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3 *Received: 5 February 2012 Accepted: 1 March 2012 Published: 15 March 2012*

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5 **Abstract**

6 While Sayyid Qutb is an acclaimed Islamist and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt,
7 that he has not been fully understood is confirmed by the persistent view that he laid the
8 foundation for the prevailing 'Islamic terror and Islamist fundamentalism' all over the globe.
9 Though there is a panoply of works that have attempted to explain and clarify this
10 misunderstanding of Qutb's Islamic revivalism and reformism through a study of his writings
11 and works yet the argument that his Islamic revivalism added to his zeal for rejecting
12 modernity, leading to 'Islamic terror and Islamist fundamentalism' leaves some questions
13 such as how did he move from a pure social justice crusader to an Islamist, why did he hate
14 America, does his work provide inspiration for Islamic militancy, fundamentalism and
15 terrorism etc and did his childhood upbringing, education, works and Islamic revivalism give
16 insight into the so-called phenomenon of 'Islamic terrorism' still begging for answers.

17

18 **Index terms**— Islamist fundamentalism, Islamic militancy, Islamic terrorism

19 From Social Justice to Islamic Revivalism: An Interrogation of Sayyid Qutb's Discourse Dr. Ibrahim Olatunde
20 Uthman leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, that he has not been fully understood is confirmed by
21 the persistent view that he laid the foundation for the prevailing 'Islamic terror and Islamist fundamentalism'
22 all over the globe. Though there is a panoply of works that have attempted to explain and clarify this
23 misunderstanding of Qutb's Islamic revivalism and reformism through a study of his writings and works yet
24 the argument that his Islamic revivalism added to his zeal for rejecting modernity, leading to 'Islamic terror and
25 Islamist fundamentalism' leaves some questions such as how did he move from a pure social justice crusader to
26 an Islamist, why did he hate America, does his work provide inspiration for Islamic militancy, fundamentalism
27 and terrorism etc and did his childhood upbringing, education, works and Islamic revivalism give insight into the
28 so-called phenomenon of 'Islamic terrorism' still begging for answers. This paper is premised on the argument
29 that Qutb, as a true African, despite his critical analysis and condemnation of the West and in fact all Muslim
30 societies which he terms *Jahili Societies* was totally opposed to all acts of terrorism as well as irrational and I
31 argue here that despite the above Haddad and others' description of him as a revolutionary because of his total
32 rejection of the West and un-Islamic systems, ?? II.

33 the socio-religious and economic milieu and background of sayyid qutb

34 Qutb as a true African was totally opposed to all acts of terrorism. Therefore this paper will make a critical
35 analysis and review of some of Qutb's works and Islamic thoughts, to answer the questions on why he hated
36 America and the West, whether his works and Islamic activism provided inspiration for 'Islamic militancy,
37 fundamentalism and terrorism' and if his biography truly gave insight into the so-called phenomenon of 'Islamic
38 terrorism.' The answers to these and other similar questions will reveal the true Qutb, an African Islamic
39 revivalist, feminist and social crusader.

40 With the establishment of al-Azhar University during the Fatimid dynasty in the tenth century, Egypt 1993
41 and Agbetola A., "The Religious Thought of Sayyid Qutb," an Unpublished M. Phil Thesis, University of Ibadan,
42 1978. and religious role in the African, Muslim and world affairs. So in the 20th century, it was destined to
43 witness again serious political and religious developments and changes that were to reverberate throughout the
44 world till today. From 1250 to 1789, Egypt was under foreign rule, first the Mamluk and then the Ottoman
45 Turkey. It was again invaded by Napoleon in 1789 and it remained under the French until they were driven
46 out by a combination of British and Turkish forces in 1805. Muhammad 'Ali ruled Egypt, first as a governor of
47 the Ottoman Caliphate and later as the imperial representative of the French and British on whom his Khedive

