.
- 81 With this definition, the word *jahalath* repeated two times on one page, see Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 578. The *jahalath* is *dalath* (deviation) from guidance (*huda*). The Qur'an used the word '*dalalah*' (deviation) only nine times, among them are these: Qur'an 2:16, 175; 7:30, 61; 16:36; 27:81; 30:53.
- 82 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 603.
- 83 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 58.
- 84 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 36.
- 85 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 8.
- 86 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 3.
- 87 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 5–6.
- 88 For his view of philosophy, see Qutb, *Khasa'is*, pp. 15–16; for the relation between matter and spirit, see *Zilal*, vol. 6, pp. 3847, 3848, 3917–3918, vol. 3, pp. 1315, 1336, 1339, 1394–1396, 400; vol. 4, p. 2138; vol. 5, p. 3027; also see *Mushkilat Hadarah*, pp. 39–40, 108–109.
- 89 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 6.
- 90 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 7–8.
- 91 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 6, 7.
- 92 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 7.
- 93 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 19.
- 94 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 7.
- 95 For example, see *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 344.
- 96 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 20.
- 97 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 19.
- 98 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 89.
- 99 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 33.
- 100 For further details, see Chapters 5 and 7 in the present text.
- 101 He later discussed this issue in a separate book, Qutb, Sayyid (1993) *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an* (1947) Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 11th edn.
- 102 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 33, esp. lines 32–36 on p. 36.
- 103 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 7.
- 104 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, pp. 344, 556; vol. 4, pp. 2373, 2374; *Ma'alim*, pp. 29, 52–53, 68; *Adalah*, pp. 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 78, 80.
- 105 See Chapter 5 section 'Social Justice'.

- 106 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 13.
- 107 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 74.
- 108 The small truth is the present world including man and his mind or his consultant. This truth is a very small truth in comparison to the Great truth of the unity of existence.
- 109 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 20.
- 110 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 6–7.
- 111 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 43.
- 112 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 12.
- 113 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 5.
- 114 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 6.
- 115 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 6, 43.
- 116 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 4, 6, 43.
- 117 See Qutb, *Ẓilal*, vol. 1, p. 344.
- 118 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 36, 43.
- 119 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 5, 43, 188–189, 203–205.
- 120 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, n. 108, 10 April (1929), p. 27.
- 121 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 204–205.
- 122 Qutb, 'Ittirabun Haniq', *Al-Balagh*, n. 108, 10 April (1929), p. 27.

5 The *jahiliyyah* theory's second stage: 1939–1948

- 1 Al-Kharbutly, Ali Husni (1969), *Al-Islam wa al-Khilafah*, Beirut: Dar Beirut li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, pp. 270–282.
- 2 Foreign occupation and capitulation did not really end until 1955.
- 3 Hurani, Albert (1983), *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, London: Cambridge University Press, p. 327.
- 4 Ramadan, Abd al-'Azim, 'Fath Khaza'in al-Watha'iq al-Britaniyyah: Istikhdam al-Din fi al-Sira' al-Siyasi', *Sabah al-Kheir*, Cairo, 31 March (1977) n. 1108, pp. 19–23; Dennis, Walker, 'The Collapse of Neo-Pharaonic Nationalism in Egyptian High Culture after 1930', *Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies* (1993) vol. 1, pp. 45–49.
- 5 'Ajami, Fou'ad (1992), *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967*, Cambridge University Press, p. 135; 'Isa, Salah (1983), *Hawamish al-Maqrizi: Hikayat min Misr*, Cairo: Dar al-Qahirah li al-Tawzi' wa al-Nashr, pp. 24, 33–34.
- 6 Sadat, Anwar, *Al-Baith 'an al-Ẓat*, Cairo: al-Maktab al-Misri al-Hadith (n.d.), pp. 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28.
- 7 Al-'Azam, Yusuf (1980), *Rihlat al-Daya' li al-'Ilam al-Arabi al-Mu'asir*, Riyadh: al-Dar li al-Nashr, 3rd edn, al-Saudiyyah, pp. 11–29, 30–32.
- 8 Al-Hakim, Tawfiq, 'Al-Shahhadhun', *Akhir Saah*, 4 December (1938); republished in 1970, in al-Hakim (ed.), *Qultu Dhata Yawm*, Cairo: Mu'assasat Akhbar al-Yawm, pp. 115–117.
- 9 Sadat, Anwar (1965), *Qissat al-Thawrah Kamilatan*, Cairo: al-Qawmiyyah li al-Tiba'ah, pp. 40–41, 60–61.
- 10 Shepard, William (1996), *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. xiii.
- 11 Muhammad Husayn Haykal himself pointed out his intention behind these Islamic writings in 1933 (the year of Qutb's graduation) and emphasized that 'the increase in the number and activity of the Christian missionaries, who came to Egypt from Europe and America, created a significant reaction on all levels including the level of the government (of Isma'il Sidqi the Prime Minister of the time)... The source of these missionaries, in most cases, was the American University in Cairo... al-Shaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi established an Islamic organization... I was one of those who stood up in the face of the activity of the missionaries of the time'. Haykal made it clear that the activity of Christian missionaries in Egypt was the reason why he wrote his books '*Hayat*

- Muhammad'; 'Al-Siddiq Abu Bakr'; and 'Al-Faruq 'Umar'. See Kishk, Muhammad Jalal (1992) *Ala fi al-Fitnati Saqatu: Tahliil 'Ilmi bi al-Watha'iq li al-Fitnah al-Ta'yfiyyah*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, 1st edn. n.p. 181. Kishk's reference was Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Mudhakkirat fi al-Siyasah al-Misriyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 328–329.
- 12 Qutb, Sayyid (1993) *Al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 76–77; Hardie's trans., p. 89; Shepard's trans., p. 106 para. 11.
- 13 Haykal, Muhammad Husayn, *Al-Imbraturiyah al-Islamiyyah wa al-Amakir al-Muqaddasah*, Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, n.d., p. 34.
- 14 Sagiv, David (1995), *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt*, London: Frank Cass, p. 24.
- 15 Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, p. 327 ff. 1.
- 16 Husayn, Taha (1938), *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, pp. 1–2, 18, 41–42, 65.
- 17 Al-Kilani, Sami (1973), *Ma'a Taha Husayn*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, pp. 50–51.
- 18 Hafiz, Ahmad Hasan (1994), 'Al-Marsafi Ra'id al-Nahdah al-Mu'asirah', *al-Azhar*, September, vol. 67:4 pp. 488–492.
- 19 Al-Kilani, Sami (1973), *Ma'a Taha Husayn*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, November, 1973, pp. 49–54, 77; Hafiz, 'al-Marsafi', *al-Azhar*, September (1994), vol. 67:4, p. 491; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 327; Adams, Charles (1933), *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 259.
- 20 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 327, 324–340.
- 21 Muwaffaq, Bany al-Marjeh (1984), *Sahwat al-Rajul al-Marid: Al-Sultan Abd al-Hamid al-Thani* Kuwait: Saqr al-Khalij li al-Tiba'ah, p. 488.
- 22 Muwaffaq, *Sahwat al-Rajul al-Marid*, p. 488.
- 23 al-Kilani, Sami (1973), *Ma'a Taha Husayn*, p. 78.
- 24 al-Kilani, Sami (1973), *Ma'a Taha Husayn*, p. 79.
- 25 Husayn was promoting these ideas among his students as he admitted, cf. *Al-Azhar*, August (1999), vol. 72, part 4, pp. 558–563.
- 26 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 328–329.
- 27 Cachia, Pierre B.A. (1956) *Taha Husayn*, London: Lurjac and Company, pp. 59–61.
- 28 Mawaffaq, *Sahwat al-Rajul al-Marid*, p. 160.
- 29 Al-Thaqafah, Qutb, Sayyid, 'Naqd Kitab Mustaqbal li al-Ductur Taha Husayn', *Dar al-Ulum*, n. 4, 5 April, pp. 28–79; January 10, 1939, p. 2 ff.
- 30 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim (1996), *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, State University of New York Press, pp. 100–101.
- 31 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Naqd Kitab Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr li al-Ductur Taha Husayn', *Dar al-Ulum*, n. 4, 5 April, pp. 28–79; also see this the above injunctions, particularly under the section 'Social reform'.
- 32 Al-Khabbas, Abdullah (1983), *Sayyid Qutb, al-Adib al-Naqid*. Al-Zarqa': Maktabat al-Manar, 1st edn, p. 235.
- 33 Al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 235.
- 34 Al-'Azam, Yusuff (1980), *Ra'id al-Fikr al-Islami al-Mu'asir: al-Shahid Sayyid Qutb*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1st edn, p. 126.
- 35 At this point of time, Qutb's view of the West was negative. Also, he was calling for a return to the East and carry the message, as previously discussed in Chapter 4.
- 36 Qutb Sayyid (1993), *Mashahid al-Qiyamah*, li al-Quran, Cairo: al-Shuruq, 11th edn, p. 7.
- 37 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an', *Al-Muqtataf*, 94, 2 February (1939), pp. 206–222 and 94, 3 March (1939), pp. 13–18.
- 38 Qutb wrote seven articles for *Al-Risalah* on this subject including 'Al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an', *Al-Risalah* 13, 601 (1945), pp. 43–46; 'Mabahith 'an al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an', *Al-Risalah* 13, 620 (1945), pp. 527–529; 'Al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'an', *Al-Risalah* 13, 621 (1945), pp. 569–570; 'Al-Jamal al-Fanni wa al-'Aqidah fi al-Qur'an', *Al-Risalah* 13, 625 (1945), pp. 677–679 and al-Jamal al-Fannik 'Taswin al-Quran' al-Jamal al-Fanni *Al-Risalah* 13, 626, (1945), p. 711 and 'al-Tanasuq al-Fanni fi Taswir al-Qur'an', *Al-Risalah*, 13, 610 (1945), pp. 278–281.

