



Political Islam as Explained by Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Mawdudi: A Comparison

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Abstract

Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Mawdudi are among the widely discussed thinkers, as their writings are a source of inspiration in Muslim World throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. There can be no doubt that they both have had a huge influence on the ideologies of several Islamist and jihadi groups around the world. Their impact has been immeasurable and often termed as “the architect of worldwide jihad”. According to them, Muslims have forgotten their religious duties and that is the main reason for their downfall, by adopting Westernization, they are living a life of jahiliyyah. It is usually perceived that both Maududi and Qutb practiced takfir, i.e., to oust Muslims from Islam. This paper will try to explain how Syed Qutb and Maulana Mawdudi understood and interpreted Islam as a political ideology. It will also discuss the various controversies and scholarly responses such a theory incite. (Qutb, Salahi, & Shamis, 1999).

Key Words: Jahiliyyah, Jihad, militancy, Al Qaida, Political Islam



Research Questions

1. How Mawlana Mawdudi and Syed Qutub used terminologies like takfir and Jahiliya in their writing?
2. What are the impact of their writing on jihadi organizations?
3. How the terminology of Political Islam evolved after WWII?
4. What is the relevance of political Islam in Contemporary World?

Introduction

Scholars studying Islamic militant movements i.e., al-Qaeda, etc. refer to the writings of two thinkers i.e. (Burke, 2004). Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Mawdudi to narrate Islam's journey from traditional Jihad to socio-revolutionary Jihad. While traditional /Classical Jihad focuses on a Muslim Ruler's voice to fight against those who have attacked Muslims and occupying their lands, on the contrary, the purpose of socio-revolutionary jihadi outfits is to aim to unseat westernized Muslim rulers (Qutb, S., Salahi, & Shamis,1999). It has been observed that both Mawdudi and Qutb used terminologies like, 'age of ignorance' or servitude (Jahiliyyah) and divine sovereignty in worship (*hakimiyya*) to license charges of ex-communication (*takfir*) and reiterate arguments that provoke people towards violence (Khatab, 2002). Research scholars have also explored how the state-centered narrative of the Muslim Brotherhood and its scion inadequately captures the transnational, hybrid, and even secular trajectories of political thought that inform the views of militants. (Devji 2019)

Although Qutb and Mawdudi portray the West as Islam's opponent, their post-colonial frameworks for social reform share founding premises with Western political thought. Their visions of Islam as a total system (*nizam*) and method (*Minhaj*), for example, unfold religion as a discipline different from other walks of life, giving Islam an ideological cast that obscures its historical root within a wide variety of cultural practices. (Akhavi 1997)

Political Islam:

As a terminology, it is used to designate individuals and associations dedicated to the transformation of state and society to make them "Islamic." It is also a fact that it is one of the most prominent and controversial phenomena of current Islamic societies. The term indicates the more comprehensive and diverse trends, e.g., Islamism, sometimes integral, and to some, it is called fundamentalism. Whatever terminology is used, it's crystal clear that they all advocate the establishment of an Islamic state by applying *sharia*.



Ideologies of Political Islam: Al-Banna, Mawdudi, and Qutb:

The term Political Islam rose to prominence when the First World War came to an end. Muslim Brotherhood and its leader, Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949), emerged as the voice of Political Islam. Founded in 1928 in Ismailiyya (Egypt), the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) grew from a trivial organization, with a mission to get Egypt liberated from Westernized culture. (Al-Banna, 1986). Hasan Al-Banna was a native Egyptian. In Cairo, where he spent most of his life, he did not like the diffusion of Westernization in Egyptian society. He lamented that people are forgetting the Islamic values, they are eager to adopt Western norms and culture. According to him, Westernization is equipped with arms of propaganda, vulgarity, wealth, prestige, pomp, and show. He thought they are attacking Islamic values with these destructive weapons. ” (Al-Banna 1986)

He refused to accept the European democracy, which according to him nothing but flamboyance; and splendor, debauchery, and lawlessness. While on the other hand, he distinguished Islam as the only salvation for Muslims, he further elaborates it by saying that all Islam incorporates traits of virtue, justice, steadfastness, truth, strength, moral values, and fortitude. (Soage, 2009).