48 family depended in running the a administration and government of Egypt. ??0 The above western imperialism
49 led to a lot of resentment among the Egyptian people. For instance in 1881 the Egyptian army under the
50 leadership of Ahmad 'Urabi, an officer, organized a popular revolution during the reign of Tawfiq. The revolution
51 was almost successful but the British army interfered and defeated the forces of 'Urabi, ending the revolution
52 though it was supported by the people. Though Britain promised France that its occupation of the country
53 was temporary, Egypt became a colony of Britain from 1882, leading to the gradual agitation of the people
54 for independence which culminated in independence talks and the holding of parliamentary elections in 1923.
55 ??1 Subsequent to the above colonization of Egypt, two dynamic trends started to emerge in Egyptian national
56 life. Secularism and its attendant nationalism began to spread among the young, promising future leaders of
57 the country with most of the political ideologues that were destined to lead the country such as Sa'ad Zaghlul,
58 Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid and 'Abdul 'Aziz Fahmi graduating from the British modern and secular universities. This
59 was the first trend, which culminated in the establishment of nationalist political parties such as the Nationalist
60 Political Party by Mustapha Kamil, the National liberation Party by 'Abd al-Khalil Tharwah and Muhammad
61 Farid and the Arab Socialist Party. The second trend was the consequence of secularization of Egypt, leading
62 to the immersion of the country into western, materialistic and un-Islamic way of life that reflected in the non
63 observance of Islamic festivals as hitherto done, even during the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon army. Egyptian
64 women were also discouraged from observing the Islamic dress code with Huda Sha'rawi, the leader of the secular
65 feminist movement, championing this cause. As a consequence, Egyptians lost confidence in both their national
66 ??0 leadership and its political structure. 12 There began to spread an anti western and anti secular Islamic
67 spirit among the Muslims. This Islamic trend was ignited by Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) who
68 came to Egypt during the reign of the last Ottoman Caliph, Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II and taught at al-Azhar
69 University in Cairo. He championed pan-Islamism and appealed to headed by Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II. ??3
70 Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), who was al-Afghani's famous disciple later became the grand mufti of
71 the country and he implemented his teacher's Islamic legal and educational reforms. Following these reforms, he
72 awakened the Muslims to the materialistic, sensate and decadent aspects of Western civilization as well as the
73 superstitious, backward and un-Islamic nature of the prevalent Muslim civilization. The reforms he implemented
74 were therefore targeted at eradicating both aspects of Jahiliyyah in the two civilizations and returning Muslims to
75 the path of divine guidance, Islamic system and dynamism. ??4 Commonwealth or League of Islamic Countries
76 following his attach of the imperialist designs of the West and the Super Powers. He explained that the support of
77 the ruling Khedive for the Caliphate in Turkey when the First World War broke out and his subsequent removal
78 and replacement by Britain compelled Egypt to act against the Caliphate and became an ally of Britain. Thus
79 Egypt was used as a base for the British forces and this facilitated the colonization of Palestine and Syria by
80 the British. He powers through the unification of all Islamic countries. ??7 Sayyid Qutb was born in 20 th
81 century Egypt during the above prevailing socio-political and religious milieu. He would later join the Hasan
82 al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood, the organization that has stood at the heart of Islamic activism throughout the
83 world till today and lead its re-organization and revival for which he is today labeled the father or grandfather
84 of the 'Islamic militancy, extremism, terrorism and fundamentalism'. It is therefore important to now examine
85 the childhood, education and career of Qutb and how he found the Muslim Brothers and his Islamic activism
86 in 20 th century history, perhaps this may give insight into his vision of Islam and terrorism, why he hated
87 America and whether his vision, activism, ideas and writings were capable of nurturing terrorism. ??8 III. A
88 Short Biography of Sayyid Qutb, his Education and Career Sayyid Qutb Ibrahim Husayn al-Shadhili was born in
89 the village of Moshe in the Asyut district in Upper Egypt on the 9 th of September or October 1906. ??9 He was
90 born into a religious, intellectual and politically enlightened family. Qutb's father, Ibrahim was well known for
91 his legendary piety, political activism, love and generous treatment of his servants as well as general hospitality.
92 ??0 Qutb's mother was also a pious daughter of a wealthy, pious and well educated father who graduated from
93 the famous al-Azhar University. By virtue of her family's university education, she encouraged her children to
94 pursue university education. She loved listening to the recitation of the Qur'an and on account of her love for
95 it; Qutb's father made its recitation a constant feature of his house. She was also generous and gave out charity
96 regularly to the poor for the sake of God. Qutb's mother, the second of two wives had five children for his
97 father. The eldest was three years older than Qutb and was named Nafisah Qutb. Qutb was the second child
98 in the family and the next child to him was Aminah Qutb who was a literary scholar, author and Islamist like
99 Qutb and his remaining siblings. ??2 She was followed by Muhammad Qutb who was thirteen years younger
100 than Qutb. The last of Qutb's siblings was Hamidah Qutb who completed her studies in Cairo after their family
101 moved to join Qutb in Cairo. She also took after Qutb in her literary and da'wah activities. After the arrest
102 of Qutb in 1954, she served as a conduit of passing his instructions and directives for the Muslim brotherhood
103 to Zaynab al-Ghazzali with whom she was later imprisoned in 1965. ??3 However, the most relevant aspect of
104 Qutb's childhood to this study was his education which started at the village school when he was six years old.
105 The educational curriculum followed two streams, one was that of government owned schools under the Ministry
106 of education and the other was that of autonomous Qur'anic schools with parents paying subscriptions to pay
107 the teachers. The students who followed the second stream were known as Kutab while their schools were called
108 the Katatib. ??4 Qutb was admitted into the first stream because of its academic standard. In his second year,
109 it was decided that the teaching of the Qur'an would be removed from the curriculum and this annoyed many
110 parents and they were compelled to send their children to the Katatib. Qutb was one of those affected by this

111 development but he hated so much the unhygienic and unclean surroundings of the Qur'anic school that after
112 his first day in the school, he went back to the state school, conveyed his dissatisfaction to the Head teacher and
113 begged him to convince his father to allow him remain in the school. Contrary to the claim of Esposito above,
114 ??5 The above point is important here because Qutb's abandoning of the Qur'anic school from the first day, he
115 was admitted there, is a clear indication that he never received any Islamist, extremist not to mention terrorist
116 training from the Qur'anic school or the madrasah. As a matter of fact, after his father gave his permission to
117 withdraw from the local school, Qutb resolved to personally enhance his own memorization of the Qur'an.

118 Qutb hated the unhygienic and unclean surroundings of his first day in the school, went back to the state
119 school. Qutb describes his father's role in the revolution. Their house served as a centre for the villagers where
120 political meetings and gatherings were held. Again, in his father's nationalist and political activism, could be
121 located, Qutb's later social and political activism in life.

