

QUTB AS A MASK OF LEGITIMATE IDEOLOGY

Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, "bin Laden's right hand man,"[218] the theoretician of al-Qaeda, describes his intellectual debt to Sayyid Qutb: "Qutb was the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist movements.... Qutb said, 'Brother push ahead, for your path is soaked in blood. Do not turn your head right or left but look only up to Heaven.'"[219] Qutb motivates Zawahiri's mission, his violence, his jihad against jahiliyya. How does the idealist philosopher with his dreams of utopia motivate violence and terror? How do Zawahiri and al-Qaeda use Qutb's philosophy to justify bloodshed? How do words travel from the pen of a philosopher to the lips of murderers?

THE SPREAD OF QUTB'S IDEOLOGY

Immediately after Qutb's execution, *Milestones* became the handbook of Islamic activism in Egypt. In the introduction to *Milestones*, Dr. Ahmad Zaki Hammad describes the book's popularity.

Milestones was banned and confiscated from libraries, bookstores, and homes. Its owners jailed, its readers threatened with ruin, every impounded copy of this little book was burned by military order. Yet the fiery response burned not the ideas expressed in the book, nor suppressed the desire in the hearts of many to seclude themselves with the forbidden thoughts of freshly martyred Sayyid Qutb. The image of young and inspired university students secretly copying the book by hand, rushing to their closeted readings, will never leave my mind.[220]

Hammad goes on to explain the courage students felt reading *Milestones*. The mere act of reading became a rebellion against the jahili regime. As *Milestones* swept through Egypt, it inspired new movements and organizations, each with its own interpretation of Qutb's ideas and its own mission for freeing Egyptian society from jahiliyya. Qutb had been the ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, but, after his death, the organization would move towards a more centrist agenda, leaving Qutb to the militants.

In 1971, the new president Anwar Sadat legalized the Muslim Brotherhood in an attempt to win support from the organization. He freed long-imprisoned members and allowed the organization to preach and advocate on the condition that the Brotherhood would not resort to violence. The Brotherhood

complied, rejected past violence, and assumed a centrist and moderate Islamic political dogma. Along with changing its stance, the Brotherhood attempted to distance itself from Qutb's thought. Though no leaders of the Brotherhood directly criticized his thought, they indirectly questioned his logic and attempted to steer interpretations of his work away from extremist interpretations.

Sadat's gesture did not abate the frustrations that had led to militancy and violence and the Brotherhood no longer provided an outlet for radicals. Dozens of militant splinter groups arose. Both the Islamic Group (al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiyya) and Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the two largest and most active groups in Egypt at the time, found their inspiration in Qutb's writings.[221]

In the early seventies, radical groups calling themselves the Islamic Group appeared on university campuses across Egypt. These groups united in a call for a return to Islamic society. The Islamic Group was not an official organization, but an umbrella organization of dozens of cells.

Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Farag founded another group, al-Jihad, that eventually merged with the Islamic Group. He drew from Qutb and the thirteenth century jurist Ibn Taymiyya and published a pamphlet titled "The Hidden Imperative." In the pamphlet, he explained that jihad against tyrants was the duty of all Muslims, calling it the sixth pillar of Islam. The ulema, he claimed, had attempted to hide this duty and the only way to free Egypt from jahiliyya was to embark on jihad against its jahili leader, Sadat, the "iniquitous prince." [222]

In 1979, Farag united several small groups under his leadership. The next year, he managed to bring the Islamic Group into his control as well and unify the groups under the spiritual guidance of Sheikh Omar 'Abd al-Rahman <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Abdel-Rahman> . As the group's advisor, Rahman issued fatwas, legal opinions based on the Shari'a, to justify violence in the name of jihad.[223] Rahman had studied Qutb's work, and scholars credit Qutb with forming 'Abd al-Rahman's extremist views.[224] This network organized the assassination of Sadat in 1981. Murdering him, they believed, fulfilled their duty to overthrow jahili leaders and establish an Islamic state.[225]

After Sadat's assassination, the authorities imprisoned the leaders and members of al-Jihad and the Islamic group and executed Farag. Ayman al-Zawahiri, a member of al-Jihad at the time, was among those arrested. Zawahiri disagreed with Rahman about who should assume the role of leader after Farag's death. Their disagreement led the two groups to split. The Islamic Group remained under the leadership of Rahman. Despite his implication in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and

subsequent imprisonment, Rahman continues to lead the group from a U.S. prison.[226] The other group continued as al-Jihad under the leadership of 'Abboud al-Zumar and Zawahiri went on to lead the group in 1992. Eventually al-Jihad joined with al-Qaeda under the joint leadership of Usama bin Laden and Zawahiri. The Islamic Group established strong ties and contributed many members to al-Qaeda.[227]

