

Shuruh

COMMENTARIES AND EXPLANATIONS
OF
SAYYID QUTUB'S
MILESTONES

INTRODUCTION

SH. MUSTAFA KAMEL MUHAMMAD

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Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah (swt). So we praise Him with what He possesses from His beautiful names and lofty and perfect attributes. We praise Allah for His judgment and decree which encompasses everything in existence.

In the introduction to the Milestones (also translated as The Sign Posts), the author, Sayyid Qutub, highlights the most essential facts and important subjects covered in the book. At the very beginning of the introduction, the author starts with a statement of certainty, to emphasize and to begin to explore the most important problem facing mankind today. This precise description of the present grave situation of mankind is followed by elucidation of its causes, explanation of its treatment and guidance to the straight path.

The author presents these points with such confidence and dignity that we are immediately impressed by his certainty and clearness in vision. This attitude is reminiscent of the Messengers of Allah (peace be on them all), when they faced their people with the challenge of the Truth (Al Haqq) impressing upon them that they had no doubt or hesitation in their mission. Thus the introduction begins with an outright challenge, full of dignity and pride, yet also overflowing with mercy and compassion for humanity. This bold challenge confronts those in power and responsible for mankind's current predicament, and forces the reader to take a clear position – either for or against – based on unambiguous facts and principles. The book straight-a-way challenges jahilliya¹.

Mankind on the Brink of a Precipice

“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...”

There is no doubt that we need to pause and reflect on the nature and significance of being “on the brink of a precipice.” Only if we go deep into understanding this precipice can we make use of these milestones. Our first instinct and desire should be to escape and to be saved from falling into this precipice. Second, we should feel the huge responsibility of saving humanity from this precipice, and thirdly we should be humbled by the enormity of this daunting task. No doubt that this is a big issue and some cursory statements are not enough – rather, great efforts should be made to grasp the nature of this precipice – its multiple colors and hues, its stages, its deep and pervasive influence on human life – indeed we are a part of this state. We live in the firm grasp of this jahilliya, and this is why we need to deeply understand its nature so that we can sense the sign-posts leading out of it and discover the milestones and lessons needed.

¹ Jahilliya is a corrupted state of existence where people have granted obedience and worship to others besides Allah. It is the state of complete ignorance of Divine guidance. Although the root meaning of jahilliya is “ignorance”, as a term it has much broader scope and denotes any time or place when Islam is not the pure living reality in human society. Even our technologically and scientifically advanced era which is supposedly very knowledgeable is jahilliya because Islam is not the pure living reality in society. The term can be used to describe any place, country, or time where jahilliya is prevalent.

The Role of the Messengers of Allah in Saving Mankind Throughout History

Whoever studies human history will observe that whenever mankind strays far away from the path of Allah (swt) and is deeply immersed in jahilliya, a Messenger is sent by Allah (swt) to help mankind reconvert to true guidance and establish the criterion by which those who want to be guided can be saved and distinguish them from those who reject this Truth.

This is the pattern by which all the Messengers were sent – when their people were on the brink of this precipice – as a last resort – as a rescue, a flotation device right before they sunk deep into the precipice.

The Messenger of Allah (sas) says in a hadith, (in meaning) “... Allah (swt) looked at mankind and He disliked them, whether Arab or non-Arab, except remnants of people of the previous books (related by Muslim).” Before sending the Messenger (sas), Allah (swt) had looked at the people and disliked them because they had come out of His Religion, the prescribed way of life that He had set forth for mankind. The people had disrupted the face of the earth and had pretended to be deities themselves, preventing mankind from finding true guidance. They spoiled the earth with all means they could – that is why Allah (swt) hated them – except for few remnants of the people of the previous books.

No doubt that every jahilliya in history was precisely in the same situation when it received a Messenger from Allah (swt). Otherwise they would have further wandered far from the right path, lost in vast darkness and misguidance. We see that Nuh (peace be on him) was the first Messenger of Allah (swt) who was sent to mankind after they had steered far off the right path, previously having been rightly guided since their creation. We can see that the situation faced by Nuh (peace be on him) and the few righteous Believers with him was the same which the advocates of Islam are facing today, characterized by arrogance, refusal for proper guidance, desire for disbelief, unjust ridiculing of Believers, being proud of misguidance, establishment of fake gods and idols, and challenging Allah (swt), demanding proof and mockingly asking for punishment. This is a reality that has been repeated over and over in the history of mankind, resulting in the appearance of a Messenger from Allah (swt) at the time humanity had stood at the brink of the precipice, and Allah (swt) decided to guide and save those who deserved safety.

There is no doubt that the last Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (sas) came when humanity was immersed in all sorts of filth in all aspects of life, and thus was standing on the brink of a precipice. This included people who were not only idol-worshippers, but also those who had deviated but still considered themselves people of the book – all of them had run away from the path of Allah (swt). Salman al Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioned that the last righteous person he was living with from the people of the book swore that he did not know anyone remaining on the right path, except for himself. He then directed Salman toward Madinah, indicating that the last Messenger of Allah (swt) would be emerging in its vicinity. This was the state of affairs before the Messenger of Allah: it was as if all the sources of guidance had died off, all the light sources had darkened. Thus there was nothing left to do but to wait for the next Messenger from Allah (swt), the next sunrise upon mankind.