122 He finally left for Cairo in 1921. ??7 When he eventually made it to Cairo, Qutb initially stayed with his
123 uncle, a journalist, Ahmad Husayn Uthman who was a graduate of al-Azhar. Though there is no record of what
124 Qutb was doing between 1921 and 1925 before he was admitted into the Teachers' College in Cairo, he must have
125 been learning journalism from his uncle. His later literary inclinations, I believe must be located in this period.
126 After the completion of his Teachers' certificate, Qutb enrolled into the pre-university course of Dar al-'Ulum
127 (Centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies) in 1928 and degree programme of the tertiary section of Dar al-'Ulum
128 that is affiliated to the Faculty of Arts and Literature of Cairo University in 1930 and graduated in 1933 at
129 the age of twenty seven with B.A. in Literature and diploma in Education. This, he believed was useful for his
130 future, no doubt, journalistic and educational activities. ??8 His journalistic activities started as a student when
131 he started writing and publishing poems. After his graduation in 1933, Qutb worked briefly with al-Ahram, the
132 famous government newspaper, and began freelancing for al-Risalah and al-Thaqafah, two Egyptian magazines
133 before starting his career as a teacher with the Ministry of education and Culture. He taught for six years while
134 he continued engaging in literary activities as a freelance. He later became an administrative officer, inspecting
135 general education and culture in the department of inspection. He remained in the office for eight years until he
136 was sent by the Ministry in 1948 to closely study, evaluate and analyze the American educational system. After
137 returning from the US, he worked as a special advisor to the Ministry and delivered lectures at Dar al-'Ulum
138 before he was finally redeployed there to teach. ??9

139 1 IV. His American Experience and

140 Beginning of his Involvement in the Muslim Brotherhood

141 As I have stated above, Qutb was certainly no Islamist not to mention being an 'Islamic terrorist or
142 fundamentalist' while growing up. His upbringing and education made becoming either impossible. He grew
143 up within the milieu of Arab upper class family system, ??7 Qutb, Tiflun min, 146-217. ??8 Al-Khalidi, Sayyid
144 Qutb al-shahid, 88-89. ??9 Ibid, 31.

145 Egyptian nationalism and political awareness where his father was an activist and leading member of the
146 Egyptian National Party and an executive committee member of his village branch of the party. ??0 In 1948 as
147 stated above, Qutb was sent to America ostentatiously to study, evaluate and analyze the American educational
148 system. In reality, the journey was an ingenious way of curtailing his growing condemnation of the country's
149 ruling class and his social crusade against the poor and deteriorating conditions of the masses in Egypt. His
150 various articles in the literary journals, magazines and newspapers had become too critical and condemning of
151 the political, social and economic conditions of the people. He used to be a strong and vocal member of the
152 Wafd Party which was the ruling party since his adolescence while he was a pre-university student but was
153 however compelled to resign from the party in 1942 and joined the Sa'ad Party. Finally he retired completely
154 from politics in 1945 because of undemocratic and anti people's practices of political parties. In the same year,
155 he wrote two of his fiery articles titled 'addilu Baramijakum (Make just your programmes) and Ayna Anta Ya
156 Mustafa Kamil (Where are you O Mustapha Kamil). The King, Faruq was not amused at all and in fact wanted
157 the Prime Minister to put Qutb in detention straight away. However, his former membership of the ruling party
158 and acquaintanceship of literary giants like 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad impressed the Prime Minister. So the
159 Prime Minister arranged with the Ministry of Education to send him to America with the goal of transforming
160 his vision, corrupting him with western culture and mobilizing him to the service of the Egyptian ruling class
161 through western indoctrination and cultural decadence. In short, it was to enlist him into becoming an agent of
162 the bourgeoisie government in Egypt.

163 Qutb was also educated at the upper class elitist schools from primary to the university; he was not a product
164 of the madrasah as he ran away from the Qur'anic school after his first day there. So when did he start to hate
165 America and the West? brotherhood and 'Islamic terrorism?' The answers to these and other similar questions
166 are what this section seeks to provide.

167 2 31

168 Unfortunately this plan backfired as Qutb rather became more committed in his criticism as well as religious life.
169 This turning point in Qutb's religious commitment started from the ship that took him by sea from Alexandria
170 to America. His first experience of cultural and western decadence came when a young beautiful and charming