Though both groups connect to al-Qaeda, this paper will not focus on the Islamic Group or Islamic Jihad, or their interpretations or misinterpretations of Qutb. In 1980, Yusuf al-Azam analyzed radical readings of Qutb and attempted to exonerate him from the shadow that extremist groups cast on his work.[228] In this chapter, I present these two groups to outline the methods of diffusion and transmittance of Qutb's ideas to a modern organization of Islamic terrorism, al-Qaeda. Instead of looking at Qutb's readers in the sixties and seventies, I will focus on two groups who quote Qutb now: al-Qaeda and the Western press. I aim to show that both groups interpret Qutb's message to support their own preestablished agendas.

FROM EGYPT IN THE 1960S TO THE WHOLE MUSLIM WORLD: WHY IS QUTB'S IDEOLOGY SO POPULAR?

Qutb's ideology relies on and addresses to the fear and disillusionment of his followers. He appeals to Muslims who feel disillusioned with the modern world and see no solution, to those who feel trapped and confused by the disparity between modern liberal society and sacred societies of the past. He resonates with Muslims who feel out of place in contemporary society, unfulfilled, and disjointed.[229] He promises a society without compromises, divisions, or conflicting forces.

Qutb writes to their fear and invokes their desperation. They fear the West will crush Islam, they fear its "crusade-consciousness." But he offers the solution, outlines the path, defines the struggle, and identifies the enemy. The Western jahiliyya is the enemy and the path is jihad. Only the spread of Islam can save humankind from the grip of tyrants. Only by overcoming the jahili societies can Muslims rid the community of the modern influences. Islam demands activism.

Qutb encourages and elevates his follower. The battle is necessary, and the risks are great, but the Believer is always superior. Allah stands with him and comforts him when he is weak. In death, he becomes a martyr and paradise awaits him. "Those who risk their lives and go out to fight, and who are prepared to lay down their lives for the cause of God are honorable people, pure of heart and blessed of soul. But the great surprise is that those

among them who are killed in the struggle must not be considered or described as dead. They continue to live, as God Himself clearly states." [230] Thus, he turns his followers into fearless warriors for his vision.

Qutb's views are more extreme than those of other modernists. He is unwilling to compromise and rejects all other interpretations of the sacred texts of Islam. He claims that his reading of the Qur'an is the only literal reading, not an interpretation, but a modern application, built solely on God's authority. Therefore, his views cannot be questioned, and his ideology is closed to argument, a stable pillar in an uncertain world.

Qutb became even more popular after his death because of his willingness to accept martyrdom. In his 2001 autobiography, Ayman al-Zawahiri writes of his great admiration for this martyr who lived and died by his words. Nasser believed he could silence Qutb by killing him, but his execution only etched the message into the minds of Muslims in Egypt and the rest of the world. [231]

WHO FOLLOWS QUTB?

Modern scholars and analysts can trace the flow of Qutb's ideas through Egypt and the Muslim world and we can follow his students from Egypt to Afghanistan and search for evidence of his influence in the speeches of modern terrorists.

Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri provides the clearest, most direct connection between Qutb's thought and modern-day terrorism in his autobiography. In 1992, Zawahiri became the leader Islamic Jihad in Egypt. He traveled frequently to Afghanistan, "the land of jihad" where he met bin Laden. [232] In 1998, Zawahiri united his organization with al-Qaeda. In his autobiography, al-Zawahiri wrote, "Qutb was the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist movements." [233] He wrote, "Sayyid Qutb underscored the importance of monotheism in Islam and that the battle between it and its enemies is at its core an ideological difference over the issue of the oneness of God." [234] Zawahiri, the man often described as the ideologue of al-Qaeda and Usama bin Laden's right-hand man, places himself as the intellectual heir of Qutb.