A survey of contemporary jahilliya

If you look at contemporary jahilliya, there is no doubt that humanity has never deserved Allah’s (swt) displeasure, anger and hate as it does today. This is especially because humanity today possesses the means to go back to Allah (swt) and assure its safety. Allah (swt) has left on the face

of the earth a firm light source for anyone who wants proper guidance. It is conceivable that previous peoples had no such sources and that is why they could not find guidance. Their books had been deviated, and the so-called learned religious men, whether they called themselves Jews or Christians, had invented their own new religions. Mankind was devoid of a book; one they could be confident that it was truly from Allah (swt).

In contrast, humanity today has a book, unadulterated and preserved by Allah (swt):

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴾ [الحجر: ٩]

“We have without doubt sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it from corruption.” (Surah Al-Hijr 15:9)

Furthermore, today’s humanity enjoys the benefit of a history which is full of light: the magnificent story of that group of Believers who took this Book, the Quran, lived by it, practiced it and thereby emerged from the darkness to the proper light. These people who had once been ignorant Arabs would become teachers to the world in such a short period of time. It is well known how these people deemed so weak and insignificant emerged with this guidance to defeat the two major empires in history in less than a quarter of a century. In fact, they were about to establish Islam over the whole world. In addition, humanity still possesses that natural disposition that yearns for proper guidance. Furthermore, humanity currently lives in great misery. Allah (swt) portrays this misery in His words:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا ﴾ [طه: ١٢٤]

“But whosoever turns away from My Message verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” (Surah Ta-Ha 20:124).

No doubt that humanity is living in a miserable, back-breaking state, yet it is still running away and refusing any proper guidance!

In a recent published article, an author wrote about how mankind was rendered unconscious in these modern times. He said that the world lives in unconsciousness and it does not know the way back to the pleasure of Allah (swt). He talked about how this unconsciousness separated people from the Truth and prevented them from seeing the light and therefore ensured that they remain in a miserable life. Jahilliya has become specialized in the misguidance of people, deviating them from the Truth and making certain that they remain in a semiconscious or even completely unconscious state.

There is no doubt that whoever looks at the life of jahilliya is utterly surprised! Are there no wise people among them? Even those who are interested in correcting the situation look into means which are far from achieving real results. This is because they have deviated from the real Truth and in fact they do not want the Truth. They merely want to survive so as to continue in the same way of life. They know that the Truth which is in fact the only means of saving themselves will cost them and bring them something which they do not like. Thus even the wise people do not look for the Truth, since they are unwilling to follow this Truth.

Therefore, humanity is currently standing on the brink of a precipice. The Quran spoke to the first generation of Believers about this:

﴿ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٠٣]

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.” (Surah Aali Imran 3:103)

﴿ أَفَمَنْ أَشَسَّ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَشَسَّ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾ [التوبة: ١٠٩]

“Which then is best? - he that layeth his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure? - or he that layeth his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? and it doth crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guideth not people that do wrong.” (Surah At-Tawba 9:109)

Thus the brink of the precipice is a true state on which humanity stands upon whenever it deviates from the Religion of Allah (swt) and His Messengers (peace be on them all). This is why we need to know this reality and danger.

The Quran describes it further:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَفَهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوَىٰ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ﴾ [الحج: ٣١]

“Being true in faith to Allah, and never assigning partners to Him: if anyone assigns partners to Allah, is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far-distant place.” (Surah Al-Hajj 22:31)

The person mentioned here reached the lowest point because he associated another deity with Allah (swt) and continued in this loss. This is when the Messengers of Allah come to prevent people from falling off this cliff into the precipice. Thus whoever desires to believe in Allah (swt) is saved, and whoever desires deviance is allowed to do so. This is mankind's current situation.

When we talk to the people, we should talk confidently, being completely satisfied of our position. Indeed, we are representatives of a much higher position, therefore we must challenge them. This requires that we should have fully understood this Truth and become certain. We are proud and happy and insisting, so we can face the whole world. In addition, we need to be powerful and brave. We also should have no doubt that they are on the brink of a precipice and they will all stand against us.

We notice nowadays in the media that the most annoying thing for jahilliya is that Islamic groups have adopted an unidirectional thinking. They accuse the Islamic groups of dividing the world into strictly two categories: right or wrong, believing or non-believing, true or false. Thus these groups do not give the jahilliya any chance to argue, apologize or rationalize. This humiliates the jahilliya, because the Muslims insist on looking at jahilliya as the loosing and despised party. Jahilliya begs for dialogue saying: “talk to us, accept the other opinion – you may not be absolutely correct.” This begging shows that they are defeated, despite that they are trying to show that they are in power and on the attack. Jahilliya feels humiliated in the hands of these

people who do not give them a chance for conversation, reconciliation, or discussion. This is what they say in their media about the Muslims: “Those ignorant people do not know Islam, and this is why they call others as non-Muslims (disbelievers or kafir).” This annoys them very much, but it is clearly the Truth, as Allah (swt) reveals:

﴿ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾ [الكافرون: ١-٦]

“Say ‘O disbelievers (1) I do not worship what you worship (2) Nor you are worshippers of what I worship (3) Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship (4) Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship (5) For you is your religion and for me is my Religion’ (6).” (Surah Al-Kafiroon 109:1-6)

Jahilliya is not on the brink of a precipice due to the danger of complete annihilation, but rather this is a consequence of its disobedience and its deviation from Allah’s (swt) way. This is the end result of any civilization in history whose people start to follow their own desires and reach a high degree of indulgence, over-confidence and grandiosity. The danger of its destruction due to its deviation is merely a symptom of the real disease. As an example, death is an endpoint and consequence, not the disease itself. The disease is the abnormality that the patient suffers.