- 39 Qutb, *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an*, p. 9.
- 40 See Calvert, John, '“The World is an Undutiful Boy!”: Sayyid Qutb's American Experience'. *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*. Carfax Publishing Company, 11 (1) March (2000), pp. 90–91.
- 41 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Ila Ustadhina Dr. Ahmad Amin'. *Al-Thaqafah*, n. 663, September (1951), p. 7.
- 42 Qutb, *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, p. 7.
- 43 Qutb, *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, p. 8.
- 44 Qutb, *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, p. 8.
- 45 Qutb, *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, p. 254; For the influence of Qutb's book *Taswir* on the contemporary Qur'anic studies, see al-Khalidi, Salah (1989), *Nazariyyat al-Taswir al-Fanni 'inda Sayyid Qutb*, Jaddah: Dar al-Manarah, 2nd edn, pp. 341–368.
- 46 See Kotb, Sayed, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. viii.
- 47 For further details, see Qutb, *Adalah*, ch. 'Historical Reality of Islam' in Shepard's trans. pp. 182–187.
- 48 Ali, Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, p. 1848, esp. 74:18–25 and fn. 5790.
- 49 For the relation between *Taswir* and *Zilal*, see al-Khalidi (1989), *Nazariyyat al-Taswir*, pp. 261–280.
- 50 For the idea of *Al-Shumul*, see Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 10, 132, 115; for *rububiyah* and other ideas see pp. 28, 72, 131, 144, 149; to compare with *Social Justice*, see Shepard (1996), *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 350, ff. 7.
- 51 Abu Rabi' (1996), *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 103.
- 52 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 26; Shepard's trans., p. 33 ff. 74; *Zilal*, vol. 1, pp. 28, 46, 55, 65, 71, 80 at ff. 1 in all; vol. 4, p. 1873 ff. 2, and pp. 2039, 2041, 2073, 2075, 2279, 2370 ff. 1; vol. 5, 2642, 2667, 2784, 2789, 2998, 3062 at ff. 1 in all and pp. 2944, 2945; vol. 6, pp. 3543, 3605 at ff. 1 in all; *Khasa'is*, p. 141 ff. 1.
- 53 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Dars fi al-Tafsir 'ala Tariqat al-Taswir', *Al-Risalah*, n. 653, (1946), pp. 14–17.
- 54 Boullata, J. Isa, 'Sayyid Qutb's Literary Appreciation of the Qur'an', in Boullata J. (ed.), *Literary Structures of the Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*. Richmond: Surrey Curzon Press, (2000) pp. 354–371, esp. 357–358.
- 55 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 36.
- 56 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 226.
- 57 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 228–229.
- 58 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 25.
- 59 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 11–12 there are more details.
- 60 See Qutb, Sayyid (1935), *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, El-Mimia, Egypt: Matba'at Sadiq, pp. 43, 204–205, contrast with the later writings *Zilal*, vol. 3, p. 1202; *Ma'alim*, pp. 20, 22; *Adalah*, pp. 11, 85.
- 61 Shepard, William, 'Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyyah', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 35, (2003), pp. 521–545 cf. 525; Khatab, Sayed, 'Hakimiyyah and Jahiliyyah in the Thought of Sayyid Qutb', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 38, n. 3 (2002), pp. 145–170.
- 62 For further details about Ibn al-Mughirah's opposition to Muhammad, see Lings, Martin (1983), *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earlier Sources*, London: George Allen and Unwin, p. 53.
- 63 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 14; for further details about Ibn al-Mughirah, see *Zilal*, vol. 3, p. 1202.
- 64 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 14.
- 65 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 25, 26.
- 66 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 216. The notion 'human types' is also there in an article entitled 'Al-Namazij al-Bashariyyah' (Human Types), *Al-Risalah*, n. 522 (1943), pp. 529–531.
- 67 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 14.

- 68 Further details about perception, see Hume, David (1969), *A Treatise of Human Nature*, New York: Penguin Group, Penguin Books, pp. 49–50, 56.
- 69 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 25.
- 70 Qur'an 74:18–25; also see Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 25, in later writings, see *Ẓīlal*, vol. 6, pp. 3752–3753.
- 71 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 14.
- 72 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 216.
- 73 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 223.
- 74 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 224 more examples on this page.
- 75 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 218–219 he has referred to Qur'an 2:89.
- 76 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 219 he has referred to Qur'an 8:6.
- 77 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 219 he has referred to Qur'an 24:47–48.
- 78 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 220 he has referred to Qur'an 4:141.
- 79 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 219, he has referred to Qur'an 74:49–51, further details, pp. 216–225.
- 80 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 225.
- 81 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 36.
- 82 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 230, 232.
- 83 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 226.
- 84 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 228–229.
- 85 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 237.
- 86 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 237–238.
- 87 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 237–238.
- 88 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 228–229, the notion here is also in his early writings, see Chapter 4.
- 89 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 228, these ideas were previously discussed in Chapter 4.
- 90 He is a professor of mathematical physics. His interests are in the field of black holes, cosmology and quantum gravity, and he has published over one hundred specialist papers as well as several textbooks including the widely acclaimed *Superforce*, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, *The Runaway Universe* (Penguin 1980), *God and the New Physics* (Penguin 1984), *Other Worlds* (Penguin 1988), *The Matter Myth* (Penguin 1992), *The Mid Of God* (Penguin 1993). He has written a number of major series of documentaries for the BBC. Radio and TV in London. In 1990, he immigrated to Australia where he was awarded the Eureka Prize in 1991.
- 91 Davies, Paul (1992), *The Mind of God: Science and the Search for Ultimate Mining*, London: Penguin, pp. 24–25.
- 92 Qutb, *Al-Shatī' al-Majhul*, pp. 5–6.
- 93 Binder, Leonard (1988), *Islamic Liberalism: A Critic of Development Ideologies*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, p. 180. Contrast, Qutb, *Ẓīlal*, vol. 5, pp. 2572, 2573–2574.
- 94 Abduh, Muhammad (1956), *Risalat al-Tawhid*. Cairo: Matba 'at Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 28, 37.
- 95 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 91; Qutb cited Qur'an 8:22 to express why the Qur'an used the word '*dawab*' (animals) and which 'human type' will be similar to animals (Qutb *Taswir*, p. 90). This point appeared in his earlier writings, see Chapter 4; in the later writings, see *Ẓīlal*, vol. 4, p. 2144; *Islam: the Religion of the Future*, trans. International Islamic Federation, Riyadh: Saudi Arabia Al-Islam wa (1983), p. 65; *Mushkilat Hadarah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 91.
- 96 Abduh, Muhammad (1956), *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Cairo: Matba'at Muhammad Ali, pp. 100–102.
- 97 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 122–123, also see the first three lines on p. 124.
- 98 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 145, 146, 149, 150–151, 153, 171, esp. 144.
- 99 Qutb, *Taswir*, pp. 131–132.
- 100 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 257.
- 101 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 7.

- 102 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 9.
- 103 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 14.
- 104 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 14–15.
- 105 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 28.
- 106 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 21.
- 107 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 31.
- 108 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 28.
- 109 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 28.
- 110 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 28–29.
- 111 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 29.
- 112 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 29.
- 113 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 29–30.
- 114 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 29.
- 115 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 32.
- 116 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 34.
- 117 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 37.
- 118 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 37.
- 119 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 39.
- 120 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 40.
- 121 Shepard considers this ‘pious formula’ one of the ‘feature of Islamic writing’ and ‘a significant expression of Muslim piety.’ With other ideas, this ‘pious formula’ is used by Shepard to indicate the increase of theocentrism in the successive editions of *Social Justice*. Shepard noted that this pious formula, in Qutb’s case, is significant since it distinguishes between ‘earlier and later editions’ of *Social Justice*, see Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. lviii, also see p. xxviii and p. xxiv.
- 122 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 41.
- 123 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 41.
- 124 Qutb *Adalah*, pp. 8–10; Hardie’s trans. pp. 2–5; *Zilal*, vol. 3, pp. 1638–1640, esp. his analysis of Qur’an 9:30.
- 125 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 10.
- 126 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 42; Qutb used almost the same words in dedicating this book to his father on p. 5.
- 127 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 42, see, pp. 65, 215.
- 128 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 43, 83.
- 129 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 63–64, 253.
- 130 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 63, 67, ‘High Command’ in pp. 90, 215.
- 131 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 253.
- 132 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 43–45, 178.
- 133 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 88.
- 134 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 89.
- 135 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 63.
- 136 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 90, 215.
- 137 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 64.
- 138 Qutb used the word *al-tajhil* few more times, see Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 127, 211.
- 139 In the footnote, Qutb emphasized that the Qur’an did not specify the eyes will turn blue, but the faces Exegetes expresses that the eyes of those sinful people will be affected by the fear and sorrow on that day. See al-Qurtubi, *Abi Abdullah Muhammad* (1985) *Al-jami’ li Akham al-Quran*, Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath, vol. 11, p. 244.
- 140 The relation between time and body is discussed in his earlier writings, see Chapter 4.
- 141 Their talk is but whispering among themselves (Qur’an 20:103).
- 142 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 122–123.
- 143 The word ‘*hams*’ is the sound of their marching feet. See al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami’*, vol. 11, p. 247.
- 144 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 123.

- 145 Qutb, *al-Shahī' al-Majhūl*, p. 33, also see Chapter 4.
- 146 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xv.
- 147 Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 103.
- 148 Boullata, 'Sayyid Qutb's Literary Appreciation of the Qur'an', pp. 354–371, esp. 358; also Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 272, and 71, 81, 169–170, 173–174.
- 149 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 272.
- 150 This phrase is one of Qutb's, which is frequently used here and in the later writings.
- 151 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 113.
- 152 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 114.
- 153 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 44–45, 178.
- 154 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 51, 51, 54, 91–92, 234, 235, 237, 238, 239.
- 155 See Ibn Manzūr, Abi al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (1994) *Lisan al-ʿArab*, Beirut: Dar Sadir, vol. 12, pp. 90–91.
- 156 For the Qur'anic and Qutb's usage of the word *mujrim* and its plural, see, *Mashahid*, pp. 45, 51, 56, 62, 64, 65, 108, 109, 114, 121, 218, 229, 239 [*al-mujrimun* are the *jahilun*, pp. 122–123].
- 157 Any Qur'anic text containing laws and rules, reveals that any violation of them invokes two sanctions: one in this world and the other in the other world, see Abd al-Qadir 'Awdah, *al-Islam Bayna Jahl Abna'ih wa 'Ajz 'Ulama'ih*, al-Ittihad al-Islami al-'Alami li al-Munazzamat al-Tullabiyyah, n.d. 6, p. 9.
- 158 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 268.
- 159 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 269.
- 160 Here, the word '*tasawwur*' has ideological importance as to indicate Qutb's theocentrism at this stage. Shepard saw this word '*tasawwur*' as one of the terminology distinctive to the last edition of *Social Justice* in which the *jahiliyyah* and *hakiimiyyah* (sovereignty) concepts frequently occurs. The increase in the use of the term '*tasawwur*' in the successive editions of *Social Justice* is also seen as one indicates the increase of theocentrism: '*Tasawwur* (conception) is not absent in the earlier editions but it is much more common in the last. Where it seems to be quite intentionally introduced at many points.' Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xlvii.
- 161 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 267.
- 162 Qutb, Sayyid, *Al-Naqd al-Adabi: 'Usulubuh wa Manahijuhu*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 7th edn, p. 103.
- 163 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 205; Hardie's trans., p. 257; Shepard's trans., p. 308 para. 181 and p. 335 para. 182, on this page see lines 5–8 in italics.
- 164 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 30, 64, 76, 113, 123, 127, 183, 211, 227, 230.
- 165 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 253; '*al-kufrān*' is a synonym of the word *kafura* (Qur'an 17:67; 76:3, 24) and indicates multi-forms of *kufr* as previously detailed in Chapter 4.
- 166 Qutb, *Mashahid*, (pp. 13, 33 *uluhiyyah*), (pp. 90, 215 *al-Amr al-'Alī*), (p. 123 *al-Hayy al-Qayyum*), (p. 124 *al-Jalal*), (p. 196, *al-Wahid al-Qahhar*), (p. 131 *al-Quwwah al-Kubrā*).
- 167 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 15, 22, 65, 68, 184, 185, 263, 264.
- 168 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 68.
- 169 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 184.
- 170 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 68, 263, it can be translated '*coup d'état*' but this does not reflect Qutb's intention in the context of *Mashahid*.
- 171 Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 103.
- 172 Qutb, *Mashahid*, pp. 269–270.
- 173 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xvi fn. 13.
- 174 Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 103.
- 175 Also see Calvert, "The World is an Undutiful Boy!": Sayyid Qutb's American experience', pp. 90–91.
- 176 *Majallat al-ʿAlam al-ʿArabi*, vol. 1, n. 4, July (1947), p. 53.
- 177 Qutb, *Taswir*, p. 103 fn. 1.

