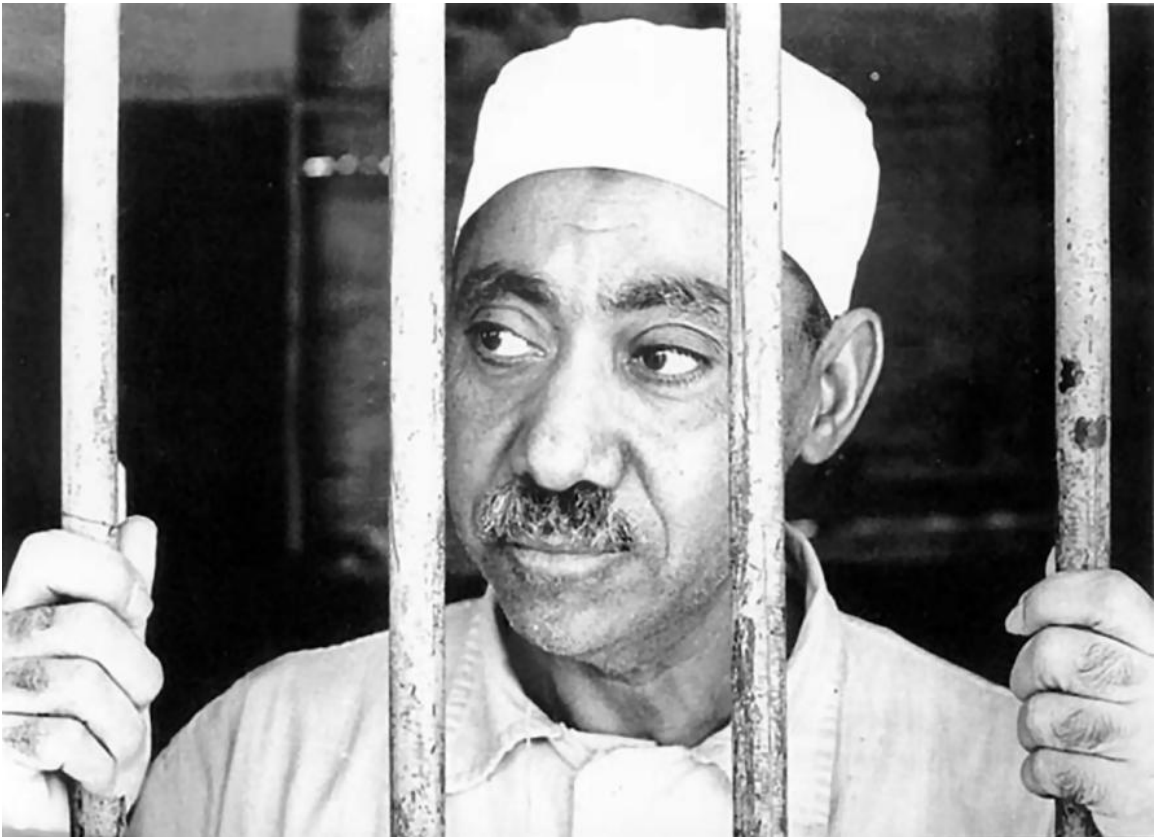


Jihadology

Socio-political Background and Intellectual
Undergirding of the Ikhwani Breakaway
Factions: 1954-1981



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Introduction

Over the past few days, we have seen a major crackdown against the Muslim Brothers second-tier leadership and grassroots supporters. While many are focused on if the ‘Algerian scenario’ is starting to play out in Egypt, I think it’s important to look back at what happened the last time there was a large-scale suppression of the Brothers. This occurred following the rise of Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir in 1954. In response, over the next decade and a half some elements within the Ikhwan broke away from the movement since they believed accommodation with the regime was illegitimate and the only solution was to overthrow the military rule.

Will we see a similar scenario play out in the coming decade or so? It is difficult to know and somewhat pointless to try and predict. That being said, it is important to understand this past history so one might be cognizant of history repeating itself. The contexts are obviously different in terms of the place Islamism – let alone jihadism – has within Egypt and the broader Middle East.

Below you will find two separate things I have previously written.¹ One is a chapter from my master’s thesis written in the fall of 2009 on Sayyid Qutb, his upbringing, and intellectual thought and the second is a paper I presented at the 2011 Middle East Studies Association annual conference on the 30 year anniversary of the assassination of former Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat. The paper explores the post-Qutb sprouting of underground jihadi movements within Egypt in the 1970s. It also looks at the natural conclusion of the radicalization of these individuals and ideas through the thought of Muhammad ‘Abd al-Salam Farag, the leader of the group responsible for Sadat’s assassination.

Hopefully these two works will shed some historical light on relevant aspects of the recent crackdown and the potential future trajectory of elements currently in the Ikhwan.

¹ Since these are two different documents the formatting is slightly different in terms of how I transliterate the Arabic words. A bibliography for both documents is combined at the end.

Sayyid Qutb

*Islam is the declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men. Thus it strives from the beginning to abolish all those systems and governments, which are based on the rule of man over men and the servitude of one human being to another.*²

Unlike Hassan al-Banna – who was more of a community organizer that utilized the language of Islam to mobilize the masses toward a more Islamicized society as well as focusing on defeating the colonialists – Sayyid Qutb was a true intellectual who helped create a theoretical framework to justify action against Muslim rulers. This chapter will primarily focus on the most crucial aspects of his biography and thought, such as the terms *jāhiliyyah*, *ḥākimīyyah*, *‘ubūdīyyah*, *tawḥīd*, *fīṭrah* and *jihad*. This chapter will also examine the influence of Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Taymīyyah’s, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s and ‘Abū ‘A’lā Mawdūdī’s on Qutb’s thought. It will also posit a theory, which argues that Qutb’s thought is not a further radicalization of al-Banna’s ideas; rather, both Qutb and al-Banna conceived of their ideas independently during an era of rapid change in Egyptian society.

Background

Qutb, like al-Banna, was born in 1906, but in the town of Mushā in the province of Asyūt about 235 miles south of Cairo. Mushā was also called *Balad al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ* in honor of him being the towns’ Sufi *walī* (saint).³⁴ Al-Ḥajj Qutb Ibrāhīm, Qutb’s father, was a delegate to Muṣṭafā Kāmil’s National Party (*al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī*) who subscribed to *al-Liwā’* (The Standard), the National Party’s journal.⁵ During Qutb’s childhood, his house was known for being at the center of political discourse in his area. Many sympathetic to Ibrāhīm’s nationalist cause would stop by their home and read *al-Liwā’*, discussed issues in the current edition and talked about the major political debates in

² Albert J. Bergesen (ed.), *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 19.

³ *Walī* in many cases is translated as an individual who is a saint and in the context of Sufism (mystical Islam). In fact, though, *walī*, when translated means one who is close to God.

⁴ Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 29.

⁵ Bergesen, 3.

Egypt at the time.⁶ Under these circumstances, at a young age Qutb became aware of many of the key sociopolitical problems in Egyptian society. This was critical to Qutb's development since he became one of the leading social, cultural, political and religious critics in post-World War I Egypt through his death in 1966. Based on Qutb's dedication to his father, in his book *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fī al-Qur'ān* (*Scenes of Resurrection in the Qur'an*) one can see that Ibrāhīm left a significant mark on Qutb's life:

When I was a young child you imprinted on my senses the fear of the Day of Judgment... The image of you reciting the *Fātiḥah*⁷ every evening following dinner, and the dedication of the prayer to the souls of your fathers in their final abode, are vividly imprinted in my imagination.⁸

Similarly, Qutb's mother, Fāṭimah, played an influential role in his life, too. In Qutb's autobiography *Ṭifl min al-Qaryah* (*Child from the Village*), he explains that his mother encouraged him in religion as well as the importance of education.⁹ By the age of ten Qutb memorized the entire Qur'an.¹⁰ Like his father, Qutb also dedicated a book to his mother, *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān* (*Artistic Portrayal in the Qur'an*):

When you sent me to primary school in the village your greatest wish was that Allah might open my heart to memorize the Qur'an... I have memorized the Qur'an and fulfilled a part of your wish.¹¹

⁶ Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah* (London: Routledge, 2006), 45. For future footnotes this will be cited as Khatab, *PTSQ*.

⁷ The first *sura* or chapter in the Qur'an: 1. In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. 2. All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds, 3. the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, 4. Master of the Day of Retribution. 5. You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help. 6. Guide us on the straight path, 7. the path of those whom You have blessed—such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray.

‘Ali Quli Qara’i (trans.), *The Qur'an: With a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation* (Clarksville, MD: Khatoons Inc., 2006), 1.

⁸ Sayyid Qutb, *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fī al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: 1966), Dedication Page; Musallam, 30.

⁹ Sayyid Qutb, *Ṭifl min al-Qaryah* (Beirut, 1973), 194; Musallam, 30.

¹⁰ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 61.

¹¹ Sayyid Qutb, *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: 1962), Dedication Page; Musallam, 31.

Both of Qutb's parents played an important role in shaping his early childhood, which gave him the necessary tools later in life to write about complicated issues within Egyptian society as well as competing ideas within the global commons (Communism and Liberal-Capitalist-Democracy). His mother also impressed upon Qutb the significance of restoring his family's prestige in light of their economic difficulties that beset them as a consequence of living beyond their means.¹² Though there is no direct evidence, Qutb's ideas about the importance of justice within an economic system could have been influenced by the economic downfall of his family within Mushā, which most likely had a lasting impression on him.

Childhood Education in Mushā

Qutb began his education when he was six years old at a secular government primary school. This differed from the *kuttāb*, a religious school for younger students.¹³ Within Qutb's village these two options were key fault lines in an ideological battle between either those who aspired modernism or traditionalism. Qutb's education became enmeshed in one of these disputes. His Qur'anic teacher at the primary school, Shaykh Aḥmad, was fired because he did not understand mathematics and other areas of modern education. Therefore, he created his own *kuttāb* to which Qutb's father transferred Qutb. The Shaykh contended that the government's firing was an indication that it planned to cut Qur'anic education from its curriculum, which in-turn turned Qutb off to *kuttāb* education.¹⁴ Also, Qutb was fond of the modern education of the primary school, and after some convincing, his father allowed Qutb to return to the government school. Sayed Khatab notes: "Although this was secular, the school became a "holy place" to him [Qutb], 'like a mosque.'"¹⁵ While at the primary school, there were Qur'anic competitions of memorization between the students at Qutb's school against those at the *kuttāb*. This was a way for Qutb to prove that his education was superior and, in most

¹² Musallam, 30.

¹³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 45.

cases, the primary school students succeeded more than the *kuttāb* students in these competitions. This gave Qutb a sense of vindication.¹⁶

Qutb also looked back on his childhood Qur'anic education nostalgically. Qutb was upset that the Qur'an of his adult life, clouded the beauty and simplicity of the Qur'an of his childhood. During his adult life he read the *tafsīr* (Qur'anic commentary) to gain a better understanding of its meaning, which Qutb believed bogged the text down and took away from its artistic and lyrical beauty.¹⁷ This could be a reason why Qutb preferred, when he wrote a *tafsīr Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān (In the Shade of the Qur'an)*, to focus more on the aesthetics of the Qur'an instead of its dense ideas.

During Qutb's childhood he was also known for his fond collection of books. He was believed to have a small collection of books on eclectic topics ranging from poetry, novels, detective stories, Islamic history, stories of heroes, astrology and magic to augury. This growing book collection was supplemented and sold by Sālih, a traveling salesman who came to Mushā three to four times a week to sell books. Qutb also traded books with fellow villagers, gaining the respect of the intellectuals of the town.¹⁸

Cairo

After completing his primary school education at the age of fourteen, Qutb's mother encouraged him to move to Cairo to continue his education. In 1920, Qutb moved to Cairo and lived with his maternal uncle, Aḥmad Ḥussayn 'Uthmān, who was a graduate of al-'Azhar and, at the time, worked as a teacher and journalist.¹⁹ Qutb entered a Teachers training school named *Madrasat al-Mu'allimīn al-'Awwaliyah*, where he studied for five years.²⁰ Afterwards, Qutb continued his education at *Dar al-'Ulūm*, a preparatory college, which coincidentally is where al-Banna went, too. There, Qutb

¹⁶ Musallam, 31.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 46.

¹⁹ Ibid., 48.

²⁰ Ibid., 49.

studied applied science, history, humanities, Arabic and Islamic studies. Following the completion of *Dar al-'Ulūm's* preparatory courses, in 1929, Qutb enrolled at *Dar al-'Ulūm's* Teachers College.²¹ His coursework at the Teachers College included logic, philosophy, political history, economics, Arabic, Islamic studies, scholastic theology, and Biblical Hebrew, although he complained about the lack of opportunities to study more foreign languages. At the age of 27, Qutb graduated the *Dar al-'Ulūm* Teacher's College in 1933 with a Licentiate in Arabic Language and Literature.²²

Once Qutb completed his education at *Dar al-'Ulūm*, the Egyptian Ministry of Education assigned him to be an Arabic language teacher at *al-Da'udīyyah* Preparatory School, which he worked at from 1933-1935.²³ He continued teaching through 1940 at schools in the following cities: *Dumyāt*, *Bani Sūwyif* and *Ḥalwān*. In 1940, Qutb was promoted to supervise general education at Egypt's Ministry of Education while also working on its administration of translation and statistics. Then, in 1944, he worked as an inspector of Egypt's elementary education and, a year later through 1948, was the Directorate General of Culture.²⁴ After a two year stint in America (which will be detailed in full below) studying its educational system, Qutb returned to the Ministry of Education, where he worked as an assistant supervisor in technical research and projects until October 18, 1952 when Qutb tendered his resignation.²⁵ This was a result of a major disagreement between Qutb and the newly empowered military leadership's conception of how education should be administered in Egyptian society. Qutb claimed the educational policies were not consistent with Islamic conceptions of education.²⁶ This would turn out to be Qutb's final official job since much of the rest of his life was spent in jail due at first to his affiliation with the Muslim Brothers, and later, to his controversial writings on Islam and the nature of the Egyptian state and society.

Intellectual Changes Before America

²¹ Bergesen, 3.

²² Khatab, *PTSQ*, 49.

²³ Musallam, 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Qutb's intellectual biography can be divided into three periods prior to his work and study in the United States. First, he worked as a poet and literary critic, which began in 1921 when Qutb published his first poem *al-Ḥāyat al-Jadīdat (The New Life)* through 1939.²⁷ The second was a Qur'anic literary stage, a time when Qutb started to examine the Qur'an in a non-religious manner through 1947.²⁸ Lastly, within the year Qutb went to the United States, he was in the process of writing and completing one of his most influential works *al-'Adālah al-Ijtimā'īyah Fī al-Islam (Social Justice in Islam)*, when the crystallization of his Islamic thinking took place.²⁹ This marked a significant intellectual turning point. Afterwards, Qutb became one of the most important and well-known Islamist thinkers and ideologues of the past century.

In the first phase, Qutb was influenced by the Dīwān school of poetry and literary criticism whose leading figure was 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād.³⁰ Though Qutb greatly admired al-'Aqqād, he worried that he was becoming too much like him and wanted to chart his own distinct path. Due to later interests in more spiritual matters, Qutb eventually split intellectually with al-'Aqqād in the 1940s, although al-'Aqqād still had an influence on him.³¹ Indeed, Qutb defended his mentor in various intellectual battles of their time. For example, in contrast to Muṣṭafā Ṣadīq al-Rafī'i and his followers who were seen by al-'Aqqād's supporters as conservative and holding on to an old intellectual trend, Qutb argued that Rafī'i's schools' use of the Arabic language made it difficult for them to differentiate from classical literature. While the Dīwān school of thought allowed dynamic use of the Arabic language that did not depend on certain style, which was utilized by Rafī'i's school.³²

Qutb's focus on secular subjects did not diminish his ties to Islam. As will be later discussed in more detail, when analyzing Qutb's major contributions to Islamist literature,

²⁷ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 46.

²⁸ Musallam, 56.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

³² *Ibid.*, 46.

seeds of those thoughts were planted in his earlier writings, but were not yet with the discourse of radical Islam. Though Qutb was still interested in literary criticism he turned to a more spiritual path when he started to seek out ways to scrutinize past Islamic scholarship on the Qur'an. As previously mentioned, Qutb was critical of the way the Qur'an was taught and studied during his adulthood as compared to when he was a child. Therefore, Qutb likely tried to resurrect the Qur'anic mode of teaching during his childhood, focusing on true inner beauty and writing about its aesthetics. In a twist of irony, al-Banna criticized Qutb's way of writing about the Qur'an since in al-Banna's view, it lacked religious tone or force, but rather only focused on its artistic qualities.³³ Qutb's interests in the Qur'an cannot be taken in a vacuum, though. At the time, many intellectuals, too, were looking back to Egypt's Islamic past in light of the failures of the liberal reforms over the previous twenty years, as well as Egypt's march towards a confrontation with the British occupation.

Within this environment, Qutb started to view the Qur'an again in more religious terms as a result of the socio-political problems of his time. In addition, it seems that Qutb's re-immersion into reading and pondering the Qur'an throughout the 1940s led to an epiphany of renewal and enlightenment. Qutb became a moralist, started publishing a new magazine called *al-Fikr al-Jadid* (*Modern Thought*), which gave him a platform for propagating his thoughts regarding culture, society, the West and religion in Egypt.³⁴ In 1948 he also completed a manuscript of his book *Social Justice in the Qur'an*, (later published in 1949 with the help of his brother after Qutb left Egypt for two-years in America) which also served as a vehicle for articulating his views.