Usama bin Laden was also aware of Qutb's thought. He attended King 'Abd al-Aziz University where he studied Islam under Sayyid Qutb's brother Muhammad. As well as teaching Islamic studies, Muhammad wrote books and articles to defend and expound the ideas of his brother. Bin Laden's professors laid the foundations of the "jihadi approach" in his mind, though it was

Zawahiri who, years later impressed upon bin Laden Qutb's rhetoric of jihad.[235]

Al-Qaeda uses language that echoes Qutb. Bin Laden warned Iraqis not to participate in elections saying, "[A]nyone who participates in these elections has committed apostasy against Allah" because the Iraqi constitution is "a jahiliyya constitution that is made by man." [236] Bin Laden draws on Qutb's language by using the term jahiliyya to describe a set of laws that are not based in the Qur'an. Zawahiri, too, employs Qutb's language to describe his mission. U.S. intelligence intercepted a letter from Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi dated July 9, 2005. Zawahiri wrote, "It has always been my belief that the victory of Islam will never take place until a Muslim state is established in the manner of the Prophet in the heart of the Islamic world..."[237] Zawahiri echoes Qutb's main theme.

Ultimately, however, I aim to prove that modern terrorists do not follow Qutb - if they did, they would not kill. As I explained in chapter two, Qutb's goal is to free mankind, not to kill them. His motivation is love, not revenge.

However, before I can show that terrorist organizations are not Qutbists in any way or explain why I believe they use his language, I must ask whom the terrorists are. If they do not follow Qutb, what ideology do they follow?

WHOM DO THESE GROUPS ACTUALLY FOLLOW?

Journalists and analysts like Paul Berman and Peter Bergen look for one foundation, one philosopher or jurist who set the machine in motion. No such figure exists, no one treatise paved the way for future fundamentalists and terrorists. These groups do not express - they do not attempt to realize a philosophical dream. These groups react -- react to colonialism, imperialism, political circumstance, modernity, and power dynamic. We can trace influences, but we will never find the one source.

One major influence is the eighteenth-century puritan zealot Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab. While parallels exist between Qutb and Wahhab, the differences are far more significant. Wahhabism better describes modern fundamentalist ideology than Qutbism.

'Abd al-Wahhab sought to rid Islam of corruption - like Qutb, 'Abd al-Wahhab believed that corrupting influences had eroded the pure message of Islam. He passionately opposed philosophy, mysticism, intellectualism, rationalism, and most existing interpretations of the Qur'an. True Islam, 'Abd al-Wahhab believed, demanded a straightforward and literal reading of the Qur'an and

hadith. There was only one true Islam, he said, and no middle road. 'Abd al-Wahhab went far beyond Qutb. He created lists of improper practices and beliefs that would instantly turn a Muslim to an infidel. On his lists he included art, music, and poetry, even in praise of God, because, he believed, imagination and creativity were steps to kufr, unbelief. Most importantly, although 'Abd al-Wahhab's thought may resemble Qutb's thought in some ways, his methods and practices are starkly opposed to those of Qutb.

Qutb declared governments jahili if he believed they enslaved their citizens or barred them from embracing Islam. 'Abd al-Wahhab eagerly branded individuals kafirs, infidels, despite the fact the Qur'an forbids takfir, the practice of calling another Muslim an infidel. Furthermore, Qutb never promotes violence - his motivation is love. 'Abd al-Wahhab, on the other hand, firmly believed it to be the duty of true Muslims to execute a kafir, even if that person claimed to be a Muslim. 'Abd al-Wahhab planned the executions of jurists and scholars with whom he disagreed.

'Abd al-Wahhab led a small number of followers but commanded little respect from other scholars. Most people found his disrespect for Islamic history and diversity of thought to be baffling and unprecedented. His own brother Sulayman was among his sharpest critics. Sulayman claimed his brother had not read and did not understand the history and jurisprudence that he so eagerly dismissed. He had not even read or understood the complete thought of the few scholars he claimed to follow - he merely selected a few passages that supported his actions. Sulayman accused his brother of ignorance, despotism, and of claiming his interpretation was the infallible truth. In a pamphlet denouncing his brother, Sulayman recalled fifty-two hadiths that forbid takfir.

A few desert tribes embraced the simple decisiveness and seeming purity of Wahhabism, but other than that the movement died out, too radical to gain much following. In early twentieth century, however, 'Abd al-Aziz allied with these tribes, adopted Wahhabism, and rebelled against the Ottomans to establish Saudi Arabia. He implemented Wahhabism as the state mandated system. Wahhabism thrived and its ideals spread for several reasons. The victory against the Ottomans cast Wahhabism as an ideology of autonomy and revolution in the eyes of the Muslim world. Today, oil wealth allows the Saudis to exert influence around the Muslim world. In addition, as guardians of Mecca and Medina, the Saudi rulers promote Wahhabism to the millions of pilgrims who visit the holy cities each year. As a result, Wahhabism reemerged and continues to thrive within contemporary Islam. [238]

Muslims who follow 'Abd al-Wahhab's teaching do not call themselves Wahhabis. Wahabism is not a school, they believe, it is not based on the thoughts of a man - Wahabism is pure Islam.

And, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab was an ignorant, intolerant evangelist. As a philosopher, he does not command respect in the Muslim world. The Wahhabis, therefore, found a different banner for their ideology. [239]

Khalid Abou el Fadl creates a new term to describe radical puritan Islamic groups today. He describes the radical puritans of Saudi Arabia as well as the Taliban and al-Qaeda as "Salafabis" -- he describes their ideology as a combination of Wahhabi and Salafi ideology. Or, more specifically, they are Wahhabis under a cloak of Salafism.

Salafism is more difficult to define than Wahhabism and its lack of a concrete definition makes it a useful cloak for Wahhabism. When Muslim reformers founded Salafism in the late nineteenth century, the precept was simple and undeniable for many Muslims: Muslims should follow the teachings of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Companions, al-salaf al-salih. Instead of relying on interpretations and established doctrines, Muslims should refer to the original texts, the Qur'an and hadith, and interpret these texts for themselves. Although Salafism was not interested in history, it did not reject history, intellectualism, or scholarly tradition. Mostly, Salafi scholars were nationalists, eager to mesh Islam with modernity. They mixed and matched traditions and interpretations to arrive at the desired conclusions and create an Islam that would serve modern circumstances. [240]

Salafism, however, compromised its principles in favor of political expedience. Salafists[EC1] supported Wahhabism in hopes of propelling Salafism via already popular Wahhabism. Salafism diluted and shifted its principles in attempts of gaining political favor. As a result, the ideology lost any clear definition. In the 1970s, Wahhabism "proceeded to co-opt the language and symbolism of Salafism...until the two had become practically indistinguishable." [241] Abou el Fadl labels this unity Salafabism and goes on to describe the message, draw, and danger of Salafabism:

...the consistent characteristic of Salafabism is a supremacist puritanism that compensates for feelings of defeatism, disempowerment, and alienation with a distinct sense of self-righteous arrogance vis-à-vis the nondescript "other" - whether the "other" is the West, non-believers in general, or even Muslim women.[242]

Salafabism is an ideology of reaction; it does not unite followers towards a goal but unites followers against certain circumstances. Abou el Fadl goes on to explain that bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and most other Muslim extremists are Salafabis. Like Qutb and Wahhab, Salafabis read their agendas into sacred texts and claim to find the pure truth of Islam. Like Wahhab, they lash

out against the other. We do not, however, find this violence in Qutb. Qutb's ideology does not attack the individual, not with words or takfir, and never with violence.

A LINE BETWEEN QUTB AND THE SALAFABIS

Sayyid Qutb died for his beliefs. He refused exile, refused to flee, and became a martyr. He died, but he would not kill and he rejected violence. Qutb wrote, "[Islam] does not attack individuals." [243] Qutb focused jihad against jahili governments. Even then, Qutb envisioned violence against the leaders as a last resort: he uses the example of the battle of Badr to show that only the most tyrannical leaders should be killed, and only if they show no hope for reform. His intentions for the individual, however, were positive: he invites the individual to freedom and utopia. Not only did Qutb shun violence against the individual, he did not engage in attacks through takfir against individuals; a Muslim may be misguided, but jahiliyya is to blame. His mission is to teach, not kill. Wahhab, on the other hand, mandated execution for any person who did not conform to his precise breed of Islam. While Qutb died for his faith, Salafabis murder for their faith. Qutb's willingness to die proved his faith in God and his dedication to his ideology. He believed he would achieve paradise through death. The Salafabi, however, tries to prove dedication and achieve paradise through murder. A terrorist, a government, or a suicide bomber crosses a line between Qutb and Salafabism when they murder, and crossing this line negates the teachings of Qutb.

Some may argue that al-Qaeda does not intentionally kill civilians, the "prisoners" under Qutb's philosophy. Some may argue that these deaths are incidental to the greater mission to destroy the symbols and leaders of Western countries. True, bin Laden does attack symbols, but his goal is to kill civilians as well. Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and other al-Qaeda leaders issued a fatwa in 1998 declaring that the Americans have declared war on God and the fatwa makes no distinction between leaders and citizens or between military and civilians. "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies - civilians and military - is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it..." [244] He goes on to quote 8:39, the Qur'anic command to fight the unbelievers until there is "no more oppression." Qutb interpreted the same verse as a command to fight the leaders of jahiliyya until their followers -- their "prisoners" -- were free. Bin Laden, on the other hand, interprets this passage as a command to kill all unbelievers until Muslims are free from the oppression of these unbelievers. According to bin Laden, all Americans are the oppressors, military leaders and civilians alike, and all deserve to die.