- 178 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 267.
- 179 Qutb, 'Hamazat al-Shayatin Li Abd al-Hamid al-Sahhar', *Al-Risalah*, n. 668, (1946), pp. 433–435 also see Qutb, Sayyid (1981), *Kutub wa Shakhsiyyat*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 90–197, this book was published in 1946.
- 180 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, pp. 80, 84, 88, 92, 136; also see Qutb, Sayyid, 'al-Rabat al-Muqaddas li Tawfiq al-Hakim', *Al-Risalah*, n. 598, (1944), pp. 2010–2012; Qutb, Sayyid, 'Ala Hamish al-Naqd: Khan al-Khalili li Naguib Mahfuz', *Al-Risalah*, n. 650, (1945), pp. 1364–1366; Qutb, Sayyid 'Al-Qahirah al-Jadidah li Naguib Mahfuz', *Al-Risalah*, n.704, (1946), pp. 1440–1443.
- 181 Calvert, 'The World is an Undutiful boy!', pp. 90–91.
- 182 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 8; also see, (1993) *Ma'alim, li al-Tariq*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 143.
- 183 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 13, pp. 106–107 for cross examination, see Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 31; in later writings, see (1995) *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami wa Muqawwimatuh*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn., pp. 151–153.
- 184 See Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 603 this reflects Qutb's view in the 1960s; in *Ma'alim*, see pp. 135–144.
- 185 Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was an English novelist and poet, see Chapter 3 in this text.
- 186 al-Khayyam was a Nisaburian Muslim poet and astronomer born in 1025 or 1050. In 1073, he was the eminent astronomer of King Malikshah of Buwayh State in Persia. Buwayh dynasty was during the period (945–1055). Al-Khayyam died in AD 1123.
- 187 Sir Tagore, Rabindranath (1861–1941) was an Indian philosopher and poet who supported the freedom of India. He received the 1913 Noble Prize in Literature. See World Book Encyclopedia (1990), Chicago, IL: A Scott Fetzer Company, vol. 19, p. 13.
- 188 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 18, see p. 19.
- 189 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 32, also see p. 80.
- 190 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 228.
- 191 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, pp. 17–18.
- 192 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 32.
- 193 Al-Khayyam, 'Umar (1995), *Ruba'iyyat al-Khayyam*, London: Bracken Books, Illustration of Rene Pull, p. 14.
- 194 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 226; Qutb comments more on al-Khayyam and al-Jami'ah (The Preacher or Ecclesiastics in The Old Testament), see *Zilal*, vol. 1, pp. 342–343 and ff.
- 195 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 17.
- 196 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 90.
- 197 The Geniuses is a title of al-'Aqqad's popular series of books on the early Muslims.
- 198 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 91.
- 199 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 184, para. 9 and ff. 10.
- 200 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, p. 92.
- 201 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, pp. 193–195, para. 39–45.
- 202 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, pp. 151–152, in the footnote, Qutb says 'these words were written in 1947', p. 152 ff. 1. The first edition of this book was in June 1948.
- 203 *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* was completed in 1959 and revised for the second edition (1961), see Boullata, 'Sayyid Qutb', in Boullata (ed.), pp. 354–371, esp. 361.
- 204 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 23; *Ma'alim*, pp. 135–140; (1991) *Fi al-Tarikh Fikrah wa Minhaje*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 11–14, 17–19; *Zilal*, vol. 1, pp. 53, 344, 370; vol. 2, pp. 836, 843; vol. 3, pp. 1395, 1405; vol. 4, pp. 2373–2374, 2409; vol. 5, pp. 3026–3027; vol. 6, pp. 3378–3379, 3395, 3992; (1993) *Dirasat Islamiyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 149–150.
- 205 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 349; also see vol. 4, p. 1939; vol. 5, p. 3090; vol. 6, pp. 3352–3353 esp. al-Khayyam. The reference here represent Qutb's view in the 1950s and 1960s.
- 206 Qutb, *Fi al-Tarikh*, p. 12.

- 207 Qutb, *Ẓīlāl*, vol. 4, p. 1990.
- 208 Qutb, *ʿAdalah*, p.7, Hardie's trans. p. 1, Shepard's trans. p. 1, para. 1–2 and ff.
- 209 Qutb, *Maʿalim*, p. 141, see pp. 138–144; also see *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 34.
- 210 Morsy, M. Laila 'American Support for the 1952 Egyptian Coup', *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 31: 2, April (1995) pp. 307–316.
- 211 Lesch, David W. (1996), *Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p. 94.
- 212 Lesch, *Middle East and the United States*, p. 92.
- 213 Lesch, *Middle East and the United States*, p. 94.
- 214 'Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, p. 135.
- 215 'Isa, *Hawamish al-Maqrizi: Hikayat min Misr*, pp. 24, 33–34.
- 216 'Isa, *Hawamish al-Maqrizi: Hikayat min Misr*, p. 23.
- 217 Kishk was at the University of Cairo until recently. In the period 1950–1994, he published more than forty books of big size such as *The July Revolution: The American* (1994); *The Raise and Fall of The Oil Empire* (1986); *The Saudis and the Islamic Solution* (1980); *The Road to a Modern Society* (1967); *The Law of Political Parties* (1951); *Egyptian not Sectarians* (1950). For further details see 'How the Saudis Control the Voice of Islam in America', *Center For Security Policy*, Security Forum No 2–F41, 2002–11–12; and Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, p. 94 and p. 256 ff. 44–49.
- 218 Kishk, Muhammad Jalal, 'Intikhabat Qadimah', *Majallat Uktuber*, n. 389, 8 April, (1984), pp. 14–15, cf. p. 14.
- 219 Al-'Azm, *Rihlat al-Dayā'*, pp. 12, 20, 23–29.
- 220 Al-'Azm, *Rihlat al-Dayā'*, pp. 31–33. For further details about the relationship of the press and public opinion, see Qutb, Sayyid, 'Wazifat Al-Fan wa al-Sahafah', *Al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyyah*, n. 12, (1943) pp. 24–28; Qutb, Sayyid, 'Misr wa al-Da'ayah', *Al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyyah*, n. 1, (1944), pp. 39–42; Qutb, Sayyid, 'Fadiah: Man Huwa Al-Mas'ul?', *al-Risalah*, vol. 1, n. 655, (1946), p. 88; also see Qutb, Sayyid (1934), 'Mawakib al-'Ajazah wa Lawhat al-I'lanat', *Majallat al-Usubu'*, vol. 1, n. 44, September, (1934), pp. 9–10.
- 221 'Isa, *Hawamish al-Maqrizi*, p. 33.
- 222 Hamrush, Ahmad, 'Alaqaq al-Thawrah bi al-Amrikan', *Rose el-Youssef* n. 3451, August (1994), p. 24 this is what Qutb was saying in 1947, see Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, pp. 151–152 and ff. 1.
- 223 Ramadan, 'Fath Khaza'in al-Watha'iq al-Britaniyyah n. 1108, pp. 19–23; Qutb, Sayyid, 'ʿAddilu Baramijakum aw Insahibu Qabla Fawat al-Awan', *Al-Risalah*, vol. 2, n. 627, (1945) pp.723–724; Qutb, Sayyid (1951), 'Ila al-Ra'smaliyyin wa al-Musta'mirin: Makanakum la Tatamassahu bi al-Din', *Al-Da'wah*, n. 29, August (1951), pp. 32–36; Qutb, Sayyid, 'Ayyuha al-Bashawat la Tatamassahu bi al-Islam', *Al-Ishtrakiyyah*, n. 32, 29 November (1951), pp. 15–19.
- 224 Al-'Azm, *Rihlat al-Dayā'*, pp. 46–51.
- 225 Al-'Azm, *Rihlat al-Dayā'*, pp. 47–48; also see Hamush, 'Alaqaq al-Thawrah bi al-Amrikan', n. 3451, 1 August (1994), p. 24.
- 226 Al-Hakim, Tawfiq (1945), 'Shajarat al-Hukm', republished under the title 'al-Dimuqratiyyah al-Muzayyafah': in *Tawfiq al-Hakim al-Mufakkir*. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab (1970), pp. 83–102 esp. 98–99.
- 227 Al-Hakim, Tawfiq (1941), 'Sultan al-Zalam', republished under the title 'Qalaq al-Insaniyyah: Masir al-Insan al-Hur': in Tawfiq *Al-Hakim al-Mufakkir*. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab, (1970), pp. 27–50, esp. p. 45.
- 228 Al-Tuhami, Muhammad, 'Al-Huda wa al-Dalal', *Majallat al-Azhar*, vol. 86, part 4, September, (1945), p. 566.
- 229 Al-'Aqqad, Abbas, *Diwan al-Aqqad: Yaqazat Sabah*, Aswan: Matba'at Wihdat al-Siyannah wa al-Intaj, vol. 1, (1972), pp. 143–144.
- 230 Qutb, *Naqd Adabi*, pp. 138–141.

