

**Prof.Dr.Hajredin Hoxha**

**Sayyid Qutb and Qur'anic Method of  
Exhortation**

*Critical reading in his commentary:*

*( Fi Dhilal al Qur'an, particularly in Chapter al-An'am)*

**2022**



*A dissertation for the fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree in the field of Qur'anic and Sunnah Studies*

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– Fi Dhilal al Qur'an, particularly  
in Chapter al An'am*

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nën hijen e Sures el En'am

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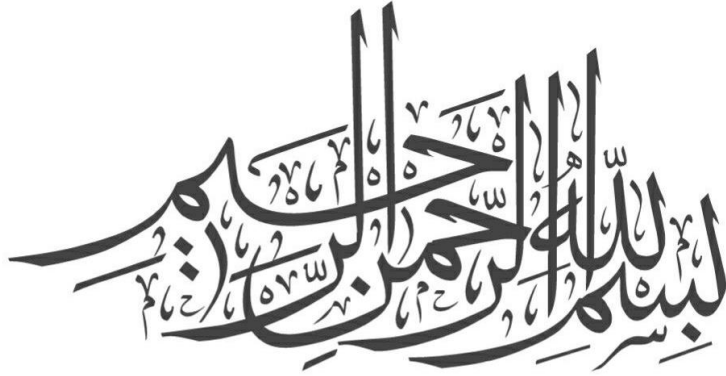
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*In the name of ALLAH, The  
most Gracious, the most Merciful.*

## ***SPECIAL THANKS***

- *To my beloved respected brother in Kuala Lumpur-Malaysia, Haji Dato Tengku Uzeir bin Ubaydi Lah. I am forever in your debt for helping me through my tough times. I'm very grateful for your continuous support. I will always remember you for helping me to accomplish this academic work. I can only pray that someday the Almighty God, Allah (exalted be He) will repay you and your family.*
- *Thank you so much for all you have done to me and to my family.*

*Brothers and Muslims like you are a real treasure!*

## ***PREFACE BY GREAT SCHOLARS***

### ***Preface: 01***

Our respected professor is about to publish his latest book in English about Prof. Sayyid Qutb's view on Quranic method in da'wa in his commentary: **Fi Dhilal al Qur'an**. This book is an important as well as very rich from several aspects, the first: it draws a *map* of the call to God Almighty, which is the task of every Muslim who follows the Messenger of God Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, according to the Almighty saying: “ *Tell them plainly: "This is my way: I call you to Allah, based on clear perception - both I and those who follow me. Allah - Glory be to Him - is free of every imperfection ...."*” The second: The authority of this map is the Holy Qur'an, the first book of the da'wah, and its most magnificent constitution, and the third: The author was cautious in choosing Surat al-An'aam, which is characterized with two types of virtue: 1- that it was revealed as a whole complete chapter in once, and seventy thousand angels escorted it, and the reason for its characterization with these two virtues: It includes evidence of monotheism, prophecy, and the Hereafter life, as well the refutation of the doctrines of the enemies of Islam. Imam el Hakim narrated it from Jaber who said: “When Surah Al-Anam was revealed, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, he praised and exalted the Almighty God, and then said: The angels blocked the horizon while this surah was revealed” And on the authority of Umar, may God be pleased

with him, he said: "The surah Al-Anam are the wonders of the Qur'an ", (i.e) it is one of the best Quranic surahs. The fourth aspect of the richness of this book lies in that it is based on what was written by the martyr Prof.Sayyid Qutb in his commentary " in the shadows of the Qur'an, that book whose author wrote it with the ink of his heart, before writing it with the ink of the pen, in which he was keen to be liberated from the traditional forms in dealing with the Noble Qur'anic text, without violating the foundations, rules and methods of Quranic interpretation that were adopted by the traditional scholars and imams of Quran interpretation.

Dr. Khair al-Din was very successful in choosing tafsir: **In the shadows of Qur'an**, as a reliable foundation on which he wants to set the path of Islamic da'wa work following the integrated Qur'anic vision that established for humanity a new concept of existence, life, values, and systems, and achieved a different social reality, whose imagination was impossible by a mere perception before the Qur'an created it and before the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, translated it in his Islamic da'wa journey.

As for the author of this book; Dr. Khair al-Din Khojah al-Kosovi he is a skillful-proficient Qur'anic scholar. You see the features of his face, hear the tone of his voice, read in his thoughts, his eagerness, and relentless desire of Islam of applied Islam in real life of Muslims. Which is in addition to his origin from the Balkans, he has received and taught knowledge in various scientific spaces with backgrounds, customs and traditions, which gave him a comprehensive vision, depth in the idea, sobriety in presenting Islamic issues, ability to scrutinize and criticize, and perhaps - because of all of this - he was one of the few who had the



opportunity to work in multiple international universities, and I heard from his peers and students the testimony to his fairness and integrity.

I ask God to bless the author and his book and to place it in the balance of the good deeds of its owner.

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**26 July 2020**

**Doha-Qatar**

## ***Preface:02***

No doubt writing about the scientific works of Prof.Sayyid Qutb, which enriched the Islamic library is not an easy task, instead it is one of the most challenging tasks. This is because, the writing on the most famous Muslim scholars in the world who occupied the Islamic and non-Islamic societies from the mid-nineteenth century till today and is still increasing and expanding over the days. Some of his works are getting reprinted legally. Some illegally stolen editions are reproduced as well, and on top of those works is his Quranic commentary: *Fi Dhilal el Qur'an* ( in the shadows of the Qur'an), and his famous book: *Milestones in the Way*, that Prof.Sayyid Qutb was executed after its publication-publishing. The Egyptian tyrant at that time did not tolerate and did not welcome the transparency and sincerity of Prof.Sayyid Qutb as well as his heroic and fearless stands for which he gave his life, and there is nothing worthy then to sacrifice your life for what you believe is right. Prof. Sayyid Qutb was wrongly understood and misjudged twice: once among his fans and followers who did not understand his writing terminologies which he used and innovated during his writings like: “ *al Uzlah al Shu'uriyah* “ (Emotional Isolation, the term: “ *al Jahiliyah* “ ( Pre-Islamic pagan period), the term: “ *al Hakimiyah*” ( Allah's governance), and other terms. For the second time, he was misjudged by his enemies, who used to two types of scholars; the first type is the justification for all grievances and corruption of their government leaders and the second type who preferred the safety and silence fearing the oppression of the dictators. As for Prof.Sayyid Qutb, he chose the most difficult and safest path to reach the righteousness, but it is a path that only great leaders and brave men choose that path, and they are few in every nation and age. Prof.Sayyid Qutb carried his highest share –based on the meaning of his name: “ **Sayyid** “

means: ( **master** ), and: “ **Qutb** “, means: ( **the Pole** ), so he was a master in front of the tyrants, whom he saw as smaller than flies, no matter how brutal, abusive and criminal were they, and he was a pole in understanding Islam and bringing it down to reality, and he is one of the few who captivates you with his rich, confident, persuasive character and writings based on understanding the Qur’an as understood by the Companions of Prophet Muhamed and the righteous predecessor in the early ages of Islam.

My brother, Professor Dr. Khair al-Din Khojah al-Kosovi, did a great job that deserves special thanks; firstly by choosing this title, “*The Map of the Call-Da’wah to the Lord of the People in the Interpretation of Professor Sayyid Qutb to Surat Al-Anam*”, which is a serious study of Prof.Sayyid Qutb’s approach to his understanding of the verses of the da’wah through his commentary: **In the shadows of the Qur’an**, that Sayyid Qutb lived it with Surat Al-Anam. I was informed that he is in the process of printing it in several languages, and it deserves to be published because of the great effort that Dr. Khairuddin made to present the thought of Prof.Sayyid Qutb through his interpretation which should be followed in the call-da’wah to God. In the conclusion of this presentation, I extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Khair Al-Din Khojah, who honored me by writing this preface to him at the beginning of this blessed work.

May God’s peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

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**29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - Doha-Qatar**

## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	15
AKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	17
THE FORM OF RESEARCH .....	20
<i>Chapter 1</i> :.....	24
1.1 PART I.....	24
1.1.1 Introduction.....	24
1.1.2 The importance of the topic.....	29
1.1.3 Reasons for choosing this topic.....	30
1.1.4 Issues involved and questions pertaining to this research .....	30
1.1.5 Earlier studies .....	31
1.1.6 Method of research.....	35
1.2 PART II.....	36
1.2.1 Sayyid Qutb’s Birth. ....	36
1.2.2 His upbringing and growth .....	38
1.2.3 Characteristics of his childhood.....	39
1.2.4 His trips and his scholarly activity.....	40
1.2.5 His activity and works.....	47
1.2.6 His martyrdom.....	55
<i>Chapter 2</i> :.....	60
2.1 PART I :.....	60
2.2 PART II :.....	81
2.2.1 The description made by Shaykh Manna’a al-Kattan who said: .....	82

2.2.2 The comments made by prof.dr. Adnan Muhammad Zarzur who writes:.....	83
2.2.3 The description by Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi who writes: .....	85
2.2.4 The description by the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh who says:.....	87
2.2.5 The description of prof.dr. Nusair Zarwaq who writes: .....	89
2.2.6 The description of sheikh Salman al-Awdah, he writes: .....	90
2.2.7 The description of sheikh Hammud bin uklaa'a al-Shuaibi who said:.....	92
2.2.8 The description of the author of this book: prof.dr. Hajredin Hoxha, who says:..	96
2.3 PART III.....	98
2.3.1 Sayyid Qutb's method in his commentary .....	98
<i>Chapter 3 :</i> .....	106
3.1 PART I :.....	106
3.1.1 Reasons for choosing Surah al-An'am. ....	106
3.1.2 Topics of the Surah .....	110
3.1.3 Name and reason for the Surah .....	114
3.1.4 On the value of this Surah and its descent.....	116
3.1.5 Some general ways of exhortation, da'wah in the Noble Qur'an .....	119
3.2 PART II.....	124
3.2.1 Characteristics and specifics of Qutb's method in understanding the verses pertaining to da'wah. ....	124
3.2.2 Exhorting Muslims to reforms (improvement) through the following ways: ....	126
3.2.3 The correcting of the method of thinking, investigating, and exhorting according to the gnostic and educational method .....	155
3.2.4 Exhorting unbelievers to Islam, through the following ways:.....	160
3.2.5 The Qur'ani method in defeating the ignoranc conceptions, through the following steps:.....	173
<i>Chapter 4 :</i> .....	200

4.1 PART I : .....200

    4.1.1 The caller’s qualities in the Qur’anic method.....200

4.2 PART II : .....234

    4.2.1 Views on Sayyid Qutb’s method.....234

    4.2.2 Conclusion and suggestions .....244

## ***ABSTRACT***

The purpose of this study is the investigation of the method followed by Sayyid Qutb in understanding the verses of the Qur'an pertaining to *da'wah*, as expounded in his *Tafsir Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an*, and Surah al-An'am in particular. The reason for such an undertaking was the observation of different deviations from the method of the Qur'an in the matter, which necessitated a clarification of the steps in the Qur'anic method of calling people to God. A great number of callers appeared, some of whom had not understood the philosophy of *da'wah* and its principles. One of those that we deem to have understood *da'wah* in accordance with the wholesome method of the Qur'an was the honoured martyr, prof. Sayyid Qutb.

The present researcher has applied the inductive, objective, and analytical method during his research in order to bring to light the ideas of Sayyid Qutb on this subject as expounded in the latter's numerous writings, and especially in the commentary of Surah al-An'am.

The method of Sayyid Qutb in the understanding of *da'wah* consists in the principle of concentrating on the change of *da'wah* in the Noble Qur'an, the exhortation for the improvement of the practicing Muslims, as well as the clarification of the method of the Qur'an in defeating the ignorant conceptions of the pre-revelation period, and the rectification of their intellectual and theoretical method leading to the gnostic and ethical method. Furthermore, this method also implies the exhorting of non-believers to Islam in several ways, such as: pondering on the signs in the Universe, goodly dialogue, and paying attention to the circumstances and their reality.

This method obliges the caller to rely on the call to God, and not on appeals to nation, general morals, or society. This method manifests the spiritual, intellectual, and ethical qualities that must be present in a caller.



## ***AKNOWLEDGEMENT***

I must express my sincere thanks and gratitude to God Almighty from beginning to end, who bestowed upon me countless blessings and benefits, among which is the completion of this work within the required time.

Secondly, my words of thanks go to my professor and mentor Prof.Dr. Su'ad Yildirim - may God preserve him! – who never spared his constructive advice and beneficial help, and never felt burdened by numerous readings of this work, until it was completed in the present form.

I also thank and express my gratitude to the second member of the commission, Prof.Dr. Gamal Ahmad Bashir Badi – may God reward him with the best – who played a major role in the development of the idea of this dissertation and in its methodological shaping until the final form, praise be to God!

My special thanks and gratitude is also for Prof.Dr Abd al-Qahhar Dawud al-Ani who read this dissertation with attention and voluntarily, expressing his pertinent views that helped in the scholarly level of the study!

I am also thankful and grateful to my sincere brother Azad Ali, who played a major role towards the final form and contents of this dissertation!

I must thank my dear professors who teach in the International Islamic University of Malaysia, especially the members of the scientific board in the department of Qur'anic and Sunnah studies!

Finally, I cannot not thank wholeheartedly the Islamic adviser to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Kuala Lumpur Shaykh

Abd al-Rahman Sa'd al-Zayr - may God preserve him! – who offered me with the excellent opportunity to use his precious library.

I dedicate this first work to all those that I mentioned above and everyone else who advised me on this dissertation, by thanking them again and praying to the Lord Almighty to reward them with His countless blessings, for the sake of Islam and the Muslims, for the help they offered!

Verily, God Almighty is the Best of those who are requested and the most Generous Giver.

## ***DEDICATION***

*I dedicate this work to my dear parents and brothers who gave everything precious so that I may study my religion and the Qur'an!*

*To my dear wife who is my life's companion and who paid great care and attention during the time of preparing this dissertation!*

*To martyrs who fell in the land of Kosova at the hands of the Serbian killing army.*

*To preachers, imamas, students, and callers to Islam across the world.*

*-I pray to God the Mighty to place this modest work in the scale of my good deeds on the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any avail. Amen!*

## ***THE FORM OF RESEARCH***

This dissertation comprises four chapters and the epilogue.

**In the first, introductory chapter.** I have pointed out the importance of the subject, issues involved in this work, earlier studies, and the method and form of the research. This chapter deals with the life, activities, and thoughts of Sayyid Qutb by concentrating on the birth, upbringing, childhood characteristics, his trips, his activities, and his joining the movement of Muslim Brotherhood, followed by his works and martyrdom.

**The second chapter** deals with the principles, rules, and foundations of Sayyid Qutb's thought in a more detailed manner. I have dealt with the qualities of the caller as reflected in the Qur'anic method, with the intellectual training of the caller, as well as the psychological portrait of the caller, starting from the spiritual and ethical aspects. Then I have studied the aspect of the behaviour of the caller, and particular qualities thereof, such as: patience, kindness, compassion, tolerance, magnanimity, as well as the knowledge of what he exhorts to in the best way, the knowledge of the culture and times in which he acts and lives. I have also paid attention to the manner in which non-believers are to be invited to Islam, based on polite dialogue and kindly exhortation, as well as relying on reflection and meditation upon signs in the Universe.

**In the third chapter** I have emphasized the general method followed by Sayyid Qutb in his exegesis of the Qur'an, touching upon some opinions by scholars regarding his work, and then I have dealt with

the main features of his *Dhilal*. Further, I have considered the method followed by the Qur'an in defeating the concepts and notions of the period of ignorance as it progresses across the Qur'anic text. Then I have dealt with the attention that must be paid to the specific situation of individuals and people who are exhorted by the caller. The chapter ends with some observations on the method followed by Sayyid Qutb, as well as the critiques levelled against his work, followed by an epilogue and a few suggestions.

**In chapter four** I have approached the issue of the call made by the Noble Qur'an to human nature. Then I have expounded on the question of the call (*da'wah*) and its preferred way as expounded in Chapter al-An'am. In the beginning I have emphasized the reasons for choosing this Surah, its topics and name, as well its importance, and the reasons for its revelation. I have dealt with the methods of *da'wah* in the Noble Qur'an in general and the characteristics and specifics of Sayyid Qutb's approach in understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah* in particular. The chapter continues with the question of the exhortation of Muslims to improvement, namely the bettering of society according to the Qur'anic method. I have also taken a look at the rectification of the method of thinking, investigation, and *da'wah* in accordance with the gnostic and ethical approach, and then I have offered my own conclusion and suggestions.

I have divided the views of Sayyid Qutb into two groups: The particular group which involves views that I have noted during my study of his exegesis and method, and the general group which involves the views of other scholars on his work and certain recommendations.

I pray to God Almighty to accept this modest effort from me and I hope He shall count it among my good deeds on the Day when neither

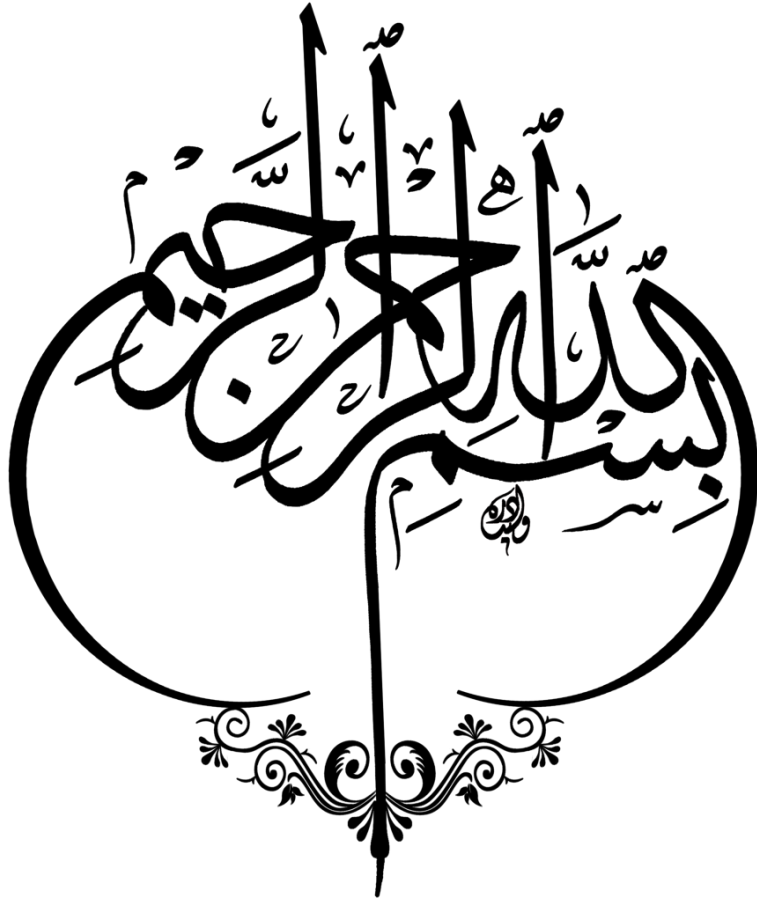
wealth nor children will avail, except for him who has come to his Lord with a pure heart!

If I have met the truth, this is from God and a blessing for me, and if there are shortcomings they are from the accursed devil and my own self.

I pray to God Almighty to forgive me, have mercy on me, and guide me to the straight path!

I also ask the sincere readers to never hesitate in freely expressing their advice, instructions, and methodological views, for which I shall remain grateful to them in any circumstance.

I have tried to do my best in this study, being fully aware of my lack of perfection, quite the opposite... My last prayer is, *praise belongs to God the Lord of the worlds.*



*In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent,  
the Most Merciful*

# **Chapter 1 :**

## **Importance of the study, life, works, and activities of Sayyid Qutb**

### **1.1 PART I**

#### **1.1.1 Introduction**

All praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and the benedictions and greetings are for the most revered prophet and messenger, our master Muhammad, his Purified progeny, and all of his companions and those who follow his path and adhere to his Sunnah until the Day of Judgement!

O Lord! Take us out of the darkness of illusion and grant us the light of understanding and make us from those who pay heed to the words and follow the best therein. Amen!

Verily, the path of exhorting in the path of God Almighty is one of the most honoured paths in general, as confirmed by the Qur'anic verse:

*“And who is better in speech than him who prayeth unto his Lord and doeth right, and saith: Lo! I am of those who are muslims (surrender unto Him)?”* (Fussilat, 33).

Naturally when there is a shortage of callers and an abundance of misdeeds, when ignorance dominates, as is the case today, which is none



the less in accordance to God's Power, Islamic call is an individual obligation.<sup>1</sup>

This path is the way of the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him), and those who followed him. It is the way adopted since Adam (peace be with him) all the way to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (Blessings and peace be with him). In this context, God the Almighty says:

***“He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein.”*** (Qur'an, al-Shura: 13).

The nature of this path is not paved with flowers and roses, nor is it easy and smooth for everyone to walk comfortably on it, quite the contrary... In accordance with the Wisdom of God this path is full of thorns, spikes, and obstacles, and it is very difficult to tread. Therefore, the caller needs to exert himself in patience and have reliance on God, by praying to Him at all times and places, in hardship and comfort, until he accomplishes his goal; and to exhort people to the path of God. In this context, God Almighty addresses the Prophet (Blessings and peace be with him) with the following words:

***“Then have patience (O Muhammad) even as the stout of heart among the messengers (of old) had patience, and seek not to hasten on***

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<sup>1</sup> *Min aqwali samahat al Sheikh Abdulaziz Abdullah bin Baz fi el Da'wa*, Darul-watan lin-nashri wa al-tawzi'a; 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1413 H., p. 16.

*(the doom) for them.*” (al-Ahqaf, 35). These words are also addressed to the believers in general!

This path requires wisdom, common sense, eloquence, and kindly discourse on the part of the caller, as these constitute premises for success in his call (*da'wah*). Due to the importance of this issue, God Almighty says:

***“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.”*** (al-Nahl, 125).

In order for the caller to the way of God the Almighty to be active and successful in his work, he must adorn himself with the morals of the prophets and the Qur'an, and to possess praisable qualities in words and deeds. In order for this important success to be achieved, God says:

***“O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? It is most hateful in the sight of God that ye say that which ye do not.”*** (al-Saff, 2-3).

God Almighty also says,

***“Verily thou art of a tremendous nature.”*** (al-Qalam, 4).

***“Enjoin ye righteousness upon mankind while ye yourselves forget (to practise it)? And ye are readers of the Scripture! Have ye then no sense?”*** (al-Baqara, 44).

Sternness and fierceness in words are not among the qualities of the successful callers, a principle which is confirmed by the Noble Qur'an:

***“It was by the mercy of Allah that thou wast lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs.”*** (Al-i Imran, 159).

Yet, given that nowadays the straying of a great number of callers from the method of the Qur’an in calling people to God and their distancing from the instructions of exhortation has become a reality, the need is felt more than ever to train apt scholars who will determine the steps of the Qur’anic method of exhortation and will establish principles and lay the foundations which are very necessary for the accomplishing of this task.

This straying has come about due to several circumstances and factors:

*\* Differing concepts among people regarding the philosophy of da’wah and its religious and educational dimensions.*

*\* Different attitudes and multiple visions of specialists in different domains.*

*\* Ignoring the situation and reality of people; and:*

*\* Limited knowledge on the principles of the Shari’ah.*

One of the callers who appeared in Muslim world during the first half of the twentieth century and who understood properly the Qur’anic method of exhortation was the honoured professor, martyr of Islam, Sayyid Qutb (may God have mercy on his soul).

The martyred professor Sayyid Qutb differs from other callers across the Muslim world with regards to his unique and precise method which is characterized by its educational, religious, and applied dimensions, as can be seen clearly in all his works, especially in his magnum opus *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* ("Under the shade of the Qur'an"). It was the will of God Almighty for this unique conception and for the martyrdom of its author in this path to become examples for all Muslims, especially the callers to Islam, until the Day of Judgment.

We deem it necessary to mention our conviction about the value and position of *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*. This work is truly significant in many aspects, and therefore a caller or an intellectual devoted to Islam who is deprived of it will be deprived of much good, because the author has dealt with every topic related to contemporary *da'wah*, be it directly or indirectly. Also, this tafsir serves as introductory and preliminary literature in dealing with many *da'wah*-related questions in Muslim world, concerning the ideal manner of an Islamic approach which can lead us out of this negative atmosphere where we find ourselves and serve as the alternative.

In this work, Sayyid Qutb offers us the peak of his thought and great experience. His book constituted an intellectual novelty and revolution in the world *da'wah* against the Egyptian socialist political system, the nationalist Arab world and for the Islamic world which had fallen into lethargy. The government of Abdun-Nasser penalized every library and institution that tried to publish this book,<sup>2</sup> as it claimed that the book called to religious extremism and was considered as a nest for many problems in the world!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This was the situation in Syria during the 1980's, which made it very hard to find a copy of *Tafsir Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an* for the reasons we mentioned earlier.

<sup>3</sup> Numerous websites contain studies and article which are full of accusations, slander, and lies against martyr Sayyid Qutb.

However, as we shall show in the course of this work, the truth is the very opposite! Thanks to God the Almighty and owing to the sincerity of its author this book achieved great authority and a high position among the callers in the Islamic world as well as non-Islamic world, thus gaining supporters and followers. Perhaps this is the reason that led the orientalist Olivier Carré to write in the introduction to his book *Mystique et politique: le Coran des islamistes - Commentaire coranique de Sayyid Qutb* (1906-1966): “***The Muslim Brotherhood and the Qutbists...***”<sup>4</sup> due to the large number of the followers of the martyred professor.

The book *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an* and its author deserve to be studied by scholars and researchers, and it can rightly be said that, as Dr. Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Halidi pointed out: “*There are very few cases when the name fits completely with the named. Sayyid Qutb is one of those in whom there is congruity between the name and the named, as he is both a master and a pole.*”<sup>5</sup>

### **1.1.2 The importance of the topic**

The subject of this work is rather important, as it constitutes one of the first studies of the kind. There are several studies on martyr Sayyid Qutb, namely regarding his life, thought, and general work, and it is my opinion that the author has been offended in different ways, without the researchers having made enough efforts to clarify his thoughts and method of da’wah as expounded in his *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*,

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<sup>4</sup> Olivier Carré, *op. cit.*, Paris, 2004, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Halidi, *Sayyid Qutb al-shahid al-hayy*; Amman: Maktabat al-Aksa, n.d., p. 11.

especially his method in understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah*, and the goals and purposes therein!

### **1.1.3 Reasons for choosing this topic**

The reasons which led me to choose this topic are the following:

*\* The author of this method whom I will study is one of the contemporary callers to Islam, and he enjoys great authority and wide respect among Muslim nations and scholars.*

*\* His distinction by a specific method in understanding the verses pertaining to da'wah, which is based on theory and practice.*

*\* The wide acceptance of his Qur'anic exegesis among people; and:*

*\* The attractive literary method in writings and his great knowledge on the Western culture, their way of thinking, their lifestyle, as well as their social and phsycological condition.*

### **1.1.4 Issues involved and questions pertaining to this research**

The main issue which the present researcher seeks to address and clarify is the method followed by Sayyid Qutb in understanding the verses dealing with *da'wah* as expounded in his exegesis *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* ("Under the Shade of the Qur'an") and particularly the Chapter al-An'am as a concrete example.

A noticeable straying in the method of calling to God the Almighty has been observed in recent times, since in general the callers have not applied the Qur'anic method in their exhortation to His way. Many preachers of Islam have no clear vision in their speeches, cermons, general activities about the priorities in exhorting others to Islam. They pay no attention to the nature and styles of da'wah in meccan and medinan era. That is why this study is considered as a guiding map and clear navigation for the students and Muslim scholars which prof. Sayyid Qutb tried to explain it in his commentary.

Some of the questions in this study<sup>6</sup> which I shall try to shed light on are:

1. *What about the thought and the works of Prof. Sayyid Qutb?*
2. *What about his method in Quran interpretation?*
3. *What does exhortation to God Almighty consist of according to his understanding?*
4. *What are some applied methods of exhorting to Islam from Qutb's point of view?*
5. *What must be taken into consideration when people are exhorted?*
6. *After all, is prof. Sayyid Qutb an extremist Muslim scholar?*

### **1.1.5 Earlier studies**

I have not found any earlier study about this topic in particular which deals with the method followed by Sayyid Qutb in his exegesis of the verses on *da'wah*, and I believe this is the first work on the subject.

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<sup>6</sup> After researching and carefully reading this study, I understood that it corresponds to the questions I raised earlier.

As for general works on the life of Sayyid Qutb, his morals, and his exegesis, they abound, and below I quote some of the titles.

Works by Dr. Abdul-Fatah Salah al-Halidi that enjoy great authority in comparison to other writings on Sayyid Qutb and his scientific opus. He offered many useful thoughts for the present-day and future generations with regards to the work of this great Muslim thinker. He has compiled a special volume on the life of Sayyid Qutb which is entitled, *Sayyid Qutb, min al-milad illa al-istishhad* (“Sayyid Qutb from birth to martyrdom”).

He has also compiled another work entitled *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy* (“Sayyid Qutb the Living Martyr”). Prof. Halidi has also written a book on the *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, whose title is *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an fi al-mizan – dirasa wa taqwim*. (“A Critical Study of Sayyid Qutb’s Tafsir”).

As we can see, the titles of the books clearly point to their contents and to the fact that a scholar on Sayyid Qutb must refer to the precious works written by Dr. Halidi. He has also written another book whose title is *al-Manhaj al-haraka fi al-dhilal* (“The Dynamic Method in *al-Dhilal*”).

There is a study by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Dulayyim al-Dulayyim al-Kahtani entitled *Sayyid Qutb, el-muftara alayhi*<sup>7</sup> which is part of the series defending the personality of Sayyid Qutb and his knowledge. It deals briefly with his life, and points out important elements on criticism and the principles of criticism. It also underlines the reasons that led him to write this work. The author also deals with questions from the Islamic creed, pantheism, *istiwa’*, and the Divine Names and Attributes, regarding which many accusations were levelled against Sayyid Qutb. He clarifies that all these accusations are

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<sup>7</sup> Muhammad ibn Dulayyim al-Dulayyim al-Kahtani, *Sayyid Qutb al-Muftara alayhi*; Riyad, Dar al-tayyiba, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1413 A.H.



consequences of partial readings of his exegesis and not a result of a concentrated and precise reading of his work.

Prof. Abdul-Fatah Ali has written a work entitled *Sayyid Qutb, sira dhatiya*<sup>8</sup> in which he deals with the life of Sayyid Qutb in a summarized fashion, and with the social and political ambience in which he lived, as well as certain signals and signs which showed that he would play an important role in the future.

The author points out that Sayyid Qutb was a prose writer and a poet, and that his poetry originated from the depth of his soul, being inspired by the circumstances in which Muslims lived in Islamic countries under British colonial rule.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps Muhammad Taufiq Barakat's study, *Sayyid Qutb - hulasati hayatihi*<sup>10</sup> with its dynamic and critical method is one of the closest to the subject of our own study. The author deals with the life of Sayyid Qutb and his method by relying in part on *al-Dhilal*. This work summarizes all thirteen parts commented upon by Sayyid Qutb in his *Dhilal*. This partial study can be considered as a reliable treatment of the method followed by martyr Sayyid Qutb.

There is also a study by Dr Fahd al-Rumi<sup>11</sup> on the doctrines of exegesis in the fourteenth Islamic century dealing with the creedal doctrine in exegesis, the Sunni method, the Shi'i method, the Ibadi

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<sup>8</sup> Abdul-Fatah Ali, *Sayyid Qutb - sira dhatiyya*; Kuwait, Sharikat al-Rabi'a li al-nashri wa al-tawzi'a, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1996.

<sup>9</sup> For further information see Imam Hasan al-Banna, *Fahm al-Islam fi dhilal al-usul al-ishrin*; Jum'atu Amin Abdulaziz, Alexandria, Dar al-da'wa li al-nashr wa al-tawzi'a, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1991, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Taufiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb hulasatu hayatih*; Manhaju'hu fil-harakati wa-naqd al-muwajjah ilayhi; n.d.

<sup>11</sup> Fahd ibn Abdurrahman ibn Sulayman al-Rumi, *It-tixhahat al-tafsir fil-karn al-rabi' ashar*; (Ph.D. dissertation), Riyad, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1986.

method, and the Sufi method. Then the author deals with the scientific doctrines of tafsir, the experimental method, and the attitude of the rationalist and sociological schools on exegesis.

Then he deals with the doctrine and literary method in exegesis, especially Sayyid Qutb's tafsir. He points out that Qutb's method is marked by his style due to its literary characteristics. He also points out the principles on which the said exegesis is based.

May God reward Dr. Fahd al-Rumi for this voluminous work which he prepared for the callers of all Islamic regions! Yet, his opinion that the *Tafsir* of Sayyid Qutb falls in the category of the literary method in exegesis is disputable.<sup>12</sup>

In short, these were some most important earlier studies related to the field, but which differ completely from what I intend to investigate in the present study. However, let's not forget also some other contemporary Arabic, American, Western bias and non objective studies, articles, reports, documentaries which were funded by suspicious academic or political institutions blaming, accusing falsely prof. Sayyid Qutb for his writings, ideas and his religious and political opinions. They accuse him for being responsible for the deaths of hundreds of innocent people in Afghanistan, in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, etc, for which they proved nothing from his writings, statements or his commentary,

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<sup>12</sup> It seems to me that Dr. Fahd ibn Abdurahman ibn Sulayman al-Rumi is far from the target when he writes that Sayyid Qutb's method is characterized by literary nuances. The latter's method is a revolutionary and dynamic da'wah as emphasized by the author himself in several places of his Tafsir: "A Method based on the Book of God"; "Milestones on the road" where he invites Muslims "...to start from the beginning and to raise the banner of No god but God in calling for the snatching of power from the hands of the tyrants and return it to God who is One and Almighty, the One to whom belongs the power of the heavens and earth ...". Although the literary, linguistic, and rhetorical aspects are clear in his method, this only means that he had a great mastery of language!

therefore I desqualify all these false and bias accusations, studies, reports, verdicts and statement against prof.Sayyid Qutb, hence I have excluded all those bias statements and reports full of hatred, islamophobic as well xenophobic in this section o previous studies, and God the Almighty knows best.

Finally, my introduction to this study is that of a caller, a cleric who relies on the methods, means, and instructions stated in the Noble Qur'an.

### **1.1.6 Method of research**

In this dissertation, I have applied the inductive topical method, following the words of Sayyid Qutb on issues pertaining to this study.

The analytical method<sup>13</sup> of the passages quoted from his exegesis of the verses pertaining to *da'wah* in the Chapter al-An'am in particular, and his *Tafsir* in general reinforce the facts related to the independent matters which the martyred professor did not emphasize in the exegesis of this chapter. The nature of this research forced me to undertake such a step in order to complete Sayyid Qutb's line of thought. I will also quote from other sources written by Sayyid Qutb, or from works written on him.

My treatment of the topics of this study and its division into chapters are based mainly on the fundamental principles of *da'wah*, on which Sayyid Qutb relied in his exegesis in general, and in Chapter al-An'am in particular, as well as to address the three questions raised earlier.

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<sup>13</sup> General note: The following pages of this dissertation deal with the methodological principles of Sayyid Qutb in understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah*: 70-73, 75-78, 80, 87, 90, 93-94, 99, 100, 104, 108, 113, 117, 121, 124, 128-129, 131, 135, 141-142, 148-149, 154, 160-161.

## 1.2 PART II

### 1.2.1 Sayyid Qutb's Birth.

Sayyid ibn Qutb ibn Ibrahim ibn Hasan al-Shadhili was born on October 10<sup>th</sup> , 1906 in the Mosha village of the Asyut municipality. He was the first son after his sister who was three years older. He also had a brother from his father, who was much older than him. His mother was very happy with his birth, especially given that her husband belonged to the peasant Sa'idi society which considered males as wealth, pride, and abundance.<sup>14</sup>

Sayyid Qutb (may God have mercy upon him) was born in a peasant Sa'idi society which was experiencing difficult times, poverty, ignorance, different sicknesses, poor agriculture, and tyrant rulers. Their lives were dominated by traditional legends and innovations (*bid'ah*) which were taken advantage of by individuals to make money and intrigues.<sup>15</sup>

His father was doing well economically; he was a generous man, in possession of a relatively large piece of land which enabled him to meet the needs of his family, and to pay off debts by selling areas from his land.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Khayr al-Din Zaraqli, *al-A'alam Qamus al-Tarajim*, Dar al-'ilm lil-malayin, Beirut, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 1987, vol. III, pp. 147-148.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Husayn Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa adabuh*, al-Mansuriya, Dar al-wafa li al-tiba'ah wa al-nashr, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1986, p. 17, c.n. *Tifl fi al-qaryah*, pp. 211-212, Abd al-Fatah Salah al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb - al-shahid al-hayy*, p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb - hulasatu hayatihi, manjajuhu fi al-harakat, al-naqd al-muwajjah ilayh*, p. 22.

His father (may God have mercy on his soul) was a swift and wise man who collaborated with a daily newspaper, as well as being a member of the Committee of the National Party. As the chief of his family he enjoyed great respect and repute in his village and looked after his authority. He was a determined, emotional man full of energies who was not like the wealthy people that belonged to wealthy families in villages.<sup>17</sup>

Sayyid Qutb describes his father in one of his books with the following words:

***“Ever since I was a little child you implanted in me the fear of the Day of Judgment. You did not exhort me, but rather you lived before my eyes with wariness of the Day of Judgment which you remembered in words and deeds. You were mindful in your actions and tolerant to those who harmed you with a view to that Day. And even though you could get even with them you forgave them to earn the reward on the Day of Resurrection. Your picture is etched into my mind, and I still remember your recitation of the Chapter al-Fatiha in the evenings when you would bestow its reward to the soul of your father. We were young children and would repeat your words even though we did not remember all of them!”***<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuhu wa adabuh*, p. 18, c.n. *Tifl fi al-qaryah*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuhu wa adabuh*, p. 18; *Tiflun fi al-qaryah*, p. 7.



*Prof.Sayyid Qutb first from the left in Algeria's conference 1950 with Algerian famous great scholar Sheikh Ibrahim el Beshiri*

## 1.2.2 His upbringing and growth

Sayyid Qutb had a childhood which differed from that of other children in his environment. He grew up in a noble religious and intellectual family which was prosperous “...and he turned out to be a distinguished child, with a poetic spirit who would develop and exercise these features and these sentiments amongst relatives and friends at school.”<sup>19</sup>

At school the head teacher showed a particular care for him, offering him lessons half-privately in class. Thus did Sayyid Qutb grow up in his village where he gained two important elements: “**Self-confidence and the good hope which had been imparted to him by his mother since birth...**”<sup>20</sup>

In the elegy dedicated to his mother in 1940, he writes:

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<sup>19</sup> *Sayyid Qutb - al-Muftara alayhi*, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*; p. 7.