In the words of Nazih Ayubi: “The efforts rendered by Pan Islamists like Jamal al-Afghani and Shaikh Abduh to modernize Islam, collided with the next generation of thinkers such as Al-Banna, etc, as they were aspiring to Islamize modernity.” (Ayubi 2003)

He had a firm belief that a revival of “pure Islam” was the remedy to Westernization and a cure for the indisposition affecting the Islamic World. Thus, he came forward by founding the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 to establish a government based on Islamic teachings and values. His organization sought to serve to provide basic services to people viz schooling networks, mosques, and factories he tried to seek public support for achieving his goals. Despite this, he never adopted a practical method for taking power.

Qutb: Early Life

Syed Qutb was born in 1906 in the Egyptian village of Musha, where he memorized the Holy Quran at the early age of 10. From 1929 until 1933, he obtained education in Dar al-Uloom, Cairo, after which, he was assigned to teach at the Ministry of Public Instruction, and later the Ministry of Education. His written contributions are



divided into two distinct parts: literary (1933-1949) and theoretical (1949-1964). His early literary works, beginning in 1933, included writing poetry, critiquing contemporary scholars such as Taha Hussain, and discussing the Qur'an as an "artistic document" (Abu-Rabi 1995). He believed himself to be a poet more than an "ivory-tower intellectual" thinker. But his literature-focused life ended in 1949 after returning from the United States of America, where he lived for three years. During his stay in the US, his love for theoretical /religious writings started. During his stay, he observed American and Western societies closely and one observes a definite shift from common Muslim to "radical Islamist in his writings". (Shepard, 1992, p. 201)

In the early 1950s, he left civil service for the good and joined the Muslim Brotherhood. He was appointed the Editor of a weekly journal, and soon he rose to the highest order. During that period, he began to read Abul A'la Maududi: Ameer of Jamaat e Islami, an Islamic Revivalist Movement in Pakistan. Following the failed assassination attempt on Egypt's President Gamal Abdun Nasir in 1954, the Pro-Western Egyptian government started a cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, and he was arrested.

He was kept in jail for ten years, during which he wrote two of his most famous and controversial books,

- a) the Quranic commentary "*Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* or *In the Shade of the Qur'an*" (Shepard, 2010).
- b) *Ma'alim fi'l-Tariq* or *Signposts on the Road*, also known as (Swenson, 2005).

He contributed ten works: seven of which he finished whilst incarcerated from 1954 to 1964, leaving an additional three unfinished. Westernization in Qutb's eyes is in opposition to the foundation of Islam. He rejects Western scholar's belief that the human mind has a capacity of knowing the world, human psychology, judging what is right and what is wrong. These human-made ideas and institutions have given birth to the secularized culture. Qutb terms it with Satan because it promotes atheism. Rejecting man-made institutions, Qutb aims to restore the Islamic notion that religion, politics, culture, and law are enduring and forever.

Qutb and Jahiliyya

He is perhaps most famous for his theory of *Jahiliyyah*, a term used in the Holy Quran mentioning the pre-Islamic period, essentially meaning "ignorance" or even "barbarism" (Shepard, 2003). Egyptian scholar Dr. Taha Hussain first talked about the social and scholarly discord engulfing Egyptian society and its religious hierarchy. Dr. Taha Hussain had a conviction that, "*Ulama* (elite religious class) was stagnating the rest



of Egyptian modernization and exploiting “people’s spirituality and devotion to religion” (Wright 2006)

Qutb agreed to some extent with Taha Hussain, urging that imams and their traditional approach to education were incompatible with the modern world, and obstructing a necessary evolution. The seed of this thought would grow into what he called *jahiliyyah*. According to Qutb, the solution to face Jahiliyya was in following Islamic values strictly. He always considered Islam as more than a religion but a social and political “source of unity” (Wright 2006)

Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi agrees with Qutb that the Holy Quran revolutionized social and ideological concepts during the time of the Prophet. But according to Abu-Rabi (1995), he differs with Qutb that the “*Jahiliyya*” was not without any virtue as the harsh nature of desert life forced certain qualities such as *hamasah* (valor in battlefield or protection of the weak); *murawah* (manliness and courage); *Karam* (hospitality and generosity), and *hilm* (tolerance and moral reasonableness). (Khatab, 2002) (Abu-Rabi, 1995)

Shepard thinks Qutb’s peers, Sayyid Mawdudi and Abul Hasan Nadwi, also accuses the modern, Western world, as *Jahili*. (Shepard, 2003)

Qutb observes: *Jahiliyyah* does not vanish yet, it has come again and with more might and strength. It has infected the environment, we breathe, and people we interact with, it has tarnished our beliefs, nomenclature, ideas, and rules. It is mingled with Islamic thoughts, philosophy, and culture. He further went on to say that this world and its inhabitants are now living in *Jahiliyyah*. He emphasizes Muslims to eradicate this evil as it is a moral duty, he announces that Jihad is the only means to deal with this *Jahiliyyah*.” (Rabi 1984)

In Qutb’s words, living in a state of *jahiliyyah* is like: “The rule of humans by humans, because it involves making some humans the servants of others... ascribing divinity to some humans and serving them apart from God.” (Khatab, 2002)

“Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head – this being just a symptom and not the real disease – but because humanity is devoid of those vital values that are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress. Even the western world realizes that Western civilization is unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind. It knows that it does not possess anything which will satisfy its conscience and justify its existence. Mankind needs to have a new leadership.



It is necessary for the new leadership to preserve and develop the material fruits of the creative genius of Europe and also to provide mankind with high ideals and values that have so far remained undiscovered by mankind, and which will also acquaint humanity with a way of life which is harmonious with human nature, which is positive and constructive, and which is practicable. Islam is the only system that possesses these values and this way of life. If we look at the sources and foundations of the modern way of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in *jahiliyyah* (pagan ignorance of divine guidance), and all the marvelous material comforts and high-level inventions do not diminish this ignorance.”

In the Shade of the Quran and Milestones, he applied this terminology towards the Muslim societies of his day: “In my opinion, the belief that man can rule over others is a *jahiliyyah*, and I assume that this sort of *Jahiliyyah* is not an abstract theory; rather a ridiculous one. He rejects Western democracy as the system is in contradiction to Quran, it allows man to subjugate others (Khatab, 2002). He declares all the societies existing in the world are primarily *Jahili*. He denounces Muslims because their way of life is not based on true Islamic teachings. Even if they believe in the oneness of God, why have they assigned the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority?

He emphasizes that *Jihad* is a sacred task, both ‘mystical and physical and that the Muslims have to perform.”

He had a firm belief that either there is pure Islam or *Jahiliyyah*. There is a contrast between Islam and *Jahiliyyah*. The question is who will prevail whether it's Islam or *Jahiliyyah*, Islam cannot succumb to a situation like this: a society having half-Islam and half *Jahiliyyah* traits. He tries to conclude that if the Muslim states are *Jahili*, then they have to be defeated. He also talks about reconciliation between Islamic and *Jahili* society and that is *Jahili* society should unconditionally surrender before Islam. When Police interrogated Qutb, he said, ‘To establish an Islamic regime is the final goal. Sharia should be the basis of legislation. This is the main point of conflict [between us and the government] – all the others are derived from it.’

Qutb’s Takfiri Ideology

The problem arose when it was not just the Western world but also the Muslim world that failed to fulfill Qutb’s moral expectations, Anyone in the Muslim world giving “political and social authority to others than God”, Muslims who were living by sharia law “invented” by Muslims, these were Muslims living in *jahiliyyah* and only those who lived by the sharia law loyal to God were true Muslims. Furthermore, those who did not



actively seek to live under sharia were unbelievers and therefore *takfir* (excommunicable).