THE FALSE HISTORY OF IDEAS

The influences and similarities between Qutb and the Salafabis are only superficial, only for show. If we examine their missions and their ideologies, we find no basis of the latter in Qutb. In the end, the only concrete link between Qutb and modern terrorists is the claim that there is a link. The claim comes from both the Western media and the terrorists themselves. Each has their own motivation for establishing a false link.

Every American and European newspaper article and magazine special that describes Qutb repeats corollaries of a single conclusion: modern Islamic fundamentalism traces back to a single point, the philosophy of Sayyid Qutb. Robert Irwin calls Qutb the "the father of modern Islamist fundamentalism." [245] Lawrence Wright calls him "the man behind bin Laden" and "a master of terror." [246] Peter Bergen calls Milestones "the key text of the jihadist movement." [247]

In his New York Times article, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," Paul Berman explains how the Egyptian factions that joined al-Qaeda shaped al-Qaeda's ideology -- Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Islamic Jihad, became "Al Qaeda's top theoretician." Berman continues,

The Egyptian factions emerged from an older current, a school of thought from within Egypt's fundamentalist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, in the 1950's and 60's. And at the heart of that single school of thought stood, until his execution in 1966, a philosopher named Sayyid Qutb -- the intellectual hero of every one of the groups that eventually went into Al Qaeda, their Karl Marx (to put it that way), their guide.... "Milestones" became a classic manifesto of the terrorist wing of Islamic fundamentalism. A number of journalists have dutifully turned the pages of "Milestones" trying to decipher the otherwise inscrutable terrorist point of view. I have been reading some of Qutb's other books, and I think that "Milestones" may have misled the journalists.

Has Berman discovered the other side of Qutb's message? Does he see the foundations in love and compassion, the hopes for freedom for mankind? Does he realize that all the other journalists are incorrect in drawing a straight line between Qutb and al-Qaeda? Berman continues,

"Milestones" is a fairly shallow book, judged in isolation. But "Milestones" was drawn from his vast commentary on the Koran called "In the Shade of the Qur'an.".... By now I have made my way through a little less than half of "In the Shade of the Qur'an," which I

think is all that exists so far in English, together with three other books by Qutb. And I have something to report.

Qutb is not shallow. Qutb is deep. "In the Shade of the Qur'an" is, in its fashion, a masterwork. Al Qaeda and its sister organizations are not merely popular, wealthy, global, well connected and institutionally sophisticated. These groups stand on a set of ideas too, and some of those ideas may be pathological, which is an old story in modern politics; yet even so, the ideas are powerful.[248]

No. His deeper reading has only led him to reaffirm the oft-repeated conclusion. He discovers that In the Shade of the Qur'an illuminates and grounds Milestones, but he never reassess his conclusions surrounding the contents - the conclusions of the "mised journalists." Not only is Qutb's thought the foundation for al-Qaeda, discovers Berman, it is a deep, sophisticated, philosophical foundation.

Despite Berman's claims - we can find the answers to modern terrorism in the philosophy of a long-dead Egyptian writer - he fails to establish any convincing link between Qutb's thought and al-Qaeda's ideology. In fact, he doesn't try. Berman writes this article to attempt to explain modern terrorism, and yet, in an eight thousand-word article about the life and work of Qutb, he does not compare Qutb's ideology to the ideology of any modern terrorist organizations. Therefore, he does not notice the glaring incongruity between Qutb's philosophy and terrorism. In truth, Berman presupposed a connection before he even opened In the Shade of the Qur'an. He assumes that, because leaders of Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group studied Qutb's thought and these groups joined with al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda is a Qutbist organization. Perhaps he believed Zawahiri's claims in Knights Under the Prophet's Banner or heard bin Laden's rhetoric of jihad. If he did, he does not mention it in his article. In his article, Berman presupposes a direct link, a direct flow of thought from Qutb to al-Qaeda. Like other Western journalists, he implicates Qutb without explaining why.

The Western media, like their counterparts in the Arab world, aims to sell stories and answers. In these articles, analysts attempt to wrap modern problems into neat packages, into cause and effect relationships. These stories attempt to establish a history of ideas, a single point of origin to explain why everything went wrong. Every journalist wants to discover the cause of terrorism. So they point to Qutb. I aim to show that, although Qutb's philosophy may exert some influence on modern terrorist organizations, he is not the cause of terrorism. Al-Qaeda ignores whole sections of Qutb's philosophy - if they followed all his teachings, there would be no terror.

Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri do not follow Qutb's philosophy. Berman errors when he connects the two in his New York Times article - a dividing line, a chasm, separates Qutb from these men. Qutb instructs the reader to fight tyranny for the freedom and dignity of every human being. It is not love of humans that motivates Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri today, but power, revenge, and religious fanaticism.

In his first years with Islamic Jihad, al-Zawahiri adhered, at least partially, to Qutb's ideology. In the beginning, al-Zawahiri "thought there was only one way to bring about change: toppling the government through a military coup." [249] He believed violence was the only path to success and he shunned the nonviolent stance of the Muslim Brotherhood. Nevertheless, he only advocated an attack on the highest government authority: Sadat himself. It was not until after the assassination of Sadat that other members of the group convinced al-Zawahiri to support assassinations of other government officials. Before merging with al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad never attacked tourists or civilians. [250] Before associating with bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri would not support action against the United States or Israel. "He always said that the only acceptable form of jihad is armed struggle and the true Muslim should confront the internal enemy, or the 'near enemy,' and only after that the external enemy or the 'far enemy.'" [251] Qutb describes this imperative in both *In the Shade of the Qur'an* and *Milestones*: the vanguard of Muslims must first establish a community by removing immediate obstacles to the formation of that community -- their own weakness and tyrannical rulers who oppose their freedom - and then engage in jihad against the far enemy - the rulers of other societies who imprison their citizens. By combating the far enemy, Muslims spread the community to encompass the entire world. During his first years with the movement, before joining with al-Qaeda, al-Zawahiri remained within the purview of Qutb's ideology: he endeavored only to kill the most powerful tyrant of Egypt.

Eventually, however, al-Zawahiri compromised his principles to gain power and he crossed the line into extreme violence and out of Qutb's philosophy. Zawahiri yielded to pressure from the young members of his group. Young men, recently returned from Afghanistan and eager to utilize their new training, cajoled Zawahiri to expand their targets. "Contrary to his better judgment, he ordered his followers to perform armed operations against some of the top Egyptian figures." [252] Not only did these operations compromise his principles, they proved unsuccessful. The foiled operations led to arrests and public outrage against the group and thereby weakened al-Jihad. In addition, between 1993 and 1995, financial difficulties threatened the survival of Islamic Jihad: Zawahiri was unable to pay the salaries of leaders and members. In short, in the early 1990s, internal divisions, the arrests of important leaders, and financial difficulties forced Zawahiri to

restructure and to change the objectives of his group to ensure its survival. "[The weakening of the group] eventually forced Zawahiri to stop armed operations in Egypt and sign an agreement to join the International Islamic Front for Jihad on the Jews and Crusaders with Osama bin Laden [sic]."[253] By joining this organization in 1998 and pulling his group under its auspices, Zawahiri greatly altered his philosophy. Instead of directing jihad against the near enemy, against the tyrannical rulers of his own nation, he supported jihad against far enemies, Israel and the United States. The organization issued a fatwa commanding Muslims to kill Americans, both military and civilian, and take their money.[254] By joining this group and issuing this fatwa, Zawahiri adopted a completely opposite philosophy from the philosophy he had previously espoused. Zawahiri abandoned and negated Qutb.

Zawahiri first met Usama bin Laden in Afghanistan in 1986. The two men influenced each other immensely. At age twenty-two, bin Laden had joined the jihadi movement in Afghanistan, first fundraising and providing financial support for the mujahideen. In the early 1980s, he brought machinery, trucks, and bulldozers into Afghanistan to aid the building of tunnels, shelters, hospitals, and trenches. Later, he built guesthouses and training facilities for Muslims on their way to fight. Despite the fact that the mujahideen also received support from the U.S., bin Laden preached against the U.S. and called for boycotts on American goods.[255] In 1986, however, Zawahiri "convinced bin Laden of his jihadi approach, turning him from a fundamentalist preacher whose main concern was relief work, into a jihadi fighter, clashing with despots and American troops in the Arab world." [256] Zawahiri expanded bin Laden's mission from a jihad to expel the Soviets from Afghanistan to a jihad to expel all foreigners, tyrannical leaders, and obstacles to the Muslim community. Bin Laden had already studied under Sayyid Qutb's brother Muhammad, but it was Zawahiri who sold him these elements of Qutb's philosophy. But bin Laden had a mission long before he adopted Qutb's words.