Values and their importance in life

The true disease that mankind suffers is its loss of vital values. The author uses “values” here to pertain to everything great, beautiful and true in human life- whether this is belief, behavior, manners, or development. The human being is human due to these values, without which he is no longer human.

Humanity came into existence the moment it recognized its values. It is only when the soul was blown into the shape of mud fashioned by Allah (swt) that Adam (peace be on him) started to be human. Before that, he was just mud. At first, the angels were looking at him not knowing what he was, but after his soul was blown into him, they found him to be something quite different - a unique creature, with nothing similar to him in the whole universe. Then, the angels were ordered to prostrate to Adam:

﴿ فَأَازَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ [الحجر: ٢٩]

“When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him.” (Surah Al-Hijr 15:29)

The soul is what made the piece of mud into a human being, and gave it his values. Thus if the soul guides the person, he becomes human, and the reverse occurs if the mud guides him. He becomes worse than animals, or even non-living things:

﴿ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ۚ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾ [الفرقان: ٤٤]

“Or thinkest thou that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle;- nay, they are worse astray in Path.” (Surah Al-Furqan 25:44)

The Quran illustrates this fact through the example of some people who have deviated from fulfilling their responsibilities and adopting the Truth offered to them by Allah (swt):

﴿ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾ [الجمعة: ٥]

“The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet apply it not, is as the likeness of the ass carrying books. Wretched is the likeness of folk who deny the revelations of Allah. And Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.” (Surah Al-Jumu’a 62:5)

Take the donkey who does not appreciate the value of what it carries and does not understand it or derive benefit – the human being who knows the Truth but does not apply this Truth is even worse than the donkey that is excused by the nature of its creation. Thus if the donkey has the appearance and mind of a human who should be able to think, then he is worse:

﴿ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۗ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرَكهُ يَلْهَثْ ۗ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ فَاقْضُصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٧٥-١٧٦]

“And recite to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), but he threw them away; so Shaitan (Satan) followed him up, and he became of those who went astray. (175) And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he still lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs; So relate the story; perchance they may reflect. (176).” (Surah Al-Araf 7:175-176)

There is no doubt that humankind whom Allah has given His signs and revelations has an enormous chance to return to the right path and elevate themselves since they have been given knowledge and free will. Nevertheless, the masses today have passed these great gifts by and followed their vain desires, and inclined to their earthly nature, and thus their similitude is that of a dog:

﴿ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٤٤]

“Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle- nay, they are even farther astray from the Path. (i.e. even worse than cattle).” (Surah Al-Furqan 25:44)

Allah (SW) considers them to be lacking of understanding and hearing, and instead, considers them to be worse than cattle.

﴿ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴾ [الأنفال: ٢٢-٢٣]

“For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb,- those who understand not (22) If Allah had found in them any good. He would indeed have made them listen: (As it is), if He had made them listen, they would but have turned back and declined (Faith) (23)” (Surah Al-Anfaal 8:22-23)

﴿ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ [الأنفال: ٥٥]

“Verily, The worst of moving (living) creatures before Allah are those who disbelieve, - so they shall not believe.” (Surah Al-Anfal 8-55)

There is no doubt when humans get deeply stuck in mud, and when the darkness overcasts the light of Truth they become below the level of animals and even worse. Therefore, if people have a mind and sensibility, they will refuse to rush headlong into being animals, deserving the final fate that Allah has threatened them with, ending up in the Hell-Fire. And they will say:

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴾ [الملك: ١٠]

“Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!” (Surah Al-Mulk 67:10)

The European mindset and the role of the Jews in leading humanity towards the precipice

Nevertheless, jahilliya insists, in many cases, on cultivating the animalistic aspects of people. Moreover, jahilliya enjoys being like animals, and may even feel sorry to be human. Contemporary European “revival” is based on the concept of the animalization of human beings. This is demanded not only by intellectuals and thinkers but it is also popularly demanded by the community. They want to be animals, and refuse to be human beings. They insist on animalization. Allah the Lord Almighty and Exalted says:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴾ [الإسراء: ٧٠]

“And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Tayyibat (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment.” (Surah Al-Isra 17:70)

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ

لَكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٠]

“And The Lord Almighty and Exalted says: “Behold thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth’...” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30)