In the Heart of Jāhiliyyah

Qutb left Egypt for America on November 3, 1948. The Egyptian palace saw this as a form of punishment and hoped-for a corrective to his thinking. Indeed, the palace was alarmed by the more radical anti-regime tone Qutb took in his essays in *Fikr al-Jadid*.

³³ Ibid., 60.

³⁴ Ibid., 94.

For instance, Qutb called the government slaves of America, Russia and Britain.³⁵ Instead, of arresting him the government decided that sending Qutb to the United States could be an opportunity for him to change his outlook and attitudes.³⁶ This, of course did not happen; rather, Qutb's views became hardened while in the United States. Even though the palace believed Qutb's outlook could be changed, it is doubtful that it would have been since Qutb already harbored anti-American sentiments prior to his trip. This antipathy was not based on some petty issue, but on a more visceral reaction to President Truman's support for the Jewish state of Israel.³⁷ Qutb believed the United States was just as culpable as the European nations in its imperial designs on the Middle East, referring to America as having a *ḍamīr muta'affīn* (rotten conscience).³⁸

While in the United States, Qutb traveled throughout the country including: Washington, DC; Denver; San Francisco; Palo Alto; San Diego and Greeley, Colorado, the latter of which is where he spent the most of his time.³⁹ Drawing on his time in America, Qutb concluded the following:

America is the biggest lie known to the world.⁴⁰

Here is alienation, the real alienation, the alienation of the soul and the thought, the alienation of the spirit and the body, here in that huge workshop which they call the New World.⁴¹

At the same time, though, Qutb admired American research and ingenuity in the “pure” sciences such as mechanics, electricity, chemistry, agriculture, physics, biology,

³⁵ Yusuf al-‘Azm, *Ra’īd al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Mu’asīr: al-Shāhīd Sayyid Qutb* (Damascus, Dar al-Qalam), 206-207; Khatab, *PTSQ*, 139.

³⁶ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 139.

³⁷ Musallam, 86.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁰ Al-Taher Ahmad Makki, “Sayyid Qutb wa Thalāth Rasā’il Lam Tunshār Ba’d,” *al-Hilal* (Cairo, October 1986), 127-128; Musallam, 114.

⁴¹ Al-‘Azm, 152-153; Musallam, 118.

astronomy, medicine, industry and methods of administration.⁴² Qutb thought that America has “virtues of production and organization but not virtues of human and social leadership, virtues of mind and hand but not virtues of taste and feelings.”⁴³

Two other key points need to be mentioned about Qutb’s stay prior to examining Qutb’s life after his return to Egypt. While he was in the United States, al-Banna was assassinated and Qutb noticed that upon hearing this news, Americans were in a state of euphoria over his death.⁴⁴ This story seems fanciful, though, since it is hard to believe most Americans in the late 1940s even knew who al-Banna was since most today would not be able to identify him. More importantly, according to Qutb this made him realize that al-Banna’s views appeared to be a threat to the West and was disappointed that he rejected past overtures from the Muslim Brothers.⁴⁵ Besides his more Islamist outlook on society, this may be a reason why Qutb was more willing to work with the Muslim Brothers following his return to Egypt.

Another turning point during Qutb’s stay in America was his longing for Egypt and his homesickness. This was brought out in a poem (a rarity at this stage in his writing) titled *Nidā’ al-Gharīb (Invocation of the Stranger)*.⁴⁶ According to Jonathan Raban, Qutb used this loneliness to construct a figure of “heroic solitude” and seeing himself as a “secret lone agent of God’s will” observing those who were truly living in misery.⁴⁷ This not only made him feel better, but also could be seen as an early crystallization of Qutb’s conception of a small vanguard of “true” Muslim individuals to change society.

Return to Egypt and Prison Years

⁴² Makki, 127-128; Musallam, 114; Khatab, *PTSQ*, 142.

⁴³ Sayyid Qutb, *al-Risālah*, No. 961 (Cairo, December 3, 1951): 1360; Musallam, 119.

⁴⁴ Musallam, 121.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

Following two years in the United States studying its educational system, Qutb returned to Egypt on August 20, 1950.⁴⁸ He came back with renewed vigor and a mission in life. Following his observations in the United States, Qutb stated: “I will devote the rest of my life to a complete social program that will engross the life of many.”⁴⁹ Upon his return, delegates from within the Muslim Brothers welcomed Qutb back to Egypt, and soon after, Qutb started writing for their periodical *al-Daw’ah*. According to Adnan A. Musallam, though, this was just an affiliation; Qutb did not become a member of the Muslim Brothers until early in 1953 following the Free Officers coup in 1952.⁵⁰ Qutb’s apprehension could have been as a result of his belief that the Free Officers could bring real change to Egyptian society and re-implement the *sharī’ah* (Islamic law). As noted earlier, Qutb became disappointed that this was not one of the guiding principles of the Free Officers, which led him to quit his job.

Quickly, Qutb rose to become one of the Muslim Brothers’ leading ideologues in which he helped prepare literature, gave guidance to brothers, and created a curriculum for the Muslim Brothers educational program.⁵¹ Qutb later became the chief editor of the Muslims Brothers new weekly journal *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (*The Muslim Brothers*). Due to the outspokenness of the Muslim Brothers and not falling in line with the Free Officers status quo and view of the way forward for Egyptian society, the Free Officers started to crack down on the Muslim Brothers activities. This eventually led to the arrest of Qutb as well as many other Muslim Brother figures, including the General Guide at the time Ḥassan al-Huḍaybī.⁵²

Much of the rest of Qutb’s life was spent in the Egyptian prison system. It was also the place where he propounded his most radical ideas, completing his most famous works: *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān* (*In the Shade of the Qur’an*) and *Ma’ālim fī al-Tarīq* (*Milestones or Signposts Along the Road*). While in prison Qutb started to organize his vanguard where

⁴⁸ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 147.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁵⁰ Musallam, 130.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 149.

they studied the Qur'an, Qutb's works as well as the writings of Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Shafī'ī, Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Taymīyyah, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad Qutb and 'Abū 'A'lā al-Mawdūdī.⁵³ Qutb was released from prison in May 1964, but was quickly rearrested and returned to prison on August 9, 1965.⁵⁴ This has been attributed to Qutb's creation of an underground apparatus adopting a thirteen-year educational program to try and Islamicize seventy-five percent of Egyptian society. If their goals were not reached they would institute another block of thirteen years until they reached that marker whereby they could call for the implementation of an Islamic state.⁵⁵

If one closely examines Qutb's actions, it is hard to see him as a fervent jihadist as is understood by jihadism today. Indeed, as will be later revealed when analyzing his works, Qutb had very radical ideas. But there is a difference between that rhetoric and what he tried to organize in practice. As a result, those who say al-Qaeda or like-minded organizations are following Qutb's lead are mistaken, but they do view him as an inspirational figure. As will be further analyzed when looking at Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Farag in the next chapter, Qutb's program was seen as problematic. It is crucial, then, for one to carefully distinguish Qutb's rhetoric and writing with his actual actions. This does not mean, one should excuse his rampant anti-Western, anti-Semitic and revolutionary thought; rather, when one deals with such complicated ideas and issues, it is necessary to make sure one truly understands the phenomenon both in its theoretical framework as well as its practical application.

Indeed, in Jarret Brachman's recent work *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice*, he discusses a subset of Salafists known as "Qutubi's," those who follow Qutb's teachings and method. In the eyes of other Salafists, "Qutubi's" are seen as "unacceptably radical in both their thinking and their organization."⁵⁶ However, Jihadists view "Qutubi's" as "accommodationist and weak because they do not demand violent solutions."⁵⁷ At the same

⁵³ Ibid., 165.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 168.

⁵⁶ Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009), 38.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

time, “Qutubi’s” don’t discount the use of violence: rather, they see *jihad* not solely militarily, but also economically and spiritually, which they prefer.⁵⁸ Even if fervent jihadists disagree with “Qutubi’s” methodology that does not take away from the inspiration and theoretical framework, which Qutb established since he had a tremendous effect on jihadist thought going forward. al-Qa’ida’s current emir Ayman al-Zawahiri explained Qutb’s significance as such:

The meaning of this plan (overthrow of the government) was more important than its material strength. The meaning was that the Islamic movement had begun a war against the regime in its capacity as an enemy of Islam. Before that, the Islamic movement’s ethics and principles—and in which some believe until now—affirmed that the external enemy was the only enemy of Islam.⁵⁹

He affirmed that the issue of unification [*tawhīd*] in Islam is important and that the battle between Islam and its enemies is primarily an ideological one over the issue of unification. It is also a battle over to whom authority and power should belong—to God’s course and the *sharī’ah*, to man-made laws and material principles, or to those who claim to be intermediaries between the Creator and mankind. . . . This affirmation greatly helped the Islamic movement to know and define its enemies.⁶⁰

Eventually, Qutb was executed by hanging on August 29, 1966. Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser saw this was the best way to deal with Qutb’s continual intransigence. In fact, though, it created yet another martyr alongside al-Banna and others whom Islamists could rally behind.

Intellectual Thought

⁵⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁹ Steven Brook, “Jihadist Strategic Debates before 9/11,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 31, 2008, 209.

⁶⁰ Quintan Wicktorovitz, “Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 28, 2005, 80.

One could write an encyclopedia about Qutb's various ideas and works throughout his life. Therefore, this section will primarily focus on Qutb's larger views on the West, Christianity, Judaism and Egyptian society. Also, this section will highlight key terms, which Qutb adopted to advance his theoretical ideas. Following this, the section will argue that Qutb's ideas were not necessarily influenced by Mawdūdī as has been previously concluded by scholars; rather these ideas were already central to his thought prior to his radicalization. The difference is that in his earlier writings they did not manifest themselves in an Islamist discourse. Lastly, this section will assess the nature of continuity, rupture and/or differences with al-Banna.

Views on Christianity and Judaism

The “hideous schizophrenia” is a term used by Qutb when explaining the historical development of Christianity from the time of Jesus to the modern era. It is Qutb's strongest attack on Christianity. Qutb wrote about this in his work *Muqāwimat al-Taṣawur al-Islamī (Components of the Islamic Conception)*. Two key elements of Qutb's critique dealt with Christianity's deviation from the Abrahamic tradition, which led to a crisis between the sciences and religion. As a result, unlike Islam, as Qutb explains, science and religion are not at odds with one another, whereas in Christianity they are, leading to secularism in Christian society and the misery they live with today. Qutb explains:

Christianity was born in the shadow of the pagan Roman Empire. Later, when the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the state religion, it did great violence to the teachings of Jesus, distorting them beyond recognition ... when the astronomers and physicists started to correct the errors contained in these ‘facts,’ the origins of which was human rather than divine, the church took a very harsh stand against them ... [and so] in order to get rid of the authority of the Church, they [European thinkers] eliminated the God of the Church.⁶¹

⁶¹ Bergesen, 17.

Moreover, Paul Berman explains that Qutb believed that this “hideous schizophrenia” led to the West’s feeling in modern society of purposelessness, seeking pleasures and alienation from the community at-large.⁶² This was a consequence of Christianity’s historical trajectory. More concerning for Qutb, though, was the enormous influence the West had on the Muslim world. Consequently, “Qutb trembled in fear at the “hideous schizophrenia,”” and was scared it was going to envelope Muslim society.⁶³

Qutb also saw the crusades of the past against Islam as the roots of imperialism in the twentieth century. There is no difference between “crusaderism” and imperialism. Khatab explains that Qutb believes “that the imperialist mentality of the twentieth century is directly descended from the mentality of the medieval crusaders.”⁶⁴ Moreover, Qutb emphasizes that the “spirit of Islam” is contrary to the “spirit of imperialism.”⁶⁵

Besides despising Christianity and its values, Qutb took issue with the Jews, too. The harsh anti-Semitic tone by Qutb is clearly seen in Qutb’s interpretation of *sūrah*’s (chapter) two and five in the Qur’an in his book *In the Shade of the Qur’an*. In it, he discusses the betrayal of the Jews to Islam ever since the beginning of their encounter:

On *sūrah* 2:

The war the Jews began to wage against Islam and Muslims in those early days has raged on to the present. The form and appearance may have changed, but the nature and means remains the same.⁶⁶

On *sūrah* 5:

The Muslim world has often faced problems as a result of Jewish conspiracies ever since the early days of Islam ... History has recorded the wicked opposition

⁶² Berman, 75-76.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 135.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur’an: Vol. 1: Sura 1-2* (Leicestershire, UK: Islamic Foundation, 1995).

of the Jews to Islam right from its first day in Medina. Their scheming against Islam has continued since then to the present moment, and they continue to be its leaders, nursing their wicked grudges and always resorting to treacherous schemes to undermine Islam.⁶⁷

Qutb sees the Jews as conspirators and an enemy that must be defeated so that Islam can be safeguarded. Michael Ebstein states the following regarding Qutb's ideas on the Jews:

Qutb combines Qur'anic and post-Qur'anic anti-Jewish sentiment with ideas and images derived from European anti-Semitism. According to Qutb, the sins of the Israelites against Allah and Moses, and their troublesome relationship with the Prophet Muhammad, testify to their treacherous nature, their perpetual machinations, and their eternal hatred towards Islam ... Qutb sees one line connecting the breaching of the divine covenant by the Israelites and the treachery of the Medinese Jews.⁶⁸

In addition, the Jews are trying to destroy Islam, according to Qutb, by inculcating the *isrā'īlīyyat* (classical Islamic traditions from Judaism and Christianity) into Islamic literature. Therefore, Muslims must "cleanse" the Qur'ān from these Jewish sources.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Jews are leading a modern conspiracy against Islam through an alliance of "global Zionism" (*al-ṣahyunīyyah al-ālamīyyah*) and "global crusaders" (*al-ṣalībīyyah al-ālamīyyah*), "by spreading communism, and through the academic works of orientalists, many of whom have been Jews," which has all been explained in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a made up polemical work that explains how the Jews secretly run the world).⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an: Vol. 4: Sura 5* (Leicestershire, UK: Islamic Foundation, 2001).

⁶⁸ Michael Ebstein, "In the Shadows of the Koran- Said Qutb's Views on Jews and Christians as Reflected in his Koran," *Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World* at the Hudson Institute, Research Monographs on the Muslim World Series Number 2, Paper Number 4, November 2009, 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Lastly, when Qutb looks at Qur’anic verses that are favorable or appear to be tolerable to the Jews and Christians as well as recognizing them as believers too, he simply brushes it off as being a particular instance during the life of Muhammad, no longer having sway and having been abrogated.⁷¹ The tone taken by Qutb is far harsher than the one al-Banna took when describing Christians and Jews and their relations with Muslims.

al-Hākimiyyah

Central to Qutb’s theory is the idea of *ḥākimiyyah*, which is translated as sovereignty in English. This differs from the post-Enlightenment understanding of the term sovereignty. Several Enlightenment figures, such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau had varying definitions of the term sovereignty, however, one can take note that in popular conception today, individuals view it as the popular will of the people.⁷² In contrast, Qutb’s idea of sovereignty derives from God, and it is God’s alone. No human can have sovereignty over another human.

This, though, is not foreign within the Islamic historical literature. This is because in the Qur’an in a variety of verses it explicitly states it. For instance, in verse 2:107 it states: “Do you not know that to God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the Earth?”⁷³ Qutb, though, goes even further than the classical understanding by creating a government framework behind his idea of *ḥākimiyyah*.⁷⁴ According to Sayed Khatab, Qutb’s theory of *ḥākimiyyah* denotes the following ideas: (1) “the system of government in Islam is not similar to any other system”; (2) “it is distinct from all forms of government in secular democracies”; (3) “it is constitutional”; (4) “it is not inherently

⁷¹ Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 80.

⁷² Sayed Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* (London: Routledge, 2006), 27-28. For future footnotes this will be cited as Khatab, *PS*.

⁷³ Other verses that state God’s sovereignty in the Qur’an include: 3:189, 5:18, 5:40, 5:120, 9:116, 42:49, 45:27, and 48:14.

