

TWO VISIONS OF ISLAMISM?

A Comparative Analysis of Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* and Hasan al-Hudaybi's *Preachers, Not Judges*

by

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¹ Right image: Unknown photographer, *Sayyid Qutb just before his execution*, 1966, Wikipedia, last modified February 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb#cite_note-1

² Left image: Unknown photographer, Hasan al-Hudaybi, *ikhwanonline*, last modified June 21, 2009, <https://www.ikhwanonline.com/article/50578>

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'Thesis submitted to obtain the degree of "Master of Arts" in Theology and Religious Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen.'

Hereby I, Mayra Christina Wilhelmina Nijland, declare and assure that I have composed the present thesis with the title *Two Visions of Islamism: A Comparative Analysis of Sayyid Qutb's Milestones and Hasan al-Hudaybi's Preachers, Not Judges*, independently, that I did not use any other sources or tools other than indicated and that I marked those parts of the text derived from the literal content or meaning of other works – digital media included – by making them known as such by indicating their source(s).

Enschede, February 9, 2025

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Abstract

Purpose: Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hudaybi are usually presented in the literature as each other's ideological opponents within the Muslim Brotherhood. Both leaders were imprisoned for their ideas, and during that imprisonment they both wrote a book that further expounded their ideological ideas. Many scholars claim that Hudaybi's book *Du'at la Qudat (Preachers, Not Judges)* is a response to Qutb's book *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq (Milestones)* in which he explains what is wrong with Qutb's ideas. Whether this is true or not, the books have many ideological differences. Since the literature places so much emphasis on these ideological differences, the question arose if there are also ideological similarities between Qutb and Hudaybi. Qutb's book *Milestones* was carefully compared with Hudaybi's book *Preachers, Not Judges* to answer this question.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study adopts a comparative textual analysis of the two primary works, with particular attention to central ideological themes such as Islamic governance, the role of *shari'a*, and the criteria for legitimate leadership. The analysis also incorporates contextual factors, including the political and social environment of 20th-century Egypt, to assess how these influenced the authors' views and ideological development.

Findings: While Qutb and Hudaybi diverge in their views on the role of violence in achieving an Islamic state, they share several fundamental beliefs. Both emphasize the necessity of an Islamic government guided by *shari'a* and reject secularism as a governing principle. Additionally, both argue for the importance of moral and religious reform within the Muslim community before political transformation can take place. Despite their differences, Qutb and Hudaybi share a commitment to reviving Islam's central role in governance and society, albeit through different means.

Relevance: This research offers a more nuanced understanding of ideological diversity within the Muslim Brotherhood by challenging the binary opposition often presented in existing literature. By highlighting the shared ideological foundations between Qutb and Hudaybi, it underscores the complexity of Islamist thought and its internal debates. These findings contribute to the broader academic discussions on political Islam, Middle Eastern studies, and contemporary issues of radicalization and reform within Islamist movements.

Table of Contents

1) Introduction.....	7
1.1 Objective and Research Question.....	8
1.2 Relevance.....	9
1.3 Methodology.....	9
2) Historical context.....	10
2.1 Historical Background: The French and British in Egypt.....	10
2.2 The Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood.....	14
3) Sayyid Qutb: Context and Thought.....	16
3.1 Biography.....	17
3.2 <i>Milestones</i>	18
3.2.1 <i>Jahiliyyah</i>	19
3.2.2 <i>Shirk</i> and <i>Kufr</i>	20
3.2.3 Antisemitism.....	20
3.2.4 <i>Jihad</i>	21
4) Hasan al-Hudaybi: Context and Thought.....	24
4.1 Biography.....	24
4.2 <i>Preachers, Not Judges</i>	27
4.2.1 Introduction of the book.....	28
4.2.2 <i>Shahādah</i>	28
4.2.3 Ignorance.....	30
4.2.4 Government.....	31
4.2.5 Opposition.....	33
5) Ideological Parallels and Contrasts.....	34
5.1 Islamic Governance.....	34
5.2 Violence.....	37
5.3 <i>Takfir</i>	38
6) Conclusion.....	40
References.....	43
Appendix 1: Glossary.....	46
Appendix 2: Organizational hierarchy in the Muslim Brotherhood.....	48

1. Introduction

“Alhamdulillah³ I performed Jihad⁴ for fifteen years until I earned this shahādah⁵.”

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

These were Sayyid Qutb’s words when he received his death sentence on the 17th of May 1966. Sayyid Qutb was accused of subversion, terrorism and the encouragement of sedition. His popular book *Ma’ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* (Hereafter: *Milestones*) was the crux for the concerns of the Egyptian government and formed the basis of his death sentence. Sayyid Qutb was hanged on the 29th of August.⁶

In scholarly research on the Muslim Brotherhood, the focus is mainly on Sayyid Qutb and his book *Milestones*.⁷ Qutb left a big mark on the Muslim Brotherhood that continues to have an impact long after his death. However, Qutb was not the only Muslim Brother who ended up in captivity. Beginning in 1952, Hasan al-Hudaybi took over as leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in succession to founder Hasan al-Banna. Many researchers share the perception that Hudaybi was a weak leader who left no noticeable mark. His weak leadership is also considered the reason the Muslim Brotherhood was persecuted by the Nasser regime in 1954. Hasan al-Hudaybi, Sayyid Qutb and many more Muslim brothers ended up in prison in 1954. They suffered from torture and some of them were executed. Despite previously receiving the death penalty, Hudaybi eventually got a life sentence. It was during that period of imprisonment that he, like Sayyid Qutb, published a book, *Du’at la Qudat* (Hereafter: *Preacher not Judges*).⁸

Today, Hasan al-Hudaybi’s moderate ideas continue to have a major influence on Muslim Brotherhood policies and attitudes. Therefore, according to Barbara Zollner, it is extraordinary that so little research has been done on Hasan al-Hudaybi. According to Zollner, there are two reasons for this. First, the focus of research on the Muslim Brotherhood is on radicalism and terrorism. This is probably motivated by a fear of Islam and the many media reports of terrorist acts. This marginalizes moderate Islam and this scholarly focus contributes to further negative public opinion of Islam in ‘the West’. Moreover, surprisingly, Hasan al-Hudaybi is also little mentioned by writers from the Muslim Brotherhood itself. Probably because many members differ on Hudaybi’s relevance within the Muslim Brotherhood. Some see him as an ideal leader who died for his activist convictions. Others see his leadership as a period of defeat and destruction.⁹

Many researchers present Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Hudaybi as each other’s opponents. Joas Wagemakers, states that Hasan al-Hudaybi was the main figure within the Muslim Brotherhood who opposed the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. His book *Preachers, Not Judges* embodies this criticism. Qutb is described by Wagemakers as a radical who advocated *takfir*¹⁰, *jihad*,

³ Arabic phrase meaning: Praise be to God.

⁴ Personal struggle in devotion to Islam/struggle in the way of God.

⁵ In this case *shahādah* refers to the supreme manner of affirming the Islamic faith, that of the martyr in the cause of Islam. More information: D. Gimaret, ‘Shahāda’ in: P.J. Bearman, e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) http://dx.doi.org/ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6755 (Consulted online on 12 November 2022).

⁶ S. Qutb (Author) & A.B. al-Mehri (Editor), *Milestones* (Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers Birmingham 2006) p. 13 & 17.

⁷ K. al-Anani, *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity and Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁸ J. Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap: Ideologie, geschiedenis, nakomelingen* (Amsterdam University Press 2021) p. 72-73 & B. H. E., Zollner, ‘Opening to reform: Hasan al-Hudaybi’s Legacy’, in: Meijer, R., & Bakker, E., *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (C. Hurst & Co London, 2012) p. 273-293, p. 274-275.

⁹ B. H. E., Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and ideology* (Routledge 2009) p. 1-3.

¹⁰ This is the verbal noun from the verb *kaffara* “to declare someone a *kāfir* or unbeliever”. It is the act of declaring someone an unbeliever (*kāfir*), accusing them of disbelief (*kufir*), often leading to social or religious exclusion. For more information about this concept: Ed. & J.O. Hunwick, ‘takfir’ in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1154 (Consulted online on 5 February 2025).

*hakimiyya*¹¹ and revolution in contrast to which Hudaybi is the moderate, peaceful and law-abiding opponent. Hudaybi, like Qutb, sought an Islamic state, but believed in a gradual path in which preaching of Islam is central and democracy must be embraced and used to achieve the goal.¹² This latter point is supported by David Johnston. Based on an analysis of *Preachers, Not Judges*, Johnston concludes that Hudaybi was quite content with the Egyptian political system and he uses terms that refer to a constitutional democracy.¹³

According to Sayed Khatab, the book *Preachers, Not Judges* was written to deflect the attention of Islamists from Qutb's ideas. Thus, according to Khatab, the book was written in response to Qutb and is a proof of the ideological difference between Qutb and Hudaybi.¹⁴ Zollner also believes that *Preachers, Not Judges* is a moderate concept and is considered the first substantial refutation of Qutb's ideas.¹⁵ According to Khatab, however, Qutb and Hudaybi were not always opponents of each other, but there was also a period of cooperation between the two Muslim brothers. Qutb supported Hudaybi against his opponents, and Hudaybi appointed him senior on the *Maktab al-Irshad* (Council of Guidance), which was headed by Hudaybi himself. Qutb became head of the dissemination department, editor of the newly established newspaper and chief spokesman for the Brotherhood's organization.¹⁶

However, this collaboration ended when Qutb published his book *Milestones* with his radical thoughts. Many researchers believe that Hudaybi's *Preachers, Not Judges* is a reaction to Qutb's *Milestones*. According to Zollner, this is more nuanced. Hudaybi still regarded *Milestones* as part of the Muslim Brotherhood legacy, but did advise that Qutb's insights should be explained and read in the context of his imprisonment.¹⁷

1.1 Objective & Research question

In the literature, the ideological contradictions between Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hudaybi are usually emphasized. Qutb is seen as a radical thinker who laid the foundation for later extremist movements with his ideas on *jihad*, *hakimiyya* and the Islamic state. Hudaybi is presented as moderate with a more gradual approach, where the peaceful spread of Islam was central. The literature primarily focuses on the ideological differences between their works, with Hudaybi's book often seen as a response to Qutb's radical ideas.

However, there is little attention paid to possible ideological similarities between the two thinkers, despite the fact that both were members of the same organization, the Muslim Brotherhood. This research aims to explore possible similarities between the ideological positions of Qutb and Hudaybi by carefully comparing their works. It thus hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the ideological currents within the Muslim Brotherhood and provide a broader perspective on the internal dynamics of the movement and the development of political Islam. Accordingly, the central research question is:

"To what extent do the ideological visions in Hasan al-Hudaybi's *Du'at la Qudat* and Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* align?"

¹¹ *Hakimiyya* refers to the concept of God's ultimate sovereignty over legislation, asserting that all governance and law should be based on divine authority and align with Islamic principles, rather than human-made or secular laws.

¹² Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap*, p. 55-56, 61-62.

¹³ D.L. Johnston, 'Hassan al-Hudaybi and the Muslim Brotherhood: Can Islamic Fundamentalism Eschew the Islamic State?', *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3:1 (2007) p. 39-56.

¹⁴ S. Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt', *The Muslim World* 91:3-4 (2001) p. 451-480.

¹⁵ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt', p. 463.

¹⁷ Zollner, 'Opening to reform: Hasan al-Hudaybi's Legacy', p. 289.

1.2 Relevance

This research is relevant for a better understanding of ideological currents within Islamism and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular. It provides insight into the relationships between radical and moderate factions within the movement. While Qutb is often portrayed as a radical and the founder of an ideology that later had a significant influence on jihadist movements, Hedaybi is presented as a moderate and peaceful leader who advocated for gradual reform. By examining the extent to which their ideological views align, this study nuances the prevailing perception of a sharp divide between radical and moderate Islamism. This contributes to a better understanding of the internal dynamics within the Muslim Brotherhood and demonstrates that the boundaries between radical and moderate Islamism are not as rigid as often assumed.

Additionally, this research contributes to the broader discussion on Islamist movements and the diversity of political and social perspectives within them. Islamist groups are frequently associated with extremism, whereas there are significant ideological differences within these movements that are not necessarily radical. By analyzing the similarities between Qutb and Hedaybi, this study provides insight into the ideological spectrum within Islamism and sheds light on the broader impact of these ideas on political and social developments in the region.

1.3 Methodology

The possible ideological similarities between Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hedaybi are examined through a comparative analysis of their works. The aim is to assess the extent to which the ideological visions of Qutb and Hedaybi align, despite the commonly emphasized focus on their differences in the literature. The primary sources for this study are the books *Milestones* by Qutb and *Preachers, Not Judges* by Hedaybi. Due to the difficulty in obtaining *Preachers, Not Judges* in Arabic, and the absence of an English translation, the book was eventually found on the official website of the Muslim Brotherhood, where it was translated from Arabic to English for analysis. This translation made it possible to examine the content of Hedaybi's work. Since this source is difficult to access, this study has heavily relied on the detailed analysis by Zollner, who thoroughly studied the book and provided important insights into Hedaybi's ideology.

The method employed is a textual and contextual analysis of the primary works. First, the ideological positions of Qutb and Hedaybi are analyzed separately, with a focus on the central themes in their works. Then, a systematic comparison is made of the ideological positions of both authors. This involves examining the similarities and differences in their approaches, taking into account both explicit and implicit statements made by Qutb and Hedaybi in their works. The focus is on identifying ideological overlaps that may point to shared beliefs.

In addition to the textual analysis, attention is also given to the historical and biographical context of the authors. The political and social situation in Egypt in the 20th century, as well as the influences of the Muslim Brotherhood, are examined to understand how this context shaped their ideas. It is important to understand the authors within their specific historical context, as their views are often the result of the dynamics within the Muslim Brotherhood and the broader societal developments in Egypt.

This study is limited to the works of Qutb and Hedaybi and does not take into account other publications by the authors or the broader ideological landscape within the Muslim Brotherhood. The focus is on the ideological content of their works and how this reflects the relationship between radical and moderate views within Islamism. Furthermore, the comparison is focused on the theoretical content of the works, without delving into the practical application or political implications of their ideas in later periods.

The expected contribution of this study is to provide a more nuanced picture of the ideological dynamics within the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamism as a whole. By examining the similarities between Qutb and Hedaybi, this research emphasizes the complexity of the boundaries between radical and moderate Islamist thinkers.

2. Historical context

The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna in the Egyptian town of Isma'iliyya, emerged as a response to growing concerns about Islam's role in society and the broader state of the Arab world. At the time, Hasan al-Banna was working in Isma'iliyya as a teacher when six men, inspired by his teachings, came to him and expressed their concerns about the Islam and the Arab world. The organization soon evolved from a local circle of people in Isma'illiya to an Islamist mass organization in Egypt and eventually internationally. In the beginning, the Muslim Brotherhood organized simple educational activities to educate a new conscious generation of Muslims consisting mostly of workers and middle-class people. By 1938, the organization already consisted of 300 local chapters throughout Egypt with a total of probably tens of thousands of members.¹⁸ To understand why this Islamist organization could grow so rapidly it is noteworthy to take a look at the historical and political context of Egypt at the time. This is also noteworthy, because with this information it is easier to understand how the ideological perspectives of Hedaybi and Qutb were shaped.