- 231 Shawqi, Ahmad (1992), *Al-Shawqiyyat*, Beirut: Al-Kitab al-Arabi, 12th edn, vol. 1–2 (1, p. 170, line 13).
- 232 ‘Awdah was a Chief Justice at the Supreme Court in Cairo, a member in the Supreme Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, wrote few books on Islam and its criminal law, executed on the gallows in 1956.
- 233 ‘Awdah, Abd al-Qadir (1992), *Islam Bayna Jahl Abna’ih wa ‘Ajz ‘Ulama’ih*. Beirut: Al-Ittihad al-Islami al-‘Alami li al-Munazzamat al-Tullabiyyah, n.d., pp. 5–6.
- 234 Shawqi, *Al-Shawqiyyat*, vol. 1–2, part 1, p. 29, lines 5–6.
- 235 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 130 esp. word *jahiliyyah*; also see Chapter 2, for further detail.
- 236 Shawqi, *Al-Shawqiyyat*, vol. 1–2, part 1, p. 182, line 9.
- 237 Shawqi, *Al-Shawqiyyat*, vol. 1–2, part 1, p. 292, line 12.
- 238 Wajdi, Muhammad Farid, ‘Muhimmat al-Din al-Islami fi al-‘Alam: Da‘watuhu al-Umam li Mahw Athar al-Jahiliyyah’. *Nur al-Islam* n. 5, (1934–1935), pp. 71–77, esp. p. 71.
- 239 Wajdi, ‘Muhimmat al-Din al-Islami fi al-‘Alam: n. 5, pp. 71–77, esp. pp. 75–76.
- 240 Abduh, *Risalat al-Tawhid*, p. 21.
- 241 Abduh, Muhammad (1972), *Tafsir al-Manar*, Cairo: Al-Hay’ah al-Misriyyah Al-‘ammah li al-Kitab, vol. 1, p. 23.
- 242 Al-Jabarti, Abd al-Rahman Hasan (1997), *Tarikh al-Jabarti: Tarikh ‘Aja’ib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhhbar*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, vol. 1, p. 30, see pp. 31–32 for further detail.
- 243 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Siyasat Qutb al-Waqt’, *Majallat al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 12, (1945), p. 23; also Abd al-Baqi, Muhammad Husayn (1986), *Sayyid Qutb: Hayatuh wa Abaduh*, al-Monsurat, Egypt: Dar al-Wafa, 1st edn, p. 288.
- 244 For more articles, see al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb al-Naqid*, pp. 372–398.
- 245 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Al-Mujtama’ al-Salih wa al-Mujtama’ al-Mutawazin’, *Al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 6, (1942), p. 56. In 1933, Qutb called for a return to the East and its message, see Chapter 4.
- 246 *Majallat al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 5, (1942), pp. 50–51.
- 247 Al-‘Asqalani, al-Hafiz (1987), *Fath al-Bari li Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, Cairo: Dar al-Rayyan li al-Turath, vol. 3, p. 18; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 5, p. 55.
- 248 *Majallat al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 4, (1940), pp. 35–38.
- 249 Among these were Salamah Musa (1887–1958) who in 1927 published a book *al-Yawm wa al-Ghad (Today and Tomorrow)*; See Qutb, Muhammad (1964), *Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*, Kuwait: Dar al-Bayan, p. 242.
- 250 Qutb, *Islam: the Misunderstood Religion*, p. 242.
- 251 Qutb, *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 39, see the previous chapter.
- 252 Qutb *al-Shati’ al-Majhul*, p. 43; see the previous chapter.
- 253 Qutb Sayyid, ‘Waylat al-Silm’, *Al-Resalah*, vol. 1, n. 395, January (1941), p. 68–70, esp. 68.
- 254 Qutb, Sayyid, Al-Qahirah al-Khadda’ah’, *Al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 5, May (1941), pp. 30–33, esp. 30.
- 255 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Al-Sukht Dalil al-Hurriyya’, *Al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 6, (1941) pp. 44–49, esp. 46.
- 256 The word *halafit* is plural and refers to people. The singular *halfit* means *safil*: low, base, evil, ignoble and vulgar, see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 2, p. 198 esp. under the word *halth*; ‘He who revert to *kufri* and *dalah* is *safil*’, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 11, p. 337; also for the word *safil*, see Qur’an 95:5.
- 257 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Al-Muqaddasat al-Insaniyyah wa al-Qawmiyyah’, *Al-Shu’un al-Ijtima’iyyah*, n. 11 (1942), pp. 32–36. In Qutb’s view, songs and acting should be related to the ethical principles of Egyptian society. He did not see this quality in these types of Egyptian arts. Therefore, Qutb wrote several articles that dealt with this

- matter, see Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Ghina' al-Marid Yanghur al-Khuluq wa al-Mujtama' al-Misri', *Al-Risalah*, n. 374, September (1939) pp. 1382–1384; Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Mutribun wa al-Mutribat hum al-Tabur al-Khamis fi Misr', *Dar al-'Ulum*, n. 1, (1940) pp. 52–56.
- 258 The word '*mawakhir*' (singular *makhur*) is a diacritical mark used for place and people. *Makhur* is the meeting place of debauchery, profligacy, licentiousness, immorality and prostitution. In this sense, the word *makhur* reflects types of behaviors and places as well as the means which facilitate the existence of such places, see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 5, p. 16. Later this word was used as alternative to *jahiliyyah*, see *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 511, line 1.
- 259 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Suwar Min al-Jil al-Jadid', *Al-Risalah*, n. 622, 4 June (1945) p. 581; cf. al-Khalidi, Salah (1994) *Sayyid Qutb Min al-Milad Ila al-Istishhad*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2nd edn, p. 241.
- 260 Basha is an Ottoman title of the 'deputy of the Salтан (ruler). The governor of Egypt was a deputy of the ruler of the Ottoman Empire'. After Egypt became a kingdom, the king began to give the title 'Basha' to special individuals with whom he was pleased. cf. Muwaffaq *Sahwat al-Rajul al-Marid*, p. 451.
- 261 Qutb, *al-Risalah*, n. 691, 14 September (1946), pp. 1081–1082.
- 262 Qutb's motivational style was further developed during his stay in the United States. See next chapter.
- 263 Qutb, 'Al-Mujtama' al-Salih wa al-Mujtama' al-Mutawazin', *Al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyyah* (1942), n. 6, pp. 56–66.
- 264 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-'Adalah al-Ijtima' iyyah', *Al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyyah*, n. 1, (1944) pp. 33–37.
- 265 Earlier, in 1944 Qutb wrote few articles about Muslim figures, among them is Qutb, Sayyid, 'Min A 'lam al-Islam: Muhammad Abduh', *Al-Thaqafah* n. 305 (1944), pp. 22–24.
- 266 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Qiyadatuna al-Ruhiyyah', *Al-Risalah*, n. 705, January, (1947) p. 27; cf. Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 34–35.
- 267 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-'Alam Yajri', *Al-Risalah*, vol. 2, n. 17, 15 September (1933), p. 13; Qutb, *al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 189, 191, and see the previous chapter.
- 268 Calvert, 'The World is an Undutiful Boy!' 11 (1), p. 90.
- 269 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Udu ila al-Sharq', *Al-'Alam al-'Arabi*, vol. 1, n. 2, (1946), pp. 3–4.
- 270 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Fi Samim al-Rif', *Al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyyah*, n. 9, September (1943) pp. 19–23, esp. 20.
- 271 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 298.
- 272 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 298, for similar words, see Qutb *Adalah*, p. 185; Hardie's trans. p. 234; Shepard's trans., p. 282, para. 57.
- 273 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Lughat Al-'Abid', *Al-Risalah*, n. 709, February (1947), p. 134.
- 274 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Lughat al-'Abid', p. 134.
- 275 Qutb Sayyid, 'Hadhihi Faransa' (This is France), *Al-Risalah*, n. 624, June (1945) p. 632.
- 276 Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence*, p. 103.
- 277 Calvert, 'The World is an Undutiful Boy!' *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, pp. 90–91.
- 278 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xviii; The date given to the third edition, above, is 1952, because, Shepard says that 'the third edition was published in 1953...before the Free Officers took power' (Shepard p. xviii), but in the bibliography, he dated the third edition '1952'.
- 279 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xviii.
- 280 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 320.
- 281 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. x; see Hardie's translation entitled: Kotb, *Social Justice in Islam*.
- 282 Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*.
- 283 See Hardie's trans. *Social Justice in Islam*, p. iii.

- 284 Hardie's trans. p. 90 middle, and p. 91 middle; Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 109 para. 23, and p. 289, para. 78; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 78.
- 285 Hardie's trans. p. 17; Shepard's trans. p. 24, para. 2 and ff.; see Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 20.
- 286 Hardie's trans. p. 18; Shepard's trans. p. 26, para. 10 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 21.
- 287 Hardie's trans. p. 87; Shepard's trans. p. 106, para. 8–9; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 76.
- 288 Shepard's trans. p. 320, para. 1; Hardie's trans. p. 227; see Qutb, *Adalah*, p.182.
- 289 Shepard's trans. p. 348, para. 315; Hardie's trans. p. 276.
- 290 Hardie's trans. pp. 1–2; Shepard's trans. pp. 1–2 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 1–2; also see 'Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, pp. 127, 134.
- 291 Hardie's trans. pp. 227–228; see Shepard's trans. p. 321, para. 5.
- 292 Opposite Islam is *jahiliyyah*, see Chapter 2.
- 293 Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 110–111 and Shepard's trans. p. 157 middle; Hardie's trans. p. 128.
- 294 Hardie's trans. p. 2; Shepard's trans. p. 2, para. 4 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 7.
- 295 Shepard's trans. p. 2, para. 4; Hardie's trans. p. 2; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 7.
- 296 Shepard's trans. pp. 16–17, para. 53 and ff.; Hardie's trans., p.14; Qutb *Adalah*, p. 17.
- 297 Hardie's trans. p.14; Shepard's trans. p. 17, para. 54; Qutb *Adalah*, p. 17.
- 298 Qutb Sayyid, 'Mashru' al-Qanun al-Islami Raqam Wahid', *Al-Fikr al-Jadid*, n. 2; January (1949) cf. Abd al-Baqi, (1983), *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 36–38.
- 299 Hardie's trans. p. 221; Shepard's trans. pp. 259–265; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 178–181.
- 300 Hardie's trans. pp. 139–142; Shepard's trans. pp. 182–185; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 126–128.
- 301 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 267.
- 302 Shepard's trans. p. 285 lines 12–13; Hardie's trans. pp. 237 last line–238 first 3 lines (translated it intellectual bias); Qutb, *Adalah*, p.188.
- 303 Shepard's trans. p. 157; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 110–111; For Qutb's view on how the mentality is translated or programmed, see Shepard's trans. p. 287 remainder of para. 72; Hardie's trans. p. 239; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 189–190.
- 304 Shepard's trans. p. 18, para. 57; Hardie's trans. p. 15; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 18.
- 305 Shepard's trans. p. 157, lines 18–19 and fn. 159; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 110–111.
- 306 See Chapter 2, subtitle 'Lexical origins of the term jahiliyyah'.
- 307 Hardie's trans. p. 13; Shepard's trans. p. 15, para. 50; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 16.
- 308 Hardie's trans. p. 18; Shepard's trans. p. 25, para. 6 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 20.
- 309 Hardie's trans. p. 8; Shepard's trans. p. 8, para. 27–28 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 11.
- 310 Shepard's trans. p. 348, para. 316; Hardie's trans. p. 276.
- 311 Shepard's trans. p. 350, para. 7 ff. 7–8; Hardie's trans. p. 278; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 214–215.
- 312 Hardie's trans. p. 55; Shepard's trans. pp. 68, paragraph 104; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 52.
- 313 Hardie's trans. p. 26; Shepard's trans. p. 36, para. 44; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 28.
- 314 Shepard's trans., p. 20, para. 12; See Hardie's trans. p. 4.
- 315 Shepard's trans., p. 3–4 and ff.; Hardie's trans. p. 5; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 8–9.
- 316 Hardie's trans. pp. 277–279; Shepard's trans. pp. 353–355; Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 214–216; For further detail, see Russell, Bertrand (1961), *History of Western Philosophy*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 19, 26–27, 35–39,40, 311, 325, 329; also see Hegel George William Friedrich (1956), *Philosophy of History*, New York: Dover Publications, pp. 111–112, 329, 330.
- 317 Hardie's trans. p. 14; Shepard's trans., p. 16 and ff.; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 17.
- 318 Shepard's trans. p. 40, para. 7; Hardie's trans. p. 30; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 32.
- 319 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Safhah min Safahat al-Isti 'mar', *Al-Balagh al-Usubu'I*, n. 89, August 1928 pp. 14–15.
- 320 For further details, in the earlier writings, see Chapter 4, for the later writings see Chapter 7.
- 321 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, pp. 6–7, 19–20.
- 322 Qutb, *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 6, also see p. 43.