⁷⁴ For a detailed linguistic understanding of the term *ḥākimiyyah* in its modern and Qur’anic understanding read Khatab, *PS*, 15-19.

theocratic or autocratic”; and (5) “the form of Islamic government has no impact on the Islamic identity of the state.”⁷⁵

Qutb therefore, links the idea of God’s sovereignty to the concept of governance. Qutb supports his argument by referring to Qur’anic verses 3:26, 23:68, 23:84, and 23:88 whereby it shows that God is the sovereign of sovereignty.⁷⁶ In addition, the concept of *ḥākīmīyyah* is connected to the concept of *tawḥīd* (oneness of God). As Qutb states:

Tawḥīd is that Allah is the Lord and Sovereign of people not merely in their beliefs, concepts, consciences, and rituals of worship, but in their political affairs ... There is no God but God. There is no one worthy of worship except God, there is no creator or sustainer except God ... There is no one in charge of the universe or even one’s own affairs except God ... Thus, Muslims worship him alone ... Muslims believe that there is no true ruler above them except Allah, no legislator for them except God, no one except God to inform them concerning their relationships and connections with the universe, with other living creatures, and with their fellow human beings. This is why Muslims turn to God for guidance and legislation in every aspect of life, whether it be political governance, economic justice, personal behavior, or the norms and standards of social intercourse.⁷⁷

When discussing the idea of Islamic governance, it was also essential for Qutb to connect the above terminologies – *ḥākīmīyyah* and *tawḥīd* – to the *sharī’ah*. Qutb contends that for one to institute the *sharī’ah* one needs to first accept the idea behind *tawḥīd*, which based on the above definition, lends credence to the notion of *ḥākīmīyyah* and one’s willingness to submit to the will of God and its laws. In other words, before one can follow the *sharī’ah*, one needs to believe in the idea of *tawḥīd* and *ḥākīmīyyah*, which is a

⁷⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa’is al-Tasawur al-Islāmī wa Muqawimatush* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1995), 200; Khatab, *PS*, 23-24.

quintessential part of joining the faith of Islam.⁷⁸ This is because the profession of faith in Islam begins with the creed *there is no God but God*, thereby institutionalizing the concepts of *tawhīd* and *ḥākīmīyyah*. Therefore, believing in *tawhīd* comes prior to practicing *sharī'ah*. In addition, according to Mary Habeck, Qutb's idea of *tawhīd* is “a sort of liberation theology, designed to end oppression by human institutions and man-made laws and to return God to his rightful place as unconditional ruler of the world.”⁷⁹

Qutb also uses the terms '*ulūhīyyah* (divinity) and '*ubūdīyyah* (servitude) to describe the relationship between God's *ḥākīmīyyah* and his followers. Qutb states that '*ulūhīyyah* is only a characteristic that can belong to God, resulting in man's servitude to God's divinity.⁸⁰ As such, it connects back to the idea of *ḥākīmīyyah* and God's sovereignty. The only one who is divine is God; therefore, only one can be in servitude toward God. Consequently, if one were servile to anything other than God, then one is breaking God's *ḥākīmīyyah*. Furthermore, if one is not in line with the *ḥākīmīyyah* of God then one is breaking a cardinal part of *tawhīd*, which is the most important element of the Islamic faith. Thus, it could render one straying from the sovereignty of God.

In the Islamic context, one can utilize the term *fiṭrah* to better appreciate the fundamental idea of human nature within Islam.⁸¹ In its most basic understanding, *fiṭrah* or being in the *fiṭrah* is human's primordial state. The *fiṭrah* is the state within which humans are born, meaning they received God's covenant and come in to the world pure, in contrast to the Christian understanding of original sin.⁸² The idea behind human nature also is different from the secular conception. Khatab explains this divergence: “Islamic concepts are comprehensive and do not separate the nature of the universe from the nature of life or the nature of man. Rather, there ought to be a well-balanced, harmonious and firm relationship between all of them.”⁸³

⁷⁸ Khatab, *PS*, 22-26.

⁷⁹ Habeck, 62.

⁸⁰ Khatab, *PS*, 24.

⁸¹ For a detailed linguistic understanding of the term *fiṭrah* in its modern and Qur'anic understanding read Khatab, *PS*, 69-70.

⁸² Khatab, *PS*, 70.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 71.

According to Qutb, there are four aspects of the *fiṭrah* that relate to its understanding in the Qur’anic context: (1) “the linkage with the concept of *khilāfah* (vicegerency) of man on earth”; (2) “emphasis of *fiṭrah* within the context of man’s free will”; (3) “*fiṭrah* has a direct link to man’s affairs and responsibilities for development and renewal in life”; and (4) “*fiṭrah* reflects the perfect and harmonious relationship between humanity and the universe.”⁸⁴

Khatab concludes from this: “These four dimensions complement Qutb’s comprehensive constructs of sovereignty (*ḥākīmīyyah*), servitude (*‘ubūdīyyah*) and the universality of Islam. These notions are related, in turn, to what Qutb calls the ‘great unity’ (*al-waḥdah al-kubrā*). This entails the comprehensive and integrated conception of the nature of the relationship between the creator and the creation, the universe, life and man. Qutb then, firmly binds these ideas to the concept of *tawḥīd*, the cornerstone of the Islamic faith.”⁸⁵

The *fiṭrah*, or the Islamic version of humans’ state of nature, therefore, cannot be deviated from. If one does deviate from the *fiṭrah* then one is going against God and his *ḥākīmīyyah* on Earth. From this, Qutb concludes one who is in conflict with the *fiṭrah* is not in line with the precepts of Islam. In other words, one is in a state of *jāhilīyyah*, to which this study will now turn. The idea and theory of *jāhilīyyah*, is a key foundation to Qutb’s writings about Islam and society. Indeed, *ḥākīmīyyah* was important as a term, too, but *jāhilīyyah* has broader consequences in Qutb’s theoretical framework.

Jāhilīyyah

J-h-l, which is the root of the word *jāhilīyyah* means ignorance of divine guidance from God.⁸⁶ It is in reference to the pagan Arabs during and prior to the time of Muhammad’s

⁸⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur’an* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1992), vol. 1, 53-54; vol. 3, 1391-1396; vol. 4, 2137-2145; vol. 6, 3916-3919; Khatab, *PS*, 77.

⁸⁵ Khatab, *PS*, 77.

⁸⁶ William E. Shepard, “Ignorance,” in *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an*, Vol 2. McAuliffe, Jane Dammen (ed.), (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 487.

revelation. It relates to their moral corruption since they were polytheists. As a result, *jāhilīyyah* came to be known as a distinct time period and referred to as pre-Islamic pagan ignorance. For instance, according to the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, *ḥadīth* collector Muhammad Ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī refers to *jāhilīyyah* as a “past epoch:” “The tribe of the Quraysh used to fast on the day of Ashūrā in the *Jāhilīyyah*.”⁸⁷ Instead of *jāhilīyyah* referring to pagans of the pre-Islamic era, Qutb directed this term at fellow Muslims.⁸⁸ He blamed the Arab secular leaders for aligning themselves with the West – and not implementing the *sharī'ah* – while at the same time violating the sovereignty of God (*ḥākīmīyyah*).⁸⁹ Therefore, the leaders were in a state of *jāhilīyyah*. Consequently, they were no longer Muslims and could be overthrown since they were seen as *ṭāghūt* (transgressors).⁹⁰ Following are a few examples of how Qutb uses the term *jāhilīyyah* in his seminal work *Ma'ālim fī al-Tarīq* (*Milestones or Signposts on the Road*):

The whole world is steeped in *Jāhilīyyah* ... This *Jāhilīyyah* is based on rebellion against God's sovereignty on earth. It transfers to man one of the greatest attributes of God, namely sovereignty [*ḥākīmīyyah*], and makes some men lords over others. It is now not in that simple and primitive form of the ancient *Jāhilīyyah*, but takes the form of claiming that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behavior, and to choose any way of life rests with men, without regard to what God has prescribed.⁹¹

When a person embraced Islam during the time of the Prophet – peace upon him – he would immediately cut himself off from *Jāhilīyyah*.⁹²

We are surrounded by *Jāhilīyyah* today, which is of the same nature as it was during the first period of Islam, perhaps a little deeper.⁹³

⁸⁷ William E. Shepard, “The Age of Ignorance,” in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, Vol 1. McAuliffe, Jane Dammen (ed.), (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 38.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸⁹ Musallam, 151-153.

⁹⁰ Khatab, *PS*, 35.

⁹¹ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2001), 11. For future footnotes this will be cited as Qutb, *Milestones*.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 19.

Our mission is not to compromise with the practices of *Jāhilī* society, nor can we be loyal to it. *Jāhilī* society, because of its *Jāhilī* characteristics, is not worthy to be compromised with.⁹⁴

Jāhilīyyah wants to find an excuse to reject the Divine system and to perpetuate the slavery of one man over another.⁹⁵

Jāhilīyyah is one man's lordship over another, and in this respect it is against the system of the universe and brings the involuntary aspect of human life into conflict with its voluntary aspect.⁹⁶

Jāhilīyyah, to whatever period it belongs, is *Jāhilīyyah*; that is deviation from the worship of One God and the way of life prescribed by God.⁹⁷

Qutb juxtapositions *jāhilīyyah* and Islam:⁹⁸

Jāhilīyyah is the worship of some people by others; that is to say, some people become dominant and make laws for others, regardless of whether these laws are against God's injunctions and without caring for the use or misuse of their authority.

Islam, on the other hand, is people's worshipping God alone, and deriving concepts and beliefs, laws and regulations and values from the authority of God, and freeing themselves from servitude to God's servants. This is the very nature of Islam, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.

⁹³ Ibid., 20.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 130.

According to Qutb, in the modern era there are four groups who compromise the *jāhilī* system:

Included among these is communist society, first because it denies the existence of God Most High and believes that the universe was created by “matter” or by “nature,” while all man’s activities and his history has been created by “economics” or “the means of production;” second, because the way of life it adopts is based on submission to the Communist Party and not God ... The Communist ideology and the communist system reduces the human being to the level of an animal or even to the level of a machine.⁹⁹

All idolatrous societies are also among the *Jāhilī* societies. Such societies are found in India, Japan, the Philippines and Africa. Their *Jāhilī* character consists first of the fact that they believe other gods besides God, in addition to Him or without Him; second, they have constructed an elaborate system of devotional acts to propitiate these deities. Similarly, the laws and regulations, which they follow are derived from sources other than God and His Law, whether these sources be priests or astrologers or magicians, the elders of a nation, or secular institutions.¹⁰⁰

All Jewish and Christian societies today are also *Jāhilī* societies. They have distorted the original beliefs and ascribe certain attributes of God to other beings. This association with God has taken many forms, such as the Sonship of God or the trinity; sometimes it is expressed in a concept of God, which is remote from the true reality of God ... These people did not consider their priests or rabbis as divine, nor did they worship them; but they gave them the authority to make laws, obeying laws which were made by them not permitted by God.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 81-82.

Lastly, all the existing so-called “Muslim” societies are also *Jāhilī* societies. We classify them among *Jāhilī* societies not because they believe in other deities besides God or because they worship anyone other than God, but because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe in the Unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life.¹⁰²

To combat *jāhilīyyah* and bring about a true Islamic society, Qutb said the following:

In order to bring this about, we need to initiate the movement of Islamic revival in some Muslim country. Only such a revivalist movement will eventually attain to the status of world leadership whether the distance is near or far.

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

It is necessary that this vanguard should know the landmarks and the milestones of the road toward this goal so that they may recognize the starting place, the nature, the responsibilities and the ultimate purpose of this long journey. Not only this, but they ought to be aware of their position as opposed to this *Jāhilīyyah*, which has struck its stakes through the earth: when to co-operate with others and when to separate from them: what characteristics and qualities they should cultivate, and with what characteristics and qualities the *Jāhilīyyah* immediately surrounding is armed; how to address the people of *Jāhilīyyah* in the language of

¹⁰² Ibid., 82-83.

Islam, and what topics and problems ought to be discussed; and where and how to obtain guidance in all these matters.¹⁰³

In other words, Qutb believes that those who do not follow God's *ḥākimīyyah* and implement God's *sharī'ah* are defying Islam and are part of *jāhilī* society. These *jāhilī* societies include communists, idolaters, Jews and Christians, and Muslims that do not implement God's law. To combat this, a vanguard of "true"¹⁰⁴ Muslims need to come to the fore and revive Islam and turn back the *jāhilī* wave and return – those who aren't even aware of this *jāhilī* malaise – back to Islam to bring about the reimplementation of the *sharī'ah* and follow the *ḥākimīyyah* of God.

Some have argued that Qutb's solution is similar to that of Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution, who wrote in his pamphlet, *What is to be Done?*, in 1902 about the need to establish a vanguard of like-minded intellectuals to initiate a true "scientific" socialist revolution. The point of this vanguard was to educate the proletariat from its "false consciousness."¹⁰⁵ These ideas are echoed above in Qutb's idea of a vanguard to educate those that have been blinded by *jāhilīyyah*. Those who propose this argument state that the similarities are too close not to be a coincidence. During Qutb's years as a poet and literary critic surely he was exposed to works such as Lenin's since socialism and communism were very popular in Egypt's intellectual class at the time. Therefore, although dressed in Islamic language, Qutb's ideas about establishing a vanguard and waking those from the hypnosis of *jāhilīyyah*, could have plausibly been drawn – consciously or unconsciously – from Lenin and reintroduced in Islamic language and framework.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁴ According to Qutb, a "true" Muslim was to "believe in [God] in one's heart, to worship Him Alone, and to put into practice His laws. Without this complete acceptance of "*La ilaha illa Allah*," which differentiates the one who says he is a Muslim from a non-Muslim, there cannot be any practical significance to this utterance, nor will it have any weight according to Islamic law"; Habeck, 63.

¹⁰⁵ For more details: Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin: "What Is to Be Done?" and Other Writings*, (Dover, 1987).

This argument might seem convincing to some, but throughout history there have been individuals that have articulated the idea that to form a perfect society an elite vanguard or philosopher class was needed to enable the “virtuous city.” According to Plato, suffering will only end once the philosopher’s become kings of the city, which allows happiness to reign.¹⁰⁶ Further, Islamic philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī draws upon Plato’s ideas in *The Republic* in his work *al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah* (The Virtuous City) to parrot Plato’s ideas but within an Islamic context.¹⁰⁷ Another possibility that some have argued is that Qutb drew upon the ideas of Leo Strauss who similarly expounded ideas about an elite vanguard controlling society.¹⁰⁸ As such, it is difficult to firmly argue that Qutb was influenced by Lenin.

It also has been argued by Gilles Kepel as well as other scholars that Qutb was influenced by the ideas of past Islamic thinkers, such as Ibn Taymīyyah, ‘Abd al-Wahhab and Mawdūdī, who used the term *jāhilīyyah*, too, to whom we will now examine.

Ibn Taymīyyah

Ibn Taymīyyah lived in Damascus during the time of the Mongol invasions of Islamic lands. This had a chilling effect because the Mongols sacked Baghdad, which was the seat of the Caliphate. Although the Mongols converted to Islam, Ibn Taymīyyah believed they were not true believers.¹⁰⁹ Ibn Taymīyyah was an *‘alim* or religious scholar who followed the teachings of the Ḥanbali Law School, which had the strictest adherence to Islamic law of the four Sunni schools of law.

¹⁰⁶ For more details: Plato, *The Republic*, (ed.) G.R.F. Ferrari and (trans.) Tom Griffith, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁷ For more details: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, (Beirut, 1964); Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 111-131; and Muhsin Mahdi, “Alfarabi,” *History of Political Philosophy*, (ed.) Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 206-227.

¹⁰⁸ For more details: Jim Lobe, “Leo Strauss’ Philosophy of Deception,” *AlterNet*, May 19, 2003. <http://www.alternet.org/story/15935/?page=entire>, accessed April 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Karen Armstrong. *Islam: A Short History*. (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 104.

Ibn Taymīyyah spoke out against the Mongols because, in his view, they did not fully implement the *sharī'ah*.¹¹⁰ Instead, they used a dual system that gave more weight to Mongol traditional law, the *yassa* code, which was a man-made law. The Mongols viewed Chinggis Khan as a sovereign and a prophet,¹¹¹ which would directly deviate from the Qur'anic verse 33:40 that states: “Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets [*Khātim al-Nabiyyīn*], and God has knowledge of all things.” Therefore, Ibn Taymīyyah viewed the Mongols as committing heresy and that they were introducing *bid'ah* (an innovation) that was perverting Islam.¹¹²

Ibn Taymīyyah also considered Shi'ism, certain aspects of Sufism and *falsafah* (philosophy) *bid'ah* as well.¹¹³ Contrary to popular belief, though, Ibn Taymīyyah was not completely against Sufism. He was a member of the Qādirīyyah Sufi *ṭarīqah* (order), rather Ibn Taymīyyah took issue with certain aspects of Sufism such as the veneration of saints.¹¹⁴ Ibn Taymīyyah would have also considered them sins, but not punishable by death like ‘Abd al-Wahhab, who misrepresented many aspects of Ibn Taymīyyah’s thought. For example, Muhammad Ibn Amīr al-Ṣana’anī, originally a follower of ‘Abd al-Wahhab, once he decided to actually read ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s works he believed they were a “naïve and imperfect repetition of Ibn Taymīyyah’s doctrine.”¹¹⁵ Further, Hamid Alger points out that: “whatever one makes of the positions assumed by Ibn Taymīyyah, there is no doubt that he was a far more rigorous and careful thinker and an infinitely prolific scholar than was Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, it could be argued that ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s selective use of Ibn Taymīyyah’s work and then later abridged versions of Ibn Taymīyyah’s works published by the Saudi state have created a

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Denis Aigle, “The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah’s Three “Anti-Mongol Fatwas,” *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2007, 114.

¹¹² Armstrong, 104.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 10.

¹¹⁵ Hamadi Redissi, “The Refutation of Wahhabism in Arabic Sources, 1745-1932,” (ed.) Madawi al-Rasheed, *Kingdom Without Borders: Saudi Political, Religious and Media Frontiers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 168.

¹¹⁶ Algar, 9.

misunderstanding of the corpus of Ibn Taymīyyah’s work, which is very intellectually sound compared to his caricature in much of the Western scholarship on him.