2.1 Historical background: The French and British in Egypt

The emergence and immense growth of the Muslim Brotherhood is closely related to the western modernization of Egypt that started with the reign of the French, but also the British rule of Egypt. Egypt had been part of the Ottoman Empire since 1517 and was under the rule of the Mamluks. This was a dynasty of former slaves who paid tribute to the Ottoman government, giving them a free hand to oppress and extort the population.¹⁹ On July 1, 1798, Napoleon landed in Alexandria with his soldiers. Just three weeks later, on July 21, 1798, the army was already in the city of Embaba on the left bank of the Nile opposite Cairo. Here the Battle of the Pyramids took place in which about a thousand Mamluks lost their lives against only twenty-nine Frenchmen. The Mamluks had no chance against Napoleon's modern Western army. After the victory over the Mamluks, the French set up an administration in Cairo and a modernization program was begun. Part of this program was the establishment of the Egyptian Institute (*l'Institut d'Égypte*) in Cairo, to which Napoleon brought all kinds of scholars. Napoleon himself took part in disputes with these scholars, and a connection between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea at Suez was already being considered.²⁰

In the first half of the 19th century Egypt was reigned by Muhammad Ali (r. 1805-1948), first as Ottoman governor and later as hereditary ruler.²¹ Born in Macedonia in 1770, Muhammad Ali was a sub-commander in the army. In 1801, he was sent across the Mediterranean with mercenaries to help the British drive out the French. During the power vacuum created after the departure of the Armée d'Orient, Muhammad Ali managed to drive out the British during a

¹⁸ Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap*, p. 73-74 & Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 10.

¹⁹ C. de Bellaigue, *The Islamic enlightenment: The modern struggle between faith and reason* (The Bodley Head London 2017) p. 32.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 33-35.

²¹ A. Gorman, 'Introduction: Occupation, Independence, Revolution', in: R. Springborg et. al., *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt* (Routledge London 2021) p. 7.

second invasion in 1805 and gained such a position of power that the Ottoman sultan appointed him as governor of Egypt.²² Mohammed Ali laid the foundation of modern Egyptian statehood with modernization programs which drew heavily on French thought and institutions and by the second half of the 19th century Egypt was an autonomous province on its own path of development, although still formally part of the Ottoman Empire.²³ The modernization programs were put on by Khedive Ismail (r. 1863-1879). The French-designed Suez Canal was built between 1859 and 1869 by tens of thousands of forcibly recruited Egyptian laborers. Many workers died during the construction of the canal, but Ismail saw the canal as a monumental symbol of his ambition to make Egypt a modern country as quickly as possible. No expense was spared. However, the construction of the Suez Canal was only possible because of Western financing and, according to the agreement, Egypt would not take control of the canal until ninety-nine years after its commissioning, provided it could repay the investors. Ismail did not stop at the Suez Canal; shortly before its opening, he built a new Cairo. That the Egyptian cotton market had collapsed in 1865 did not matter, Ismail simply borrowed extra money from the Oppenheims (a German banking family) and the Société Générale to continue his modernization program. This could not go on forever.²⁴

In 1875, Ismail sold the last shares in the Suez Canal Company to the British because he was on the verge of bankruptcy.²⁵ The British government bought Ismail's 44 percent of the stakes for just 4 million pounds, and became the largest shareholder of the Suez Canal.²⁶ Unfortunately, the sale of these stakes had little effect, for a year later Ismail was still unable to pay off his debts. He had borrowed heavily from Europe for his reform programs and mortgaged his funds to European financiers. When he was unable to repay his debts, a special financial body, the *Caisse de la Dette*, was created under pressure from Europe. The Caisse represented the financial interests of Great Britain, France, Austria and Italy and was responsible for paying off the Egyptian debt. As representatives of the creditor nations, the British and French established a dominant power.²⁷

At the same time, in the 1870's there arose a movement that wanted to end foreign influence in Egypt and wanted the autocracy of the Khedive family, the Urabi movement. Clashes with this movement eventually led to the invasion of Egypt by British troops in 1882 and the first phase of British rule called the veiled protectorate. A small military force was installed in Egypt and in 1883 a new constitution was promulgated that would form the basis of government for the next forty years. Egypt's finances had to be put in order and at the same time the government was engaged in an extensive program of public works and infrastructure. In 1906, Egypt's quest for independence was sparked by the Dinshaway affair. A number of peasants were hanged for defending their village against pigeon-holed British officers. The brutal reaction of the British fanned a deep nationalist feeling. The British responded to the movement by banning newspapers and parties and imprisoning or deporting nationalists. In 1914 World War I broke out and Egypt was formally declared a British protectorate by replacing the absent Abbas Hilmi II, the last Khedive of Egypt, with his more accommodating uncle Husayn Kamil as the first modern Sultan.²⁸

After the end of World War I, the call for national independence was quickly resumed by the Egyptians. In November 1918, a delegation (Wafd) was formed, which presented their national demands to the British government with a petition. The British did not respond, and in March

²² Bellaigue, *The Islamic enlightenment* (2017) p. 48.

²³ R. L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914* (Princeton University Press 1966) p. 12.

²⁴ Bellaigue, *The Islamic enlightenment* (2017) p. 74-76.

²⁵ Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914*, p. 10-11.

²⁶ Bellaigue, *The Islamic enlightenment* (2017) p. 75.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 10-11.

²⁸ Gorman, 'Introduction: Occupation, Independence, Revolution', in: R. Springborg et. al., *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt* (Routledge London 2021) p. 8.

1919, the members of the Wafd were arrested and deported. This led to the 1919 revolution, a period of nationwide protest against the British and the call for independence. This was suppressed by the British, and ultimately, in February 1922, it led to the end of the protectorate and the self-government of Egypt. In March 1922, Sultan Ahmed Fu'ad, the successor of Husayn Kamil, was appointed as King Fu'ad, and a commission was appointed to consider a new constitution. The 1923 constitution laid the foundation for an independent Egypt, but significant reserve powers for the British remained. The British continued to effectively control Egyptian defense and foreign policy. The first government elected under Egypt's new constitution quickly demonstrated the limitations of its authority. Prime Minister Sa'd Zaghlul, at the head of a Wafdist government installed in January 1924, resorted to British methods to crackdown on political opposition, particularly the emerging communist and labor movements. However, British influence was still clearly visible in constraining Egyptian authority. This was evident from the harsh British reaction to the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, the commander of the Egyptian army. An apology from the Egyptian government, payment of indemnity, and withdrawal of all Egyptian officers from Sudan were demanded, while extra British troops landed in Alexandria. Instead of succumbing to such humiliation, Zaghlul resigned on November 24 and was replaced by the pro-Palace government under the leadership of Ahmad Ziwar.

During the interwar period, the political situation remained characterized by strong British influence and the significant role of the palace. Parliamentary politics largely remained confined to the political interests of the landed elites and their allies and the political struggle between the Wafd and smaller parties in consultation with the palace. This political game was further exacerbated by the meddling of King Fu'ad, as the 1923 constitution had granted him far-reaching powers. In 1930, he attempted to monopolize his political power, but this was reversed. Egyptian governments were keen on utilizing British government strategies such as the press law. In the 1920s and 1930s, opposition party newspapers were regularly suspended or banned, and a penalty provision and a special prison regime were established for journalists criticizing the government or the king. Despite political stagnation, new social and political forces began to emerge, such as the Egyptian Socialist Party, later the Egyptian Communist Party, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The labor movement and women activists also played a significant role in the pursuit of rights and social change.

The deadlock in relations between Egypt and Great Britain was broken in 1936 when King Fu'ad passed away, and his son Faruq ascended the throne in April, and a Wafd government was elected in May. At the same time, the British were concerned about developments in Germany and potential hostilities. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was created in 1936, a defense alliance, and this formed the legal basis for the presence of British troops in Egypt for the next twenty years and the use of the country as a base for allied operations during the war, even though Egypt remained formally neutral. On the other hand, the British supported Egypt in abolishing the capitulations, a system of legal and economic privileges for foreigners residing in Egypt. These were abolished in 1937 during the Montreux Conference.²⁹

After the Second World War in 1945, the Egyptians demanded even more strongly that the British leave Egypt, and large protests were organized. Many of these protests ended in violence, and many protesters lost their lives. In addition to the presence of British troops in Egypt, the country suffered from an increasing decline in living standards and growing inequality and dissatisfaction. In 1950, a final Wafd government was formed. Under Prime Minister al-Nahhas, the 1936 treaty was terminated in October 1951. Demonstrations broke out, and armed conflicts

²⁹ A. Gorman, 'Introduction: Occupation, Independence, Revolution', in: R. Springborg et. al., *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt* (Routledge London 2021) p. 8-11.

arose between British troops and the Muslim Brotherhood in the canal zone. On January 25, 1952, 50 Egyptian police officers were killed after a confrontation between British troops and Egyptian police in Ismailia. The subsequent riots and arson in downtown Cairo led to the resignation of the Wafd government and a period of political stagnation.

In the night of July 22, 1952, Nasser and his small group of Free Officers seized power during a bloodless coup called the July Revolution. Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir was an officer in the first batch of the Egyptian army since it was allowed to expand its size according to the 1936 treaty. The new regime was led by Mohammed Naguib, but the real direction lay with Nasser and his colleagues. They were all men in their early thirties whose authority was formalized in the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The king was sent into exile, and a republic was established with Naguib as president. In 1954, an assassination attempt was made on Nasser by the Muslim Brotherhood, which led to the banning of the Brotherhood. A power struggle also took place within the ruling group itself, and Naguib was sidelined by Nasser after his involvement in the assassination plot. As prime minister, Nasser consolidated his power, and in 1955, he retired from the army to become a politician. In 1956, a new constitution was adopted, changing the office of president into a plebiscite with 99% approval. The withdrawal of British troops was negotiated in an agreement in 1954 and took place in April 1956. A few months later, the Suez Crisis occurred, and the British briefly returned. In July 1956, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal.

After the Suez Crisis, radical Arab nationalism received a boost, with Egypt playing a broader role in regional and international affairs. The events of 1956 strengthened Nasser's position, who built a strong relationship with Arab masses and criticized conservative leaders. The political and economic changes in Egypt after 1945 led to a shift towards a more meticulous, national, and Arab identity, seemingly excluding the position of non-Arab communities in the country. The nationalization measures and state development marginalized private interests and made doing business increasingly difficult. The establishment of Israel and the subsequent Palestinian displacement, along with the Suez Crisis, exposed tensions between traditional diversity and emerging national unity. The departure of non-Arab communities from Egypt had negative consequences, such as the loss of entrepreneurial talent and experience, with potential political implications.

Nasser's presidency not only enjoyed significant popular support but also led to a significant expansion of his repressive power in dealing with opposition. The modern security apparatus of the Egyptian state originated in the 19th century and was further developed during the British protectorate, with tools such as censorship, imprisonment, and exile of activists, and the banning of political parties. These instruments were eagerly adopted by Egyptian governments after 1923, especially in suppressing leftist movements and critical voices in the press. Political imprisonment became a key feature of the Nasserist state, with mass incarceration of Italian male residents as enemy aliens being necessary during World War II. This was increasingly applied on a larger scale to domestic political opponents after the war, especially against the communist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Zionist activists. After the July Revolution, political repression became even more intense, with the deployment of emergency laws to suspend civil rights and the use of emergency powers as a standard instrument to neutralize political opposition and avoid accountability. However, the economic successes of the Nasser regime began to fade in the mid-1960s, and criticism of the Egyptian state as an instrument of oppression increased. Egypt's devastating defeat by Israel in June 1967 exposed the gap between rhetoric and reality, and although Nasser remained in office until his sudden death in September

1970, he left behind a mixed legacy of social and economic achievements alongside a consolidated authoritarian state where political life was closely controlled.³⁰

2.2 The Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood

The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood is rooted in the Hanbali school. This is one of the four schools of law within Islam within which members advocate grounding faith only in the Qur'an and Hadith. The Hanbali school of law is thus strictly traditionalist and opposed to speculative theology.³¹ The Muslim Brotherhood grew out of concerns about Islam and the Islamic world.³² Egypt was dominated by the British, the people were poor and morality among the people was declining. The need to free Egypt from immoral and imperial Western domination by following an Islamic path formed the basic mantra of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood saw a connection between British domination and the secular lifestyle of the Egyptian people.³³ By embracing Islamic teachings again and becoming a close-knit Islamic community, Western corrupt influence could be resisted. In this respect, its ideology is a legacy of the famous Islamic scholar Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, to whom modern pan-Islamic³⁴ thought is attributed.

In the first years of its existence, the Muslim Brotherhood was an apolitical organization. It devoted its energy to membership recruitment, private discussions of religion and moral reform, and building a social service organization. Only from the end of the 1930s did the organization focus increasingly on politics. This finds particular expression in conferences, publications, electoral participation and a fiercer rhetoric against British colonial rule. The focus on politics was triggered by the Palestinian uprising in 1936.³⁵ In this year, the Secret Unit (*al-Jihaz al-Sirri*) was established to send volunteers and arms to Palestine in support of the uprising. The organization ran camps, where volunteers were instructed in guerrilla warfare. The Egyptian government knew of the existence of the Secret Unit and its activities all along, but did not see it as a problem during World War II and as long as volunteers were sent to the Israeli-Palestinian war. After 1945, the Secret Unit became a problem because it was used by the Muslim Brotherhood to push through its political agenda on Egypt's national scene. Above all, the Secret Unit developed itself in the late 1940s into an autonomous body which acted without instructions from the General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁶

During World War II, anti-colonial sentiment grew considerably as Egypt unwittingly became the theater of war and the British actively demanded power over national politics. The Muslim Brotherhood grew during this period because of its rhetoric against the political status quo. In 1942 and 1945, al-Banna put himself up for election. In 1942 he withdrew after an agreement with the wafd and in 1945 he was defeated. Real political influence could be obtained behind the scenes and the Muslim Brotherhood therefore began to build a political network with notables and party representatives. While the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were negotiating with the government, mass protests were also organized calling for social reform and

³⁰ A. Gorman, 'Introduction: Occupation, Independence, Revolution', in: R. Springborg et. al., *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt* (Routledge London 2021) p. 11-15.

³¹ J. Hoover, 'Hanbali Theology' in: S. Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford 2014) p. 626 & H. Laoust, 'Ḥanābila' in: P. J. Bearman, e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam.COM_0263 (Consulted online on 4 may 2024).

³² Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap* (2021) p. 73.

³³ Z. Munson, 'Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood', *The Sociological Quarterly* 42:4 (2001) p. 489.

³⁴ Pan-Islamism is a political and ideological movement that seeks the unity of all Muslim countries, based on shared religious, cultural, and political interests. It calls for cooperation and solidarity among Muslim nations, aiming to strengthen the Islamic world. For more information about this concept: J.M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1990).

³⁵ Munson, 'Islamic Mobilization', p. 488 & Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap*, p. 73-76.