Nevertheless, people do not want to be the honored representatives (vicegerents, caliphs or khalifas) of Allah (swt). They refuse to be human; instead they want to be animals. The contemporary revival is based on the foundation of human animalization. Darwin theory, which is considered in European history as the mother of theories, has been used as an excuse to rescue humanity out of the tyranny of the Church, from the tyranny of religion, from the suppression of monasticism and from the ill-perceived suppression of purification. Darwinism came to give them so-called “relief,” thus, the people held on to this ideology. When Darwin initially came to talk about the aspects of variation in biology as an ascendant ladder, he was neither talking about ideology, nor on the intellectual, cultural and social aspects of mankind’s history. However, he was hypothesizing about the biological relationships between living beings and how they may have evolved. Then the Jews came and utilized this theory to contrive all sorts of destructive ideas for human life. This gave Europe an excuse to disobey the Church, even to abandon the religion itself. This is because the Jews wanted to get the Christians away from religion in general and even not to be guided to a better religion, preventing them from being able to correct their

religious understanding. Jews had a benefit out of this since they aimed at removing all religious barriers because the Jews themselves were persecuted in the name of religion. In that era, when a European would borrow money from a Jew, he would treat him like a dog, and would say to the Jew: put the money on the table and don't touch me with your hand. Thus the Jews suffered violent persecution. At the onset of the revolt on the Church, when people exclaimed: "leave none of the priests and aristocrats alive!" the Jews were keen to keep the people away from religion. In fact, initially there was only a revolt on the Church and not on the religion. However, the Jews came and extended it to be a revolt on the religion, a revolt on Allah (swt) and a revolt on all values. They had utilized Darwin's theory and made it the foundation of the rebellion that they had initiated in Europe.

Darwin was not the first to come up with evolutionary theory. A Frenchman, named Lamarck had preceded him. Lamarck had suggested the same theory, however, the Jews could not utilize it at that time because the Church was strong. But when the church became weak, the people started to stir, and the revolution against the Church dawned. They could make use of Darwin's theory and its implications to deviate Europe and to prevent humanity from ever returning to Allah (swt).

The first implication of Darwin's theory is to deny The Creator. Darwin says: "The suggestion of intellectual or deliberate power in the process of life or creation is nothing but intervention of natural elements in a pure mechanical process." They adopted the statements of Darwin to supposedly confirm –on a scientific basis- that there is no Creator, and that life initiated from mere mechanical considerations and by pure accidental chance. Thus, as they say, there was no need to propose that there was any deliberate intellect behind the creation process. When they denied the Creator (swt) they pulled the carpet beneath the feet of the Church which was already overburdening the people in the name of God. Thus, they concluded, if they brought God down then they would be rid of the Church, because Jesus had said: "I have bestowed my power to my Church."

The other implication of Darwin's theory is the animalization of the human. Religion embraces the human in a halo of grandeur and honor. Humans are the vicegerents of Allah (swt) on earth and He created them by His own hands (swt) and preferred them over all other creatures. So the human has a great status that prevents him from degradation. The people were annoyed with the Church and its prohibition of many things. They wanted to go back to the barbaric times of the Greeks and Romans. Thus came about the idea of human animalism – being descendants of high level apes, and high apes being from lower apes, and those from lower mammals etc. Thus humans were supposedly just that. They were deemed to be at the end of a long chain, and still they were just animals.

Since the human was now considered just an animal, then there was no need for him to have manners, religion or values. Any attempt to raise him above this rank would be deemed "ignorance" and "unscientific." It was essential for the human to be "liberated" from his humanity and persist on his animalism. This idea became the basis on which all the European scholars after Darwin continued. All of them launched from this fixed point that the human is an animal; then they disputed about his shape. Freud would say that he is a sexual animal, and the behavioral school would suggest that he is a being without free will, thinking or choice, merely moving by conditioned reflexes; thus he is not responsible for his actions. Then existentialism, a man made philosophy and ideology, came to make the human free in living his life any which way he likes.

Thus the theory of the animal origin of the human being has very dangerous implications which remove all limitations from his life. If animals can mate anywhere, why shouldn't humans do the same? They actually succeeded in allowing humans to have sex in the streets. Then protesting against this became a form of retrograde thinking and reaction and interference in the right of others and oppression. From this point of view, the s-called civilization was encouraged to adopt the attitude that if you see such a thing, it should be considered normal, as if one is eating or drinking: the person is merely fulfilling one of his natural desires; if he is hungry, he eats, and if he is thirsty, he drinks, and when he has a sexual urge, he satisfies it anywhere. Why do you look at this strangely? So you must be a backward person. Then this jahili person tries to sue you, because you are trying to prevent him from his natural rights. So they actually succeeded in turning the human being into an animal, a sexual animal, as Freud said. Freud stated that any restriction on sexual freedom is a restraint on human happiness. He considered that the ideal behaviors are oddities or aberrations. He considered that civilization was built at the expense of human happiness because it utilized a part of his energy in science and discovery and deprived him from free animal life in the jungles. The animal did not establish a civilization, thus why should the human?