171 girl knocked on the door of his room in the ship and entered, seeking his permission to be his guest throughout
172 the night. He apologized for his how did he Muslim meet the inability to accommodate her because his room had
173 only one bed and she replied that "many single beds are meant for two persons." Qutb was compelled to shut
174 the door on her face and heard her falling along the corridor and realized she was stark drunk. That was only
175 the beginning of the attempt to seduce him by American ladies. According to him, he was chased by these ladies
176 from one place to another and one city to another. A staff of the hotel solicited sex from him, a nurse tried to
177 seduce him while he was hospitalized at George Washington hospital, a university student inundated him with
178 claims of sex being a merely biological and not moral issue while an Arab boy inundated him with stories of
179 sexual escapades with American girls. ??2 The climax of his experience of the decadence of the American and
180 western way of life however came when he was hospitalized in San Francisco and was astonished at the jubilation
181 of the hospital staff over the assassination of the founder and first General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood
182 in 1949. This was also the scenario at a departmental store where he saw American men and women jubilating
183 over the above assassination. This singular incident had an everlasting impression on Qutb and his attention
184 was directed to the comments of American newspapers on the assassination as well as books on Al-Banna and
185 his Muslim Brotherhood. Mitchel quotes Qutb as saying that he read the book, Religious and Political Trends
186 in Modern Egypt written by a British Intelligence officer while he was in America and the book also confirms
187 to him, the threat of Hasan al-Banna and his Muslim brotherhood to the West in general. ??3 That Qutb was
188 disgusted by his above experiences which he saw as proofs of the decadent styles of living in the west was made
189 clear by him in his various articles and books, such as, Hamaim fi New York (Pigeons in New York) al-Islam wa
190 al-mushkilat al-Hadarah (Islam and the Problems of Civilization), Ma'alim fi al-Tariq ??Milestones) and Amrika
191 allati ra'ytu' (The America which I saw) which contained his depictions of the American dream. He portrays
192 his attempts at overcoming the temptations he confronted in America and how he found solace and succor in
193 Islam, the Qur'an and da'wah activities. The divine light, according to him, entered his heart and he found
194 Islamism with new tastes, perspectives, dreams, aspirations and philosophy of life in America. In other words,
195 by turning his back against American decadence, Qutb found Islam and ultimately the Muslim Brotherhood on
196 American soil. Qutb the death of their fellow human being that eventually drew him into the fold of the Muslim
197 Brotherhood and so, we will now turn to his activism after his acquaintance with the Muslim Brotherhood on
198 American soil and the rest of his life thereafter.

199 3 V. Qutb's Da'wah Activities and

200 Islamism in the Muslim Brotherhood Following Qutb's discovery of the Muslim Brotherhood on American soil,
201 he developed a new link with the Qur'an, turning away from his previous literary and artistic reading of the Holy
202 book and ended up the rest of his life and in fact literary career thereafter, inspired by the Qur'an in his goal of
203 reforming the Egyptian society. The first outcome of this Qur'anic outlook which I argue marked the beginning of
204 his Islamic reform and da'wah activities in his writings was the publication of his book al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah
205 fi al-Islam (Social Justice in Islam), almost six months after his arrival in the US. While it has been argued that
206 since the work was completed before he left for the US, the Islamic activism and bias of the book had nothing to
207 do with the Muslim Brotherhood and his founder, Al-Banna, 34 I argue that though the book was written before
208 his trip to America, it was quite easy for Qutb to have revised its dedication and one or two sections of the book
209 since it was not published until many months after he had arrived there. That he did revise some parts of the book
210 after he arrived in America is proven by Qutb's admission in one of his lectures at Cairo University that he was a
211 heretic for almost eleven years of his life and was lost from the Islamic outlook until he wrote the book, al-'Adalah
212 al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam. ??5 Since, it has been shown above that he found Islam in America, it stands to reason
213 that it must have been in America, that he wrote what he referred to in the Cairo lecture as his Islamic direction
214 in al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam. It is no doubt after his trip to the US that it could be truly argued as
215 Nasru Rejwan has done that "the authenticity and deep knowledge of his Islamic outlook and his interpretation
216 are not disputed even by those who would not agree with his conclusion. ??6 I therefore reiterate here that the
217 book marks the beginning of Qutb's integration with the Muslim Brotherhood. A beginning demonstrated by
218 the similarity between his reform vision and aspirations expressed in the book and those of the Brotherhood as
219 well as his perceived dedication of the book to the youth of the Brotherhood. This perception was both that of
220 the Brotherhood and the Egyptian government. Members of the Brotherhood who were in prison when the book
221 was published understood that the dedication was referring to them and they began to distribute copies of the
222 book while in prison. Even the other members of the Brotherhood outside the prison also distributed copies of
223 the book and in fact, their General Guide once held a copy of the book in public and declared that the Islamic
224 thought of the book is the thought of the Brotherhood and it was probable that its author was one with the
225 Brotherhood. ??7 This was also the perception of the government and the book was banned and withdrawn from
226 the market and the government announced that it would remain banned until such a time when the author remove
227 the dedication of the book to the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood. ??8 While there is disagreement on when he
228 actually became an official member of the brotherhood, I argue that following his fraternization with it from the
229 US and the dedication of his above book to it, Qutb, in order to fulfill his new Islamic thought, vision and mission,
230 did not hesitate to join the brotherhood immediately he returned back to Egypt from America. On his return from
231 the US in 1950, Qutb naturally turned to the Muslim Brotherhood and became one of his members as reflected
232 in many incidents about him and the brotherhood. It was his membership that drew youth of the brotherhood