He was criticized for using the term “takfir”, especially from conservatives and puritans, who claim that this is *bid'ah* (innovation) and overuse of *ijtihad* (interpretation) making “unlawful what Allah has made lawful” The extent of such a crisis led to Qutb’s theory of *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty), and eventually *jihad*. “*Jahiliyyah* is the *hakimiyyah* of humans, Islam is the *hakimiyyah* of God.”

This means that a true Islamic state would have no rulers, as the only authority is God. The procedure which he suggests is through a revolutionary vanguard with a dual purpose: preaching Islam and terminating *jahiliyyah* using “power” (*jihad*) as a means of achieving this. The vanguard would expand until a true Islamic community had been established, at which point it could spread until eventually taking over all civilizations.

According to Qutb, Darul Islam (House of Islam), means living a true Islamic life fulfilling God’s laws, or *dar al-Harb* (House of War) means living in *Jahiliyyah* (Shepard, 2003).

This lead to the modern interpretation of the ancient concept of *jihad*. Though built off the ancient example of the Prophet, Qutb’s writings on *jihad* would have a ripple effect that would ultimately result in the creation of the modern connotation for *jihad* meaning religious war, a modern crusade. The linguistic origin of the word ‘*jihad*’ refers to ‘a struggle’ or means ‘to strive’ but there are three different orders of *jihad* – each ranking in difficulty: Qutb’s spearhead was expected to employ the second-order of *jihad*, *jihad-e-Kabir*, which requires Muslims to actively correct misunderstandings about the message of Islam whilst also sharing their knowledge. The lowest order of *jihad* is the *jihad-e-Asghar* meaning *jihad* of a defensive battle. This final level can only be justified as a defensive measure, never offensive:

Qutb would controversially ignore the context of certain passages in the Qur’an, instead of manipulating – though some scholars see it as *bid'ah* passages to suit his message. For example, by incorrectly employing *ijtihad* whilst reading Surah 8 (which says if *kufir* (unbeliever) remains in disbelief the believer should “fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere”), he interpreted from this that Islamic *jihad* was in fact offensive.

Therefore, he believed that it was the duty of a true Muslim to immediately seek to correct any “social or moral ills” as all social “ills are rooted in the more fundamental failure to accept the sovereignty of God.”



This active effort was to be necessary for all Muslims to establish an Islamic community and replace everything *Jahiliyyah*. Discussion of what was theoretically right or wrong was not important; it was better to just act.

He didn't believe that this would be easy, telling Muslims to expect "poverty, difficulty, frustration, torment, and sacrifice" but that this was what God wanted. Qutb proved once again to be more radical than his scholarly counterparts, such as Mawdudi, who had advocated a "gradualist methodology" over such direct actionⁱⁱ. Criticism of his theory of *jihad* would continue until today with mainstream Muslims discouraging the need for "physical power" regarding anything, as well as once again sighting mistakes in *ijtihad*, *aqeedah* (belief), and *manhai* (methodology).

By declaring offensive *jihad* instead of defensive as more than just acceptable but a moral obligation for any self-respecting, self-declaring Muslim, this is critical to understanding Qutb's twisted interpretation of Islam. Moreover, it is the fundamental core of how radical Islamists justify their actions. His twisted interpretation of such religion fell waiting into the arms of a recently and continually humiliated society that was fed up with its governments, and ready to listen to solutions – no matter how radical they were. With the publication of *Milestones*, he impacted the Muslim world from Morocco to Malaysia (Qutb, Salahi, & Shamis, 1999).

According to Qutb, since Jahiliyah and Islam are poles apart, offensive jihad is the only way to annihilate Jahiliyah. Until and unless this task is not done, all Muslims must fight against Jahiliyyah. He did not support the conventional defensive Jihad, he broke with Uema and ridiculed them: "One can wage Jihad against munkar (evil) government and replace them with pious people in government because nothing is more powerful than government, one of the objectives of Islamic Jihad is to extinguish the rule of the non-Islamic governments and replace them with Islamic rule."