Drawing on past historical events, Ibn Taymīyyah reinterpreted the idea of *jāhiliyyah* and applied it to his time period. Therefore, since the Mongols adopted *yassa* code, they were considered by him to be in a state of *jāhiliyyah*.¹¹⁷ This allowed Ibn Taymīyyah to call the Mongols apostates (*murtadd*) and pronounce *takfīr* (excommunication) against them from Islam. Ibn Taymīyyah viewed the Mongols as creating *fitnah* (disturbance, anarchy) within the Islamic community because of their differing beliefs similar to the *fitnah* during the period following the Kharijites assassination of the fourth Caliph ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.¹¹⁸ Therefore, using *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), Ibn Taymīyyah issued a *fatwā* (legal ruling) calling for an obligatory *jihad* (*farḍ al-‘ayn*) against the Mongols and those who supported them, which stated: “Every group of Muslims [in reference to the Mongols] that transgresses Islamic law [the implementation of the Mongols’ *yassa* code] ... must be combated, even when they continue to profess the credo.”¹¹⁹

Before moving to ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s ideas it is worthwhile to examine two notions that are misrepresented about Ibn Taymīyyah in the literature. First, Ibn Taymīyyah did not promote capital punishment for apostasy as has been interpreted by later jihadists from his thought as will be seen in the next chapter on Farrag. As Mohammad Hashim Kamali points out: “[Ibn Taymīyyah] held that apostasy is a sin which carries no *ḥadd* (fixed) punishment and that a sin of this kind may be punished only under the discretionary punishment of *ta’zīr* (corporal).”¹²⁰ As such, Ibn Taymīyyah does not view apostasy as a capital crime, which jihadists do today. Indeed, Ibn Taymīyyah called to kill the apostate

¹¹⁷ Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 194.

¹¹⁸ Aigle, 103.

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam* (Yale University Press, 1985), 128. Also, for a balanced perspective and further discussion of all three *fatāwā* (pl. of *fatwā*) of Ibn Taymīyyah on the Mongols see: Denis Aigle, “The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyyah’s Three “Anti-Mongol” Fatwas,” *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2007.

¹²⁰ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, “Punishment in Islamic Law: A Critique of the *Hudud* Bill of Kelantan, Malaysia,” *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1998, 213; Ibn Taymīyyah, *al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl*, Muḥayy al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamid (ed.) (Beirut: Daral-Kitab, 1978), p. 318.

Mongols, but it was only specific to that instance since if one looked to Ibn Taymīyyah's full collection of work, which jihadists do not do they would realize they are completely taking his work out of context. The other problematic interpretation of Ibn Taymīyyah is that he believed that one should rebel against any leader who did not fully adhere to the Islamic faith. In truth, similar to the orthodox Sunni *'ulamā'* understanding, Ibn Taymīyyah believed one should be obedient to their leader even if they were unjust. Victor E. Makari explains Ibn Taymīyyah's views: "To be obedient to those in authority is not only commanded by God, but also is itself an extension of the believer's obedience to Him and to His Prophet."¹²¹ Later Makari explains: "Ibn Taymīyyah placed social peace above the exercise of the right to dissent."¹²² Moreover, Ibn Taymīyyah stated: "It is the duty of Muslims to obey their ruler whether he is impious or ignorant," as long as Muslims are allowed to practice their faith without interference.¹²³

'Abd al-Wahhab

'Abd al-Wahhab lived in the Najd, which is in the middle of present-day Saudi Arabia. Most scholars agree that 'Abd al-Wahhab formulated his major ideas while studying and debating with other Islamic scholars in Basra, located in present-day Iraq.¹²⁴ Although 'Abd al-Wahhab expanded on the puritanical views of Ibn Taymīyyah, the environment within which he lived was different. Unlike the invasion of the Mongols, which Ibn Taymīyyah viewed as outsiders, 'Abd al-Wahhab responded to the internal problems he saw in his own community. He believed that there had been deterioration in Muslim beliefs within his society. Therefore, it was imperative to return to the true ways of Islam that gave rise to its previously powerful empires.

Wahhab's goal was to purify Islam from *bid'ah*. Wahhab went even further than Ibn Taymīyyah on this front. Although he was a follower of the Ḥanbali School, Wahhab

¹²¹ Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymīyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 154.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 156.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Algar, 11.

"was opposed to any of the schools being taken as an absolute and unquestioned authority," and denounced *taqlīd*.¹²⁵ Therefore, this would eliminate individuals from taking religious interpretations and relying on it as much as the Qur'an, which, in Wahhab's, view should be the most important. Consequently, this erased 1200 years of various precedents within Islamic history. As a result, it allowed followers of Wahhab to have a narrow focus on history and use it to justify their actions. In fact, if they included actual historical developments, they would undermine their argument.

Along with Wahhab's notion of *bid'ah*, he believed that many of these innovations had led to *shirk* or polytheistic practices.¹²⁶ As such, he expanded on Ibn Taymīyyah's disapproval of Sufism and Shi'ism. This is because, in Wahhab's view, Sufi's put an overemphasis on praising their Sufi saints or Shī'ah on martyrs. Wahhab also had a problem with practicing Sunnis who would celebrate Muhammad's birthday or go to his burial place.¹²⁷ Wahhab thought these actions broke Islam's cardinal rule of *tawhīd*. As alluded to above, Wahhab deviated from Ibn Taymīyyah's ideas on this subject. David Commins highlights this difference:

The problem was that Ibn Taymīyyah and Ibn al-Qayyīm (a student of Ibn Taymīyyah) did not declare that these practices constituted major acts of *shirk* that resulted in removing one from the ranks of believers or that rendered the place where they occurred as a land of apostasy. Rather, they forbade such practices and placed them into the category of minor acts of *shirk*. Moreover, they maintained that these acts did not result in excommunication until individuals who performed them were presented with proof that they were guilty of *shirk*.¹²⁸

Consequently, many of Wahhab's contemporary followers have taken this interpretation to the extreme. For instance, they have taken head stones off of graves, destroyed Shī'ah

¹²⁵ Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 61.

¹²⁶ Mohammed Ayoub, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 43-45.

¹²⁷ Wright, 72-73.

¹²⁸ David Commins, "Contestation and Authority in Wahhabi Polemics," Mohammad Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 45.

shrines and, in the case of the Taliban in Afghanistan, they blew up the Buddha's of the Bamiyan Valley in 2001.

Wahhab's ideas gained traction in Arabia through an alliance with the al-Saud family who went on to establishing Saudi Arabia. Followers of Wahhab's views are called Wahhabis, but the followers of Wahhab's version of Islam call themselves *al-mūwahidīn* or the monotheists.¹²⁹ Many incorrectly describe Wahhabis as the first modern example of Salafism, which are those who follow in the path of the *salaf*, the pious followers of Muhammad. The labeling of Wahhabis as *salafis* according to Khaled Abou El Fadl did not occur, though, until the 1970s.¹³⁰ This is when much of the intellectual sophistication of early *salafis* including Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍa became non-existent so one could no longer truly distinguish between the two currents.¹³¹ Originally, Salafism as described in the previous chapter was a reformist and liberalizing movement that was more than anything an intellectual trend, but was slowly co-opted by the Saudis who puritanized it. As a result, original Salafism is for all intents and purposes dead.

Mawdūdī

Mawdūdī was born in 1903 in India. Unlike al-Banna, Mawdūdī believed it was the duty of the elite to Islamicize society doing it top-down versus bottom-up through the grassroots. As such, Mawdūdī established the political party *Jamā'at-e Islamī* in 1941, though following the independence of Pakistan it was electorally weak since it only appealed to the elites.¹³² Mawdūdī argued against the idea of nationalism and as a result theorized what he coined a "theo-democracy."

The abolishment of the caliphate had an impact on Mawdūdī's thought. Because of this,

¹²⁹ Algar, 1.

¹³⁰ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 75.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹³² F.C.R. Robinson, "Mawdūdī, sayyid abu 'l-a' lā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Brill Online, ed. Peter Bearman, Th. Bianquis, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-5052.

he joined the *Khilāfat* movement in India. Mawdūdī's mission was clear, as he declared:

The plan of action I had in mind was that I should first break the hold which Western culture and ideas had come to acquire over the Muslim intelligentsia, and to instill in them the fact that Islam has a code of life of its own, its own culture, its own political and economic systems and a philosophy and an educational system which are all superior to anything that Western civilization could offer. I wanted to rid them of the wrong notion that they needed to borrow from others in the matter of culture and civilization.¹³³

This was the beginning of his argument against the ideas of nationalism. Mawdūdī believed the only *ḥākimiyyah* (sovereignty) on Earth lied with God, therefore, only God could legislate. When sovereignty is invested in an “idol” such as a nation, military, political party or head of state and this “idol” becomes an object of mass *‘ubūdīyyah* (adoration) then evil and falsehood reign, which results in *jāhilīyyah* (ignorance).¹³⁴ Central to Mawdūdī's vision is the belief that God alone is sovereign; Muslims have gone astray since they accepted sovereigns other than God and the only guidance one needs is through the *sharī’ah*.¹³⁵

Mawdūdī's “theo-democratic” state is God's vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on Earth. It is a vicegerency, however, which is shared by all Muslim citizens of the state with whom, in consequence, the ruler must consult in the process of government.¹³⁶ In this system, the ruler (*amīr*) is elected by whatever means are decided upon, providing that they ensure that the most qualified leader is chosen, while the legislature (*majlis-i-shurā*) is also to be elected by whatever means are decided upon, so long as they have legitimacy with the local population.¹³⁷ As for the creation of law, it should be derived from the *sharī’ah* by *qiyās* and *ijtihād*. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam:

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Kepel, 48.

¹³⁵ Vali Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 49-69.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 69-80.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The major feature of Mawdūdī's thought is to have transformed Islam into an ideology that is an integrated and all-embracing system. He aimed to set out the ideal order of the time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. The outcome is the most comprehensive statement of the nature of the Islamic state in modern times, and one, which, while conjuring an ideal from the past, has been shaped by contemporary concerns and modes of thought. His exposition, as might be expected from a man who was primarily a theologian, is strong on general principles but weak on detail.¹³⁸

In other words, Mawdūdī's ideas would have appeal since they resonate with the "golden" age of Islam, but there are no details as to how society will be truly established or governed with the implementation of his "theo-democracy."

Another key development in Mawdūdī's thought is his redefinition of the term *jāhiliyyah*. Originally, at the outset of Islam, it meant pre-Islamic pagan ignorance, referring to those who were in Arabia at the time prior and during Muhammad's revelation that were not following *hanifīc* (true monotheism) practices. Mawdūdī, though, reinterpreted the term to modern circumstances. According to Quintan Wicktorovitz, "Qutb's solution to the modern *jāhiliyyah*, however, was a stark departure from Mawdūdī, who sought to work within the system. Whereas Mawdūdī formed a political party and social movement to promote reform, Qutb advocated jihad to establish an Islamic state."¹³⁹ In addition, although not necessarily important in this discussion regarding the evolution of Sunni Islamic thought in the modern age, Philip Jenkins has pointed out that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as early as 1963 met Mawdūdī, translated his work into *Fārsī* and was influenced by his idea of a theo-democracy.¹⁴⁰ Obviously, Khomeini's theory of *velāyeh e-faqīh* (guardianship of the jurists) was far more developed and within an Shī'ah context.

¹³⁸ Robinson.

¹³⁹ Wicktorovitz, 79.

¹⁴⁰ Philip Jenkins, "Clerical terror: The roots of jihad in India," *The New Republic*. 12/24/2008. <http://www.tnr.com/toc/story.html?id=f1dba11c-0b2d-4e10-b2fc-2416a7fb2f7b>.

It is clear, that Qutb's ideas about *jāhilīyyah* are similar to the way Ibn Taymīyyah, 'Abd al-Wahhab and Mawdūdī utilized the concept, but in their own contexts. Sayed Khatab, though, deviates from this popular assessment, specifically with regard to Mawdūdī. Khatab argues that Qutb's ideas regarding *jāhilīyyah* can be traced back to his earlier writings and, at the time in Egypt it was common to use the word *jāhilīyyah* and not in the context of the pre-Islamic era. For example, Ṭaha Ḥussayn, one of the most renowned modern Egyptian intellectuals, described the graduates of *Dar al-'Ulūm* where Qutb graduated as *jāhilī*.¹⁴¹ In addition, Qutb's early mentor al-'Aqqād used the term *jāhilīyyah* to describe injustices in Egyptian society at the time:

Jāhilīyyah was widespread, atrocity overflowing
The goodness and Truth were whispering
but the voice of deviation was very loud.¹⁴²

More importantly, in a 1935 poem entitled *al-Shaṭī al-Majhūl* in which Qutb utilizes the term *al-jāhalat*, which is the plural of the singular *jāhalah*, which Khatab explains is a synonym of *jāhilīyyah*.¹⁴³ In the poem, Qutb discusses two valleys. These valleys were *al-īmān* (belief) and *al-kufrān* (unbelief). These represented Islam and *al-jāhalat*. Following is a key verse of the poem:

It is not that you elements are *al-īmān* and *al-ṭuhr* (purity)?
If not so, you belong to *al-kufrān* and *al-rijs* (enormity).
In which valley, then, are you walking stealthily?
And which 'ahd (era) of the *al-jāhalat* is *mubham* (uncovered)?¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Mawdūdī's and 'Abū al-Ḥassan al-Nadawī's works were not translated from

¹⁴¹ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 49.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁴⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *al-Shaṭī 'al-Majhūl* (El-Mina, Egypt: Matba'at Sadiq, 1935), 43; Khatab, *PTSQ*, 68.

Urdu to Arabic until the mid-1950s.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, on some level, Khatab’s arguments could be plausible. The above selection from Qutb’s poem was also prior to his interest and writings on the Qur’ān. Therefore, although Qutb was yet to be an Islamist ideologue, he was still very traditionally Islamic in his thought. Furthermore, Qutb met al-Nadawī at the *Hajj* in November 1950. There, Khatab points out that al-Nadawī stated that he had been interested in Qutb’s writings ever since the 1930s.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the opposite seems to be the case in that Qutb influenced al-Nadawī’s work. In addition, since, as mentioned above, that Mawdūdī’s works were translated in the mid-1950s, it is hard to believe that Qutb acquired the language of *jāhilīyyah* from either individual. Ibrāhīm Abū Rabī explains that those who explain the *jāhilīyyah*-Mawdūdī nexus are “dichotomizing” Qutb’s earlier writing from his later work.¹⁴⁷

Qutb’s admiration of Ibn Taymīyyah and ‘Abd al-Wahhab are still valid, though. Qutb’s radicalization was motivated by both Ibn Taymīyyah and ‘Abd al-Wahhab. Qutb believed he was living in a similar situation as Ibn Taymīyyah. Instead of the Mongols advancing on Islamic lands, Qutb saw the West and its cultural values encroaching and seeping into Islamic society, especially in Egypt. Qutb also saw the threat from within, similar to ‘Abd al-Wahhab. Instead of individuals worshipping only God (*tawḥīd*), Qutb thought that individuals were worshipping their leaders as well as consumer products. This, though, wasn’t the individuals’ fault, because in Qutb’s mind they didn’t even realize it. He blamed the secular Arab leaders for aligning themselves with the West – and not implementing the *sharī’ah* – while at the same time violating the sovereignty of God (*ḥākīmīyyah*).

Similarly, Khatab argues that Qutb’s ideas about *ḥākīmīyyah* and *tawḥīd* were a part of his earlier writings too, but were not referenced as such. It is hard to determine whether this circumstantial evidence holds, it is at least plausible. For instance, in Qutb’s early works he discusses the notion of *al-waḥadah al-kawnīyyah al-kubrā* (the great universal

¹⁴⁵ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 59.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁴⁷ Ibrahim Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 139.

unity), which could be taken as an allusion to the ideas discussed above about *ḥākīmīyyah* and *tawḥīd*.¹⁴⁸ The idea of *al-waḥadah al-kawnīyyah al-kubrā*, could be interpreted as seeds of the idea behind Qutb's notion of *ḥākīmīyyah* and *tawḥīd*.

Jihad

Before examining Qutb's ideas on *jihad*, it is necessary to understand the term in its Qur'anic context. In its raw form, the root *j-h-d* means striving or to struggle.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, etymologically *jihad* does not mean holy war; rather, if one were to translate the term holy war into Arabic, it would be *al-ḥarb al-muqaddas*.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, according to the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, which wrote an authoritative study on *jihad* and Islamic law of war, the term *al-ḥarb al-muqaddas* has no place in any part of the Islamic tradition.¹⁵¹

To further investigate whether *jihad* actually means holy war one must consult the Qur'anic text for specific references to the term. According to the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, there are only ten verses connecting the term *jihad* and warfare or fighting (*qītāl*), while the other verses are in reference to: (1) "combat against one's own desires and weaknesses"; (2) "perseverance in observing religious law"; (3) "seeking religious knowledge"; (4) "observance of the *sunnah*"; and (5) "obedience to God and summoning people to worship him."¹⁵² As has been described in the exegetical literature and *ḥadīth*, there are two forms of *jihad*: *jihad bi-l-naḥs* (struggle or striving of the self) and *jihad bi-l-sayf* (striving through fighting).¹⁵³ Moreover, as famously cited in the *ḥadīth* literature, after fighting in a battle Muhammad stated: "We have returned from the lesser (*āṣghar*)

¹⁴⁸ Khatab, *PTSQ*, 72-77.