233 to him in 1950 and they complained about their inability to carry on the activities of the brotherhood because
234 of its 1949 proscription. Following his new Islamic commitment and disposition, he must have seen their move
235 as the divine answer to his desire Contrary to the arguments of those who opine that the above perception was
236 wrong based on the explanations given by Qutb and his younger brother, Muhammad, the book was dedicated
237 to the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood. In his interview granted to al-Khalidi, Muhammad explains that Qutb
238 only refers in the dedication of his book to the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood metaphorically and not literally
239 because he intends the Muslim youth in general. This clarification by Muhammad is purportedly supported
240 by Qutb's explanation in his alleged "Li-madha A'damuni" published in al-Muslimun (The Muslims) in Saudi
241 Arabia in 1985, two decades after his execution. In this journal, Qutb is allegedly reported to have written
242 that though the Muslim Brotherhood perceived that the dedication of his book referred to them, this was not
243 true. However my assertion that the book was dedicated to the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood is confirmed
244 by the fact that in the second edition of the book that appeared in 1954, after his involvement in the Muslim
245 Brotherhood had become widely known, Qutb specifically and unambiguously dedicated the book to the youth
246 of the brotherhood. and goal. Hence, He welcomed the youth around him and started to provide leadership for
247 them. This is the first point in support of Qutb's immediate membership of the brotherhood after he returned
248 from America. ??9 Secondly, when the brotherhood led an attack against the British army in the Suez Canal
249 in late 1951 and the British forces retaliated by brutally killing or wounding its members and destroying their
250 homes, the brotherhood became divided on the appropriate action. While some of them including Muhammad
251 Tahir Munir, the president of the Suez branch of the brotherhood called for patience and perseverance on the
252 part of the brotherhood, others including Muhammad al-Ghazali, a member of the Guidance Office called for
253 immediate counter attack against the British forces and interestingly, these two leading figures of the brotherhood
254 published their differing views in the newspaper, al-misri. At this critical period of the brotherhood's trial, it was
255 Qutb who appealed to the General Guide of the brotherhood to issue a conclusive statement of the brotherhood
256 because according to him, neither of the two leaders had the right to issue an official statement on behalf of the
257 brotherhood. Immediately, the General Guide, responded two days after and praised Qutb for his views on the
258 issue and added that perhaps no one knew the views of the brotherhood on the issue other than him. This is
259 the clearest statement from the General Guide of the brotherhood on not only the membership of Qutb but also
260 his active and deep involvement in the brotherhood as well as his knowledge of it. ??0 What is therefore clear is
261 that Qutb officially joined the brotherhood in 1951, the year he refers to as his date of birth because it was the
262 date of his joining the brotherhood ??1 Perhaps the biggest point in support of Qutb's immediate membership
263 of the brotherhood after he returned from America was his involvement with the Muslim brotherhood in the
264 1952 revolution that toppled King Faruq and appointed Muhammad Najib, the leader of the coup as the first
265 president of the Egyptian republic. Qutb was subsequently publicly praised by the leaders of the revolution for
266 his role in the success of the revolution and he was invited to play a leading role in the government that followed.
267 His involvement in the revolution, I argue could only be explained in the light of his membership and indeed
268 leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood. This is because the role of the though he had been a member since 1950.
269 ??9 Al-Khalidi recorded the story of these youth around Qutb in his Sayyid Qutb min al-milad, 314 while denyin
270 that Qutb ever nursed the intention of establishing a new movement to replace the Muslim brotherhood butt he
271 did not accept that Qutb related with these youth around him as a member of the brotherhood. ??0 Both this
272 observation of Qutb and the response of the General Guide of the brotherhood were quoted by Al-Khalidi in ibid,
273 328 yet he disagreed with the view that Qutb wrote as a member of the brotherhood. revolution. Consequently
274 the revolution took place with the collaboration of the brotherhood through Abdul Nasir. This collaboration
275 afforded the military junta the opportunity to use the resources of the brotherhood and its al-Dubbat al-ahrar
276 in conjunction with Qutb as its ideologue and intellectual leader. ??2 Shortly before the above 1952 revolution,
277 Qutb broke away completely from the ruling elite by resigning from his position at the Ministry of Education
278 because of his disgust at the authorities' rejection of his proposals for reforms in the educational system and
279 their request that he should stop his political articles on national problems and issues. Qutb on many occasions,
280 attempted to reform the Ministry of Education, establish a special professional department that would overhaul
281 the entire educational system and its curricula but all his proposals were rejected. ??3 He must have thus devoted
282 his attention to providing leadership and guidance to the leaders of the revolution. As a result of his contribution
283 to the success of the revolutionary coup by the military junta that toppled the King, Qutb was regarded as the
284 father of the revolution and was likened to the famous Mirabeau who contributed to the success of the French
285 revolution. As mark of respect, many honours were bestowed on Qutb and he was even offered the position of the
286 Minister of education which he turned down. He also declined the offer of the position of the Director General of
287 Broadcasting and Information. He like the brotherhood was not interested in political positions but rather in the
288 Islamic reform of the country. This objective was clearly mentioned by Qutb in a talk he delivered at a public
289 event organized by the revolutionary Military junta in August 1952. ??4 However 'Abd al-Nasir later in a meeting
290 he held with the General Guide, denied that there was any agreement or collaboration with the brotherhood and
291 the revolution to carry out Islamic reforms. He rejected all the peace gestures of the brotherhood thereafter and
292 the gaps between them started widening gradually. ??2 Ibid, 294-298. ??3 Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid,
293 98 and 125. ??4 Al-Khalidi Sayyid Qutb min al-milad, 294-304.
294 Then Muhammad Najib, the leader of the coup and president did not last in his office and was replaced by
295 'Abd al-Nasir and he decided to form a liberation organization in 1953 ostentatiously to carry out Islamic reforms.