³⁶ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 11-12.

an immediate withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood evolved into a political pressure movement and became feared by official parties, the government and the British.³⁷

In the late 1940s, tensions increased between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Sa'adi government led by Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi. In 1947, Egyptian police discovered a large weapons cache belonging to the group on the outskirts of the capital, and a year later they seized a Muslim Brotherhood jeep full of explosives.³⁸ On Dec. 8, 1948, al-Nuqrashi announced the dissolution of the organization and many members were imprisoned. The dissolution did not calm the situation because three weeks later, on December 28, 1948, the prime minister was assassinated. Al-Banna knew this would be the end of the organization and released a number of official statements distancing himself from the assassination and rejecting this violence. His efforts were unsuccessful; on Feb. 12, 1949, Al-Banna was assassinated. The assassination was probably instigated by the government.³⁹

After al-Banna's death, repression of the Muslim Brotherhood continued, but in 1951 a new government took office and allowed the organization back in under restrictive conditions. This led to a split within the organization; some agreed and some did not. One of the opponents was Salih 'Ashmawi, the defacto leader of the Muslim Brotherhood since al-Banna's death. Because confrontation with the state was undesirable, however, they chose to appoint Hassan al-Hudaybi as the new General Guide (*al-Murshid al'am*). However, mutual tensions between the radical 'Ashmawi and the moderate Hudaybi remained present within the Brotherhood.

When Nasser and the Free Officers seized power in 1952 and an authoritarian regime came to power led by Mohammad Naguib, the Muslim Brotherhood forged close ties with some Free Officers. The Muslim Brotherhood hoped it would give them independence, and the Free Officers needed the support of the Muslim Brotherhood and its large constituency. Since the beginning, however, a power struggle raged between Naguib and Nasser from which Nasser emerged victorious in 1954. Here the Muslim Brotherhood had made an error of judgment in supporting Naguib. Now that Nasser was in power, he no longer needed the Brotherhood either and turned against them. A new period of oppression dawned.

The Muslim Brotherhood stepped up criticism of Nasser's regime and the regime launched a smear campaign against al-Hudaybi. Things got out of hand when members of the Secret Unit decided to launch an attack on President Nasser. The attack failed, but it prompted a complete ban on the Muslim Brotherhood and the arrest of many members. Among them was al-Hudaybi. It was also in this context that the idea of re-establishing the Secret Unit and creating a revolutionary organization arose. The Secret Organization (*Al-Tanzim al-Sirri*) was founded and was strongly associated with the radical ideas of Sayyid Qutb who eventually also became its leader. In the context of this suppression, in the 1950s and 1960s, of the Muslim Brotherhood, an ideological debate raged within the organization between radical thinking and moderate thinking. In fact, this was also an internal power struggle that was finally decided to some extent by the regime when Sayyid Qutb was put on trial in 1966.⁴⁰

³⁷ Munson, 'Islamic Mobilization', 488 & Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 11-12.

³⁸ Munson, 'Islamic Mobilization', p. 489.

³⁹ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 13-14.

⁴⁰ Wagemakers, *De moslimbroederschap*, p. 75-76.

In conclusion, the colonization of Egypt by the French initiated a wave of modernization that was subsequently continued by Muhammad Ali and Khedive Ismail after the French departure. However, these modernization efforts relied heavily on loans from European powers, creating an unequal and dependent relationship between Egypt and these countries. Despite significant modernization, the general population did not see corresponding improvements in their quality of life. This situation deteriorated further when the Egyptian cotton market collapsed in 1865 and Khedive Ismail declared bankruptcy in 1875, ultimately leading to another period of colonization with the British invasion of Egypt in 1882.

Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood out of dissatisfaction with the state of Islam in Egypt and the broader Islamic world. He wondered why Egypt had lost its Islamic character and identified colonialism and Western dominance as the causes. Al-Banna's mission to restore Islam to the center of society brought the Brotherhood into conflict with the Egyptian state, ultimately leading to his assassination in 1949. His death left a deep impression on Sayyid Qutb, who began to reflect on the failure of the Brotherhood and the broader question of why Egypt had not returned to an Islamic order. This search for answers would profoundly influence his ideological vision and lead to a radical reinterpretation of Islamic governance and society. The next chapter will focus on the ideological development of Sayyid Qutb.

3. Sayyid Qutb: Context and Thought

Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential Islamic thinkers of the 20th century, articulated his ideological vision in his most important work, *Milestones*, written during his imprisonment in the 1960s. In this book, Qutb delivers a radical critique of both Western civilization and the state of the Muslim world, advocating for a return to what he considered the pure and original form of Islam. However, to fully understand the development of Qutb's thought, it is necessary to place it within the broader ideological struggle of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Brotherhood, was driven by the central question of what had gone wrong with the Islamic world. He saw colonialism and Western domination as the main causes of Islam's decline. However, after al-Banna's assassination and the subsequent repression of the Brotherhood, Qutb went a step further. He not only questioned what had gone wrong in Islamic history but also why Islamic movements, including the Brotherhood itself, had failed to establish an Islamic society. Initially, the struggle was directed against colonial rule, but in Qutb's time, the main enemy was no longer foreign occupiers but the secular regime governing Egypt. His response to this failure led to the development of a much more radical ideological framework than that of his predecessors.

To understand the foundations of Qutb's worldview and the ideas he presents in *Milestones*, this chapter will examine his biography, his experiences within the Brotherhood, and the key ideological concepts that shaped his vision of an Islamic society. This chapter will explain how Qutb's radical ideology emerged as a response to both colonialism and the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood to achieve its goals.

3.1 Biography

Sayyid Qutb was born in 1906 in the small village of Musha, 200 miles south of the capital Cairo. His family was forced to give up part of their land because of economic difficulties. Encouraged by his mother, Qutb's goal was to later become part of the *effendi* class (the modern and Western-style sector of Egyptian society). Thus, he hoped to repair the damage to his family.⁴¹ In 1921, at the age of fifteen, Qutb left for Cairo to continue his studies at a modern state school, the madrasa. But this did not stop him from studying the Koran. After secondary and high school he attended the Dar al-'Ulum from which he graduated in 1933 when he was 27 years old.⁴² After graduation he began working as a school teacher and then as an inspector of the Ministry of Education. Qutb was well known in literary circles for advocating modern poetry and he joined the wafd party which opposed the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴³ In the mid-1930s, Qutb became increasingly critical of the political regime in Egypt. He was disappointed that the nationalist movement failed to resolve the problems with the British, the gap between rich and poor and to support the Palestinians against the arrival of Zionist settlers.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it was not until the 1940s that Qutb turned to Islam to express his political vision. Despite his modern and Western appearance, Qutb increasingly turned back to his traditional and cultural roots.⁴⁵ In 1946, his biography *A Child from the Village* was published, revealing the roots for his turn to Islamism. Qutb considered the policies of the secular elites in Egypt to be the source of injustice. In his book, he vested hope for justice in the moral community of the village. In 1947, Qutb also founded the journal *New Thought* with the mission of raising awareness about poverty in Egypt. In this journal he advocated for a modernized Islam as the solution for all the problems in Egypt.⁴⁶

Qutb had always been critical of Western imperialism, but his antipathy was mainly directed toward the European powers. When the United States supported Jewish settlement in Palestine in 1946, Qutb felt the same antipathy toward the United States. Qutb was under the impression that the United States, as a champion of international justice, would support the self-determination of the Palestinians. It is because of this event that he began to turn increasingly away from secularism and to invoke an Islamist basis for achieving social justice. This is reflected in his first Islamist book *Social Justice in Islam* published in 1949.⁴⁷

Between November 1948 and August 1950, Sayyid Qutb stayed in the United States. He was sent here by the Ministry of Education to study modern education and training systems.⁴⁸ The Egyptian government initiated his trip to the United States due to concerns about his increasingly problematic writings. Qutb was a prominent secular intellectual, but in the 1940s, he began transitioning to an Islamic activist, vocally criticizing Western influence and the political corruption and tyranny of King Farouk I's regime. Prime Minister Mahmoud Nuqrashi Pasha arranged the trip, hoping it would moderate Qutb's hostility toward the West. Instead, his two years in America further radicalized him and hardened his views against the West, particularly the United States.⁴⁹ Qutb acknowledged American accomplishments in production and social

⁴¹ J. L. Nolan, *What they saw in America: Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, G.K. Chesterton and Sayyid Qutb* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) p. 165.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 167.

⁴³ E. F. Thompson, *Justice Interrupted: The struggle for constitutional government in the Middle East* (Harvard University Press 2013) p. 279.

⁴⁴ J. Calvert, 'Wayward son: The Muslim Brothers' Reception of Sayyid Qutb' in: Meijer, R., & Bakker, E., *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (C. Hurst & Co London, 2012) p. 250.

⁴⁵ Nolan, *What they saw in America*, p. 168-169.

⁴⁶ Thompson, *Justice Interrupted*, p. 279-280.

⁴⁷ Nolan, *What they saw in America*, p. 168-169.

⁴⁸ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 51.

⁴⁹ Nolan, *What they saw in America*, p. 163-164.

organization but emphasized materialism, racism, and sexual permissiveness as prevailing characteristics of American society.⁵⁰

When he returned in Egypt in 1950 his book *Social Justice* was an immediate hit and Qutb immersed himself in revolutionary circles. He contributed to a Muslim Brotherhood magazine and joined protests against the presence of the British in the Suez Canal Zone. By July 1952, King Farouk had been deposed by Nasser's Free Officers, and Qutb was recognized as a revolutionary intellectual, hosting meetings for the officers and advocating for Egypt's return to Islam. Initially, Qutb supported the revolution, serving as cultural advisor and leader of the new official party, the Liberation Rally. However, he became disillusioned when the officers refused to establish an Islamic government. In February 1953, he resigned to join the Muslim Brotherhood as director of propaganda, strongly opposing the Free Officers. Tensions peaked in October 1954 when a Muslim Brother attempted to assassinate Nasser, resulting in Qutb's arrest and a fifteen-year prison sentence for anti-government agitation.

In prison, Qutb's views became more radical. He wrote a personal commentary on the Qur'an, renounced his previous works, and revised his book *Social Justice in Islam* to remove liberal elements. He rejected popular sovereignty and the republic, declaring Islam not just superior but the only true civilization.⁵¹ In 1964, he published his book *Milestones* from his prison cell. This book called for revolt against the tyranny of Nasser's Arab socialism and the establishment of an Islamic State.⁵² In the end of the year 1964, Qutb was released from prison for a short time, but in August 1965 he got rearrested and sentenced to death. He was hanged on the 29th of August 1966. His book *Milestones*, with its widespread appeal and long-term revolutionary ideas, formed the basis for this sentence.⁵³

3.2 Milestones

In the preface to his book *Milestones*, Qutb starts with the phrase "*mankind is on the brink of a destruction.*"⁵⁴ According to Qutb, this is because mankind is "*devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress.*"⁵⁵ According to Qutb, democracy in the West and Marxism in the Eastern Bloc fail because these systems go against human nature. Therefore, it is essential for humanity to have a new leadership that is in harmony with human nature. According to Qutb, there is only one system that meets this requirement; Islam. Indeed, all man-made systems and collective theories have failed and are unsustainable.

Qutb believes that the Muslim community has long been extinct, namely from the time when the laws of Allah were suspended. Indeed, according to Qutb, a Muslim community refers to a group of people whose entire way of life is based on the Islamic source. If Islam is to be restored as a guiding system, the first important step, according to Qutb, is to restore the Muslim community to this original form. Qutb acknowledges that at the time of writing the Western world is further along in terms of material progress, but to achieve leadership over humanity, the benefits of modern science and technology and human needs must be fulfilled at the same level as technology has done in terms of material comfort.

⁵⁰ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 8.

⁵¹ Thompson, *Justice Interrupted*, p. 281-282.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁵³ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 16.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

According to Qutb, the world is in *jahiliyyah*⁵⁶ based on rebellion against Allah's sovereignty on earth. The right to promulgate laws and choose a way of life lies with people and Allah's precepts are suspended in the process. This causes people to rule over other people. That people are humiliated under the communist system and exploitation takes place under the capitalist system. According to Qutb, people are free from service to other people under Islam and can devote themselves to Allah alone.

To implement the system of Islam, it must first take a concrete form. Therefore, according to Qutb, an Islamic revivalist movement must be initiated in a Muslim country. In order to start the revival of Islam, it is important to have a determined vanguard who will keep walking on the straight and narrow path in the world of *jahiliyyah*. The milestones along the way to the attainment of leadership are determined by the first source: the Qur'an.⁵⁷

3.2.1 *Jahiliyyah*

In his book, Qutb states that the world is in *jahiliyyah*. This assertion is the reason Qutb wrote his Milestones manifesto: To provide a solution to get out of the *jahili* situation.

*"If we look at the sources and foundations of modern ways of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in Jahiliyyah."*⁵⁸

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

By the term *jahiliyyah*, Qutb means the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. In the first chapter of his book, Qutb explains that when a person embraced Islam, during the period of Muhammad, he immediately disposed himself of his pre-Islamic ignorant past and of the *jahiliyyah* in which he found himself. By accepting Islam, a person could start a new life and distance himself from his previous life. According to Qutb, the *jahiliyyah* in the period in which he lives is the same, but perhaps even deeper because the entire environment is permeated by it. By this he is referring to art, beliefs and ideas, regulations and laws. Even that which is called Islamic is often a construction of *jahiliyyah* he writes. According to Qutb, this is the reason why true Islamic values no longer penetrate people's hearts and there is no longer a Muslim community as there was in the time of Muhammad. To break this, society must first completely rid itself of all jahili influences. According to Qutb, the Egyptian government and all the other governments in the Islamic world were comparable to pre-Islamic Arabia because of its ignorance of divine precepts. Qutb also sees the secular system prevalent in Egypt at the time as *jahiliyyah* and believes that the ruling system oppresses people and keeps them from living as the creator commanded. *Jahiliyyah* served as an epistemological device for rejecting all allegiances other than Islam. The term *jahiliyyah* forms an important part of Qutb's Milestones and his vision of Islam that he describes in the book. The term is found 115 times in the book.

*"Our foremost objective is to change the practices of this society. Our aim is to change the Jahili system at its very roots, this system which is fundamentally at variance with Islam and which, with the help of force and oppression, is keeping us from living the sort of life which is demanded by our Creator"*⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The jahiliyyah is used to refer to the state of affairs in the Arabic lands before the mission of the Prophet. It also refers to paganism. Qutb describes jahiliyyah as the period of pre-islamic ignorance. For more information about this concept: P.J. Bearman, 'Djahiliyya' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1933 (Consulted online on 2 october 2024).

⁵⁷ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 27-28.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 26.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 35.

*“Jahiliyyahh, to whatever period it belongs, is Jahiliyyahh; that is, deviation from the worship of One God and the way of life prescribed by Allah Almighty. It derives its system, laws, regulations, habits, standards and values from a source other than Allah Almighty. On the other hand, Islam is submission to Allah, and its function is to invite people away from Jahiliyyahh toward Islam.”*⁶⁰

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

3.2.2 *Shirk and Kufr*

Qutb also uses two other concepts: *shirk* and *kufr*. These concepts are closely related to the concept of *jahiliyyah*, because *shirk* and *kufr* are acts of *jahiliyyah*. In the following quote from *Milestones* you can see how Qutb defines these concepts.

*“Before this, Allah Almighty accused the Jews and Christians of committing Shirk, (association of other gods with Allah), of Kufr (unbelief) and of ... people among themselves.”*⁶¹

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

Shirk thus refers to the act of associating something with Allah. It is then acknowledged that there are other deities besides Allah. *Shirk* can be literally translated as associating something with God, but in a more explicit sense it is translated as polytheism.⁶² *Kufr* originally means “erasing” or “covering,” then “concealing benefits received”. It means “ungrateful”. In the Koran, the term is used to demonstrate ingratitude toward God. Later, the meaning of the term *Kufr* developed into “unbeliever”.⁶³

3.2.3 *Antisemitism*

After reading Qutb's book, one outstanding theme remains whose naming is relevant. In one passage in the book, Qutb makes an anti-Semitic statement.