¹⁴⁹ *Jihad and the Islamic Law of War* (Amman, Jordan: The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2007), 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Jihād," *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, Vol. 3, Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 37.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

jihad (battle) to the greater (*ākbar*) *jihad* (*jihad* of the soul).”¹⁵⁴ Therefore, it is, however, a priority at times that *jihad* does not always mean warfare. In addition, not all warfare is *jihad* since there are various verses dealing with fighting that do not mention or use derivatives of *j-h-d* or imply so. Therefore, the abuse of the root *j-h-d* and how it is used as the “sixth pillar of Islam” misrepresents the standard view of it being a far more complex and nuanced term.

Furthermore, there are specific rules with regard to waging war (*ḥarb*) in the Qur’ān. For example, “the Islamic law of war prohibits naked aggression, the harming of non-combatants ... [and] forced conversion.”¹⁵⁵ Also, as noted by Muhammad Abdel Haleem, the priority of Muslims is that they should live in peace with their neighbors and war should be waged as a last resort.¹⁵⁶ Abdel Haleem also spells out the justifications and conditions of war, *jihad* as an obligation, cessation of hostilities and treaties. According to Abdel Haleem there must be “valid justifications and strict conditions must be followed” before waging war.¹⁵⁷ One cannot wage war to change others’ religions based on the following Qur’anic verses: 2:256, 5:48, 11:118 and 12:103.¹⁵⁸ Also, Abdel Haleem maintains that all battles within the Qur’ān were of self-defense or pre-empting an imminent attack, which differs much from an offensive *jihad* as promoted by Qutb and later Farrag who will be discussed in the next chapter.¹⁵⁹ Abdel Haleem further explains that war is justifiable only to protect one’s freedom of belief. But “once the believers have been given victory they should not become triumphant or arrogant or have a sense of being a superpower.”¹⁶⁰ In addition, if an enemy wants to halt the fight, it is the Muslim’s duty to stop fighting. As the Qur’ān says: “And fight them on until there is no more Tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease,

¹⁵⁴ David Dakake, “The Myth of a Militant Islam,” in *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars*, ed. Joseph E.B. Lumbard (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 3.

¹⁵⁵ *Jihad and the Islamic Law of War*, 39 & 65.

¹⁵⁶ Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur’an: Themes and Style* (London, UK & New York, NY: IB Tauris, 1999), 60.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

Let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression” (2:193).¹⁶¹ Furthermore, when signing a treaty with an enemy one must not break it even if one believes they are superior to the other (16:92). Therefore, one could interpret this verse to mean that it would be illegal to use a treaty as a tactic and means to end.

In sum, the idea behind *jihad* and warfare is far more complicated than one just stating that within the Qur’anic framework it advocates either a peaceful or an aggressive tone; rather, the real meaning of the term depends on the circumstance; at times war will be a necessity, but if possible it is better to maintain the peace. Qutb’s thoughts on *jihad*, though, are far more black and white. He views *jihad* in relation to the terms *ḥākīmīyyah*, *sharī’ah* and *jāhiliyyah*. Qutb believed it was necessary for “true” Muslims to stand up against any type of government that did not have *ḥākīmīyyah*. In Qutb’s view, although individuals thought that they were “free” in a *jahili* society, the only true way to be free was to create a truly Islamic society and follow the *sharī’ah*. To accomplish this, one needed to engage in a *jihad* of combat. Like Ibn Taymīyyah, Qutb believed an offensive *jihad* was the only way to solve this condition.¹⁶² As discussed earlier, though, this is a misinterpretation of Ibn Taymīyyah’s thought. When discussing offensive *jihad*, Qutb explicitly attacks those who, in his view, are Muslim apologists. These are people who he thinks have buckled under the pressure from the Orientalists and who say that *jihad* wasn’t truly offensive but in fact defensive in nature. Qutb explains that the *jihad* he discusses is *jihad bi-l-sayf* (striving through fighting). In a clever move, though, Qutb twists the words of his apologetic opponents by stating the following: “If we insist on calling Islamic *Jihad* a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word “defense” and mean by it “the defense of man” against all those elements, which limit his freedom.”¹⁶³ Thus to gain this freedom, it was important for a revolutionary vanguard to take up this duty and change society for the better through *daw’ah* (preaching) and, more importantly, *jihad*. This vanguard would continuously get bigger

¹⁶¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2004).

¹⁶² Qutb, *Milestones*, 62.

¹⁶³ Sayyid Qutb, “*Jihad in the Cause of God*,” *Islam in Transition*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 409-416.

until there was a return to a true Islamic community or *ummah*.¹⁶⁴ This would ultimately cure Muslims of their *Jāhilī* condition and defeat Western cultural imperialism. Following are some clear examples of how Qutb uses the term *jihad* in his final work *Ma'ālim fī al-Tarīq*:

This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs [*daw'ah*]; and it uses physical power and *Jihad* for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the *Jāhilī* system.¹⁶⁵

Those who talk about *Jihad* in Islam and quote Qur'anic verses do not take into account this aspect [practicality], nor do they understand the nature of the various stages through which this movement develops, or the relationship of the verses revealed at various occasions with each stage. Thus, when they speak about *Jihad*, they speak clumsily and mix up the various stages, distorting the whole concept of *Jihad* and deriving from the Qur'anic verses final principles and generalities for which there is no justification. This is because they regard every verse of the Qur'ān as if it were the final principle of the religion.¹⁶⁶

When writers with defeatist and apologetic mentalities write about “*Jihad* in Islam,” trying to remove this “blot” from Islam, then they are mixing up two things: first, that this religion forbids the imposition of its belief by force, as is clear from the verse, “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256), while on the other hand, it tries to annihilate all those political and material powers which stand between people and Islam, which force one people to bow before another people and prevent them from accepting the sovereignty [*ḥākimīyyah*] of God. These two principles have no relation to one another nor is there room to mix them. In spite of this, these defeatist-type people try to mix the two aspects and want to confine *Jihad* to what today is called “defensive war.” The Islamic *Jihad* has no relationship to modern warfare, either in its causes or in the way in which

¹⁶⁴ Qutb, *Milestones*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 56.

it is conducted. The causes of Islamic *Jihad* should be sought in the very nature of Islam and its role in the world, in its high principles, which have been given to it by God and for the implementation of which God appointed the Prophet.¹⁶⁷

The reasons for *Jihad* ... [are] to establish God's authority in the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end lordship of one man over others, since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them. These reasons are sufficient for proclaiming *Jihad*.¹⁶⁸

The *Jihad* of Islam is to secure complete freedom for every man throughout the world by releasing him from servitude to other human beings so that he may serve his God, Who is One and Who has no associates.¹⁶⁹

We ought not to be deceived or embarrassed by the attacks of the orientalist on the origin of *Jihad*, nor lose self-confidence under the pressure of present conditions and the weight of the great powers of the world to such an extent that we try to find reasons for Islamic *Jihad* outside the nature of this religion, and try to show that it was a defensive measure under temporary conditions. The need for *Jihad* remains, and will continue to remain, whether these conditions exist or not!¹⁷⁰

Qutb explained that the main point of *jihad* was to “strike terror into the hearts of God’s enemies who are also the enemies of the advocates of Islam throughout the world, be they open their hostility and known to the Muslim community, or others who may be discreet with their real feelings, not openly stating their hostile attitudes towards Islam.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 70.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹⁷¹ Habeck, 132.

In other words, Qutb sees *jihad* as a way to reawaken people's Islamic spirits. Explaining that Muslims should neither be ashamed of *jihad* nor should they buckle under the pressure of Western criticism of it since this is what they want Muslims to do. In addition, the reason for *jihad* is to reverse the trend of *jāhilīyyah* in society since governments are not implementing the *sharī'ah*. As such, individuals' servitude (*'ubūdīyyah*) is to their leaders, not God. As a result, *jihad* is required to remedy these problems and to achieve 'true' freedom in society.

As noted in the previous section, in the early 1960s Qutb called for a thirteen-year education program, he mentions the idea of *daw'ah* in the first quote above, along with *jihad*. Therefore, although at the time *Ma'ālim fī al-Tarīq* was published it appears that Qutb's thought had further radicalized, the non-violent aspects of *jihad* and the use of *daw'ah* was still a part of his thought. It is hard to truly know Qutb's motivations since *Ma'ālim fī al-Tarīq* was his last work and he did not have time to clarify his ideas. As he says in the introduction to the book: "These writings are a first installment of a series."¹⁷² As such, although many Islamist thinkers as well as Western scholars and policy analysts have come to their own conclusions from Qutb's thought, one cannot be absolutely certain of his true intentions since he was hung before being able to elaborate on his thinking. This does not excuse his radical ideas; rather, it is to expose this dilemma when examining his later thought. At the same time, Qutb understood the stages that led to an Islamic government in Muhammad's time. The first stage was when Muhammad was in Mecca and this spanned thirteen years.¹⁷³ As a result, it seems that Qutb proposes a thirteen-year educational program in light of this. Indeed, in the later stages fighting was allowed. Therefore, Qutb's method although it eventually involves violent *jihad*, does not directly start there like al-Qaeda today. As will be seen in the next chapter, Farrag critiques Qutb's method since Farrag does not believe there needs to be any educational or ideological training prior to engaging in violent *jihad*.

¹⁷² Qutb, *Milestones*, 13.

¹⁷³ Habeck, 140.

Al-Banna and Qutb: Continuation, Rupture or Co-evolution?

It has been argued by Ana Belén Soage, that Qutb's thought was a logical conclusion from those of al-Banna's.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Soage argues that they have similar conceptions of Islam as being an all-encompassing way of life, both men wanted to implement an Islamic state, both were non-intellectuals and both had similar methods to bringing about this change. Granted, they both had similar ideas about the totalitarian nature of the Islamic state. At the same time, though, al-Banna and Qutb developed their ideas at different times and under different circumstances. Rather than being a continual fluid development from al-Banna to Qutb, it is rather a co-evolution of thought through the crucible of Egyptian society at the time. Al-Banna was not exposed to Western political, economic and philosophical thought in the same manner as Qutb. In addition, al-Banna's goal was trying to Islamicize society and fight against the colonial control of Britain, whereas Qutb's aim was of a different nature. Qutb tried to create a framework for rebelling against a Muslim leader and government. Additionally, his ideas were far more intellectually advanced and theoretically sophisticated. This was due to the status quo in Sunni Islamic lands, which the *'ulamā'* endorsed a quietist position so as not to create *fitnah* (disturbance) based on the experience of the early Islamic civil wars. Therefore, al-Banna and Qutb's objectives were different. In addition, as mentioned above, Qutb's thought has many proto-ideas of *jāhilīyyah*, *ḥākīmīyyah* and *tawḥīd* earlier in his life before even thinking of joining the Muslim Brothers. Consequently, it is not accurate to claim that Qutb was a logical conclusion to al-Banna's thought. Rather, both men came to similar conclusions since they were both living under the same circumstances in Egypt, but they came to these conclusions separately. Therefore, their separate trajectories led to similar yet distinct thoughts on Islam and the way to solve the current problems of the day. Therefore, this shows a break between the moderate aspects of the Muslim Brothers and the radical aspects that broke away.

¹⁷⁴ Ana Belén Soage, "Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb: Continuity or Rupture?," *The Muslim World*, Volume 99, April 2009, 304.

The latter two similarities that Soage posits do not seem to be accurate. Soage bases her argument on al-Banna and Qutb as being non-intellectuals in juxtaposition to al-Afghānī and ‘Abduh who have been portrayed as modernists while the former were fundamentalists.¹⁷⁵ These points are well taken, yet one cannot state that Qutb was not an intellectual. He was a poet, a literary critic and he engaged in well-known intellectual debates of his time. In addition, Soage’s second point about al-Banna and Qutb having similar strategies for change is far from true too. As mentioned in the previous chapter, al-Banna created a grassroots organization, while Qutb looked to a vanguard or a small-organized group of like-minded individuals. Al-Banna’s method was one that appealed to the masses and a social movement that would be bottom-up, while Qutb’s was a program for the intellectual elites and would be implemented from the top-down.

Qutb’s legacy has many layers to it since his intellectual transformation over time has left a mark on various communities. Most individuals respect his work up until *Ma’ālim fī al-Tarīq*. Originally Ḥassan al-Huḍaybī, the General Guide of the Muslim Brothers at the time, endorsed *Ma’ālim fī al-Tarīq*, but following Qutb’s hanging, he recanted and wrote a book, *Du’āt wa lā Quḍāt* (Preachers and Not Judges) that critiqued *Ma’ālim fī al-Tarīq*.¹⁷⁶ This was to try and moderate the Muslim Brothers position and gain good standing in the eyes of the Egyptian government to operate again. Nonetheless, there are those who were inspired by Qutb’s ideas in *Ma’ālim fī al-Tarīq*. Today, these individuals are described as “Salafī Qutubis” as well as many *jihadi’s*, who espouse a different method but took note from Qutb’s theoretical ideas. According to William McCants and Jarret Brachman, “His narrow definition of true Muslim identity and broad denunciations of existing Muslim societies helped determine the *takfiri* or excommunicative tendencies of subsequent *jihadis*, who are thus sometimes known interchangeably as Qutbis and as *takfiris*.”¹⁷⁷ Muhammad ‘Abd al-Salam Farrag, who was the original leader of the *Tanzīm al-Jihad* (later the Egyptian Islamic *Jihad* (EIJ)), although inspired by the thoughts of

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 299.

¹⁷⁶ Musallam, 168 & 178.

¹⁷⁷ William McCants & Jarret Brachman, “The Militant Ideology Atlas,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, November 2006, 346.

Qutb was the first to analyze Qutb's method and wrote a scathing critique of it, to which we will now turn for examination.

al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba and al-Sadat's Assassination, a 30 Year Retrospective

It is also known that he who knows the obligations of salāt must pray, and he who knows the obligation of sawm (fasting in the month of Ramadan) must fast. Likewise he who knows the obligation of Jihad must fight in the cause of Allah.¹⁷⁸

Background

Prior to delving into Farag's intellectual contributions, it is worthwhile to briefly explore his background and the environment in which he lived in Egypt while he came of age. Farag was born in 1954, the same year that former Egyptian president Gamal °Abd al-Nasir came to power, in the province of Buḥayrah, Egypt, which is the same province that the founder of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brothers), Hasan al-Banna, grew up.¹⁷⁹ Farag's father was believed to be a member of the more radical wing of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (*al-jihāz al-sirī*: the Secret Apparatus). Prior to his jihadi career, Farag attended college at Cairo University and completed his degree in electrical engineering. For some time, he worked for Cairo University.¹⁸⁰

Events that Influenced and Shaped Farag's Weltanschauung

The year 1954 also marked the second banning of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, sending tens of thousands of its members to Egypt's notorious prisons after an attempt on the life of °Abd al-Nasir. This led to the radicalization of many and the eventual downfall of Sayyid Qutb, who at the time of his arrest was the chief ideologue for al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. In 1957, Zaynab al-Ghazālī, the founder of *Gamā'at al-Sayyidāt al-Muslimāt* (The Muslim Ladies Association) and closely linked to al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, and °Ali °Abd al-Fattāḥ Ismā'īl, former member of the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun Guidance Council who was

¹⁷⁸ Muhammad °Abd as-Salām Farag, *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba*, Minbar at-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.ws/a?a=a5ieej5j>, accessed March 20, 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (London: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1986), 1.

¹⁸⁰ Sayed Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* (London: Routledge, 2006), 195.

released early from prison in 1956, met to reconstitute the so-called Islamic movement in Egypt.¹⁸¹

The leader of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun at the time Ḥasan al-Huḍaybī endorsed a plan to reorganize the movement yet warned against any use of violence. Al-Huḍaybī would later be freed from his house arrest in 1961. The nascent organization was floundering without leadership. Al-Ghazālī and Ismāʿīl sought out al-Huḍaybī to become their spiritual guide. Although al-Huḍaybī endorsed the organization he balked at becoming its leader. As a result, the fledging organization convinced Qutb to becoming their advisor and spiritual guide.¹⁸² Qutb was impressed by their dedication and enthusiasm, but as Calvert explains: “he (Qutb) understood that left to their own devices they would lead the remnants of the Islamic movement to disaster.”¹⁸³ Therefore, Qutb attempted to temper their zeal by explaining it was important to learn the lessons of the crackdowns against al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in 1948, 1954, and 1957.

Instead of preparing to use violence, as some in the reorganized Islamic movement believed was the correct next step, Qutb suggested focusing on the spiritual reawakening at the grassroots level, which he would emphasize in his *magnum opus* *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq* (Milestones Along the Road). Although Qutb was opposed to the use of violence without proper spiritual training, he still allowed military training. Qutb stressed the need for defensive measures if the Egyptian state began to crack down on the movement.¹⁸⁴ This planning was uncovered and led to Qutb’s reincarceration in 1966 after being released less than a year earlier in 1965. Qutb was sentenced to death and became a martyr in the eyes of Islamists the world over. In the coming years, Qutb’s *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq* became a guide to many new jihadi organizations that sprang up in the 1970s in Egypt, including Farag’s.