We mean by these details only to view deeply the way of western thinking and their up-side-down views in these great issues, and to know where they exactly stand. They are not only refusing Allah's (swt) orders or in suspicion of His existence, but they are also unbinding the human being from his own true nature and what makes him sublime. Animalization of humans has become a public requirement. Whoever does not want to become an animal has no place in European civilization. Thus they want to powerfully impose this everywhere, through social meetings, feminist conferences, and prostitution. In Europe or America, you find graphic pictures and invitation for prostitution in buses or underground subways. In Holland women are shown in shop fronts completely nude with price tags per hour. Also gay men are shown the same way – as if one is buying a shoe or a dress. No jahilliya had ever done a similar thing since the beginning of human history with the same degree of boldness as contemporary jahilliya. This is what motivates us to purify this jahilliya, or die trying, refusing any compromise. This situation cannot be accepted by any clean man, especially if he is a Believer in the Messenger's mission.

The complete unbinding of humanity from the vital values has led to this degree of humiliation and loss, whether in the east or west. It may be said that the eastern block (communism) had collapsed due to this degradation of humanity. This may be true, but it actually fell down as a whole system, not just as ideas especially among eastern communities. It fell down because this was inherent in its existence. It was later destroyed intentionally due to the fear that those people who were mistreated and humiliated might search for an alternative with the true Religion of Believers. Especially since the influence of the Afghani Jihad movements started to affect the Islamic regions of the Soviet Union and people there started to hope and imagine that they too might obtain freedom if they did the same. This danger was appreciated by the anti-Islamic planners and so they quickly degraded the Soviet Union in a very quick and silly manner, even astonishing themselves. It fell down very quickly and the east was embraced by the west and given the promise of unlimited freedom, wealth and thereby kept away from searching for the true Religion.

The West is unfit for leading the world; humanity needs new leadership

Whether east or west, all are far away from the vital values, their Creator, and the backbone of society – the family. All the European ideas aim to destroy the family. The family is the origin of goodness and values in people's lives. They seek to destroy it so as to destroy the cornerstone of humanity and host of vital values. As a result of loss of values, Europe has become unfit for leadership, and thus it is essential to have new leadership, and this is Qutub's next point:

“It is essential for mankind to have new leadership! The leadership of mankind by Western man is now on the decline, not because Western culture has become poor materially or because its economic and military power has become weak.”

This is clearly the reality in front of us. The West is not materially weak or poor. Nor is it weak from a militaristic aspect. The United States considers itself now the master of the world. It does whatever it likes, military-wise or economically. All these agreements (like JAT) and others show that it is gaining more power both in her economy and military.

“The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind.”

So this arrangement will fall down because it has already lost its vital values, the vital values that are the cornerstones on which any human structure is built:

“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 such high ideals and values as have so far remained undiscovered by contemporary 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.”

When Qutub speaks about the new values, he does not mean theoretical Islam. The matter is not in the realm of reference and theory, but rather it is a matter of practice and application in the real world. Humanity currently does not practice Islamic values - neither in part of the world which had been formerly Islamic, nor in the long-established jahili world. Therefore, the values which are upheld by Islam are completely different than those practiced today, in spite of their existence in the books and in Islamic history. These values would be considered completely new relative to the actual life of contemporary mankind.

Contradictions in behavior of the so called Muslims in our countries are clearly visible in our daily lives. For instance, in spite of seeing many women wearing hijab (outer-coverings), these same women walk in the street full of makeup, displaying themselves with different ornaments and dress in attention-grabbing clothes. This contradictory behavior clearly indicates that they do not understand Islam and, moreover, they do not understand the essential goal of hijab. Quite often you can see ladies doing Umrah (ritual performed in Makkah similar to the pilgrimage, the Hajj) and going around the Kaabah wearing attractive red clothes which means that the concept of hiding their attractiveness, the meaning of screening themselves and the concept of chastity are not understood. The issue of arousal of men by the beauty and attraction of women is also not understood. Hence hijab, from their point of view has no value. The whole issue is not in just hiding the body. The point is that coverage of the body demonstrates the concept of chastity, decency and purity, so that the woman's body does not become the ultimate goal of hungry eyes and does not become a means for exciting men's desires.

Islam with its correct values and way of life is the only system capable of providing leadership to humanity

Thus Islam presents completely new values, and at the same time, preserves and appreciates the material achievements of Europe. This is because Islam does not reject and does not refuse material life in itself and does not discard or forbid legal, wholesome and pure things. Islam nevertheless considers reconstructing this earth according to certain values and makes this our duty in this life. Thus, there should be no fear from the guidance of Islam to humankind since part of this responsibility is to preserve the material achievements of mankind.

Qutub continues:

“Islam is the only System which possesses these values and this way of life. The period of the resurgence of science has also come to an end. This period, which began with the Renaissance in the sixteenth century after Christ and reached its zenith in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, does not possess a reviving spirit.

All nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies which have appeared in modern times, and all the movements and theories derived from them, have also lost their vitality. In short, all man-made individual or collective theories have proved to be failures.

At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of Islam and the Muslim community has arrived.”

There is no doubt that mankind and especially the formerly Islamic world blunders in an illogical manner. Those in the non-Islamic world, including the Christians, idolatrous pagans, communists, and-so-on, know what they want and honestly declare their most fundamental belief: hedonistic self-gratification, thus they strive for decadency and even behave in an extreme way to satisfy their lusts. In contrast, the so-called Islamic world is hypocritical as they raise the banner of extremely high Islamic values and talk about Islamic issues in great clearness, but this is just talk and has no substance. Whenever you listen to Quranic radio stations and hear how they talk about Islam, about ethics, about the family, cooperation, cleanliness and purification etc., you hear wonderful talk and values. The rulers are forced to say similar words in their conferences. However, the reality is completely opposite to Islam. In the whole world today, there is no place living in such a state of schizophrenia, confusion and blunder as our nation which had once been an Islamic society.