*“The statement that “Culture is the human heritage” and that it has no country, nationality or religion is correct only in relation to science and technology – as long as we do not jump the boundary of these sciences and delve into metaphysical interpretations, and start explaining the purpose of man and his historical role in philosophical terms, even explaining away art and literature and human intuition philosophically. Beyond this limited meaning, this statement about culture is one of the tricks played by world Jewry, whose purpose is to eliminate all limitations, especially the limitations imposed by faith and religion, so that the Jews may penetrate into body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs. At the top of the list of these activities is usury, the aim of which is that all the wealth of mankind ends up in the hands of Jewish financial institutions which run on interest.”*⁶⁴

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

This passage in *Milestones* makes it clear that Qutb considers “*world jewry*” to be the greatest enemy. First, this passage points to Qutb's belief in a Jewish conspiracy for world domination. The origin of this motif can be found in the Qur'an, as it contains texts in which conspiracies can be found in the time of Muhammad and the Jews of Medina.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 146.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁶² D. Gimaret, ‘shirk’ in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) http://dx.doi.org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6965 (Consulted online on 15 september 2024).

⁶³ W. Björkman, ‘Kāfir’ in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) http://dx.doi.org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3775 (Consulted online on 15 september 2024).

⁶⁴ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 123.

⁶⁵ R. Fastenbauer, ‘Islamic Antisemitism: Jews in the Qur'an, Reflections of European Antisemitism, Political Anti-Zionism: Common Codes and Differences’, in: Lange, A., Mayerhofer, K., Porat, D., & Schiffman, L. H. (Eds.). (2020). *Confronting*

Moreover, the origin of Qutb's belief in a conspiracy can also be traced back to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This is a scripture with minutes about an alleged conspiracy of the Jews.⁶⁶ Leaders of the international Jewish community supposedly met in a cemetery in Prague to cunningly plan to achieve world domination. The forged text was produced in the late 19th century on orders from the Russian tsarist secret service and then spread through Europe during the interwar period. From about 1925, after the first Arabic translation, the idea of the Protocols was also taken up in Islamic societies. Although it was exposed as a forgery in the early 20th century, the scripture has since been of great influence as a source for anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. To this day, the Protocols continue to be used as justification for hatred and violence, especially in conspiracy theories that hold Jews responsible for global disasters and crises.⁶⁷

Qutb's passage also reveals that he accuses the Jews of manipulating financial systems, specifically through usury, claiming that this is their means of controlling global wealth. This accusation is deeply rooted in historical anti-Semitic prejudice, where Jews were often portrayed as greedy and power-hungry figures who dominate the economy.⁶⁸

The Qur'an is full of negative references to the Jews, but this must also be considered in historical context. The critical passages in the Qur'an about Jews, and other religious groups, are in response to the Jews' rejection of Muhammad and his message. The Qur'an does not promote anti-Semitism because it does not call for the destruction of the Jews. However, there are religious leaders today who selectively employ Quranic verses to justify anti-Semitic ideas.⁶⁹

Despite Qutb's works focusing primarily on criticizing Muslims, the few works in which he focuses on Jews have played an influential role in the development of anti-Semitic ideas within political Islamist movements. In the 1950s, Qutb wrote a number of essays on the danger of Jews; these were published in the Muslim Brotherhood's weekly newspaper, *Al-Da'wa*. Qutb connected European anti-Semitic views, such as those in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Nazism, with the anti-Jewish traditions of the Qur'an. This is considered a connection of European anti-Semitic thought with Islamic rhetoric. In the 1970s, these essays were compiled into a booklet called *Our Struggle with the Jews (Ma'rakatuna ma'a al-Yahud)*⁷⁰, which was published in Saudi Arabia in 1970 and then widely distributed in the Arab world.⁷¹

3.2.4 Jihad

There is much debate in the academic literature about Qutb's views on the use of violence to achieve his desired Islamic society. On the one hand, Milestones shows that Qutb believes in a gradual approach to achieving an Islamic society. On the other hand, there are also passages in which Qutb legitimizes the use of violence to achieve this goal.

"Hence in the future, whenever there are attempts at the revival of Islam, this comprehensive method should be adopted. Thus the stage of constructing the faith should be long, and it should be gradual. ... It ought to be a

Antisemitism from the Perspectives of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism (An End to Antisemitism!, 2). Berlin: De Gruyter. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-70557-3>, p. 294-295.

⁶⁶ M. Cools & D. Siegel, 'De Protocollen van de Wijzen van Zion: Het judéo-maçonniek complot als een eeuwige samenzwering', *Tijdschrift over Cultuur en Criminaliteit* 12:2 (2022) p. 40-52.

⁶⁷ Fastenbauer, 'Islamic Antisemitism', p. 294-295.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 296.

⁶⁹ R. Firestone, 'Is the Qur'an antisemitic?', in: Lange, A., Mayerhofer, K., Porat, D., & Schiffman, L. H. (Eds.). (2020). *Confronting Antisemitism from the Perspectives of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism (An End to Antisemitism!*, 2). Berlin: De Gruyter. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-70557-3>.

⁷⁰ Some scholars consider Qutb's *Milestones* highly influential in Islamist antisemitism, arguing that Qutb was influenced by Hitler. They note the title's similarity to *Mein Kampf* and draw parallels between Qutb's work and Hitler's ideas, suggesting both shaped radical movements.

⁷¹ Fastenbauer, 'Islamic Antisemitism', p. 282 & D. J. Schroeter, "'Islamic Anti-Semitism" in Historical Discourse', *American Historical Review* 123:4 (2018) p. 1172-1189.

dynamic movement which challenges Jahiliyyah both in theory and in practice, so that it becomes a living faith which grows while struggling against the surrounding forces.”⁷²

“The callers to Islam should understand that when they invite people toward the revival of religion, they should invite them to accept Islam's fundamental belief... The people ought to know that Islam means to accept the creed "La ilaha illa Allah" in its deepest sense, which is this: that every aspect of life should be under the sovereignty of Allah, and those who rebel against Allah's sovereignty and usurp it for themselves should be opposed; that this belief should be accepted by their hearts and minds and should be applied in their ways of living and in their practices. When the revival of this religion starts among a people, this aspect of it must have first priority. The first Islamic call was based on it; thirteen complete years of the Makkan period of the Qur'an were devoted to this Message. When a group of people enters this religion in the true sense, only then can it be considered a 'Muslim group'.”⁷³

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

The reason Qutb wrote *Milestones* is mainly because he feels that the whole world has fallen into *jahiliyyah*. Qutb is convinced that there exists only one system in which man can live in harmony with nature and truly move forward: Islam. He also believes that the generation of Muslims in his time differs from the real Muslim community in the Mecca period.⁷⁴ In the introduction to *Milestones*, Qutb explains that he thinks a determined vanguard is needed to implement the system of Islam in the world through an Islamic revolution.⁷⁵

This may sound quite radical, but the passages above emphasize that Qutb believes this revolution should be a gradual one in which people convert to Islam in quiet conviction, just as it happened in the first period of Islam. Time is taken for it because it is important that the faith is deeply felt and accepted. Qutb explains that Allah did not reveal all the laws and rules during the Meccan period so that all Muslims had a ready-made system when they reached Medina. The Meccan period was solely used to imprint the Islamic faith on the hearts of its followers.⁷⁶ Qutb believed that Islam “stands entirely on belief in the Oneness of Allah, and all its institutions and laws are derived from this great principle.”⁷⁷ This means that belief in the unity of Allah is the absolute foundation for a truly Islamic society, because it is from this absolute belief in the unity of Allah that the entire system emerges.

Therefore, he emphasizes that the creation of a truly Islamic society begins with the acceptance of the first pillar of Islam. This is the *shahādah*⁷⁸. Qutb believes that the first half of the *shahādah* “*La ilaha illa Allah*”⁷⁹ is the foundation of faith and that this creed must be accepted in its deepest sense. In doing so, he refers to the first thirteen years of the Islamic faith, the period in Mecca, when attention was paid solely to this message.

Despite these passages from *Milestones* making it clear that Qutb believes in a gradual approach to rid the world of *jahiliyyah*, there are also passages showing that he allows the use of violence to achieve this goal:

“This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs, and it uses physical power and Jihad for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the Jahili system which prevents

⁷² Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 50.

⁷³ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 48.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27-28.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47-48.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷⁸ In the religious sense *shahāda* denotes the Islamic profession of faith, the act of declaring “There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God”. Sometimes, one speaks in this case of al-*shahādātān* “the two *shahādas*”. By extension of this sense, *shahāda* can refer to the supreme manner of affirming the Islamic faith, that of the martyr in the cause of Islam. For more information about this concept: D. Gimaret, ‘*Shahāda*’ in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6755 (Consulted online on 2 october 2024).

⁷⁹ Meaning: There is no god but God.

people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, but forces them to obey their erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord. This movement does not confine itself to mere preaching to confront physical power, as it also does not use compulsion for changing the ideas of people.”⁸⁰

“No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam. It should leave every individual free to accept or reject it, and if someone wants to accept it, it should not prevent him or fight against him. If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until either he is killed or until he declares his submission.”⁸¹

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

These passages show that Qutb doesn't believe in imposing faith through violence, but that he is convinced that the political systems of his time hinder the preaching of Islam and the emergence of the Islamic community. According to Qutb, an Islamic community can only be realized if there is an active struggle against the *jahili* systems that hold people back to accept Islam as an all-encompassing system. To support this argument, Qutb developed the concept of defensive *jihad* in its narrow sense and used it in its broadest sense.

In jurisprudential literature, the concept of *jihad* is divided into two forms: the greater and the lesser *jihad*. The greater *jihad* focuses on combating one's own desires and cultivating inner self-discipline, while the lesser *jihad* involves defending the Islamic faith and protecting Islamic territories from external threats. Traditionally, *jihad* was viewed as a defensive concept. However, some modern Islamic movements emphasize a more aggressive interpretation. Scholars argue that this shift is not inherent to *jihad* but is a reaction to internal oppression and foreign imperialism, reflecting current political and social conditions rather than the core concept of *jihad* in Islam.⁸²

In *Milestones*, Qutb writes several times that he disagrees with the use of the concept of *jihad* as a defensive movement in a narrow sense. According to Qutb, *jihad* is “a movement to wipe out tyranny and to introduce true freedom to mankind”⁸³. That so many people today are looking for reasons to prove that *jihad* is only a defensive war in its narrow sense is, according to Qutb, because they have succumbed to pressure from “treacherous Orientalists” who tell them that Islam is a violent movement that imposes its beliefs on people through violence.⁸⁴ Qutb views *jihad* as a defensive movement in a broader sense, extending beyond territorial defense. For him, it also involves creating the conditions for the free preaching of Islamic beliefs, ensuring that Islam can be practiced and spread without obstruction.

“Anyone who understands this particular character of this religion will also understand the place of Jihad bis-Saif (striving through fighting with the sword), which is to clear the way for striving through preaching in the application of the Islamic movement.”⁸⁵

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

Many scholars have explored whether Qutb is responsible for the jihadist violence seen today, and opinions on this matter vary. Supporters of the link between Sayyid Qutb's writings and modern jihadist movements argue that his book *Milestones* laid the foundation for groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS. They point to his advocacy for an Islamic state and rejection of secularism as central to the motivations behind these extremist groups. Critics, however, contend that Qutb's ideas have been misinterpreted or selectively used by extremists, focusing more on violence than

⁸⁰ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 65.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 66.

⁸² M. Mirahmadi, 'Sayyid Qutb, Islamic Jihad and Extremism', *Journal of Islamic Political Studies* 3:5 (2021) 60-82, p. 65.

⁸³ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 71.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 86.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 71.

on his emphasis on self-purification and moral struggle. From a moderate perspective, while Qutb's influence is acknowledged, it is argued that jihadist violence is driven by a combination of political, social, and economic factors, not solely his ideology. Others believe Qutb's call for jihad was primarily defensive, aimed at resisting oppression, and should not be blamed for the aggressive movements seen today.

One thing is certain: Qutb's ideas have had a huge influence on terrorist Islamist organisations like al-Qaeda.⁸⁶ Indeed, Osama bin Laden studied under Mohammed Qutb, Sayyid's brother. Moreover, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's second-in-command, has written extensively about Qutb's influence on the organisation. Al-Zawahiri himself also has a link to Qutb, as his uncle was a student of Qutb.⁸⁷ Both within the Arab world, as well as far beyond, Qutb is of enormous influence on Islamists.⁸⁸

After reading Qutb's *Milestones*, it becomes clear that his ideology is deeply influenced by his historical and personal context. His experiences in the United States, his disappointment with the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood after the death of al-Banna, and the political situation in Egypt during the 1940s and 1950s all played crucial roles in shaping his thoughts.

Qutb introduces the concept of *jahiliyyah*, a state of ignorance he viewed as characteristic of the modern world, where the law of Allah had been replaced by human-made laws. He advocates for an Islamic revolution to overcome this state and establish an Islamic state based on the *shari'a*, rejecting secular systems and Western influences. His vision emphasizes jihad and calls for a vanguard to lead the revolution, first developing an unwavering belief in the oneness of God, similar to the early Meccan period of Islam.

4. Hasan al-Hudaybi: Context and Thought

Hudaybi's work is a response to *Milestones* of Qutb. While Qutb presents a more radical vision in his *Milestones*, Hudaybi's approach is more moderate and ideologically more in line with the ideas of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. This chapter examines Hudaybi's personal experiences and the political situation in Egypt to explain why his views are more moderate than those of Qutb. By analyzing his biography, the reader is introduced to the defining experiences that shaped Hudaybi's worldview. A thorough analysis of *Preachers, Not Judges* follows, providing insight into the religious and ideological content of the work.

4.1 Biography

Hasan al-Hudaybi was born in 1891 in the village of 'Arab al-Sawliba in Egypt's rural Shibin al-Qanater province. Raised in a religious environment, he memorized the Qur'an in his youth before studying at Al-Azhar⁸⁹ University. After completing his religious education, he pursued

⁸⁶ B. Tibi, *Islamism and Islam* (Yale University Press 2012) p. 149 & J.C. Zimmerman, 'Sayyid Qutb's Influence on the 11 September Attacks', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16:2 (2004) 222-252, p. 222.

⁸⁷ Zimmerman, 'Sayyid Qutb's Influence on the 11 September Attacks', p. 240-241.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 238-239.

⁸⁹ Al-Azhar, established in Cairo in 972 CE, is one of the oldest and most prominent centers of Islamic learning in the world. It encompasses both Al-Azhar Mosque and Al-Azhar University, serving as a key institution for Sunni Islamic scholarship and education, known for its moderate and traditional interpretations of Islam. For more information about al-Azhar: I. F. Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London 2009).

law, graduating in 1915. Hudaybi began his legal career working with Ijafia Ramadan, a prominent leader of the National Party, where he quickly gained recognition for his skills. In 1924, he was appointed as a judge, and over the next 27 years, he served in various provinces, earning respect for his dedication to justice, even though he remained detached from political movements. While he was minimally involved in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution, he was known for his aversion to violence and public demonstrations, earning a reputation as a moderate.