¹⁸¹ John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 229.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 230-231.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

The Six Day War in 1967 was another event in the late 1960s that played a significant role in the shaping of Farag and other Islamists' worldview. The Arab armies were defeated at the hands of Israel in an embarrassing manner. Israel occupied and/or annexed Southern Lebanon, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. This military defeat drove home the salience of Qutb's arguments about the corruption of the Egyptian regime and the necessity to implement God's sovereignty (*hakīmīyya*) over society. Not only did it confirm Islamist preconceived perceptions; it exposed the failures of Nasserism in Egypt and the Middle East at large. This gave rise and more legitimacy to the Islamist movements who had been harping on the injustices of °Abd al-Nasir's regime since the mid-1950s. All of the hopes following °Abd al-Nasir's rise to power were dashed with Egypt's defeat in the Six Day War.

Following the death of °Abd al-Nasir in 1970, the new president of Egypt, Anwar al-Sadat, sought to distinguish himself from °Abd al-Nasir by reversing many of °Abd al-Nasir's policies. Two of the more important ones were the leniency given to Islamists (whom he released early in the 1970s) and the *infitāh* (openness) of Egypt's economy to private investment. These two policies eventually led to his death at the hands of Farag's group *Tanzīm al-Jihad* a decade later. The latter policy resulted in Egypt's patron state changing from the Soviet Union to the United States. The economic policy, though, created a further rift between the average Egyptian and the ruling elite in society. As such, although al-Sadat was more lenient toward the Islamists and gave them more room to breathe in society compared with the °Abd al-Nasir regime, al-Sadat's economic policies showed the Islamists he had not intended to adopt reforms that would assist the average Egyptian or lead to the re-implementation of the *shari'ah*.

Al-Sadat's gambit in the 1973 Yom Kippur War to restore honor to Egypt that would lead to the peace accords with Israel provided an even greater grievance for the Islamists. Not only was al-Sadat turning his back on the Egyptian people, but also the *umma* (Islamic community) as a whole by making peace with the hated "Zionists." Al-Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1977, where he addressed the Israeli Knesset, was regarded as the ultimate insult. The above events – prison torture, Qutb's martyrdom and *Ma'ālim fī al-*

Ṭarīq, the defeat in the 1967 war, the *infītāh*, and the peace with Israel – shaped many of the Islamist movements that came to prominence in the 1970s.

The Rise of the Gamāʿat

The earliest of the *Gamāʿat* (groups/societies) cells that emerged at the time was led by Sāliḥ Sirīyya, a Palestinian doctor who moved to Egypt in 1971. Sirīyya's followers were deeply influenced by Qutb. Taqī ad-Dīn al-Nabhānī, another Palestinian, in 1953 founded *Ḥizb ut-Tahrīr* (The Liberation Party), a non-violent trans-national movement that hopes to restore the Caliphate, and was allegedly Sirīyya's mentor.¹⁸⁵ According to Musallam, Sirīyya wrote an unpublished manuscript entitled *Risālat al-Imān* (The Epistle of Faith), where he echoed views similar to Qutb. Sirīyya believed society to be living in a state of *jāhiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance) while the political systems of the Muslim world were under the influence of *al-ḥukūma al-kāfira* (infidel government).¹⁸⁶ Unlike Qutb, Sirīyya did not believe individuals needed educational or ideological training prior to jihad. In this light, his views are more in line with those of Farag, although they had differing tactics for gaining state power.¹⁸⁷ Sirīyyah's group *al-Gamāʿat al-Shabāb Muhammad* (the Youth Muhammad Group) or better known as the Military Technical Academy Group led a failed *coup d'état* against the Egyptian state on April 18, 1974.¹⁸⁸ If Sirīyya's manuscript had been published and the putsch been successful, he may have been a larger figure in the intellectual history of jihadi thought since Farag later echoed some of his views. Following the *coup* attempt, his *Gamāʿat* was dismantled and therefore did not have any lasting power, as opposed to *Tanzīm al-Jihad*, whose influence propelled Farag's ideas over time.

Following Sirīyya's *Gamāʿat*, Shukrī Mustafā led *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* (The Society of Muslims). Mustafā's *Gamāʿat* was also referred to by the Egyptian media in a derogatory

¹⁸⁵ Khatab, 177.

¹⁸⁶ Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 184.

¹⁸⁷ Khatab, 178

¹⁸⁸ Musallam, 183.

manner as *al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra* (Excommunication and Withdrawal). *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* was originally founded by Shaykh ʿAli ʿAbd al-Ismāʿīl, an al-Azhar University graduate, while in prison. But, after Shaykh al-Ismāʿīl read Ḥasan al-Huḍaybī’s rebuttal of Qutb’s ideas in *Duʿat la Quḍāt* (Preachers Not Judges),¹⁸⁹ he decided that he no longer believed in the ideology of *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* and returned to become a mainstream member of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun.¹⁹⁰

While in college for an agriculture degree, Mustafā joined al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. Due to their activities Mustafā was arrested and imprisoned at Sijn Ṭura in 1967. Later, he was transferred to the Abū Zaʿbal concentration camp.¹⁹¹ There, he read Qutb and Abū al-ʿAlā Mawḍūdī¹⁹² and developed extreme views regarding Egyptian society. By the time Mustafā was released on October 16, 1971, he believed that Egyptian society was living in a state of *jāhilīyya*, as described by Qutb. Therefore, in Mustafā’s view, society was in a state of *kufir* (unbelief) and proscribed *takfir* against it, stating: “Anyone who refused to become a member of [*Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn*] or wanted to leave it was declaring himself an enemy of God, and was to be treated accordingly.”¹⁹³

Following Shaykh al-Ismāʿīl’s departure from the group, it almost completely fell apart. Because Mustafā took the lead and preached for new members to the cause, the group started to gain some strength starting in 1972, a year after Mustafā’s release from prison.¹⁷ After some arrests in 1973, members actually made *hijra* to mountain grottoes. This is where the Egyptian media portrayed *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* as *Takfir wa’l-Hijra* incorrectly. According to Kepel, members of *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* only lived there

¹⁸⁹ Al-Huḍaybī’s *Duʿat la Quḍāt* was an attempt to rehabilitate al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in the eyes of the Egyptian government following the death of Qutb. Al-Huḍaybī argued against the use of *takfir* (calling another Muslim an infidel and therefore excommunicating him/her).

¹⁹⁰ Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 75-76. For future footnotes this will be cited as Kepel, *MEE*.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹² Mawḍūdī was a Sunni Pakistani Islamist leader and political philosopher. He was the founder of *Jamāʿat-ī-Islāmī*, an Islamist party.

¹⁹³ Jeffrey B. Cozzens, “Al-Takfir wa’l Hijra: Unpacking an Enigma,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 32, 2009, 493; Kepel, *MEE*, 74. ¹⁷ Kepel, *MEE*, 76.

temporarily and actually lived in apartments in a poor neighborhood in Cairo.¹⁹⁴ The major turning point, which led to the downfall of *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn*, was when they captured the former minister of *awqāf* (religious endowments) Muhammad al-Dhahabī on July 3, 1977.¹⁹⁵ The group used this as an opportunity to not only gain exposure, but to also seek concessions from the Egyptian government. This led to the state cracking down on its members, and in response, members of *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* murdered al-Dhahabī.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, state forces rounded up the members within a few days, including Mustafā. Following a quick trial, Mustafā and five other members were executed, while others were sentenced to prison.¹⁹⁷

Farag Joins the Jihadi Scene

Following the downfall of Mustafā and *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn*, members of Sirīyya's *al-Gamāʿat al-Shabāb Muhammad* who had been released from prison tried to reconstitute the organization twice in 1977 and then again in 1979. Both times the police broke them up. In 1978, Farag joined *al-Gamāʿat al-Shabāb Muhammad* while they were trying to revive the organization for the second time. Farag was caught up in the arrests, but somehow escaped.¹⁹⁸ Farag's near arrest set the stage for two new *Gamāʿat* to fill the vacuum that *al-Gamāʿat al-Shabāb Muhammad* and *Gamāʿat al-Muslimīn* left. Farag decided to start his own group where he merged disparate jihadi cells together and named it *Tanzīm al-Jihad* (The Jihad Society).¹⁹⁹ In 1980, another jihadi group, *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* (The Islamic Group), merged with *Tanzīm al-Jihad*. *Al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya*'s *amīr* (leader) Shaykh ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, a blind al-Azhar graduate, became *Tanzīm al-Jihad*'s spiritual leader, while Farag focused on the political leadership.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 77.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 78

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ayman al-Zawāhirī, *Fursan Taht Raiyyah al-Nabi*, Juz al-ʿAwal al-Tabʿah al-Thaniyyah, As-Sahāb Media Foundation: 2010, 14-15.

¹⁹⁹ Steven Brook, "Jihadist Strategic Debates before 9/11," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 31, 2008, 205.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

In the late 1970s, Farag wrote *Tanzīm al-Jihad*'s main source of ideological inspiration *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba*. Fawaz Gerges notes that *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* was the operational manual for jihadis in the 1980s and first half of the 1990s.²⁰¹ In it, he promotes the efficacy of jihad in Islam and its prime role in Egyptian society at the time. As he saw it, jihad was a “neglected duty,” so it was necessary to rebel against the Egyptian regime of President al-Sadat. Once this was accomplished, it was one’s obligation to create an Islamic state.

This “rebellion” came to fruition on October 6, 1981, when a member of *Tanzīm al-Jihad*, Khālid al-Islāmbūlī, assassinated President al-Sadat and exclaimed: “I am Khālid al-Islāmbūlī, I have killed Pharoah, and I do not fear death.”²⁰² Unfortunately, for *Tanzīm al-Jihad* the act of assassinating President al-Sadat did not lead to a mass revolution or the formation of an Islamic government in Egypt, as had been hoped for by Farag and his cohorts. While in jail, several members of *Tanzīm al-Jihad* were put on trial and sentenced to varying terms in prison. The four accomplices in the actual assassination, along with *Tanzīm al-Jihad*'s leader, Farag, were sentenced to death. On April 15, 1982, the five of them were executed.²⁰³ Now that this paper has examined Farag’s early history and Islamist intellectual trends that were percolating in Egypt while he was coming of age, this paper will turn to analyzing his infamous work *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba*.

Farag’s Intellectual Thought

Farag could be seen as the first true strategist and practitioner of jihadism, but unlike today where jihadism is viewed through the lens of fighting against *al-‘adūw al-ba‘īd* (the far enemy) – The United States, Europe, Russia, China, India, and Israel – Farag focused his attention on destroying *al-‘adūw al-qarīb* (the near enemy), Egypt. Although Farag was influenced by previous ideologues he believed there were flaws in their plans to re-implement *shari’a* in Egyptian society.

²⁰¹ Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Second Edition, 9-10.

²⁰² Kepel, *MEE*, 192.

²⁰³ Jansen, 1.

Critique of Previous Efforts to Overthrow the Government

Farag's book *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* primarily focused on overthrowing the Egyptian regime through violent jihad. Farag sought to diagnose the previous ills of the various Islamist trends so that once one understood these problems he could provide a prognosis to solve the issue. He identified and criticized five other Islamic intellectual trends of his time: (1) those that follow "obedience, education and intensive worship;" (2) those who were "chasing good professions;" (3) those "giving *da'wah* alone;" (4) those who are "busy seeking knowledge;" and (5) those who prefer "migration." These approaches were too slow for Farag, who believed that the vanguard was ready to fight, basing his views on a number of Qur'anic verses.

Farag first attacked those who propagated "obedience, education and intensive worship."²⁰⁴ The former group is in reference to al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun and Qutb's followers. As Farag states:

There are some who say that we have to busy ourselves with obeying God, educating the Muslims and making effort in worshipping God, because the humiliation in which we live is the result of our sins, and because of our deeds it was inflicted upon us ... The truth is that whoever thinks that his own wisdom has abrogated the obligation of jihad and that of enjoining good and forbidding evil, he has indeed led himself and those who listen to him to destruction. Whoever really desires to be engrossed in the highest degree of obedience and be on the peak of worship, then let him make jihad in the cause of God; but without neglecting the other pillars of Islam.²⁰⁵

Farag is not necessarily against either al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun or Qutb since they both argue that it is necessary to fight jihad; rather their incremental method is where he

²⁰⁴ Farag.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 30

thought they went wrong. Farag did not believe in the stage of weakness; rather, Muslims were ready to fight jihad and overthrow the Egyptian government. Farag also believed that education and ideological training were not necessary pre-requisites to jihad.²⁰⁶

Second, Farag criticized the method of those who were “chasing good professions.” In this instance, Farag is alluding to *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya*, prior to the merging of the groups in 1980.²⁰⁷ *Al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* argued that individuals in Egyptian society with the *al-Daʿwah al-Islāmīyya* (the Islamist call) should fill top professions, such as being an architect or doctor or governmental official.²⁰⁸ *Al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya*’s hope was to Islamicize society from the inside out, eventually leading to the implementation of the *shariʿah*. Farag’s responded to this strategy by stating: “even if we manage to form Muslim doctors and architects, they will be part of the government as well, and no way will a Muslim personality hold a ministerial post unless he completely takes those in the system as friends and protectors.”²⁰⁹ In other words, these individuals will be co-opted by the government and would no longer hold any sort of independence that would allow them to defeat the regime from the inside out. They would also be corrupted through a conflict of interest and would have an interest in maintaining the status quo so they could maintain their hold on power.

Third, Farag took issue with the approach of just “*daʿwah* alone.”²¹⁰ Here Farag is at odds with the view of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Hāmīd Kishk, a popular preacher in Egypt at the time. Kishk was a graduate of al-Azhar University and was a proponent of *al-jihad al-akbar* (the greater jihad).²¹¹ According to Kishk, *al-jihad al-akbar* “heals those societies which follow its guidance and are built on consciences which have been awakened and hearts

²⁰⁶ Kepel, *MEE*, 202.

²⁰⁷ Farag.

²⁰⁸ Kepel, *MEE*, 201.

²⁰⁹ Farag.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ This term the greater *jihad* comes from a famous Hadith (actions and sayings of the Muslim prophet Muhammad) that stated: Some troops came back from an expedition and went to see the Messenger of God. He said [Muhammad]: “You have come for the best, from the smaller jihad (*al-Jihad al-Asghar*) to the greater jihad (*al-Jihad al-Akbar*).” Someone said, “What is the greater jihad?” He [Muhammad] said: “The servant’s struggle against his lust” (*Mujahadat al-ʿAbdi Hawah*).

which have been illuminated by the light of belief.”²¹² In response to Kishk’s insistence on only pursuing *da‘wah*, Farag states:

Some of them say that the way to establish the [Islamic] state is by *dacwah* alone, and forming a wide base (i.e. a large number of practicing Muslims), but this will not do so. Despite that some people have based their abandonment of jihad on this point, the truth is that those who will establish the Islamic State are a few believers, and those who stand straight on the obligations of Allah and the *sunna* of the messenger of God.²¹³

If a person concludes that what I have said means keeping from *da‘wah*, his understanding is wrong, because the basis is to take Islam as a complete religion. This is rather a reply to the one who has taken it as his duty to create a large base, which is the reason behind his diversion from jihad, and which has lead him to stop and delay it.²¹⁴

To put it another way, Farag is not necessarily against pursuing *da‘wah*. Instead, Farag looks down upon those who, in his opinion, justify not fighting jihad by only performing *da‘wah* and shirk their responsibility to engage in jihad.

Fourth, Farag takes on the ‘*ulama*’ of al-Azhar or as he describes them: those who are “busy seeking knowledge.”²¹⁵ As Farag argues:

There are some who say that what we should do now is busy ourselves with seeking knowledge, for how can we struggle in the cause of God while we are lacking the knowledge, which is *fard* (obligatory) to seek? But we have not heard anyone who says that it is permitted to abandon an Islamic order or an obligation of the obligations of Islam because of knowledge, especially if this obligation is

²¹² cAbd al-Hāmid Kishk, *Dealing With Lust and Greed According to Islam* (London: Dār Al Taqwā, 1995), 2-9.

²¹³ Farag.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

jihad. So how can we abandon a *farḍ ‘ayn* (individual obligation) because of *farḍ kifāya* (collective obligation)? ... So he who says that knowledge is jihad must realize that what is *farḍ* is fighting ... If a person wants to increase his knowledge ... he could do so, because there are no restrictions on knowledge, which is available for everybody. But to delay jihad because of seeking knowledge is an evidence of the one who has no evidence ... However, we do not underestimate knowledge and scholars, rather we call for that. But we do not use it as evidence to abandon the obligations that God ordained.²¹⁶

Lastly, Farag takes issue with the strategy of those who prefer “*hijra*.”²¹⁷ Farag is referring to Shukrī Mustafā and his group *Gamā‘at al-Muslimīn*. Farag notes: “There are some who say that the way to establish the Islamic State is to migrate ... and then come back as conquerors.”²¹⁸ Farag provides Qur’anic evidence for the ‘correct’ methodology: “Fighting is prescribed upon you though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing, which is good for you” (2:216); and “And fight them until there is no more *fitna* and all of the religion is for God” (8:39).²¹⁹ This means that one does not need to change one’s scenery to prepare to fight jihad and defeat the *kufir* government; rather, the vanguard is ready for the fight at this moment; it does not need any education or ideological preparation.

Proofs for the Necessity of Jihad Farag has a three-pronged argument to convince others why the above methods are insufficient: (1) legal, theological, and historical proofs; (2) pre-emptive defense of particular positions individuals may have doubts over; and (3) a strategy to bring about Farag’s vision of society.