- 323 Qutb, (1935), *Al-Shati' al-Majhul*, p. 43.
- 324 Calvert 'The World is an Undutiful Boy!', *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, p. 91.
- 325 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 11.
- 326 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 13.
- 327 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 13.
- 328 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 14, this view of humanity is important in Qutb thinking, see *Ma'alim*, pp. 59–60.
- 329 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 21.
- 330 Qutb, *Mashahid*, p. 41.
- 331 Shepard's trans. p. 40, para. 7; Hardie's trans. p. 30; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 32.
- 332 Hardie's trans. p. 30; Shepard's trans. p. 41, para. 8 and fn. 12; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 32.
- 333 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 33; Shepard's trans. p. 43, para. 14–16 and ff.; Hardie's trans. p. 32.
- 334 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 38; Shepard's trans. pp. 48–49, para. 39; Hardie's trans. p. 37.
- 335 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 111.
- 336 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157.
- 337 Lutfi al-Sayyid's concept of humanity is similar to Qutb's, see discussion about the conscience, earlier; also see *Mashahid*, p. 14; in later writings, see *Ma'alim*, pp. 59–60.
- 338 Al-Sayyid, Ahmad Lutfi, (1908) 'Rawwidu Anfusakum 'Ala al-Istiqlal', *Al-Jaridah*, September (1908) 2, n. 454, republished under the title 'Taqdis al-Hukumah Yanfi al-Karamah wa al-Istiqlal', in Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (ed.), *Mabadi' fi al-Siyasah wa al-Adab wa al-Ijtima'*, Cairo: Al-Hilal, Series of Kitab n. 149, August (1963), pp. 60–62.
- 339 See, al-Hakim, Tawfiq (1945), 'Shajarat al-Hukm' republished under the title, 'Al-Dimuqratiyyah al-Muzayyafah', in *Tawfiq al-Hakim al-Mufakkir*, Cairo: Al-Kitab al-Jadid, Series of Tawfiq al-Hakim, (1970), n. 2, pp. 83–102, esp. 87–88. Al-Hakim began to publish the series of 'Shajarat al-Hukm' (tree of government in 1938).
- 340 Qutb, (1951), 'Ila Ustadhina Dr. Ahmad Amin', p. 7.
- 341 See Chapter 2, last part about *jahiliyyah* as antithesis of sovereignty.
- 342 Hardie's trans. p. 30; Shepard's trans. p. 41, para. 8 and ff.; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 32.
- 343 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, pp. 111–112.
- 344 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 33; Hardie's trans. p. 32; Shepard's trans. p. 43, para. 14 ff. 22, 23.
- 345 Hardie's trans. p. 31; Shepard's trans. p. 41, para. 9–10 ff.; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 32.
- 346 Hardie's trans. pp. 23–24 Shepard's trans. pp. 41–42, para. 10–11; Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 24–25.
- 347 Hardie's trans. pp. 31–32, Shepard's trans. p. 42, para. 12; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 33.
- 348 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 27; Hardie's trans. pp. 24–25; Shepard's trans., p. 34, para. 39; similar to Qutb's view and for further information about the importance of 'absolute liberation of the conscience', see al-Sayyid, Ahmad Lutfi 'Al-Farqu Baynana wa Bayna al-Gharib' (The Difference between us and the Foreigners), *Al-Jaridah*, 3 April (1907), n. 23, pp. 2–3.
- 349 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 25–7; Hardie's trans. pp. 22–24; Shepard's trans. pp. 32–33, para. 32–34.
- 350 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 24–25; Hardie's trans. p. 22; Shepard's trans., p. 31, para. 22.
- 351 Qutb's note here refers to the chapter 'Al-Qissah fi al-Qur'an' (the story in the Qur'an) in his book *Al-Taswir*, discussed earlier. It illustrates how *Al-Taswir* facilitated Qutb to arrive at his later ideas.
- 352 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 26; Hardie's trans. p. 24; Shepard's trans. p. 33, para. 33–35, ff.
- 353 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 77; Shepard's trans. p. 108, para. 14. Hardie's trans. p. 90.
- 354 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 77; Shepard's trans. p. 108, para. 15; Hardie's trans. p. 90.
- 355 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 78, Shepard's trans. p. 108, para. 16.
- 356 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 78; Hardie's trans. p. 91; see Shepard's trans. p. 109, para. 20 and ff.
- 357 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 79; Hardie's trans. p. 92; the phrase '*jahalah fikriyyah*', in the quotation, was translated by Shepard 'mental ignorance', see Shepard, p. 111, para. 26.

- 358 For earlier writings, see Chapter 4; also see Qutb's *Mashahid*, p. 30; in later writings, he used '*al-Jahalah al-'ilmīyyah*' see *Ma'alim*, p. 58.
- 359 Shepard's trans. p. xxv and fn. 21, p. xxv and ff. 21; Shepard, 'Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyyah', pp. 521–545 cf. 525 and ff. 36.
- 360 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 78–80; Hardie's trans. pp. 92–93; Shepard's trans. p. 109, para. 23, p. 111 para. 26–27.
- 361 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 80; Hardie's trans. p. 93; Shepard's trans. p. 112 para. 31 . . .
- 362 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 81; Hardie's trans. p. 94; Shepard's trans. p. 113 para. 36.
- 363 Shepard's trans. p. xxv and fn. 21, p. xxvi top.
- 364 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 86; Hardie's trans. p. 99; Shepard's trans. p. 120 para. 59.
- 365 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 33; Hardie's trans. p. 32; Shepard's trans. p. 43, para. 14 and fn. 22, 23.
- 366 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 91; Hardie's trans. p. 110, Shepard's trans. p. 129 para. 22.
- 367 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 87–88; Hardie's trans. p. 100–101, Shepard's trans. pp. 123–124.
- 368 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 87; Hardie's trans. pp. 100, Shepard's trans. p. 123 para. 1.
- 369 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157 middle.
- 370 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 127; Hardie's trans. p. 140; Shepard's trans. p. 183 para. 5.
- 371 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 128; Hardie's trans. p. 142; Shepard's trans. p. 185 para. 13.
- 372 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 129; Hardie's trans. p. 143; Shepard's trans. p. 186 para. 17.
- 373 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 129; Hardie's trans. p. 143; Shepard's trans. p. 186 para. 18.
- 374 Hardie's trans. p. 143.
- 375 Shepard's trans. p. 186, para. 18.
- 376 Shepard's trans. p. 186, para. 18.
- 377 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 129–130; Hardie's trans. p. 144; Shepard's trans. p. 187, para. 19–21.
- 378 Hardie's trans. p. 181; Shepard's trans. p. 268, para. 175.
- 379 Shepard's trans. p. 273 para. 179; see Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 164; see Hardie's trans. p. 197.
- 380 He was the leader of the Tribal Arab League, which fought against Muslims and the Qur'an called the League Confederates. He converted to Islam after the conquest of Makkah in January 630. For further details, see Chapter 2 under the title, '*Jahiliyyah* is antithesis of Sovereignty'.
- 381 Shepard's trans. p. 267 para. 172; Hardie's trans. p. 180.
- 382 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 154; Shepard's trans. p. 224 para. 160; Hardie's trans. pp. 177–178.
- 383 Shepard's trans. p. 268 para. 179; Hardie's trans. pp. 181–182.
- 384 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 168; Shepard's trans. p. 245 para. 262–264; Hardie's trans. pp. 204–205.
- 385 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 168; Hardie's trans. p. 205; Shepard's trans. p. 246 rest of para. 265.
- 386 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 178; Hardie's trans. p. 221; Shepard's trans. p. 261 para. 329.
- 387 See Hardie's trans. pp. 227–228; see Shepard's trans. p. 321, para. 5; Qutb '*Adalah*', p. 182.
- 388 Shepard's trans. p. 264, para. 343, see p. 322 para. 9; Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 180 n. 8.
- 389 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 110–111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157, lines 18–19 and fn. 159.
- 390 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 190; Hardie's trans. p. 240, Shepard's trans. p. 288 para. 76.
- 391 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 185; Hardie's trans. p. 234, Shepard's trans. p. 281, para. 56.
- 392 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 185; Hardie's trans. p. 234; Shepard's trans. p. 282, para. 57; in later writings, see *Zīlāl*, vol. 3, pp. 1608–1609.
- 393 Later, this subject was dealt with in two books: the first *Hadha al-Din* (This Religion), published in Cairo by Dar al-Qalam in 1960. This was followed, in the same year, by *Al-Mustaqbal li Hadha al-Din* (*The Future is for this Religion*), published in Cairo by Maktabat Wahbah.
- 394 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 186–187; Hardie's trans. p. 236; Shepard's trans. pp. 283–284 para. 65–66.
- 395 Hardie's trans. p. 236.