In October 1951, Hudaybi resigned from his judicial post to become the General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood following the assassination of its founder, Hasan al-Banna.⁹⁰ His succession was marked by internal rivalry, as many Brotherhood members initially expected Banna's deputy, Salih 'Ashmawi, to take leadership. However, to avoid division and ensure unity, the Brotherhood appointed Hudaybi. His background as a respected judge, his familial ties to the royal court, and his reputation for integrity made him a figure who could stabilize the Brotherhood and navigate external pressures, though some viewed him as a temporary leader.⁹¹

Despite his appointment, Hudaybi faced challenges in bridging the divide between the Brotherhood's political wing and its militant arm, the Secret Unit (*al-Jihaz al-Sirri*).⁹² His efforts to place his allies in leadership roles within the Secret Unit were met with resistance, particularly from its head, Abdel Rahman al-Sanadi. Hudaybi sought to restore the Brotherhood's respectable image and ease tensions with the Egyptian establishment, but the Secret Unit had become increasingly radicalized and autonomous, making it a growing threat to the political wing.⁹³

When Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers seized control of Egypt on the night of July 22, 1952, Hudaybi's leadership was once again tested. Just days before the coup, on July 18, three prominent Brotherhood members were informed of the planned overthrow, leaving them uncertain about the Brotherhood's position with respect to the Free Officers.⁹⁴ Shortly after the coup, Hudaybi met with Nasser, expecting to be treated as an equal partner. He believed that a prior agreement for cooperation had been made, and that all major decisions should be taken in consultation with him. However, during the meeting, it quickly became clear that no such understanding existed, and this revelation shattered Hudaybi's trust in Nasser. The relationship between the two leaders deteriorated rapidly.⁹⁵

The division within the Brotherhood deepened, especially over how to engage with Nasser's Free Officers. About a third of the Brotherhood's members sided with Nasser, including senior figures from the Secret Unit, such as its Chief Commander Abdel Rahman al-Sanadi. They believed that Hudaybi was putting the Brotherhood's future at risk by confronting Nasser.⁹⁶ As tensions between the Secret Unit and the political wing escalated, Hudaybi decided in November 1953 to sack Sanadi, the chief officer. Nasser intervened, and Sanadi staged a coup against Hudaybi, forcing him to resign at gunpoint. Despite this, Hudaybi managed to retain his position, which only deepened the rift within the Brotherhood. Sanadi's successor, Sayed Fayez, was later murdered by Sanadi's supporters, further intensifying the conflict and signaling the growing instability within the organization.⁹⁷

Hudaybi appointed Yusuf Tal'at to replace Fayez and tasked him with reforming the Secret Unit. Tal'at expanded the organization but focused on quantity over quality, weakening control over the increasingly unruly paramilitary wing. As tensions mounted between the Brotherhood

⁹⁰ Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt', p. 455.

⁹¹ R.P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford University Press 1993) p. 84-86.

⁹² F. A. Gerges, *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East* (Princeton University Press 2018) p. 100.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97-98.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106-107

and Nasser's regime, Tal'at convened members to plan an uprising against Nasser. This led to the launch of a propaganda war, with pamphlets authored by Sayyid Qutb, the Brotherhood's propaganda leader, distributed without Hedaybi's approval. Despite warnings from senior members to halt the activities, the campaign continued, and Hedaybi went into hiding.⁹⁸

In January 1954, Nasser dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood, declaring it a political party in violation of the 1953 law banning political organizations. Hedaybi and 450 other members were arrested. However, due to lack of public support, Nasser released Hedaybi and the others in March 1954. Nasser sought to win the Brotherhood's allegiance in his struggle with Naguib, but this was a tactical move to consolidate his power.⁹⁹ During his imprisonment from January to March 1954, the Brotherhood's internal divisions deepened.¹⁰⁰ Hedaybi chose to support Nasser, while the Secret Unit, following the dissolution of the Brotherhood, refused to cooperate.¹⁰¹

The breaking point came on October 26, 1954, when a member of the Secret Unit attempted to assassinate Nasser. The assassination attempt failed, and Nasser used it as an excuse to completely crush the Brotherhood. Naguib was placed under house arrest for his alleged collaboration with the Brotherhood. The organization was labeled a terrorist group, and thousands of members, including Hedaybi, were arrested.¹⁰² Hedaybi was sentenced to death on December 4, 1954, along with six other members. However, his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.¹⁰³

From 1954 to 1957, the Brotherhood remained inactive, though members began to be released from prison. Hedaybi's life sentence was later reduced to house arrest, marking the beginning of the Brotherhood's reorganization.¹⁰⁴ In June 1965, a new wave of arrests targeted the Brotherhood, including the recently freed Sayyid Qutb. By February 1966, Hedaybi, Qutb, and other leaders were sentenced to death, though Hedaybi's sentence was again commuted to life imprisonment. Qutb was executed in August 1966.¹⁰⁵

This period led to a sharp ideological split within the Brotherhood. Qutb's followers, who had become more radical, clashed with Hedaybi's moderate faction, while others remained loyal to al-Banna. Following Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, many Qutbists broke away and formed independent militias, seeing themselves as the "vanguard" described in Qutb's *Milestones*. During this time, Hedaybi, with the help of his son and senior figures, authored *Preachers, Not Judges*, outlining his vision for the Brotherhood.¹⁰⁶

After Nasser's sudden death in 1970, his successor, Anwar Sadat, began releasing Brotherhood members between 1971 and 1975, allowing them more freedom to reorganize, though the ban on the organization remained.¹⁰⁷ Hedaybi emphasized missionary work and political influence through civil society, including student unions and professional organizations. He passed away on November 11, 1973, at the age of 82, leaving behind a Brotherhood that was more powerful and politically influential than ever before in Egypt's political landscape.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 108-109.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110-112.

¹⁰⁰ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 34.

¹⁰¹ Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 110-112.

¹⁰² Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 36-37.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46-47.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

4.2 Preachers, Not Judges

Preachers, Not Judges was first published in 1977, with Hasan al-Hudaybi listed as the author. However, the manuscript was completed earlier, on February 23, 1969. The book marked a significant shift within the Muslim Brotherhood as it presented the first explicit internal critique of Sayyid Qutb's work, particularly his ideology as outlined in *Milestones*.¹⁰⁹ Notably, while Sayyid Qutb is never mentioned by name in the text, a clear rejection of his ideas can be discerned when reading between the lines.

There are various accounts from members of the Muslim Brotherhood regarding the creation of the book. Although the narratives sometimes conflict, it can be reasonably assumed that Hudaybi was not the sole author.¹¹⁰ Different theories circulate about this. Khatab wrote in 2001 that according to Fu'ad ad Allam, Brigadier General of the Egyptian army and officer in Nasser's secret service, the book was not written by Hudaybi, but by a group of Al-Azhar¹¹¹ scholars in collaboration with a group from the Interior Ministry's security apparatus. No one has disputed this statement, so according to Khatab, it must be true. He also has another theory about the book. The book could have been written by critics of Hudaybi. Hudaybi saw Egypt's socio-political system as a *Jahili*¹¹² system that would have to be changed in order to establish an Islamic order.¹¹³ In 2007, Johnston also notes that *Preachers, Not Judges* is a collective work written by Hudaybi in collaboration with his brother and seven other learned Muslim brothers.¹¹⁴ It is noteworthy that according to Johnston, Hudaybi did actively collaborate on the book. Because Khatab argues that Hudaybi "did not write a word of it."¹¹⁵

Zollner also believes that Hudaybi is not the sole author of the text and presents several pieces of evidence for this. According to Zollner, *Preachers, Not Judges* is "the missing link" that helped the Muslim Brotherhood move to a more moderate political strategy without major obstacles. Since the book's authorship is not clear, this was possible. Zollner, like Khatab, also describes the report of Brigadier General Fu'ad ad Allam. Then there is the version of Ahmad Abd al-Majid, second in charge of The Secret Organization (*Al-Tanzim al-Sirri*)¹¹⁶. According to his version, a document appeared after internal discontent that he identifies as the book published later. It is common knowledge among brothers that the book was written by Hudaybi with the help of some close companions. According to Ahmad Ra'if, the book was compiled by Hudaybi and a select group of brothers, including Umar al-Tilmisani, and scholars from Al-Azhar. Umar al-Tilmisani became the third General Guide of the Muslim Brothers after the death of Hasan al-Hudaybi, and he stated that Hudaybi wrote the book with the help of seven members of the brothers' inner circles. They helped gather material and researched the leveled position and

¹⁰⁹ G. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) p. 61 & Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 65.

¹¹⁰ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 66-69.

¹¹¹ Al-Azhar, established in Cairo in 972 CE, is one of the oldest and most prominent centers of Islamic learning in the world. It encompasses both Al-Azhar Mosque and Al-Azhar University, serving as a key institution for Sunni Islamic scholarship and education, known for its moderate and traditional interpretations of Islam.

¹¹² *Jahili* or *jahiliyyah* refers to the period of ignorance and moral decline in pre-Islamic Arabia, characterized by a lack of divine guidance, often used in Islamic thought to describe societies that do not follow Islamic principles. For more information: Ed. 'Djahiliyya' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1933 (Consulted online on 5 february 2025).

¹¹³ Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt', p. 465-466.

¹¹⁴ Johnston, 'Hassan al-Hudaybi and the Muslim Brotherhood', p. 50.

¹¹⁵ Khatab, 'Al-Hudaybi's Influence on the Development of Islamist Movements in Egypt', p. 465.

¹¹⁶ *Al-Tanzim al-Sirri* was a secret, radical wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1965 during Sayyid Qutb's imprisonment. The group aimed at the violent overthrow of the secular regime and the establishment of an Islamic state, inspired by Qutb's ideology in *Milestones*.

supported Hudaybi and his son in writing passages.¹¹⁷ Shavit also concurs with Zollner's statement and believes that Hudaybi did not write *Preachers, Not Judges* on his own.¹¹⁸

The text of *Preachers, Not Judges* is crucial for understanding the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood during the prison period.¹¹⁹ As previously mentioned, the Brotherhood became internally divided over the ideological direction to follow, with a faction radicalizing after adopting a literal interpretation of Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*.¹²⁰ *Preachers, Not Judges* presents a moderate stance in opposition to these radical ideas, aiming to guide younger Brotherhood members back to the right path. At the same time, it provides guidance for those within the Brotherhood who had remained moderate and were awaiting such direction. Although the text was not officially published until 1977, it had already been circulated among Muslim Brotherhood members in various prisons prior to its release. Within the prisons, a wide distribution network existed, which was also used to disseminate Qutb's book.¹²¹

4.2.1 Introduction of the book

Preachers, Not Judges opens with a brief introduction that highlights the purpose of the book.

*“The book contains some discussions on the various opinions which have been expressed at different times. However, there is no evidence for their correctness. We feel that we have to give a clarifying response referring to the mighty book of God and to the Sunna of the prophet ... to give evidence of the truth in a very clear manner.”*¹²²
(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

The introduction of *Preachers, Not Judges* suggests that the book responds to a particular individual or ideology, though it remains unclear exactly who or what is being addressed. The work is divided into ten chapters, each addressing a distinct theme, but the overall structure lacks cohesion, making the connections between chapters ambiguous. Despite this, Hudaybi employs the Qur'an and Sunna as primary sources for his arguments, showcasing a deep reliance on orthodox Islamic texts to present what he views as the "true" interpretation of Islam. The book demonstrates a high level of scholarship, employing principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), including analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) and consensus (*ijma'*), to substantiate its claims. Through this method, Hudaybi firmly roots his arguments in traditional Islamic frameworks, aiming to reinforce the legitimacy and authenticity of his perspective.¹²³

4.2.2 *Shahādah*

The first chapter of *Preachers, Not Judges* begins with a focus on the concept of the *shahādah*.¹²⁴ Within this chapter, an interesting passage addresses the significance of verbal testimony in defining one's status as a Muslim. The passage delves into the relationship between outward expression and inner sincerity, providing insight into the theological framework of the text.

¹¹⁷ Zollner, 'Opening to reform: Hasan al-Hudaybi's Legacy', p. 285-288.

¹¹⁸ U. Shavit., 'The Muslim Brothers' Conception of Armed Insurrection against an Unjust Regime', *Middle Eastern Studies* 51:4 (2015) p. 600-617, p. 607.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 70.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 46-47.

¹²¹ Shavit., 'The Muslim Brothers' Conception of Armed Insurrection against an Unjust Regime', p. 70.

¹²² Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers Not Judges*, p. 6-7. Quoted in: Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 64-65.

¹²³ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 65.

¹²⁴ In the religious sense *shahāda* denotes the Islamic profession of faith, the act of declaring "There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God". Sometimes, one speaks in this case of al-*shahādātān* "the two *shahādas*". By extension of this sense, *shahāda* can refer to the supreme manner of affirming the Islamic faith, that of the martyr in the cause of Islam. For more information about this concept: D. Gimaret, 'Shahāda' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1063/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6755 (Consulted online on 2 october 2024).

*“The ruling of the spokesman of my testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah to consider him a Muslim subject to the rulings of Muslims and we do not have to discuss the sincerity of his testimony as this is related to what he sensed and trusted with his heart, which is something that we cannot doubt and verify, but that is the business of the one who knows the secret and concealed whoever is sure of what he uttered was with God a believing Muslim and the benefit of what he uttered with his tongue.”*¹²⁵
(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

This passage emphasizes the theological principle that verbal testimony of faith (*shahādah*) is sufficient to consider someone a Muslim, as outward declarations cannot be judged by others' perceptions of sincerity. It highlights the distinction between human judgment and divine knowledge, asserting that only God, can determine true belief. The text discourages skepticism or excessive scrutiny of a person's faith, promoting trust in God's ultimate authority. By focusing on the act of uttering the testimony, the passage underscores the importance of both outward and inward dimensions of faith, aligning with Islamic teachings on the balance between actions and intentions.

The text then continues with a critique of Professor Maududi's¹²⁶ book. In *Four Key Concepts of the Qu'ran*,¹²⁷ Maududi highlights how key Qur'anic concepts like God (*Ilah*), Lord (*Rabb*), worship (*Ibadah*), and religion (*Deen*) were fully understood in their original context during the Qur'an's revelation, resulting in immediate comprehension of its message by the Arabs. However, over time, these terms lost their depth due to linguistic decline and misinterpretation by later generations. As a result, many Muslims came to believe they were fulfilling monotheism merely by rejecting idols, without realizing their continued reliance on other entities for authority or guidance contradicted true monotheism. Maududi argues that reclaiming the original, comprehensive meanings of these terms is essential to understanding the Qur'an's call for complete devotion to Allah in all aspects of life. Without this clarity, individuals risk superficial adherence to Islam while unknowingly straying from its core principles.

*“Since people now do not know the truth of the meaning of the words of God, Lord, worship and religion, when they repeat the testimony of "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", they repeat words that they do not realize the truth of its meaning, and they do not pronounce the testimony that the Arab used to utter at the time of the mission, because this was aware of the meaning of what he was witnessing and deciding, and therefore the Prophet - may God's peace and blessings be upon him - accepted that testimony whose content and concept is known to those who performed it, and adopted it as a rule of his Islam, but now We cannot adopt the Islam of those who pronounce the two testimonies as long as they do not understand the truth of their concept, and the reality of the situation is a witness to this, since many of those who pronounce the two testimonies come at the same time the rulings of religion with regard to their political, social, economic and other affairs of their lives, with their insistence on pronouncing the two testimonies and claiming that they are Muslims, and they concluded from this that he is not considered a Muslim who may be treated on this basis and pray behind him except for those who are sure that he understands the truth of the meanings and concept of the two testimonies.”*¹²⁸

¹²⁵ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 1, "Testimony that There is No God but Allah and That Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," subheading "Ruling on the Speaker of the Two Testimonies," *Ikhwanwiki*, last modified August 28, 2012, https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹²⁶ Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979) was an influential Islamic scholar, theologian, and political thinker from India and later Pakistan. He was the founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, an Islamist political movement advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state governed by Sharia.