The need for Islam has once again emerged at this horrible period of blunder and disturbance in our nation. There must be a certain way of re-establishing Islam which is compatible with the current reality of this nation. How can we convey Islam to this nation? There must be something newly invented, new tools or anything which will help us fulfill this duty by one way or another.

“At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of Islam and the Muslim community has arrived -the turn of Islam, which does not prohibit material inventions. Indeed, it counts it as an obligation on man from the very beginning of time, when Allah deputed him as His representative on earth, and regards it under certain conditions as worship of Allah and one of the purposes of man's creation.”

How can Islam play its assigned role?

In order to extract people from the darkness and bring them to the light, there must be a living movement which is attained through a collection of mankind, through a nation representing Islam. This is one of the features of Islam as Allah (swt) has stated:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ﴾ [الرعد: ١١]

“Verily! Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves.” (Surah Ar-Rad 13:11)

Qutub explains:

“Islam cannot fulfill its role except by taking concrete form in a society, rather, in a nation; for man does not listen, especially in this age, to an abstract theory which is not seen materialized in a living society.”

Humanity wants to see action. Everything that has a real existence has a stronger influence on the people compared with the most elaborated theories. Islam must be established in a form of real live collection of people representing the morals of the Islamic nation and its way of thinking regarding all aspects of life (morals, behavior relations, etc.). This society must be established because the Islamic world is just talking about Islam without implementing it in reality. Otherwise the current state of affairs will become a false witness and misrepresentation against Islam confirmed by the contradiction of so-called Islamic speakers and their behavior. Examples of this abound in the countries furthest from and least practicing Islam (like Western part of Arabic countries and Lebanon) as well as countries that pretend to follow Islam like Saudi Arabia. None of these countries apply or follow Islam. Jahilliya knows this reality in spite of exterior appearances, and in spite of the thin cover that hides the most deviant of societies.

What is going to convince people with Islam? There must be a group of people living according to Islam. This is why Qutub said:

“The Muslim community does not denote the name of a land in which Islam had once resided, nor is it a people whose forefathers lived under the Islamic system at some earlier time.”

This is the reality of this age. The whole so-called Islamic world speaks about its previous glory but actually, nothing is being done to truly uphold Islam. The irony is that the nation’s scholars or those who pretend to be scholars do not even realize this issue: The Muslim nation is not based on inheritance or a place, but rather, as Qutub states:

“...what defines the nation is a people whose life, thoughts, situations, systems, and values arise from the Islamic way. This nation, with these characteristics, is no longer in existence on earth today after the disappearance of the governing law of Allah (swt) from the whole globe.”

This is not a new definition, but it is the Truth, and despite its simplicity, seems odd for the disbelievers. Thus, based on this definition, Qutub says:

“...then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form.”

While endorsing this definition theoretically, we find that scholars of Al-Azhar (long-standing institution of Islamic learning in Egypt) issue a decree proclaiming that “our government does not reject any of Allah’s (swt) orders.” Does this nation, with all of its laxity and loss, deserve to be designated as a Muslim nation? Does it truly “not reject” any of Allah’s (swt) orders? It is

obvious that these scholars just memorize books and only argue in technical matters of jurisprudence (fiqh). Thus they are not true scholars, but rather, they are ignorant, even disloyal and deceivers. Indeed, those who would make this declaration are ignorant, disloyal and are deceivers. They still think that they are Believers. This is the simple Truth, but they do not want to realize the plain and simple Truth.

It is essential to re-establish this nation for Islam to be able to fulfill its expected role in leading humanity once again. Islam cannot stand alone – it can only stand through an Islamic group. Re-establishing this nation has its own methodology. It is essential to arouse this nation from underneath this heavy accumulation of non-sense ideas and systems which have no relation with Islam, even though people pretend that they are in the so-called Islamic world. This tremendous accumulation, is not just the product of recent years, but rather has been collecting for a very long time, ever since the fall of the wise successors of the Messenger of Allah (sas) (the first four Caliphs of The Messenger of Allah). As any accumulation, it started little by little, and heaped up gradually.

Deviation in Islamic history

There is no doubt that this accumulation started to heap up since the transformation of the period of the wise Caliphs which were freely elected, only to be transformed to a kingship to be inherited. Although early scholars allowed this inheritance, this was only as a temporary measure to avoid riots and turbulence. Any society needs wise, sincere and adherent leaders – this was not the case for most of the familial successors. This explains the accumulation in Islamic history as demonstrated in the wrong behaviors, multiple divisions and parties. If there were leaders like Omar ibn Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) who were protecting the nation to the degree where he would concern himself with the welfare of an animal in Iraq, fearing to be asked about this one day - if governors were at that level of awareness such parties and divisions would not exist. How would such parties like “the secluded ones,” “the determinists,” “Safa brothers,” or other philosophy groups exist? How was it that they in fact did exist, had followers and power to remove the Holy Black Stone from its place and get away with it? How could this happen if the nation did not enter a state of coma and deterioration? No doubt that the succession method of establishing rulers (Caliphs) brought variable people. For instance, Al Mo'tassem was very powerful – he conquered the Romans – but he also participated in the deviant party that considered the Quran as a creature. He also participated in the torture of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. One could also consider the cases of Al-Maamoon and Al Watheq, who were just as powerful but were also affected by Roman and Greek philosophies and Mu'tazali thought.