5 VI. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF MAJOR

296 Upon his insistence, Qutb who was by then a member of the brotherhood's Guidance office and the Director of
297 da'wah, and was representing the group in various local and international conferences, 45 Following the refusal of
298 the leadership of the brotherhood to merge it with the newly formed Liberation Organization of 'Abd al-Nasir,
299 there was a conspiracy to ferment trouble that would lead to the forceful removal of Hasan Hudaybi, the General
300 Guide and the appointment of a new General Guide and formation of a new Guidance office loyal to Abd al-Nasir.
301 The government loyalists and conspirators broke into the house of the General Guide and sought to make him
302 resign from his position under duress. They then proceeded to the brotherhood's headquaters on 27 November
303 1953 and declared the dissolution of the Guidance Office and the formation of a new one headed by Sayyid Sabiq,
304 a great Islamic scholar and leading member of the brotherhood. Qutb was among the delegation from all branches
305 of the brotherhood that came on 29 November, 1953 to pledge their continuous support to the incumbent General
306 Guide, Hasan Hudaybi. He gave a powerful speech, in which he called on all the representatives to recognize
307 the threat of the conspiracy of 'Abd al-Nasir and his intention to destroy the Islamic movement in Egypt and
308 therefore urged them to renew and reaffirm their pledge and trust in Hasan al-Hudaybi. was compelled to
309 accept the position of the General Secretary of the Liberation Organization in order to mobilize the people and
310 consolidate the achievements of the revolution through Islamic reforms. 46 Having become convinced of 'Abd
311 al-Nasir's ploy to use the Liberation organization to undermine the Muslim brotherhood and his own beliefs in the
312 Islamic thoughts and reforms of the brotherhood, Qutb resigned and dissociated himself from the organization
313 after all his efforts to reconcile the president and the brotherhood failed. The moment Qutb resigned from the
314 Liberation Organization, 'Abd al-Nasir who was ruling with abominable martial powers turned against him and
315 the Muslim Brotherhood. He implicated them in a purported attempt to assassinate him. Qutb and the members
316 of the Muslim Brotherhood fell out of favour with the military junta and were arrested and detained in prison.
317 Qutb was imprisoned along with other members of the brotherhood in 1954 for three months. 47 Nevertheless,
318 after their release from prison, Qutb in collaboration with Zaynab al-Ghazzali al-Jubayli, a front burner and pace
319 setter in both the Muslim

320 4 Year

321 Brotherhood and Islamic feminist struggles pioneered the attempts at the re-organization of the brotherhood
322 after it was banned in 1954 by the government of 'Abd al-Nasir. ??8 Perhaps it is this insistence by Qutb and
323 the young elements of the brotherhood to revive its activities that 'informs' their labeling as 'Islamic terrorists,
324 fundamentalists and extremists' since John Esposito, a contemporary and influential scholar of Islam has branded
325 them as "neo-fundamentalists, extremists or fanatics." ??9 The insistence of Qutb and the youth to initiate the
326 revival and re-organization of the brotherhood soon provided an excuse for 'Abd al-Nasir to re-arrest Qutb and
327 accused him of planning to assassinate him and overthrow his government, for which he was sentenced to fifteen
328 years with hard labour. Out of this, he spent ten years in prison and was only released on the appeal made by
329 the then Iraqi President, "Abd al-Salam 'Arif in May 1964. ??0 Qutb continued to lead the re-organization of
330 the brotherhood both inside and outside the prison. In prison, he conducted meetings and trainings with the
331 fellow Muslim Brothers imprisoned with him while providing intellectual, moral and spiritual guidance for those
332 outside. On his release, in 1964, he assumed the full leadership of the re-organization till he was again rearrested
333 in August 1965. ??1 'Abd al-Nasir succeeded in penetrating the brotherhood through 'Ali Ashmawi, a member
334 of the youth Council of Five responsible for the re-organization and a retired Accountant in the Egyptian Public
335 Service. He became an agent, spy and protégé of the government and his statement was used to convict Qutb and
336 many other leaders and members of the brotherhood of treason and felony against the state. The government
337 confiscated their property, tortured and persecuted them and against all international and human right norms
338 sentenced many of them to death including Qutb in 1966. ??2

339 5 VI. A Critical Review of Major

340 Allegations against Sayyid Qutb I will now examine the most serious allegations against Qutb which portrayed
341 him as a champion of terrorism, extremism, militancy or fundamentalism.

342 One of the most serious allegations against Qutb is that he as the leader of the re-organization of the Muslim
343 brotherhood, supported by its youth, conceived, planned and conducted an armed revolt against the government.
344 This allegation, for which Qutb was arrested, convicted and sentenced to fifteen years ??8 Zaynab al-Ghazzali,
345 Ayyam min Hayati (Days from my Life) ??Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1986), 30-33. ??9 See his John L. Esposito
346 (ed.) Voices of Resurgent Islam ??New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). ??0 Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb min
347 al-milad, 293-314. ??1 Aal-Ghazzali, Ayyam min, 33-40. ??2 Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb min al-milad, 252-253 and
348 402-404.

349 imprisonment in 1954 only to be finally hung in 1966 was not fully investigated and neither was Qutb's trial
350 guided by universal democratic and human rights norms. He was tried by special military courts headed by judges
351 who were army officers and characterized by legal and technical anomalies, irregularities and discrepancies. For
352 instance, at the time the brotherhood's prosecution was closed in 1954, the court was told that the government
353 was dropping its charges against Qutb on humanitarian grounds because he was diagnosed of a pectoral ailment
354 and tuberculosis. However this was a ploy used to postpone his prosecution because of the presence of the
355 representative of the International Human Rights. After the departure of the representative, he was brought