- 396 Shepard's trans. pp. 283–284, para. 66 line 1–2.
- 397 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 182; Hardie's trans. p. 227; Shepard's trans. p. 320 para. 1.
- 398 For further detail, see Chapter 2, subtitle 'Jahiliyyah is antithesis of Sovereignty'.
- 399 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 187; Hardie's trans. p. 236; Shepard's trans. p. 283–284 para. 66.
- 400 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 187; Hardie's trans. p. 237; Shepard's trans. p. 284, para. 67.
- 401 For more detail on Voltaire's view about the Church and God, see Voltaire, Francois-Marie Arouet (1947) *Candide*, trans. John Butt, England: Penguin Group, pp. 7–8, 69, 94, 115–116; al-Hakim, Tawfiq, *Tahta Shams al-Fikr*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, n.d. pp. 18–31.
- 402 Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 187–188; Hardie's trans. pp. 237–238; Shepard's trans. pp. 284–285, para. 68.
- 403 Shepard's trans. pp. 284–285, end of para. 68, esp. [no change].
- 404 For further detail, see Chapter 2; The use of the term *jahiliyyah* in Qutb's environment, outlined above.
- 405 Qutb, *Adalah*, p.186; Hardie's trans. p. 235; Shepard's trans. pp. 282–283, para. 61–62.
- 406 For further details, see Chapter 4; also see discussion in the section 'Social reform', earlier.
- 407 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 189; Hardie's trans. p. 239; Shepard's trans. p. 287, remainder of para. 72; Qutb here speaks from his experience in the field of education, and ten years after the publication of his book *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (1939).
- 408 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 182; Hardie's trans. pp. 227–228; see Shepard's trans. p. 321, para. 5.
- 409 Shepard's trans. p. 264, para. 343, see p. 322 para. 9; Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 180 n. 8.
- 410 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 191; Hardie's trans. p. 241; Shepard's trans. p. 289, para. 78.
- 411 Hardie's trans. p. 279; Shepard's trans. p. 351, para. 9. Later, in *Ma'alim* (1964), Qutb wrote a chapter entitled 'Shari'ah Kawniyyah' (literally: Universal Shari'ah). He means there is one single law, which regulates the universe, life and humanity. This law is *shari'ah*.
- 412 Shepard's trans. p. 353, para. 10; Hardie's trans. p. 279.
- 413 See Shepard's trans. p. xl.
- 414 Among these are: *Shari'ah* of God (Shepard, p. 322 para. 9); Islamic *Shari'ah*, and Islamic law (Shepard, p. 336 para. 239); The idea of 'harmony' and 'universe, life and man' (Shepard, p. 350 ff. 7, p. 333 para.131); Islamic state (Shepard, p. 324 para. 15); Islamic system (Shepard, p. 324 para.18, p. 325 para.19); Islam is a worldwide system (Shepard, p. 109 para. 20, 23 and p. 289 para. 78); *jahalah* (Shepard, p. 111 para.26); *jahili* (Shepard, p. 157; p. 283 rest of para. 65); barbarism, (Shepard, p. 282 para. 57); and *jahiliyyah* (Shepard, p. 186 para. 18; p. 224 para. 160; p. 267 para. 172; p. 268, para.179; p. 273, para. 234; pp. 283–284 para. 66; p. 285, line 15).
- 415 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 33; Hardie's trans. p. 22; Shepard's trans. p. 31, para. 24.
- 416 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 25; Hardie's trans. p. 32; Shepard's trans. p. 43, para. 14–16 and ff.
- 417 Shepard's trans. p. xxvi.
- 418 Shepard's trans. p. xxv.
- 419 Qutb, 'Mujtama' Salih wa Mujtama' Mutawazin' p. 56.
- 420 Qutb, 'Qiyadatuna al-Ruhiyyah', p. 27.
- 421 Qutb, *Adalah*, pp. 110–111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157, lines 18–19.

6 The *jahiliyyah* theory's third stage: 1948–1950

- 1 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Adalah*, al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157.
- 2 Hardie's trans. p. 250.
- 3 Eveland, William Crane (1980), *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East*, London: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 36.

- 4 Eveland, *Ropes of Sand*, pp. 37, 38, 57; Green Stephen (1984), *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*, New York: William Morrow and Company: pp. 11, 47–48, 55–58.
- 5 Green, Stephen, *Taking Sides*, pp. 47–75.
- 6 See 'Social Reform' in the previous chapter; also Qutb, Sayyid, 'Al-Damir al-Amrikani wa Qadiyyat Filistin' (American Conscience and Palestinian Issue), *Al-Risalah*, vol. 2, n. 694 (1946), pp. 1155–1557.
- 7 Al-'Azam, Yusuf (1980), *Ra'id al-Fikr al-Islami al-Mu'asir: al-Shahid Sayyid Qutb*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1st edn, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 223.
- 8 Musallam, Adnan Ayyub (1983), *The Formative Stages of Sayyid Qutb's Intellectual Career and His Emergence as an Islamic Da'iyah* (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan), p. 188.
- 9 The two projects were published in *Al-Fikr al-Jadid*, n. 2 and 4, in January (1948).
- 10 For the ideas of these articles in his 'Social Justice', see Qutb, Sayyid (1993) *Al-Adalah, al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 178–188; Hardie's trans. pp. 220–221, Shepard's trans. pp. 259–265 and ff.
- 11 For further information about the articles published in this Journal until it was closed down in March 1948, see Abd al-Baqi Muhammad Husayn (1986), *Sayyid Qutb: Hayatuhua Adabuh*, al-Mansurah, Egypt: Dar al-Wafa', 1st edn, pp. 433–434.
- 12 Shepard, William (1996), *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, p. xvi.
- 13 See al-Khalidi, Salah (1994), *Sayyid Qutb Min al-Milad Ila al-Istishhad*, Damascus, Dar al-Qalam, 2nd edn, pp. 105–106; al-Khabbas, Abdullah (1983), *Sayyid Qutb, Al-adib al-Naqid*, Al-Zarqa': Maktabat al-Manar, 1st edn, p. 99.
- 14 Eveland, *Ropes of Sand*, p. 57.
- 15 See Muhammad Qutb, 'Interview with Muhammad Qutb', in *Majallat al-Ghuraba'*, 3, September (1975), p. 10.
- 16 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Wad' Maqlub fi Jawa'iz Fu'ad al-Awwal: Dars fi al-Karamah li-Asatidhatina al-Kibar', *al-Fikr al-Jadid*, n. 6, February (1948).
- 17 See Qutb, Sayyid, 'Taharraru Ya Abid al-Amrikan wa al-Ruos wa al-Engliz, al-Ummah Masdar al-Sutan, Yada 'uhuma Askary Polis wa Yajlid biha al-'Ard', *al-Fikr al-Jadid*, n. 8, February (1948).
- 18 See Muhammad Qutb, *al-Ghuraba'*, 3 September (1975), p. 10.
- 19 Al-'Azam, *Ra'id al-Fikr al-Islami*, pp. 206–207.
- 20 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 192, some sources claimed that the trip was arranged by Qutb's friend al-Nuqrashi the Prime Minister. See, al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 192.
- 21 Al-Tahir, Makki, 'Qutb and Three Unpublished Letters', *Al-Hilal*, October (1986) p. 121.
- 22 Qutb, *Adalah*, p. 111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157.
- 23 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 40.
- 24 Qutb, Sayyid (1995), *Al-Taswir al-Fanni, fi al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 216, for details on 'namazij insaniyyah' (human types), see Chapter 4 under the subtitle 'Qutb focuses on the Qur'an'.
- 25 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 195.
- 26 Ibn Manzur, Ali al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Muhammad (1994), *Lisan al-'Arab*, Beirut: Dar Sadir, vol. 8, p. 340.
- 27 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, vol. 9, p. 17.
- 28 See Qutb *Adalah*, pp. 110–111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157. For further details about the word *mutraf*, see Qutb, 'Antum ayyuha al-Mutrafun Tazra'una al-Shuyu'iyyah Zar'an', *Al-Fikr al-Jadid*, n. 6, February (1948). For cross-examination, see the word *Mutraf* in the Qur'an (23:33; 21:13; 11:116; 34:34; 56:45; 17:16; and 23:64).
- 29 Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 40.
- 30 al-Tahir, 'Qutb and Three Unpublished letters', p. 121.

- 31 Qutb, Sayyid, 'America al-Lati Ra'ayt fi Mizan al-Qiyam al-Insaniyyah', *Al-Risalah*, n. 957, November (1951), pp. 1245–1247; for further details see *Al-Risalah* (1951), n. 957, pp. 1245–1247; and n. 959, pp. 1301–1306; and n. 961, pp. 1357–1360.
- 32 See Qutb Sayyid (1983), *Al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 78, 79, 84.
- 33 Qutb, Sayyid (1992), *Fi Zīlal al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol. 2, p. 1091; vol. 3, p. 1786.
- 34 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 195.
- 35 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 196–198.
- 36 These articles collected by al-Khalidi and published in 1985, see al-Khalidi, Salah (1985), *America Min al-Dakhil bi-Minzar Sayyid Qutb*' (*America From Within as Seen by Sayyid Qutb*), Jaddah: Dar al-Manarah, 1st edn, p. 31; cf., al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 198–199; also see Hammudah, Adel (1990), *Sayyid Qutb, Mina al Quayyahila al-Mishnaquah*, Cairo: Sina li al-Nashr, 3rd edn, pp. 83–101.
- 37 Here, I am grateful to Janet Waters, Head of Archival Services at the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, who provided me with this fifty-five years old article. In her message to me, her comment is also indicative: She said: 'We are very familiar with this [Qutb's] name. He has generated much interest among researchers since September 11, 2001.'
- 38 Qutb, Sayyid, 'The World is Undutiful Boy', *Fulcrum*, vol. 3, n. 1 (fall 1949), p. 29.
- 39 Qutb, 'The World is Undutiful Boy', p. 29.
- 40 Qutb, 'The World is Undutiful Boy', p. 29.
- 41 Qutb, 'The World is Undutiful Boy', p. 29.
- 42 Calvert, John, 'The World is an Undutiful Boy': Sayyid Qutb's American Experience, *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, 11:1, March (2000), p. 49; al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 198.
- 43 Shepard says, '*ubudiyyah*, *hakimiyyah* and *uluhiyyah* 'appeared occasionally in the earlier editions' of *Social Justice* but 'frequently' used in the 'last edition'. In all editions, '*ubudiyyah* and *uluhiyyah* appeared occasionally in some chapters. For further details see Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xxv and ff. 21, p. 48 para. 39; also see Hardie's trans. p. 94.
- 44 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 111, see Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157.
- 45 Qutb, 'America al-Lati Ra'ayt', *Al-Risalah*, n. 957, November (1951), pp. 1245–1247.
- 46 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 201–202.
- 47 Qutb's concept of 'Humanity' is discussed in his *Mashahid* (1947) in the previous chapter. He based this concept on the value of life in human conscience. The indicator on this value is both the belief in Just Divinity and the belief in the Other World. See Qutb, Sayyid (1993) *Mashahid, al-Qiyamah fi al-Quran*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 11th edn, pp. 13–14.
- 48 Qutb, 'America al-Lati Ra'ayt', *Al-Risalah*, pp. 1245–1247.
- 49 Qutb, 'America al-Lati Ra'ayt', *Al-Risalah*, pp. 1245–1247.
- 50 Qutb, Sayyid, 'Akhi Abbas', *Al-Risalah*, n. 887, 3 July (1950), p. 756.
- 51 Qutb, '*Adalah*', p. 7; Hardie's trans. p. 1, similar notions, p. 15; also see Shepard's trans. p. 1 and ff.
- 52 Qutb, 'Akhi Abbas' *Al-Risalah*, p. 756; Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 88.
- 53 Qutb's letter, 5/11/1951, cf. Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 92.
- 54 Qutb, 'Akhi Abbas', *Al-Risalah*, p. 756, cf. Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 87. Regarding this quotation, I have used the word '*jahili*' as translation to Qutb's word '*jahilah*' for grammatical reasons, Qutb's Arabic phrase is 'al-hifnah *al-jahilah* al-maridah al-ananiyyah'. Here, the word *al-jahilah* cannot be accurately translated in any form other than *jahili*.
- 55 Qutb, '*Adalah*', pp. 110–111; Hardie's trans. p. 128; Shepard's trans. p. 157, lines 18–19.
- 56 Qutb used the word 'dogs', but translated here 'lackeys'.