Long before he adopted the rhetoric of jihad against tyrannical governments and obstacles to Islam, bin Laden had wanted to kill American civilians. In 1982, years before he met Zawahiri, bin Laden watched the Israelis bomb towers in Lebanon using American-made planes. Bin Laden told al-Jazeera in 2004 that he first got the idea to destroy the Twin Towers at that moment.

As I watched the destroyed towers in Lebanon, it occurred to me to punish the unjust the same way - to destroy towers in America so that it can taste some of what we are tasting and to stop killing our children and women. God knows that it had not occurred to our mind to attack the towers but after our patience ran out and we saw the injustice and inflexibility of the American-Israel alliance toward our people in Palestine and Lebanon, this came to my mind.[257]

Before he spoke of jihad against the West, before he founded al-Qaeda, bin Laden planned to kill Americans. Despite the cruelty he witnessed, despite his hatred for the jahili system, Qutb never writes of revenge. Instead, he says, "We invite people to Islam because we love and we wish them well, although they may torture us." [258] As he describes in his comments on the Battle of Badr, Qutb believes Muslims should welcome their most vicious opponents to Islam. His mission is to save, not kill. Vengeance, however, motivates bin Laden. Zawahiri extracted Qutb's description of jihad from Qutb's complete philosophy and presented this rhetoric to bin Laden. From Zawahiri, bin Laden adopted the rhetoric of jihad, stripped of Qutb's motivations of love and compassion, in order to validate his vengeance.

Years later, bin Laden would exert great influence on Zawahiri, convincing him to ally with al-Qaeda against the Americans and Israelis and cease actions in Egypt. Bin Laden, through his friendship with Zawahiri and the promise of financial support, convinced Zawahiri to reverse his philosophy. [259]

Al-Qaeda strives for power, but power was never Qutb's goal. Qutb describes the leader of his utopia as a just ruler, elected by the umma to ensure adherence to the Shari'a. He provides vague descriptions of the good leader and just government based on the leadership of the four rightly guided caliphs. In Qutb's vision, Muslims first form the community and then the community elects the leaders. The leaders do not impose themselves upon the community. "Establishing the rule of God on earth does not mean that sovereignty is assigned to a particular group of people..." [260] Religion, he says, does not give any person or group license to force their rule onto others. In his letter to Zarqawi, Zawahiri writes that after expelling the Americans from Iraq, his organization will "establish an Islamic authority or emirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate..." Islam will prevail, he says, when the Muslim state encompasses "the Levant, Egypt, the neighboring states of the Peninsula and Iraq." [261] Al-Qaeda wants to rule.

Al-Qaeda hopes to rule an empire that will include Saudi Arabia with its and control of Mecca and Medina and its oil resources. Analysts note that al-Qaeda uses acts of terrorism in Saudi Arabia in an attempt "to bring down the Saudi government as well as to create fear and spread terror." [262] Al-Qaeda hopes to depose the Saudi ruling family in order to take control of the country. "Saudi Arabia is the golden egg. Economically, politically, religiously and socially, it is a perfect fit for al-Qaeda's orientation and ambitions." [263] Al-Qaeda's goal is to obtain power and support for the organization, not to establish freedom and justice for all human beings. The caliphate that Zawahiri hopes to create fits

Qutb's description of tyranny, jahiliyya, the lordship of some men over others.

Without focusing on the details of Qutb's philosophy, Montasser al-Zayyat notes in his biography of Zawahiri that Qutb's work "forms the framework for Zawahiri's ideology and his approach to affecting change.... Zawahiri's love for Qutb is clear in that he quotes him in almost everything he publishes." [264] I argue that Zawahiri originally followed Qutb in some form, but he turned away from Qutb to join with bin Laden. Zawahiri may love Qutb, but he abandoned Qutb's philosophy. Nevertheless, as Zawahiri is deeply familiar with Qutb's work, he must know that he has negated him. If Zawahiri left Qutb behind in the nineties, why, in his 2001 autobiography, does he credit Qutb with inspiring his actions?

How could any militant Muslim read Qutb and claim to follow him even though he preaches non-violence? Why chose an ideologue whom one must read selectively? Why follow teachings that one's own course of action will negate? Why do they claim to follow Qutb when they clearly do not? Why pull this idealist philosopher into a bloody battle?

WHY DO THEY PULL HIM ACROSS THE LINE INTO VIOLENCE?