*“I imagine myself as a unique being ever since I was in the cradle; you offered me hope from birth and in my mind, I believed I was a great person who would pursue the obligations that followed from this greatness which was a fruit of your dreams coming from your motherly instinct!”<sup>21</sup>*

There is no doubt that this is precisely the attitude that upright and good children must have towards their parents: to know the virtues and not deny the blessings and value of their parents. Likewise, the mothers of today must treat their children in the same way.

### **1.2.3 Characteristics of his childhood**

Sayyid Qutb’s childhood was marked by several characteristics:

a. His reflections on the Qur’anic texts and examples, as Qutb himself alludes in the following words:

*“When I was a child, I would read the Qur’an and I could understand neither its meanings nor its purposes, but I always felt something inside of me. My naive illusion envisaged concrete forms while reading the Qur’an. This was the simple form, but it pleased my soul and nourished my mind. One of the forms I imagined during the reading of the Qur’an regarded the verse: “And among mankind is he who worshippeth God upon a narrow marge so that if good befalleth him he is content therewith, but if a trial befalleth him, he falleth away utterly. He loseth both the world and the Hereafter. That is the sheer loss.” (al-Hajj, 11). Here I would envisage a man standing on a high place in a valley, on which he would pray but who could not stand straight and*

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<sup>21</sup> “Sayyid Qutb, *Hayatuhu wa adabuh*, p. 20. (quoted from *Majallah al-risalah*, October 1940, no. 381, p. 1602).

*was always leaning sideways, about to fall. His movements would give me a strange satisfaction and happiness...”*

b. His great desire to read and study, especially books on the charismatic acts of the friends of God and His devout servants from Islamic history, as well as other scientific and cultural literature.<sup>22</sup>

c. His stern criticism against wrongdoers and tyrants, his hatred of the colonizers and their collaborators who openly influenced the spread of poverty, social and cultural regress and corruption, as well as violation of the laws. Whenever he thought of this, he would feel shame for having not reacted against this evil that had seized his people.<sup>23</sup>

#### **1.2.4 His trips and his scholarly activity**

Sayyid Qutb learned the *hifdh-memorization* of the Qur’an by himself when he was ten years old, in order to secure the right to study in the school he wanted to be. Most of the village children had left the school, due to the spreading of the opinion that there was no longer any interest in learning the Qur’an by heart...<sup>24</sup>

Afterwards, Sayyid decided to continue his education. At the age of fourteen he left his village and went to Cairo, where he lived with his maternal uncle who worked in education and was a journalist. The young Sayyid aspired to become refined as his uncles. With a concrete goal in his mind he enrolled in a teachers’ training school, namely ‘Abd al-Aziz School, and he focused all his energies in order to accomplish his final

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<sup>22</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Hayatuhu wa adabuh*, p. 21 (c.n. “Majallah al-risalah”, Oct. 1940, no. 381, p. 196).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. See also Abdul-Fatah Ali, *Sayyid Qutb, sirah dhatiyya*.

<sup>24</sup> Abd al-Fatah Ali, *Sayyid Qutb, sirah dhatiyya*, pp. 20-21. See also Sayyid Qutb, *Khulasat hayatih*, p. 9.



goal by outperforming all others and successfully obtaining a certificate as an elementary school teacher.

In 1929 he was enrolled in the faculty of teaching **Dar al-‘Ulum** from which he graduated in 1933. Afterwards he was appointed a teacher in the same faculty due to his excellent grades. He was also employed by the Ministry of Education as an elementary school teacher, and his wage was six Egyptian pounds.<sup>25</sup>

During his presence in school and at the faculty he met the famous writer and professor Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad<sup>26</sup> who was the leader of literary reforms in Egypt. Qutb followed him closely and became his sincere student. He was impressed by Akkad’s swiftness, competence, and erudition. He describes their meeting in the following words:

***“Akkad is a very impressive personality for all of us, and we all hope to be able to amend this present individual literary confusion which can even affect social chaos and upheavals that threaten this society. We think of him as a man who stands unswervingly before the difficulties he has faced throughout his personal life and his general activities in life!”***<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Husayn Abd al-Baqi, *Sayyid Qutb Hayatuh wa adabuh*, pp. 28-26, taken from file no 5/22-125 of the Ministry of Education. It contains official data on Qutb on which I based his biographical account, rather than use other sources. See *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Abbas ibn Mahmud ibn Ibrahim ibn Mustafa al-Akkad (1889-1964) enjoyed a great authority in Egyptian literature. He is the author of many works and a prolific writer. He came from Himyat and was a descendant of a silk worker, hence his surname Akkad. His father married a Kurdish girl from Aswan who bore him Abbas. In his childhood, he learned English, then German, and then French. He wrote for different newspapers and authored popular articles. He published 83 books from different domains with a high literary style, such as *Abkariyat Muhammad Anil-lah, Raj’ a Abi al-Ala; al-Fusul, Muraja’at fi al-adab wa al-funun; Abkariyat ‘Umar*; etc. He has also been called the champion of poetry. See Zaraqli, *al-A’alam*, vol. III, p. 266.

<sup>27</sup> *Sayyid Qutb Hayatuh wa adabuh*, c.n. *Majallat al-usbu’I*, June 1934, 4/31, p. 28.

On March 1, 1940 Sayyid Qutb entered the General Inspection Department of Culture in the Ministry of Science as an editor, and 6 weeks later he joined the Office of Translations and Statistics. On July 1, 1944 he started working as an inspector of elementary education. In April 1945 he returned to the General Inspection Department of Culture, and this time marks the beginning of his steps in literary critique and the shaping of his specific literary method. The fruit of this activity were two critical works, *Qutb wa shahsiyaat*, and *al-Naqd al-adabi, usuluhu wa manahijuhu*. His literary criticism earned him opponents who nonetheless helped his career.<sup>28</sup>

From what has been said so far, it can be seen clearly that Sayyid Qutb was an independent intellectual who relied in himself and in his rational and literary talents. His writings from this period show a penchant for strong criticisms and a sarcastic tongue which became the cause for his loss of many friends and well-wishers due to his disagreements with their ideas. It is said that even his teacher Abbas Akkad distanced himself from Qutb, without any words of praise for his literary criticism.<sup>29</sup>

On November 3, 1948 Sayyid Qutb departed for the United States of America<sup>30</sup> with a scholarly delegation of the Ministry of Education in order to study the principles of the American methods in education and pedagogy. It would seem that the reason why Qutb was sent abroad was the fact that the state had already understood the danger threatening the establishment due to the criticism in his writings, and therefore they decided that the only way to distance him from his Islamic ideas and goals

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32. See Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb, Khulasat hayatih*, p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Zaraqli, *al-A'alam*, vol. 3, pp. 147-148.

was to send him to the United States where he would hopefully change opinion and concepts, and replace them with American notions and ideas, ***“they plot, but Allah (also) plotteth; and Allah is the best of plotters”*** (al-Anfal, 30).<sup>31</sup>

Yet, the trip to America completely changed Sayyid Qutb’s thought but in the opposite direction to what the government had hoped, because his faith and convictions became strengthened even more. He became certain that the Islamic faith and the Islamic system of life are true and that what others possessed was false and insignificant. After his return from America, Sayyid Qutb authored the book *America al-lati ra’aytu* and he began to feel his responsibility as a caller to Islam and as a thinker. The Egyptian government expected Qutb to become its supporter after his return to Egypt. But people wish a thing and God wills something else which is what takes place ultimately. This is the divine law but most of people know not. Qutb became a strong opponent of the state according to their conception, and precisely for these ideas he paid with his life!<sup>32</sup>

**Prof.Sayyid Qutb in the USA,  
and his book:  
United States of America from**



<sup>31</sup> Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi in his book *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy* points out the reasons why Qutb was sent to America, and adds that: *“Apart from their goal to get him out of Cairo, they wanted to make him change his mind and equip him with the American culture, so that he would become a partisan of America upon his return, because the United States trained Egyptian leaders in order to fulfil its projects. They offered him a special program for the corruption of his morals, ideas, and soul, but they failed again because God had determined another path!”* p. 126.

<sup>32</sup> *Sayyid Qutb, sira dhatiyya*, pp. 33, 39. *Sayyid Qutb, khulusatu hayatih*, p. 9; *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa adabuh*, pp. 32-42.

## 2. Joining the Muslim Brothers ( al Ikhwan al Muslimun)<sup>33</sup>

The founding leader of Muslim Brothers Sheikh Imam Hasan al-Banna<sup>34</sup> (*may God have mercy on his soul*) with his Islamic personality and his erudition influenced the training of the Muslim Brothers for calling in the path of God. He had found harmony between his soul, his knowledge, and his movement on the one hand, and the different Islamic schools, including Sufism and Salafism on the other hand, as reflected in the

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<sup>33</sup> For more details on his cooperation with the Muslim Brothers, see *Sayyid Qutb al-shahid al-hayy*, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup> Imam Hasan ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Banna was born in 1906 in Mahmudiyya near Alexandria, and he was martyred in 1946. He is the founder of Muslim Brothers of Egypt and the main leader of this movement. He graduated from the Dar al-ulum school in Cairo and worked in education. He visited many countries in order to learn about their lifestyles and traditions, and then taught in Isma'iliyah where he gained sincere followers who would help him in raising the banner of Islam, and he called himself a "general guide". They started inviting to religion through lectures, publications, and instructions by visiting other places. He set up centres in many locations and made Isma'iliya the centre of the call. He did not call only men but rather opened an Institute for mothers of believers, to educate girls with Islamic manners. His call began to spread massively, until the number of his followers became half a million. The government feared his influence and tried to buy him off in order to convince him not to enter politics. In one of his sermons, the Shaykh said: "*The Islamic religion is faith, worship, love for the country, citizenship, tolerance; it is power, morals, matter, culture, and law.*"

Muslim Brothers participated in the Palestinian war, and they were among the most active fighters. After a short time, while Hasan al-Banna was standing in front of the Islamic Youth Centre in Cairo, three persons assassinated him. He was a capable speaker who held sermons filled with Qur'anic verses, and he worked continuously. He has written many diaries and autobiographical works. See *Zaraqli al-a'alam*, vol. II, pp. 183-185. For a more detailed treatment of al-Banna, his movement, and activities, see Ali Abdul-Halim Mahmud, *Manhaj al-tarbiyah al-ihwan al-muslimin - dirasa tahliliya*, Darul-wafa'I li al-tiba'ati wa al-nashr, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1992, vol. I, pp. 10-27. This is the best book written on the history of the Muslim Brothers.

organizational structure of the society. This structure was distinguished for being a collective work<sup>35</sup> in the form of an Islamic party,<sup>36</sup>.

Some sources mention that before his trip to the United States, Qutb wrote his well-known book *al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyah fi al-islam* (“Social Justice in Islam”), and he gave a copy of this book to Muslim Brothers.

I believe that this gesture marked the beginning of the relationship between Muslim Brothers and Qutb.<sup>37</sup> Two events were decisive in his joining the Muslim Brothers, as pointed out by Qutb himself.<sup>38</sup>

The first is from the time when he was in the U.S. On February 12, 1948 when Imam Hasan al-Banna was assassinated in Egypt, Qutb had surprisingly experienced great joy like never before. The second event concerned a secret British agent by the name of James Heyworthe Dunne who was focused on Sayyid Qutb and continuously repeated that, in his

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<sup>35</sup> Which is considered nowadays as a “terrorist party” by many countries in the world falsely, and their followers and leaders were prosecuted, jailed, and killed wrongfully and unjustly. As a result of this politically motivated global military crackdown on them it was banned by Egyptian government, followed by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Syria. It turned worse especially after the military coup in Egypt in 2013 led by Egyptian militant and dictator Abdul Fattah al Sisi against the legitimate and democratically elected president “Muslim Brother” candidate, Dr. Muhamed Mursi, which was murdered mercilessly in Egyptian jail by his regime in 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb, Hulusatu hayatih*, pp. 16-17; see also *Zaraqli al-A'alam*, vol. II, p. 184; See Abu Hasan Ali Hasan al-Nadawi's introduction to al-Banna's *Mudhakkirat al-da'wah wa al-da'iyah*, Cairo: al-Zahra li 'allam al-arabi, 1990, pp. 15-16.

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Husayn Abdulbaki, *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuhu wa adabuh*, p. 39.

<sup>38</sup> *Sayyid Qutb, al-Shahid al-hayy*, p. 135.

view, “The Brothers are the main obstacle to the penetration of Western civilization in the East...”<sup>39</sup>

These two events encouraged Sayyid Qutb to study the ideas of Imam Hasan al-Banna in great depth and seriousness, and they influenced his interest in the movement of the Muslim Brothers (*al Ikhwan al Muslimune*) as an organization, and for the obligation of defending Islam.

When Qutb returned from the United States, he was warmly welcomed by a great delegation of the Muslim Brothers,<sup>40</sup> an event which left an indelible mark in his attitude towards their organization, despite having not yet joined their ranks officially. This closeness to the Muslim Brothers (*al Ikhwan al Muslimune*) intensified further when Qutb began to write in their journal *Da’wah* from February 1951, until he was invited in early 1953 to form the Department of Islamic Call of the organization, which constituted one of its main centres in Cairo.

In 1953 Qutb was appointed editor in chief of the weekly journal of the Muslim Brothers, which was banned in 1954.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid; see: *Sayyid Qutb, sira dhatiyya*, p. 23; *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*; p. 136.

<sup>40</sup> *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa adabuh*, c.n. *al-Majalla al-Kuwaitiyya*, August 1974, nr. 215, p. 7; Ahmad Salah al-din al-Musalli, *al-Fikr al-islam al-muasir*; Beirut, Dar Hudar li al-tiba’ati wa al-nashr, 1990, pp. 26, 27.



*From left prof.Sayyid Qutb delivering the speech and from the right the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood party, Imam Hasan al Banna*

### **1.2.5 His activity and works**

Sayyid Qutb has left a rich library of published and unpublished works behind, as well as hundreds of articles in different newspapers and journals. His heritage is considered a great asset for the coming generations. This great treasure constitutes the strongest argument for his knowledge and erudition. Based on the periods and intellectual development that Qutb underwent, his opus can be divided into two periods:

- a. His activities and works before joining the organization, (Muslim Brothers -al Ikhwan al Muslimun”, which coincides with the period before his Islamic writings; and**
- b. His activities and works after becoming a member of Muslim Brothers and his complete focus on writing Islamic literature.**

This is quite an important matter, as the chronological knowledge of his activity based on periods, he underwent reflects the author's intellectual development. Many of those who write about Qutb ignore this historical aspect of his life, and then they make false comments about his ideas.

This issue is related to this study which is why I am considering its most important points. It has been dealt with in detail by Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Khalidi in several of his writings on Qutb. May God reward him for the great work he offered to the future generations of Muslim society.

Dr. al-Khalidi writes: *"I took great pains to edit the work in the present form, and I take the opportunity to say that the numerous (official and unofficial) new editions of these books have committed a great error in not stating the years of the first editions, in order for the respected reader to be able to understand the progression clearly, given that the author's thoughts have evolved, and an idea stated by him in the first edition might have been removed by him in the new edition as a result of this development in his ideas. Such an evolution is very evident in Sayyid Qutb's thought, and this can be understood only if his works are taken in this order. I advise each scholar of Sayyid Qutb's thought to systematize his works according to their publication dates."*<sup>41</sup>

The writings of the first period include the period from 1933 until 1948, and I will quote them according to Dr Khalidi's classification:

**1. *Muhimmat al-sha'ir fi al-hayat wa shi'r al-jiyl al-hadir***, which is a lecture held at the Dar al-'ulum, published in 1933;

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<sup>41</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, pp. 219-220.



2. *Al-Shati' al-majhul* is his first and last *diwan*, published in 1935.

3. *Naqd Kitab Mustaqbal al-thakafeti fi Misr* (A Critique of Taha Husayn's Work). This book was published in 1937 and caused a great confusion, since Taha Husayn believed Egypt was a part of the Western civilization, whereas here Sayyid Qutb criticizes such opinions in a convincing way with arguments from education.

4. *Al-Taswir al-fanni fi al-Qur'an* is his first Islamic work, which deals with the Qur'an and its artistic illustration. It is considered a reference in Qur'anic literature. Were it not for this book, the subsequent development of Qutb's work would not have been known to this day? It came out in 1945.

5. *Al-Atyaf al-arba'ah* written together with his brother and sister. It was published in 1945 as university literature.

6. *Tiflun fi al-Qaryati* is a story about his childhood. It was published by the University Press in 1946. It was dedicated to Taha Husayn, the author of the novel *Days*, because he was impressed by this book as well as by Tawfiq Hakim's *Yaumiyyat Na'ib fi al-aryaf* which influenced his choice of the structure of his book.

7. *Al-Madinatu al-mas'huratu*, written in 1946 which is a symbolic tale in the form of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

8. *Kutubun wa shahsiyyattun*. This is the third book published in 1946, and it was dedicated to novelists, poets, and researchers whose works he criticized.

9. *Ashwak* is a romantic love story. It was published in May 1947, and his literary mastery is displayed clearly. It regards his love story with a girl from Cairo whom he did not marry for several reasons. As a result, Sayyid Qutb remained single and left no descendants.

**10. *Mashahidu al-Qiyamati fi al-Qur'an*** was initially published in 1947 and constitutes the second volume in the Qur'anic series, as it was written based on the method of *al-Taswir al-fanni fi al-Qur'an*.

**11. *Rawdatu al-tifli*** is a series of articles written by Qutb in collaboration with Amina al-Sa'id and Yusuf Murad, published by Dar al-Ma'arif in Egypt.

**12. *al-Qasasu al-dini*** is a series of religious works for children in collaboration with Abd al-Hamid Jawdah.

**13. *al-Jadidu fi al-lughati al-arabiyyati***, in collaboration with other authors. It became compulsory literature for the subject of Arabic in schools.

**14. *al-Jadidu fi al-mahfudhati***. This work was compiled with other authors and also constitutes a textbook for schools.

**15. *al-Naqdu al-adabi - Usuluhu wa Manahijuhu*** was published in 1948, and this is the fourth and last of his critical books which are no longer available.

**16. *al-Adalatu al-ijtima'iyatu*** – This book was written before his trip to America. Qutb asked his two brothers to publish this book before he left for the United States. The first edition came out in 1949 and this is his first book on Islamic thought. It was printed in other editions which were revised by Qutb himself.

**17. *Ma'rakatu al-islami wa al-ra'smaliyyati***. This book was completed in February 1951, after his trip to America and the political situation in Egypt, which had become extremely tense. This is the period in which he joined the Muslim Brothers.

**18. *Al-Salamu al-alami wa al-islamu*** was published in October 1951 by the Cairo publisher Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi;

**19. *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an***. When Qutb wrote his *al-Taswir al-fanni fi al-Qur'an* in 1945, he expressed the wish to elaborate on the whole of

the Qur'an in this way. This wish remained with him for a considerable period, until Sa'id Ramadan started the monthly *al-Muslimun* Journal in December 1951. Sa'id Ramadan requested Qutb to collaborate in this journal by writing articles for every issue. Qutb obliged with pleasure, and this is how the Qur'anic commentary *Fi dhilal al-Quran* started. Yet Qutb later stopped the writing of articles, as he had promised his readers that he would compile a special commentary in thirty volumes, the first of which appeared in October 1952.<sup>42</sup>

**20. *Dirasaatun islamiyyatun*** was published by the Committee of the Islamic Youth in 1953, and it contains articles published in different journals.

**21. *Hadha al-din*.** After the imprisonment of many members of the Muslim Brothers in Egyptian prisons and as a consequence of severe tortures and inhuman treatment, some members first lost their self-confidence and then lost their faith in Islam and in its capacity to face ignorance.

Secondly, Qutb immediately understood this, for he was a leader who felt the sufferings of his brothers, and he began to write this book in order to elucidate the characteristics of Islam which is at the same time a path for people. He wanted to emphasize that Divine help could come through His angels, but due to numerous aspects of wisdom God has willed that men must be helped by efforts of sincere men. This book marks the beginning of a new ideological period for Qutb and his method, while also denoting the start of his dynamic Islamic approach.

**22. *al-Mustaqbal li hadha al-din*** is a continuation of the previous book. After restoring the lost self-confidence this book points out that the future belongs to Islam, because it constitutes a complete universal

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<sup>42</sup> See the chronological data on *Dhilal* written while in prison and in freedom, in al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, pp. 241-245.

method which meets all human needs. No other religion fulfils this mission.

**23. *Khasais al-tasawwur al-islami wa mukawwimatuhu.*** This book deals with the Islamic creed and its characteristics. It consists of two parts which were completed after a long research and study by the author, lasting from 1951 to 1961.<sup>43</sup>

**24. *al-Islamu wa mushkilatu al-hadarati.*** Qutb wrote this book in order to provide people with the effective cure for their ills and to embrace Islam as the only key to their problems; and:

**25. *Ma'alimun fi al-tariq*** (*Signposts on the Road*) is Qutb's last published book, since he and other members of the Muslim Brothers were imprisoned. Qutb immediately received the death sentence.

The authorities did not allow the prisoners to read this book which Qutb wrote in a revolutionary style. In this work he was very bold and rather direct in his thoughts. The book deals with belief, systematizing and organizing movements. It is marked by the clear intellectual maturity and life experience of its author.

At the end of this review, Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi writes: ***“These are the twenty-five books published by Qutb in his lifetime.”***<sup>44</sup>

Several books have been published posthumously, but Qutb did not prepare them in their final form. Rather they were compilations of his thoughts during his stay in the U.S. from 1949 to 1951 which he sent in his letters to his brother, sister, and friends in Egypt and elsewhere. A

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<sup>43</sup> Al-Khalidi notes that “...only the first part of this book has been published.” It seems that al-Khalidi wrote this in the early eighties. Today we have also the second part available.

<sup>44</sup> al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, p. 251.

number of these books consist of articles he published in different journals, which were then reprinted with different titles.

The following is a list of these titles:

1. *Afrah al-ruh*;
2. *Nahwa mujtama'in islamiyyin*; and:
3. *Fi al-ta'rikh: fikratun wa minhaj*.

Publications which are parts of the *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* that were published with different titles for commercial purposes are:

1. *Ma'rakatuna ma'al-yahud*;
2. *Tafsir surat al-shura*;
3. *Tafsir ayat al-riba*;
4. *Kissat ayat al-da'wah*;
5. *Islam aw la islam*;
6. *Ila al-mutathakilin an al-jihad*; and:
7. *Rislatu al-salat*.

Among the unpublished studies and articles are:

1. *Muhimmatu al-sha'ir fi al-hayat*;
2. *Dirasetun an Shawki*;
3. *al-Murahakah, atharuha wa ilajuha*;
4. *al-Mar'atu lagzun basit*;
5. *al-Mar'atu fi kasas Tawfiq al-Hakim*;
6. *as daau al-zaman*;
7. *al-Ka'su al-masmumatu*;
8. *Kafilatu al-raqiq*;
9. *Hilm al-fajr*;
10. *al-Qitat al-dal-latu*;

11. *Min a'maq al-wadi*;
12. *al-Madhahibu al-fanniyyatu al-mu'asiratu*;
13. *al-Suwar wa al-dhilal fi al-shi'r al-arabi*;
14. *al-Qissat fi al-adab*;
15. *Shu'arau al-shabab*;
16. *al-Qissatu al-hadithatu*;
17. *Arabiyun el-muftara alayhi*;
18. *al-Sharif al-Radi*;
19. *Lahadhat ma'a al-khalidin*; and:

20. *America al-lati ra'ytu*; Here Dr. Khalidi says that Qutb intended to publish this book whose manuscript he had hidden at a friend's house after the 1954 imprisonment. However, his friend had burned the manuscript when the persecutions and imprisonments of the Muslim Brothers increased.<sup>45</sup>

21. *al-Qissah bayna al-Tawrati wa al-Injil*;
22. *al-Namadhiju al-insaniyyatu fi al-Qur'an*;
23. *al-Mantiq al-wujdani fi al-Qur'an*;
24. *al-Asaalib al-fanniyatu fi al-Qur'an*;
25. *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* (second part);
26. *Fi dhilal al-sirah*;
27. *Fi Maw'kib al-Iman*;
28. *Mukawwimatu al-tasawwur al-islami*;<sup>46</sup>
29. *Awlawiyyatun fi hadha al-din*;
30. *Hadha al-Qur'an*;
31. *Taswibat fi al-fikr al-islami al-muasir*; dhe:
32. *Nahwa mujtama'in islamiyyin*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-shahid al-hayy*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>46</sup> This book has been published.

<sup>47</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-shahid al-hayy*, pp. 221-261.

### 1.2.6 His martyrdom

Qutb understood clearly that the **Muslim Brothers** were a group with strong principles and powerful elements who sought the spreading of God’s Law and therefore he felt it was his obligation to join them. After the martyrdom of the founder of the organization Shaykh Imam Hasan al-Banna, Qutb became a leading Islamic thinker in Egypt and elsewhere in the world and his books especially the Quranic Interpretation “ Fi Dhilal al Kuran” has been translated into many languages globally.<sup>48</sup>

Qutb experienced all hardships and trials that the Muslim Brothers went through from 1954 until his death in 1966. This was in keeping with the trials and tribulations of the God’s messengers and prophets... This is God’s law for His chosen servants, as God confirms in the Noble Qur’an: *“(Such was Our) course in the case of those whom We sent before thee (to mankind), and thou wilt not find for Our course aught of power to change.”* (al-Isra’, 77).



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<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, Sayyid Qutb, Khulusat hayatih, pp.17; Muhammad Husayn Abd al-Baqi, Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa adabuh, p. 45; Risala ila al-da’wah al-islamiyya, pp. 17-18.

Sayyid Qutb has often repeated in his *Tafsir* and in other writings that the path of *da'wah* is not an easy one, quite the opposite. The government accused the Muslim Brothers as terrorists due to their participation in the July upheavals<sup>49</sup> in which lieutenants and other army officials participated.<sup>50</sup> The conflict began in reaction to a decision by the government issued on January 13, 1954, and a consequence Abdel-Nasser's government began to imprison the Brothers in large numbers. First a thousand members of the Muslim Brothers were imprisoned, and some of them were sentenced to death with shortened court procedures. Among them were two eminent scholars: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Abd al-Qadir Awdeh.<sup>51</sup> The others were sentenced to death whereas al-Hudaybi was sentenced with life imprisonment.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Muslim Brothers did not believe in revolution or in its benefits and results, due to the experience Egypt had with such failures before. See *Majmuat rasa'il al-imam al-Banna*; Dar al-shihab, n.d., p. 170. The revolution of the Egyptian youth that started on 25.01.2011 was not organized by the Muslim Brothers because the latter's principles do not include revolutions, coups, or changes from above, but rather the idea of positive change from the base, that is from people, through their education and training in every aspect. Yet the Muslim Brothers won the elections after eighty years of suffering, imprisonment, and executions!

<sup>50</sup> *Risala ila al-da'wa al-islamiyya*, p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> The martyred professor Abd al-Qadir Awdah was an eminent lawyer and one of the best experts on the Shari'ah in Egypt. He was one of the leaders of Muslim Brothers. When Jamal Abdel Nasser ordered the founding of the People's Court, Awdah wrote a critique against this court, in which among other things he says that the head of the court Jamal Salim had asked some of the indicted persons to read the Qur'anic verses in reverse. Awdah was sentenced with hanging for the murder of Jamal Salim in 1954, together with other members of the Brothers. Some of his works are *al-Islam wa awda'una al-siyasah*; *al-Jashr al-jama'i al-islami muharraman bi al-qanun al-wad'i*; *al-Mal wa al-hulum fi al-Islam*; *al-Islam bayna jahli abnaini wa ajzi ulamaih*; etj. (Zaraqli, *al-A'alam*, vol. 4, p. 42)

<sup>52</sup> *Sayyid Qutb, Hayatuh wa adabuh*, p. 47.



Qutb was among the prisoners and was being accused as a participant in the movement for coup, which is not true. In 1954 he was sentenced with fifteen years of imprisonment during which he experienced numerous tortures and sufferings. Nevertheless, he succeeded in writing several works on Islam while in prison and he never stopped the *da'wah* parallel to writing. Among these works are *Hadha al-din, al-Mustaqbal li hadha al-din*; and he also completed his *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, by editing the volumes that had been published prior to his imprisonment.<sup>53</sup>

After his amnesty in May 1964 for health reasons and due to the intervention of the Iraqi president Abd al-Salam Arif<sup>54</sup> for his freeing, Qutb was imprisoned again because he had written a letter against the security services after the imprisonment of his brother Muhammad Qutb

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Muhammad Abd al-Salam ibn Muhammad Arif was born in Baghdad in a family of merchants in 1921 and died in 1966. He was the second president of the Republic of Iraq. He joined the army in 1938 and worked as a lieutenant in the tanks division in 1939. He participated in the Battle of Jenin in Palestine in 1948. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1951 and joined the British units in West Germany in 1956. He became the assistant of the commander in chief of the army of Iraq in 1958, but fell into conflict with Abd al-Karim Qasim (the first president of the Republic of Iraq) and received the death penalty. He was freed after two years of imprisonment and became very active. On February 8, 1963 after the execution of Abd al-Karim Qasim, he was chosen as the president of Iraq by the Revolutionary Committee. He led Iraq for three years and two months in an unstable situation due to the Kurdish upheavals and his disputes with the Revival Party. He made a treaty with Jamal Abd el-Nasser for the unification of Egypt and Iraq, which did not materialize. He had Islamic goals, good manners, and piety, and he did not drink or commit injustice. On his return from Casablanca, the helicopter in which flying caught fire and exploded in suspicious circumstances. His diary was published post mortem. Zaraqli, vol. 4, p. 9.

on July 30, 1965. He received the death penalty together with seven Brothers, and was executed on Monday morning August 29, 1966.

After the court ruling was read Sayyid Qutb uttered his famous words: “*Praise be to God I struggled for fifteen years to become a martyr.*”<sup>55</sup>

Thus, the Islamic world lost a scholar, a famous caller, and a well-known thinker, only because he said:

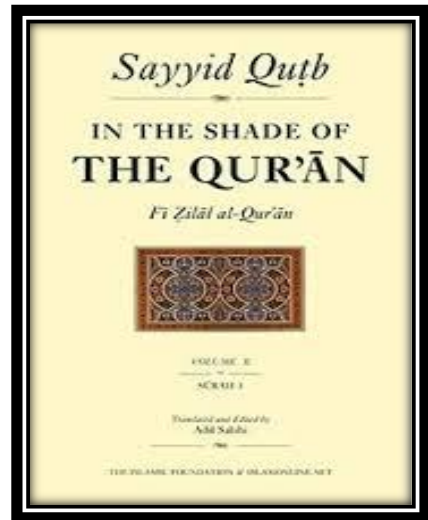
“God is our Lord! We must apply His method, we must apply His Shari‘ah and seize power from people and restore it to the Lord of mankind in order to live by His word: “*Is it a judgment of the time of (pagan) ignorance that they are seeking? Who is better than Allah for judgment to a people who have certainty (in their belief)?*” (al-Ma’ida, 50).

God embraced him in His mercy and made him an inhabitant of His vast heaven! May God make us brave like him and among those who fear none but God, and may He protect us from the harm of the evil ones. Amen! Indeed, God bestows this favour unto whomever He likes, and this is something very valuable!

This ends our treatment of Sayyid Qutb’s life. We pray to God Almighty to reward the author of these works with best rewards, and to bless us in our own lives and times and make us from those who serve Islam with deeds and ideas! Amen!

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<sup>55</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Hayatuh wa adabuh*, pp. 47-48; Sayyid Qutb, *sira dhatiya*; p. 49; Zainab al-Ghazzali, *Ayyam min Hayati*, p. 182.



## **Chapter 2 :**

Sayyid Qutb's thought, Praises of some contemporary scholars,  
Principles of his Tafsir

### **2.1 PART I:**

#### **Sayyid Qutb's thought**

There is no doubt that whoever passes the greater part of his life engaged in books and knowledge, searching for the truth, spreading ideas, correcting mistakes, and elucidating different matters, will go through changes in his opinions due to the appearance of new problems, challenges, ideas, and contradicting thoughts, which can be close or far, big, or small.

This is the path that Muslims in general and callers to Islam in particular must tread. Of course, this does not harm the personality of the researcher, scholar, or the caller to Islam. Rather it elevates his authority and worth, by showing his great intellectual and analytical capacity...

This is precisely what happened with Sayyid Qutb, for he went through several periods in his thinking. A strange leap is noticeable in his life, in his *da'wah*, and in his writings. Some of the scholars on Qutb tried to divide his life into a number of periods.

Some are of the opinion that Qutb went through three different stages in his thinking,<sup>56</sup> and others thought there were more periods involved.<sup>57</sup> Prof. Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat writes:

“Generally speaking, his life can be divided into three periods:

1. *The period before choosing his Islamic doctrinal orientation.*

2. *The period of Islam; and*

3. *The general period of Islam.*

The last two periods are mutually related.

The second period was the result of the first one, and the first period was not categorically separated from the specific period of Islamic doctrine.”<sup>58</sup>

Whoever reads the works of Sayyid Qutb will see that this is true beyond any doubt. Yet, this does not mean that the first period was detached from Islam, quite the opposite...<sup>59</sup>

The second period of his life is marked by his book *al-Adalah al-ijtimaiyya fi al-Islam* (*Social Justice in Islam*), which proves his intellectual level during this period. The third

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<sup>56</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb - khulusat hayatih - manhaj fi l-harakati wa al-naqd al-muwejjah ileyhi*, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> al-Khalidi, *al-Shahid al-hayy*, p. 132.

<sup>58</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, *Sayyid Qutb, Khalasatu hayatih*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-shahid al-hayy*, p. 133; *Mudhakkiratu Sa'ihin fi al-sharq al-arabi*, al-Nadawi, p. 189.

period is marked by his joining the Muslim Brothers – al Ikhwan al Muslimine, and by the transformation of his thought before, during, and after the imprisonment. While in prison he began to write *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, *Hadha al-din*, *al-Mustaqbal li hadha al-din*, etc.

Based on the knowledge of these periods, we understand that Qutb's return to Islam was a decree and guidance from God Almighty. This does not diminish his rank, as some people claim when they say that Qutb had little knowledge of Islam based on the periods he went through. These wrong perceptions and false accusation is rejected completely due to the historical facts of the companions of prophet Muhammed (*peace be upon him*), they were different people before Islam and, on the day they accepted Islam they became our guiding milestones and religious stars, may Almighty God shower His mercy upon them.

## **I. Sayyid Qutb's principles, rules, and thought**

Sayyid Qutb had great intellectual capacity and a deep knowledge of Islam, its nature, and the way to apply it, as well as the practice of Shari'ah in accordance with the present realities.

After reading and analysing most of his writings, one can see clearly that his understanding was based on certain

principles, elements and theories which were the foundation of some premises, rules, and principles of his later understanding.

His conception was a result of his specific visions and thoughts, as well as his deep study and precise analysis of the texts of the Shari‘ah, that is the Qur’an and Sunnah. Qutb lived under the shade of the Qur’an, a fact which he does not hesitate to mention in his *Tafsir* and in other books. As for those unqualified scholars, researchers, journalists, politicians who accuse him that prof. Sayyid had little knowledge!! they failed to produce single linguistic, religious, or methodological mistake in his writings, especially his commentary *Fi Dhilal el Quran*. Up to date there is no single research or study which proves that prof. Sayyid Qutb had a little knowledge, in contrary they proved, as well we proved in our studies the opposite, his deep religious knowledge and understanding of Islam. He was, and will remain undisputed Muslim scholar, may the Almighty God shower His mercy upon him.

We are fully aware that it is impossible to offer a complete summary of all these principles, premises, and elements in this introduction of our dissertation which is limited in scope and subject...

The main goal of these premises, principles, and theories was the laying of the ground for the noble reader to understand the thinking method of Sayyid Qutb and his

involvement with the texts of this pure religion through a study of his method and of his understanding of the Qur'anic verses pertaining to *da'wah* in Chapter al-An'am of the Qur'an.

The present researcher will systematize these principles, premises, and theories in points and sections in order to clarify the ideas of the author and to show his horizons, based on the commentary of Chapter al-An'am. Here we must underline a very important point to the reader, namely the fact that Qutb is distinguished by a special method which he referred to as the "dynamic method".

Al-Khalidi in his *Mafatih li al-ta'am ma al-Qur'an al-Karim* says:

*"We say what our professor Sayyid Qutb stated on the new theory of understanding, commentary, and analysis of the Qur'an, namely the theory of the dynamic exegesis, and we consider Sayyid Qutb the vanguard of this theory, a clarifier of its principles, and the founder of the school of the dynamic exegesis which presents the Qur'an as a living organism capable of influencing contemporary Muslims. God Almighty bestowed upon him the original, dynamic key to unlock the*



*treasure of the Qur'an and to offer it to the people through the Dhilal.*"<sup>60</sup>

This notion is supported by the words of Qutb himself. For instance, in his *Khasais al-tasawur al-islami* (vol. I), he writes:

*“The question of understanding the meanings and inspirations of the Qur'an is not related to the mere understanding of its words and texts, which does not suffice for the commentary of the Qur'an as we seem to think. Rather it means the preparation of the soul, sentiments, perception, and experience. There must be interrelation between feelings, perceptions, and experiences and its revelation, namely the struggle against lust, and it must concern Muslims' lives. Jihad against one's passions and against enemies, struggle and sacrifice, fear and strengthening, fall and rise, the Meccan atmosphere and the beginning of the da'wah, small numbers and weakness, a stranger among people...*

*Then comes the period of Medina, which concerns the ambience of the formation of the first Islamic society amidst intrigues, hypocrisy, systematic efforts, the atmosphere of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Hdaybiya, the capture of Mecca, Hunayn, Tabuk... The atmosphere of the formation of the **Islamic** ummah,*

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<sup>60</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah Al-Khalidi, *Mafatih li al-ta'amul ma'al Qur'an*, Damascus, Dar al-Alam, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1994, pp. 57-58.