Even before Qutb was an Islamist, his understanding of the world was built on the idea that secular Europe and religious Egypt were opposites and must not mix.

Such a claim was damning not only Egypt's secular leaders but its traditional religious institutions as well. According to Qutb, they were just as guilty of *jahiliyyah* as any modernist. Much like his previous writings before his time in prison, Qutb saw the world in very clear, divided, terms and his understanding of *jahiliyyah* would make the world even more divided into black and white. To Qutb there was no grey line between *jahiliyyah* and Islam, societies find themselves existing in either one or the other.



This simplification of theological ideas has large implications for the Muslim world as it not only takes a stand against modernism but argues that modernism is a form of *Bida*, making it utterly un-Islamic. On certain subjects, Qutb allows for some nuance as he argued that science in and of itself is perfectly fine while western ideas such as Darwinism were guilty of *jahiliyyah*.

Regardless, Qutb had a conviction that his unadulterated understanding of Islam was the only way people could worship God, all other societies, regardless of whether they considered themselves Islamic or not, were guilty of *jahiliyyah*, and thus could not be called truly Muslim. His theology did not only take a break from modernism, but traditionalism as well as it claimed that Islam over the years had lost its meaning, suggested that theological change would come from ordinary Muslims as opposed to the entrenched *ulama*. Qutb's position on theology mirrored his politics as he continued to see the world in two different groups, and argued for the turmoil of Egyptian and Muslim society. While many in the Arab world and beyond were deciding between the ideas of capitalism and Marxism as presented by the United States and the Soviet Union, Qutb rejected them both; the fundamentals of both policies according to Qutb conflicted with human nature, and thus a form of *Bida*.

The rejection of nationalism is important as Egyptian nationalism was the spark of Qutb's rejection of westernization. Therefore to exist in a fully Islamic society, Qutb's logic called for the dissolution of the nation-state model and the reinstatement of Islamic unity. There were a lot of obstacles in the face of Qutb's political and theological, not only would his followers have to deal with Western and Soviet powers as well as their modernist leaders. To combat these influences, Syed Qutb proposed a more militant version of *jihad* (Valentine, 2008). He understood that not all *jihad* was violent, and thus encouraged his followers to build up small but devoted groups of fellow believers. Jihad in Qutb's eyes is a holy and sacred task, both 'mystical and physical' and the Muslims have to perform. It would be a great mistake to follow the Muslim apologists and to conclude that such a war is only defensive because Jihad aims to restore the lost unity between human beings and God, namely to eradicate the existing Jahili regimes and systems that disturb the unicity of God and thus prevent man from embracing Islam. Only under a universal Islamic rule, will mankind have a genuinely free choice either to embrace Islam or not.

Maulana Mawdudi:



Maulana Mawdudi (1903–1979) is regarded as a prominent thinker of the twentieth century. He expanded the Quranic concept of Unicity (Tauheed) by suggesting that it also meant the (political) oneness of the Muslim ummah, it can only be achieved by 'Islamizing the society' and through achieving state power to finally establish an 'Islamic state.'.

His ideas and books have a huge impact and have influenced a vast number of the Muslim world, using the concepts of *Hukumat-i Ilahiyyah* (Establishment of God's Government), and *Iqamat-i Deen*, he adheres to the commandments of Islam, which deals with personal character, ethics, socio-cultural, political, economic, judicial and all other aspects of the life of an individual.

Mawdodi and Jahiliyyah

He sought to expose the permeability of Jahiliya in Muslim society at that time. Calling it evil, he blamed Western influences behind this concept. He understood Western political thought after studying several readings. According to him, the answers for all debated issues exist in Islam, he tried to clear up all and some others confusions that have been labeled against it

In the eyes of Maulana Mawdudi, Jahiliyyah is the opposite of Islam. He calls it to all the systems. Thoughts, belief, which denies the sovereignty of God, accountability, and life hereafter. He categorizes the concept of Jahilliyya into the following three types:

- i) Having a belief that the universe and its existence is an accident, there is no Divine authority, no definite purpose behind the creation and existence of this universe. The human race is a mere animal, having no purpose of life, they are here only to fulfill their beast's instincts.
- ii) In the second category lies those, having a belief that the universe has several lords, gods, deities' masters.
- iii) In the third category falls those, who think salvation is possible through monasticism, i.e., by denouncing the world, its luxuries, and adopting a solitary life.