Regarding the first prong, Farag begins his argument for jihad by citing the Qur’anic verse “Whoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers”

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

(5:44).²²⁰ Farag goes on to quote a fatwa by Abū Ḥanīfā, the founder of the Sunni Ḥanīfī school of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), that provides three criteria for determining whether one's state is in *dār al-Islam* (the Abode of Islam) or *dār al-Kufr* (the Abode of Unbelievers): (1) "When it is governed by *kāfir* (infidel) laws"; (2) "When the Muslims lose their safety"; and (3) "Neighborhood." This happens if the state has borders with the *kāfir* state in a way the latter causes danger to the Muslims and becomes the reason behind the loss of their safety.²²¹ Therefore, according to Farag, since the Egyptian state did not follow the *sharīʿa*, then Egypt was no longer considered part of *dār al-Islam*, but rather in *dār al-Kufr*. Similar to Qutb, Farag believes that if one's government is not following the laws of God (*ḥakīmīyya*) then that state is not Islamic.

Moreover, Muslim rulers of his day failed to implement *sharīʿa* so Farag declared them as *kufr*: "The present rulers have apostatized from Islam. They have been brought up over colonial tables be they Christian, Communist or Zionist. What they carry of Islam is nothing but names, even if they pray, fast and claim to be Muslims."²²² Farag borrows this line of argument from 13th century *faqīh* (jurist) Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Taymīyya, who used it when describing the Mongols. The Mongols claimed they were Muslims and outwardly might have shown it, but since they administered the *yassa* code along side the *sharīʿa* they could not be considered true Muslims. Ibn Taymīyya stated: "Every group which rebels against *mutawātir* (clear-cut) law of the Islamic *sharīʿa* must be fought by the consensus of all the *a'imma* (religious leaders) of Muslims, even if they pronounce the *shahāda* (declaration of faith)."²²³ Ibn Taymīyya buttressed this statement by citing the following Qur'anic verse:

And fight then [sic] until there is no *fitna* and the religion (worship) will all be for God (in the whole world) (8:39).²²⁴

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

Much of Farag's book is filled with quotes from Ibn Taymīyya. Again, Farag quotes from Ibn Taymīyya's *Majmū'at al-Fatāwā* (Compilation of Legal Judgments) to support his point that against those who do not follow the laws of God or shirk the responsibilities of a believer a *jihad* must be waged until the *sharī'ah* once again reigns supreme:

Indeed scholars of the Muslims were agreed that when the rebellious group abstains from some *mutawātir* (clear-cut) obligations of Islam, fighting them becomes compulsory. If they say the *shahāda* (declaration of faith) but refuse to pray, pay zakat, *ṣawm* in the month of Ramadan, perform hajj, judge between themselves by the Qur^{ān} and sunna or refuse to prohibit evil deeds (such as) (consuming) alcohol, marrying those who are prohibited to marry, legalizing killing and stealing wealth with no cause, dealing in usury, gambling, or (failing) to fight against the disbelievers or imposing *jizīyya* on *ahl al-Kitāb* or other things from the Islamic *sharī'ah*, they must be fought until all of the religion is for God.²²⁵

Farag believes that the Muslims in his time were worse than the Muslims in the time of Ibn Taymīyya. As he says: "In fact, despite the fact that the Tartars [Mongols] ruled by the *yassa*, which was taken from various laws and many laws that he (Chinggis Khan) made up from his own desires, there is no doubt that it is less criminal than the laws laid down by the West, which have nothing to do with Islam or any religious laws."²²⁶

Farag points to the need to fight the *jihad* against the *kuffār* of his day by citing Ibn Taymīyya's call to fight the Mongols: "Fighting the Tartars [Mongols] who came over to Syria is obligatory by the Qur^{ān} and sunna."²²⁷ Farag presses his argument further by claiming he is following the path of the *salaf* (pious predecessors):

The *salaf* and the *a'imma* are agreed upon fighting *al-Khawārij*. The first one ever to fight them was [°]Alī Ibn Abī Tālib and the Muslims kept on fighting them during the *khilāfa* of the 'Umayyads and 'Abbasids along with the leaders even though they were

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

oppressors, and al-Ḥajjāj²²⁸ and his delegates were some of those who used to fight against them.²²⁹

One could take from this quote that Farag was calling the *kuffār* of his day *al-Khawārij*, which Muslims view very negatively since they are seen as a secessionist movement from Islam.²³⁰ In addition, if one successfully calls an individual or a group *al-Khawārij*, then they become stigmatized within society.²³¹ Moreover, Brook explains that this was a tactic of Ibn Taymīyya's, too:

Farag also borrows one of Ibn Taymīyya's rhetorical devices to ensure that the obligation for revolution is clear. When Ibn Taymīyya had to persuade Muslims to attack the Mongols, he portrayed them as *Khārijī*, an early deviant sect of Islam. There was wide justification among early Muslims to fight the *Khārijī*. Farag improves on the device when he explains that the leaders of Egypt are "more rebellious against the laws of Islam than . . . the *Khārijī*."²³²

Pre-emptive Defense After Farag argues why jihad is necessary, he turns to the second prong. This aspect of his argument is a pre-emptive intellectual strike against those who may be on the fence regarding his thoughts. One of Farag's more controversial arguments is that jihad is not defensive. Farag is a proponent of offensive jihad, stating:

²²⁸ In the translation to Farag's book, the translator provides background to this figure in the footnotes: "He was al- Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī, a governor at the time of the ʿUmayyad Khalīf ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān. Much has been said of this man, in that he fought and killed some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah, the most famous of whom was ʿAbd Allah ibn az-Zubayr, and it is accepted that he was a tyrant and often merciless ruler. But a fundamental point is that he never replaced Islamic laws with those from the *kuffār*, neither did he implement them – rather he was known to be a strong supporter and upholder of the *sharīʿa*. In fact, it was him who sent his nephew Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim to rescue Muslim families in Sind (present day Pakistan) that had been attacked by pirates, which led directly to the conquest and Islamization of the Western Indian sub-continent."

²²⁹ Farag.

²³⁰ Ersilia Francesca, "Khārijīs," Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, Vol. 3, (Leiden: The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 84-90.

²³¹ This has been a tactic used by the Saudi government against the ideology and members of al-Qaʿida.

²³² Brook, 206.

Concerning this, it is worth giving a reply to the one who has said that jihad in Islam is for defense and the sword did not spread Islam. This is a false saying that has been repeatedly uttered by a lot of those who are known in the domain of the Islamic *da'wah* ... Islam was spread by the sword, but only against the leaders of *kufir*, who veiled it from reaching the people, and after that no one was forced to embrace it. It is obligatory upon the Muslims to raise their swords against the rulers who are hiding the truth and manifesting falsehood, otherwise the truth will never reach the hearts of the people.²³³

Farag reinforces his argument by drawing on the letters of the Muslim prophet Muhammad sent to the various leaders of the time – Heracleus, Caesar, Najārān, Maqawqus, al-Mundhir bin Sāwā, al-Hārith ibn Abī Shamr al-Ghassānī, al-Hārith ibn ʿAbd Kalal al-Ḥamīrī and others.²³⁴ In these letters, the options are as follows: join Islam, pay the *jizīyya* or open war.

To emphasize the importance of fighting, Farag criticizes the famous hadith in which Muhammad states after a battle that they have just completed the lesser jihad and now were to focus on the greater jihad; and when one asked what the greater jihad was, Muhammad replied that it was the jihad of oneself to be a better Muslim. Farag states: “It is a fabrication. The reason behind the fabrication [of this hadith] is to belittle the value of fighting by the sword so as to divert the Muslims from fighting the *kuffār* and *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites).”²³⁵ Farag doesn’t present a strong argument against the idea. It appears he disregards it since he disagrees with its premise, so his argument in opposition to it is not entirely convincing.

This is where Farag makes a major break from a classical interpretation of the hadith. Most scholars who disagree with this hadith explain that there are other *aḥadīth* (pl. *hadith*) that contradict it. Moreover, the hadith about the greater jihad is considered not *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound), which is the highest level of authenticity in the hadith sciences (*ʿulūm al-*

²³³ Farag.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

hadith) rather it is viewed as *ḍa'īf* (weak), the lowest level of authenticity. Neither Qutb nor Ibn Taymīyya deny the veracity of this *hadith*.

Farag also takes issue with those who claim that they cannot take part in *jihad* on the grounds that there is currently no *amīr* or *khilāfa*. Farag sees this position as misguided because of Muhammad's saying: "When three people go on a journey they must appoint one of them as their *amīr*."²³⁶ Therefore, according to Farag:

There is no excuse for those who claim that leadership is nonexistent, because they are able to spring it from among themselves, and should there be any shortcoming in the leadership, there is nothing, which cannot be acquired. But it is not permitted to lose the leadership because it is non-existent, for we could indeed find a scholar who is not aware of the current affairs, leadership and planning and vice versa. However, this does not exempt us from creating a leadership and presenting the most suitable of us to lead through the process of *shurā* (consultation between the pious) and shortcomings can be perfected.²³⁷

Farag concludes by stating:

Now there is no excuse for any Muslim to abandon the obligation of *jihad*, which is a burden on his shoulder. So it is necessary to do our utmost to start devising for *jihad* so as to bring Islam back in this *umma*, establish the state and remove the tyrants who are but humans that have not encountered those who will convince them of the command of God.²³⁸

Farag makes this argument to persuade those who feel uncomfortable waging *jihad* when there is no leader of the faithful to join the vanguard to overthrow the *kufīr* regime. Again, Farag reiterates the negative consequences of not joining the *jihad* when he says:

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

“Abandoning jihad is the cause of the humiliation and division in which the Muslims live today.”²³⁹ As a result, to regain Islam’s glory the only solution is jihad.

This fits with another crucial issue that Farag addresses, which is when jihad changes from being *farḍ al-kifāya* (a communal obligation) to one that is *farḍ al-ʿayn* (an individual obligation). In the past in Islamic tradition, only the *khilāfa* could proclaim whether a jihad was *farḍ al-kifāya* or *farḍ al-ʿayn*. According to Farag, there are three instances where *jihad* becomes *farḍ al-ʿayn*:

First: When the two armies [the Muslims against the disbelievers] meet to fight, it is forbidden for the one who is there to leave, and staying there is incumbent upon him.

Second: When the *kuffār* invade a [Muslim] country it is *farḍ* on its people to fight them and force them out.

Third: When the *imām* (legitimate Muslim leader) orders a people (among the Muslims) to march forth in the cause of God.²⁴⁰

Farag goes on to explain how these conditions would apply under the conditions he lived in Egypt:

As for the Muslim lands, the enemy resides in their countries. In fact the enemy is controlling every thing. The enemies are these rulers who have snatched the leadership of the Muslims, therefore, jihad against them is *farḍ al-ʿayn*. Besides, the Islamic jihad is now in need of the effort of every Muslim. When *Jihad* is *farḍ al-ʿayn* (an individual obligation), it is not required to seek permission from one’s

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

parents to march forth, as scholars have said: ‘it becomes like praying and fasting.’²⁴¹

In Farag’s mind, another refrain, according to so-called apprehensive jihadis, innocent Muslims could be killed in the process and that goes against the precepts of Islam. Farag counters by quoting Ibn Taymīyya’s answer to this question: “He who doubts fighting them [Muslims] is the most ignorant of people about the religion of Islam, and as fighting them is obligatory so they must be fought, by the consensus of the Muslims.”²⁴² Farag deduces from this that Muslims who would die under such circumstances would be martyred and so jihad must not be abandoned, essentially condoning the idea of collateral damage.²⁴³ This is problematic, though, because Qur’anic verse 4:93 states: “Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is to dwell in hell forever; God is angry with him, he curses him and prepares a terrible punishment for him.”²⁴⁴ More importantly, Farag completely takes Ibn Taymīyya’s quote out of context. According to Denise Aigle, this quote dealt with Mamlūk soldiers who were either prisoners of war and forced to fight alongside the Mongols or Mamlūk’s who defected to the Mongols.²⁴⁵ Those who were prisoners of war would be considered martyrs if they were killed, while the Mamlūk defectors were viewed as apostates since they accepted the Mongols *yassa* code. Also, this was in the context of an invading military. This differs from Farag’s situation since there is no invading military; rather, Farag is using any justification necessary even if it is twisted to pursue his ends. Further, Ibn Taymīyya’s call to kill apostates in this situation is only in the context of the Mongol invasions and, therefore, would be inappropriate to generalize beyond this situation.

Strategic Thought and How to Bring About Change

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, “Suicide,” in *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an*, Vol 5. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 162.

²⁴⁵ Denis Aigle, “The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah’s Three “Anti-Mongol Fatwas,” *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2007, 117.

Lastly, is the third part of Farag's argument. Farag is the first theorist to ask the question of what enemy should be fought first: *al-ʿadūw al-baʿīd* or *al-ʿadūw al-qarīb*. Prior to decolonization, as was the case with al-Banna, the main focus was on forcing the colonizer out of one's country, while following decolonization, Qutb looked to create a framework for forcing the local government to apply the *shariʿa*. Later questions arose regarding which enemy would be better to fight first. Farag provides the basis for explaining why one enemy should take precedence over another. According to Farag, it is necessary to overthrow the Egyptian government (or if one is in another Muslim country) rather than liberating Jerusalem, because, as he says:

First: Fighting the enemy that is near to us comes before that which is far.

Second: The blood of Muslims will certainly flow even if victory comes, but the question now is will this victory be beneficial for the established Islamic State? Or will it be beneficial for the kafir system and a strengthening of the pillars of the state that has rebelled against the laws of God? These rulers are but taking advantage of the nationalistic ideas amongst some of the Muslims to achieve their non-Islamic objectives, even though they (objectives) appear Islamic. Thus fighting must be under an Islamic flag and leadership, and there is no disagreement about that.

Third: Verily the main reason behind the existence of imperialism in the Muslim lands is these rulers. Therefore to begin with destroying the imperialists is not a useful action and is a waste of time. We have to concentrate on our Islamic issue, which is to establish the laws of God in our land first and make the word of God the highest. This is because there is no doubt that the prime field of jihad is to remove these leaderships and replace them with the complete Islamic system, and from here we start.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Farag.

Another important strategic question that Farag addressed was the method for taking state power. According to Steven Brook:

Farag's strategies had similarities to those of Ṣāliḥ Sirīyya, and members of [*Tanzīm*] *al-Jihad* later testified that they saw themselves as part of an ideological line that began with Sirīyya's Military Technical Academy Group. Yet there were also important strategic divergences. Whereas Sirīyya believed in a *coup d'état* that would deliberately minimize any role for the population, Farag believed that his targeted assassination would spark a popular revolution. Because he believed that the "silent majority" of Egyptians supported him, Farag saw his task ending with the removal of the apostate ruler. The population would do the rest. As he wrote, "when the Rule of the Infidel has fallen everything will be in the hands of the Muslims, whereupon the downfall of the Islamic State will be inconceivable." The 1979 Iranian revolution likely proved to Farag that the Muslim masses were sufficiently Islamic and only needed something to waken them. The success of that event also provided Farag with a reasonable explanation why Sirīyya's strategy of ignoring the population led to failure.²⁴⁷

Tanzīm al-Jihad's strategy for seizing power was to first create fear. It included two elements. First, *Tanzīm al-Jihad* would create fear by "attacking Christian stores, attacking police stations and demanding that certain laws be broken simply because they were not in accordance with the 'law of God.'"²⁴⁸ They believed this would cause confusion in society. The second aspect of the first step, which was more integral to their plan to seize power, was to kill leaders. According to Michael Youssef, they planned to assassinate "President al-Sadat, his vice president, ministers of interior (policy, foreign affairs and defense), chief of the military staff, the speaker of parliament, head of the central security agency" as well as others.²⁴⁹ These assassinations were to occur simultaneously at night so as not to be as easily detected or to allow repressive measures

²⁴⁷ Brook, 207.

²⁴⁸ Michael Youssef, *Revolt Against Modernity: Muslim Zealots and the West* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1985), 100.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

to be taken against group members. The second step was to take over the military apparatus by poisoning guards in the area of the ministry of defense, which stored a weapons cache. But this did not go as planned because the drugs the chemical apparatus used when they mixed it with candy diluted the effect of the poison. Even though this did not work, their ultimate plan was to initiate a popular revolution once the cell led by al-Islāmbūlī assassinated President al-Sadat, as well as other figures in the military parade, celebrating the 1973 victory over the Israelis. As soon as this occurred, a group of *Tanzīm al-Jihad* fighters would take over the state's radio and television communications to announce the arrival of the revolution.²⁵⁰

As detailed above, none of this came to fruition and their plan failed. Much of it had to do with the grandiose notion that the Egyptian situation was similar to what occurred in Iran a few years before. Along with this misreading, Farag believed everything would fall into place following the assassinations. As Johannes J.G. Jansen argues: "It can be demonstrated from their [Farag and members of *Tanzīm al-Jihad*] own testimony as written down in the *Farīda* that they did not think such preparations to be necessary."²⁵¹ Jansen surmises that this could have been as a result of the Qur^canic verse: "Fight them and God will punish them at your hands. God will make you victorious" (9:14).²⁵² But Jansen does not have any substantive reason for making this claim regarding the verse.

Legacy

Farag's view on the immediacy of jihad still resonates in the jihadi ideological milieu thirty years after the assassination of al-Sadat. This final section will briefly examine how Farag's path breaking ideas would translate into action and how traces of Farag's innovative thinking still pervade jihadi intellectual thought.