*the social system, and the living contacts between feelings, interests, and principles in the early stages of the system.*

*This is the ambience in which the verses of the Qur'an were revealed, full of livelihood, reality, and energy. The words and texts had meaning and bore their inspiration. In such an atmosphere a new life started for the Muslims, because the Qur'an opened people's hearts with its treasures, and it offered them its secrets thus giving refreshing scents and providing security and light to them... ”<sup>61</sup>*

Some of the main principles of Sayyid Qutb's thought as expounded upon by Abd al-Fatah Khalidi are:

1. *A large number of feelings, perceptions, and experiences during the study of the Qur'anic texts which inspired him; and*

2. *The experience, in his sentiments, of the times of the revelation of the Qur'an in Mecca and Medina, which enabled him to understand the influence and impact of the Qur'an...<sup>62</sup>*

For a better understanding of these two principles, namely the importance of the practical aspect of Islam and the

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<sup>61</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Khasais al-tasawur al-Islam*, vol. I, Beirut, Dar al-shuruk, n.d., pp. 7-

8. See also his *Fi dhilâlil-Qur'an*, vol. III, pp. 1559-60.

<sup>62</sup> al-Khalidi, *Mafatih li al-ta'amul ma al-Qur'an*, p. 5.

personal experience of Qutb's ideas, we will quote from his book *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*:

*“Yet Islam can only fulfil its role if it is embodied in a society or an ummah. People do not pay heed if they do not witness faith in concrete terms in everyday life. As always, people do not respond to the reading or listening method, but they do respond to the living dynamic method made concrete in a group of people and applied to a reality which is tangible and whose traces are perceivable by the intellect. A book is written on Islam, a sermon is held at the mosque, classroom or in the square, a movie is shown for spreading Islam, a delegation from the Az'har is sent to other places... All of this cannot possibly enrich a small society which lives in a certain place with the Islamic method, nor does the embodiment of the characteristics of this method reflect the Islamic lifestyle...”*<sup>63</sup>

From what has already been said Qutb benefitted from his experience in *da'wah*, that being a caller to Islam, we must not forget that words without deeds are worth nothing. Islam has not been revealed just for gathering thoughts and lectures without practical application. Qutb confirms this idea in the following paragraph:

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<sup>63</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, pp. 4-5.

*“The nature of the dynamic Islamic method is to accord this human reality with a pertinent and superior movement in different periods of time and with renewing methods...”<sup>64</sup>*

*In this way we reach the evident truth that unbelievers are a single body and organism, and therefore Islam must be organized in the same manner and form, both inwardly and outwardly, and even be superior to them, if we are to accomplish what God Almighty has willed, and to achieve victory and success over them.”<sup>65</sup>*

*3. His views on the movement of the Companions in the atmosphere of Mecca and Medina in accordance with the Qur’an, and their interaction with it...<sup>66</sup>*

If these thoughts of Qutb are read carefully the principles on which his dynamic theory is based will be clear. In addition, he writes:

*“The nature of this religion refuses the depositing of cold data in the fridges of stagnated minds. Rather, knowledge in Islam is translated immediately to action, otherwise it does not belong to this religion.”<sup>67</sup>*

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<sup>64</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. X, p. 170.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, vol. X, p. 170.

<sup>66</sup> al-Khalidi, *Mafatih li al-ta’amil-me’al-Qur’an*; p. 59.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

This supports the point made earlier that there will be no progress if Muslims will not put these verses into practice fully in their lives. Qutb backs this theory with a strong argument, by stating that the principles of the Shari‘ah have not been revealed in the Meccan period to be deposited into thoughts and then be practiced in Medina. In this context, he says:

*“The principles of the Shari‘ah were sent down in Medina as an impetus for the Islamic society that was being formed there, and no principles were revealed in Mecca to be deposited until the time was ripe for their application in Medina. Art for the art’s sake is not an Islamic method, for in Islam knowledge is related to action, cognition is related to works, and faith is related to life.”*<sup>68</sup>

This principle can be seen even more clearly in Qutb’s analysis of the Meccan verses and the wisdom behind their being revealed in this period:

*“Those who call unto the way of God and the formation of a system in which Islam will be applied must pause before this great phenomenon of the revelation of the Qur’an in Mecca for thirteen years, in order to confirm the source without*

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<sup>68</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Mukawwimat al-tasawwur al-islami*, Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1993, pp. 23-24; Sayyid Qutb, *Khasais at-tasawwur al-Islami wa mukawwimatuh*, Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., 1983, p. 10.

*concentrating themselves on the details about the system and laws regulating the Islamic society.”*<sup>69</sup>

The pure Prophetic biography played an important role in the Qutb's religious training and his understanding of Islam. It was a fundamental starting point for his method of clarifying religious truths.

*4. His focus on the principal goals of the Qur'an and his dynamic method which brings life to the Islamic ummah and the revelation of the verses based on the living reality of the Muslims...*<sup>70</sup>

If we analyse these words of Qutb, it will become clear that he concentrated on some basic goals of the Noble Qur'an more than in others. In other words, he was focused on faith as the basis of one's life and has clarified the meaning of Divinity and the proper worship of God, His Absolute dominion in all aspect of our lives, great and small, the place of man in existence, and his end. We should bear on our mind, that his main concern in his writings was how to apply the teachings of the Noble in our daily life, therefore his method in Qur'anic interpretation was known as a **Dynamic, Practical Method in Tafsir**, which is indeed a unique and the most accurate and

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<sup>69</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>70</sup> *Mafatih al-ta'amul ma al-Qur'ani*, p. 59.

appreciated method to follow to understand and practice the Noble Qur'an. In another passage he writes:

*“Whenever faith or believers are mentioned in the Qur'an works are mentioned alongside which are the application of faith. This matter concerns not only feelings, but it is also related to the movement of the formation of the reality based on the Islamic conception of life.”*<sup>71</sup> He clarifies the great value of faith in God with the following words:

*“The value of faith is much greater with God, and the most valuable thing in God's marketplace is no doubt faith. The best victory is the victory of the soul over matter, of faith over pain, of belief over corruption... In this nature the souls of the believers have triumphed over fear and pain, the earthly aspects as well as upheavals for the sake of the whole humankind. This is victory.”*<sup>72</sup>

What shows that he was focused on the fundamentals of religion and not in the branches of faith is the fact that he did not separate religion from the life of this world, for the divine method does not allow for a definition of religion exclusively through worship symbols, within the walls of the mosque or only in private life. In this context, he writes:

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<sup>71</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-islami*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>72</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, pp. 170-171.

*“The nature of this religion does not allow the separation from this world, nor does the divine method allow us to focus on the spiritual aspect and manners, namely the worship, or some narrow column of human life which is called ‘civil law’.”*<sup>73</sup>

How great is the number of callers and scholars today who insist on not separating religion from the world (politics, economy, social life, education, business, industry..etc), but unfortunately nobody listens to them, and how great is the number of rulers who refuse this and do not wish this to happen! All power and strength are with God, the Exalted and Almighty Lord!

In this context Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah says:

*“Islam came to spread the call and to build the state; it focused on this life to spread the call to God on earth and based on this to experience and build the order of life, and to protect man from the evils of his own self and of others. For this reason, the nature of state in Islam does not allow for a separation from the soul of the da’wah but harmonizes them like the river and its bed. Sayyid Qutb does not represent a novelty among the callers who invited to the realization of the unification of the principle,*

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



*'No separation of religion from the state, or of the state from religion'.*"<sup>74</sup>

There were other brothers who called to this noble and sublime goal. Here we focus on the features of Qutb's approach to this important question.

He gave priority to the religion of God in everything and defended the notion that God's religion cannot be subservient to or lead by anyone, but rather that it should lead and decide on everything: *"In no way can God's religion accept something else but to be a ruling master, which is powerful and intelligible, noble and generous, ruling and not ruled, leader and not follower!"*<sup>75</sup>

The main reason that caused Qutb to deal with these questions is our interest as human beings in this world and in the next, for only in this way we will be able to practice the true Islam and not some variation thereof. He writes: *"We are obligated to realize this method starting from ourselves and then elsewhere."*

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<sup>74</sup> Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, *Uslubud-da'wahi fi al-Qur'an*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., al-Zahra li al-tiba'ati wa al-nashri, 1982, p. 32.

<sup>75</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-Mustaqbal li hadha al-din; al-Ittihad al-alami al-islami li al-munadhdhamat al-tullabiyyah*, 1988, 1<sup>st</sup> Faysuli ed., p. 93; Chapter *al-Uluhiyya wa al-ubudiyya in Mukawwimat al-tasawur al-Islami*, pp. 84, 107, 109, 132, 134.

He also says: *“We must realize this method for reasons related to the method itself. It is the only method which realizes man’s honour, granting him true freedom, and making him subservient to God only.”*<sup>76</sup>

5. *His practical experience with jihad and his living experience with the call (da’wah) were similar in certain aspects to the experience of the noble Companions, especially the atmosphere of the early Meccan period, namely the practical engagement with the Qur’an, people’s total preoccupation with it in difficult situations and tribulations, and the return to the Qur’an to find the clear answer and remedy...”*<sup>77</sup>

One of the first implications of this is that, with the perseverance, steadfastness, and unshaken faith shown by Sayyid Qutb, the great hopes that the future will belong to the believers (true and sincere Muslims), will become a reality. Muslims must not give up before the great injustices that they are subjected to, and they need to follow the example of the Companions of the Prophet.

In this context, Qutb writes:

*“Doubt must not seize our hearts from the vicious attacks against the pioneers of Islamic revival in any country; or from*

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* p.16.

<sup>77</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Khalidi, *Mafatih li al-ta’amul ma’al Qur’an*, p. 59.

*the enormous strength on which the materialist civilization is based. The size of falsehood or the strength of the attacks against Islam is not crucial, rather resistance against such attacks is... We are not alone for we possess the natural inclination of the Universe, power, and superiority.*”<sup>78</sup>

The strength of his sincerity is clear, as well as his strong argument and trust in God for any good and evil that comes, his reliance on the Book of God which no falsehood or slander can reach from behind or from the front...

If a caller wants his message to have a great and active impact, he must equip himself with these qualities as well as the morals that originate from the inner meaning of the verses of the Qur’an. Qutb further writes:

*“This truth can be deduced from the long company of the Qur’an and of the analysis of the problems of the people and the long individual involvement in writings...”*<sup>79</sup>

*“The Qur’an did not take thirteen years to build the Muslims’ faith because it was revealed for the first time. Nay! Had God willed it, He would have revealed the Qur’an at once*

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<sup>78</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-Mustakbal li hadha al-din*, pp. 116-117; *Khasais al-tasawur al-Islami*, Chapter al-Thabat, p. 87.

<sup>79</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Mukawimat al-tasawur al-islami*, Pt. 2, pp. 24,25, Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1993; Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa’is al-tasawur al-islami*, Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., 1983, pp. 10.

*and thus leave the Companions to study it for thirteen years, or less or more, until they would understand the “Islamic theory”. But God wanted something else, namely a special and unique method. He wanted the forming of a society, the movement of faith, and the strengthening of faith on a social scale through dynamism. He wanted belief to become an active part of society! This is the mirror of faith! God knew that souls and societies are not built overnight... ”*<sup>80</sup>

Sayyid Qutb benefitted from the experience of the Companions during the reading of the Qur’an and from their way of interacting with it. They would read the Qur’an in order to learn it and then apply it and not to enjoy in the reading. In illustrating this point, Qutb writes:

*“The method of teaching with a view to practicing and acting is what shaped the first generation, whereas the method of learning for studying and pleasure produced the later generations.”*<sup>81</sup>

This implies that we must refer to the biographies of the righteous ancestors to solve our intellectual, psychological, and social crises, as well as to learn from them the way in which they approached the Qur’an, and the way in which they understood it and were helped by it. Nowadays most Muslims misunderstand

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<sup>80</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. VII, pp. 89-90; *Ma’alim fi al-tariq*, p. 38-39.

<sup>81</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma’alim fi al-tariq*, p. 19.

the Qur'an and the manner in which they must interact with it, which is why their situation is so unstable...

6. *“His observation that the formation of man in the Qur'an is based on the principle of thought and faith. Man's behaviour and practical steps are a natural fruit for the regulation of this ideological and creedal aspect...”*<sup>82</sup>

To grasp the truth of these words and the fact that he had understood this, we need to analyse them until his thought becomes even clearer. Man is not made by wealth, authority, position or honour, and a caller is obligated with the improving of his faith and thinking, and only then he should turn to other aspects of life.

Sayyid Qutb further writes:

*“The spiritual, social, and political formation that was based on this sublime method which lasted only half a century challenged all obstacles, hostilities, and vicious attacks opposing it for more than a thousand years. These principles are still capable of reviving the young generations if they accept them...”*<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Adnan Muhammad Zarzur, *Mad'hal il al-tafsir wa ulumihi*, Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1995, p. 267.

<sup>83</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Hadha al-din*; Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, pp. 36-37.

He continues to stress the humankind's need for God Almighty:

*“The method of a realistic human life with all of its principles... A method which contains the concept of faith and which clarifies the nature of existence determines the position of man therein, and it also determines the goal of his existence. It includes systematic and organizational prescriptions, such as a value(moral) system, a power(political) system with all of its characteristics, the principles of a social system, the philosophy of the economic system, international order and relations ... ”*<sup>84</sup>

*“This thirst is of a different kind, it is thirst for faith with greater power on man's side, for a world which is more elevated than the material aspect of this world's life, for the interconnectedness of man's feelings and his reality. Between the humanity that controls man's feelings and the Shari'ah that controls his life, between the method of individual movement and the method of cosmological movement around him, towards the One God from whom man receives the Shari'ah of his heart and the shari'ah of his society in the same manner!”*<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *al-Mustakbal li hadha al-din*, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 68-69. See Chapter *Uluhiya wa ubudiyya* in his *Mukawwat at-tasawur al-islami*, p. 101; Sayyid Qutb, *Nahwa mujtama'in islamiyyin*, p. 29.

He clarifies his reasons and comments upon the necessity of such thirst for faith in the following words:

*“A rule of the divine method originating from knowledge and not ignorance, from perfection and not drawbacks, from strength and not weakness, from wisdom and not lust is based on the principle: Taking people from the worship of servants to the worship of God.”*<sup>86</sup>

It is obvious from what has been stated above that among the most important duties and milestones of the callers to Islam is to explain the importance of religion and faith to Muslims in order to love it and to live with it, because it is originated from knowledge and not ignorance.

Among the principles of Qutb’s method in the understanding of the verses pertaining to *da’wah* which I came across in my study are:

*1. His conviction that people are led to perdition if they do not practice God’s Law. Men of our times can be improved by the same element that improved the earlier generations; and:*

*2. Giving priority to the next world as opposed to the life of this world which in his eyes was small and ugly; all of this*

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8; See Chapter al-rabbaniyya in *Khasais al-tasawur al-islami wa mukawwimatuh*, p. 43; also the introduction to *Nahwa mujtama’in islamiyyin*, pp. 5-13, and “Tiyhun wa rukam” in *Khasais al-ta’rikh al-islami*, p. 22.

*because of his steadfast faith. He feared only God Almighty and this can be seen clearly in his works and deeds.*

After the presentation and clarification of some texts written by Qutb, we believe that it has become clear for the reader what were some of the principles and elements of his thought. We tried to show how did he arrive at these thoughts and based on what principles did he launch the call of the Islamic *ummah* in general, and the clerics and scholars who are the standard bearers of Islam in particular. He advised them to be careful with the Noble Qur'an which God has sent as a guide and mercy unto all of mankind.

After the elucidation of the principles and thoughts of this scholar it is easier to tackle his exegesis of the Noble Qur'an in a general manner. Then we shall address the question of the method he followed in understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah* in the Chapter al-An'am in particular.



## **2.2 PART II :**

### **Words of praise from contemporary scholars regarding Qutb's commentary**

At this point, it is worth mentioning some words of praise from contemporary scholars regarding Qutb's commentary and the general characteristics displayed in his exegesis, as well as on his method in understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah* in particular.

The main purpose for the presentation of this method in a summarized fashion is the reflection on the approach and thoughts of this scholar in general, which will serve as an introduction for the understanding of Qutb and his authentic method in the exegesis of the verses pertaining to *da'wah*, particularly in Chapter al-An'am.

Another important issue in this context is that, mentioning the quotations of the following scholars is to authenticate and prove prof. Sayyid Qutb's scientific and intellectual ability his value and legacy, especially the quotations from Saudi Arabia, as a response to baseless critics and accusations.

### **2.2.1 The description made by Shaykh Manna'a al-Kattan who said:**



**Prof. Shaykh Manna'a al-Kattan**

*(may the Almighty God shower His mercy upon him)*

*“Among the men of this ummah one of the most distinguished as a thinker was the martyr Sayyid Qutb, who interpreted Islamic thought and uncovered its authentic principles in a clear and magnificent way. This man was martyred in the path of faith leaving behind intellectual traces, the most important of which is the commentary of the Qur’an, Fi*

*dhilal al-Qur'an which is a true intellectual and social treasure that is badly needed for every contemporary Muslim.*”<sup>87</sup>

### **2.2.2 The comments made by prof.dr. Adnan Muhammad Zarzur who writes:**



**Prof.Dr.Adnan Muhammad Zarzur**

*(may the Almighty God bless him)*

*" The Dhilal was a written practical argument, catalog for Islamic society and for the whole of the Islamic ummah. It is not a cultural argument, catalog of the exegetical sciences or the outward sciences such as Islamic jurisprudence or dialectics...His commentary upon the Word of God is like a*

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<sup>87</sup> Manna'a al-Kattan, *Mabahith fi ulum al-Qur'an*, Cairo, Dar gharib li al-tiba'ah wa al-nashr, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.,1981, pp. 334-335.

*pertinent irrigation plan which by the leave of God distributes water over the fields with planted seeds and slowly enables the plants to grow, that is it enables the study of the Qur'an over the generations to take shape in the best way, following the example of the first generation of Muslims..Who knows, perhaps this statement by Dr Zarzur on the commentary written by Qutb is related to what we mentioned earlier regarding the fact that it was written twice by its author: once with the ink of the scholar and another time with the blood of the martyr”*

Shaykh Zarzur concludes:

*“The letters of the Qur'an are light...*

*The martyrs' blood is light...*

*Fi dhilal al-Qur'an is light above light...”*<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Adnan Muhammad Zarzur, *Madhal illa tafsir al-Qur'an wa ulumih*, pp. 261-270.

### 2.2.3 The description by Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi who writes:



**Prof.Dr.Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi**

*(may the Almighty God shower His mercy upon him)*

*" Fi dhilal al-Qur'an is the most important commentary on the Book of God because it represents a new spirit in exegesis for others to come, a principle for the new, unique and distinguished school in the Quranic exegesis, the dynamic school. Sayyid Qutb with his Dhilal is the leading contemporary Islamic thinker and the reviver of the most important themes in world of exegesis. Our own conclusion is that the essence of Sayyid Qutb's exegesis has been written with the ink of the pen and with his blood, and then it was planted in the soil of faith, it was irrigated with the water of sincerity, and it grew under the care of courage. And God knows best " <sup>89</sup>*

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<sup>89</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Khalidi, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an fi al-mizan - dirasa wa taqwim*, Dar al-menareti li al-nashr wa al-tanzil, Jidda, 1<sup>st</sup> ed, 1986, p. 5.

His commentary is marked by several features and characteristics. In our view, this is the most important commentary and the most valuable source of our time from the aspect of the contemporary understanding of the verses and the interrelation of real events with the Qur'anic texts.

From the point of view of the contents this commentary contains a hidden secret which is strange and yet attractive, and it possesses an ideal method in inferring lessons from the Qur'anic verses in order to guide the Muslim caller and to teach him how to face the challenges of the times and society he lives in. This does not imply depreciation for other commentaries for each has its special value and weight...

Praise be to God, the greatest merit in this period belongs to the well-known professor Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi, for he studied this tafsir as well as its author in more detail and greater precision, in order to defend the truth, knowledge, and the scholars"

#### **2.2.4 The description by the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh who says:**



**Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Al-Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh**

*(may the Almighty God bless him)*

*His Eminence, the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh, may God protect him, when he was asked in a radio episode on the program "**Light on the Path**", then the episode was broadcasted on the Internet and You Tube, says what we summarize as follows:*

*My brothers, the book "**In the Shadows of the Qur'an – Fi Zilal al-Qur'an**" is not a book of Qur'an interpretations, rather it is as the author declared: "This book tells the Muslims that the Noble Qur'an is the constitution of the Muslim ummah (nations), therefore you should live under its shadows, derive from it its lessons and manners and use its pure teachings. You*

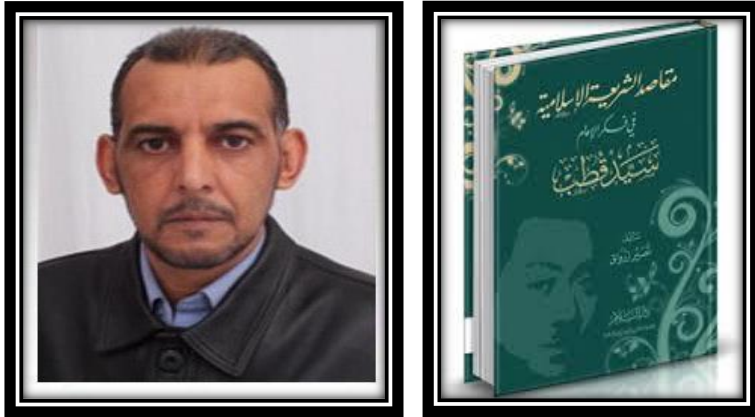
*must resort to the Qur'an with your hearts to find in it the treatment of your problems and the resolution of your issues and the relief of your concerns." The book **Fi Zilal al-Qur'an** which Prof. Sayyid Qutb wrote has a high literary style of writing and expression which some people may find difficult to understand its phrases and meanings. Due to this reality, they may think that there are some terms and views which indicate some wrong opinions and bad ideas about the Almighty God, His prophets etc. However, if the reader reconsiders and reanalyses the phrase he will find that it was constructed and written in a high literary style that may be above the reader's understanding. This method of writing is understood only by those who practice reading the author's commentary.*

*Admitting this, we do not claim that the book: **Fi Zilal al-Qur'an** is free of some errors and observations. One important thing we must not forget is that the author wrote his book in the defence and love of Islam. He was well qualified with general Islamic education and sciences, and we may excuse him for such mistakes because of the lack of his knowledge in those particular small issues... Students and the knowledge seekers must read and benefit from it and they must avoid thinking bad of him or accusing him. They must be fair and objective towards him and revere that he died as a Martyr of Islam; may the Almighty God*



*shower His mercy upon him. He changed and corrected some of his views in other writings before he died...”*<sup>90</sup>

### **2.2.5 The description of prof.dr. Nusair Zarwaq who writes:**



**Prof. Dr.Nusair Zarwaq**

*(May the Almighty God bless him)*

He says: *“Professor Sayyid Qutb, is the undisputed scholar of Islam and the reformer of the fourteenth century. The imam Sayyid Qutb is the author of a great Qur'anic thought, which gave us a deeper look into the Qur'an and Islam. His vision relied on general legal priorities of Islam without neglecting the other secondary parts. Thus, he opened to us gates of research in the Sharia horizons in depth to face the western ideology and*

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<sup>90</sup> For more details please to his video footage on the internet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTpKJejonJk>, browsed on June 27, 2020

*moving the stagnant thought in the East, demonstrating the ability of this Sharia to direct private individuals, public life, society and state ”<sup>91</sup>.*

## **2.2.6 The description of sheikh Salman al-Awdah, he writes:**



**Shaikh Dr.Salman al-Awdah**

*(May the Almighty God help him to get released from the jail)*

*“He who fears God refrains from accusing the Muslims, especially scholars of Islam who defend Islam and fight for the cause of Islam. What I believe about Professor Sayyid Qutb is that: he is one of the imams of guidance and religion, and one*

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<sup>91</sup> See: Zarwaq Nusair, **Maqasid al-Shariati al-Islamiyati fi Fikri al-Imam Sayyid Qutb**, the introduction.

*of its advocates of Islamic reform, as well among the pioneers of Islamic thought. He used his thought and pen to defend Islam and to explain its meanings. He replied to the suspicions of the enemies of Islam by defending Islamic beliefs and its rulings in a special way that no one did in our modern time. His talks and writings reveal the true spirit of a sincere person who lived for Islam, and whose heart was fully concerned about Islam to the extent that he neglected his own concerns due to his sadness over Islam and the Muslim situation.”<sup>92</sup>*

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<sup>92</sup> See: **Sayyid Qutb ba'da 43 A'men min istish'hadih**, with and introduction of prof.Salah Abdul Fattah al-Khalidi

**2.2.7 The description of sheikh Hammud bin uklaa'a al-Shuaibi who said:**



**Al-Sheikh Hammud bin Uklaa'a Al-Shuaibi**

*( may the Almighty God shower His mercy upon him)*

*” Targeting Sayyid Qutb, may God have mercy on him, was not a mere target of his person; he is not the only scholar with shortcomings! We admit that he has shortcomings, He died and met his Lord. However, what concerns the enemies of Islam is the spread of his method of understanding Islam (Qur'an & Sunnah) among Muslims.*

*And when I hear the critiques about Sayyid Qutb, may God have mercy on him, I am not surprised by this, because the Almighty says: " Thus have We made for every Prophet an enemy among the Mujrimun (disbelievers, polytheists, criminals, etc.). But Sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and Helper ", ( al-Furqan: 31). As for those who have been given the light and the legacy of our Prophet Muhammad - i.e. the knowledge - (peace and blessings be upon him ) they will have some enemies accordingly. These critiques never ever defame Prof. Sayyid Qutb; rather they are an honor and privilege for him.*

*What is surprising us in this matter is that you see some religious people with double standards; when it comes to someone whom they admire and love, and their mistakes are much more than those of Prof. Sayyid Qutb they say: those mistakes are almost nothing compared to his good deeds!! His mistakes should be dipped into the sea of his good deeds!! However, when it comes to someone whom they do not admire and hate – like Prof. Sayyid Qutb, the reformist of calling people to practice Islamic Shari'ah - they produce such strong accusations and critiques against him, declaring him rebellious and disobedient to Allah!!*

*Our Prof. Sayyid Qutb's case is unlike the case of other great scholars like Imam Ibni Hajar, Imam al-Nawa-wi, Imam Ibni al-Jawzi, and Imam Ibni Hazam; they too have their shortcomings in some issues of al-Aqidah (Islamic Belief). However, Muslims*

*– be they scholars or seekers of Islamic knowledge – none of them said do not benefit from the works of Sayed Qutb! None of them forbade benefitting from their knowledge! Absolutely. They are great Imams and scholars of Islam and will remain so. The same method must be applied when it comes to Prof. Sayyid Qutb. His minor shortcomings do not affect his sincere striving for the cause of Islam and sincere calling of Muslims to abide with Islamic law and its regulations, worshipping the Almighty God only... Finally, I believe strongly –and the God knows the best - that Prof. Sayyid Qutb is the best and great martyr of Islam who gave his soul for the sake of Islam by advising and correcting the actions of the wrong rulers, killers and dictators like the Egyptian ruler Gamal Abdul Nassir who killed him.*

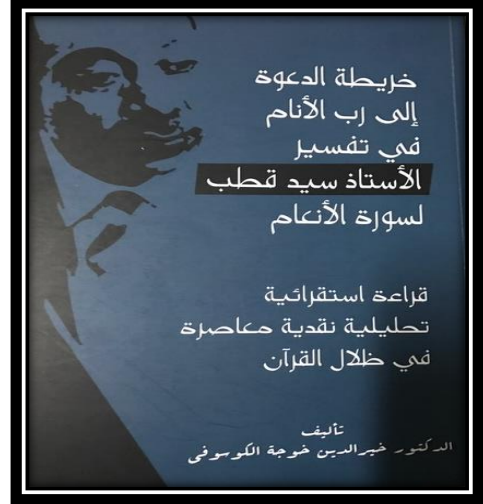
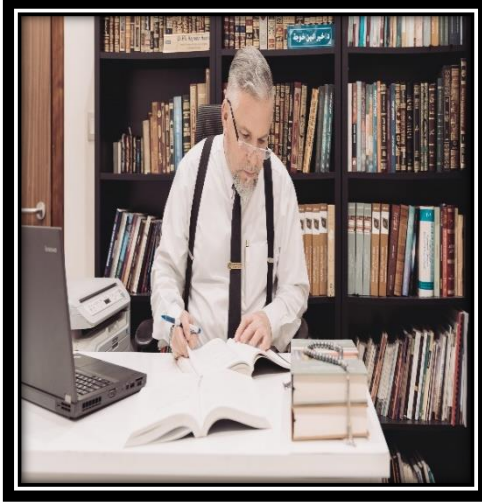
*I hope and do consider Sayyid Qutb among the martyrs of Islam - the Almighty Allah knows best - This is because the prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) said about his uncle Hamzah when he was killed by al-Wahshy in the battle of Uhud: That Hamzah is the leading Martyr of Islam. He is included and meant by the hadith of prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) who said: "the leading Martyr / privileged Martyr is Hamza, and also said that a person who advised an autocratic/despotic leader with firmness and braveness was killed by that leader. So, we believe that Prof. Sayyid Qutb is among the martyrs of Islam because he spoke the truth and was killed for that reason.*

*Here I would like to bring a story before his death when he knew about the death sentence. He became very happy and one of the officers saw Sayyid Qutb very delighted when he heard the news of the death sentence, "martyrdom". This officer said: " I was surprised because he was not sad, nor depressed or collapsed or frustrated. This officer asked him saying: You think that you will be a martyr?! What is the meaning of martyrdom in your opinion? Prof. Sayyid Qutb answered, may God have mercy on him, saying: The martyr is the one who provides testimony from his soul and blood that the religion of God –Islam - is more precious to him than his life, and therefore he exerts his soul and life in exchange for the religion of Allah. Prof. Sayyid Qutb has a lot of sayings and positions that prove to us with no doubt that his heart is filled with the love of God and the love of His Messenger, may God bless him and grant him Paradise. We ask God to have mercy on us and forgive us and him, and may God's prayers be upon our Prophet Muhammed, his family, and all his companions.., Hamoud bin Aqla Al-Shuaibi 5/16/1421 AH " <sup>93</sup>.*

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<sup>93</sup> <http://www.mosshaf.com/ar/main>

## 2.2.8 The description of the author of this book: prof.dr. Hajredin Hoxha, who says:



**Prof.Dr.Hajredin Hoxha**

*(May the Almighty God be pleased with him)*

*I may conclude by saying without any exaggeration, and the Almighty God is my best witness: The interpretation of Prof. Sayyid Qutb “Fi Dhilal el Quran -In the shadows of the Qur’an” is a doctrinal, societal, moral, literary, rhetorical, academic, dynamic, contemporary educational interpretation of the first degree. When you read it, the Almighty God awakens dead hearts, unconscious minds, and defeated souls. By reading this interpretation, it makes dry eyes to cry, it cultivates hearts to love the Almighty Allah and His Messenger, the Qur’an, and Muslims and the love of the author of this interpretation as well.*



*It also ignites in the hearts of preachers to God and students of Islamic knowledge the flame of faith in God to move forward to God. He draws a clear road map of the invitation-da'wah for scholars and students how to reach the pleasure of God through the application of His laws in all areas of life.*

*This book *Fi Dhilal el Qur'an* explains the way of dealing with invitees and addressees of different races, classes, and their level of knowledge and culture, taking into consideration their intellectual, psychological and behavioral conditions, gradually helping them to understand the laws of God in the rise of and potential victory of nations and civilizations. It organizes the dispersed thoughts of Muslims, assesses their crooked ranks, and reveals to them the true nature of Islam and the nature of the divine method to walk on with knowledge, guidance, and a bright book. Blessed be the author of this interpretation, the reader of this interpretation, and the implementer of this interpretation. God knows best.*

## 2.3 PART III

### 2.3.1 Sayyid Qutb's method in his commentary

During our study for his interpretation, we have discerned the following features in this commentary:

1. *Accomplishment and seriousness of approach and study.*
2. *The Salafi and contemporary methodology.*
3. *The clarification of man's role and position.*
4. *Deep understanding of the historical facts on the revelation of the Qur'an.*
5. *Elucidations on the interaction of the Companions with the Qur'an.*
6. *Correcting contemporary deviated Islamic thought and an analysis of the Islamic world in past and today. Analysing deeply imperial and colonial countries in the past how they exploited the wealth and natural resources of Muslim societies.*
7. *Discussion of matters pertaining to da'wah and the Islamic movement in facing the challenges of ignorant materialism.*
8. *Aesthetical exegesis of the artistic forms in the Quran;*<sup>94</sup> and:

Ample analysis on the Qur'anic verses related to faith, the elucidation of their meanings, implications, principles, and analysis;<sup>95</sup>

These characteristics prove the value of the commentary *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an* for in this book the author deals with numerous issues. The frequent analyses clearly confirm that the author possessed a vast knowledge.

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<sup>94</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an fi al-mizan*, pp. 305-400.

<sup>95</sup> *Madhal il al-tafsir wa ulum al-Qur'an*, p. 267.

Some of the other characteristics which are noticeable in this *tafsir* are:

1. *Reliance on the truths of the Islamic belief and considering the latter as the foundation for everything; and:*

2. *Recapitulation of creedal issues and recourse to the principles of religion and to divine authority until the strengthening of faith takes place in the hearts of men. If the hearts are pure than all else is pure, and if they are corrupt all else is corrupted...*<sup>96</sup>

During the study of the author and his commentary, as well as certain scholars who wrote on his method, we can reach the following results on his method and principles for the commentary of God's words:

- First, Sayyid Qutb points out the purpose for the revelation of the specific verse or verses under discussion, the goals involved, and the thematic unity of the Chapter and the characters mentioned therein. Then he goes on to comment elaborately by presenting lessons and conclusions.<sup>97</sup>
- Whenever the cause for the revelation of a verse is known, Qutb points it out by relying on authenticated reports. He also quotes the opinions of different scholars on the meaning of the verse in discussion. Qutb pays attention to the linguistic aspects and seeks the reviving of consciousness, the correction of the concepts and interaction of Islam with life.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Mukawwimat al-tasawur al-islami*, chapter "Uluhiyya wa ubudiyya", p. 41; Chapter "Haqiqat al-uluhiyya", p. 81.

<sup>97</sup> Adnan Muhammad Zarzur writes that, "*To Sayyid Qutb belongs the idea of the thematic unity of the Surah, be it long or short, and he is the first to consider the question.*" For more details, see *Ma'dhal il al-tafsir wa ulumih*, p. 267.

<sup>98</sup> Menn'a al-Kattan, *Mabahith fi ulum al-Qur'an*, p. 334.

- He mentions saying of philosophers and treats their ideas with rational arguments; he rejects their doubts and clarifies the invalidity of their method on issues related to religion and monotheism.<sup>99</sup>
- He clarifies and analyzes social and man made systems and regimes, such as communism, Marxism, democracy, capitalism in

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<sup>99</sup> Perhaps Qutb's approach to the commentary of the Qur'an was the reason behind some accusations which have been levelled against him by some personal opponents who claimed that he did not know the "deep philosophical issues". Dr. Ahmad Salah al-din al-Musilli writes: "*Yet Qutb did not possess a deep knowledge of philosophy, history, and science, or even of traditional sciences. Even though his knowledge was general and diverse, Sayyid Qutb did not give any other role to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) except the transmission of the revelation, thus lowering his grade to the level of the dogmatic theologians, philosophers, and jurisconsults. That is, Qutb's knowledge about prophethood was poor, since our scholars, and even non-Muslims had a better opinion about the Prophet than Sayyid Qutb. Many of his opinions were similar to those of the philosophers...*" See *al-Fikr al-islami al-mu'asir*, pp. 46-56, 57-152.

Our response to this falsw claim and those who think alike is based on two aspects:

1. In Islam there is no sanctification of persons or beings, as in some other religions. In Islam we cannot grant the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) more than God Almighty had granted him. We cannot elevate his authority as Christians elevated Jesus the son of Mary. If one ponders about the words of God, one will understand this: "*Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only One God...*" (al-Kahf, 110). Qutb's understanding of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was based on this verse and other verses alike within its limits, and God willing this is the sound reasoning on the position of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). He is a human being, but it is the revelation that comes down to him which differentiates him from others.

2. Does his statement "*Sayyid Qutb was not a scholar*" imply that Sayyid Qutb was ignorant? In accordance with the scientific method, one must offer facts in support of one's claim. If one reports one must prove the report, and if one makes a claim, one must bring an argument. Unfortunately, we do not find this in the speech of al-Musilli. All these accusations against Sayyid Qutb have no foundation whatsoever, be it in the domain of history, philosophy, and other sciences.

order to prove the invalidity of man-made methods. He offers political and social analyses of the attitudes of the Prophet (blessings and peace upon him) towards the idolaters, Jews, and explains the causes of the migration (*hijra*).

- He does not hesitate in using harsh and sarcastic words against unbelievers and hypocrites, such as: *ignorant, blind, degenerate, etc.*<sup>100</sup>
- He does not rely on Isra'iliyyat in his commentary because they are not based on authenticated transmitters. Nevertheless, despite his utmost care in this regard we note that some of those reports escaped his attention.<sup>101</sup> I call as my iraqian former professor Abdul Qahar al Ani called, that we must disqualify all Isra'iliyat sources (Jewish and Christian sources) in our Quran interpretations, because in early and contemporary times they became a source of all lies and troubles against Islam and Muslims aroind the Globe.
- He concentrated on the practical aspect and the artistic unity of the verses.<sup>102</sup> Most of the time he quotes from the classic commentators such as Ibn Kathir and Tabari, but without being influenced from them in his commentary.<sup>103</sup> Sometimes he expresses his own opinion and relies on the outward meaning of the text without leaving the context, as in the case of the verse of fasting in the second Chapter of the Qur'an.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. I, p. 45.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>102</sup> Muhyi Hilal Serhan Muslim al-Ja'far, *Manahij al-mufassirin*, (Dar al-ma'rifah), 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1980, p. 268; *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. III, pp. 3598-3599.

<sup>103</sup> *Madhal il al-tafsir wa ulumih*, p. 269.

<sup>104</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. VI, pp. 3598-3599.