356 back to court to face his legal prosecution and then sentenced. ??3 Similarly, Qutb and his fellow Muslim
357 Brothers were tried under a retroactive law in 1966 during which the government banned members of the public
358 and the press. Even the lawyer sent by the Amnesty International as an observer in the court proceedings was
359 as well prohibited from attending the proceedings. One of the unfortunate results of these legal irregularities
360 was the death sentence also handed down on Farid 'Abd al-Khalil and Munir Dallah along with Qutb in 1966.
361 Though the two were among the leaders of the brotherhood, they were not involved in its reorganization and in
362 fact, rejected the idea when they were invited to lead it before Qutb was appointed. They vehemently opposed
363 the re-organization because they considered it hazardous and dangerous. They went further to complain to the
364 General Guide and called for the abolition of the idea. ??4 Another allegation against Qutb was that he was
365 extremely harsh in his condemnation of the West and the entire Muslim societies as jahili societies. Rather
366 than rejecting everything in the West and the Muslim societies as jahili, Qutb welcomed and praised the good
367 aspects of the two. He was praiseful of many Western disciplines such as English and other languages, psychology
368 and education contrary to the view of Islamic scholars who opposed the teaching of foreign languages in Islamic
369 institutions. As a result of his love for foreign languages, he was disillusioned by the absence of foreign languages
370 in the curriculum of his alma mater, Dar al-'Ulum.

371 In short, the government itself orchestrated the conspiracy that entrapped Qutb and the Muslim brothers.
372 For this reason, the government prohibited the members of the public, the press and all the lawyers who came
373 forward to volunteer their services in the defence of the accused from attending the court proceedings.

374 55 ??3 Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb min al-milad, 350. ??4 Ibid, 379. of the areas where Muslim practices violate
375 the tenets of Islam, especially on the stifling of freedom.

376 6 He believes that this is one

377 Qutb also rejects western and American leaders because of their opposition to the struggles for the rights of the
378 Egyptian people. In his book on the clash between Islam and capitalism, Qutb dissected the Egyptian society
379 and became disgusted by the secular and western imperialist use of their stooges in government to plunder
380 and devour his country's resources. This he said had devastated and impoverished the people while the upper
381 classes monopolized the national income, consuming more than one third though their number was insignificant.
382 As a result, he calls on the masses to rise and fight western imperialism and feudalism reflected in capitalism
383 and communism, socialism and Marxism as these secular ideologies could never avail the people materially and
384 spiritually. ??6 In order for the rights of the masses to be guaranteed in practical terms, all they would require,
385 according to him, is education. He however believes in an all inclusive and holistic education as he called for
386 the integration of Islamic emphasis and Islamic philosophy of education in the national curriculum. ??7 He
387 was totally against the prevalent un-Islamic educational system, which he argues was under the tutelage of the
388 Zionist Jews, Christians and Communists and concluded that this was dangerous to the Muslim Ummah. 58
389 Consequently, the mindset of Muslim intellectuals became infected by a Zionist orchestrated conspiracy that
390 makes a Muslim graduate from the socalled secular schools "abandons Islam in actuality if not in name." 59 As a
391 result of this dominant Zionist brainwashing of Muslim intellectuals, Qutb called for a revolutionary, ideological
392 and total rejection of the Zionist Western and un-Islamic educational systems. 60 In his description of both the
393 western and Muslim societies as jahili, Qutb brings a new Islamic dimension to the already diverse and differing
394 definitions of society. 61 He does not view the society as merely "the totality of social relationships among men,"
395 62 a civilized social way of life or organized community of people. By this definition, society is based on civilized
396 organization and not just population. ??3 Qutb conceives the Islamic society as not just a civilized community
397 of organized Muslims characterized by its Islamic public practice and way of life through ritual worship and
398 social norms of Islam. To Qutb, the Islamic society must be characterized, in addition to the above, by the
399 implementation of the Islamic law by its political leadership. On this premise, he charges the Muslim rulers who
400 rule by what has not been revealed by Allah as unbelievers and expels them from the fold of the believers. ??4
401 He argues further that the implementation of the Islamic law by both Muslim political leader and their people
402 is the most important norm or standard of the Islamic society. In other words, this norm must constitute the
403 "specific guides to conduct which apply either to everyday activities or to situations that not occur often." 65
404 Accordingly, he insists on the obligation of enforcing this norm in Islamic societies in order to help humanity out
405 of its socio-economic, political and spiritual logjams. 66 Expectedly, while commenting on the need to establish
406 the Islamic society based on an Islamic government that promotes the Islamic norm of al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa
407 al-nahy 'an al-munkar (Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong), Qutb notes that this norm of
408 collective checks and balances must be done standing on the sacredness of the truth, mutual counseling, patience
409 and freedom of worship. He stresses that non-Muslims residing in the Islamic society are permitted to be judged
410 by the law of their religions. 67 He therefore sees the Islamic society as "holistic, describing the whole humanity
411 as a society and considers society as an organic entity." 68 It is in the same vein that that Qutb charges only
412 Muslims who propound the lawfulness of the prohibited and the prohibition of the lawful as guilty of unbelief,
413 transgression and infidelity. So, mere weakness or inability of Muslims to observe Islamic rulings on the lawful
414 or prohibited matters in Islam does not attract the charge of unbelief. In his Magnus opus, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*,



Figure 1:

⁴¹⁵ which is regarded as one of his most significant and highest achievements, ⁶⁹ his greatest contribution to Islamic scholarship ⁷⁰ ⁶³ David L. Sills, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences ^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9}

¹Anwar al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper, 1978), 66. ⁴ Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi, *Mudhakkirat Sa'ih fi al-Sharqi al-'Arabi*,

²Salah 'Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid al-Hayy 2 nd edition (Amman: Maktabat al-Aqsa, 1985), 18-34. ¹⁶ Malcom H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Los Angeles: University of

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⁴After his graduation from the primary school in 1918, he wanted to continue his education in Cairo but was compelled to remain in his village for another two²² Qutb, *Tiflun*, 202-207. ²³Ibid, 33. ²⁴ Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid, 80-84.²⁵ John Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*.²⁶ Qutb, *Tiflun* min, 22-44.