After al-Sadat's Assassination The assassination of President al-Sadat left a fissure in *Tanzīm al-Jihad*, leading to a split between it and the *al-Gamā'at al-Islāmīyya* faction.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 103.

²⁵¹ Jansen, 16.

²⁵² Ibid., 15.

They no longer agreed on tactics and who should lead the organization following Farag's death. Farag's essential idea of the necessity of jihad and the continued targeting of *al-ʿadūw al-qarīb* still permeated the intellectual thinking of both groups. Gerges notes that *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* was the operational manual for jihadis in the 1980s and first half of the 1990s.²⁵³

Al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya became infamous as well in the 1990s. First, the spiritual leader of *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rāḥmān helped plan the first World Trade Center attacks in 1993 and later the Day of Terror plot. He was convicted in 1995 of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to life in prison, where he still resides today.²⁵⁴ The al-Kifah Center, a series of offices located in the United States, which were originally established by ʿAbd Allah ʿAzzām during the 1980s *jihad* against the Soviets and connected to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rāḥmān's *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* network, translated copies of Farag's *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* from Arabic to English (the translation was carried out and published by the Boston al-Kifah branch). Additionally, during the arrests, it was learned that some of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rāḥmān's followers had copies of Farag's *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* in their homes.²⁵⁵

Second, *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* began a terror campaign in Egypt targeting *al-ʿadūw al-qarīb*. From 1992 to 1997 more than 1,200 people were murdered. The insurgency came to a head on November 17, 1997, when members of *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* killed sixty tourists at the Temple of Hatshepsut and the attack became known as the "Luxor Massacre."²⁵⁶ This led to a significant backlash against *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* in

²⁵³ Gerges, 9-10.

²⁵⁴ Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007), 241.

²⁵⁵ United States of America v. Muhamed Mubayyid, Emadeddin Muntasser, and Samir Al Monla, Criminal Action No. 05-40026-FDS (2007). Exhibit 281; For more on the al-Kifah Center and the *al-Gammat al-Islamiyyah* American network see: J.M. Berger, *Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go To War In The Name Of Islam*, (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2011).

²⁵⁶ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 277.

Egyptian society. As a result, *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* was forced to renounce violence and since then the recidivism rate has been essentially zero.²⁵⁷

The other half of the former alliance, *Tanzīm al-Jihad* regrouped while members were still imprisoned for the assassination of President al-Sadat. Imām ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Sharīf (pen name: ʿAbd al-Qādir bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz), better known as Dr. Faḍl took over the reigns of *Tanzīm al-Jihad* and was the *amīr* until 1993. Like Farag, his work had an enormous impact on the *jihadi* movement during the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to al-Zayyat, Dr. Faḍl wrote the so-called constitution for *al-Jihad al-Islami al-Masri* (Egyptian Islamic Jihad; EIJ), which was the name *Tanzīm al-Jihad* went by after the late 1980s.²⁵⁸

Dr. Faḍl’s contribution was his tract *Risālat al-ʿUmda fi ʿDād al-ʿUdda li-al-Jihad fi sabīl Allah* (Manual for Planning the Necessary Provisions to Mount Jihad in the Cause of God). He exhorts fellow jihadis the necessity of jihad like Farag before him. Unlike Farag, though, as Lahoud explains, “Dr. Faḍl makes a case that training for jihad is not merely a practical matter that some able bodied men should perform on behalf of the rest of the community. Rather, he advances a theological paradigm justifying why training for jihad is a religious duty incumbent upon every Muslim.”²⁵⁹ Dr. Faḍl notes, “training and jihad are from the best ways of becoming closer to God.”²⁶⁰ He further adds that the classical scholars agreed that no act is greater than *jihad* and that it is even more important than the *hajj/ʿumra* (greater and lesser pilgrimages) or *salat*.

Like Dr. Faḍl, Dr. al-Zawāhirī who became the *amīr* of EIJ in 1993 continued to uphold to Farag’s principles of the necessity and singularity of jihad. More so than Dr. Faḍl, al-Zawāhirī prior to his alliance with Usāma bin Lādin and al-Qaʿida, forcefully defended

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 297.

²⁵⁸ Montasser al-Zayyat, *The Road to al-Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man*, (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 28.

²⁵⁹ Nelly Lahoud, *The Jihadis’ Path to Self Destruction*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 135.

²⁶⁰ ʿAbd al-Qādir bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *Risālat al-ʿUmda fi ʿDād al-ʿUdda li-al-Jihad fi sabīl Allah*, Minbar at-Tawhīd wa-l-Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.ws/dl/?i=f8ro5d45>, accessed April 9, 2010.

the imperative of striking at *al-ʿadūw al-qarīb*. Al-Zawāhirī went so far with his argument that he released a publication in the mid-1990s title *al-Ṭarīq Ilā al-Quds Yamurru ʿAbra al-Qāhira* (The Road to Jerusalem Passes Through Cairo). Arguing that the only way Jerusalem could be re-conquered was if the vanguard of jihadis first gained control of the levers of government in Cairo or Algiers (where the Algerian civil war was going on at the time). It would then have the instruments available to defeat Israel.²⁶¹

Al-Zawāhirī also wrote a book titled *al-Ḥisād al-Murr: al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun fī Sitīna ʿĀman* (Bitter Harvest: The Muslim Brothers in Sixty Years), which was a polemic against al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun and touched on *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya*, too.²⁶² This built upon Farag’s earlier critiques in *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghāʿiba*. According to Nimrod Raphaeli, “He [al-Zawāhirī] accuses the Muslim Brothers of sacrificing God’s ultimate authority by accepting a nation that is the basic foundation of democracy ... he [al-Zawāhirī] condemns the Brothers for renouncing jihad ... He [al-Zawāhirī] is equally virulent in his criticism of *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* for renouncing violence and for upholding the concept of constitutional authority.”²⁶³ Unlike Farag whose main issue was with their incremental approach as well as primary focus on *daʿwah* efforts, al-Zawāhirī notes the issues of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun and *al-Gamāʿat al-Islāmīyya* coming to terms with the democracy.

Al-Zawāhirī did disagree with Farag’s specific tactics for taking power, though. Al-Zawāhirī learned that Farag’s strategy for a popular revolution was ineffective. Rather, Sirīyya’s idea of a *coup d’état* was a more sound idea. Al-Zawāhirī came to believe that the only reason Sirīyya failed was due to a lack of training on the part of his men. According to al-Zayyat, al-Zawāhirī thought, “a coup would be the fastest way to jump to power with minimum losses and bloodshed.”²⁶⁴ This led al-Zawāhirī later, when he was

²⁶¹ Ayman al-Zawāhirī, *al-Ṭarīq Ilā al-Quds Yamurru ʿAbra al-Qāhira*, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4wwr6wa8>, accessed October 20, 2010.

²⁶² Ayman al-Zawāhirī, *al-Ḥisād al-Murr: al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun fī Sitīna ʿĀman*, Minbar at-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=2gxseb4t>, accessed January 9, 2010.

²⁶³ Nimrod Raphaeli, “Ayman Muhammad Rabi’ al-Zawahiri: The Making of an Arch-Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 14 Issue 4, 2002, 9.

²⁶⁴ al-Zayyat, 27.

with al-Qacida, to focus solely on the notion of training an elite vanguard since the population could not be trusted.²⁶⁵ The EIJ did not formally merge with al-Qa^cida until June 2001.²⁶⁶

°Abd Allah °Azzām, al-°adūw al-ba°īd, and al-Qa°ida

Aspects of Farag’s views on the immediacy of jihad would later appear in the work of °Abd Allah °Azzām. In contrast to Farag, though, °Azzām preached the necessity of taking on *al-°adūw al-ba°īd*. °Azzām’s focus on *al-°adūw al-ba°īd* had deep influence – most notably with al-Qa^cida – and was the reason why many regard °Azzām as the godfather of the global jihadi movement.²⁶⁷ Although °Azzām never specifically cites Farag in his work, as Hegghammer states: “I have not seen historical evidence that they met in person, nor can I recall instances of °Azzām citing Farag. That said, I think it is almost inconceivable that °Azzām was unaware of *al-Farīda*, given how well-read, well-connected, and politically minded he was.”²⁶⁸

As such, since Farag was the first to articulate the primacy of jihad, °Azzām, who lived in Egypt, would have been influenced by Farag’s paradigm shifting thought. In what was called the First Conference of Jihad, held at the al-Faruq Mosque in Brooklyn, New York in 1988, the headquarters for al-Kifah, °Azzām stated: “Whenever jihad is mentioned in the holy book, it means the obligation to fight. It does not mean to fight with the pen or to

²⁶⁵ Brook, 210.

²⁶⁶ Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus‘ab al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 211.

²⁶⁷ Thomas Hegghammer explains, in *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* there is a slight difference between °Azzām’s (classical jihadism) and al-Qa^cida’s (global jihadism) understanding of *al-°adūw al-ba°īd*. °Azzām was more interested in fighting to regain lost Muslim territory such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Spain, among others. While al-Qa^cida was more concerned with fighting and then defeating the United States/Western European nations so that they would no longer monetarily support Arab regimes. As such, since the local “apostate” regimes would be weakened al-Qacida would then be able to sweep into power.

²⁶⁸ Interview with Hegghammer, October 27, 2011.

write books or articles in the press or to fight by holding lectures.”²⁶⁹ This statement echoes the core of Farag’s argument.

Following ʿAzzām’s assassination in 1989, over the next decade, al-Qaʿida sought and became the premiere *jihadi* organization in the world. Similar to Farag, al-Qaʿida has justified the killing of innocent Muslims and non-Muslims. Although Farag never laid out a theory for suicide attacks, this has become al-Qaʿida’s signature strategy, which has taken Farag’s idea on the legitimacy of killing innocents to its logical extreme. According to Mohammed Hafez: “The jihadi *salafīs* reject the use of the term ʿ*amalīyyat intihārīyya* (suicide operation) and insist on the euphemistic labels ʿ*amalīyyat istishhādīyya* (martyrdom operations), ʿ*amalīyyat fidaīyya* (sacrifice operations) or ʿ*amalīyyat jihādīyya* (jihadi operations).”²⁷⁰ This allows al-Qaʿida to frame its argument through the lens that the Qurʿan glorifies individuals who die as martyrs.

This, though, does not hold up to scrutiny since al-Qaʿida misuses traditional Qurʿanic interpretation of what it means to die as a martyr. As Reza Shah-Kazemi notes: “To present the indiscriminate murder of Western civilians [one could conclude that Shah-Kazemi would say the same for non-Western Muslims too] as “jihad,” the values of jihad needed to be dead and buried. The murder of [Aḥmad Shāh] Massʿūd [the day prior to the September 11 attacks] was thus doubly symbolic: he embodied the traditional spirit of *jihad* that needed to be destroyed by those [al-Qaʿida] who wished to assume its ruptured mantle.”²⁷¹ Shah-Kazemi goes on to infer that this type of murder and “martyrdom” is not in the true spirit of one fighting in the way of God (*fī sabīl Allah*) and that those who espouse those views truly don’t live up to the Qurʿanic verse: “Truly my prayer and my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Good, Lord of all creation” (6:162).²⁷² Al-Zawāhirī would disagree by rejecting its premise, stating: “in fact, we fight those who kill

²⁶⁹ *Terrorists Among Us: Jihad in America*, VHS, produced by Steven Emerson, (1994; Thousand Oaks, CA: Ventura Distribution, 2001).

²⁷⁰ Mohammed M. Hafez, *Suicide bombers in Iraq: the strategy and ideology of martyrdom* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 129.

²⁷¹ Reza Shah-Kazemi, “From the Spirituality of *Jihad* to the Ideology of Jihadism,” *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Faith*, ed. Joseph E.B. Lumbard (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2009), 143.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 144.

innocents. Those who kill innocents are the Americans, the Jews, the Russians and the French and their agents.”²⁷³ Additionally, he cites the tenuous theological concept of *Masālat at-Tatarrus* (the issue of non-Muslims taking Muslims as human shields) from a tract from his fellow senior leader in al-Qaʿida Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī (also known as Ḥasan Qāʾid al-Fār and Yūnis al-Ṣaḥrāwī).²⁷⁴ Al-Zawāhirī argued: “We haven’t killed the innocents; not in Baghdad, nor in Morocco, nor in Algeria, nor anywhere else. And if there is any innocent who was killed in the mujahidin’s operations, then it was either an unintentional error, or out of necessity as in cases of *at-Tatarrus*.”²⁷⁵ Unrelated, but of note, one of the main reasons that al-Lībī decided to join the jihadi movement was being convinced by Farag’s message in *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghāʾiba*.²⁷⁶

Also, over the past few years, the saliency of fighting individual jihad has re-energized Farag’s innovative concept of the duty to fight jihad without any other recourse. Americans Adam Gadahn, head of al-Qaʿida’s media outlet As-Saḥāb Media Production Foundation, and Anwar al-Awlaqī, recently deceased member of al-Qaʿida in the Arabian Peninsula and spiritual guide for many Western jihadis, have brought new life to Farag’s old concept to an English speaking audience. In October 2010, Gadahn released a video message titled “The Arabs And Muslims: Between The Conferences Of Desertion And The Individual Duty Of Jihad,” where he exhorts Muslims to hold true to their duty of jihad, stating:

²⁷³ Brian Fishman, Jarret Brachman, and Joseph Felter, “The Power of Truth? Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,” *Combating Terrorism Center*, April 21, 2008.

²⁷⁴ Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī, *at-Tatarrus fī Jihad al-Mucasir*, Minbar at-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=vjs5vkiw>, accessed May 7, 2006. For more on the concept of *Masālat at-Tatarrus* see: Jack Barclay, “Al-Tatarrus: al-Qaeda’s Justification for Killing Muslim Civilians,” *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 8 Issue 34, September 9, 2010; Jarret Brachman and Abdullah Wariis, “Abu Yahya al-Libi’s “Human Shields in Modern Jihad,”” *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 1 Issue 6, May 2008.

²⁷⁵ Ayman al-Zawāhirī, “Open Interview with Shaykh Ayman al-Zawāhirī, Part One,” *as-Saḥāb Media Production Foundation and al-Fajr Center for Media*, April 2, 2008.

²⁷⁶ Jarret Brachman interview with cAbd al-Waḥḥāb Muhammad Qāʾid (Abū Idrīs), Tripoli, Libya, March 25, 2010.

It is the duty of everyone who is sincere in his desire to defend Islam and Muslims today, to take the initiative and rush to perform the individual obligation of jihad.

[...]

The possibility of the commission of mistakes and transgressions by some of the mujahidin can never be a justification for us to abandon the individual obligation of jihad ... A mistake isn't treated by an even bigger mistake.

[...]

Jihad isn't the obligation of a few organizations or limited number of individuals, nor is it their responsibility alone; rather it is your duty and the duty of every Muslim on the face of this Earth.²⁷⁷

This message was further emphasized by al-Awlaqī just two weeks later in a video message released in early November 2010 when he commanded:

Do not consult anyone in killing the Americans. Fighting *shayṭān* (satan) does not require a fatwa. It does not require consulting. It does not need a prayer for the cause. They are the party of *shayṭān*, and fighting them is a matter of time. With them we reached: it is either us or them. We are two opposites that cannot be gathered; they want something that cannot be established except by removing us. It is a fateful battle. It is the battle between Moses and Pharaoh. It is the battle between *ḥaqq* (truth) and *bāṭil* (falsehood).²⁷⁸

Al-Qa'ida then returned to this subject in June 2011 releasing a two-part video message titled "You Are Held Responsible Only For Yourself," which repeats the call for the

²⁷⁷ Adam Gadahn, "The Arabs And Muslims: Between The Conferences Of Desertion And The Individual Duty Of Jihad," *As-Sahāb Media Production Foundation*, October 22, 2010.

²⁷⁸ Anwar al-Awlaqī, "To Make It Known And Clear To Mankind, And Not To Hide It," November 8, 2010.

necessity of individual jihad.²⁷⁹ Another sign of Farag's lasting influence, even though he was executed thirty years ago, is that his tract *al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* is very popular in the online jihadi world. It continues to be distributed through PDF or DOC files on popular jihadi forums, websites, blogs, and social media platforms.

Conclusion

The idea that jihad is a necessary duty that comes before anything else is an idea that is taken for granted today since it is so intertwined in the ideology of global jihad espoused by groups like al-Qa'ida. Although Farag is not necessarily as well known as the likes of Qutb or al-Zawāhirī yet his idea about the absent obligation of jihad created a paradigm shift in the intellectual history of jihadi thought. Additionally, even though Farag's ideas were not as theologically sound as the ideas of Abū Muhammad al-Maqdīsī, who is viewed as one of the most influential living jihadi theorists, Farag's arguments were populist, which attracted many dissatisfied with the passivity and ills of the *culama'*. *Al-Jihad al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* provided a voice and answers to many who sought a simple explanation and solution for many of the complex, unfortunate, and unfair problems plaguing Egyptian and Arab societies in general. Farag's ideas guided a whole new generation of Islamists that harnessed its emotion into violence that still remains a force today.

²⁷⁹ al-Qa'ida, "You Are Held Responsible Only For Yourself, Parts I & II," *As-Sahāb Media Production Foundation*, June 3, 2011.

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