- Sayyid Qutb was a moderated commentator, inclined neither to extremism nor to liberal opinions that seek to oversimplify God’s principles. In his commentary he applied the method of the pious ancestors ( *al Manhaj al Salfi/ al Tafsir bi al Ma’thur*) a fact he mentioned repeatedly in his exegesis.<sup>105</sup> He exercised selection of opinions in Islamic jurisprudence and chose the opinion that was based on authentic arguments, as in the case of the continuation and consequence of fasting.<sup>106</sup>
- He also mentions modern sciences like medicine, astronomy, physics, and chemistry, but exercises great caution against the so-called scientific commentary of the Qur’an (*al Tafsir al Ilmi*), because scientific discoveries and the theories based upon them are changeable, whereas the Qur’anic verses never change.
- It is therefore not true that Sayyid Qutb rejected the scientific commentary of the verses, be it even in general or.<sup>107</sup> In questions of faith, he confirms the Attributes of God that are stated in the Qur’an, such as life, power, etc.
- Qutb distinguished between the Meccan and the Medinite verses because each period had its specific priorities.<sup>108</sup>

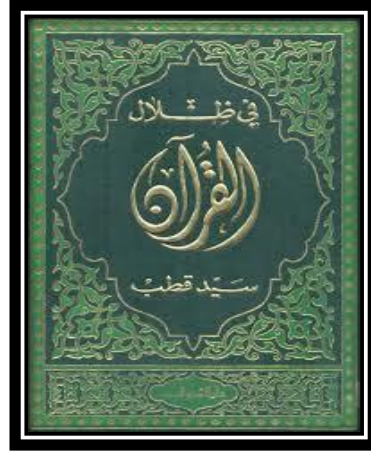
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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, vol. VI, p. 3560.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, vol. VI, p. 3560.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*; vol. III, pp. 1216-1217; vol. VI, pp. 3713-3714.

<sup>108</sup> For more details on Sayyid Qutb’s style and method, see: 1. Fahd ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Sulayman al-Rumi, “Ittijahat al-tafsir fi al-karn al-rabi’ ashar”; vol. III; p. 999; 2. Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi, *Mafatih li al-ta’amu ma’al-Qur’an*; Idem, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an fi al-mizan*; Chapter “Simat al-dhilâl, p.19; 5. Menna’a al-Kattan, *Mabahith fi ulum al-Qur’an*, pp. 334; 6. Adnan Muhammad Zarzur, *Madhal il al-tafsir wa ulumih*, pp. 260-270.



*My presentation in the International Conference on the contemporary methods of Qur'an Interpretation in Amman-Jordan, August 2008. My paper was about the qualifications of the contemporary methods of Qur'an interpretation: **Prof.Sayyid Qutb as a case study**. The speech was delivered in Arabic language. The author of this book is in the right.*

We end the section on the method used by Qutb by listing the principles on which he based his commentary of the Qur'an:

1. *The literary method.*
2. *The experience of the spirit of Qur'anic text.*
3. *Realism and dynamism.*
4. *Aesthetic and artistic exegesis.*
5. *Thematic unity of the text.*
6. *Receiving inspiration from the text without preconceptions.*
7. *Not delving on unclear matters in the Qur'an.*
8. *Caution against the Isra'iliyyat.*
9. *Abandoning juridical disputes in question of fiqh; and:*
10. *Distancing from long elaborations on linguistic points.*
11. *Direct involvement with the Qur'anic text, focusing on the practical sides and dimensions of the Quranic commands in our life*<sup>109</sup>.

What we have stated in this section constitutes our own response to all those who claimed and who unfortunately continue to claim that *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* is not a commentary and that its author is not a commentator. If the principles listed above are not conditions and principles for the commentary, then what are they?!

Another two additional principles which we came across in the commentary are the following:

1. *The author's capacity to consider the verses from different aspects without being influenced from early or contemporary commentators; and:*

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<sup>109</sup> For more details, see Fahd ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Sulayman al-Rumi, *Ittijat al-tafsir fi al-karn al-rab' asher*; pp. 999ff.



*2. His self-confidence and lack of intimidation before other opinions until he reached his own conclusions.*

This is our limited treatment of the methodology used by Sayyid Qutb in his commentary of the Qur'an, and God knows best!

## **Chapter 3 :**

The call (da'wah) and its method based on Chapter al-An'am of the Qur'an

### **3.1 PART I:**

#### **3.1.1 Reasons for choosing Surah al-An'am.**

There are several reasons and causes that influenced my decision to choose the Chapter al-An'am for my study:

\* This blessed Surah is one of the Meccan chapters, except for a few verses which are said to have been revealed in Medina. The Meccan chapters in general are characterized by the fact that they focus more on the aspect of faith and exhortation to religion. Therefore, this Surah fits perfectly with the subject of this study.

\* This blessed Surah contains several cosmological arguments and proofs regarding the existence of God, creation, Divine omnipotence and dominion of the universe, issues pertaining to human beings, the jinn, believers, and non-believers... as can be seen in verses 11-14, 59-66, and 95-99 respectively. This is directly related to the topic of this dissertation which focuses on the call to God the Almighty.

\* This blessed Surah speaks about ancient peoples, their situation after the coming of the prophets and messengers unto them from God, to guide them, as well as their treatment of the messengers and prophets. It also deals with the prophets' attitude toward these peoples. Their example is a guiding principle for callers, especially today (cf. vs. 6-10);

\* This blessed Surah comprises various ways and methods of calling people to religion which can and should be applied by callers today. They involve the need for patience, steadfastness, variety of approaches in accordance with the situation of the people they address, such as: rational argumentation and posing questions to the opponents, in order to prove the Majesty of God and His dominion over everything (cf. vs. 17-18, 33-34-35-38, and 50-52). Their benefit lies in drawing lessons from stories of bygone people and from their fate. This chapter includes a method which warns, orders, and stops people to ponder on the remembrance of God's blessings, as well as the recourse to challenge (cf. vs. 11-13, and 46-47).

\* This blessed Surah deals with the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab-Jews and Christians*) and with their hiding of their knowledge on the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him). This is a very important point, especially for the stage of the dialogue in calling to God.

\* This blessed Surah shows in a clear and direct way the essential difference between Muslims and wrongdoers, a fact which implies that the callers must understand that their task is a complex one. The difference between Muslims and unbelievers must be made clear and stated explicitly. (cf. vs. 55-57, 68).

\* This blessed Surah clarifies the legitimacy of studying, searching and defending the truth, which is made evident in the story of Ibrahim (peace be with him!) when he saw the moon at night, the sun in the day, etc... (cf. vs. 74-79).

\* This blessed Surah mentions most of the prophets and messengers of God who had diverse methods but a single common call (cf. vs. 82-90). This is a very important matter for the callers who must

unify their goals of exhortation despite their differences in method and approach.

\* This blessed Surah contains deep principles from the aspect of faith (*iman*) as well as different religious domains such as: legislation, juridical relations, worship, etc. (cf. vs. 103, 108, 118, 137, 121, 151-153). This can greatly influence the erudition and self-confidence of the caller.

\* This blessed Surah elucidates the idolatry of the period of ignorance as practiced by the Meccans, namely the offering of gifts and sacrifices in the name of God and divinities which they ascribed as partners to Him. This aspect implies the necessity for the study and knowledge of the reality of the society which the caller is addressing (cf. vs. 136, 140, 146);

\* This precious Surah contains important advice which the scholars have called “the ten advices- comandments”. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these ten advises are considered as the culmination of the Islamic legislation, namely: Not ascribing partners to God, which essentially means to uphold monotheism (*tawhid*), the foundation of a believer’s worldview; kind behaviour towards one’s parents, which is among the most preferred deeds with God Almighty; and not killing one’s children for fear of poverty, because God Almighty is their Sustainer and Master (cf. vs. 151-3). These principles guide and instruct callers to concentrate on the priorities of religion and then deal with secondary issues.

\* The long but pleasant and important introduction written by Qutb to this Surah is the longest one in his entire commentary. In it Qutb clarifies the importance of the revelation in the Meccan period and the

steps and measures that are a prerequisite for building an Islamic society. This long period is an indicator, for the callers, of the long time they must be prepared to spend with those whom they exhort to belief, and the implanting of faith in the hearts and in the intellects. They must not expect fast results for their efforts before clarifying to people the secret of their existence, the reason for the existence of the Universe, their true identity, their origin, manner of creation, reason of creation, and their end. This is Qutb's approach.

\* Perhaps this was the strongest reason that led me to study this blessed Surah, namely the challenges we face today as callers to Islam. The situation obligates us to study the chapters of the Meccan period which contain different strategies for inviting people to faith, until we reach a way out of the present impasse in which we notice division and dispute among callers, as well as a complete lack of a program for their activities, and their weakness which has come about from lack of knowledge in the field...;

\* This blessed Surah is filled with testimonies about the life of the Arabs during the period of ignorance. Contemporary ignorance and the distancing of people from Islam, openly or secretly, be they rulers or subjects, individuals or communities is not easier than the early ignorance.

\* This blessed Surah has laid out the basic principles to tread the path of God with the purpose of accomplishing the divine method and leading the whole ummah out of the impasse that has seized even callers to Islam. Yet there is no doubt that the day will come when believers rejoice from the application of God's Law and the experience of this divine method in their everyday life.

### 3.1.2 Topics of the Surah

This blessed Surah exposes several important matters from the life of the individual, society, and the ummah, and it openly opposes deviation and ignorant conceptions of the idolaters on God the Almighty and His Shari‘ah. The subject of faith constitutes the basis of this Surah from beginning to end.

In this context, Qutb writes:

*“The subject elaborated upon throughout this Surah is that of faith with all its principles and elements. This Surah deals with the general reward of man, with existence, with the sources of belief, and with inspiring matters of existence, be they hidden or open. It takes man to the world of the heavens and the earth, it looks at darkness and light, the sun, the moon, and the stars in the fenced and unfenced gardens under which water flows. This Surah takes man to the times of the extinct people and shows him their traces which are still evident. Then it takes him to the darkness of the earth and the sea, to the mysteries of the invisible and the spirit, when the living arises from the dead and the dead arises from the living to the semen which is planted and which lives in the darkness of the womb. It also takes man to the world of jinn and people, birds and beasts, the foremost and the last, the living and the dead, the custodian angels during night-time and daytime...”<sup>110</sup>*

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<sup>110</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 11<sup>th</sup> revised ed. 1985, vol. II, p. 1016.

When Qutb deals in detail with the topics of this Surah in another place, he writes:

*“This Surah deals with the basic questions of faith, the issue of God’s divinity, it informs people about God and tells them who is He that constitutes the source of existence, what mysteries are there after this world, who are the servants, who brought them into existence, who created them, who sustains them, who takes care about them, who regulates their affairs, who changes their hearts and eyes, who changes night and day, who starts and ends the two, what did He create them from, how long will they live, where shall they go?”*

*This life blossoms everywhere, who is it that instilled it into these dead beings? This great decoration, this bud that blossoms, the seed that blooms, this shining star, this rising morning, this night that sets, this universe that rotates, who is behind all of this? Who?*

*What mysteries and secrets stand behind all these things? What about people throughout the centuries who are replaced by their descendants? Who creates descendants, and who replaces them? Why are descendants created? Why are they destroyed and why do they disappear? What end, what reckoning, and what reward will they have after their destruction trials, and death?”<sup>111</sup>*

*“The main topic that is treated throughout this Surah cannot be divided into parts. This Surah is like waves standing behind each other.”<sup>112</sup>*

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, vol. II, p. 1016.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, vol. II, p. 1022.

In his discussion of the subject at hand, Wahba Zuhayli writes: ***“In general this Sura summarizes:***

\* The confirmation of the principles of faith based on conviction, influence, dialogue, discussion, question, and answer.

\* The confirmation of prophethood, the message of the revelation, and the rejection of the idolaters’ doubts with rational and intelligible arguments.

\* The clarification of the principles of religion, morals, and social ethics through the “ten advices, commandments”;

\* Religion (*al-din*) which has been the same from the time of Adam to Muhammad (blessings and peace be with him!) in its essence, ways, and goals.

\* Divine justice that has willed different peoples and individuals, and God destroys the wrongdoers, He bestows blessing upon the believers, and enables the righteous to inherit the earth...; and:

\* God who is the source of legislation: the allowed and the prohibited.”<sup>113</sup>

Rashid Imam Husayn, in his book ***Qur’aniyyat***, when dealing with the practical aspect of the world problems and crises, writes:

*“This chapter declares war on the exploiters of the weak (cf. vs. 119-161). Verse 152, “And approach not the wealth of the orphan save with that which is better, till he reaches maturity” clearly shows how one*

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<sup>113</sup> Wahba Zuhayli, *al-Tafsir al-munir fi al-aqidah wa al-shari’ah wa al-manhaj*, Dar al-fikr al-Mua’sir, Beirut, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1991, vol. VII, p.126.



*must act in different juridical matters. This verse brings out important lessons which can run the whole world economy if their principles and rules are followed.”*<sup>114</sup>

Professor Rashid continues by pointing out that:

*“The rich countries must not exploit the poor countries - quite the opposite, they must help them overcome their economical problems and difficulties. The wealthy must help the poor, for only in this way there will be no excuses for the spread of immorality and unemployment. Every effort must be made for achieving humankind’s happiness and progress, instead of running after personal interests. One of the conclusions of this blessed Surah is Islam’s effectiveness for the solution of world problems.”*<sup>115</sup>

This impressed Bernard Shaw who wrote:

*“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age.”*<sup>116</sup>

We believe that a closer look at the Surah al-An’am will reveal that all the above-mentioned ideas are clearly present in its text.

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<sup>114</sup> Husain Rashid, *Quranology - the Practical Solution to the World’s Problems and Crisis*, London, Ta-ha Publishers Ltd, 1987, pp. 78-79.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.1.3 Name and reason for the Surah

Regarding with the mystery and wisdom behind the name of this Surah, Wahba Zuhayli states in his Tafsir:

*“Surah al-An’am is the sixth chapter and it has been called so due to the mentioning of cattle therein: “They assign unto God , of the crops and cattle which He created, a portion, and they say: ‘This is God's’ - in their make-believe – ‘and this is for (His) partners in regard to us.’ Thus that which (they assign) unto His partners in them reacheth not God and that which (they assign) unto God goeth to their partners. Evil is their ordinance.” (al-An’am,136)*

This explains the reason for the name of this Surah, because in Arabic the term *al-an’am* includes the following animals: **camels, cows, and sheep**. *As for the reason of its revelation, it is related with previously expounded concepts, because both Surah al-Ma’ida and al-An’am reject the attitudes and beliefs of the People of the Book, they state the prohibited foods and slaughter, and they criticize the supporters of ignorance for their prohibition of some blessings in order to draw nearer to their idols.*”<sup>117</sup>

In this point, there is also an important comment by Shaykh Muhammad Rashid Rida in his *Tafsir al-Manar*, which is worth mentioning in order to bring out another of the numerous secrets of this Surah. He says:

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<sup>117</sup> Wahba Zuhayli, *al-Tafsir al-munir fi al-aqidah wa al-shari‘ah wa al-manhaj*, vol. VII, p. 127. For more details see Muhammad Rashid Rida’s *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-hakim al-shahir bi Tafsir al-Manar*, Dar al-Manar, Shari al-insha, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1367 H, vol. VII, pp. 384-385.

*“Whoever analyzes the order of the Suras in the Book will notice that there are long, medium, and short sentences in them, in order to make their reading and memorizing easier. The reader begins to read and is taken from the longer chapters to the shorter ones and then to the shortest ones;<sup>118</sup> in order for the reading to be vivid and far from boring. The last part can be learned by heart for it is easier for children to memorize. Since faith is uppermost in religion, the question of the People of the Book is dealt with more than that of the polytheists, which is why the former are criticized more, and only then the latter are mentioned.*

*This can be seen most clearly in Surah al-An’am which complements Surah al-Baqara in questions of faith. It is followed by Surah al-A’raf which expounds on God’s laws to the prophets and the messengers, regarding the matters of the people they were sent to. This is an argument for the People of the Book. Surah al-An’am deals in more detail with Ibrahim who is the forefather of the Arabs and the People of the Book.”<sup>119</sup>*

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<sup>118</sup> On the seven long suras, Muhammad Rashid Rida writes: *“It is said that the first of the seven long ones is Surah al-Baqarah, and the last is Surah al-Tawbah. The other Suras that have one hundred or less verses include the short ones, such al-Fatiha which is also called ( al Sab’u al Mathani – The repeated seven separated verses, due to many divisions in it”*. See his *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-hakim al-shahir bi Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. VII, p. 287.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 287.

### 3.1.4 On the value of this Surah and its descent

Regarding the value of this chapter of the Qur'an, the scholars and commentators have related several opinions. Sa'id ibn Jubayr relates from Ibn Abbas who says: ***“If you wish to learn about the ignorance of the Arabs, read verse 130 and beyond from Surah al-An'am:***

*“They are losers who besottedly have slain their children without knowledge, and have forbidden that which God bestowed upon them, inventing a lie against God. They indeed have gone astray and are not guided.”* (al-An'am, 140).<sup>120</sup>

Also Imam al-Darimi in his *Sunan* says: “It is related from Abu Na'im, from Abu Zuhayr ibn Is'haq, from Abdullah ibn Khalifa that 'Umar said: ***“Then al-An'am is from among the chosen parts of the Qur'an.”***<sup>121</sup>

It is related that Ibn Abu Shayba has said in his classical work: “Affan relates from Hammam who says: I have heard from Abu Imran al-Jawni saying: We have heard from Abdullah ibn Rabbah who said: I have heard Ka'b saying: ***“The key of the Torah is in the beginning of Surah Hud.”***<sup>122</sup> And in some versions: the key of the Torah is in the beginning of the Chapter al-An'aam and in its end (last ten advices).”

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Daris in his *Fada'il al-Qur'an* writes:

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<sup>120</sup>Al-Bukhari, *al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih*, Dar al Ma'rifah, Bierut, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1999, no. 3524.

<sup>121</sup> Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Rahman Abu Muhammad al-Darimi, *Sunan al-Darimi*, Dar al-kitab al-arabi, Beirut, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1407 H., vol. II, p. 245, edited by Fawwat Ahmed Zumerli and Khalid al-Sabi al-Ilami.

<sup>122</sup> Ebu Baqir Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Shuayb al-Kafi, *Musannaf ibn Abi Shayba*, Maktabah al-Rashid, Riyad, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1409 H, ed. Kamal Yusuf al-Hut, vol. VI, p. 152.

“It has been related to us by Sulayman ibn Hazb, Musa ibn Isma‘il and Ali ibn Zayd from Yusuf ibn Mehran who relates from Ibn Abbas that: **“*Surah al-An’am was revealed completely during night time.*”** Ali ibn Musa has said: **“*It was sent down in Mecca during the night, and seventy thousand angels were singing praises around it.*”**<sup>123</sup>

Imam Muhammad ibn Daris says that Isma‘il ibn Ayyash relates from Ibn Hibban, who quotes Shahr ibn Hashub that: **“I heard Ibn Abbas saying, ‘*All of Surah al-An’am was sent down in Mecca surrounded by groups of angels who sang praises between the heaven and the earth, and the whole earth shook from the echo of their praising of the Lord.*’”** Ibn Abbas is also quoted as saying: **“*When the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) heard their praise he felt awe and went into prostration, until the surah was revealed.*”**<sup>124</sup>

Below we give a summary of different commentators’ statements on the value of this Surah in order to have a more complete picture thereof:

1. Imam Fakhr al-Din a-Razi in his *Tafsir al-kabir* says:

**“*Surah al-An’am is a Meccan surah, with the exception of verses 20, 23, 91, 114, 141, 151-153.*”**

He relates from Ibn Abbas who si reported to have said:

**“*This is a Meccan surah and it was revealed in its entirety under the witnessing of seventy thousand angels. They descended and filled both sides of the Mecca, and the Prophet (Blessings and peace be with***

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<sup>123</sup> al-Daris ibn Muhammad, *Fada’il al-Qur’an*, al-shamilah, vol.1, p. 206.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

him!) *called the scribes who wrote it down that night, except for six verses which were revealed in Medina.*"<sup>125</sup>

It is also related from Ibn al-Munkadir that:

**“When Surah al-An’am was revealed the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) praised God, and said: *“This Surah was accompanied with angels who covered the whole of space!”***<sup>126</sup>

The usuli scholars -Islamic Jurisprudent scholars, maintain that this Surah is distinguished by two characteristics:

***“It was revealed at once, and its revelation was accompanied by seventy thousand angels. This was due to the fact that it contains proofs of the Divine unity (tawhid), justice, prophethood, resurrection, rejection of the beliefs of atheists and polytheists, which goes to show that the science of usul takes an exceedingly important place therein.”***<sup>127</sup>

Imam al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir writes:

***“According to the majority, this chapter was revealed in Mecca”;*** and he quotes Ibn Abbas as saying: ***“If you wish to learn about the ignorance of the Arabs, read verses 130 and onwards of Surah al-An’am”:***

***“They are losers who besottedly have slain their children without knowledge, and have forbidden that which Allah bestowed upon them,***

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<sup>125</sup> Imam Fakhr al-Din ibn Allama Diya al-Din Umar al-Razi, known as Khatib al-Razi. He is the author of the commentary known as *Tafsir al-Kabir* or *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, Dar al-fikr li al-taba’at wa al-nashr, Beirut, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1985, vol. VI-VII, p. 149.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

***inventing a lie against Allah. They indeed have gone astray and are not guided.***” (al-An’am, 140).”<sup>128</sup>

Imam al-Shawkani writes: “It is related from Tabari, from Ibn Mardawayh, Ebu Shaykh, from Bayhaqi in *Shu’ab al-iman*, from Anas r.a. who relates that the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) has said:

***“Surah al-An’am was sent down accompanied by the angels who had filled the whole space and offered praise and laudation.”*** The earth was trembling, and the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) would repeat continuously: *Subhana ‘Llah al-Adhim, Subhana ‘Llah al-Adhim* (“***Elevated is God the Exalted above any imperfection ...***”)<sup>129</sup>

### **3.1.5 Some general ways of exhortation, da’wah in the Noble Qur’an**

The Noble Qur’an is a Book of Guidance, rhetorics, and eloquence. It was revealed by God, the Lord of the worlds. The Noble Spirit (Archangel Gabriel) brought it to the heart of Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) in pure Arabic as a warning unto humankind.

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<sup>128</sup> Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ansar al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami’ li ahkam al-Qur’an*, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, vol. VI, pp. 382-383.

<sup>129</sup> Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Shawkani, *Fat’h al-Qadir al-jami’ bayn al-riwayat wa al-dirayat fi ilm al-tafsir*. He died in Sa’a (Yemen) in 1250 H. The verification of traditions related in his work was done by Abd al-Rahman Umayra with the help of a commission from the Dar al-Waqfi Academy of Sciences, vol. II, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1994, al-Mansuriya, pp. 1001-102. See also *Tafsir al-Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli al-Sha’rawi*, vol. VI, pp. 3491-3492, Dar Akhbar al-Yaum, and Muhammad Rashid Rida’s *Tafsir al-Manar*, Vol. VII, pp. 281-287.

Neither Arab nor other rhetoricians were able to produce a single Surah with ten verses, or even a single verse, which would match the perfection of the Noble Qur'an...

The Noble Qur'an is distinguished by its superior linguistic style, its eloquence and rhetorics, as well as its fresh method and pleasant fluidity. The ways of exhortation vary in accordance with these linguistic approaches.

Dr. Ahmad Abu Zayd points out several methods of exhortation in the Noble Qur'an, and he notes the following:

- The majority of these methods comply with the different natures of human individuals, and they regard commands, prohibitions, wisdom, advice, the guidance of the bygone people, the enjoining of action, as well as threats, examples, accounts, invitations to the intellect, etc.

The following is a selection of such methods from the Qur'an:

- The method of command and prohibition: ***“Establish worship, pay the poor-due, and bow your heads with those who bow.”*** (al-Baqara, 43).

- The method of a convincing dialogue: ***“Noah's folk denied the messengers. When their brother Noah said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)?”*** (Shu'ara, 105-106).

- The method of advice and instructions: ***“And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith, said: Would ye kill a man because he saith: My Lord is Allah?”*** ( Ghafir, 28)

- The method of encouragement and threat: ***“And vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a paradise as wide as***



*are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil);”* (Al-i Imran, 133). *“Lo! hell lurketh in ambush, a home for the rebellious...”* (Naba’a, 21-22).

- The method of remembering the blessings: *“Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and causeth water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you, and maketh the ships to be of service unto you, that they may run upon the sea at His command, and hath made of service unto you the rivers; And maketh the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service unto you, and hath made of service unto you the night and the day. And He giveth you of all ye ask of Him, and if ye would count the bounty of Allah ye cannot reckon it. Lo! man is verily a wrong-doer, an ingrate.”*. (Ibrahim, 32-34).

- The method of remembering the end of bygone peoples:

*“Thamud and A'ad disbelieved in the judgment to come. As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the lightning. And as for A'ad, they were destroyed by a fierce roaring wind, Which He imposed on them for seven long nights and eight long days so that thou mightest have seen men lying overthrown, as they were hollow trunks of palm-trees. Canst thou (O Muhammad) see any remnant of them? And Pharaoh and those before him, and the communities that were destroyed, brought error. And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, therefore did He grip them with a tightening grip.”* (al-Haqqa, 4-10) This method concerns the end of the people from the past.

- The method of advice: *“And (remember) when Luqman said unto his son, when he was exhorting him: O my dear son! Ascribe no*

*partners unto Allah. Lo! to ascribe partners (unto Him) is a tremendous wrong.*” (Luqman, 13).

- The method of similitudes: *“Seest thou not how Allah coineth a similitude: A goodly saying, as a goodly tree, its root set firm, its branches reaching into heaven.”* (Ibrahim, 24).

- The method of addressing the intellect: *“Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men.”* (al-Baqara, 164).

- The method of questioning: *“Will not Allah defend His slave?”* (Zumar, 36). *“Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequence for those who disbelieved before them?”* (Ghafir, 21).

- The method of challenging: *“And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witness beside Allah if ye are truthful. And if ye do it not - and ye can never do it - then guard yourselves against the Fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones”* (al-Baqara, 23-24).<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> See *Minhaj al-da'iyah*, Ahmad Abu Zayd, a monthly publication by WIL, year XII, Rabi al-awwal, 1414 H, no. 135, pp. 116-126, article **“On da'wah”**. See also Ahmad Faiz, *al-Da'wah Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, (2 vols.), in which the author has summarized all the expositions on da'wah in Qutb's commentary. This is one of the best works on the subject which we have come across. See also **Rawa'i al-Dhilal**, prepared by Rami Umar Ba'Atiyah, Dar Wuyuh li neshr wa al-Tawzi'a, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012, Riyad; and *Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyah fi Fikr al-Imam Sayyid Qutb* by Nusayr Zarwaq, Dar al-Salam li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzia, Cairo, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 2009, *Sayyid Qutb ba'da 43 A'men min Istish'hadhi - Majmua' min al-bahithin*, intr. by Salah Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, ed.: I'sam Faris, Dar Ammar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'a, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 2010.

Most of these methods of exhortation have been expounded in Surah al-An'am, as we shall see closely. We had to mention these methods to understand the approach of Sayyid Qutb in his *Tafsir* and the way in which he inferred most of these methods from the Noble Qur'an. Our students, Islamic preachers, imams, khatibs must be well learned and well equipped about the methods of da'wah, to use a proper method for a proper case. It is not necessary one method to fit all invitives and to fit all circumstances. We must benefit from the Qur'anic methodology in this matter. Prof. Sayyid Qutb in his commentary has drawn for us a road map of da'wah based on Qur'anic vision. May the Almighty God bless his soul and help us to follow his footsteps in da'wah.

## **3.2 PART II**

### **3.2.1 Characteristics and specifics of Qutb's method in understanding the verses pertaining to da'wah.**

Before turning to Qutb's method, we must consider some of the characteristics of his approach. Some of the most salient features that an attentive reader of the *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* will note are:

- Analyses of the political reality both locally and globally, its relationship with the Qur'an, and the reflection thereof.
- The experiencing of the contemporary political situation of the Islamic world, as well as the social and religious impasse of the *ummah*.
- The rejection of man-made laws such as communism, Marxism, democracy, capitalism, secularism, atheism etc.
- Realizing the extent of the negative influence of Christian elements on the Islamic *ummah*.
- Elucidation of the projects and method of the enemies of Islam.
- Being influenced by the Qur'anic method and his concentration on the principles and priorities on which the Qur'anic approach to exhortation, such as the question of faith, divine unity, Lordship, power, etc; and:
  - The relation of the verses with the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and historical events, both with the pacts and treaties between Muslims and Jews and Christians, and with the

invitation to kings and leaders like Caesar, Hercules, Khosrow, Negus through letters and ambassadors.

During the study of this blessed Surah we noticed certain principles and elements on which Qutb based his exegesis and his understanding of the verses pertaining to exhortation in this Surah.

Qutb tried to shed light on various points just as he exerted efforts to establish some excellent principles for the callers in the way of God from the verses pertaining to exhortation, as well as to its different problems and methods. The study of all of these aspects is beyond the scope of the present dissertation and therefore we will focus only on the most important ones!

An obvious characteristic of Qutb's approach to exegesis is the dynamic aspect which is more evident in the subject of exhortation. This is a clear argument which shows how he paved his special way in the exegesis of the verses pertaining to da'wah...

What were these principles and these methods? Which approach enabled him to differ from others in ideas and thoughts and to exert his own opinion in this domain?

The answers will be in the following sections.

### **3.2.2 Exhorting Muslims to reforms (improvement) through the following ways:**

#### **3.2.2.1 Exhorting to the improvement of faith based on divine truth and worship:**

To appropriately present this first important step in Qutb's method, the need is felt for collecting his thoughts and ideas from different places across his opus, in order to compare and then summarize them.

This element must be supported by statements from the author and also by the inductive method. After numerous readings of the commentary of Surah al-An'am we have inferred these ideas, principles, and rules, on which Qutb based his exegesis as well as his thought in general. He was fully convinced in the importance of the beginning of exhortation to faith, and to God the Almighty.

It is worth mentioning the number of pages in which the matter of faith is dealt with clearly or in allusive and symbolic ways, which will be used as an indicator. However, we cannot possibly treat all the ideas and texts for such a task would exceed the space allocated for this study. Whoever wishes to read further on the topic must rely on the *Tafsir* itself, and read the pages mentioned in our notes.<sup>131</sup>

Qutb speaks about this important and basic aspect of an individual's life and society, on which he wants to inform Muslims in general and callers in particular. In the beginning of exhortation we must start from one example, namely exhortation to the improvement of faith, (believe in Allah the Almighty and His Messenger) in its wide and

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<sup>131</sup> On *uluhiya* in *Tafsir Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* see pages 1030-1, 1047-8, 1053, 1068, 1095, 1106, 1108, 1111, 1124, 1131, 1133, 1137, 1146, 1157, (vol. II), and 1179, 1180, 1187, 1193, 1205-6, 1211, 1228-9, 1240, 1235 (vol. I).

universal significance and meaning. If this principle is accomplished, then we can continue with secondary issues related to the Islamic faith..

The improvement of faith plays a vital role and has a great importance for the life of the *ummah* in general and the caller to religion in particular. This truth originates from the words of God in Surah Hud, when the prophet Shuayb (peace be with him!) told his people:

*“He said: O my people! Bethink you: if I am (acting) on a clear proof from my Lord and He sustaineth me with fair sustenance from Him (how can I concede aught to you)? I desire not to do behind your backs that which I ask you not to do. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My welfare is only in God. In Him I trust and unto Him I turn!”* (Hud, 88).<sup>132</sup>

The beginning of exhortation with the improvement, structuring, and purification of faith contains in itself a defence against and prevention of the Divine punishment on people. This truth is based on God’s word:

*“In truth thy Lord destroyed not the townships tyrannously while their folk were doing right.”* (Hud, 117).

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<sup>132</sup> In his commentary to this verse, Ibn Kathir writes: ***“I desire naught save reform so far as I am able, and I bid and forbid you in order to improve you to the extent of my capacities”*** (vol. II p. 39). We believe that there is a stylistic subtlety between the terms *al-islah* and *al-salah*. The noble verse says ***“I desire naught save reform so far as I am able”*** and it does not use the term *al-salah*, to do good, kindness, but rather *al-islah*, reform, improvement. The wisdom of using such a term lies in its implication of self-reformation before reforming others. The other term, *al-salah* implies the improvement of the others and not of the caller himself, thus weakening his call and its impact. We base our opinion on the same verse, ***“I desire not to do behind your backs that which I ask you not to do.”*** And God knows best!

Let us now take a look at what Qutb has to say about the role of the Noble Qur'an in the Meccan period, in healing people and instructing the believers in the early phases of the revelation. In this context he says:

*“It dealt with the foremost essential issue of this new religion, namely the question of faith which pertained to the fundamental principle of lordship and worship,<sup>133</sup> and the relationship between them... The Qur'an of the Meccan period explained to man the mysteries of his existence and of the Universe around him. It posed the question: “Who is man? Where does he come from? How did he come about, and why? Where will his end be? Who created him from nothing? Who brought him here, and what will his end be?” It asked him: “What is this existence which he perceives and feels? Who is its invisible Master? Who created this universe full of mysteries? Who put it in order and who controls it? Who changes the things we observe before our eyes?” It also taught him how to stand before the Creator, and this is how thirteen years were spent in confirming these major questions...”<sup>134</sup>*

From what we mentioned above we can infer another characteristic of Qutb's approach in understanding the verses pertaining to da'wah. He believed that the Islamic faith is a major and fundamental question, based on which human societies are formed. And it was precisely from the realization of this question that the generations of the Companions and the Followers ( Sahabah and Tabiine), made possible the world expansion of Islam. Qutb argues for this principle based on reality, intellect, history,

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<sup>133</sup> Shaykh Muhammad al-Saleh al-Uthaimin, *The Muslim Belief*, tr. Mani'e Hammad al-Johani, p. 9.

<sup>134</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1004.



and religion. A caller must act within this principle, and he will miss his goal if he ignores it.

To better understand the importance of focusing on faith in exhorting to God Almighty we must pay attention to the repeated reference made by Qutb to this question and to his insisting on the long time that any caller must put to his efforts for his exhortation to reach the depths of the hearts and bear the desired fruit.

Regarding the first verse of Surah al-An'am, "*Praise be to Allah, Who hath created the heavens and the earth, and hath appointed darkness and light. Yet those who disbelieve ascribe rivals unto their Lord*" Qutb writes:

*"Tasbih and acceptance due to the fact that He alone is worthy of praise, and praise for His lordship that is beheld in creation and formation. Through this, one passes from the praised Divinity to the first specific of creation... It starts with creation in the macrocosmos."*<sup>135</sup>

Qutb's notion of divinity (*uluhiyya*) is wide and universal because it includes this life, this Universe and everything between them. The divine universality of life means that only God Almighty has absolute dominion (*al-hakimiyya*). Everything originates from Him and all things return to Him. He alone brings the laws, principles, and legislations. This is supported by a verse from the same Surah. Qutb writes about this point:

*"The third part summarizes both parts in a circle, because it confirms God's divinity in the Universe and in human life. He is God in the heavens and on earth "He knoweth both your secret and your utterance, and He knoweth what ye earn" (al-An'am, 3). He alone who*

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

*created the heavens and the earth is Lord in the heavens and on earth is worthy of worship; all divine questions can be seen in them as well as in the submission of men to God by fulfilling the obligations of worship.*”<sup>136</sup>

Regarding the truths and facts related to this divinity, Qutb writes that they differ from those of the philosophical and theoretical divinities that other religions preach.<sup>137</sup> This divinity is an original principle within man, and it stems from instinct.<sup>138</sup> Qutb continues:

*“The first wave presents the truth of the divinity that is witnessed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the creation of darkness and light, the reation of man from clay, the ending of man’s life, and in his resurrection. This truth shows the divine omnipresence in the heavens and on earth, for He knows the hidden and the manifest of men as well as their manifest and hidden gains. All of this is not an argument for the negative philosophical-theoretical divinity, but of the truths of human life. They must rely only on God. He cannot be replaced by anything nor can His unity be contested in any way whatsoever. Divine universality dominates the matters of the Universe and of mankind, in a manifest and hidden way. The systematizing of natural results confirms the truths on God’s absolute power in questions of the worldly life as well as cosmological ones.”*<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1004.

<sup>137</sup> Ali Muhsin, *Da’w al-Injil yatakallam*, a dissertation on the errors in the gospels, *Let the Bible speak*, Islamic Da’wa Guide Center, Daman, p. 7).

<sup>138</sup> A characteristic of Qutb’s method is that he often refers to instincts as the instrument of intuitive perception in awakening oneself which is a necessity for da’wah. See the following pages of his commentary: vol. II, pp. 1053, 1087, 1088, 1098, 1123, 1137, 1138, 1146, 1153, 1161; vol. III, p. 1202.

<sup>139</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1047. It is worth noting that Muhammad Rashid Rida shared the same opinions with Qutb. See his *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. VII, pp. 299-300.

The focus on faith and divine unity (*al-iman wa al-tawhid*) includes all three dimensions<sup>140</sup> during calling to God Almighty, and this was among Qutb's priorities. He expands on this meaning by pointing out:

- “- *Oeness of dominion and guidance.*
- *Oeness of submission and worship; and:*
- *Oeness of the surces of the laws and commands”.*

I say that Oeness of God in these domains consists of dimensions of faith, educational dimensions, and da'wah dimensions in the lives of Muslims in general and callers in particular. This is of a great importance, and we must not begin with something else in exhorting to God Almighty.

Some of Qutb's thoughts on this issue are quoted below:

*“This new wave also seeks to present the truth about divinity that is evident in dominion, activity, sustaining, warranty, power, destruction, benefit, and harm... This does not point to a negative philosophical-theoretical divinity, but the truths of the monotheism of guidance and the fact that these two reflect submission and worship. When the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) ordered that only God must be taken as Master, he clarified this point based on the fact that God sustains and*

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<sup>140</sup> Ibn Taymiya when dealing with the view of the pious ancestors on the Divine Names and Attributes writes: *“The recognition of this principle is faith and a source of guidance, the best that the hearts, people, and intellects have earned. This can be summarized in the statement that God can be qualified with what He has qualified Himself, and what the Prophet a.s. and the ancestors have qualified Him, that is without going beyond Qur'an and Hadith.”* This is done without deviation, privation, comparison, and similarity. See *Majma al-fatawa'*, vol. V, chapter: *“al-Asma' wa al-sifat”*, pp. 6-26, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1389 H.

*is not sustained. Therefore, reliance upon anyone else beside God goes against Islam and amounts to idolatry... ”*<sup>141</sup>

We can conclude from these words’ certain characteristics of Qutb’s approach in understanding the verses pertaining to *da’wah*:

His confirmation of the principles of the oneness of divinity (*tawhid al-uluhiyya*) and of its utmost importance, after which he refers to works of the heart and of the limbs, in contrast to negative philosophical-theoretical methods. He grants practical and dynamic dimensions to this important aspect of monotheism.