- 57 Qutb, *Al-Risalah*, 31 July (1950); the letter was signed, San Diego, California. The notion of this letter is similar to that of 'Rawwidu Anfasakum 'ala al-Istiqlal' (Train Yourself for Independence) written by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, *Al-Jaridah*, n. 454, 2 September (1908).
- 58 Qutb, *Al-Risalah*, 31 July (1950); see, Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 88–90.
- 59 See Chapter 4 section 'Justice and harmony'; Chapter 5 subtitle 'Social reform' in this book.
- 60 Qutb, *Al-Risalah*, 31 July (1950); see, Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 90.
- 61 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 88–90, he quoted from *Al-Risalah*, 31 July (1950).
- 62 Barakat, Muhammad Tawfiq, *Sayyid Qutb: Khulasat Hayatih, Minhajuh fi al-Harakah wa al-Naqd al-Muwajjah ilaiyyh*. Makkah: Maktabat al-Manarah, p. 25, (n.d.).
- 63 Ayubi (1991), *Political Islam*, p. 137.
- 64 Hammudah, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 100, quoted from Qutb's *Limadha A'damuni*. Hammudah is a former chief editor of Egypt's magazine *Rose el-Youssef* and currently is writer in *al-Ahram Newspaper*.
- 65 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 103 quoted from Qutb's letter to Anwar al-Ma'addawi. The letter was published in *al-Katib Magazine*, August (1975), n. 175, pp. 28–29.

7 The jahiliyyah theory's fourth stage: 1950–1966

- 1 Abd al-Baqi, Muhammad Husayn (1986), *Sayyid Qutb: Hayatuh wa Adabuh*, al-Mansurah, Egypt: Dar al-Wafa', 1st edn, p. 43.
- 2 The Ikhwan (brotherhood) appreciated his book '*The Future of Culture in Egypt*' (1939) and published it in their journal, see al-'Azam Yusuf (1980), *Ra'id al-Fikr al-Islami al-Mu'asir: al-Shahid Sayyid Qutb*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, p. 126.
- 3 See Qutb's letter to Anwar al-Ma'addawi published in *al-Kutub*, August (1975), n. 175, pp. 28–29.
- 4 Abbd al-Baqi, Salah (1994) *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 43.
- 5 Al-Khalidi, Salah (1994), *Sayyid Qutb Min al-Milad ila al-Istishhad*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2nd edn, p. 130.
- 6 Al-Nadawi says his family is of Arab origins. The lineage of his father goes back to 'Abdullah al-Ashtar Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn al-Hasan Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib the paternal cousin of the Prophet. Al-Nadawi's father (d. 1341/1923) was a scholar and wrote a number of books some of them still in his handwriting but some were published, among them is '*Nuzhat al-Khawatin*' (*Excursion of ideas*). The book is a biography covered, in eight volumes, almost five thousand (5000) Muslim scholars in India from the first Islamic century until the death of the author. Al-Nadawi's Mother memorized the Qur'an and was teaching both Urdu and Persian languages and wrote few books. For further information, see introduction by Al-Sharabasi, in al-Nadawi's book '*Madha Khasira al'alam bi Inhitat al-Mustimin*', pp. 17–23; also see al-Nadawi, *Shakhsiyyat wa Kutub*, (1990), pp. 8–9.
- 7 Al-Nadawi, Abu al-Hasan (1990), *Shakhsiyyat wa Kutub*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, pp. 101–102. Al-Nadawi left India for the first time to Saudi Arabia in 1947 and stayed until early 1950. He came to Egypt in February 1951 and then went to Syria and other Arab countries. See introduction by al-Sharabasi, in al-Nadawi Abu al-Hasan's (1984) book *Madha Khasira al-'Alam bi-Inhitat al-Mustimin*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, p. 22
- 8 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsiyyat wa Kutub*, p. 102; regarding 'Attar, Qutb wrote an article 'Shi'r min al-Jazirah: Ahmad 'Abd al-Ghafur 'Attar', *Al-Risalah*, n. 698 (1946), pp. 1278–1280; also, 'Attar wrote about Qutb and analyzed his biography '*Tijl min al-Qariyah*', see 'Attar, Ahmad Abd al-Ghafur (1947), *Hadith fi al-Kutub*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah p. 234.
- 9 See World Book Encyclopaedia (1990), Chicago, IL: A Scott Fetzer Company, vol. 17, p. 159.

- 10 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, p. 101.
- 11 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, p. 102, for these details see pp. 102–106.
- 12 Al-Nadawi insisted to write the manuscript of this book in Arabic which is not among his skills, so that the publisher took the book to Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Nashr (Committee of authoring and publishing) at Cairo University and got the book published in early 1950, before Qutb returned from the USA to Cairo. Later, the book was translated into English and published in Pakistan under the title '*Islam and the World*', see Arabic edition numbered 8 (1984), Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, pp. 3–4.
- 13 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, p. 106.
- 14 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, pp. 106–107.
- 15 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, p. 107, and ff. 2, for further detail about Qutb's discussion of al-Nadawi's book, see al-Nadawi, Abu al-Hasan (1975) *Mudhakkirat Sa'ih fi al-Sharq al-Arabi*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2nd edn, p. 184.
- 16 Al-Nadawi, *Shakhsīyyat wa Kutub*, pp. 107–108.
- 17 Qutb used this term '*ubudīyyah*' in *Taswir* (1945), *Mashahid* (1947), *Adalah* (1949). Shepard uses this term to emphasize Qutb's theocentrism, see Shepard William (1996), *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*; Leiden: E. J. Brill, p. xxv and ff. 21, p. 351, para.12.
- 18 See Qutb's introduction to al-Nadawi's book *Madha Khasira*, pp. 12–16 esp. pp. 13–15; For cross examination with *Social Justice* (1949), see Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, Ch. 'The historical Reality of Islam', and 'The Present and Future of Islam' in Hardie's trans. pp. 139–226 and 227–276 respectively; and in Shepard's trans. pp. 182–320.
- 19 See discussion of the first poem and the conclusion of Chapter 4 in the present text, also see summary at the end of Chapter 5.
- 20 For example, see the word *jahl* in Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Ma'rakat al-Islam wa al-Ra'smalīyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn, p. 28 (one time), p. 63 (four times), p. 64 (four times); prevalent *jahl* (*al-jahl al-fashi*), p. 76; *al-jahl and al-juhhal*, p. 85.
- 21 See etymological aspects of *jahalah* and *jahiliyyah* in Chapter 2 in this book; and Qutb's early usage as discussed here in Chapter 4.
- 22 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 24; Qutb used the same passage in his *al-Naq al-Adabi* pp. 151–152 and in ff. he said these words were written in 1947.
- 23 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 25.
- 24 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 28.
- 25 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 29.
- 26 See Chapter 5 subtitles 'Social reform' and 'Social Justice'; also Chapter 6 for his view about America.
- 27 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 36.
- 28 At this time of 1951, Egypt was using the constitution of 1923 drafted by 'Abd al-'Aziz Fahmi.
- 29 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 60.
- 30 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 55.
- 31 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 55, here, Qutb reflects on al-Azhar's theoretical method (*wa'z wa irshad*).
- 32 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 59.
- 33 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 59.
- 34 This was further explained in a few articles, specifically: '*Misr awwalan walakin*' (Egypt is first, but), *Rose el-Youssef*, 1952, n. 1275, pp. 10–11, republished with other articles in 1953 in Qutb's *Dirasat Islamiyyah: Islamic Studies*. See Qutb (1993), *Dirasat Islamiyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 106–112. This idea is also detailed in *Nahwa Mujtama' Islami*, Cairo: Dar Al-Shuruq, pp. 96–97; *Ma'alim li al-Tariq*, pp. 151, 157–158, 159–160.
- 35 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, pp. 63, 65.
- 36 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 65.
- 37 Qutb, *Ra'smalīyyah*, p. 63; Qutb's intention of the phrase '*jahl fashi*' alludes to fascism.

- 38 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 69–70; also see pp. 71, 85, 105–106. Qutb was not easy with those shaykhs and dervishes in his village, as previously explained in Chapter 3. This view grew with him to be articulated.
- 39 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, p. 66.
- 40 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, p. 76.
- 41 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, p. 76.
- 42 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 83–84.
- 43 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 84–86 see the idea of consultation (*shurah*), p. 86.
- 44 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 86–88.
- 45 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 88–92.
- 46 Qutb, *Ra'smalayyah*, pp. 93–111.
- 47 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 542.
- 48 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Al-Salam al-'Alami wa al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 13.
- 49 Qutb stressed this idea in his poetry (1935) and in *Social Justice* (1949), see Chapter. 4, also see Chapter 5 subtitle 'Social Justice', further detail, see Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. xxxvi, esp. 'comprehensive', p. xxxviii and then 'integrated'.
- 50 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 13–14; this was later detailed in his *Khasa'is al-Tasawwur al-Islami wa Muqawwimatuh*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn, pp. 111–118; also see Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, pp. xxiv and xxxiv.
- 51 Qutb, *al-Salam*, p. 14.
- 52 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 10–11.
- 53 Qutb, *al-Salam*, p. 13.
- 54 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 122–126.
- 55 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 142–144.
- 56 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 15–37.
- 57 Qutb, *al-Salam*, p. 34.
- 58 Qutb, *al-Salam*, p. 170.
- 59 I used the word 'living' as translation to Qutb's word 'talughghu', in order to be in line with my translation of Qutb's phrase '*mustanqa' asin*' (despicable conditions) in the same sentence. Qutb's phrase is 'al-mustanqa' al-asin al-ladhi talughghu fih al-hadarah al-gharbiyyah'. The word 'talughghu' is 'to eat indigestible fatty food in a gluttonous manner'. As for the phrase 'mustanqa' asin' is used to refer to the swamp-land with stinky-muddy water. See Ibn Manzur, *Abi al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Muhammad* (1994), *Lisan al-'Arab*, Beirut: Dar Sadir, vol. 8, p. 449. Thus, literal translation of Qutb's whole phrase would be 'the stinky morass from which Western civilization eats in a gluttonous manner.'
- 60 Qutb, *al-Salam*, p. 199.
- 61 See Chapters 4 and 5.
- 62 See Qutb's introduction to al-Nadawi's book *Madha Khasira al-'Alam*, pp. 12–16, esp. p. 15.
- 63 al-Khatib's introduction was removed from the later prints, see al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 549.
- 64 See Hardie's trans. *Social Justice in Islam* (1970), p. viii.
- 65 Qutb, *Dirasat Islamiyyah*, p. 147.
- 66 Qutb, Sayyid, *Adab al-Inhilal, Al-Risalah* (1952) n. 990, p. 937–939.
- 67 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 147.
- 68 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 148.
- 69 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 149; for similar view in his earlier edition of *Social Justice*, see Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 240, para. 239; Hardie's trans. p. 198.
- 70 Qutb, *Dirasat Islamiyyah*. pp. 149–150, esp. 150.
- 71 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 31.
- 72 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 32.
- 73 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 99.
- 74 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 12.