¹²⁷ *Four Key Concepts of the Qu'ran* examines the Qur'anic concepts of *Ilah* (God), *Rabb* (Lord), *Ibadah* (worship), and *Deen* (religion). The book aims to restore the deeper, holistic understanding of these terms, emphasizing their significance for establishing a truly Islamic way of life.

¹²⁸ This is a quote from Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Four Terms*, in: al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 1, "Testimony that There is No God but Allah and That Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," subheading "Some Opinions of Professor Maududi,"

Hudaybi disagrees with Maududi's opinion. He argues that the Qur'an is rich with verses that clearly define the meanings of God, Lord, worship, and religion. As a result, Muslims can always refer to the Qur'an to understand the meanings of these concepts. Hudaybi regards the Qur'an as an all-encompassing, comprehensive, and timeless source of guidance.

According to Barbara Zollner, one of the central questions in *Preachers, Not Judges* is the significance of the testimony of faith (*shahādah*). She explains that while there is consensus on the *shahādah* as an act of speech that initiates one into Islam, there remains a debate about whether any additional requirements should be attached to this profession. This debate, rooted in the early history of Islam, revolves around the question of whether the mere act of speaking the *shahādah* is sufficient for someone to be identified as a Muslim, or whether it also necessitates action (*'amal*). This issue of active engagement leads to the question of whether Muslims who do not adhere strictly to the rules of Islam can still be considered Muslims, or whether such behavior constitutes apostasy.¹²⁹

4.2.3 Ignorance

The text continues by discussing fundamental beliefs and legal principles that are crucial in Islam. One of the core points emphasizes the absolute sovereignty of God. Only God has the right to judge, legislate, and impose rules. Only God may determine what is permissible (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*). Muslims are obligated to know and follow God's laws, regardless of what worldly rulers impose. Those who intentionally alter or ignore these laws are considered guilty of *shirk* (idolatry). This underlines the obligation for Muslims to constantly assess everything against the *shari'a*.

Hudaybi then elaborates on the theme of ignorance. According to Hudaybi, ignorance is not directly considered sinful, and a distinction must be made between mistakes made out of ignorance and deliberate violations.

*"As for those who did not inform him of all or part of the matter, this is excused by his ignorance, he is not an infidel, an immoral person, or a disobedient person except for what is explicitly stated in the text and Muslims unanimously agreed that he is not called a Muslim and is not treated as Muslims except those who testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and therefore they said that this is known from religion necessarily, as from his ignorance he is not considered in this world a Muslim and is not treated as Muslims."*¹³⁰

(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

The passage discusses when someone is recognized as a Muslim, with ignorance considered a possible mitigating circumstance. A person who is not fully aware of certain religious issues is not automatically regarded as an unbeliever, unless there is explicit evidence. Muslims agree unanimously that someone is only recognized as a Muslim if they profess the declaration of faith. Missing this basic knowledge means that person is not considered a Muslim in this world, but this does not speak to their final fate.

https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹²⁹ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 75-77.

¹³⁰ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 4, "The Judgment is Only for God," subheading "The Rule of the Ignorant with the Commands and Prohibitions, the Duty on Him, and the Duty of Society Towards Him," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

Hudaybi states that it is the responsibility of the Islamic community to spread knowledge of God's laws. If this does not happen, the community shares the responsibility for ignorance. The text rejects the idea that human legislation automatically amounts to idolatry (*shirk*), as long as it aligns with the *shari'a*. However, deliberately ignoring or altering God's laws without an Islamic basis is seen as defiance against God, striking a balance between human legislation and God's sovereignty.

Hudaybi adopts a moderate position by distinguishing between deliberate violations and mistakes made out of ignorance. He emphasizes the responsibility of the Islamic community to spread knowledge and takes an inclusive approach toward those who unknowingly deviate from the *shari'a*. Hudaybi also allows room for *ijtihad*, meaning that human interpretation and legislation are acceptable as long as they do not contradict the *shari'a*. In this way, Hudaybi permits flexibility while maintaining a steadfast commitment to the clear recognition of God's absolute sovereignty. He strives to strike a balance between orthodoxy and pragmatism.

4.2.4 Government

According to Zollner the most crucial issue for an Islamist movement is the establishment of an Islamic state, because this guarantees the application of *shari'a*.¹³¹ There is debate about whether *shari'a* is a fixed and defined body of law or a flexible, evolving framework that changes over time. This discussion, in turn, gives rise to many other debates regarding the establishment of an Islamic state. Should an Islamic state be established first in order to deliberate on the practical matters of *shari'a*? Or should Islamic law first be thoroughly examined and defined before the establishment of an Islamic state? Is *shari'a* compatible with democracy, or must the Islamic state be governed by a single authority? These kinds of debates reflect the variety of opinions among Islamists and also play a role in the question of approaches regarding the acceptance or rejection of the current state order.¹³²

*"In our view, these definitions of Islamic government are covered by what we have said that the Islamic government "or the true Imam" is the government that embraces Islam as a religion and is based on the implementation of the provisions of Shari'a."*¹³³

(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

From this quotation, it becomes clear that Hudaybi explicitly envisions Islamic governance in the form of an Islamic state. He argues that such a government is an institution entirely based on the *shari'a*. This Islamic law, as revealed and explained by the Prophet Muhammad, is unchangeable and complete. According to Zollner, a collection of public statements from before 1954 shows that Hudaybi clearly advocates for an Islamic state and rejects a secular legal system and government.¹³⁴ This is also evident in the text, in which the re-establishment of the caliphate, with the *imam*¹³⁵ as leader and the *shari'a* as law, is central to Hudaybi.

¹³¹ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 106.

¹³² Ibid, p. 107.

¹³³ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 8, "Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience," subheading "Islamic Government," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹³⁴ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 112.

¹³⁵ The term *imam* refers to the concept of "supreme leadership" of the Muslim community, particularly after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. The debate over who holds this leadership role became central following the Prophet's death, leading to the division between supporters of the early caliphs and those advocating for leadership by the Prophet's family, particularly the descendants of Ali. For more information: W. Madelung, 'Imāma' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0369 (Consulted online on 5 February 2025).

The text continues with a focus on the *imam*. Hidaybi states that the establishment of an Islamic government and the appointment of an *imam* is a religious obligation. This position is supported with references to the Qur'an, hadith, and the consensus (*ijma'*) of the companions (*sahaba*) of the Prophet Muhammad. Hidaybi also uses historical examples from Islamic history. The election of Abu Bakr as the first caliph after the death of Muhammad is presented as a fundamental precedent. According to Hidaybi, there has always been consensus in the *umma*¹³⁶ about the necessity of a caliph, and disagreements were about who should fulfill this role. As an example, he refers to the conflict between Ali and Mu'awiya, as Ali's leadership was contested because he was involved in the murder of his predecessor, Uthman¹³⁷.

Notably, Hidaybi also claims that all Islamic sects, including the Shiites, recognize the necessity of an *imam*, but that there are disagreements about the method of appointment. This underscores the argument that there is a broad historical consensus on the necessity of the *imam* in an Islamic government. Hidaybi adds a practical argument to this. According to him, an Islamic government is essential for implementing *shari'a* and maintaining order and justice in society.

Hidaybi engages with both classical and modern interpretations but does not seem to delve deeply into formal issues. He takes a rigid and conservative stance, which raises the question of what Islamic governance precisely entails and how it can be restored. However, there is a lack of a concrete and constructive guideline for how Islamic governance can actually be realized. His text remains largely an objective description of how he believes Islamic governance should be, based on classical interpretations, without offering a practical path to its implementation.

As set out above, Hidaybi is of the opinion that the caliphate must be restored and that this should be led by an *imama*. According to Hidaybi, this is a collective obligation (*fard al-kifaya*), and every Muslim is individually responsible and sinful as long as this obligation has not been fulfilled. Hidaybi justifies his position based on the Qur'an and hadith but disregards other interpretations.

*"The establishment of the Islamic government, i.e. the "true Imam", is one of the duties of sufficiency, i.e. it is an obligation that asks the Ummah in solidarity with all its members until it is achieved, and each particular individual is a sinner as long as that imposition has not been fulfilled, and there is no doubt that every member of the Islamic Ummah is personally responsible before his Lord for the effort he fails to exert in order to achieve that purpose that God Almighty has committed him to."*¹³⁸
(Hasan al-Hidaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

Fard al-Kifaya is an Islamic legal term referring to a collective obligation. It is a duty that, if performed by some members of the community, absolves the rest from the responsibility, but if no one fulfills it, the entire community is held accountable.¹³⁹ Zollner provides an extensive description of Hidaybi's view on *fard al-kifaya*. According to Zollner, it is remarkable that Hidaybi acknowledges this concept. It confirms his steadfastness in classical thought. Achieving an Islamic state, according to Hidaybi, is a collective duty. Compared to other Islamist writers, who believe that every Muslim is responsible for actively striving for an Islamic state, Hidaybi is moderate in his approach. Hidaybi emphasizes communal motivation and absolves the

¹³⁶ Means Islamic community. For more information about the heritage of this word: F.M. Denny, 'Umma' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1291 (Consulted online on 31 January 2025).

¹³⁷ For more information about this conflict: W. Madelung, 'Imāma' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0369 (Consulted online on 5 February 2025).

¹³⁸ al-Hidaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 8, "Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience," subheading "Islamic Government," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹³⁹ Th. W. Juynboll, 'Fard' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2277 (Consulted online on 31 January 2025).

individual from their obligation. As long as at least one believer strives for the Islamic state, the rest are excused to a certain extent. This does not make them unbelievers but sinners.

4.2.5 Opposition

Before Hidaybi presents his view on whether Muslims have the right to revolt against leadership that does not implement shari'a as law, he first delves deeper into the theme of obedience. According to Zollner, this shows that Hidaybi considers the issue of opposition as supplementary to obedience.¹⁴⁰ The theme of obedience is linked to the legitimacy of the *imam*. The *imam* is also a human being and bound by God's rules, yet he is responsible for implementing the *shari'a*. Hidaybi cites various verses from the Qur'an and hadith to make it clear to the reader that obedience to the *imam* is obligatory unless the *imam* himself calls for sin. He then introduces the principle of *al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf wa-n-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil).

Zollner explains that the *amr* is mentioned multiple times in the *Qur'an*, but its content is not clearly explained. To define it, Islamic theorists have applied it to two areas: as a tool to determine what is in accordance with Islam and what is not, and in the issue of economic, political, and social control. The *amr* can also be used as a basis to delineate the boundaries of Islamic leadership. This has resonated in modern Islamic circles. There is much discussion about the *amr*, as opposition is in conflict with the idea of obedience. There are many verses in the *Qur'an* and hadith about the idea of opposition, but also about obedience. In this conflict, there is one important hadith verse that forms the center of the dispute over the appropriate measures of opposition.¹⁴¹

*“On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah say, “Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.”*¹⁴²
(Hadith 34, 40 Hadith an-Nawawi)

Hidaybi uses the *amr* to address the means of opposition, contributing to the ongoing debate over active versus passive resistance. His argument centers around the hadith mentioned above, which emphasizes that while the ideal response to evil is active confrontation, rejecting it in any form is crucial, even if one lacks the power to physically or verbally intervene. Hidaybi contends that the dispute surrounding the *amr* and the application of violence has led to significant divisions within Sunni Islam, particularly across different sects and schools of thought. Various interpretations have resulted in differing conclusions about whether opposition should be enacted through action (hand), speech (tongue), or rejection (heart).¹⁴³

Hidaybi outlines two opposing approaches. The first group maintains that passive opposition is an obligation, with verbal resistance being required if possible. Active opposition, especially through force, should be seen as a last resort, permissible only when it is certain that a leader has deviated from the correct path. Violence, in this view, is a final option and should never be actively sought. Opposition, therefore, is primarily limited to passive resistance. The second group, however, views violence as a necessary tool for upholding the *amr* and considers active intervention the most appropriate form of resistance. Hidaybi strongly criticizes this perspective, aligning himself with the first group. He argues that violence should always be treated as a last resort, only to be used when absolutely unavoidable. He also distances himself from ultimate passivity and actually takes a middle position. He proposes a gradual increase of

¹⁴⁰ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 135.

¹⁴¹ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 131-132.

¹⁴² Imam Nawawi, *The Forty Hadith of Imam Nawawi* (<https://sunnah.com/nawawi40:34>), hadith 34.

¹⁴³ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 138.

measures. The Muslim must first reject the *imam* with his heart before speaking out or even resorting to physical methods.¹⁴⁴

“As for his command (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to be patient in taking money and beating the back, this is undoubtedly if the Imam really takes over that, and this is undoubtedly what he imposed on us patience for him, and whoever refrains from doing so, but rather from hitting his neck if he must, is a sinner who disobeys God Almighty, but if that is false, then God forbids that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) orders us to be patient with that, as proof of this is the words of God Almighty.”¹⁴⁵
(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

Hudaybi continues on his middle path and adds that one must have patience (*sabr*) before resorting to more violent actions.¹⁴⁶ This can be read in the passage above. The passage discusses the command of Prophet Muhammad to remain patient in the face of unjust acts by a leader. This command is only valid if the *imam* is legitimately authorized to carry out such actions. In that case, patience becomes a religious duty. However, if the *imam* acts unjustly, then the command to remain patient could not have come from the Prophet, as Islam does not permit cooperation with sin and oppression. The text emphasizes that whoever actively resists, for example, by attacking the *imam* without legitimate justification, is considered a sinner.

In conclusion, Hasan al-Hudaybi’s education in both religious studies at Al-Azhar and law provided him with a unique perspective on the relationship between Islamic principles and state laws, likely shaping his moderate stance. As the *Murshid*¹⁴⁷ of the Muslim Brotherhood since 1951, he was tasked with uniting a deeply divided organization. Given the radicalization within the Brotherhood and subsequent repression under Nasser's regime, adopting a moderate position was a wise choice. Hudaybi’s approach was characterized by a balance between orthodoxy and pragmatism, allowing flexibility in interpreting *shari’a* and implementing Islamic governance, as long as it did not contradict the core principles of Islam.

5. Ideological Parallels and Contrasts

This chapter examines the extent to which the ideological views of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hudaybi align in *Milestones* and *Preachers, Not Judges*. Themes such as Islamic governance, *jihad*, and *takfir* are compared. This analysis will clarify whether there are shared foundations in their thought.

5.1 Islamic governance

After reading *Milestones* and *Preachers, Not Judges*, it becomes evident that both Qutb and Hudaybi advocate for the re-establishment of the caliphate. This is unsurprising, as both were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite internal divisions during the years of imprisonment, the Brotherhood remained united in its vision of an Islamic state.

¹⁴⁴ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 138-140.

¹⁴⁵ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 8, "Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience," subheading "Islamic Government," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹⁴⁶ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 140.