In his commentary to verse 14 of this Surah, “*Say: Shall I choose for a protecting friend other than Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who feedeth and is never fed? Say: I am ordered to be the first to surrender (unto Him). And be not thou (O Muhammad) of the idolaters*”, he offers more detailed explanations:

*“The question of considering God as the only Master in the fullest sense of the word implies man’s complete submission in His worship and in His absolute power, so that he worships God alone and dedicates all his rites to Him. Man must rely only on his help and call unto Him only in hardship. This is the essence of faith: to sincerely rely on God in the full extent of the word. Otherwise one will ascribe partners unto Him, and this is polytheism. Idolatry and Islam cannot coexist in a heart”*<sup>142</sup>

The great scholar al-Alusi al-Baghdadi writes in his *Tafsir*:

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<sup>141</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1047, *Mukawwimat al-tasawwur al-Islam*, Pt. 2, Chapters “*al-Uluhiyya wa al-ubudiyya*”, p. 81, and “*Haqiqa al-uluhiyya*”, p. 189.

<sup>142</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1054.

*“One of the meanings of Guardianship is worship [...] which implies His succour, and this is the well-known meaning. Whoever relies on someone else’s succour cannot worship Him...”*<sup>143</sup>

Furthermore, Qutb adds: *“This is the strong and deep logic of instinct as to who is worthy of reliance and who is not? On whom must one rely if not on the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth who supports all and is supported by none?”*<sup>144</sup>

He continues by saying: *“This is a clearly determined matter which allows for no weakness and swerving. One must call only God with worship, submission, rites, and reliance, and one must accept His absolute power in everything and refuse to ascribe partners unto Him. One must act with the heart and with works only for His sake and not for anyone else. All of this implies Islam... If one ascribes a partner unto Him, this is called polytheism. Polytheism and Islam cannot coexist in one’s heart...”*<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> The great scholar Abu al-Fadl Shihab al-Din al-Sayyid Mahmud al-Alusi al-Baghdadi (d. 1270 H) is the author of the well-known commentary *Ruh al-Ma’ani fi Tafsir al-Qur’an al-adhim wa al-sab’ al-mathani*, Dar ihya al-turath al-arabi, Beirut, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1985, vol. 1, p.109.

<sup>144</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1054.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* It is worth noting that, according to Qutb, the notion of idolatry (*shirk*) has a wider meaning than what most people understand from it. In his commentary of verse 70 of Surah al-An’am, “And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest” Qutb writes: “Do you still need to decide who are the idolaters? They are those who ascribe partners unto God in questions of divinity, both in faith as in taking someone else as a god, or in the acceptance of the law and rule of someone else besides God. Though they bear names of Muslims, it is better if they are not called so. Let us have certainty in our faith.” *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p.1129. In another place of his commentary to the same Surah, he writes: “Those who condemn the

I believe that Qutb's ideas on polytheism and its concept accord with the thoughts of Ibn Taymiya on this subject.<sup>146</sup>

From the words of Qutb we can conclude that the caller to religion must be cautious and aware during exhortation of people to the truth of

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*idolater for idolatry and do not condemn those who judge in the name of the tyrant, who fear the latter but not God, have not read the Qur'an properly and do not know the nature of this religion. Let them read the Qur'an well and let them act according to God's words: "And if ye submit to them ye are idolaters!" (Ibid, p. 1216). In **Dhilal**, he also speaks about the concept of idolatry in vol. II, p. 1130 and vol. III, p. 1233. Thus, some people accuse Qutb of seeing everything around him as ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) and idolatry (*shirk*), thereby perceiving all society as idolatrous and ignorant. Our view is that such opinions stem from not reading all Qutb's statements on this matter, which are scattered in his works, but from their selective reading. It is not an exaggeration to say that Qutb enjoys a great authority and special position, and he is a scholar who knows how to use words in accordance with their specific meanings.*

<sup>146</sup> In his commentary of the verse, "*They have taken as lords beside God their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah son of Mary, when they were bidden to worship only One God.*" (Tawba, 31). Ibn Taymiya writes: "*They submit to them in allowing what God had forbidden and in forbidding what God had allowed, and this happens in two ways:*

1. *By consciously changing God's religion, practicing the change, and believing in the allowing of God has prohibited, and in prohibiting what God has allowed, by following their leaders even though they know that they oppose the religion of the Prophet a.s., and this is considered unbelief, because they ascribe partners unto God, even if they do not pray or prostrate to them. Whoever follows those who reject religion knowing that they oppose religion and believing in their words and not in God's words and the Prophet's words is considered an idolater, just like them; and:*

2. *Their belief in the prohibition of the allowed and in the allowing of the prohibited is secondary, and yet they follow their leaders in sinning against God, just like a Muslim who sins with complete awareness. They are considered sinners. It is related in Sahih that the Prophet a.s. has said: "A Muslim must listen, and respect what he loves or dislikes, unless he is asked to sin." And: "A creature must not respect sin against the Creator..." ("Majma' al-fatawa", Chapter "Kitab al-Iman", vol. VII, p. 70.)*

God and its principles. He must know well the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) in order to offer Islam to people as it was revealed by the Lord of the worlds without adding or taking away anything. He must present the true Islam and not as passions dictate.

This was Qutb's method. He used a specific approach while deducing teachings, advises, and lessons from the Book of God Almighty. He was not influenced by any scholar and did not practice blind imitation, but rather he relied on God's support. He was led to these truths by his reliance on God.

I believe that Muslims in general and the callers to Islam in particular (*clerics, students of the Shari'ah*) must experience these quotes from his commentary and try to understand this question as best as they can, in order to be able to expand on it in their exhortation of people to Islam...

Qutb writes:

*“This is another approach to the truth of divinity (uluhiyya). It deals with the great power that God has over people, the everlasting authority. He never slumbers, and His decree no one can postpone or accelerate, it is the end that cannot be avoided, the last reckoning forgets no one. All of this exercises dominion over people and influences them! He is the Omnipotent over His slaves. He sendeth guardians over you until, when death cometh unto one of you, Our messengers receive him, and they neglect not. Then are they restored unto Allah, their Lord, the Just. Surely His is the judgment. And He is the most swift of reckoners.”*  
(al-An'am, 61-62)

*He is Omnipotent over His servants - He has power and they are under his authority and exceedingly weak before the power of this Master, they have no power or helper because they are servants! Dominion is over them and they submit to Him.*"<sup>147</sup>

Here Qutb offers historical arguments, legal proofs on the manifestation of mercy by God, and the truth of His divinity in many domains. This is a part of his method, and it is related to Qutb's references to the pure biography of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) in order to draw lessons from the events of his life.

In this context, he says:

*"The instances in which God's mercy and Lordship can be seen are those changes which will be summarized here, before they are expanded upon during the commentary of the Qur'anic verses:*

**i.** God's mercy can be seen in the heart of the Messenger of God (*blessings and peace be with him!*), and he carries the proof from his Lord. He is convinced in it, and no lies or intrigues from opponents can swerve him off the path. Then he concentrates completely in his Lord and distances himself from the straying of his people, for he is certain in the One who guided him:

*"Say: I am forbidden to worship those on whom ye call instead of God. Say: I will not follow your desires, for then should I go astray, and I should not be of the rightly guided. Say: I am (relying) on clear proof from my Lord, while ye deny Him. I have not that for which ye are impatient. The decision is for God only. He telleth the truth and He is the Best of Deciders."* (al-An'am, 56-57).

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<sup>147</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1109.



ii. In God's decree against the liars and in the rejection of their proposal to the Prophet to bring a phenomenal miracle, so that their chastisement would not be accelerated, as was the case with previous generations. Had it been up to the Prophet a.s., he would not have been able to repel the acceleration of the chastisement. This postponing is therefore mercy from God, and a clear instance of His compassion:

*“Nay, but that hath become clear unto them which before they used to hide. And if they were sent back they would return unto that which they are forbidden. Lo! they are liars.”* (al-An'am, 28).

iii. In God's knowledge on metaphysical things and the inclusion in this knowledge of each existing thing. Only God can bestow the form that existents possess:

*“And with Him are the keys of the Invisible. None but He knoweth them. And He knoweth what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falleth but He knoweth it, not a grain amid the darkness of the earth, naught of wet or dry but (it is noted) in a clear record.”* (al-An'am, 59).

iv. In the dominion and authority that God exercises on people in any situation; asleep and awake, in life and death, in this world and the next:

*“He it is Who gathereth you at night and knoweth that which ye commit by day. Then He raiseth you again to life therein, that the term appointed may be accomplished. And afterward unto Him is your return. Then He will proclaim unto you what ye used to do. He is the Omnipotent over His slaves. He sendeth guardians over you until, when death cometh unto one of you, Our messengers receive him, and they neglect not. Then are they restored unto Allah, their Lord, the Just. Surely His is the judgment. And He is the most swift of reckoners.”* (al-An'am, 60-62).

v. In the instinct of the liars themselves, when they face Hell and seek help from God to save them. They are polytheists and they forget

that God to whom they pray for salvation can make them taste different kinds of chastisement and that no one can help them:

*“Say: Who delivereth you from the darkness of the land and the sea? Ye call upon Him humbly and in secret, (saying): If we are delivered from this (fear) we truly will be of the thankful. Say: Allah delivereth you from this and from all affliction. Yet ye attribute partners unto Him. Say: He is able to send punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with dissension and make you taste the tyranny one of another. See how We display the revelations so that they may understand.”* (al-An’am, 63-65).<sup>148</sup>

From what we saw so far, we notice that Qutb’s method is also based on the return to history, namely the pure biography of the Prophet (*blessings and peace be with him!*), the history of the bygone peoples and their attitude to the messengers of God and their teachings. His method was also based on the fact that people must refer to the Attributes of God which are manifest in every thing, such as His knowledge on the unseen, his control over people’s actions and their states, etc.

Then he dealt with another question which is equally important as the issues of faith, namely the question of clarifying the goal of legal definitions:

**The goal of divinity and dominion** (*al-uluhiyya wa al-hakimiyya*). He points out that only God decides about the lives of His servants and no one else possesses such authority. None but Him can prohibit or establish a new law and give judgment, for these are all characteristics of divinity. No one has any right on people’s lives, for no one but God creates, sustains, makes them die, revives, harms, benefits, gives, takes or is able to give to others in this world or in the next.

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<sup>148</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1108-1109, and *Mukawwamat al-tesawwur al-Islami*, chapter: “**Haqiqat al-uluhiyyah**”, p. 189.

The Surah has been structured in a way so as to offer the arguments with images, illustrations, attitudes, and intonations which deeply affect the heart in every way and in every aspect!<sup>149</sup>

Qutb's understanding of the issue of faith was built by a powerful principle which is based on the testimony, *No god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God*.

He frequently mentions this truth and writes in the context that:

*“Faith in Islam is based on the testification that there is no god but God, through which man removes the god of misery from his heart and relies only on the worship of God, and he also removes the absolute power from people and submits only to the absolute power of God...”*<sup>150</sup>

In this way, he formed a clear idea and an explicit method on the understanding of this religion. The reason that led him to form such ideas and principles is the fact that Islam has a special nature which, according to Qutb, is based on:

*“The principle of the Oneness of God. All the divine legislations and systems stem from this great principle. The system of Islam dominates in all aspects of life for all peoples, be they great or small. This aspect represents the mystery and nature of Islam, it determines the method of building oneself and is considered as a must for any correct formation.”*<sup>151</sup>

Sayyid Qutb understood the importance of the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an successively during the long Meccan period. This phenomenon which he called “the phenomenon of the Meccan Qur'an”

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<sup>149</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. III, p. 1179-80, and *Khasais al-tasawwur al-Islami wa mukawimatu*, chapter: “al-Rububiyya”.

<sup>150</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Khasais al-tasawwur al-Islami*, chapter: “al-Uluhiyya”, Also see: *Fi Dhilal al Qur'an*, vol. III, p. 1211.

<sup>151</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1009.

led him to focus for a long time on this period in order to draw lessons from it, which inspired him for the strategy and methods of da'wah. There is no doubt that this is an essential principle of his approach to the understanding of the verses pertaining to exhortation. This may be the reason for his lengthy introduction to the commentary on Surah al-An'am, compared to other chapters of the Qur'an.

In this introduction he confirmed his approach to the commentary of the verses pertaining to da'wah and the fact that it was developed from his study of the Meccan period which focused on the training of man from the aspect of the Islamic creed before delving into legal obligations.

Qutb writes:

*“This blessed method would not have been accomplished in such a high level had exhortation not begun from this principle and had it not raised the banner of ‘No god but God’. Nothing is more valid than this principle. This method seems difficult, but in reality it is easy.*

*This blessed method enjoyed success because it relied sincerely on God Almighty. Had it relied on rational exhortation or social and moral calls or any other principle rather than ‘No go but God’ it would have not achieved any success.”<sup>152</sup>*

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<sup>152</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1009.

### 3.2.2.2 Improving society through the Qur’anic method

Based on what has been said earlier we can understand that Islam first invited people to the strengthening of their faith, and after this they would begin to understand the truth of divinity and worship in the wider sense.

When this is accomplished, faith starts to penetrate deeper into the souls of men and women, which will be a sign of the strengthening of this principle in them. After this step the caller continues to erect his building, namely society, from the aspect of the morals, lifestyle, and system of living. This society must be based on the wholesome and strong principle which is inferred from the Qur’an and Sunnah, and then continue further according to the respective revealed principles.

*“The caller must feel that his exhortation will be long, it will have to involve creativity, dynamism, and activeness. It changes and takes its life from feelings and blood. His preoccupation with exhortation does not allow him to worry about his children or wealth... This is, then, the sincere caller. Only in this way will he experience strong faith in his exhortation which affects people’s hearts and sets their feelings in motion towards their aspirations.”*<sup>153</sup>

What is the method in which we should approach people and how can we infer it from Surah **al-An’am**? What are the great religious questions which a caller must understand to have success in the improvement of society through the Qur’anic method? For answers to these questions, we will refer again to the writings of Sayyid Qutb on contemporary religious issues such as the question of violence and its use,

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<sup>153</sup> al-Khuli al-Bahiyy, *Tadhkirat al-dua’t al-Itihad al-islami al-Alam li al-munadhhamat al-tullabiyat*, Dar al-Qur’an al-Karim, Beirut, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1983, pp. 44-50.

the distancing from wrongdoers and sinners, modern polytheism and its followers, etc.

In the following section we turn to some issues dealt with by Qutb in his commentary of the verses pertaining to *da'wah* in *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*:

### **3.2.2.2.a The callers' recourse to violence and the use of force:**

In a letter against the dictatorial government of Gamal Abdul Nasir in Egypt, which was later used as secret evidence by the prosecution which eventually imprisoned Qutb in a military, high security prison, Qutb speaks about his activity, the organizing of the movement, and his joining the Muslim Brothers:

*“No organizing should be started unless the individuals involved reach a high level of understanding their faith and acquire lofty Islamic morals in behaviour, cooperation, and awareness. We must not depart from the principle of the building of the Islamic and Sharia'ah system. Rather, our starting point must be the transformation of societies (including rulers and the ruled) towards the authentic Islamic concepts and the formation of a principle which even in the case of excluding society suffices to influence the elements and institutions that have a say in the guidance of the whole society in order to express the desire to establish an Islamic system and the Shari'ah. This cannot be accomplished through coups from above, but from the change of the conceptions and worldview of the community which can set the whole society to motion. Society must be convinced that*

*the moral values and the application of Islam can lead to the establishing of the Shari‘ah as the source of legislation.*”<sup>154</sup>

These words clearly show Qutb’s opinion on the need to educate society with authentic Islamic values based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and this testimony clearly shows that he did not believe in the use of violence, power, destruction, and explosions to reach power, which are methods used for coups and revolutions. And yet, many authors and scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim have unjustly levelled accusations and concocted all kinds of different lies against him and the Muslim Brothers who won the democratic elections held in Egypt after the Revolution of January 2011.<sup>155</sup> The opponents of Islam continue to make all efforts against the Muslim Brothers<sup>156</sup> by accusing them of usurping the flowers and fruits of this revolution.

This is a strong argument for the rejection of all slanders against the Muslim Brothers. Imam Hasan al-Banna, the general leader of the Muslim

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<sup>154</sup> Sayyid Qutb, “**Li madha a’damuni?** (*why they killed me*)”, Kitab al-Sharq al-awsat, p. 43.

<sup>155</sup> Such accusations have increased in the last decade parallel to attacks against Islam in general, and prof. Sayyid Qutb in and Muslim Brothers (*al Ikhwan al Muslimin*) in particular. Shame on them! Shame on fake news reporters! Shame on most famous English and Arabic media broadcasting fake news and false documentaries on them! How they dare to accuse and terrorise innocent scholars and peaceful Muslim parties! They never read whole ideas of prof. Sayyid Qutb. They just pick some of disputable issues and create out that big dilemma. I call upon sincere researchers and analysts to admit this reality and to restore back their rights and ideological values. They never call for attacks on innocent people or for coupe to topple down contemporary government leaders. This is not the way how the oppressed Muslim society restores back its power and value. All lost values can be restored back through proper education of generations to make future successful, just, and strong leaders.

<sup>156</sup> As can be seen in press analyses published recently (note added on August 14, 2022).

Brothers, and Sayyid Qutb were the most important pillars of the religious leadership that inspired them with wholesome Islamic manners and wisdom, and they never preached extremism, upheavals, violence, and murder, and all such accusations are meaningless and ill-intended.

Suffice to read carefully and in perspective all writings of Imam Hasan al-Banna and those of Sayyid Qutb to be convinced that both are free from what their accusers ascribe to them. And God is the best reckoner!<sup>157</sup>

### 3.2.2.2.b Nature and universality of Islam

A caller must understand that the divine methodology which consists of the pure teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (*blessings and peace be with him!*). Among the parts in which Qutb deals with the nature and universality of Islam is the following excerpt:

*“The nature of this religion eventually proves itself. This is a religion which is based completely on the principle of the Oneness of God. All systems and all laws derive from this great fountainhead. It is like a large tree which has a vast shade, and interconnected branches which spread widely and are in need of deep roots to protect the trunk. Such is the similitude of this religion, for its system regulates every thing in life.*

*Islam systematizes the issues of all people, be they big or small, as well as man's life, not only in matters related to this world but also the next; not only in tangible relationships but also in feelings, purposes, and **goals**.*

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<sup>157</sup> See Abd al-Halim Mahmud's analytical and historical study, *Manhaj al-tarbiyat inda al-Ihwan al-Muslimin*, vols. 1, 2, al-Mansura, Metabi Dar al-Wafi'n, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1992, *A Summary of Imam Hasan al-Banna's Messages*, Dar al-Shihab, n.d., n.p.



*This religion is a vast, comprehensive and supreme institution, and for this reason it needs roots...!*<sup>158</sup>

Qutb also points out that:

*“This is an indicator of the hidden aspect and nature of this religion, which determines its method for the further training of man..., it determines the formation of his faith, the penetration of the universality of this religion into his soul. This is necessary for a correct formation, security for providing the relationship between the visible form of the trunk and the roots deep in the soil. When the faith in No god but God is determined in the innermost depths, then the system built on No god but God will be strengthened too.*

*Submission is a principle of faith and through submission people accept voluntarily all the principles of Islam and its laws. They do not refuse them outright and do not perform them just formally. Only in this way will alcohol, usury, gambling, and other traditions of the jahiliyya disappear – owing to the verses of the Qu’ran and the traditions of the Prophet. Although earthly governments tried to prohibit such things with their laws, systems, power, and propaganda, they have failed in this... ”*<sup>159</sup>

From what has been said above we can see that Qutb’s method of understanding the verses pertaining to da’wah in giving examples for people was based on the Noble Qur’an. Thus, he tried to show the universality of Islam in every aspect of life, both for the great ones and for the small ones, for the elite and for the common people, for the visible and the invisible... Without this universality the situation of the Muslims cannot be stabilized for many generations to come. The example of the oak tree is the best for

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<sup>158</sup> Sayyid Qutb, **Fi dhilal al-Qur’an**, vol. II, p. 1009-1010.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

the caller to God with regards to the value of faith, especially for its planting in the heart.

### **3.2.2.2.c The starting point – the determination of the path of the believers as opposed to the path of the wrongdoers**

Someone might say: *“Well, we accept the Qur’an as the model for our lives, but what are the points we must follow and what project does this method contain in faith and in dynamism, and who will determine for us the views of this method? Where is the starting point? On what points must we base ourselves for our own education and the society’s education?”*

To respond to these questions, we must consider some important questions on exhortation as related to the improvement of society, according to the Qur’anic method in the vision of Sayyid Qutb.

The answer to this question was found by this idealist scholar when he took the principle of faith as the starting point and centre of his concerns. The stress he laid on this point obliges us to pay close attention to it in order to clarify its religious and educational dimensions.<sup>160</sup> It constitutes the intelligibility of the difference between the path of the believers and that of the unbelievers; the virtuous ones and the evil ones, the sincere ones and the hypocrites. Once this distinction has been made, the message of the call will be understood in an explicit and decisive manner.

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<sup>160</sup> On the distinction between the path of the believers and that of the unbelievers, see *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, 1167-8, 1053-8, 1105-7, 1109, 1123, 1126-8, 1131, 1141, 1167-8, and pp. 1239, 1215 vol. III.

Qutb further writes:

*“This centre must be the starting point for discerning between the path of believers and the wrongdoers. We must start with the definition of the path of the believers and with the definition of the path of the wrongdoers, in order to distinguish between them in the real world and not in the world of theories. Thus Muslim callers and the Islamic movement will know who is a Muslim and who is a wrongdoer”*<sup>161</sup>

In order not to confuse the reader, Qutb explains his view by saying:

*“The path of the Muslims is the path of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) and to those who are with him in this religion. This definition existed and this clarification was complete on the day in which Islam opposed the polytheists in the Arabian Peninsula. The path of the wrongdoers was the path of those who did not join him in this religion. Islam fought against idolatry, totemism, athism, and the different deviated beliefs after humans had intervened. Anytime Islam was faced with these sects and factions, the path it had to follow was clear: it was the path of the devout believers, which is fully clear just as the path of idolaters and wrongdoers was clear, and there is no confusion whatsoever in this question!”*<sup>162</sup>

After illustrating the starting point and centre, he begins to speak about the difficulties and hardships that callers will face to establish the application of divine legislation on earth. In this context, Qutb says:

*“The great hardship which will challenge the movements of Islam and truth today is not related to this, but to the existence of people from*

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<sup>161</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1106, Ahmad Faiz, *Tariq al-da'wah Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, Muassasah Dar-Risalah, Beirut, 1985, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. I, p. 153.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

*among the ranks of the Muslims, who live in places which used to be seats of religion and God's law, whereas now people in those lands forsake Islam and carry it only in their names. They deny the faith and reality of the principles of Islam even though they think they have Islamic faith!"*<sup>163</sup>

From what has been quoted above we must conclude that Islam does not stop at the theoretical aspect but insists also on the practical aspect. It is not enough to bear Muslim names, while contradicting the Islamic principles with deeds. Qutb further explains:

*"The truth of Islam... is the testification that "There is no god but God!"... This testimony is seen in the principle that only God is the Creator of this Universe, that men must address only God in worship and in their other activities, that they must take their laws only from God, and that they are submitted only to His power in their lives...*

*Anyone who does not bear witness that There is no god but God in this meaning is not considered as having borne witness and embraced Islam, despite having a Muslim name or origin.*

*There are people with Muslim names, of Muslim origin, and from countries which were once seats of Islam, and yet neither people testify that there is no god but God nor are there places of firm belief in God.*

Qutb continues with the diagnosis of the problem which the callers to Islam and the Islamic movements face:

*"Such movements suffer primarily from:*

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<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 153.

- *The chaos, unclarity, and confusion that have seized the understanding of the principle 'No god but God' and of Islam on the one hand, and the understanding of idolatry and ignorance on the other.*

- *The lack of discernment between the path of the devout Muslims and the path of the polytheist wrongdoers; and:*

- *The confusion of symbols and titles, as well as names and qualities, and the lack of discernment between the two paths.*"<sup>164</sup>

From what has been pointed out here it is clear that Qutb relies on the necessity of the clarification of the Islamic method, its details for the Islamic ummah in general and the callers in particular. This is a part of his method of understanding the verses pertaining to *da'wah*, as inferred from the noble verse: ***"That the way of the unrighteous may be manifest."*** (al-An'am, 55).

He points out that the reason of the confusion of notions and concepts among Muslims today is the lack of understanding of this subject and the distancing of people from the teachings and principles of this religion which has resulted in mixing the issues in most of cases.

Here it is worth underlining a few issues and problems related to the distancing from sinners and wrongdoers in general, as well as the questions that arise as to the extent of this distancing.

Qutb writes:

*"Do we still feel the need to determine who the polytheists are? The polytheists are those who ascribe partners unto God:*

- in believing in someone else as God beside God.

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<sup>164</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1106.

- in worshipping symbols for someone else beside God.
- in accepting the authority and law of someone else beside God.

*It would be better if we said that whoever falls under one of these categories is a polytheist, even if they bear Muslim names... ”*<sup>165</sup>

When commenting on this verse, Imam al-Qurtubi in his *al-Jami li ahkam al-Qur’an* writes:

*“This verse contradicts those who opine that the Imams, who are leaders and proofs [of God], must sit with sinners to rectify their strayed ideas”*

*“We [Qutb] say that the verse permits in a limited manner sitting or associating with sinners to advise and remind them,<sup>166</sup> and in order to rectify their stray ideas. It is forbidden not to react to the words and deeds of strayed sinners, for it implies acceptance of their evil and a witnessing against the truth. This causes confusion for people, a playing **with God’s religion and the believers, and therefore the distancing from them is a requirement.**”*<sup>167</sup>

From what has been said regarding Qutb’s argument for the distancing from the wrongdoers and sinners, one may conclude that it is

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<sup>165</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1106.

<sup>166</sup> It is related that Hasan al-Banna said regarding exhortation: **“Spread everywhere around and preach Islam and exhort: in shops, houses, mosques, and coffee shops, in general or specific meetings, in villages, towns, and capitols; in factories, kindergartens, and schools!”** Refer to the writings of the Muslim Brothers in their journal for the fiftieth anniversary of his martyrdom: No. 82, Shawal, 1419 H, January-February 1999, pp. 14-16, 28-48.

<sup>167</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1129.

based on the verse: ***“Thus do We expound the revelations that the way of the unrighteous may be manifest.”*** (al-An’am, 55)

Here it is worth mentioning the contemporary negative phenomenon of some extremist Muslim youngsters who have often become a destructive tool rather than a constructive element in spreading their religion. It is evident that such youngsters are not aware of this reality. We have seen them debating, arguing, and causing trouble in mosques where people offer the five daily prayers, abusing the innocent and guided elderly believers without any serious reason or scientific basis. This phenomenon has caused hatred against the students of religious sciences and clerics among the populace!

They should be doing quite the opposite, that is, engage in exhortation in shops, streets, coffee or tea houses, commercial centres, schools, companies, universities, and recreative centres where God and the Prophet are denied and opposed openly. They must make the distinction between the rightly guided and the misguided. They must understand this Qur’anic verse well, and not be victims of the devil and of their own passions. Rather, they should exhort criminals, thieves, drug addicts, alcoholists, those involved in illegal trafficking of bodily organs and merchandise, those who are corrupt morally, financially, spiritually, politically, economically, and academically, etc; and not disturb the congregation who offer the five daily prayers in mosques.

### 3.2.2.2.d Islamic history as an argument for distancing oneself from sinners

The Qur’anic verse: “*Say: Allah is Witness between me and you. And this Qur'an hath been inspired in me, that I may warn therewith you and whomsoever it may reach. Do ye in sooth bear witness that there are gods beside Allah? Say: I bear no such witness!*” (al-An’am, 19) is part of the verses that exhort through encouragement and questioning.

In his commentary of this verse Qutb refers to the construction of similar verses that deal with the issue of befriending unbelievers (*al-wala*), Oneness of God, and the distancing from the wrongdoers (*al-mufaselat*).<sup>168</sup>

Qutb continues by saying:

*“The issue of faith and of the principles we mentioned is a deep truth, and therefore the believer must ponder for a long time over this divine teaching... This society is attacked by the jahiliyya of the world just like the first community was attacked when these verses were revealed in order to determine their position and to follow these principles. The callers must reflect deeply before such verses in order to plan their path of guiding.*

*The times are the same as when this religion was revealed to humankind. People have been transformed in the same way as when the Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) and when Islam came to them with its clarification of the major principle, namely ‘There is no god but God’; as Rib’i ibn Amir, the ambassador of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) explained it to the commander*

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<sup>168</sup> Muhammad ibn Salim al-Kahtani, *al-Wala’ wa al-bara’ fi al-Islam min mafahim aqidah al-salaf*, MA dissertation, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1401 H, Tayyiba, Riyad. This is one of the best books on the subject.



*of the Persians, Rustam. When the latter asked him, “What has brought you here?”, Ri’bi replied: “God has sent us to transfer those who will go from the worship of servants to the worship of God, from the straying of religion to the justice of Islam.” He knew that Rustam and his people did not believe in Khosrow as the Creator of the universe and they did not offer gifts and sacrifices to him, but they received laws from him and in this aspect, they worshiped him. This is absolutely rejected in Islam. Ri’bi told him that God had sent them to take people from the state of worshipping people and man-made systems to the worship of God and the justice of Islam... ”<sup>169</sup>*

#### **3.2.2.2.e The price of this distancing**

Once we properly understand the issue of the distancing from the wrongdoers and sinners, except for the purpose of reminder and advice, then this is considered the essence of faith, and in this context, we must know the price and the sacrifices that are to be made for such results.

Below we quote from Qutb on the price of this distancing:

*“Distancing can create hardships and difficulties for the believing people, but they will be more harmful and miserable than the lack of discernment between attitudes and concepts, due to the ignorant society that surrounds them.*

*If we refer to the history of exhortation to God by all the messengers of God we will be convinced that God’s help and the fulfilment of God’s promise for the victory of His messengers and the believers did not come about immediately after the separation of the group of the believers from*

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<sup>169</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1057.

*their people, due to the faith and the system of life on the one hand and the ignorant belief and idolatrous lifestyle. This was the point where all calls were separated. The path of this exhortation is one, and therefore it must be the same as it was at the time of all the prophets (peace be with them all) ”*<sup>170</sup>

As a result, the path of the righteous must be distinguished from the path of the evildoers, the devout must be distinguished from the wrongdoers, the sincere must be distinguished from hypocrites, the pure must be distinguished from the corrupt, the Muslims must be distinguished from Jews and Christians. This is a Qur’anic and prophetic method. Whoever rejects it has swayed from the straight path and has entered the path of the ignorants.

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<sup>170</sup> Muhammad ibn Salim al-Kahtani, *al-Wala’ wa al-bara’ fi al-Islam min mafahim aqidah al-salaf*, p. 40, chapters “al-Wala’ wa al-bara’ min lawazim al-imam”, and “al-Wala’ wa al-bara’ fi al-ahd al-mekki”, p. 60; and Chapter: “al-Wala’ wa al-bara’ fi al-ahd al-medeni”, p. 188. In his commentary to the verse “Say: What thing is of most weight in testimony? Say: Allah is Witness between me and you.” (An’am, 19) - Muhammad Reshid Rida writes: “*The quotations here are about confirming through denial and distance, and God guided him to reply that he does not bear witness as they do. Then God ordered him to bear witness with another testification, namely that There is no god but God, to distance himself from the idols and other forms of idolatry. “Say: “He, Allah, is One!” is a repetition of the order without relating it to previous words, as it implies monotheism and requires no testification through idolatry.*”

### **3.2.3 The correcting of the method of thinking, investigating, and exhorting according to the gnostic and educational method**

The Noble Qur'an came to correct many wrongs and misconceptions of the jahiliyya from the aspect of the morals, social life, as well as from the economical aspect, and Surah al-An'am is an excellent example of such a correction. Among the misconceptions of the Arabs which are dealt with in the Qur'an, was the paving of the way in order to understand this religion and its nature appropriately, and so it obligated them to base their limited capacities and knowledge on religion, and not to exaggerate with issues pertaining to the invisible world in order not to deviate and get lost in the darkness of ignorance, conjecture, and bewilderment.

We are obligated to respect its prohibitions, not to preoccupy ourselves with questions of fate and destiny as did the idolaters: ***“They who idolaters are will say: Had Allah willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners neither had our fathers, nor had we forbidden aught.”*** (al-An'am, 148)

In his commentary of the verses, ***“They who are idolaters will say: Had Allah willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners neither had our fathers, nor had we forbidden aught. Thus did those who were before them give the lie (to the messengers) till they tasted of the fear of Us. Say: Have ye any knowledge that ye can adduce for Us? Lo! ye follow naught but an opinion, Lo! ye do but guess. Say - For God's is the final argument - Had He willed He could indeed have guided all of you.”*** (al-An'am, 148-149), Qutb says:

*“The second issue had to do with the correction of the method of thought and meditation. God forbade them from doing evil deeds and they must withdraw from such deeds with certainty. God's wish is a hidden*

*matter which no one can know. How can we know then? And if we cannot, how should we obey and rely on this order?*

***“Say: Have ye any knowledge that ye can adduce for Us? Lo! ye follow naught but an opinion, Lo! ye do but guess.”*** ( al-An’am- 148)

God’s commands and prohibitions are known with certainty. If people know them, why should they abandon them and delve into things they know not? This is the answer to such claims. God Almighty does not obligate people to know the invisible or His decree, and He does not encourage them to act according to their desires. Rather He obligates them to know the commands and the prohibitions and to live by them. When they try to accomplish this, God guides them, opens their hearts to Islam, and in such cases this issue seems easy and clear and away from surmise and doubt!

God Almighty could have created men guided, or to create the sense of guidance in their hearts for them to be easily guided, but He wished that men try individually to reach guidance and He wanted to help those who search for guidance. And He does what He wills!

***“Say - For God's is the final argument - Had He willed He could indeed have guided all of you.”*** ( al – An’am 149), This is a clear issue which is formulated in a very intelligible manner for people. Therefore for Islam the discussion on this issue is unbeknown, for no such philosophical or theological dialogue has ended with any tangible results. Dialogue deals with this question in a manner that does not accord with its nature, because

the nature of every truth determines the method<sup>171</sup> of its scrutiny and analysis. For example:

- Empirical truth can be analyzed based on lab experiments.
- Mathematical truth can be scrutinized from the aspect of theoretical principles.
- Metaphysical truth must be analyzed through another method; and:
- *“The method of practical tasting of this truth from the experiential aspect”*

Both in the past and now people have tried to enter in dialogue and scrutinize intellectual issues through these methods. Then Islam came to accomplish a scientific reality with clear obligations and prohibitions, and any delving into metaphysical speculation is entrance to bewilderment, because the mind speaks without arguments and spends great energies, rather than spending such energies in positive, realistic, and visible works.<sup>172</sup> On the other hand there came the Qur’an with the gnostic and educating method which was completely new to mankind. Qutb emphasizes this method in his commentary of the verse: ***“Say: Travel in the land, and see the nature of the consequence for the rejecters!”*** (al-An’am, 11).

Here we notice an important constituent of Qutb’s approach which he used in his commentary of the verses related to history and its role in the

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<sup>171</sup> On these important issues see the detailed analysis and study by the martyr Seid Ramadan al-Buti, in the introduction to his *Kubra al-yaqiniya al-kawniya*, pp. 10-70, which contains very useful information.

<sup>172</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. III, p. 1227.

training of the generations. We will also note that he clarifies the central points and the pillars of the study of history from the Islamic perspective.<sup>173</sup>

In many places in his *Dhilal* Qutb asks for the rewriting of the Islamic history from the start. The Arabs walked the earth for trade and livelihood and they did not pay heed to liars when the latter would pass by their homes. The Noble Qur'an says: ***“And lo! ye verily pass by (the ruin of) them in the morning. And at night-time; have ye then no sense?”*** (al-Saffat, 137-138).

God Almighty wants to inform them, us, and the generations to follow until the Day of Resurrection that life must continue as God says, by paying heed and taking advice, in order not to earn God wrath as happened with the bygone peoples.

This verse is one of the verses which deal with exhortation in the form of advice. In his commentary of the verse ***“Say: Travel in the land, and see the nature of the consequence for the rejecters!”*** (al-An'am, 11) Qutb says:

*“The purpose of travelling in the land must be observing, reflecting, and meditating as well as knowing the laws of God which are registered in events and have left visible traces, that is, in transmitted history as reflected in the events on earth and among people.*

*Travelling must be of this kind and it must be done with awareness and for higher goals. All of these, needless to say, were new for the Arabs.*

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<sup>173</sup> We had the honour to offer a critical study and analysis of Albanian history from an Islamic perspective in the first chapter of our doctoral dissertation (2003) which is the first study of its kind in Albanian and in which we have called for a review of our historiography. See our *Tafsir Doctrines in Albanian Lands during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Brunei, 2011.

*Imagine the transformation that the divine Islamic method caused on this level of awareness, thought, scrutiny, and knowledge among the Arabs of the age of ignorance. They had to walk the path of the educational-gnostic method and this was something new for them. It carried them from the age of ignorance into the path which elevates to high grounds.*"<sup>174</sup>

Qutb concludes his discussion on this important topic by saying:

*"From the aspect of the interpretation of history this method was something new for the human intellect of the time, because historical information was not so available, apart from stories and tales about events, traditions, and peoples, lacking any analytical or structural method which would make an inter-relation of events, both between premises and results and between periods and events.*

*The Qur'anic method elevated humans to such heights and it obligated them to use the method of observation in the events of human history. This is not merely a formal method of techniques, thought, or information, but one which provides correct interpretation of human history.*"<sup>175</sup>

From all that has been said above we can conclude many important lessons for our own lives. Whenever we hear of earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, forest fires, storms, heavy rains and snow, epidemics, hunger, drought, etc., we must take lessons from such events and pray to God for our well-being. We must protect ourselves from causes that lead us to earn God's wrath and to learn from such catastrophic events that have seized our planet today. We must analyze the deeds of the people that have been tried

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<sup>174</sup> Dr. Imad al-Din Khalil, *Fi al-ta'rikh fikr wa minhaj*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Beirut, 1996.

<sup>175</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, pp. 1045-6, Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa'is al-tasawur al-Islami wa mukawwimat*, Part II, "al-Tafsir al-Islam li al-ta'rikh".

with these difficult trials in order to avoid the punishment of God, through repentance and asking for forgiveness, as well as correction of our actions, both individual and collective, by enjoining good and forbidding evil.

### **3.2.4 Exhorting unbelievers to Islam, through the following ways:**

#### **3.2.4.1 Exhortation based on the path of observing and pondering on the signs of the Universe**

Islam is a universal religion, and its message is a world message. The mission of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) was inclusive for all people and jinn, for the believers and non-believers, for the righteous and the corrupt alike. In this context, God Almighty says:

***“And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind;”*** (Saba’, 28).

***“Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of God to you all.”*** (al-A’raf, 158).

***“We sent thee not save as a mercy for the worlds.”*** (al-Anbiya’, 107).

***“When it is naught else than a Reminder to creation.”*** (al-Qalam, 52).

***“Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His slave the Criterion (of right and wrong), that he may be a warner to the peoples.”*** (al-Furqan, 1).