On the other hand, we look at Omar ibn Abdulaziz who succeeded some good rulers like Abdul Malik ibn Marwan and Suleiman ibn Abdalmalik who were not at the level of Omar ibn Khattab in his Religion and straightness. Omar ibn Abdulaziz was able to change the whole nation in about two years. Before him, people were boasting with one another about how many houses or palaces they owned, or how many girl servants they possessed, or how much money they earned. During his days, they asked each other about the night prayers and memorization of the Quran.

Omar ibn Abdulaziz did not achieve all this by means of force, nor by the power of compulsion, but by being a model of piety and devoutness.

When his governor in Africa sent him a message informing him that the alms have exceeded the treasury, and asked him what should he do, Omar told him to liberate the slaves, and then to

drop the tribute from the weak people of the book (Christian and Jews). Even after all that, there was still more money. How did this happen?!

Also take the example when Omar ibn Abdulaziz sent a letter to the governor of Egypt telling him to go and check on a poor woman who had complained about her collapsed chicken coop. He then actually sent his governor to go and rebuild her chicken coop.

A common woman from the Muslims was able to complain to Omar telling him: "Omar, you were placed by Allah to watch over us, and you slept."

He did not use the power of weapons nor assault, but he stood-up straight and so did the nation. In spite of the uprightness of Omar, his son Abdul Malek was still accusing him of inattention!

So the case is not a case of mere words, but it is a case of work and action combined.

It is said that Omar was poisoned because Yazeed Bin AbdulMalek and his brother Hesham were fed up from him because he took all the money of Banni Ummaya and returned it back to the public treasury house. From that time all the disasters came incessantly. We notice how disastrous were the princes in the reign of Banni Abbas, especially in the second period – the weak period: It was ridiculous; a child of seven years was appointed as the Caliph and was manipulated by his retinues from every corner.

Therefore, we say that the decay started early. The seeds of jahilliya had been sowed long ago, though it was possible for the people to come back from this. What Moaaweya did, namely appointing his son as Caliph did not have to be established as a law to be followed thereon. He tried his best to manage, since he was up against trials and had fear for his people, thus there might be some excuse to explain his actions and Allah may forgive him or praise him for that. Nevertheless, why did the institution of crown-prince-ship continue until nowadays as if it was the only mean for rulers to come?

When this happened, disassociation occurred between the head and the body of the nation. People were no longer interested in choosing the ruler, because they were no longer involved in the process and so gaps existed, and kept growing larger day by day with the corruption of the rulers, corruption of hearts, and the appointment of corrupt biased government scholars. Therefore, corruption engulfed the people and the whole life became corrupted.

There is no doubt that the decay and debris accumulated generation after generation, becoming extremely large. If we look at it now, we will find that the heap is enormous and contemporary jahilliya has managed to benefit from the negative aspects of the past by utilizing and employing it against Islam.

The first step of saving humanity from the precipice: revival of Islam

Qutub continues:

"It is necessary to revive that Muslim community which is buried under the debris of the man-made traditions of several generations, and which is crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings, and which, in spite of all this, calls itself the 'world of Islam.'

I am aware that between the attempt at 'revival' and the attainment of 'leadership' there is a great distance, as the Muslim community has long ago vanished from existence and from

observation, and the leadership of mankind has long since passed to other ideologies and other nations, other concepts and other systems. This was the era during which Europe's genius created its marvelous works in science, culture, law and material production, due to which mankind has progressed to great heights of creativity and material comfort. It is not easy to find fault with the inventors of such marvelous things, especially since what we call the 'world of Islam' is completely devoid of all this beauty.

But in spite of all this, it is necessary to revive Islam. The distance between the revival of Islam and the attainment of world leadership may be vast, and there may be great difficulties on the way; but the first step must be taken for the revival of Islam."

There is no other solution other than the revival of Islam. Jahilliya - as we see it – will not let go easily what it has built, and will fight with utmost aggression whoever attempts to destroy its existence, its material power, or culture. We must be aware about the nature of this battle. We must be aware that even though we are weak in material power and numbers we will have to face entire nations, and not only nations, but the whole of mankind which has progress, power, persistence and money at its disposal in its confrontation with us, a mere handful of people having only their faith - but there is no other way.

The first step is establishing a revival, and we have seen this accomplished before in the history of mankind: great ideas have been established initially in only one man's heart, then, by persistence, civilizations and nations were born. Islamic expansion starts from one Believer's heart; one heart which shines and lights up the others' hearts. So the first step is the attempt to establish the revival, because there is no other step before it and there is no alternative.