¹⁴⁷ This means: General Guide

“There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari’ah is the authority and Allah’s limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation.”¹⁴⁸
(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

“The Islamic government “or the true imam” is the government that embraces Islam as a religion and is based on the implementation of the provisions of Sharia and the guarding of religion.”¹⁴⁹
(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

It is clear from the above quotations that both Qutb and Hudaybi view the Islamic state as the ultimate goal and that this state must be based on *shari’a*. As discussed before, Qutb’s *Milestones* is intended to provide the reader with a roadmap to achieve this objective. He argues that the Islamic state can only be realized through a radical break with the existing *jahiliyyah* society and the formation of a vanguard that separates itself from the corrupt system. This group must re-educate itself according to true Islamic principles and, once it is strong and large enough, wage jihad to abolish the rule of human legislation and establish *hakimiyya*¹⁵⁰. Only after the victory of this revolutionary movement can an Islamic state emerge that is fully based on *shari’a*.

Hudaybi focuses primarily on the role of the *imam* in his chapter on Islamic governance. According to him, there can be no Islamic state without an *imam*. As previously discussed, he draws on various classical interpretations to support his argument and to demonstrate that there is consensus within the Muslim community on the necessity of an *imam*. He asserts that the establishment of an Islamic government and the appointment of an *imam* is a collective religious obligation (*fard al-kifaya*). This means that as long as a portion of the community works toward it, the rest are not individually responsible, but as long as this obligation remains unfulfilled, the entire community is in a state of sin. Hudaybi does not provide a concrete roadmap for achieving the Islamic state.

According to Zollner, Hudaybi distinguishes himself through his moderate and pragmatic approach. Unlike radical Islamists, who consider every Muslim responsible for the establishment of an Islamic state, he emphasizes collective involvement and reduces the pressure on the individual. As long as at least one believer strives for this goal, others are regarded as sinners rather than unbelievers. At the same time, the demand for the establishment of an Islamic state remains strong, placing Hudaybi’s interpretations in contrast to Nasser’s regime.¹⁵¹

In conclusion, Hudaybi and Qutb adopt different approaches: Qutb views all Muslims as unbelievers unless they actively work toward the establishment of an Islamic state, while Hudaybi sees them as sinners until the Islamic state is achieved. Nevertheless, both present a counter-ideology that rejects Nasser’s rule. Hudaybi emphasizes the substantive design of the Islamic state, while Qutb primarily focuses on how the Islamic state should be established. When it comes to the substantive design of the Islamic state, Hudaybi places significant focus on the role of the *imam*. Both Hudaybi and Qutb agree that the Islamic state should have an *imam* and follow *shari’a* as its legislation. They also both pay attention to the concept of *ijtihad*¹⁵², where a clear parallel can be identified.

¹⁴⁸ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 131.

¹⁴⁹ al-Hudaybi, “Preachers, Not Judges,” chapter 8, “Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience,” subheading “Islamic Governance,” https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹⁵⁰ *Hakimiyya* refers to the concept of God’s ultimate sovereignty over legislation, asserting that all governance and law should be based on divine authority and align with Islamic principles, rather than human-made or secular laws.

¹⁵¹ Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 124.

¹⁵² *Ijtihad* refers to the process of independent legal reasoning in Islamic law, where scholars interpret the *Qur’an* and Hadith to address new or ambiguous issues. It allows for the development of legal rulings based on reasoned judgment when clear guidance is not available in established texts.

"If there is a clear text available from the Qur'an or from him, then that will be decisive and there will be no room for Ijtihad (analogical judgement). If no such clear judgement is available, then the time comes for Ijtihad - and that according to well-defined principles which are consistent with Allah's religion and not merely following opinions or desires."¹⁵³

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

"We have already said that the work of the Islamic government or the Muslim imam or the Muslim guardian, not to innovate legislation nor to rule what he sees in his mind good or really, but to implement the rule of God and what the Almighty ruled that the truth, if the legal ruling of the unanimous, has gone out of the field of ijtihad and there are no possibilities of error and interpretation, but if the judgment of the multiple opinions and different points of view, the guardian strives as much as possible and then implements what his ijtihad led him to, what the Muslim guardian did - and the Muslim judge only acts on his behalf and derives his mandate from him - except to order the enforcement of what he sees as the rule of God as his ijtihad leads to and a resolution of the dispute, which is after fallible may misunderstand the verse and hadith, and his judgment may not affect the rule of God in fact, and therefore his rule does not solve forbidden and does not forbid halal, and the lesson in halal and haram is the rule of God in fact."¹⁵⁴

(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

Qutb and Hudaybi emphasize the central role of *shari'a* in governance, stating that the goal of the Muslim ruler or judge is to enforce God's law, not to introduce personal opinions or innovations. Both authors assert that when a clear text from the Qur'an or Hadith is available, there is no room for *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* is only applied when there is no explicit guidance, but both stress that this process must strictly adhere to the bounds of Islamic religion and not be based on personal desires or opinions. A common view is their recognition of the fallibility of human interpretation: Qutb implicitly acknowledges the limitations of *ijtihad*, while Hudaybi explicitly states that even in *ijtihad*, the judge or ruler may misinterpret, though this does not alter the intrinsic *halal* or *haram* status of actions. Both authors thus emphasize that God's law remains the ultimate standard, and human judgments are always subordinate to divine truth.

A final theme within the achievement of Islamic governance is the emphasis on deep-rooted knowledge of the faith.

"The people ought to know that Islam means to accept the creed "La ilaha illa Allah" in its deepest sense. ... When the revival of this religion starts among a people, this aspect of it must have first priority. The first Islamic call was based on it; thirteen complete years of the Makkan period of the Qur'an were devoted to this Message. When a group of people enters this religion in the true sense, only then can it be considered a 'Muslim group.' Only such a group has the capability of giving a concrete form to the Islamic system in its social life, because such a group has agreed to base its entire life on Islam and to obey Allah Almighty in all aspects of life."¹⁵⁵

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

This passage shows that a religious revival begins with complete dedication and obedience to Allah in all aspects of life. The early revelation in Mecca focused on establishing these fundamental principles. This message was spread for thirteen years before the community in Medina further developed. According to Qutb, only a group that fully commits to the faith can establish the Islamic system in society.

¹⁵³ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁴ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 8, "Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience," subheading

"Arbitration," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹⁵⁵ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 48.

To this analysis it can be added that Qutb, in his book, introduces the idea of a vanguard that, when large and strong enough, will wage *jihad* against the rest of the *jahili* society. In the quoted passage, however, Qutb also emphasizes how important it is to deeply anchor the faith. The reference to the thirteen-year period in Mecca illustrates that anchoring the *shahādah* is a gradual process that requires both time and a fundamental inner transformation. Essentially, this closely aligns with Hudaybi's vision, which also stresses that the deep-rootedness of the faith is the basis for societal reform. However, the way in which Qutb and Hudaybi envision the realization of an *Islamic State* after this period of anchoring differs significantly.

5.2 *Jihad*

Since both Qutb and Hudaybi aim for the establishment of an Islamic state and have their own views on how to achieve this goal, the discussion on *jihad* plays a significant role. They have different perspectives on the justification of violence and the circumstances under which it is deemed permissible. Qutb views *jihad* as more than just a defensive struggle, he sees it as a broader fight against tyranny and oppression. According to him, *jihad* is not only about defending Islamic territory but also about creating conditions in which Islam can be freely preached, without restrictions from political systems. This process begins with a small group of Muslims deeply embedding their faith, similar to the first thirteen years of Islam in Mecca. Only then does *jihad* inevitably follow to overthrow the rest of the *jahili* society. While Qutb initially adopts a gradual approach, this ultimately leads to *jihad* once the group of Muslims who have firmly established their faith is large and strong enough.

“This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs, and it uses physical power and Jihad for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the Jahili system which prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, but forces them to obey their erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord. This movement does not confine itself to mere preaching to confront physical power, as it also does not use compulsion for changing the ideas of people. These two principles are equally important in the method of this religion. Its purpose is to free those people who wish to be freed from enslavement to men so that they may serve Allah Almighty alone.”¹⁵⁶

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

As discussed earlier, Hudaybi adopts a moderate approach when it comes to the use of violence to establish an Islamic state. He emphasizes that opposition to unjust leaders is obligatory, but the use of violence should always be considered a last resort. Hudaybi argues that passive resistance should be employed first, such as rejecting the injustice in one's heart, and if possible, through verbal resistance. Violence is only permissible when it is clear that the leader has abused his authority, but even then, it must always be measured and proportional. Hudaybi advocates for patience (*sabr*) while awaiting the right circumstances, and while he does not actively seek violence, he accepts it as a final option when there is no other way to restore *shari'a* and justice. Then the question arises of when a leader is considered illegitimate and how Qutb and Hudaybi view this. According to Hudaybi, a leader is considered illegitimate when they fail to adhere to the basic requirements of Islamic law, particularly when they do not follow the *shari'a* or fail to perform the duties of the faith. The legitimacy of a leader depends on their adherence to the *shari'a* and their responsibility to enforce Islamic legislation. If an *imam* or leader deviates from Islamic guidelines, such as committing sins or failing to uphold justice, they are considered illegitimate. In this case, the people have the right to rise up against the leader. However, Hudaybi

¹⁵⁶ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 65.

emphasizes that this opposition should be carried out gradually, with patience (*sabr*) playing an important role.

“It is obligatory to pay some unfairness ... to speak to the imam about that ... if he refrains and reviews the truth and ... to establish the punishment for adultery, slander and alcohol on him, he has carried out the command of Allah, and complied with His judgment, and if he refrains from enforcing any of these duties on him, he must be deposed and others who do the truth must be established, for the Almighty says: And cooperate on righteousness and piety and do not cooperate on sin and aggression (The table: from verse 2), and it is not permissible to waste any of the duties of Sharia and God Almighty reconcile”¹⁵⁷

(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

According to Qutb, a leader loses legitimacy as soon as he deviates from divine law, as revealed in the *Qur’an* and the authentic traditions of the Prophet. A leader is considered illegitimate when he enacts legislation based on his own judgment instead of strictly implementing *shari’a*. Furthermore, Qutb views a leader as unlawful if he allows secular or human influences to prevail over Islamic norms, thereby keeping society in a state of *jahiliyyah*. In line with his strict dichotomy between Islamic and non-Islamic societies, Qutb sees any deviation from Islamic law as a return to *jahiliyyah*. A leader who fails in this regard is therefore illegitimate and may be removed.

“Islam knows only two kinds of societies, the Islamic and the Jahili. The Islamic society is that which follows Islam in belief and ways of worship, in law and organization, in morals and manners. The Jahili society is that which does not follow Islam and in which neither the Islamic belief and concepts, nor Islamic values or standards, Islamic laws and regulations, or Islamic morals and manners are cared for.”¹⁵⁸

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

In conclusion, Qutb and Hudaybi share the view that a leader loses their legitimacy when they do not adhere to the *shari’a* and fail to uphold Islamic principles. Both assert that a leader who deviates from divine law is illegitimate and may be removed. However, they differ in their approach. Hudaybi advocates for a gradual reform within existing structures, with patience (*sabr*) and collective effort being central. Resistance, according to him, must proceed carefully and without chaos. In contrast, Qutb takes a more radical stance, making a sharp distinction between Islamic and *jahiliyyah* societies. Any deviation from *shari’a* he sees as a return to *jahiliyyah*, making resistance not only necessary but urgent. In summary, Qutb demands immediate, revolutionary purification, while Hudaybi emphasizes a step-by-step approach within existing frameworks.

5.3 *Takfir*

A key theme in the works of Qutb and Hudaybi is the concept of *takfir*, the act of declaring someone an unbeliever (*kufr*).¹⁵⁹ This raises the question of when someone is considered a Muslim and when they are not, a question to which both Qutb and Hudaybi have their own perspectives.

¹⁵⁷ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 8, "Islamic Government or the Right Imam and the Meaning of Hearing and Obedience," subheading "Islamic Government," https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹⁵⁸ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁹ This is the verbal noun from the verb *kaffara* "to declare someone a *kāfir* or unbeliever". it is the act of declaring someone an unbeliever (*kāfir*), accusing them of disbelief (*kufr*), often leading to social or religious exclusion. For more information about this concept: Ed. & J.O. Hunwick, 'takfir' in: P.J. Bearman e.a. eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012) https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1154 (Consulted online on 5 February 2025).

*"This obedience to the Shari'ah of Allah is necessary for the sake of this harmony, even more necessary than the establishment of the Islamic belief, as no individual or group of individuals can be truly Muslim until they wholly submit to Allah alone in the manner taught by the Messenger of Allah thus testifying by their actions that there is 'no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.'"*¹⁶⁰

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

Qutb emphasizes the crucial importance of complete submission to *shari'a* to ensure a harmonious society. According to him, no individual or group can be considered true Muslims without fully submitting to Allah. Qutb stresses that merely reciting the *shahādah* is not enough to be recognized as a Muslim; acting in accordance with this testimony is equally essential. Belief must actively manifest in daily life by adhering to Islamic principles and values.

Hudaybi holds a different view on this matter. According to him, simply pronouncing the *shahādah* is enough to be considered a Muslim. He presents two key arguments for this. As discussed in the previous chapter, Hudaybi emphasizes that the *shahādah* alone suffices, while Qutb insists on actions to demonstrate God's sovereignty. Hudaybi argues that only God can truly judge a person's belief, highlighting the distinction between human judgment and divine knowledge.

*"The consensus is that everyone who was in the ends of the earth and did not inform him except that God Almighty has sent a messenger named Muhammad bin Abdullah calls people to testify that there is no god but God and that he is the Messenger of God and to believe in his tongue and then died for his hour and he did not know the ruling of those who did not believe the Messenger and did not pronounce the two testimonies and did not think about it at all, and he did not reach his knowledge that God Almighty will send people to another house after their death or that God created angels Or he had previously sent messengers or sent down a book and did not know that God forbade things and permitted things or imposed statutes or limits limits, the consensus is certain that this person is a believing Muslim who died on Islam and faith, he is certain that he is one of the people of Paradise."*¹⁶¹

*"Then we say to the one who stipulated that the person's deeds must be certified for his testimony in order to be judged to be Muslim: In what we have presented proves the corruption of that statement, we have established conclusive evidence that the ruling of God Almighty is to consider a person a Muslim at the same moment he utters the two testimonies, and that once he utters the two testimonies, we must consider him a Muslim and forbid us his blood and money."*¹⁶²

(Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Preachers, Not Judges*)

This quotations clearly indicate that, according to Hudaybi, reciting the *shahādah* is the minimum requirement to be considered a Muslim. Belief in the fundamental truths of Islam, without necessarily fully understanding all the rules, is regarded as sufficient. This suggests that the essence of being a Muslim revolves around the core principles of faith, rather than full adherence to all *shari'a* laws. Ignorance of certain Islamic rules is therefore not considered disbelief or sinful, as long as the intention is sincere. Even scholars sometimes make mistakes, Dan but they are not punished as long as their actions are based on sincere intention.

The quote from Qutb below makes it clear that Qutb does not distinguish between intentionally disregarding the *shari'a* and unconscious ignorance. For him, all those who do not

¹⁶⁰ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 101-102.

¹⁶¹ al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 4, "The Judgment is Only for God," subheading "Dangerous Inevitable Consequences,"

https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

¹⁶² al-Hudaybi, "Preachers, Not Judges," chapter 1, "Testimony that There is No God but Allah and That Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," subheading "Invalidity of the Statement of the Requirement of Work,"

https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AF%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A9_%D9%84%D8%A7_%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A9 (Consulted online on 30 January 2025).

fully submit to the *shari'a* are not considered Muslims. In contrast, Hedaybi does make a distinction between consciously and unconsciously failing to follow the *shari'a*.