It is related in authenticated traditions from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) has said:

***“I have been elevated above all other messengers with six (characteristics): I have been granted all knowledge, I have no fear, I have***



*been allowed the war booty, the whole earth has been made a mosque to me, I have been sent to all creatures, and I am the seal of the prophets.”*<sup>176</sup>

In another transmission he is quoted as saying: *“Each prophet was sent to their own people, but I have been sent to the red and to the black.”*<sup>177</sup>

Whoever understands these verses and traditions that deal with universality will see that the message of the Prophet is inclusive of all people.

Islam enjoins us to exhort Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in order to discharge our responsibility, and this is an additional sign of the miracle of Islam as the seal of the previous divine messages, and its superior value.

The biography of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) is rich with authentic arguments, situations, and lessons... For instance, the Prophet a.s. sent several messages to kings, and religious or tribe leaders to invite them to Islam. Some of them responded to his call, they were guided and embraced Islam, while others rejected it and opposed him, they sinned and rebelled.

Islam did not come to save only Muslims from ignorance but the whole world. Its call is clear and transparent; whoever wants to believe will believe and others will fall into polytheism, for there is no compulsion in religion.

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<sup>176</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, vol. I, p. 371, “**Kitab al-Mesajid wa mawadi al-salat**”, Maktabatu wa matba’at, Dar al- ihya al-Qutb al-arabiyya, commentary by Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi. The hadith was verified by Imam Tirmidhi, vol. III, p. 56, who says: *“This hadith is hasan sahih”*. Related by Muhammad Sayyid ibn el-Habib in *al-Da’wah illa Llahi fi surah Ibrahim al-Khalil*, Cairo, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Abdullah Baba al-Shankiti, Maktabah wa matba’ah Dar ihya al-Qutb al-arabiyya, p. 136.

<sup>177</sup> Related by Imam al-Bukhari in *Sahih*, vol. I, p. 91, “**Kitab al-tayyammum**”, p. 137.

In this context God the All-powerful says:

***“Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge. I and whosoever followeth me - Glory be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters.”*** (Yusuf, 108).

It is a sad fact that today many unbelievers know nothing about the truth of Islam, the Qur’an and the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him). Qur’an says about the People of the Book from the time of the Prophet,

***“Those unto whom We gave the Scripture recognise (this revelation) as they recognise their sons. But lo! a party of them knowingly conceal the truth.”*** (al-Baqara, 146)

They know these truths and these facts very well and exert great efforts to distance people from Islam in general, and Muslims in particular. As an example, we can refer to the situation in Kosovo and Albania where the number of evangelical organizations is very high.<sup>178</sup> They are very influential in world media, including those in the West and in the Islamic world.<sup>179</sup>

Nevertheless, we have been obligated to call to the roundtable of Islam. There is no single and specific correct method for their exhortation, but rather many different methods to convey this faith and light to them. All of us, including callers and leaders of Islamic groups and movements, are obligated to choose the easiest and most appropriate way to enter in dialogue as we have been ordered by God Almighty and the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!): ***“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is Best***

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<sup>178</sup> On their activities, see the study by Mr. Fehim Dragusha, *al-Adyan wa al-Harakat al-Tabshiriya fi Kosova*, (MA dissertation), 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2009, Brunei.

<sup>179</sup> Readers may refer to the pages of his **Fi dhilal al-Qur’an** in order to have more information on the projects of the enemies of Islam against this religion. Qutb’s arguments may be unique. See his *Dhilal*, vol. I, pp. 1032-4, 1061, 1087, 1094; vol. III, pp. 1195, 1201, 1208, 1218.

*Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.”* (Nahl, 125)

*“Reville not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do.”* (al-An’am, 108)

Among the successful methods in exhorting the unbelievers is the method of observing the signs and arguments in the vast Universe which is filled with speaking and silent arguments for the existence of God.

In this context, God the Almighty says:

*“Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the difference of night and day are tokens (of His Sovereignty) for men of understanding.”* (Al-i Imran, 190).

*“Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men, and the water which God sendeth down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth: are signs for people who have sense.”* (al-Baqara, 164).

Ibn Taymiyya has said:

*“Certainty comes also from pondering on the Qur’an and on verses dealing with people, horizons, and deeds that are based on knowledge...”*<sup>180</sup>

Imam al-Ghazzali in his voluminous *Ihya’ al-Ulum al-din* speaks about the value of the truth of reflection and meditation.<sup>181</sup>

In his commentary of the following Qur’anic verse:

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<sup>180</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu’ al-fatawa’*, vol. III, p. 330. “**Muxhmel-I’tiqadus-selef**”.

<sup>181</sup> Salih Ahmad al-Shami, *al-Mudhahhab min Ihya Ulum al-din*, Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, v. 2, pp. 420-440.

*“He it is Who sendeth down water from the sky, and therewith We bring forth buds of every kind; We bring forth the green blade from which We bring forth the thick-clustered grain; and from the date-palm, from the pollen thereof, spring pendant bunches; and (We bring forth) gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, alike and unlike. Look upon the fruit thereof, when they bear fruit, and upon its ripening. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who believe.”* (al-An’am, 99) Qutb writes:

*“The role of water in a great number of things in nature can be seen rather clearly by anyone, be they illiterate or intellectuals, backward or civilized. The role of water is greater than what can be seen, and this is stated in the Qur’an. With God’s decree, water made the surface of the earth fertile (Some theories suggest that the surface of the earth was initially volcanic than it became dry and unsuitable for planting, and then under the effect of water and atmospheric factors it turned to soft soil). Water softens this hard layer with nitrogen, and whenever there is lightening there is electric discharge, and the clouds drop the rain to revive the earth’s fertility.*

*Man imitates the laws of the Universe and creates artificial food. If water did not exist, the fecundity of the soil would disappear altogether!*

*Contemporary discoveries confirm the great role of water in this life ... (Does the Qur’an not say, “**Verily in this there are signs for those possessed of intellect...**”?)*

*Faith opens the hearts and enlightens the sight, it encourages the senses and it calls upon intuition to believe in God, the Creator of everything. Had the opposite been the case, the hearts would have been sealed, the eyes would have been closed, and intuition would have been frozen, even after observing the wonders of creation without any response.*

***“Those who hear are the ones to respond.” Only those who believe understand these signs.”***<sup>182</sup>

It is precisely on this repetition of the blessings of God as a reminder to all people that Qutb, who lived under the shade of this verse, bases his method. He writes, **“This is a method that must be applied by all callers.”**

There is another method in exhorting unbelievers to faith in order to affirm the existence of the Majestic Creator. For Qutb, cosmological sciences do not deny the existence of God. He quotes scholars and cosmologists to prove these truths. Qutb believes that atheism in the West is a result of the ills of religion and the concept of God held by the Church:

*“Today, the elite minority discusses on God without relying on science because science does not accept atheism for it cannot argue in its favour based on any scientific fact or the nature of the universe. This misfortune has come about from the concept of God held by the Church, which was not based on any religious principle. The instinctive nature of such debaters has a negative influence on the fundamental role of human beings, in the same way as the metamorphosis of creatures takes place!*

*The truth of creation (just like the truth of the blossoming of life) is never mentioned in the Qur’an without affirmation of God’s existence, because the discussion about this subject is not as important as to deserve a thorough treatment in the Qur’an. Rather it is used to guide people to the straight path by making them certain in God’s unity, in His worship, in His Power, and in His strength, as well as other truths. Therefore, He alone is worthy of worship and He is in no need for a partner...!*

*Julian Huxley, author of Man Stands Alone and Man in the Modern World makes unbased claims which are a product of his imagination.*

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<sup>182</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1162.

*In his Man in the Modern World, chapter “Religion as an objective question”, he says strange things such as:*

*“The progress of the sciences, logic, and psychology has made God unnecessary, which is why He has been banished from our intellects by natural sciences, to the extent that He has been reduced to just “the First Cause” or a general and unintelligible principle.”*

*Will Durant, the author of “The Pleasures of Philosophy” says:*

*“Philosophy investigates God, but not the God of theologians who see Him as situated outside of the world of nature. It studies the God of philosophers who is the law of the world... Although this is stated, it is difficult to be accepted.”*

*We do not consider them an argument of the Qur’an or an argument for our intellects which are guided by the Qur’an, but we quote them as scholars of mankind who are seriously engaged with this issue.*

*John C. Cotran, a chemist and mathematician who has a Ph.D. from the University of Cornell and is the head of the Department of the Natural Sciences at the University of Minnesota and author of the book “God in the age of science”, writes in chapter “The Necessary Outcome”:*

*“Can a rational being that matter is divorced from intellect and wisdom and that it has created itself? Or that it created this system and these laws, and then it imposed those laws unto itself? The answer will no doubt be negative. When matter is transformed into energy and energy is transformed into matter the process takes place in accordance with concrete laws to which matter too is submitted despite having allegedly created them...”*

*Chemistry discloses that matter is ceasing to exist, some varieties exceedingly slowly, others exceedingly swiftly. Therefore, the existence of matter is not eternal. Consequently, matter must have had a beginning. Evidence from Chemistry and other sciences indicates that this beginning*

*was not slow and gradual; on the contrary, it was sudden, and the evidence even indicates the approximate time when it occurred. Thus at some rather definite time the material world was created and ever since has been obeying law, not the dictates of chance. Now, the material realm not being able to create itself and its governing laws, the act of creation must have been performed by some nonmaterial agent. The stupendous marvels accomplished in that act show that this agent must possess superlative intelligence, an attribute of mind. But to bring mind into action in the material realm as, for example, in the practice of medicine and the field of parapsychology, the exercise of will is required, and this can be exerted only by a person. Hence our logical and inescapable conclusion is not only that creation occurred but that it was brought about according to the plan and will of a person endowed with supreme intelligence and knowledge (omniscience), and the power to bring it about and keep it running according to plan (omnipotence) always and everywhere throughout the universe (omnipresence). That is to say, we accept unhesitatingly the fact of the existence of “the supreme spiritual being, God, the creator and director of the universe.”*

*Arguments from chemistry and other sciences confirm that the origin of matter was not slow and gradual but sudden, and such sciences even tell us the time when matter was form.*

*This implies that the material world must be created and that, ever since its creation, it has been moving based on cosmological laws and rules, and this rejects the theory of sudden appearance. Since the world cannot create itself and its laws it must have a Creator who is above matter. All arguments confirm that this Creator must be wise and intelligent.*

*The intellect cannot function in the material world (as claimed by medicine and psychology) without will, and he who wills must be existent by himself. The logical conclusion of our intellect is that this universe not only*

*has a Creator, but its creator must be wise, omniscient, and omnipotent for all things he can create, systematize and order in this Universe.*

*This Creator must be Existing, Everlasting, and He must manifest His proofs everywhere. As we said in the beginning of this passage: “The progress of sciences from the time of Calvin convinces us more than ever before that if we think deeply, sciences will lead us to believe in God.”*

*Frank Allen, a biophysicist writes:*

*“It has often been made to appear that the material universe has not needed a Creator. It is undeniable, however, that the universe exists. Four solutions of its origin may be proposed: first, that it is an illusion; second, that it spontaneously arose out of nothing; third that it had no origin but has existed eternally; fourth, that it was created.*

*The first proposed solution asserts that there is no problem to solve except the metaphysical one on human consciousness, which has occasionally itself been considered an illusion. The hypothesis of illusion has been lately revived in physical science by Sir James Jeans who states that from the concept of modern physics ‘the universe cannot admit of material representation, and the reason, I think, is that it has become a mere mental concept.’ Accordingly, one may say that illusory trains apparently filled with imaginary passengers cross unreal rivers on imaginary bridges of mental concepts.*

*The second concept, that the world of matter and energy arose of itself out of nothing, is likewise too absurd a supposition for any consideration.*

*The third concept, that the universe existed eternally, has one element in common with the concept of creation: either inanimate matter with its incorporated energy, or a Personal Creator, is eternal. No greater intellectual difficulty exists in the one concept than in the other. But the laws of thermodynamics indicate that the universe is running down to a condition when all bodies will be at the same extremely low temperature and no*



*energy will be available. Life would then be impossible. In infinite time this state of entropy would already have happened. The hot sun and stars, the earth with its wealth of life, are complete evidence that the origin of the universe has occurred in time, at a fixed point in time, and therefore the universe must have been created. A great First Cause, an eternal, all-knowing and all-powerful Creator must exist, and the universe is His handiwork.*"<sup>183</sup>

The reader will note that Qutb's method is related to sayings of European scholars and philosophers as an argument against those who deny the existence of God. This method is worth pursuing in our everyday life during discussions and polemics with atheists, secularists, and sceptics, because it can be used as a counterargument to their references to science.

#### **3.2.4.2 Calling unbelievers through dialogue and kindly exhortation**

This passage is very important, in spite of the fact that it has been dealt with only briefly in the beginning. Here we provide a more detailed treatment.

Many people have been involved in da'wah around the world and some of them have understood the wisdom of this activity, and they have struggled to accomplish the path of the prophets and the messengers (peace

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<sup>183</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, pp. 1164-6. Many Muslim callers who are not familiar with cosmological sciences cannot offer these scientific truths to Muslims or non-Muslims appropriately, for a number of reasons despite their best intentions to clarify these truths. We have included these examples in order to make them useful for cases in which Muslim callers are faced with non-Muslim debaters in particular.

be upon them). They have discharged their obligation and have achieved victory against their ego and their enemies. Yet, some of them have not understood the role of their mission, thinking that da'wah is done only a number of days, months, or years. Thus they have failed without earning God's pleasure.

In our view, the caller to God is like a surgeon who operates sick persons regardless of their citizenship, nature, religion, or morals. He is obliged to them equally and to be patient in the process, with the conviction that this is his vocation and thus he has no reason to feel hurt by the patients' complaints.

We also believe that callers to God must prepare themselves to meet individually with any person, be he virtuous or sinner, believer or unbeliever, scholar or ingorant. So we must listen to their words with patience and pay attention to their concerns.<sup>184</sup>

It is not wise to confine the call within Muslim circles; it is actually a great injustice because the Islamic call is universal and as such addressed to all.

The important question that arises is: Who from among the callers should exhort unbelievers and penetrate their circles? Are there some conditions to be fulfilled by the caller to be able to exhort among such people?

In my view, callers must be divided into those who exhort Muslims, and those who exhort non-Muslims. The latter in particular must possess special qualities and capabilities that will enable them to engage in specialized exhortation. These issues will be dealt with in the next section which focuses on the qualities of the caller that are inferred from the Qur'anic method.

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<sup>184</sup> al-Huli al-Bahiy, *Tadhkiret al-da'wah*, chapter: "Mizaj al-da'wah", p. 51.

Shaykh Salih ibn Abdullah ibn Hamaydi in his treatise on the importance of manners for the successful caller, writes:

*“One of the most important elements for a successful exhortation to God and for bringing people closer to Islam and eventually practice its laws, is the kind behaviour of the caller, who must possess lofty qualities and pure morals. He must be ready to set his example for others and to inspire people with the concepts of Islam, so that people approach him. Influencing through words is more effective than influencing with words...”*<sup>185</sup>

Due to the importance of this element, Qutb pays special attention to it with a very strong attitude. In his commentary of the verse from Surah al-An’am which deals with exhortation through enjoining and forbidding: ***“Revile not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do.”*** (al-An’am, 108), he writes:

*“Although the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) ordered the believers to oppose the idolaters, he instructed them to do so with kindness and lofty manners, as befits the believers. They are commanded not to revile the gods of the idolaters for the latter not to revile God, because they do not know the Majesty and Elevation of God: “Revile not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do.”*

*In accordance with the nature in which God created man, every person who does something is prone to be satisfied with his act and to defend it, even when wrong. If he is wronged, he performs good deeds, and even if*

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<sup>185</sup> Salih ibn Abdullah ibn Humayd, *al-Kudwah, Mabadi wa al-Nemadhij*, Dar al-Watan, 1414.

*he is loss he acts with the conviction that he is doing good. Such is man's nature.*<sup>186</sup>

*Some ascribe partners unto God even though they know that God is the Creator and the Sustainer. If Muslims revile their gods, the idolaters will distance themselves even more from believing in God and will pray more fervently to their gods to protect their worship, concepts, and traditions.*

*Therefore, believers must leave them as they are: "Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do". This behaviour befits the nature of believers who are confident in their religion, with a guided heart which no evil can penetrate.*

*If Muslims revile the idolaters' gods, they will not guide them but they will add to their stubbornness, and no believer needs such a counter-reaction. Such behaviour may lead to reviling against God the Almighty.*"<sup>187</sup>

We believe that upholding this principle is very difficult in practice, therefore the caller must have a special strategy in society regarding this issue, in order to be able to apply it successfully.

A caller must act in such a way as to enable those he exhorts to understand that he is not one of them, by:

- Distancing himself from them *when he is not exhorting.*
- *Not allowing them to visit him; and*
- *Showing his disagreement with their state, his regret about their lifestyle which must be changed and replaced.*

Qutb's comments imply the principle of taking preventive measures and the principle of comparing good deeds with evil ones. These steps must be applied in Islamic exhortation, in order for the caller not to experience

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<sup>186</sup> Alusi, *Ruh al-ma'ani*, vol. 7-8, pp. 250-251.

<sup>187</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol 2, p. 1169, Husni Ad'ham Jarra, *al-Da'wa illal-Islam mafahi wa minhaj wa wajibat*, Dar al-diya' li al-nashr wa al-tawr, Aman, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1984, pp. 166, 178.

unpleasant events or even failures in his call as a consequence of not dealing with their deeds and words with wisdom and based on the principles of the Shari‘ah.

### **3.2.5 The Qur’ani method in defeating the ignorant conceptions, through the following steps:**

#### **3.2.5.1 Graduality**

Graduality is one of the greatest principles of our pure religion for in this way the Noble Qur’an was revealed to the heart of the Prophet (*blessings and peace be with him!*) so that he could be a warner in pure Arabic.

God Almighty says in this context,

***“And (it is) a Qur’an that We have divided, that thou mayst recite it unto mankind at intervals, and We have revealed it by (successive) revelation.”*** (al-Isra, 106).

***“And those who disbelieve say: Why is the Qur’an not revealed unto him all at once? (It is revealed) thus that We may strengthen thy heart therewith; and We have arranged it in right order.”*** (Furqan, 32).

Graduality is one of the most important tools of the Qur’anic method for the training of the ummah and the defeating of different concepts of the jahiliyya. It constituted one of the important characteristics of the Meccan period to which Qutb referred frequently in his commentary. When talking about graduality one must mention the wisdom, mysteries, and lessons that can be drawn from the gradual descent of the Qur’an.

Commenting on the wisdom of graduality, Qutb writes:

*“This Qur’an came to educate an ummah, to build a society, and to establish a system. Manners need a certain time to influence actions and words, and to start a movement that will transform this influence into reality. In other words, the human soul cannot be changed overnight by reading a Book with a completely different method. Influence comes about gradually and this method is developed step by step, thus slowly getting to the obligations. If a difficult burden would become an obligation, it would not have been accepted. Rather the obligation is developed gradually and man becomes more prepared for the acceptance of the next obligation, and graduality enables him to accept things easier and with pleasure.”*<sup>188</sup>

Among the wise points<sup>189</sup> and lessons that are gained from the gradual and successive descent of the Qur’an we shall mention a few:

\* Glorification of the Qur’anit and of the one it was revealed to;<sup>190</sup>

\* The strengthening and training of the heart of the Prophet (*blessings and peace be with him*) as well as the renewal of his pact with archangel Gabriel to be his helper and to encourage him;<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. V, p. 2562.

<sup>189</sup> We were privileged to participate in the International Conference about **Religion, Philosophy and Ethics**, organized by the International Academic Forum (IAFOR) in Osaka (Japan) from 28-31 March 2013, in which we presented our paper *Wisdoms Behind the Gradual Revelation of the Noble Qur’an – Some Contemporary Religious, Spiritual, Social and Educational Wisdoms*.

<sup>190</sup> Manna’a al-Kattan, *Mabahidh fi ulum al-Qur’an*, vol. I, pp. 452, 469.

<sup>191</sup> Said Hawwa, *al-Asas fi al-Tafsir*, Dar al-salam li al-tiba’ti wa al-nashr, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1985, vol. VII, p. 3874.

\* The compatibility of revelation with events, questions, and emerging cases. The Qur'an was revealed after events in order to judge with justice in concrete cases;<sup>192</sup>

\* In God's word, "*We revealed it successively*", lies a secret about this manner of revelation. It includes graduality, peace, and clarification that yields conviction and confirmation, and this produces certainty and complete informing which would be lacking had revelation been at once. It is present only when revelation is accompanied with lessons drawn from events;<sup>193</sup>

\* The continuous proofs for unbelievers, reminding them of their straying and deviated beliefs. Had the Qur'an been revealed at once, unbelievers would have mocked it, and after rejecting it they would forget it.<sup>194</sup> Malik ibn Nabi in his book *al-Dhahir al-Qur'aniyya* writes:

*"Had the Qur'an been revealed at once, it would have been quickly transformed into a futile sacred word, a dead idea, and a religious document. The historical social and spiritual movement introduced by Islam could have only been accomplished through this graduality."*<sup>195</sup>

\* Stylistic and legislative confirmation of the Qur'anic miracle by challenging the Arabs with writings Suras and verses.

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<sup>192</sup> Muhammad Abdullah Darraz, *al-Naba' al-adhim, Nadharat jadida fi fahm al-Qur'an*, Dar al-Qalam, Damascus, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1970, p. 61.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. See also *al-Asas fi al-tafsir*, vol. VII, p. 3864.

<sup>194</sup> Sabir Hasan Muhammad Abu Sulayman, *Rawa'i al-bayan fi ulum al-Qur'an*, al-Maktab al-Islami, Beirut, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1988, pp. 41-42.

<sup>195</sup> Malik bin Nabi, *al-Dhahir al-Qur'aniyya*, tr. Abd al-Sabur Shahin, intr. Abdullah Muhammad Darraz and Mahmud Shakir, Beirut: Dar al-fikr al-mu'asir, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1987, p. 175.

\* The uncovering of traps, conspiracies, and plans of polytheists in Mecca, and the hypocrites, Jews, and Christians against the Muslims and Muhammad a.s. in Medina.

\* Facilitating the memorization of the Qur'an and the putting of the verses in practice. Had the Qur'an been revealed at once it would have been difficult to memorize. Its gradual descent enabled the Muslims to gradually memorize the Qur'an during the Meccan and Medinite period, given that the means of writing and recording were still very primitive. This educational wisdom dominates in schools and universities around the world.

\* Correcting the deeds, attitudes, and decisions by the Prophet a.s. and his Companions when they made mistakes in some religious, social, military or family matter, such as the case of not participating in the Battle of Tabuk by some Companions from Medina, the case of the war prisoners at Badr, the case of the Prophet a.s. prohibiting to himself some allowed food for the sake of his wives, etc.<sup>196</sup>

Thus, we can conclude that the Noble Qur'an was revealed gradually in order to speak to the people and to reveal to them the principles of the law. This method was accepted by the Arabs, and they were gradually led from darkness to the light, being rightly guided in the path of God, which is the path of all beings in heaven and on earth.

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<sup>196</sup> For more details see our *Wisdoms Behind the Gradual Revelation* quoted earlier, as well as our paper *Nahwa Manhaj Qur'an fi Ta'limi al-Ulum al-Shar'ia*, presented at the International Conference of the Sultan Sharif Ali University, faculty of Usul al-Din, Brunei 2010.



In Islamic history there are numerous examples of the descent of the principles of the Qur'an in this manner, such as the prohibition of alcohol which took place in three or four stages (depending on the transmissions), as well as the prohibition of usury. This was the case with other prohibitions also, such as the veil, fasting, *jihad*, etc. The verses which obligated these laws were revealed in Medina. The Meccan period which lasted for 13 years was a preparatory, theoretical period for the founding of faith and certainty, whereas the Medinite period pertained to the practice of God's laws. This historical Qur'anic reality must not be missing in the thoughts of the callers to Islam, otherwise their method and work will be considered anti-Qur'anic.

Based on this divine method of graduality in principles and worship, the Qur'an defeated ignorant conceptions. Qutb concentrated on this method for a long time, thinking on its mysteries and even coining the terms "**the Meccan Qur'an**" and "**the nature of the Meccan Qur'an**."

The Meccan period had specific goals and nature in the exposition of the problems and the challenging of the concepts and morals of the jahiliyya.

What does this method consist of, what are its stages, and where did it start from?

"**The nature of the Meccan Qur'an**" was shown by Qutb to contain another mystery, namely the fact that God did not order the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) to start calling his people to Arab nationalism or to the reform of the ignorant Arab society filled with immorality in behaviour and concepts. Qutb linked the relation of this fact with the Meccan period of the revelation by saying that there is no use in

saving people from different kinds of ignorance unless righteousness is instilled in their stray hearts.

In the following pages we turn to the manner in which Qutb deals with this issue and how he instructs the callers to use this method in their exhortation and training of the others.

*“The callers to the religion of God and the determination of the system which vivifies this religion in everyday life must ponder for a long time on this great phenomenon which regards the Qur’an of the Meccan period during its thirteen years of strengthening the faith. At first it provides no details on this system and the law to be applied in an Islamic society. God’s wisdom has decreed that da’wah be based on the question of faith from the beginning of the message. The Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) started his da’wah by exhorting people to bear witness that ‘There is no god but God’, in order to inform men on their true God so that they may worship Him.*

*Certainly, in consideration of the nature of the matter and the limited human intellect this was not the easiest way to the hearts of the Arabs. Linguistically they understood the meaning of No god but God. They knew that divinity meant the absolute power which implied the Oneness of God, and therefore the elimination of the rule of the monks, tribe leaders, and rulers, and the acceptance of God’s rule alone: rule over feelings, over symbols, over the reality of life, over wealth, over the legislative, rule over the souls and the bodies...*

*They knew that “No god but God” constitutes a revolution against earthly rule, which is the first characteristic of divinity and a revolution against everything on which such a rule is based. It opposes powers that judge by laws that are not sanctioned by God!*

*The Arabs knew their language well and they understood well the true meaning of the call No god but God and its implications for their position, leadership which is why they opposed this da'wah – or revolution – so bitterly that everyone is familiar with it.*"<sup>197</sup>

In this there is a valuable lesson for the contemporary callers to Islam, because people can resist his call not due to ignorance, but fear from loosing power, authority, and position.<sup>198</sup>

The callers must apply this method which deals with mysteries and secrets of the huma hearts, and they must not rely only on visible and superficial matters in their discussion of religious laws.

Next, we turn to Qutb's comments on the wisdom of the beginning of the call in which he says that the Qur'anic method is the only wholesome method which eliminates different concepts of the jahiliyya, and that the start must always be from the base. This basis is in need of a long time to strengthen itself in order for the building to take place. He raises the question:

***“Why this start in da'wah? Why was God's wisdom so evident in this issue? He sent His Prophet with this religion, but the richest and most exclusive places were in the hands of the Arabs...***

*In the north, the territory of Sham was held by the Romans, and in the south the territory of Yemen was in the hands of the Persians, that is, of Persian-controlled Arabs. So in both these territories the Arabs were*

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<sup>197</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1005.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

*ruled by the foreigners or Arab quislings. Only Hijaz and the desert was in the hands of the Arabs.”*

*“There were real chances for the call to start from those places, but the opposite took place...*

*- The Prophet could have instigated Arab nationalism which would unite the Arab tribes that were vindictive and divided by numerous quarrels and enmities, and thus they would save their occupied territories from the invaders and form a strong unity throughout their Peninsula.”<sup>199</sup>*

*“Had the Prophet of God called to this principle, all the Arabs would have responded, and he would have not undergone mistreatment and abuse for thirteen years, nor would have he fought against the resistance of the rulers of the Peninsula. Perhaps Muhummad a.s. could have done this after the Arabs responded and after he granted them rule and power, after uniting all the sources of power that were divided. Then he could have called them to monotheism with which his God sent him and people would have obeyed their Lord after he achieved their control!*

*But God Almighty is Omniscient and Wise, and He did not guide him in this direction, but He guided him to call to No god but God, so that a small minority would carry that heavy burden.*

*God’s knowledge is absolute and God the Magnificent is Merciful and Omniscient, and He knows best what is in people’s benefit. Why? God Almighty does not wish to overburden the Prophet and believers with this issue, for He knows best that this is not the appropriate path. He does not wish to save the earth from the Roman devil or the Persian devil and give it to the Arab devil, for all devils are one. The earth is God’s, and we must*

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<sup>199</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1005.

*address only God. This shall happen only when the banner of No god but God will be raised.*

He also adds: *“Men must be servants only to God, and they will be His servants only when the banner of No god but God will be raised – just like the Arab understood that power belongs to God alone, that the Law is from God, and no one can dominate anyone because dominion is only God’s and Islam asks from people the citizenship of faith, in which the Arab, the Roman, the Persian, and all other people are equal under God’s banner. This is the path.”*<sup>200</sup>

In the Qur’anic method of exhortation God did not ask the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) to make a social call, for this too just like the former would not help or guide them. Therefore, God Almighty did not call them in this manner. Qutb writes with regards to this point:

*“Muhammad (blessings and peace be with him!) could have raised a social banner and start a struggle against the rich elite, seize their wealth, change the situation and give the wealth to the poor. Had he called to this principle the Arabs would have been divided into two groups: the majority which would have supported this new idea against the rich who had wealth and authority, instead of uniting all under No god but God.*

*God knew that this was not the appropriate path, and that social justice must originate from the general concept of faith in society, as well as reliance on God, in accepting that everything decreed by God is just*

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<sup>200</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1006, chapter “**al-Da’wah ilall-llah fi surah Ibrahim al-Khalil**”, p. 273.

*and intelligible in society. Thus those who give and those who take will be equally content, for this system has been created by God!*<sup>201</sup>

Qutb also analyzes the third possibility of da'wah, in which he says that had Muhammad (blessings and peace be with him) called to moral and ethical reform, this method would have no doubt met with good reaction, but he did not do this either, for God wanted that the Arabs unite under another word, namely No god but God. Let us see how Qutb analyzes this matter.

*“Muhammad a.s. also could have proclaimed a reformist movement to strengthen the morals, purify society and men, and change their values and principles. As in every ambience, he too would have found people who reacted against corruption and thereby responded to the call.*

*Some might say that, had Muhammad a.s. acted in this way, first the virtuous men would have responded, and due to the purification of their morals and their souls that would be more prone to accept faith, rather than he having to face a great resistance against his call to No god but God from the start.”*<sup>202</sup>

*“But God is Wise and Omniscient, and He did not guide him in this path. God Almighty knew that this is not the appropriate path and that the morals can be based only on principles and values of faith, and that the values and principles are valid if they are based on this principle. Also, the issue of the reward of those who respect these values and the punishment for those who reject them are based on this principle. Before the strengthening of this principle, values could be wavering, just like*

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1007.

*morals without discipline, rule, and reward. After the strengthening of faith and great efforts, the rule on which this faith is based is strengthened.*

Here Qutb states that:

*\* When people know their God and worship only Him;*

*\* When they are freed from the rule of men and passions; and:*

*\* When the principle of No god but God is inscribed in the hearts then God makes that people act in accordance with His laws...*

*The earth was cleared off the Romans and the Persians, but not for the domination of the Arabs, but God's dominion. The earth was cleared off all all devils, and it was purified from all social injustice, and the Islamic system was established which is based on God's justice and weighs with His scale, and which raises the banner of justice only in the name of God. This is the banner of Islam and it allows for no other name. It is the banner of No god but God.*

*The souls and morals were purified along with the hearts with no need for the prohibitions and penalties decreed by God – except in rare cases – because fear from God had penetrated within, as had the desire to gain God's pleasure and reward, as well as shame and fear from His wrath and punishment, which controlled and punished... ”<sup>203</sup>*

Furthermore, Qutb adds: *“People were elevated based on this system and morals in their lives like never before, and this was due only to Islam. All of this was possible because those who raised this religion into a system with a state, Shari‘ah, and principles had applied this*

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<sup>203</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1007.

*religion in their souls first and in their lives in the form of faith, morals, worship, and manners. Thus, God knew what happened to them and He knew that they become worthy of His great trust and of this religion with which God had captivated the hearts, sentiments, and souls within, in every state and situation... He enabled them to apply His Shari‘ah.*’’<sup>204</sup>

In this passage one can see clearly Qutb’s methodological aspects in dealing with verses related to exhortation. The most evident aspect is the understanding of the Qur’anic verses and their commentary according to the periods of revelation and the events that occurred during the pure life of the Prophet a.s. Also he formulates his ideas according to this method and he quotes several times complete texts from the biography of the Prophet, based on which he draws lessons from the verse in question. Therefore, for a true caller to Islam it is an indisputable necessity to know the life of Muhammad a.s. and his Companions.

At the end of this appraisal, we confirm what was said earlier, namely that had the Islamic call started with an invitation for national unity, for purification of the morals, or for opposing the elite of the time which was predominant in families and clans, the Islamic call would have failed, and it would not have had the wonderful success it achieved in such short time.

*“This blessed method would not have been accomplished at this level if it did not start with this principle and it would not have raised the banner of ‘No god but God’. Only this difficult and hard path from the superficial aspect, but which is easy and blessed in its essence allowed the da’wah to be what it is. This blessed method would have not been*

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1008.



*realized for the sake of God had it started with a national call,<sup>205</sup> or a social call, or educational call or any other symbol apart from No god but God ”<sup>206</sup>*

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<sup>205</sup> A brief note on our view of the Islamic stance on nationalism and its principles and position. This issue is clarified in the Qur’an and Sunnah within certain rules. Among the verses pertaining to nationalism is

***“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.”*** (al-Rum, 22). God Almighty has emphasized this blessing approvingly not disparagingly, as understood from the context of the verse. The difference of languages and colours are divine blessings for man and proofs of His existence. It was the will of God for me to be born in Kosova from Albanian parents. Although there is not need to take pride, I am an Albanian Muslim and there is no harm in this. I must defend my identity, language, country and personality as created by God, and any denial of these elements amounts to denying the Will and Wisdom of God, for had He so willed he would have created me an Arab, a Turk, or a Persian, and this is not difficult for God. I am proud to be an Albanian Muslim and to live by the rules and principles of Islam. Any deviation therefrom implies straying from the guidance of Islam. We are not concerned with those who give priority to national sentiments over religious ones. Perhaps when Qutb deals with this question he has in mind such persons. God says: ***“And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them. Then God sendeth whom He will astray, and guideth whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Wise.”*** (Ibrahim, 4) This verse implies that God did not reveal Islam in order to oppose natural qualities in men. I believe that one’s language, country, and traditions are natural qualities of man and that Islam has come to regulate and purify men from evil morals and deviation. This verse confirms these truths, just as it confirms that God has sent each messenger in the tongue of his people, and the prophets never asked their people to deny their tongues. There are other verses that point to this truth, such as: ***“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. Lo! God is Knower, Aware.”*** (al-Hujurat, 13) Such arguments are found also in the Sunnah of the Prophet a.s. When God ordered the Prophet a.s. to migrate to Medina, he addressed Mecca with these words: ***“By God, O Mecca! You are the dearest of God’s earth for me. Had God not ordered me to migrate, I would have never left!”*** His great love for the fatherland and his birthplace is evident in this

### 3.2.5.2 Attention towards the state of the exhorted ones

This part is interrelated with the previous one, and therefore we shall turn to a few of Qutb's ideas in which the all-embracing aspect of the divine da'wah which paid attention to the state of the Arabs and people in general. Qutb deals with each principle separately and then generalizes based on it.

Below we take a look at Qutb's interpretation of the question of the formation of the Ummah as a very important pillar, and the attention paid to the situation of those that are exhorted. In this context he says:

*“The Qur'an and Islamic faith waged a specific, dynamic, and realistic battle. The “theoretical” form does not accord with this approach which is appropriate for the reality of the present state, because this dynamic form faces obstacles, challenges, psychological and real rejections which were present in the dynamic and lively souls.*

*Theoretical dialogue which took place lately cannot comply with apologetics.<sup>207</sup> The Qur'an addressed human reality and all dynamic forms. It addressed all people based on this reality. On the other hand, “theology” is not an appropriate form either.<sup>208</sup> Even though Islamic*

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hadith, and these are innate instincts that do not contradict Islam. In the Prophetic biography we have never read that the Messenger of God has asked Bilal Habashi, Suhayb al-Rumi and Salman Farsi to forsake their identity, language, and nationality after embracing Islam.

<sup>206</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1009.

<sup>207</sup> Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, in his book *Sayyid Qutb, khulasatu hayatih, manhajuhu fi al-harakat - al-naqd al-muwajjah ilayhi*, in a special chapter on the critiques against Qutb and the muakallimun who deal with the creedal questions philosophically, says that Qutb's method obliges us to consider the issues of the creed (*'aqidah*) and to deal with faith based directly on the Qur'anic method. See p. 199.

<sup>208</sup> Ali Muhsen, “Let the Bible Speak”, p. 20-55.

*faith is a belief system, it represents belief as related to the realistic lifestyle and the practical application, and it is not related to the limited form of the theoretical and theological investigations!*

*Islam builds faith based on considerations of Islamic society and it wages a strict battle with ignorance around them, within them, in their morals and everyday life. Faith was built in this way and not in a:*

- *theoretical form*
- *theological form, and:*
- *apologetic dialogue.*

It was based on the systematic and direct building of life”.<sup>209</sup>

In our view, these words were not known in this form by earlier commentators. Qutb had this attitude and arrived at these conclusions, because he knew Western civilization well, and after his studies thereof he had concluded that the teaching, analysis and investigation of religion in the West was in theoretical and philosophical form, as well as theological, which explains the presence of the great confusion in general. But the future is in God’s hand and in favour of the Muslims, for at the present moment the West is experiencing a transformation in its study of Islam.