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⁶Qutb, *Tiflun* min, 37,[145][146][147][192][193][194][195][196] Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid, 126. From Social Justice to Islamic Revivalism: An Interrogation of Sayyid Qutb's Discourse

⁷This observation of Hasan al -Bann a was quoted and commented upon in Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb min al-milad, 316. ³⁸ Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid, 315.

⁸Al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb al-shahid, 138. From Social Justice to Islamic Revivalism: An Interrogation of Sayyid Qutb's Discourse

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417 C Year many major languages such as English, Bahasa Malayu, French and Persian, 71 he upholds this view
418 throughout his interpretation of verses that dwell on unbelief, transgression and infidelity. In his commentary on
419 the prohibition of usury (Q2: 276) for instance, he explains that any Muslim who permits usurious transactions
420 and rejects his unlawfulness is an unbeliever, transgressor and infidel because to reject a part of Islam is
421 tantamount to rejecting it in its entirety. ??2 The above view of Qutb on the takfir (Unbelief or infidelity
422 of a Muslim) is in line with the views of classical scholars. Ibn Kathir writes that leaving the rule of Allah
423 because of the belief that it is not obligatory makes a person an unbeliever. ??3 This is the opinion of Ibn
424 Mas'ud when he refers to Q5: 44 to substantiate that it is unlawful not to judge with what Allah has revealed
425 and that it is unbelief which entails both big or small. ??4 Qutb also reflects upon the conditions of women in the
426 Egyptian society where they were oppressed, maltreated and dominated upon. They generally lacked education,
427 training and marital security and could be disposed off at the whims and caprices of their husbands. It was
428 against this background that Qutb, like the Muslim Brotherhood addressed the feminist questions in Islam and
429 demonstrates that Islam had granted Muslim women total freedom from oppression and domination. ??5 In
430 his commentary, Qutb explains the Islamic concept of marriage as well as the philosophy behind its principles
431 of family formation, maintenance, sexuality polygamy and inheritance etc. He discusses how these principles
432 address the rights and welfare of Muslim women. For instance, he argues that Islamic law on forming the family
433 through the conduct of a public marriage between a man and a woman leads to a high degree of security for
434 women and children as well as increased sense of responsibilities for men. Another aspect of Islamic marriage,
435 polygamy is also discussed by Qutb while commenting on the verse of multiple marriages in Islam (Q3:4). The
436 verse, according to him, not only limits the number of wives a man can marry to four, it also emphasizes the
437 obligatory fulfillment of justice by a man in respect of the provision of his wives' economic, medical and sexual
438 needs. ??6 He also employs a rational juristic understanding based on the traditional methodological approach
439 in Qur'anic exegesis, al-tafsir bi al-ma'thur and delineates all legal rulings pertaining to the rights of 71 M. A.
440 Salahi (Trans), In the Shade of the Qur'an a widow to both inheritance and bequest in her marital residence for
441 one year. By opposing the general notion of naskh wa'l-mansukh (theory of abrogation and the abrogated), he
442 restores to Muslim women, their divine right to bequest. Therefore rather than rejecting absolutely the use of
443 philosophy in the interpretation of the Qur'an, he only advocates making revelation the basis of Islamic outlook,
444 exegesis and the application of reasoning and rationality. 77

445 .1 VII. Conclusion

446 This paper has analyzed the Islamic personality and activism of a Muslim reformer who believes in, and holds
447 tenaciously, to the Islamic teachings. He, therefore, does not fit into the same descriptive role of 'Islamic
448 terrorists' with people like Osma Bin Laden. The Qutbian texts examined in this article constitutes part of his
449 social, political Islamic struggles against the oppression of the Egyptian people in 20 th century Egypt. Through
450 his writings, this paper has recorded that Qutb, like the Muslim brotherhood is first and foremost involved in
451 improving the family, social and political conditions of Egyptians, including the conditions of Muslim women
452 through their Islamism as today confirmed by the Egyptian struggle which has culminated over the years in a
453 popular revolution that defeated tyranny as symbolized by the fall of Husni Mubarak's despotic government on
454 February 11, 2011. This movement which has demonstrated that the use of force should not constitute a corner
455 stone of the Islamic movement and a barrier to the western acceptance of its activism, and Islamic change, is
456 today reverberating throughout the Muslim world today and arguably it is reflected in the recent developments
457 all over the Arab World.

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459 [Qutb and Zilal] , Fi Qutb , Zilal . 3 p. .

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472 [Al-Khalidi] *Sayyid Qutb al-shahid*, Al-Khalidi . 144.

473 [Al-Khalidi] *Sayyid Qutb al-shahid*, Al-Khalidi . 144.

474 [Al-Khalidi] *Sayyid Qutb min al-milad*, Al-Khalidi . 337.

475 [Haddad] *The Qur'anic Justification for an Islamic Revolution*, Haddad . p. 25.