“The question in essence is that of unbelief and belief, of associating others with Allah Almighty and the Oneness of Allah, and of Jahiliyyah and Islam. This ought to be made clear. Indeed, people are not Muslims, as they proclaim to be, as long as they live the life of Jahiliyyah. If someone wishes to deceive himself or to deceive others by believing that Islam can be brought in line with this Jahiliyyah, it is up to him. But whether this deception is for others, it cannot change anything of the actual reality. This is not Islam, and they are not Muslims. Today the task of the ‘Call’ is to return these ignorant people to Islam and make them into Muslims all over again.”¹⁶³

(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*)

The analysis of *Milestones* and *Preachers, Not Judges* reveals that both Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hudaybi advocate for an Islamic state based on *shari'a*. Both reject the existing political system and view Islam not merely as a faith but as a comprehensive societal framework. They emphasize the necessity of Islamic governance, strong leadership, and education to strengthen Islamic consciousness.

Despite these similarities, they differ significantly in their approaches to Islamic governance, *jihad*, and *takfir*. Qutb promotes a revolutionary model in which a vanguard actively fights against the *jahiliyyah* society, whereas Hedaybi advocates a pragmatic, gradual reform within existing structures. Their views on *jihad* also diverge sharply: Qutb considers it a necessary struggle against oppressive systems, while Hedaybi sees violence as a last resort, favoring peaceful resistance. The most striking contrast lies in their stance on *takfir*. Qutb argues that Muslims who do not actively work toward an Islamic state are part of *jahiliyyah*. In contrast, Hedaybi rejects this radical approach, asserting that the *shahāda* is sufficient to be considered a Muslim and that only God has the ultimate authority to judge one's faith.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the ideological visions of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hudaybi, based on their respective works *Milestones* and *Preachers, Not Judges*. The central question was: "To what extent do the ideological visions in Hasan al-Hudaybi's *Du'at la Qudat* and Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* align?" To answer this question, the historical context of Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood was first analyzed, followed by an in-depth study of the works of both authors. To answer this question, the historical context of Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood was first analyzed, followed by a substantive study of the works of both authors.

Chapter one examined the political and social context of Egypt in the 20th century, highlighting the influence of colonialism, nationalism, and repression on the Muslim Brotherhood. Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood out of dissatisfaction with the Islamic situation in Egypt. The Western influences, encouraged by the colonial past with France and later Britain, were seen by al-Banna as the cause of the decline of Islam in Egypt. After al-Banna was assassinated in 1949, Qutb began to reflect on the Brotherhood's failure and the question of why Egypt had not restored an Islamic order.

¹⁶³ Qutb (auth.) & al-Mehri (ed.), *Milestones*, p. 154.

Chapters two and three analyzed the ideological visions of Qutb and Hedaybi. The analysis of *Milestones* shows that Qutb introduces the concept of *jahiliyyah*, referring to the pre-Islamic period but considering the modern world as such. He therefore advocates for a radical break with the existing order and the establishment of an Islamic state based on *shari'a*. Only in this way can the world return to the pure and original form of Islam. Qutb also questions how the Muslim Brotherhood could fail and why it has not been able to achieve its goals since the assassination of al-Banna in 1949. While he agrees with al-Banna that colonialism is a problem for the decline of the Islamic world, al-Banna was killed by Egypt's secular regime. This historical event plays a crucial role in Qutb's radical ideological vision, in which he clearly states that he considers any form of government not founded on *shari'a* as *jahili* and thus justifies overthrowing it by force. His vision emphasizes *jihad* and calls for an avant-garde to lead the revolution, beginning with an unshakable belief in the unity of God, similar to the early Meccan period of Islam. Furthermore, Qutb's experiences in the United States play an important role in the development of his vision. What he experienced there, he views as immoral, which resulted in an outspoken anti-Western stance.

Hedaybi, on the other hand, rejects the revolutionary interpretation of Islam and emphasizes the importance of gradual reform and religious preaching over political action. Like Qutb, Hedaybi wrote *Preachers, Not Judges* during a period of imprisonment. During this time, he faced the significant challenge of reuniting the internally divided Muslim Brotherhood. Since the publication of Qutb's *Milestones*, young members of the Brotherhood had become increasingly radical and formed their own radical organizations. Hedaybi responds to this development and to Qutb's work in *Preachers, Not Judges*, but this is not directly traceable in his book. Hedaybi's religious studies and law at Al-Azhar likely played a significant role in his view of the relationship between state laws and Islamic principles, explaining his moderate stance. Nevertheless, Hedaybi rejects the Nasser regime and also seeks the establishment of an Islamic state. However, his approach is more moderate: he rejects violence and instead focuses on realizing the Islamic state through preaching, patience, and within the boundaries of the existing political system. His moderate stance may also stem from the situation of the Muslim Brotherhood at that time, as Nasser was still in power and repressing the Brotherhood. Taking a moderate stance was thus a wise choice, especially considering that Qutb paid for his radical stance with his life.

The final chapter compared the ideological visions of Qutb and Hedaybi. The analyses of *Milestones* and *Preachers, Not Judges* reveal that both Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Hedaybi advocate for an Islamic state based on *shari'a*. Both reject the existing political system of Nasser or any other system based on man-made laws and consider Islam not just as a faith but as a comprehensive societal framework. They also both emphasize the necessity of Islamic governance, strong leadership by an *imam*, and the importance of education to strengthen Islamic awareness before the Islamic state can actually be realized. Despite these similarities, they differ significantly in their approach to realizing the goal of an Islamic state. Qutb advocates for a revolutionary model, while Hedaybi supports gradual reform. Regarding *jihad*, Qutb sees it as a fight against oppression, while Hedaybi prefers peaceful resistance. The greatest difference is their view on *takfir*: Qutb considers non-combatant Muslims as part of the *jahiliyyah*, while Hedaybi considers the *shahāda* sufficient and believes only God can judge a person's faith.

David Johnston and Joas Wagemakers present Qutb and Hedaybi as opposites, the radical and the moderate. This study shows that this portrayal is more nuanced than often presented. While Qutb is undeniably more radical than Hedaybi, both share a similar vision for an Islamic state and modernity, especially in their critique of the existing political systems in Egypt. The main difference lies in their approach to the path toward this goal: Qutb calls for revolutionary

action, while Hudaybi seeks a gradual process of preaching and reform. In conclusion, it can be stated that the starting point for both men is the same, as well as the end goal. The difference lies in the path between these two points.

A key limitation of this study is the reliance on a translated version of Hudaybi's *Preachers, Not Judges*, which may not fully capture the nuances of the original Arabic text. Additionally, focusing on just two works precludes a broader exploration of their complete ideological evolution. These methodological choices may have influenced the results, particularly in terms of understanding the full spectrum of Hudaybi's political thought.

For further research, it would be interesting to analyze how the ideas of Qutb and Hudaybi relate to other influential Islamic thinkers from the same period. This would provide a broader perspective on their place within the spectrum of Islamic political thought and the different approaches to Islamic governance that emerged during this time. Furthermore, it would be useful to examine how Qutb and Hudaybi's ideas relate to contemporary developments in the Islamic world, particularly regarding the ongoing debate over radicalism and moderation within Islamic political movements.

Ultimately, this analysis demonstrates that the interpretation of Islamic governance is not static but continually evolves under the influence of political and social circumstances. The differences between Qutb and Hudaybi illustrate how Islamic political theories are dependent on their context and how these ideas continue to resonate in modern times. Future research could focus on the reception of their works within the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements in the decades following their publication, to explore the extent to which their ideas have influenced the political strategies and internal dynamics of these movements.

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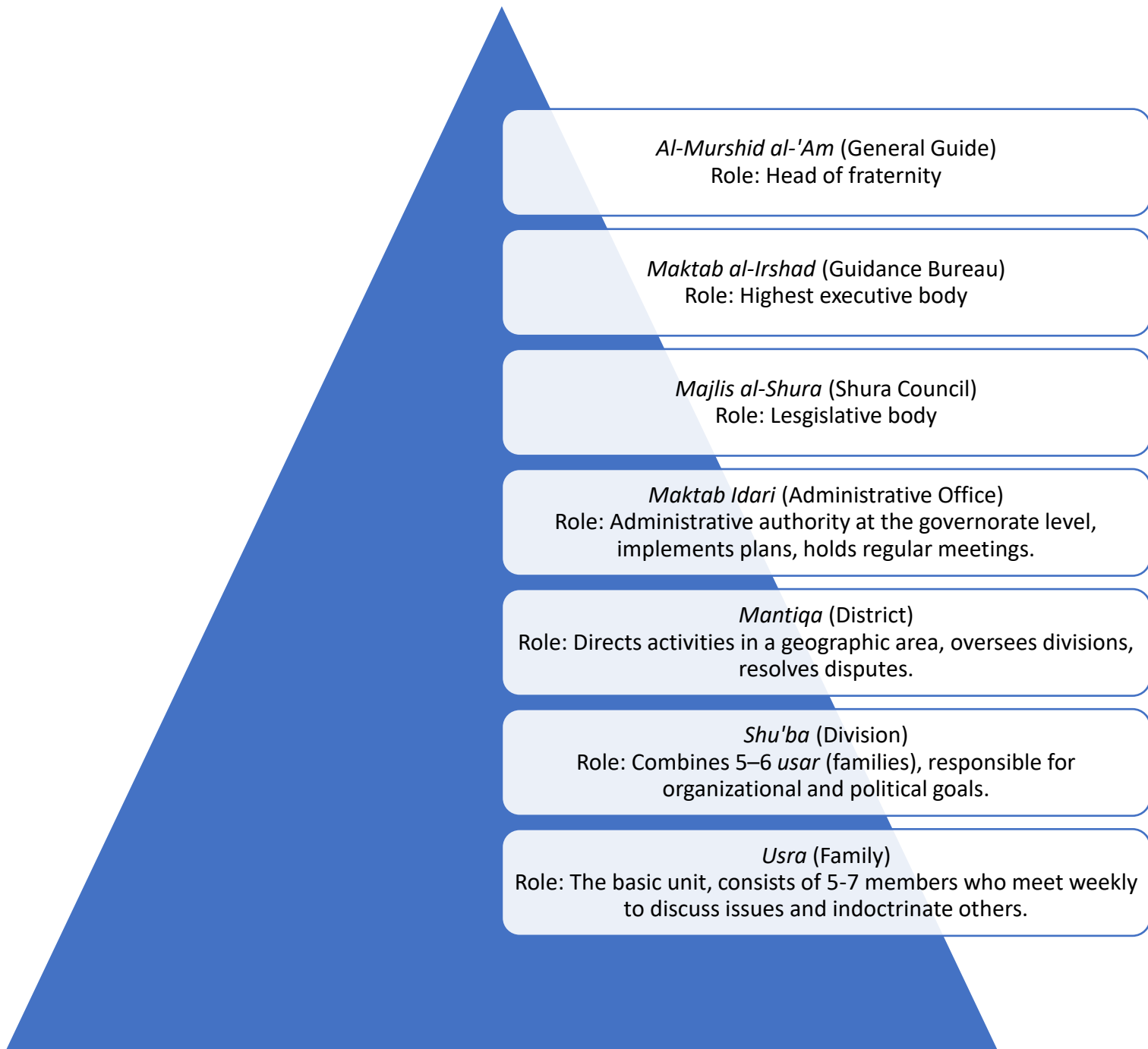
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Appendix 1: Glossary

- *Al-Azhar* – Al-Azhar, established in Cairo in 972 CE, is one of the oldest and most prominent centers of Islamic learning in the world. It encompasses both Al-Azhar Mosque and Al-Azhar University, serving as a key institution for Sunni Islamic scholarship and education, known for its moderate and traditional interpretations of Islam.
- *Al-Jihaz al-Sirri (The Secret Unit)*: The clandestine wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, involved in militant actions and political operations.
- *Al-Tanzim al-Sirri* – "The Secret Organization": refers to a secret, radical wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1965 during Sayyid Qutb's imprisonment. The group aimed at the violent overthrow of the secular regime and the establishment of an Islamic state, inspired by Qutb's ideology in *Milestones*.
- *Amr* – "Command": refers to the concept of *al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf wa-n-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil).
- *Dar-ul Islam* – Refers to the land or territory where Islam is practiced and the Islamic state is established, governed by *Shari'a*, and where Muslims live according to Islamic principles.
- *Du'at la Qudat* – "Preachers, not Judges": a book attributed to Hasan al-Hudaybi.
- *Effendi* – A term referring to a class of modern, Western-influenced intellectuals in Egypt.
- *Fard al-Kifaya* – A collective religious obligation. If some members of the community fulfill it, the rest are absolved from responsibility.
- *Fiqh* – Islamic jurisprudence: the understanding and interpretation of Islamic law.
- *Hakimiyya* – The concept of God's sovereignty over legislation; only God's law (*Shari'a*) should govern society.
- *Halal* – Permissible under Islamic law.
- *Harām* – Forbidden under Islamic law.
- *Ibadah* – Worship: the act of devotion to Allah.
- *Ijma'* – Consensus: the agreement of Islamic scholars on a particular issue.
- *Ijtihad* – Independent legal reasoning: interpreting Islamic law when there is no clear ruling from the Qur'an or Hadith.
- *Ikhwan* – A shorthand for the Muslim Brotherhood.
- *Imam* – Leader: refers to a leader of an Islamic state.
- *Jahiliyyah* – The period of ignorance before Islam, also used by Qutb to describe modern society not living according to Islamic principles.
- *Jihad* – "Struggle" or "effort": can refer to both spiritual and armed struggle.

- *Jihad bis-Saif* – "Striving through fighting with the sword": refers to physical combat in the defense or expansion of Islam.
- *Kufr* – Disbelief or rejection of Islamic beliefs: can also mean ingratitude toward God.
- *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* – "Milestones": a book by Sayyid Qutb outlining his revolutionary Islamic vision.
- *Madrasa* – Islamic school or educational institution.
- *Ma'rakatuna ma'a al-Yahud* – "Our Battle with the Jews": a booklet by Qutb expounding antisemitic ideas.
- *Maktab al-Irshad* – "Office of Guidance": the governing body of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- *Murshid* – "General Guide" or "Mentor": refers to the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- *Qiyas* – "Analogical reasoning": refers to the method of drawing conclusions by comparing a new case with a known case that shares similar characteristics.
- *Shahādah* – The Islamic declaration of faith: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."
- *Shari'a* – Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, governing all aspects of a Muslim's life.
- *Shirk* – "Polytheism" or "associating partners with God": considered one of the gravest sins in Islam.
- *Sunnah* – Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad: practices, teachings, and sayings forming the basis of Islamic law.
- *Sabr* – Patience or perseverance, particularly in the context of gradual resistance to oppression in the establishment of an Islamic state.
- *Takfir* – The act of declaring someone an unbeliever or apostate.
- *Tawhid* – The oneness of God: the belief in the absolute oneness of Allah.
- *Ummah* – The collective community of Muslims worldwide.

Appendix 2: Organizational hierarchy in the Muslim Brotherhood



The information in this organigram is based on K. al-Anani, *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood: Religion, Identity and Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 104–110.