Deviated interpretations had brought about negative results and the persecution of the scholars of that time because of the negative effect of

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<sup>209</sup> The scholar Ali Muhammad Juraysha agrees fully with Qutb in this question when dealing with the principles of the Islamic call in his book *Usul al-da’wah al-islamiyya: “Principles of da’wah: This is a divine, universal approach in projects and methodology...”*

the Church on science. Qutb had a specific opinion about this question and repeatedly stressed that the Islamic da'wah is not like missionary techniques in the West. Therefore, he offers pure methodological principles to the Muslim callers, which are derived from Islam:

*“It is necessary for the Muslim callers to grasp the nature of Islam and its dynamic method, as we explained... in order to understand that the period of the formation of faith which was longer in the Meccan period was not separated from the period of the practical formation of the Islamic movement and society... there was no period of “theoretical” study.*

*Thus, the period of faith building must be gradual, deep, and strong, and must not be only a period of theoretical study of faith, but it must be a dynamic interpretation of this period as represented in feelings that are formed in accordance with this faith”.*<sup>210</sup>

From these words we derive Qutb's method in understanding the verses pertaining to da'wah, and we notice that this method opposes strictly the contemporary Western methods of teaching Islam, because they are still theoretical and theological, and they have nothing to do with the practical aspect. Qutb clarifies the impertinence of this method and says that Islam cannot be studied and taught accordingly, because God Almighty wishes to for a society in which faith will be its practical reality. Therefore, the callers of today must apply both a theoretical and practical method in exhortation.

From what has been said regarding Qutb's method it can be seen that in the investigation and application of the rules of the Shari'ah in

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<sup>210</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1009.

understanding the verses related to da'wah, one must not expect quick results especially during the formation of the ummah and its preparation in a complete shape. Callers must understand this element in their exhortation.

In this context, Qutb writes:

*“This is the nature of this religion, as implied in the method of the ‘Meccan Qur’an’. We must understand this religion properly, and we cannot change it because of fleeting and failing desires of theoretical considerations by humans!*

*In this way the Islamic ummah was formed in the beginning and in this way it shall form the ummah every time the need to appear on the scene will be felt, just like God made it appear for the first time.”<sup>211</sup>*

Someone might say that from the theoretical aspect we understand that the Noble Qur’an used the principle of graduality and paid attention to the state of those who were being called to Islam in the Arabic Peninsula, in order to defeat the different ignorant conceptions, but we do not see any living example of these words? What does Qutb have to say about this?

In answer to this question, we say that Qutb clarified his method of understanding the verses with concrete examples... This also points to his approach of commenting the verses on gradual exhortation.

In his interpretations of the following Quranic verse he said: ***“They assign unto Allah, of the crops and cattle which He created, a portion,***

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<sup>211</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1215, Ahmed Faiz, *al-Da’wah Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. 1. pp. 148-152.

*and they say: "This is Allah's" - in their make-believe – ‘and this is for (His) partners in regard to us.’” (al-An’am, 136) and verse:*

*“And (He commandeth you, saying): This is My straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way. This hath He ordained for you, that ye may ward off (evil).” (al-An’am, 153);*

Qutb at the start clarifies the attitudes and beliefs of the idolaters, and then continues the way in which the Qur’an expounds on such meaningless beliefs in crops, animals, and children, and then adds:

The regards the general aspect whereas from the specific aspect the Qur’an waged a dynamic and realistic battle through this faith against the destructive tendency of the instinct within the human souls. It did not create ‘theories’ that agreed with this reality, but it launched a challenge against the obstacles, boundaries, and psychological barriers existing in dynamic souls. The illusory dynamics which came about later through apologetics was not suitable. Islam also faced a complete human reality in all its vital aspects and it addressed the human being within such a reality. Theosophy was not a suitable form either because Islamic faith concerns the realistic lifestyle and the practical application, and not the narrow domains which theoretical theosophical studies deal with.

The Qur’an built the faith within the Muslim society, and through such believers it waged a great battle against the roots of the jahiliyya that had set within, in behavior and in reality. Faith was formed in this environment and not in a merely theoretical, theosophical, or apologetic dialectical form. Such a faith formed a direct life system which introduced the Islamic society. The Islamic society and the respective faith concepts were developed within this objective concept in order to completely uproot the jahiliyya as a system... Its development was a complete form

of building faith and life itself... This nature was represented by the methodology of Islam...

The followers of the Islamic da'wah are obligated to understand the nature of this religion and the method of this movement in order to see that the period of faith-building in Mecca was not separated from the practical formation of the Islamic movement and the objective reality of Islamic society. This period did not concern the study of some theory but it was a period of the formation of faith, society, movement, and objective existence. This is the course to be taken whenever such a formation needs to be revived!

This is the way in which the period of the informing of faith must take place, with deep, strong and gradual steps. The period of the formation of faith must not be only a theoretical study of faith but also a revival of the feelings of this religion and society. This realistic movement challenges the jahiliyya and it wages a battle against such feelings in order to create a lively faith and to develop a dynamic process through this challenge.

It is also a grave error to envisage Islam as a theory which has to be studied as such or as a culture.<sup>212</sup>

From Qutb's methodology, conviction, and principles regarding the concepts and superstitions of the jahiliyya, we see that he did not look at revelation and the Qur'anic method merely as a theory or theosophy, but as a dynamic challenge against ignorant obstacles and conceptions. He waged a dynamic battle against such conceptions, beliefs, and rites.

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<sup>212</sup> Qutb, **Fi dhilal al-Qur'an**, vol. II, p. 1012.

*“The Qur’an in its structure made slow, long, and precise steps in this method...”*

*\* It confirmed the destruction of those who kill their children from ignorance and who have been deprived of God sustenance, by crying lies against God. Thus their absolute loss comes from their misconceptions and such saying which they ascribe to God without any knowledge.*

*\* Then he draws their attention and tells them that it is God who has bestowed their wealth upon them, and that He has created gardens with plants reaching up and laying across. He created all these blessings. The Sustainer is the sole Possessor, and He alone bestows such riches. In this context, concrete examples are given from the different crops and the garden with plants reaching up and laying across.*

*\* Then he expounds in detail the great naiveness of their ideas on the blessings, which completely opposes common sense. He clarifies their obscure concepts which are meaningless and naive. In the end, he asks: “Do you support these illogical laws?!” “Or were you witnesses when God ordered you to this?”<sup>213</sup>*

Here he confirms the power of the legislator in Shari‘ah and explains the prohibitions in food among Muslims and Jews. Then he exposes the ignorance in ascribing partners unto God, and in prohibiting what God has allowed in the Shari‘ah, by ascribing it wrongly to God Almighty:

***“They who are idolaters will say: Had Allah willed, we had not ascribed partners neither had our fathers, nor had we forbidden aught.”***

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<sup>213</sup> *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1215; Ahmad Faiz, *al-Da’wah Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. I, pp. 148-52.



(al-An'am, 148) Here he points out that these are words used by every unbeliever and liar. When God's punishment comes, the liars say: ***“Thus did those who were before them give the lie (to God's messengers) till they tasted of the fear of Us.”*** (al-An'am, 148). Qutb explains:

*“Polytheism is the same as forbidding without having a ruling from God, because both groups reject God's proofs.”* Then, in a negating tone, he asks them: *“What is the basis of your claims? ‘Do you surmise? Nay, indeed you tell but lies.’”*<sup>214</sup>

He ends his exposition of this issue with evidence and categorical words just as he criticized them at the beginning of the Surah on the question of faith, by using the same words and descriptions to refer to the issue of polytheism and legislation without divine sanctioning:

***“Say: ‘Bring the proof that God forbade them.’ In this verse we see the unity of reflection, text, and words on those who devise such laws and follow their passions and belie God's arguments and resurrection. Had they followed divine guidance they would not create laws for themselves and others which were not from God, and they would have not forbidden or permitted anything without God's permission.”***<sup>215</sup>

Finally, it invites them to see what has been prohibited, and here we observe basic principles of social life the foremost of which is belief in the Oneness of God. Some of them are orders and prohibitions, and the latter predominate. All of these are summarized in the sentence:

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

*“God forbids idolatry, enjoins kindness to parents, and forbids the killing of children from poverty, and He provides sustenance for you...”*<sup>216</sup>

The study of the method used by Qutb reveals again the practical aspect of Islam, which confirms time and again that Islam is not a religion of philosophical theories but a way of life. A society in order to be Islamic must abide by the principles of Islam.

The second issue regards the deducing of an exhortation method from the Qur’an for the defeat of the strayed beliefs and concepts. Callers must pay attention to this method whose pillar remains **“graduality, successivity, and attention to the state of those who are exhorted to Islam”**. Before turning to this point we must turn to Qutb’s approach to the intellectual formation of the callers and the exhortation of unbelievers to Islam.

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<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.2.5.3 The Qur'an addresses human instinct

Regarding this characteristic of the Qur'an,<sup>217</sup> it would not be an exaggeration to say that this Qur'anic method of exhortation is one of the most important ones for Qutb in his *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, because addressing the instinct has a great effect on awakening the feelings and responsibilities. God Almighty knows that the eyes betray what hies hidin in the hearts and in the souls. Regarding this truth, Qutb writes:

*“The Qur'an addresses the human instinct, man as such, and all that surrounds him. The Qur'an lays out the forms of the acceptance of the instinct which were weak and dysfunctional in order to enable it to accept inspirations and to respond to them. Surah al-An'am is a perfect example of this method.*

*For Islamic callers it is important to understand the nature of this religion and its method of dynamism in Islam, in order to understand the true nature of this religion. They must know that the period of the forming of faith was long precisely for this reason, and that it was not separated from the practical period of the Islamic movement or the forming of the Islamic society.”<sup>218</sup>*

In his commentary of the verse: **“Those who ruin their own souls will not believe.”** (al-An'am, 20), Qutb says:

*“They lost, failed and did not belive, and this is a precise expression those who do not believe in this religion which inspires the instinct with faith and proofs have lost their instinct beforehand, and it is*

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<sup>217</sup> On the instinct, see the expositions in his commentary of Surah al-An'am in *Dhilal*, vol.1, pp. 148-152.

<sup>218</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1012.

*evident that the acceptance and reaction of the instinct has been damaged and destroyed. In this state they ruin themselves and end up in disbelief. This is the deep root of their disbelief, despite the fact that before their eyes there are proofs for the existence of God in every existing thing...*<sup>219</sup>

From this we can conclude that unbelievers were in great loss, and the reason for this lied in the destruction, ruin, and corruption of their instinct. In his commentary to verse: **“Say: Can ye see yourselves, if the punishment of God come upon you or the Hour come upon you? Do ye then call to any other than God if ye are truthful?”** (al-An’am, 40), Qutb says:

*“This verse addresses the instinct by way of challenge... God’s punishment in this world is a punishment of destruction and ruin or the coming of the Day suddenly. When instinct imagines this challenge, it understands the truth and trembles, for this is a truth that lies in its depth. God knows that this truth is there, and He addresses man who then seeks help from God and forgets worship; and even polytheism forgets itself. The knowledge of God is a truth that lies within, whereas polytheism is something added from the outside.”*<sup>220</sup>

This means that polytheism, unbelief, and atheism are accidental and superimposed on the human soul from the outside, for in its essence the soul knows its true God and believes in Him whenever it faces hardship and challenges in this world and in the next.

Qutb’s commentary is very pertinent in the callers’ activities, and its vaue becomes evident when we address people from different elites with the proofs of the error of their idolatry and unbelief which go agains

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<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1053.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1087.

the absolute truth. The absolute truth is what God has shown us, namely the fact that when the soul is faced with hardship in this life and on the Day of Judgment it accepts its Lord... This is the very reason why Qutb doubts the sincerity of atheists, what they believe in, and what they practice in different forms and ways. I think that he arrived at this conviction through his method of understanding the religious truths and social phenomena, and the fact that human instinct in its unadulterated form rejects polytheism.

Here Qutb unveils a great historical point regarding the enemies of Islam. Whenever they try to sow their ideas and doctrines they do not fight Islam openly in order not to face the human instinct, but they spread their ideologies under the garb of different forms and ways that seek to deviate the morals of the Muslims.<sup>221</sup>

Qutb also writes that the awakening and dynamism of the instinct without revelation leads to deviation. The same occurs to the intellect without revelation and a message from God. Thus, in order for the instinct and intellect to function properly there must be prophethood.<sup>222</sup>

In his commentary of the verses on Abraham (peace be with him!): ***“Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty... That is Our argument. We gave it unto Abraham against his folk.”*** (al-An’am, 75-83); - Qutb writes that the wholesome instinct in the account of Abraham (peace be with him!) seeks its true God and Creator, and it rejects the jahiliyya

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<sup>221</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1088.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1098.

concepts. When it finds the truth, it rejoices, shines, and it submits to Him. This is a marvelous scene involving the wholesome instinct.<sup>223</sup>

Instinct can stray and become corrupt from inner and out pressures, as well as the instigations from devils among men and the jinn. God out of His mercy send messengers and prophets to save the instincts from perdition.<sup>224</sup>

In the end, Qutb underlines the question of the instinct in this blessed Surah, *“There is a suppressed instinct, and the question is: how can it be saved? Its only salvation is faith that opens the heart, illuminated the eye, and regulates the forms of instinctive consent and awakend man who thereby starts to exist in the real sense of the word...”*<sup>225</sup>

Therefore, the callers must pay more attention to the commentary and elucidation of such psychological and spiritual questions which can be accepted truths but unknown for the scholars of psychology. The callers must use and engage the instinct which is crucial point in exhortation.

Thus, da’wah requires struggles, sacrifices, patience and not haste, for most men are ready to accept the exhortation to their nature at any moment.

In general, the Qur’anic method in its defeat of wrong concepts and superstitions sets into motion an inner and hidden aspect, namely the instinct which plays a positive role in many cases.<sup>226</sup> A quick glance at

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<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, pp. 1137-1138.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1146.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 1161.

<sup>226</sup> For more information see Sayyid Qutb, **Hadha al-din**, ch. “**al-Fisam al-nekid, tiyhun wa rukam**”.

many verses of the Noble Qur'an enables us to understand this reality, for God calls to the human intellect for meditation and study of the universe and the natural phenomena in it, as well as his own instincts and emotions in order to reach at the affirmation of the Oneness of God.

## **Chapter 4 :**

### **The caller's qualities in the Qur'anic method, Critique, epilogue, and suggestions**

#### **4.1 PART I:**

##### **4.1.1 The caller's qualities in the Qur'anic method**

###### **4.1.1.1 The spiritual side**

Qutb showed great interest in this aspect in his commentary of Surah al-An'am,<sup>227</sup> both directly and through allusions.

From our study of his commentary it is clear that he rectified several misconceptions held by ambitious callers who wish to see the results and fruits of their efforts too early, despite relying on Divine succour, due to their hasty temperaments.

In this context, Qutb writes :

*“Some of the sincere callers who are in haste on the nature of this religion and this divine method of exhortation which has been formulated by the wisdom of the Omniscient and the Wise who knows the nature of people and their needs, are dreaming and acting impatiently. They are like a person who proposes to first uphold the call of the Prophet a.s. under the banner of nationalism, society, morality, in order for the*

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<sup>227</sup> See vol. II, pp. 1011-15, 1033, 1054, 1058, 1070-1, 1073, 1077-9, 1081-3, 1097, 1099, 1100, 1126-7, 1159, 1169; and vol. III, pp. 1189-91, 1202, 1220, 1227 of his commentary.



*mission of the call to be accomplished more easily. Before entering into details one must be sincere towards God and worship Him by accepting His Law and rejecting anything else in its essence... The desire must stem from the love of sincerity in worshipping God and distancing oneself from any other power beside His power.*"<sup>228</sup>

It is clear that Qutb's method stresses the spiritual element, namely the need of the caller to apply his sincerity, gradualness, and lack of haste, for this approach will affect the happiness of the believer in both worlds.

The scholar Ibn Hamid points to three principles of ethics:<sup>229</sup>

1. Good manners, which are based on (i) faith; (ii) worship; and (iii) sincerity;
2. Good character ; and :
3. Agreement between words and deeds.

He says the following about sincerity : "*It is a great secret, a specific door, and a much sought characteristic. It must be sought first by the leader, who must act and teach only for the sake of God and stay aloof from the demands of passions and creatures...*"<sup>230</sup>

In our view, the emphasis on this element is due to the fact that the cause of all good lies precisely in sincerity. It differentiates serious people from others, and it is based on this great quality that God rewards on the Day when wealth and children will not help, except for one who meets his Lord with a pure and wholesome heart. This great gate improves the soul, it purifies and educates it continuously.

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<sup>228</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1011.

<sup>229</sup> Salih ibn Abdullah ibn Hamid, *al-Qudwah, mabadi' wa namadhij*, pp. 14, 113.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

We are convinced that the quality of sincerity was ordained for all the prophets and messengers of God (peace be upon them) from Adam to the last prophet, our master Muhammad (blessings and peace be with him) who was sincere, trustworthy, and a mercy unto the worlds.<sup>231</sup>

Let us live by these Qur'anic verses and learn from the divine guidance addressed to the prophets and the messengers of God (peace be upon them), who were ordered to act based on this principle :

***“And they are ordered naught else than to serve God, keeping religion pure for Him, as men by nature upright, and to establish worship and to pay the poor-due. That is true religion.”*** (al-Bayyina, 5).

***“The revelation of the Scripture is from God, the Mighty, the Wise. Lo! We have revealed the Scripture unto thee with truth ; so worship God, making religion pure for Him”*** (al-Zumar, 1-2).

***“And lo! Elias was of those sent (to warn) when he said unto his folk: Will ye not ward off (evil)? Will ye cry unto Baal and forsake the Best of creators, God, your Lord and Lord of your forefathers ? But they denied him, so they surely will be haled forth (to the doom) save single-minded slaves of God.”*** (al-Saffat, 123-128).

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<sup>231</sup> Sincerity plays an active role in a caller's life and quest for knowledge. One of his greatest obligations is the purification of the soul from passions and pleasures. This must be conveyed to him by his teacher, imam, or parents from the beginning of his quest in the path of knowledge, scholars, and the prophets because any shortcoming in this aspect will later cause his failure and he will end up at crossroads. I have known friends and brothers during my studies that were not well-equipped with this trait, and they failed in this obligation and in the completion of their studies. In my personal life my parents played an important role, especially my mother who from the outset gave me precious advice, as well as my professors who influenced my decision to engage in da'wah in the path of God. May God recompense them all.

All callers must pay attention and be careful just like the martyred Qutb who understood best the meaning of sincerity and worked accordingly ; he was tortured but showed patience until he gave his life with dignity.

The improvement of the spiritual aspect plays a major role in the personality of the caller. It is similar to the restoration of a large palace. Those who ignore this aspect fail and achieve no success. The reforming of the caller's soul, its training for concrete tasks is a must in this pure religion and a necessity for the overall preparation of any caller.

The first generation of the noble Companions (may God be pleased with them) focused on this aspect, and they were lamps in the dark, guides to the right path, and the best of creation. In similar emphasis of this element, Prof. Hasan Adham writes :

*“Spiritual strength is the basis of the caller’s personality without which he will be empty, like a body without a soul... The spiritual strength of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) was great, elevated, and thus it became an attractive example that influenced so many people who responded to his call unhesitatingly, loved him with sincerity and faithfulness, and followed him with trust and determination, and they sacrificed everything they possessed in the way of Islam.”*<sup>232</sup>

Qutb insisted on the acquisition of these virtues and qualities by the caller because they were part of the Qur’anic method and were inspired from qualities that God taught to the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him), but which were difficult for common people to abide by.

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<sup>232</sup> Hasan Ad’ham Jarrar, *al-Da’wah il al-Islam, mafahim wa Minhaj...*, p. 201.

Let us look at Qutb's words in his commentary of the verse :

*“Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of God, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen; and I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought?”* (al-An'am, 50).

*“The ignorants had such absurd concepts on the prophethood and nature of the Prophet. People expected specific feats from those who proclaimed their prophethood and asked them to foretell them the truth or to influence the laws of the Universe, through magic and sorcerers.*

*Thus, idolaters asked the same feats from Muhammad (blessings and peace be with him), and the Qur'an repeats the characteristics of the message and nature of the Prophet. Verse 50 of Surah al-An'am says:*

***“Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of God, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen; and I say not unto you: ‘Lo! I am an angel.’ I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: ‘Are the blind man and the seer equal?’ Will ye not then take thought?”***

**The Prophet is also ordered by God to show to people:**

\* The pure self, free from presuppositions that existed in the age of ignorance on the nature of a prophet and prophethood, and to offer people this faith which is pure from lies and deceit: This was the faith of the Prophet who showed the path through God's guidance;

\* He must learn from inspiration by God who teaches him what he knows not;

\* He does not know the unseen and cannot inform his followers on it;

\* He does not possess the keys to the invisible and cannot tell his followers what shall come to pass; and:

\* He is a man and a prophet, and faith is simple, luminous, clear, and intelligible.

*Faith is the whisper of this instinct, a pillar of this life, a leader to the hereafter, and a guide to God. Faith needs no ornaments for it will be the most important thing for us. Whoever wishes to use it as merchandise has not understood its nature and will never benefit from it. That is why the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) is ordered to call people to faith in this pure manner, free from any ornament, for there was no need for it. Those who embrace it in this way do not run after wealth or this world. Rather people are differentiated only by their piety and inclination to the guidance of God, the Noblest and the Richest.*"<sup>233</sup>

Therefore, Qutb's method implies the activity of the caller within the Qur'anic parameters, as set forth by the requirements of God and the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him) for training oneself with the values of the Qur'an, which include both the spirit and manners.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1097.

<sup>234</sup> Al-Ghazzali in *Ihya Ulum al-din*, chapter "Adab al-ma'isha wa ahlaq al-nubuwwah", writes on the virtues and manners that Muslims in general and callers to Islam in particular must possess. He says: "It is related from Mu'adh ibn Jabal that the Prophet a.s. said: "God chose Islam with lofty manners and good deeds." Among these traits is: "Good company, noble deeds, leniency, generosity, giving food, greeting, visiting the sick, attending a Muslim's funeral, kindness to neighbours be they Muslim or not, not offending, responding to invitations, praying for blessings among people, magnanimity, nobleness, tolerance, forgiving, staying away from

When speaking about the improvement of the spiritual aspect we do not mean the Sufi approach, isolation from people and retreat in isolated places for invocation, asceticism, and self-purification. This is a separate topic, and this is not the place to deal with it.

The spiritual aspect implies the training of the Muslim with the love of God and the Prophet from childhood, and to love that which draws one near to them, such as the great scholars, the friends of God, etc., and to learn from them and associate with them in order to benefit from their experience. In this way one will face the challenges of life more easily and will be steadfast before hardships that will appear.

An important question that arises here is : What are the ways for the realization of this lofty and worthy goal ? The following are some of the answers that have been given by Islamic scholars :

1. Attention to obligatory and supererogatory prayers in their set times, congregational prayers, especially at dawn.<sup>235</sup>

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*forbidden pleasures, from stinginess, pride, deceit, exaggeration, immorality, hatred, greed, sin, enmity, and oppression.”* Anas (r) has said: *“The Prophet called us to every good word, he forbade us from every evil, and warned us!”* Here the *Qur’anic* verse *“God orders justice and kindness...”* comes to mind Mu’adh said: *“The Prophet (Blessings and peace be with him!) told me: “O Mu’adh! I command you to fear God, to report truthfully, to fulfil the promise, to act loyally, to avoid perfidious actions, to care for the neighbour, to have mercy on the orphan, to be soft-spoken, to be liberal in extending greeting, to perform fine acts, to limit expectation, to cleave to the faith, to study the Qur’an, to love the other life, to be anxious in regard to the reckoning, and to act humbly! I forbid you from offending the wise, belying the sincere, submitting to the sinner, and rise against a just imam, and damage the earth! Fear God in every place, and repent for every sin...”* These are the morals of the servants of God, and this is how they were called to lofty manners and good deeds” (vol. II, p. 560).

<sup>235</sup> We have witnessed many brothers who are engaged in da’wah but who do not offer their prayers on time with the excuse that they are busy with exams, with da’wah, or

2. Reading the Qur'an and different commentaries with reflection and attention to voluntary worship, such as night prayers, the fasting of those days whose fasting is a Sunnah, etc.

3. Attention to the invocation and remembrance of God, entertaining a pure heart, genuine thoughts, and distancing oneself from indecent movements during invocation, such as dancing or abnormal movements, raising one's voice, etc.<sup>236</sup> Ibn Taymiyya writes with regards to this:

***“Dancing, music, and movement of the invocers during invocation are considered a sin, pleasure, and game.”***<sup>237</sup>

4. Readiness for sacrifices : “The caller is a leader for the people and must set an example in sacrifices. He must invest much time and wealth for those in need and cover their shortcomings. He must sacrifice in benefits, he must not seek the ephemeral but what counts with God, and even sacrifice himself in the way of God, praying to God and persisting in supplications to grant him the station of the martyr. If he achieves this, he will have gained authority and influence over others.”<sup>238</sup>

Qutb understood this great truth and paid attention to its spiritual aspect. The caller must prepare himself from the outset in order not to be caught off guard from hardships in the long path ahead. In his commentary of the verse : ***“Those who deny Our revelations are deaf***

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attending different gatherings with the congregation, political meetings, and that allegedly they have not time for prayers at the moment. Since when have exams, seminars, conferences, and meetings become more important and valuable with God than offering prayers on their prescribed times?! God says, “ ... ***surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers...***”, (al-Nisa, 103). The Prophet a.s. says: ***“Among the most beloved deeds with God Almighty is offering prayers on time...”*** Such colleagues have misunderstood Islam in this aspect and must change!

<sup>236</sup> Hasan Adhami Jarar, *al-Da'wah il al-Islam, mafahim, minhaj wa wajibat*, p. 202.

<sup>237</sup> Ibn Taymiya, *Majma al-fatawa'*, vol. V, p. 83.

<sup>238</sup> *al-Da'wah il al-Islam, mafahim, minhaj wa wajibat*, p. 205.

***and dumb in darkness. Whom God will send astray, and whom He will He place on a straight path.***” (al-An’am, 39) Qutb says:

*“The path of calling to God is difficult and full of hardship, even though God’s help will no doubt come when He decrees it with His Knowledge and Wisdom. His decree is a secret no one knows..., not even the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!).*

*Difficulties arise for two reasons: rejection of exhortation, and opposition against callers. Then there is the human desire in the soul of the caller to guide people to the truth and the desire to spread guidance. This desire is no less difficult than rejection, enmity, and torture which are all parts of the difficult path...!”*<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 1081.



#### 4.1.1.2 The ethical side

This aspect is no less valuable and important than the previous one, because it complements the first; if one of them is not present, half of the foundation will be missing because the subject of the message pertains to exhortation and the caller. A caller who works with people must be patient, kind, and compassionate. Therefore we now turn to these three virtues as dealt with in Qutb's commentary of Surah al-An'am, for he pays great attention to each throughout his *Tafsir*.

##### 4.1.1.2.a Patience

This element can be common to the spiritual aspect and manners. How did Qutb understand the philosophy of patience and how did he taste its sweetness, how did he meet His lord with serenity and patience ! How did he differ in his understanding and specific method in analyzing and commenting upon the verses pertaining to exhortation ?

Qutb expounded on this important notion in his commentary of the verse that speaks about exhortation by learning from the ancestors :

***“Messengers indeed have been denied before thee, and they were patient under the denial and the persecution till Our succour reached them. There is none to alter the decisions of Allah. Already there hath reached thee (somewhat) of the tidings of the messengers (We sent before)”*** (al-An'am, 34), in which he says :

*“Exhortation to God dates from ancient times... It has travelled a long path in straight lines and with wholesome foundations. Wrongdoers used to attack the paths of exhortation and found support from their lost*

*followers. They harmed and even tortured the callers, spilling their blood with no restraint... But this path cannot be destroyed, harmed, deviated or made to fail. Torture is torture but however long it may last and however long the path may be, God's succour always comes: "Messengers indeed have been denied before thee, and they were patient under the denial and the persecution till Our succour reached them. There is none to alter the decisions of Allah. Already there hath reached thee (somewhat) of the tidings of the messengers (We sent before)." (al-An'am, 34).*

*These words are addressed to the Prophet, and they serve as reminder, encouragement, support, and reinforcement, and they also serve for clarifying the path to the callers after the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!). It determines their role in an unequivocal manner and it points to the difficulties on the way. It teaches that the course of God in exhortation is that most people reject the straight path and its followers are harmed... The callers must show forbearance in the face of rejection, as they must be patient towards challenges. This is a path which ends with victory that always comes at the right time."<sup>240</sup>*

Qutb confirms this notion in another place in his commentary :

*"Patience is part of the way of exhortation. It is a long way, replete with challenges and thorns, blood, trials, and ill-treatment. Patience must be exerted with respect to people's lusts and shortcomings, their weakness, ignorance, their misconceptions, the corruption of their innate nature, their inclination to sin, wrongdoing, the domination of passions, pride, the small number of supporters, weak helpers, the long path, the*

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<sup>240</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1077.

*instigations of the devil at difficult moments, and the bitterness of jihad... At times disbelief in goodness is small, just like hope in human instinct.*

*Patience must be exerted also with respect to self-control at the moment of victory, empowerment, and victory, when thanks are due for the blessings with modesty and moderation, by keeping the bond with God in ease and hardship and submitting fully to His decree, and being serene in his reliance on God with faith and resolution. One must be patient in all such cases and in moments of other challenges. Our words are incapable of crystallizing this reality as they cannot possibly convey the true extent of these tortures. Such hardship can be understood only by those who experience them. A believer's patience must not be lost.*"<sup>241</sup>

Qutb's method here is marked by the practical and applied aspects of exhortation as intertwined with religious texts. The sweetness of patience can be tasted only when we experience hardship and different difficulties, and when we accept them, being pleased with God's decree, and seeking reward only from Him.

I call myself first and then my brothers who are scholars and students of the Shari'ah whom God has chosen to be protectors of this faith, to study carefully these progressive words by Qutb, if they wish to understand the educational and religious horizons. Treasures of wisdom are found here which are scarce with other scholars, because of his station of the martyr.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Ahmad Faiz, *Tariq al-da'wa fi al-Dhilal*, vol. I, pp. 198-199.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Tyamiya speaks on patience in similar terms: ***"Believers are ordered to forbear in hardship and to seek forgiving and repent in sins. God Almighty says: "Then have patience. Lo! the promise of God is true. And ask forgiveness of thy sin, and hymn the praise of thy Lord at fall of night and in the early hours."*** (Ghafir, 55) ***"No calamity befalls save by God's leave. And whosoever believeth in God, He***

The phenomenon of the execution and elimination of scholars and callers has existed and shall continue to exist until the end of this life. Islamophobia still reigns in the hearts of political leaders of both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The Arab spring has increased their fear from Islamists even more, and we believe this is unjustified. Now it is high time for radical changes of different structures in these countries, for battling academic, religious, economical, political, and other corruptions. Qur'anic and prophetic lessons teach people to oppose any kind of corruption. Their vision is that of the rule of justice on earth through the application of the Shari'ah, free from any corruption and imperfection. It is therefore illogical and unfounded to fear the coming to power of moderated, non-extremist Islamic parties who would rule the country based on religious principles. This was the focus of all of Qutb's books, especially his *Tafsir*. This effort cost him dearly, as in showing his sincerity, forbearance, and unswerving conviction he was martyred by execution. God Almighty will certainly gather Qutb and his oppressive executioners on the Day of Judgment before His absolute justice in order to recompense both parties, one of which will go to the Fire and the other to the Garden.

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*guides his heart. And God is Knower of all things.” (al-Taghabun, 11) Ibn Mas’udi says: “...This is the person who, when struck by a calamity, knows that it is from God and therefore accepts it and resigns.” In the scholars’ view, patience is an obligation, especially with regards to God’s decreet. It is said that submitting to God’s decree is obligatory or preferable, and this is correct. A Muslim must thank God for the trial, because it is a gift from Him to forgive his sins, and elevate him with piety, sincerity, reliance only on God.” al-Furqan bayna awliya’ al-shaytan wa awliya’ al-rahman, ed. Abu Abbas ibn Abd al-Halim Harrani, n.p, n.d., p. 107.*

#### 4.1.1.2.b Kindness and compassion

This important quality of the caller is mentioned in the commentary of the Surah al-An'am, as well as in a particular verse of Surah Al-i Imran, in which Qutb gives a practical example from the biography of the Prophet a.s. and from his decisions in battles, such as those of Badr and Uhud.

In the commentary to the verse : ***“It was by the mercy of God that thou wast lenient with them, for if thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in God. Lo! God loveth those who put their trust (in Him).”*** (Al-i Imran, 159) - Sayyid Qutb says:

*“Divine compassion was evident in the morals of the Prophet a.s. and in his kind, merciful, lenient, and serene nature which had been made to gain hearts and souls. This mercy from God made him compassionate and lenient with them. Had he been stern and fierce of heart he could not have gained their hearts, and they would have dispersed. Rather they need kindly behaviour, attention, tolerance, and love which draws them to religion and for manners which do not insist in distancing them from their ignorance, weakness and shortcomings at once...”*

*They need a heart which betows kindness and expects nothing in return, a heart that lives with their problems and never grows tired of them; they need someone who is polite and careful, warm, tolerant, and loving in their midst. Such was the heart of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) and this was his life with people.*

*He never got bitter for no reason nor felt unease from human weakness; he never possessed anything of this world but gave everything away with great tolerance. He was kind, polite, sensitive, and noble. Whoever accompanied or even saw him, their heart would be filled with love for him due to his noble soul.*

*This was a mercy from God for him and his ummah. Through him, God reminded people about the system of life this ummah must follow.*<sup>243</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that in his method Qutb concentrated on the morals of the Prophet a.s. which was taught to him by God, because his morals were the same as the Noble Qur'an.

Callers must be guided by the words, deeds, and the station of the Prophet a.s. Islam is a religion of work and the putting into practice of God's orders and avoiding what He has prohibited. It is not just a pure idea which suffices to be discussed in dialogues and debates, but it is a practical religion ordained by God to build an ideal Islamic society. Hence, the behaviour, deeds, and actions of the callers must accord with God's laws in order not to have contradiction between what is preached and what is done: ***“Enjoin ye righteousness upon mankind while ye yourselves forget (to practise it)? And ye are readers of the Scripture! Have ye then no sense?”*** (al-Baqarah, 44).

When A'isha (may God be pleased with her) was asked about the morals of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!), she replied:

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<sup>243</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. I, p. 501.

***“His morals was the Qur’an.”*** The Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) was a living embodiment of what he preached.<sup>244</sup>

The manners, morals and actions of the caller are more important than his knowledge or erudition, even if he is an expert in different religious or social sciences. We have seen many callers and scholars who have extensive erudition, mesmerizing eloquence which moves hearts but who have no scruples or decency, as they do not act in accordance with the principles of the Shari‘ah. A quick glance at their everyday behaviour, morals, and deeds and living with them for some time would reveal that unfortunately they are distant from the divine and prophetic guidance. Such persons need to improve their souls and hearts, and then try to reform others

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<sup>244</sup> Hasan Adham Jarrah, *al-Da’wa ilal-Islam, mafahim wa minhaj wa wajibat*, pp. 203-204. Salih ibn Abdullah Humayd says: **“The example for the first Muslims, the possessor of the perfect morals and of the best method was our Prophet Muhammad a.s. God says: “Verily in the messenger of God ye have a good example for him who looketh unto God and the Last Day, and remembereth God much.” (Ahzab, 21) Among the clear meanings of this verse is that God made the Prophet a general example, and He mentions his specific traits, the morals and noble deeds, as confirmation that he must be followed in words and deeds in general. He guides by honouring the prohibitions through his deeds, actions, patience, bravery, steadfastness, manners, and other forms of his morals.”; *al-Qudwah, mabadi wa namadhij*, pp. 7-8.**

#### 4.1.1.2.c Tolerance<sup>245</sup> and magnanimity

Qutb considers this element to be part of patience, and he writes :

*“Patience is of many kinds and has different forms : in works, struggle, exhortation, and exertion, in good and in hardship. Verily, very few people are patient when prosperous and avoid kufr and deviation. There is also patience towards foolishness and ignorance of the heart.”*<sup>246</sup>

In *Ma’alim fi al-tariq* Qutb gives the definition of this tolerance and the manner of its application :

*“We must first confirm and then assess. We must understand the truth about jahiliyya based on the illuminating horizons of the Islamic life we aspire for. This shall not take place if we take a few steps to or from it, ut only if we engage in true and sincere dialogue for elevating faith.”*

<sup>247</sup>

This cooperation with those who are called to Islam and our tolerance towards them constitute the appropriate method. Those who exhort to Islam, the clerics, the educators of the new generations must equip themselves well with certain spiritual and ethical traits and be generous towards those who are called. They must be well trained spiritually and psychologically to be able to exhort others successfully. Certainly knowledge of the history of the prophets in general and of Muhammad (a.s.) in particular, as well as of his Companions and their

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<sup>245</sup> By “*tolerance*” and “*magnanimity*” we mean that the caller must have extensive knowledge and skills in order to understand the mentality of those he calls to Islam, and to accomplish his goals without any compromise against religion and its principles. See *Dhilal*, vol. II, pp. 1073-1074.

<sup>246</sup> Ahmad Faiz, *Tariq al-da’wah fi al-dhilal*, vol. I, p. 201.

<sup>247</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma’alim fi al-tariq*, p. 158.



followers such as Imam Abu Hanifa, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, of great scholars such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Imam Malik, Ibn Taymiya, Ibn Badi, Shaikh Said al-Hawwa, Imam Muhammad al-Ghazzali, Yousufal-Qardawi, Hasan al-Banna, Ebu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb, the former president of Bosnia Alija Izetbegović, Hafidh Ali Korça, Hafidh Ibrahim Dalliu, Hafidh Sabri Koçi, Hafidh Jakup Myqeziu, Shaikh Salman al-Awdah and many scholars and clerics from Kosova, Albania, Macedonia, the Arab world, Turkey, etc, encourages us for patience and forbearance in the path of exhortation.

#### **4.1.1.2.d Obeying the religious injunctions and prohibitions**

This is another important questions because people look at callers as if they were angels walking on earth who dare not commit sins against His injunctions and who only do as they are told. In the eyes of some, even small sins are considered great. In our view, this is a very old phenomenon in Islamic history. We tend to identify persons with their actions in all aspects.

Callers to God's path must keep away from immorality and indecent deeds, be they visible or invisible, especially before their listeners so that they do not become a cause for people to reject their words. If they err in something inadvertently they must hurry to repentance openly and in secret. Thus, they must first improve themselves for the sake of God and to enable themselves to apply the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad a.s.

Qutb confirms this meaning in his book *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-Islam* while explaining the following qur'anic verse "*Thus We have*

*appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you.”* (al-Baqara, 143).

*“And who is more unjust than he who hides a testimony which he has received from God? God is not unaware of what ye do.”* (al-Baqara, 140).

Qutb further writes:

*“He must apply this testimony to himself first by building it in his personal life and in every detail of his activities in accordance with the concept on which his faith is based. He is required to testify to the truth of this religion in every action of his life with practical evidence, and not just words and feelings. The practical evidence confirms faith and materializes it in the real world and among people.”*<sup>248</sup>

The verse in question, although not a part of Surah al-An’am, is in keeping with our method announced at the beginning of this study, which is concerned with the commentary of verses pertaining to exhortation, in order to crystallize Qutb’s thought and ideas on the subject more fully.