Sayyid Qutb's philosophy and persona provide a mask, a white screen of respectable moderation, the screen to shield the Wahhabi extremism of fanatical groups like al-Qaeda. Qutb was impassioned, compassionate, erudite, and clean of fanaticism, senseless rage, and slaughter. Qutb is popular and inspirational. Muslims around the world know his name and basic themes of his philosophy. As a martyr, he commands great respect and great legitimacy. Qutb presents a workable public front, an image that Muslims can relate to and the West can attempt to understand. His eloquence gives fundamentalist rage focus and direction. When Zawahiri co-opts Qutb's language, he pulls Qutb's legitimacy onto his own mission.

Qutb validates and justifies their jihad. He describes jihad as a noble religious duty: "The causes of Islamic jihad should be sought in the very nature of Islam and its role in the world, and in its high principles, assigned to it by Allah..." [265] Jihad is natural and unquestionable, every Muslim should fight - it is the will of God. Without actually practicing Qutb's form of jihad, they co-opt his language to justify their action.

The screen deceives Paul Berman -- he believes the mask and misses the truth. He observes that Qutb's philosophy is "deep," "a masterwork." Without any critical assessment, he assumes that al-Qaeda actually stands on this philosophy and is

therefore equally deep. "Al Qaeda and its sister organizations are not merely popular, wealthy, global, well connected and institutionally sophisticated. These groups stand on a set of ideas too, and some of those ideas may be pathological, which is an old story in modern politics; yet even so, the ideas are powerful." [266] Berman fails to glimpse behind the mask. He mistakes al-Qaeda's disguise for the truth.

Zawahiri and bin Laden do not merely deceive Western journalists. They cut and paste Qutb's words to validate their struggle in the eyes of Muslims, to validate their willingness to kill and die in the struggle against jahiliyya. Zawahiri selects themes from Qutb and directs them to his own agenda. For example, Zawahiri quotes Qutb in his autobiography. "Qutb said, 'Brother, push ahead, for your path is soaked in blood. Do not turn your head right or left but look only up to Heaven.'" [267] Lawrence Wright includes this quote in an article for *The New Yorker* about Zawahiri. Both Wright and Zawahiri interpret this quote as Qutb's support for bloody battle and murder in the name of Islam. By my reading of Qutb, both are incorrect. Qutb describes this blood-soaked path in *Milestones*:

[Muslims who call others to Allah] will not be anxious to find help and victory, while traversing this road paved with skulls and limbs and blood and sweat, or be desirous that the decision between Truth and falsehood be made in this world. But if Allah Himself intends to complete the mission to call all men and women to His universal and eternal din through their efforts, He will bring about His Will, but not as a reward for their sufferings and sacrifices. Indeed, this world is not a place of reward." [268]

Examining the blood-soaked road in this context, I make two observations. First, the blood and skulls do not belong to slaughtered enemies in the path of the Islamic movement. There is no mention of murder. Especially in context with the rest of Qutb's writing, in no way should this carnage be interpreted as the blood of non-Muslims, hypocritical Muslims, or even tyrants. In this passage, Qutb describes the role of the martyr, the martyr's "sufferings and sacrifices." Qutb, therefore, refers to the blood of martyrs. The Muslim, he says, must be prepared to suffer and die for the cause, without any hope of reward. Second, Qutb does not expect immediate success or reward. The mission is in God's hands. The believer has a role. By fulfilling the role, the believer carries out the will of God. The believer cannot control when or how success will come. Qutb does not support the killing of innocents and political expediency would not validate murder in his eyes. Qutb's philosophy does not support Zawahiri's decision to murder to ensure the survival of his group.

Al-Qaeda co-opts Qutb's words to inspire and motivate their followers and to validate their mission. As a martyr, Qutb's life

inspires followers to die for jihad. When al-Qaeda takes his words out of context, his words inspire followers to kill for jihad. Stolen pieces of Qutb's philosophy validate the vengeance, the struggle for power, and the murder of civilians.

Qutb recognizes that the Prophet and his companions gave the vicious opponents of Islam a chance to open their hearts to Islam after the Battle of Badr. He is clear that there is no compulsion in religion and that any leader or organization that forces its beliefs onto others is tyrannical, a force of jahiliyya. Qutb presents an impossible vision, an impossible path to an impossible utopia. Nonetheless, his words are powerful, his jihad noble, his motivations pure. He suffered and hoped no other human would suffer as he did. All over the world, Muslims respect him - he died for his beliefs without compromising for one second. Today, terrorist organizations steal his language, strip the compassion and hope for humanity from his message, and co-opt the passion and the validations of hatred for the current system. Qutb provides a mask of legitimate ideology. So far Western media and Western scholars have been unwilling and unable to strip this mask from the true face of Islamic terrorism.