- 75 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 86.
- 76 This article, first published in *Al-Risalah* (1952), n. 1013, pp. 1379–1383 under the title ‘Fi Zilal Mawlid al-Rasul: In the Shadow of the Birth of the Messenger’, and republished in *Dirasat Islamiyyah* (1953) under the title ‘Intisar Muhammad: The Victory of Muhammad’.
- 77 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 27.
- 78 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 28.
- 79 Qutb, *Dirasat*, pp. 17, 81.
- 80 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 80.
- 81 Qutb, *Dirasat*, pp. 31, 168.
- 82 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 75.
- 83 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 74, Qutb’s expression ‘different lords’ takes the line of the Qur’an 12:39.
- 84 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 75.
- 85 Qutb, *Dirasat*, pp. 75–76.
- 86 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 76.
- 87 Qutb, *Dirasat*, pp. 76–77.
- 88 Qutb, *Dirasat*, pp. 77–78; for cross examination of his earlier and later writings, I have dealt with this issue in more detail in an article ‘Khatb Sayed, ‘Al-Hudaybi’s Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt’, *The Muslim World*, vol. 91, 3 and 4 (fall 2001), pp. 451–479.
- 89 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 382–383, he quoted from Qutb’s *Limadha A’damuni* pp. 42–45.
- 90 See Qutb (1952), ‘Fi Zilal al-Qur’an’, *Al-Muslimun*, n. 3–9, pp. 28–32; 19–27; 17–26; 13–22; 25–30; 24–34; 11–15 respectively.
- 91 Al-Khalidi (1994), *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 545.
- 92 See Qutb, ‘Fi Zilal al-Qur’an’, *Al-Muslimun*, n. 9, p. 15.
- 93 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 545.
- 94 Boullata, J. Isa (2000), ‘Sayyid Qutb’s Literary Appreciation of the Qur’an’, in Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur’an*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, p. 361; also see al-Khabbas, Abdullah (1983), *Sayyid Qutb, al-Adib al-Naqid, Al-Zarqa’*: Maktabat al-Manar, 1st edn, p. 312.
- 95 Boullata, Issa (2000), p. 361; al-Khabbas (1983), *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 312.
- 96 al-Khalidi (1994), *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 546.
- 97 Qutb, Sayyid (1992) al-Qur’an, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, vol. 4, p. 2474.
- 98 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 4, p. 2475.
- 99 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 5, p. 2861.
- 100 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 5, p. 2861.
- 101 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 2, p. 904, more details about *jahiliyyah* on this page.
- 102 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 3, p. 1256.
- 103 See Qutb, Sayyid (1957), ‘Bawakir al-Kifah’, *Al-Kifah al-Islami*, n. 29, 26 July (1957), p. 5.
- 104 See al-Azm, Yusuf, ‘al-Risalah al-Ula’, *Al-Kifah al-Islami*, n. 30, 3 August (1957), p. 9.
- 105 See al-A’zami, Walid, ‘Sada al-Kifah’, *Al-Kifah al-Islami*, n. 39, 4 October (1957), p. 5.
- 106 See al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 358.
- 107 See Ahmad al-Jada’ and Husni Jirar (1989), *Shu’ara’ al-Da’wah al-Islamiyyah*, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risalah, vol. 4, pp. 37–38.
- 108 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Bawakir al-Kifah’, p. 5.
- 109 Qutb, Sayyid, ‘Bawakir al-Kifah’ p. 5.
- 110 Qutb, Sayyid ‘Itrabun Haniq’, *Al-Balagh*, April, n. 108 (1929), p. 27; also see, n. 89 (1928), pp. 14–15.
- 111 Al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 303.
- 112 About the programme in his later stage, see Khatib, ‘Al-Hudaybi’s Influence on the Development of Islamist Movement in Egypt’, pp. 451–479, esp. 470–473.

- 113 See Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movement in Egypt', pp. 451–479, esp. 460–468.
- 114 Qutb, Sayyid (1990), *Hadha al-Din*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 5.
- 115 Qutb, *Dirasat*, p. 27.
- 116 Qutb, *Hadha al-Din*, pp. 5–6 esp. 6.
- 117 Qutb, *Hadha al-Din*, p. 28 see pp. 17–19.
- 118 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, Beirut: Holy Qur'an Publishing House, p. 34.
- 119 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, pp. 34, 41–44.
- 120 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 100.
- 121 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 62.
- 122 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, p. 117.
- 123 Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future*, pp. 13, 29.
- 124 See al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 559; also Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 332, fn. 118.
- 125 See Chapter 4.
- 126 See Qutb, Sayyid (1995), *Al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qura'n*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq pp. 122–124, 145, 146, 149, 150–151, 153, 171; *Mashahid al-Qiyamah fi al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 11th edn, pp. 44–45, 63, 88, 178; also see Chapter 5 esp. discussion of *Taswir* and *Mashahid*.
- 127 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 332, 118; Qutb, *Ra'smaliyyah*, p. 54 ff. 1; *Adalah*, Ch. 'Tabi'at al-'Adalah'.
- 128 Qutb, *al-Salam*, pp. 13–14.
- 129 See Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 1, p. 547 ff. 1; vol. 2, pp. 1046 ff. 1, 1981 ff. 1, 1164 ff. 1; vol. 3, p. 1299; vol. 4, pp. 1902 ff. 2; 1939 fn. 1; 2073 ff. 1.
- 130 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 332 fn. 118.
- 131 Qutb, *Ra'smaliyyah*, p. 54 ff. 1.
- 132 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 6, p. 3732 ff. 1 (in his commentary on Qur'an 72:11–12).
- 133 Qutb, *Khasa'is* p. 5.
- 134 Qutb, *Khasa'is*, p. 11.
- 135 Qutb, *Khasa'is*, pp. 11–12.
- 136 See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, p. 329, para. 17, and see 118, p. 330, para. 119–120, p. 331, para. 123, p. 332, para. 127, 129, 130, p. 333, para. 131, 132, 133; also p. 334.
- 137 Qutb's intention of this phrase lies in the definition of those words, which imply a range of attributes. The word '*Tih*' means 'pride; haughtiness; arrogance; loftiness; straying; deviation; error; wilderness; labyrinth', see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 13, p. 482. The word '*Rukam*' means 'to pile up (i.e. sand, mud or other things such as clouds over clouds). The Qur'an says: 'Do you not see how God drives the clouds, then gathers and piles them up (*yaj' alahu Rukama*) in masses' (Qur'an 24:43). For the word *Rukam*, also see Qur'an (52:44; 8:37). For further detail, see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan*, vol. 12, p. 251. Thus, the word *Rukam* (the piled up things) implies 'darkness' (*zulumat*) which is also used by the Qur'an in the context of the universe, life and man. The Qur'an says about the stature of the unbelievers that it 'is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds: darkness upon darkness: *zulumat* upon *zulumat*' (Qur'an 24:40). 'He who guides you in the darkness (*zulumat*) of land and sea...' (Qur'an 27:63); '*Zulumat al-ard*: darkness of land' (Qur'an 6:59); 'darkness of land and sea' (Qur'an 6:63, 97), speaking of man in the darkness (*zulumat*) of his mother's womb (Qur'an 39:6). Thus, Qutb's intention of the title '*Tih wa Rukam*' refers to the accumulated errors and deviations of all types and forms 'beliefs, customs, philosophies, myths etc. . . .' see Qutb, *Khasa'is*, p. 23 first paragraph and the Qur'anic verse in the beginning. Qutb preferred to use this phrase '*Tih wa Rukam*' to reflect on the darkness of the *jahiliyyat* (singular *jahiliyyah*) of all types and forms; beliefs and conceptions, customs and behaviors. For

- further details about similar phrases, see Qutb's article, 'Fi al-Tih: In the Wilderness', *al-Risalah* n. 544, (1943), pp. 972–973.
- 138 Qutb, *Khasa'is*, p. 23.
- 139 Qutb, *Khasa'is*, p. 24 *uluhiyyah* and *'ubudiyyah*, pp. 25, 31–32.
- 140 See Chapter 5, also *Khasa'is*, pp. 33, 178.
- 141 About critical analysis of these ideas, see Shepard's trans. pp. xxxiv–xlvi.
- 142 Qutb, *Khasa'is*, pp. 189, 190, also pp. 7, 25.
- 143 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 5, p. 2861.
- 144 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 5, p. 2861.
- 145 See Qutb, *Khasa'is*, p. 23, 1st and 2nd para. (where the term *jahiliyyah* did not appear) and compare with p. 25 lines 8–19 (where the term *jahiliyyah* was mentioned); compare all with p. 34 para. 4 (similarity between Christianity and deviation in Arabia); see p. 62 esp., Trinity (where the term *jahiliyyah* did not appear) and compare with *Zilal*, vol. 3, pp. 1638–1639 esp., Trinity (where he used the term).
- 146 The concept of 'Humanity' is previously discussed in Chapter 5 under the subtitle 'Social Justice' in this text.
- 147 Qutb (1983), *Al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 5.
- 148 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, pp. 7–8.
- 149 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, pp. 9, 34, 73.
- 150 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 185.
- 151 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 187.
- 152 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 188.
- 153 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, pp. 195–196.
- 154 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 188.
- 155 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 70.
- 156 Qutb, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah*, p. 53.
- 157 The existing book '*Mujtama' Islami*' is not the one referred to here. The existing book '*Mujtama'*' was published in 1969, and contains some of Qutb's articles published in *Al-Mustimun* in 1952 and 1953. Qutb wrote a book entitled *Mujtama' Islami* but it disappeared. The matter of this book is discussed in Chapter 3.
- 158 See al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 325–326.
- 159 Abu Rabi, Ibrahim (1996), *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 167.
- 160 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, Cairo: al-Shuruq, pp. 5–6.
- 161 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 10.
- 162 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 11.
- 163 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, pp. 6–7.
- 164 See Chapter 5 under the subtitle 'Qutb focuses on the Qur'an'.
- 165 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, pp. 11–12.
- 166 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 12.
- 167 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 21.
- 168 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, p. 150.
- 169 Qutb, Sayyid (1993), *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 13th edn, p. 151, see p. 157–159.
- 170 Qutb, *Ma'alim*, pp. 98–101.
- 171 Qutb, *Zilal*, vol. 3, p. 1256; these categories were further detailed in Chapter 3.
- 172 See al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 129, 188–191, 365.
- 173 It is the name of the idol, which was worshipped as a deity by the Arabs before Islam.
- 174 See Qutb, 'Bawakir al-Kifah', p. 5.
- 175 For further details, see al-Khabbas, *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 129.
- 176 See 'Belief and conceptions in pre-Islamic Arabia' in Chapter 2.
- 177 See Qutb, Sayyid and Hashim al-Rifa'i, *Lahan al-Kifah*, n. 12, pp. 13–14; in his poetry (1935) and in his writings of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, Qutb was encouraging the masses to express their anger and act rather than to keep silent. Here, in this

poem, however, Qutb is shaking his fists with desperation at the leaders and the masses altogether.

178 See Qutb, *Lahan al-Kīfah*, p. 14.

179 Comparable to these terms, I have provided a brief outline for a number of the words and phrases used by Qutb before 1950. For further details, see Chapter 4, esp., conclusion; also in Chapter 5, see the three paragraphs at the end of the subtitle 'jahiliyyah conception vs Qur'anic conception', and further, summary at the end of the discussion subtitled 'Social Justice.'

180 See Chapter 4 section 'Islam v al-Jahalat'.

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