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<sup>248</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa’is al-tasawwur al-Islam*, pp. 184-185.

### 4.1.1.3 The intellectual side

#### 4.1.1.3.a Callers must understand properly what they exhort to

There is a close connection between this aspect and the qualities of callers mentioned earlier, intellectual or behaviour wise. Here we have in mind the training of the callers in different disciplines for gaining a better understanding of Islam and knowing their task accordingly: **“Say: This is my Way: I call on God with sure knowledge. I and whosoever follows me - Glory be to God! - and I am not of the idolaters.”** (Yusuf, 108).<sup>249</sup>

In his commentary to this verse, Qutb expands on the scientific requirements that each caller must fulfill :

**“Say: This is my Way”- is a whole with no shortcomings, doubt, or scepticism. “I call on God with sure knowledge. I and whosoever follows me.” That is, we are under the guidance and light of God, we know our way, and tread it with awareness, watchfulness, and vigilance; we do not fail, we are not emotional and do not rely on surmise. This is a clear and luminous certitude. We do not attribute to God what does not befit to His divinity and keep aloof from those who ascribe partners unto Him. “And I am not of the idolaters”- be it openly or secretly! This is my way, whoever wishes may follow it. And**

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<sup>249</sup> On the commentary of this verse we refer to some of the classical commentators: al-Qurtubi, vol. IX, p. 374, al-Razi, vol. IX, p. 229, al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-manthur*, vol. IV, p. 75, Izz al-Din Abd al-Salam, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, vol. II, p. 142 etc, have stated that this verse means: “Say, O Muhammad, this is my path, my method, and my call; I call to God with complete certitude on this religion, with truth, and proofs.”

***those who do not wish to enter it will not prevent me from treading the right path.***

*Callers to God must make this distinction and they must proclaim that we are a single ummah. We distance ourselves from those who do not believe in this principle, who do not walk on their path, and who do not respect their leadership. The two cannot mix! It is not permissible for the followers of this religion to exhort to Islam while living themselves in a jahiliyya society. They must demonstrate that they differ from jahiliyyah with respect to a society which has a specific belief and follows Islamic leadership. They must differ from both jahiliyya society and their leaders.*

*Based on fundamental elements and essential characteristics, the jahiliyya of the twentieth century does not differ much from the jahiliyya which the Islamic call faced in its origin. Are not the followers of atheistic doctrines those who do not hesitate to declare their address, their challenge and their thought? The followers of Islamic da'wah must likewise declare their specific address, their way, and their path which differs completely from that of the jahiliyya.*"<sup>250</sup>

In order to understand Qutb's insistence on the necessity of giving the Qur'an a central role in guiding the callers with a view to their distancing from the jahiliyya society, we need to delve into some additional traits of his method. The inspiration of his exhortation method from the Noble Qur'an which is evident in his commentary cannot be experienced by common scholars but only by those who have immersed themselves deeply in knowledge in the company of books and scholars until meeting with God.

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<sup>250</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. V, pp. 1034-2035.

We consider Sayyid Qutb as one of these profound scholars, for he studied Shari‘ite sciences ever since he began his literary criticism. We are convinced that he offered to the ummah much more than he offered to us.

In inferring advice and instructions from the Qur’an, he writes:

*“The intellect when aided by revelation and divine guidance can see, and when it distances itself from them it turns blind. As for the blind and he who can see, we refer to the verse: “I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought?” (al-An’am, 50) The appearance of its signs points to the manner of the Qur’anic account. Reflection is a requirement, and persisting in it is a Qur’anic method.*

*Reflection must be within the framework of revelation, for thus it will be in the path of light. If undisciplined it will wander in blind darkness with no guide and instruction, and without an illuminating book. When the human intellect moves within the confines of revelation,<sup>251</sup> it*

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<sup>251</sup> The agreement between intellect and revelation has been discussed from early on in the Islamic tradition and even in the framework of the “Islamization of knowledge” or “Islamization of sciences”. We have written a paper on this subject, called “**Takamul al-aql wa al-wahy wa al-khawas fi al-islamiyya al-ma’rifah**”. In summing we can say that Islam has paved several ways for gaining knowledge, as in the succinct definition by Shaykh Abd al-Rhman Habannaka al-Maydan: “**Knowledge is an act in which visible and invisible senses, instruments and tools are engaged and which uses the senses and innate and acquired principles of intelligence as well as knowledge gained earlier from others who have knowledge. This includes what God has revealed to the messengers from His knowledge in order for them to attain to truths which they will pass to the common people.**” (*Dawabit al-ma’rifeti wa usul al-istidlal wa al-munadhara*, pp. 126-7, Dar al-Qalam, Damascus, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1993. This can be seen in the fact that Islam divides reality into the visible and the invisible, each of which can be known in their particular manners. It is a mistake to mix between the

*does not take a narrow path but a wide one, because it treads the way of all existence, both visible and invisible, in spirit and in form, in all of life's domains. Revelation protects the intellect from straying, misperception, reliance on whims and lust, and it makes it more active. This important instrument was given to man by God in order to preserve revelation and Divine guidance. Thus it does not get lost or astray.*"<sup>252</sup>

Qutb's focus on revelation shows that Muslims must deduce their knowledge and understanding from the Noble Qur'an and the pure Sunnah of the Prophet. We cannot distance ourselves from these two sources in our exhortation to God, for they contain the truth and the light we need for those whom we invite and call to guidance. It is evident that Qutb pays great attention to the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him!) and to the understanding of enjoining right and forbidding evil.

It seems to us that the main problem of the majority of callers lies in the fact that the cultural aspect of their knowledge of the revealed sciences (Qur'anic disciplines, the Sunnah, fiqh, usul, Arabic, and other religious sciences in general) is superficial and shallow, despite their degrees and diplomas!

Regarding this problem, Qutb uses expressions such as: "**Callers must understand this aspect well,**" or "**Callers to God are obligated not**

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means of knowing these two worlds. See *al-Ru'ya al-islamiyya li ma sadr al-ma'rifah*; Riyad Salih Janzarlii, Dar al-Bejair al-islamiya, 1994; *Islamiya al-ma'rifah, al-mabadi'u el-Ammetu*; IIT, 1986; *al-Islam wa al-aql*, Muhammad Jawad Mughniya, Dar al-Jawad, Beirut, 1984; *al-Ta'arut wa al-tarjih wa atharuhum fi al-fiqh al-islami*, Muhammad Ibrahim Hafnawi, Dar al-Wafa'i, Mansura, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1987; *Hawla tashkil al-aql al-muslimi*, Imad al-Din Khalil; *Azma al-aql al-muslimi*, Abd al-Hamid Ebu Sulayman, Dar al-alemiyya li al-kitab al-islami, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Riyad, 1992, etc.

<sup>252</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 1099.

*to haste...*” or “*Callers to God must know that...*” to underline the idea that callers must possess a sound knowledge of Islam and its nature, in order to transmit it properly to people, without changes or misinterpretations.

This part is related to the important notion of enjoining right and forbidding evil, which has been dealt with by Imam al-Ghazzali in a special chapter of his *Ihya’ ‘ulum al-din*, in which he says:

*“Know that the principles of al-hisbah which implies the command for enjoining good and forbidding evil are four: al-muhtasib (the enjoiner) al-muhtasab alayhi (the one enjoined), al-muhtasab fihi (the principle to which the call is made), and nafs al-ihtisab (the act of enjoining good and forbidding evil). There are conditions for each of these principles :*

**- First principle, “al-Muhtasib”:**

Its conditions are: “Being a Muslim, mature, and capable, therefore the mad, the underaged, the unbeliever, and the incapacitated are excluded. But concrete persons such as a sinner, a slave, and a woman are included even if they are not authorized...”<sup>253</sup> These conditions are very important.

In the section on the manners of the *muhtasib* Imam Ghazzali writes: “We say that the manners of *muhtasib* are derived from three of his qualities: knowledge, piety, and good behaviour.”

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<sup>253</sup> al-Ghazzali, *Ihya Ulum al-din*, ed. Abu Hafs ibn Imran, Cairo: Darul-Hadith, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., vol. II, p. 487.

*Knowledge* pertains to his mastery of the sciences of places, limits, implications, and prohibitions of the Shari‘ah.

*Piety* protects one from doing the opposite of what one’s knowledge dictates, for everyone acts in accordance with what they know...

*Good behaviour* means kindness and leniency towards the others.

Knowledge and piety are insufficient though. In cases of bitterness and in absence of good behaviour, they do not suffice for self-control. Piety is valid only when one has a good behaviour and strength to control one’s passions. These three qualities enable *hasbah* to accompany good deeds and stay aloof from misdeeds. In their absence evil cannot be avoided, and even hisbah itself can be a misdeed if it exceeds the boundaries of the Shari‘ah.

Regarding such traits, the Prophet a.s. has said: ***“One cannot enjoin right and forbid evil unless one knows what one enjoins and forbids.”***<sup>254</sup>

This shows that he does not have to be a *faqih*, it is sufficient for him to know that to which he calls and that which he forbids.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> The editor says: ***“I did not find it in this form!”*** Bayhaqi relates it in his *Shu‘ab* from Amr ibn Shu‘ayb, from his father, from his father: ***“Whoever enjoins righteousnss let him be righteous himself!”***

<sup>255</sup> al-Ghazzali, *Ihya Ulum al-din*, vol. II, pp. 519-520.



#### 4.1.1.3.b Callers must know the culture and the times in which he lives

This means that he must also know modern sciences in order to be able to analyze social problems and clarify with wisdom the commandments of God and of the Prophet a.s. The scholars define this obligation as *“the understanding of reality”* and they demand the callers, muftis, and judges to get acquainted with it in order to achieve success in their exhortation, decision making, and judging. A starting point in this issue is the hadith related by Imam Ahmed in his *Musnad*:

“When the Prophet (Blessings and peace be with him!) sent Mu’adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he said: *“You are going to a nation from the people of the Scripture, so let the first thing to which you invite them be the Oneness of God. If they learn that, tell them that God has enjoined on them five prayers in one day and one night. And if they pray, tell them that God has enjoined on them Zakat of their properties and it is to be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor. And if they agree to that, then take from them zakat but avoid the best property of the people!”*<sup>256</sup>

Based on this hadith, the understanding of the reality in which a caller lives and the knowledge of the environment in which he works must be priorities in da’wah after his training and acquisition of Islamic morals. We are firmly convinced that it is a mistake to engage callers from the Islamic world to Western countries in direct da’wah-related activities

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<sup>256</sup> Ahmad, *Musnad*, no. 1968 from Abdullah ibn Safi; Bukhari, *“Kitab al-zakah”*, no. 1308, 1365, 1401; al-Madhalim, 226, al-Maghazi, 4000, al-Tawhid 6824; Muslim, *“Kitab al-iman”* 27; Tirmidhi, *“Sunan”*, Kitab al-Zakah, 567. Nesa’i, *“Sunan”*, Kitab al-Zakah, no. 2392; Abu Dawud, *“Kitab al-zakah”*, 1251; Ibn Maja, *“Kitab al-zakah”* 1773; and Darimi, no. 1563.

until they have reached full preparation in this aspect. Islamic religious institutions in these lands should organize seminars and training courses with the specifics of the countries in question. I say this based on the fact that countless problems have been reported in the work of many young colleagues, clerics, and even young callers in the Balkans who have caused a great deal of divisions among the congregation and in the media, as a result of their lack of sufficient experience and knowledge of this scientific and religious reality. Islam is blamed by its enemies for the behaviour of these individuals.

What are the elements needed for the completion of this aspect of the caller, which will enable him to understand the reality in which he lives?

There are several elements involved here and all of them have been derived from Qutb's precious method in his commentary of verses pertaining to exhortation.

#### **4.1.1.3.c Callers must complete training in religious (Shari'ah) disciplines**

The caller must have graduated from an Islamic university. But there is no harm if even those who have not specialized in Islamic sciences engage in da'wah, if they meet the conditions that grant them credibility to exhort.

a) The candidate must have knowledge of some philosophical and intellectual issues of the time, such as: metaphysics, existentialism, evolutionism, the existence of God, etc. He must also know the positive systems of the time, such as secularism, democracy, socialism, etc.

b). Knowledge of the elites and the hierarchy of people around him, because exhortation cannot be successful if the caller looks at everyone in the same way and addresses them in the same language...<sup>257</sup>

c). Knowledge of a language that is used extensively in the world today, such as French, Italian, German, and especially English. We cannot see how can a caller be successful in the West without the knowledge of one of these languages, otherwise the value of his exhortation will be greatly diminished as well as the importance of his sermon.

We do not agree with the activity and approach of some humanitarian religious institutions from the Arab world and elsewhere because the callers they send to different Western or Asia countries speak only Arabic. I suggest that they should send only callers who know the language of the country they are going to, or who study it for 6-12 months prior to his travel there.

Fortunately, this suggestion derives from the divine method of sending prophets and messengers who speak the language of their people... In this context, God Almighty says:

***“And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them”*** (Ibrahim, 4).

Precisely due to this negligence many efforts of charitable religious institutions which believe that they are acting rightly have failed. God does not send a prophet or a messenger to people whose language he does not know. Let us pay attention to this important principle of da’wah and let us not rely on good intentions or superficial plans. We did not need to present this important introduction before turning to these truths by

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<sup>257</sup> Muhammad ibn Sayyid al-Habib, *al-Da’wah illa ‘Llah fi surah Ibrahim al-Khalil*, chapter on the da’wah of Prophet Noah a.s., pp. 291-295.

Qutb for he was the most concrete example of the idea that the aller must know the culture of the times in which he lives and works.

Qutb had an extensive knowledge on the culture<sup>258</sup> of the time in which he lived. His period was a time of conflict between both atheistic and believing writers, poets, and novelists. He also knew well the positive laws and the communist, socialist, and democratic doctrines, and insisted on Islam's conflict with such doctrines as well as other systems.

Below we illustrate Qutb's ideas on the topic from his commentary in order to underline the necessity of acquainting the callers with these systems and to present his method of understanding exhortation in its educational aspect. Qutb writes :

*“This leads us to a wider aspect of this Qur’anic injunction. It is not limited to a particular time, place, or proposal. Man’s whims are presented in other proposals. Callers to the religion of God must not fear people’s whims. The desire to respond to provocations leads many callers today to try to interpret Islamic faith in terms of a “doctrinal theory” on paper, just like the case of earthly “small doctrinal theories” which people create at a given time and which later turn into contradictory ideas, thought, and hypothesis.*

*Because of this we find some callers who try to explain the Islamic system through other systems or laws which are close to the jahilliya, and have no relation to original Islam whatsoever. The followers of this jahiliyya say: “Islam is faith and it has nothing to do with the general and realistic system of life!” They are immersed even deeper into their ignorance by ignoring God’s law. All of these are evil efforts and a*

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<sup>258</sup> For more details on Qutb's source of Arabic and Western culture, see “**Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy**”, pp. 161ff.

*Muslim does not need to rely on the ever-changing human opinions that are formed in the name of progress in the means of exhortation to God!*

*One of the most evil efforts is that which tries to give Islam new forms, hence they name it with all kinds of names circulating among people at a given period, such as ‘socialism’, ‘democracy’, etc. They think they are serving Islam with this so called progress. Socialism is a social, political and economical system created by man, and it can be right or wrong. Democracy is also a man-made system of life and rule, and therefore it too can be right or wrong. Islam is a lifestyle which contains the concepts of faith, and social, economical, and juridical systems... It was formulated by God Almighty and contains no shortcomings. The Arab idolaters from the period of ignorance prayed to god through some of His creatures which they considered as bridges bringing them near to God: “We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah.” (al-Zumar, 3). This is idolatry (shirk)! How else can one describe the person who prays to God through His servants or through another man-made doctrine or method? What utter foolishness!*

*Islam is Islam, socialism is socialism, and democracy is democracy! Islam is God’s method and it bears only the address and qualities given to it by God. Socialism and democracy are human methods and experiments. If we choose them, let us choose them in the way they are. The callers to God’s religion must not fall in the trap of different human whims and claim that in this way they are serving God’s religion!*

*I address those with a weak faith who do not glorify God as it befits Him: Do you present Islam to people in the name of socialism/democracy just because these doctrines are contemporary? During a certain period capitalism was the absolute system, and its doctrine was embraced widely*

*during the period of national unity of separated states such as Germany and Italy at the time of Bismarck and Mazzini. Who knows what they will say about Islam tomorrow and which social and earthly system will represent it? Will they present it in the way people like it?! Qur'anic guidance is clear about this. It asks the caller to elevate his faith and not to become victim of human proposals to beautify this religion with another name. God is pure and independent from His creation. This does not correspond to religious worship and to those who do not concentrate only in this worship. Islam does not need such people in its worship, just like God is not in need of any worshiper or any sinner.*"<sup>259</sup>

This wonderful analysis constitutes a study, comparison, and result of his erudition in other disciplines and sciences, as can be seen in many places in his commentary of the verses pertaining to exhortation.

Let us turn again to what Qutb says about his stay in the United States during the 1950's for post-graduate studies, namely about the deviation of the morals, values, and the manner in which he inferred divine laws from the reality of nations' punishment. Had he not understood this reality from an Islamic perspective, he would not have been able to present the greatness of the Qur'anic method to people.

In his commentary of verse **44** of Surah **al-An'am** Qutb says:

*"During my stay in the U.S.A., I witnessed with my own eyes God's words: "Then, when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We opened unto them the gates of all things..." (al-An'am, 44). This scene points to the enormous prosperity and blessings which can be seen only there. I witnessed the people's pride about this wealth and their feelings*

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<sup>259</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, pp. 1083-1084.

*that it was meant only for the white man. Their cooperation with the coloured people was very low and harsh.*

*I witnessed this scene and kept thinking about the verse that refers to those who are in slumber: "...till, even as they were rejoicing in that which they were given, We seized them unawares, and lo! they were dumbfounded. So of the people who did wrong the last remnant was cut off. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!" (al-An'am, 44-45)*

*If, after sending the Prophet a.s., God Almighty has lifted the punishment by cutting off, there are of course other penalties, and people especially those to whom the doors of blessings have been open, taste many punishments, in spite of their prosperity...*

*Psychological affliction, spiritual suffering, sexual deviation, and the destruction of morals are phenomena experienced by such nations, and this overshadows their prosperity, entertainment and pleasure. Their life is filled with misery, boredom, and suffering. Moreover, deviation of the political ethics is also present there, and state secrets are sold and the people betrayed for the sake of pleasure and deviations... No doubt these things lead to negative results !*

*This is the start of the way. As the Prophet a.s. said: "When you see that God has given (a sinner) what he desires, (know that) it is temporary," and then he read the verse: "**Then, when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We opened unto them the gates of all things till, even as they were rejoicing in that which they were given, We seized them unawares, and lo! they were dumbfounded.**" (al-An'am, 44).*

*Moreover, one must stress that it is the wont of God in destroying evil to spread the truth in a people, and then God strikes evil with the truth and destroys it. The followers of the truth are not lazy and they do not expect God's law to be accomplished without effort and engagement, otherwise they would have not represented the truth or deserve it. The truth stays with a people who strive for the rule of God's authority on earth and who back off the others that call for the usurpation of the divine prerogative.*" <sup>260</sup>

We are convinced that materialism and communism had their peak during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>261</sup> International universities in general and those of the Easter block in particular taught the principles of Marxism and Freudism, as well as other destructive and deviated principles which contradict Islamic faith and principles. Unfortunately, this method began to spread among Muslims as well, and in several Arab countries, with the reform in the teaching methods and curricula. Qutb opposed this bitter and destructive trend, and uncovered its decadence. He defended the sanctity of Islam with his pen and with his blood.

Furthermore, with regards to the caller's erudition on the times in which he lives,<sup>262</sup> as related to the method of exhortation, Qutb writes:

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<sup>260</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. II, p.1091-1092.

<sup>261</sup> On the political situation in Egypt at the time, see Khalidi's *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, pp.18-30.

<sup>262</sup> The contemporary scholar Yusuf Qardawi has written a very important book entitled *Thakafah al-da'iah*. Also, the late Egyptian scholar Muhammad al-Ghazzali has written important books on the callers to God, such as, *al-Sunnah al-nabawiyya bayna ahl al-fiqh wa al-hadith, Khuluq al-muslimi, al-Haqq al-murru'*; *Ma'Allah; Dirasat fi al-da'wah wa al-du'at*, etc. Readers should refer to these books because of their high level of scholarship as well as their long experience in *da'wah*.



*“Belief in the unseen differentiates man from the animal world. However, the materialist society of today, like the materialist society of all times, wishes to turn man into an animal which believes only in what it sees, and this is called by them progress. Nay, this is regress from which God has protected the believers by describing them as “Those who believe in the unseen.”*

*Thos who speak of “metaphysics” and “scientism” also speak of “historical determinism”. Modern science says “there are hypotheses” but no “theses”. Marx accepted determinism but where are his predictions ? He predicted the establishing of communism in England due to the high industrial development and the culmination of capitalism on the one hand, and the poverty of workers on the other. Yet, communism spread among the least industrially developed countries : in Russia, China, etc., never in the developed countries. Marx and Lenin predicted a war between the capitalistic and the communist world, but their successor Khrushchev raises the banner of “peaceful coexistence”. I do not wish to speak about such predicted “determinism”, for it does not deserve any serious attention.*

*There is a truth which is called the truth of the invisible, and everything else is considered a hypothesis. There is also determinism in the events that occur according to God’s decree and destiny. God’s decree is a secret known only to Him. Yet, there are laws in the Universe which man can discover and use them as God’s vicegerent on earth, leaving the door of God’s decree open. God’s secrets are unknown and this is the pillar of all things: “Lo! this Qur'an guideth unto that which is straightest.”<sup>263</sup>*

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<sup>263</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur’an*, vol. II, pp. 1120-1121.

Here we reach the end of our intellectual and exhortive expedition with Qutb after the study of his commentary during which we saw how he related exegesis of the verses pertaining to exhortation with his criticism of positive theories and systems of his time. Through his scientific method of relating the Qur’anic verses with everyday situations, he offered lessons on Islamic exhortation. He is perfectly right in saying that: *“Life under the shade of the Qur’an is a blessing, known only by those who experience it... It prolongs life, and it blesses and purifies it.”*<sup>264</sup>

## **4.2 PART II :**

### **Critique, epilogue, and suggestions**

#### **4.2.1 Views on Sayyid Qutb’s method**

After this journey through the commentary of the verses pertaining to exhortation, and after drawing many lessons from Qutb’s extensive and bitter experience with respect to the *da’wah*, its philosophy and strategy, we turn to our own conclusions on his method of understanding those verses.

This in no way implies the reducing of the value and merits of this commentator. The opposite is true, for such reviews elevate his status and increase the love, respect and reverence towards him.

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<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, pp. 1-2.

These views might be unknown for some and unexpected for others, but for us it is a relative question which can occur to anyone :

**Such views can be divided into two groups :**

**A). Specific views.** I have reached these views through study and investigation of Qutb's method throughout the writing of this dissertation ;

**B). General views.** These are views by other scholars and researchers who have studied Qutb's thought, method, and life.

#### **4.2.1.1 Specific views**

**1.** The repetition of many creedal and intellectual issues, such as: the Islamic conception and its characteristics, authority, Divine attributes, the question of association and distancing, human laws, the Meccan verses, the long period of training the believers of the first generation, etc. The author could have dealt with these issues once and extensively in his commentary. When he is forced by the context to repeat what has been stated earlier, he could have led the reader to the respective pages to avoid repetition.

**2.** It was difficult for me to collect in one place all passages pertaining to Qutb's method in dealing with verses on exhortation, because he did not systematize his method nor did he use a single approach throughout the commentary of the specific and general verses. The author speaks in a dispersed manner in his works on rational issues related to this aspect.

**3.** As for the term "*jahiliyyah*" and "*jahilite society*" with which Qutb qualifies contemporary societies and for which he has been accused

of labelling them with disbelief, our study of his works led us to the conclusion that it has a specific and general meaning.

#### **4.2.1.1.a                    The general meaning**

The general meaning in which Qutb uses this term refers to all modern positive, man-made, social, political, and economical systems which are not based on the constitution of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him). People act and judge according to such systems even in some Arab countries whose departments of justice and information are based on their Western or Eastern counterparts that rely on socialist, and liberal democratic laws derived from Roman law.

In Qutb's views such Muslims are under the pressure and domination of non-Islamic, jahiliyya laws, which are applied widely today. This is the general meaning in which we agree with Qutb. He did not accuse Islamic societies or Muslims with kufr, but he has clarified their situation under jahiliyya systems and laws which do not apply God's Shari'ah at all.

#### **4.2.1.1.b                    The specific meaning**

This meaning is used extensively throughout his works. We believe it refers to jahiliyya societies with all their principles, values, and meanings, as in the case of the pre-Islamic society. Indeed they are unbelievers and non-Muslims, even though their present day followers bear Muslim names.

I distance myself completely from this meaning and I do not believe Qutb subscribed to it. I cannot imagine him accusing all Muslims

and their societies with kufr. Had he supported this meaning, it would no doubt constitute a grave shortcoming in his thought.

I think Qutb could have not possibly accused all people with kufr and with the original jahiliyyah, because the rules of kufr and belief are very clearly defined by him. In his commentary he testifies to the opposite when dealing with the exhortation of unbelievers to Islam.

The opinions we expressed here in no way diminish the authority of the commentator in his *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*. Quite the opposite, he will continue to be a leader of contemporary Islamic thought and da'wah.

I pray to God to reward his efforts and sacrifice for the Islamic ummah by placing him in His gardens with the prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs, and the righteous ! Amen!

#### **4.2.1.2 General views**

General views on Qutb and his works differ according to individuals and academic backgrounds. The jurists criticize him from the aspect of fiqh due to some related opinion in his commentary. The traditionists criticize him due to some hadith he has used in his Dhilal, etc. Perhaps his intention has been a noble one and people have understood something else, and this is what is evident in such disputes.

The majority of his critics belonged to this domain. The reason why they slipped into prejudice and negative opinion about Qutb lies perhaps in the fact that they did not read all of his works from cover to cover.

Our pure religion teaches us to verify and bring proofs for every claim. If we read a work by a scholar only superficially or partially we will be doing a great injustice regardless of the position of the reader.

The sincere scholars consider this an undeniable fact because we cannot judge on something without weighing all the related arguments. The same must be true for persons and their ideas. A reader is obligated to follow the ideas in a historical continuation with precision and then judge on them.

Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi has studied Qutb's life and works with precision and objectivity, and he is considered an authority in the field. He wrote many works and literary and critical monographs on Qutb's thought, such as *Sayyid Qutb, al-shahid al-hayy*, *Sayyid Qutb min al-miladi illa al-istis'had*, *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an fi al-mizan*, etc. It is also worth mentioning Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat, the author of *Sayyid Qutb, Khulasat hayatih, manhaj fi al-haraka wa al-naqd al-muwajjah ilayh*. Also, the adviser Salim al-Bahansawi has authored excellent works in which he defends Qutb with scientific and methodological arguments, such as: *Adwa' ala ma'alim fi al-tariq, al-Hukm wa qadiyya takfir al-muslim*, etc. Recently a number of important monographs have been published regarding Qutb's thought and contribution, such as *Rewa'i al-Dhilal* by Rami Umar Ba Atiyeh (Riyad, 2012); *Sayyid Qutb ba'de 43 A'men min Istishhadih*, group of authors, (Aman: 2010); and *Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-islamiya fi fikr al-imam Sayyid Qutb*, (Khartoum, 2009).

Salim al-Bahansawi underlines the scientific and legal principles of understanding others' speech, in his book *Adwa' ala ma'alim fi al-tariq*, because many people misinterpret Qutb's words and accuse him wrongly. His accusers do not rely on scientific and juridically sound methods, and al-Bahansawi suggests certain principles which must be respected and followed in order to properly understand other's opinions.

**4.2.1.2.a The principles pointed out by the adviser Salim al-Bahansawi can be summarized in the following points:**

**1. Not accusing Muslims with kufr for doubtful issues:**

In the presence of a plurality of opinions, we cannot abide what causes dissension and leave others unconsidered, for in this manner we shall be far removed from attaining the true ruling according to the Shari‘ah.<sup>265</sup>

If someone chooses an opinion which accords with the direction of a particular society or individual and then he accuses another person for not agreeing with him, this will not be an objective gesture, but rather falls into the category of doubtful issues which God has forbidden: ***“But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical seeking dissension by seeking to explain it.”*** (Al-i Imran, 7).

**2. Reliance on the Qur’an and the Sunnah:**

Islamic principles order us to rely on the Qur’an and the Sunnah in case there is a dispute or discord regarding an issue and find a good solution.

In this context, God Almighty says:

***“O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.”*** (al-Nisa’, 59).

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<sup>265</sup> Salim al-Bahansawi, *Adwa’ ala Ma’alim fi al-tariq*, p. 27.

Salim al-Bahansawi says that this is also the meaning of the hadith of the Prophet (blessings and peace be with him):

**“Offending a Muslim is a sin, and killing him is disbelief (kufr)!”**

Another Qur’anic verse says: **“And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them.”** (al-Hujurat, 9).

This implies that fighting among believers is not disbelief and the part of the hadith which says **“killing is kufr”** refers to kufr in the blessings of Islam, not kufr as in abandoning the Islamic community.<sup>266</sup>

### 3. **Difference between judges and callers :**

Here, al-Bahansawi points out the readers of the books of some callers who write about the rule of the Shari‘ah in our lives, such as Qutb’s **Ma’alim fi al-tariq, Fi dhilal al-Qur’an**, and Mawdudi’s **al-Mustalahat al-arba’ah** believe that such thinkers are judges who present verdicts and that their word will be accomplished no matter what.

This is a grave mistake for any reader, for these callers themselves declare that they do not seek to give verdicts but simply their opinions. Qutb points to the same truth when he writes, **“We are callers not judges.”**<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36. It is important to note that the lack of discernment between the terms **mufti, qadi, da’i** (verdict giver, judge, and caller) is a great contemporary problem for Islamic callers in many places. Mufti is a person who issues verdicts and signs documents as a representative of Islam, which are not normative but serve as guidance. Qadi is the Islamic judge who gives rulings based on arguments he possesses regarding an issue in Islamic law with the Islamic court. These rulings are obligatory and must be executed. Da’i is a cleric, or student of religion who speaks for Islam in accordance with his personal understanding of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, or the Shari‘ah in general, so that his opinions are neither obligatory nor executable. What we are witnessing today in electronic media and the internet is a real catastrophe



Bahansawi gives examples of negative results that have ensued from ignoring original principles by callers and scholars. He also underlines the issue of accusing Muslims with *kufur* that is attributed to Qutb by his own students.<sup>268</sup>

Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi in his book *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an fi al-mizan* deals with many questions related to the ideas of Qutb, including the latter's accusations of Muslims with *kufur*, his attitude to the Islamic *fiqh*, etc.

In fact, al-Khalidi's study deserves all praise and respect from scholars and students of the sciences of the Shari'ah!

According to al-Khalidi, the cause of the first accusation lies in the misunderstanding of Qutb's message in *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* and *Ma'alim fi al-tarik*. His detractors have limited scientific, cultural, and legal knowledge, and they do not know the basic rules of thinking.<sup>269</sup>

Al-Khalidi writes that there are two groups that have inferred negative results from the Sayyid Qutb's works:

The first group which claims that all Muslims are unbelievers, except for its own members. This group was formed in Egypt during the 1970's and is known by the name of *Jama'ah al-muslimin*, or *Jama'ah al-takfir wa al-hijrah*. This group claimed to subscribe to the ideas of Qutb, and for this purpose they quote out of context from *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* and *al-Ma'alim*. The most vocal opposition to their ideas came from Salim al-Bahansawi in his book *al-Hukm wa Qadiyya takfir al-muslim*.

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for the Islamic ummah. May God help and guide us all to the true understanding of religious terminology, Amin.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39. Here we cannot quote extensively due to the limited space of this dissertation.

<sup>269</sup> Salah Abdul-Fatah al-Halidi, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an fi al-mizan*, p. 205.

The second group which criticizes Qutb for labelling some Muslims with *kufr*. This group was lead by the engineer A. Abu Izzah who wrote several articles in the Lebanese journal al-Shibab, in which he claims that individuals from Islamic countries are ignorant, unbelievers, and outside of the fold of Islam even though they pray, fast, and go to pilgrimage!

Al-Khalidi provides examples on this issue by offering their proofs from the words of Qutb. He points out that in the beginning one may conclude that his words imply accusations for *kufr*, but the real picture will be obtained only through a complete reading of Qutb's opus and in view of other scholars' opinions after which their mistake will be evident.<sup>270</sup>

I fully agree with the criticism and views of Salim al-Bahansawi and Salah Abd al-Fatah al-Khalidi to *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an* and its author.<sup>271</sup>

After this important discussion we add the following comments:

1. Sayyid Qutb (May God have mercy on him) was a man like us, and he can be right or wrong, for he is not protected from erring like the prophets and the messengers of God (blessings and peace be with them) were.

2. In his *al-Adalah al-ijtimaiyya* Qutb deals with the dissension and conflict between Ali and Mu'awiya. In fact, he should have not delved into this matter, for all the Companions (r) were righteous and mujtahids, and whoever judged right has two rewards, and whoever was wrong gets one.

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 278-304. Al-Khalidi provides twenty views on **Dhilal**. See also *Adwa ala' Ma'alim fi al-tariq*.

Regarding this issue we can say that *al-Adalah al-ijtimaiyya* was written in the beginning of Qutb's activity when he had little knowledge of Islam, before joining the Muslim Brothers and before going to the U.S.A.

The experts of these issues have said that the two periods of Qutb's life can be harmonized, and that the *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* was his last book which summarized his ideas. In this book he praised all the Companions (r) without exception and even devoted a chapter to them, *Jiyl Qur'an farid*:

***“There is a historical phenomenon in which the Muslim callers must pause in every land and time for a good amount of time, for it has a clear influence on their method of exhortation and direction. This call has produced a generation of persons – the generation of the Companions (r) – which stands unmatched in the whole history of Islam and the world.”***<sup>272</sup>

These comments on the Companions are clear whereas what is said in *al-Adalah al-ijtimaiyya* is dubious. In cases of doubt, we accept only the evident and distance ourselves from the suspicious, and this is a basic rule in Islamic Law, in the principles of jurisprudence (*juhmal al-mutlaq ala al-mukayyad, wa juhmal al-mutashabihu ala al-muhkaam*) etc.

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<sup>272</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, p. 14.

## 4.2.2 Conclusion and suggestions

Praise be to God, after labourious efforts I managed to complete this dissertation. I am grateful to my Lord for this as for the health He bestowed upon me during its writing in 2000 and its revising in 2013 for the Albanian and English editions which include additional information and suggestions for the readers. God blessed me by making it possible for me to finish this dissertation within a short time, despite the academic and family obligations.

It is worth noting that after my expedition into the life, works, and the characteristics of the world of exhortation with Sayyid Qutb, and after spending pleasant moments under the shade of his commentary, after our pleasure with the fresh water and clean air, and after the elevation of our spirits and thoughts above the materialism of the life of this world, over the decadence and its regress, we will underline some the most important results and conclusions drawn from this study.

The following is a list of results we obtained during this study:

- Our study reflected the religious situation in the Islamic world at a time of great upheavals and doctrinal conflicts with communism and atheism;

- In studying the personality of Sayyid Qutb in his relationship with the environment he lived in, we found a scientific figure of a great level and a living example of the scholars of the call. The main reason for Qutb's success in exhortation, as well as for the fame of his commentary, was the fact that his lifetime coincided with civilizational challenges to Islam from the West. As a writer and Islamic scholar, a brilliant commentator with a rich experience in exhortation he felt the pain of the ummah with all of his being and he offered correct analyses and personal opinions ;

- This study confirmed that Sayyid Qutb considered the issue of da'wa based on the precise and complete Qur'anic and scientific method, whose understanding of the verses pertaining to exhortation conformed to the rules of the Shari'ah, science of the usul, and Arabic language;

- Qutb's personality as an imam and a scholar of exhortation based on scientific stances became evident, for he never took a passive attitude and did not criticize from far away, but was immersed in the battlefield of da'wa;

- This study showed Qutb's stance on different political systems, and his way of dealing with important questions in which he was relentless and open, never fearing anybody's harm, except God's;

- This study also pointed to the unity between the method of Qutb and Hasan al-Banna in their understanding and philosophy of exhortation;

- Through his method Qutb gained extensive knowledge on the different deviated sects of that time and their doctrines. He was well-acquainted with the world affairs, and he showed a particular interest in the question of Islamic government as related to the divinity of God;

- This study also confirmed Qutb's deep and wide knowledge in the domain of da'wah, namely in the analysis of its elements pertaining to the understanding of the Qur'an and its guidance, by relating the situation of the jahiliyyah with its contemporary counterpart. He offers a precise and excellent comparison between the two periods, in which he proved to be a leader who deals with the essentials based on verses of the Qur'an;

- Sayyid Qutb used the dynamic method in his call, which was a unique, hitherto unused approach. Through his commentary he helped in the illumination of the characters in Surah al-An'am, the principles of the call in the Meccan period, and their importance in the stages of exhortation. He concluded that initially people must be invited to the

improvement of the essential principle: faith in God and worship (*'aqidah wa 'ubudiyah*), and that any other approach will fail and it will not help the truth;

- This study also showed that Qutb understood certain themes of exhortation differently from others, e.g.: divinity (*rububiyya*), dominion (*hakimiyya*), ignorance (*jahiliyya*), idolatry (*shirk*), and disbelief (*kufr*), etc.;

- This study also confirmed certain ideas and principles of exhortation used by Qutb regarding the personality and the intellectual, spiritual and ethical principles of callers, as well as the issue of exhortation, such as: its method, gradualness, successivity, and attention for the situation of people;

- The study also presented the great authority enjoyed by Qutb in society as a Qur'an commentator and caller to Islam in comparison to his peers. It showed the position of Qutb through the eyes of his contemporary colleagues and scholars who wrote about him;

- In the end, I enjoin myself and my fellow callers to engage in other studies on this scholar and to illuminate other aspects of his life and work which must be studied with the special attention he deserves. We need more of such studies, especially for clearing him from takfir and extremism; and:

- I also call on different universities of Islamic sciences to commemorate his name and work, especially his Qur'anic commentary by using it as complementary or compulsory literature in the respective courses.



**Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!**

**Hajredin Hoxha**  
**Last update was in Prizren -Kosova,**  
**3.07.2022**  
**As well in Doha-Qatar 14.08.2022**

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