His thoughts on *jahiliyyah primarily* concern the way of life of the elite/ruling classes, not a common man. He says there are two categories of *jahiliyyah* i.e., pure *jahiliyyah* and partial *jahiliyyah*. The first type of *jahiliyyah* refuses to believe in the oneness of God, whereas the latter one is referred to as those who do not mind



associating religion with infidelity and don't lead their lives by God's commands. In his writings, he explained Islam is a complete code of life. According to Mawdudi, the Islamic state is based on three important principles namely *Unicity*, *Prophethood*, and *Caliphate*. Unicity means that sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Allah, who is all omnipotent and His orders are in Quran, thus could not be debated. Prophethood means God selects a pious man, who guides astray people towards guidance. Caliphate means man is the vicegerent of God. This principle distinguishes the Islamic concept of State from democracy, where principles are vested in the common man (Qutb, 2004).

Islam, as a 'din', is synonymous with the Islamic state, this was Mawdudi's basic idea: Creating the vision of a state that is informed within a framework of his prototype of the Quran, the Prophet, and the four pious Caliphs. It is visible in his writings that he dreams and desires for a return to the Caliphate system. Creating an Islamic state is necessary because he had no faith in individuals to lead their lives according to Islamic values and thus, a virtuous Caliph should guide. He expresses his 'trilogy of religion' in three terms:

- a) Iqamat-e- Deen (Commandments of Islam)
- b) Pious Rulers (Imamat-i salihah)
- c) Divine rule (hukumat-e- Ilahiyah).

According to him, the relationship between Islam and politics is just like the relation of roots with the trunk and the branches with the leaves. It is the beauty of Islam that it has incorporated the religious, political, economic, social aspects, indeed they are different departments of the same system.'

Further, Mawdudi emphasizes the political characterization of *jahiliyyah*. All political structures – liberal, socialist, fascist, and theocratic are equivalent to *jahili* because they are based on the rule of one man over another. They are bereft of the rule of God's Will and therefore the source of evil in our world, says Mawdudi. Qutb does not distinguish between the political and religious character of *jahiliyyah*. He declares that all structures alien to the precepts of Islam are *jahili*, therefore, the whole world lives in one pure *jahiliyyah*. *Jahiliyyah*, in his eyes, is an epistemological device that enabled him to reject modern philosophy, thought, and institutions as modernity represent the negation of God's sovereignty in all fields of life.

Mawdudi on Jihad



It is important to shed light on his concept of a revolution. In *Al-Jihad fil Islam*, he condemns those Muslims who respond to criticisms of jihad and are apologetic. In reply to westerners who, when they think of jihad, it invokes ‘the vision of a marching band of religious fanatics with savage beards and fiery eyes brandishing drawn swords and attacking infidels wherever they meet them and pressing them under the edge of the sword for the recital of the Kalima’ the apologists respond by saying that Islam has never known war. In his eyes, the apologetic approach to seeing jihad in what has become known in so many introductory textbooks as the ‘greater jihad’ of internal struggle or pacifist preaching is surrendering to the enemy: ‘Islam requires the earth – not just a portion of it – not because the sovereignty over the earth should be wrestled from one or several nations and vested in one particular nation – but because the entire mankind should benefit from the ideology and welfare program or what should be truer to say from “Islam” which is the program of well-being for all humanity.’

This is echoed nine years later in an address he delivered entitled ‘War in the cause of Allah’, “Jihad aims to eradicate the rule of systems other than Islamic. Since Islam is a universal religion, therefore it does not intend to confine its rule to a single state or few states. The purpose of the Quran is to bring about a revolution. Although in the initial phase, it is incumbent upon Muslims to bring a revolution in the state system of the globe to which they belong, their ultimate objective is none other than a world revolution.”

He concluded that the Muslims are lagging because they are practicing a corrupt Islam contaminated by non-Islamic ideas and culture. He urged that Islam is not only a religion but it is a complete code of life and social system that provides guidelines in every aspect of life including running affairs of the state. In his views, tolerating Non-Islamic rule, concepts and systems is an insult to God. Therefore, the only way Muslims might practice pure Islam and assume their past glory in the world is by the establishment of an Islamic state, where Islam rules independent of non-Islamic influences. These Islamic states will spread Islam far and wide and will establish God’s rule. He argued the only practical way to accomplish Islamic rule is through jihad, he explained his concepts in *Al-Jihad fil Islam*. Mawdudi’s *Jihad in Islam* articulated the goals of an evolving Islamist ideology by reiterating the strategic objective of global Islamic rule and designating jihad as the way to achieve it. Islam to Mawdudi was not a passive existence, but an active subservience to God, meaning that Muslims would need to be unified in their practice and society, this subservience needed to be reinforced by society through education and not allow any deviance (Qutb, 2004).



Mawdudi however did not share Qutb's vision of an Islamic revolution as his experience had taught him the importance of sound institutions. Mawdudi would go so far as to use Western terms such as democracy due to their positive connotation in intellectual spaces as well as his hope that in Muslim populated areas, a purer version of political Islam would emerge victoriously.ⁱⁱⁱ Mawdudi was also willing to distinguish small, everyday sins from outright *Bida*, making it easier to work with those who did not share his opinions. *Da'wah*, or preaching, would be the primary vehicle that would create Pakistan's constitution according to Mawdudi (Behera, 2011). The *Ummah's* religious problem Mawdudi argued would be solved by a more Islamic educational system headed by scholars (Jackson, 2010). Mawdudi agreed with Qutb that the educational and political system in charge of Muslim societies before colonialization had failed, but Mawdudi took this to mean that they needed to be strengthened by Islamic revivalism, not torn down through *jihad* and revolution (Al-Hamidy, 2011).

Conclusion

Both Qutb and Maududi have had a key impact on the Jihadi organizations. Their writings and thoughts have inspired and influenced the founder of Al Qaida, Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Ladin AlYman Al Zawahiri, Ayatullah Khomeini, etc. Their books were translated and interpreted into other languages. Ayatullah Khomeini translated Qutb's voluminous quranic commentary into Persian. Both Qutb and Mawdudi were hugely inspired and influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a 7th-century Hunbali scholar. Al Zawahiri said that: "Qutb's call for loyalty to Unicity and to accepting only God's authority and sovereignty was the spark that ignited the Islamic revolution against the foes of Islam. The bloody chapters of this revolution continue to unfold to this day. The ideology of this revolution and the clarity of its course are getting firmer every day." (Al Zawahiri, 2008).

While Qutb dreamed of an Islamic utopia formed from violent revolution in his prison cell, Mawdudi used his position at the head of the power Jamat-i Islami party to demand revivalism and reform. It is easy to imagine Mawdudi taking Qutb's approach if he spent his formative political years in a jail cell. Qutb may not have been so keen on declaring all Islamic societies guilty of *jahiliyyah* had he been allowed to work within political institutions. In the end, both signaled the rise of Islamist ideology throughout the Muslim world, and the fact that their means differed would in the end benefit, not hinder their growth. While their differences should not be underwritten, their challenge to modernism would help lay the basis for the Islamic Revival, a movement that's ramifications are still being felt throughout the world today. Constructing an Islamic state



with Islamic laws, their methods were very dissimilar and backgrounds that had nothing in common. By comparing and contrasting their backgrounds and deducing the context of their writings it would be revealed that while Mawdudi suggested a top-down approach to both domains i.e., theology and politics, while Qutb believed in an anarchist Islam where theological and political change would occur from the bottom up.



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