The qualifications of the Islamic community for leading humanity

Qutub continues:

"If we are to perform our task with insight and wisdom, we must first know clearly the nature of those qualities on the basis of which the Muslim community can fulfill its obligation as the leader of the world. This is essential so that we may not commit any blunders at the very first stage of its reconstruction and revival.

The Muslim community today is neither capable of nor required to present before mankind great genius in material inventions, which will make the world bow its head before its supremacy and thus re-establish once more its world leadership. Europe's creative mind is far ahead in this area and at least for a few centuries to come we cannot expect to compete with Europe and attain supremacy over it in these fields."

So we do not proceed by this qualification, even though attainment of this qualification itself is an Islamic demand. Although we may aspire to having such qualifications and excel in material progress, the reality is that we do not have this now. It is not expected – while Europe has already attained supremacy – that we proceed by this qualification because we cannot compete with Europe in this field even after centuries.

Thus we must search for another qualification to propose to mankind:

"Hence we must have some other quality, that quality which modern civilization does not possess...."

“To attain the leadership of mankind, we must have something to offer besides material progress, and this other quality can only be a faith and a way of life which on the one hand conserves the benefits of modern science and technology, and on the other fulfills the basic human needs on the same level of excellence as technology has fulfilled them in the sphere of material comfort. And then this faith and way of life must take concrete form in a human society - in other words, in a Muslim society.”

The truly human society is only the Muslim society, and there cannot be a human society except for it being truly Muslim...

Therefore, any society is either characterized as being human or being below animals. When it is a Muslim society, then it is human, and jahili society cannot be described as a human society. This really frustrates jahilliya; we deal with it as being something else rather than human. They are something else, and not even animal, but lower. We cannot say that they are animal because this would be unfair to animals and an injustice. Animals perform their role; they are respectful creatures that carry out their mission, just as plant life performs its mission and fulfills its role. Jahilliya does not even rise up to this level; they are distorted and deformed societies, and cannot be called in any other way other than being non-human societies. Therefore, the Muslim society is the only human society.

Qutub continues:

“The whole world is steeped in jahilliya...”

Notice he said: **“the whole world is...”** so he did not exclude anything: **“the whole world is steeped in jahilliya...”**

Certainly if Sayyid Qutub had observed any spot on earth which does not live in jahilliya he would have mentioned so, he knows exactly what he is saying:

“If we look at the sources and foundations of modern ways of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in jahilliya, and all the marvelous material comforts and high-level inventions do not diminish this jahilliya. This jahilliya is based on rebellion against Allah's sovereignty...”

So the world now lives completely in jahilliya. It is from the nature of jahilliya to deny the dignity that Allah (swt) has bestowed on mankind. Indeed the highest dignity for mankind is achieved when mankind completely and exclusively worships Allah and upholds His authority and sovereignty in society. Thus when jahilliya rebels against Allah's sovereignty and authority and forces mankind to obey others besides Allah, jahilliya certainly does degrade human dignity.

In this respect, Islam is privileged to be the only way of life that honors the human being and gives him distinction and dignity:

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾ [الإسراء: ٧٠]

“We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation.” (Surah Al-Isra 17:70)

The Muslim who holds to this way of life, that preserves human dignity, must feel strong, proud, secure and confident. However, we do not say that he should be arrogant; there is a difference

between having high status, and being arrogant; difference between confidence and being conceited. We have to know that we are holding on to the Truth, but we do not smother over people with this Truth like the Church did before, nor do we become supercilious over people because we sense that we are privileged, advantaged and overconfident.

This is where the roads separate between the life in Islam and jahilliya. Islam liberates mankind from worshiping anything except Allah (swt), whereas jahilliya forces mankind to worship anything rather than worshiping Allah (swt) so it makes him a worshiper of false deities. We know of so many unfortunate cases in the history of humanity, and even nowadays, where people worship others in some form or another, or where people worship animals like even cows.

So Islam liberates mankind from any forms of worship except for Allah (swt), while jahilliya worships everything and anything except Allah. This is an extremely important point of separation and we should understand this clearly; we should never accept half truths or half solutions.

Yes, there are people who say: "we worship Allah, pray and fast, go to churches, lead in masjids, visit temples..." but what about the remaining activities of their lives? Despite the performed rituals that they claim is for Allah, they then go and establish man-made laws, obtain their values from humans, and determine their relationships through humanly legislated laws. They divide the sovereignty and authority between Allah and humans so divinity no longer belongs only to Allah, and instead it becomes a partnership between Allah (swt) and humans.

Dividing up the sovereignty among many, in the Islamic understanding, is the greatest form of polytheism or idolatry, and this Allah (swt) never accepts for all sovereignty belongs to Him.

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Allah (swt) said:

"I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate. Thus he who does an action for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action renounced by Me and granted to him whom he associated with Me."² It was related by Muslim.

Allah (swt) also states in the Noble Quran:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ [النساء: ٤٨]

"Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin Most heinous indeed."

(Surah An-Nisa 4:48)

So whoever associates partners with Allah, Allah (swt) expels him from being among His worshipers. Such a person is never considered a worshiper of Allah even if he believes in Allah, and even if he submits some of the rituals and refers back to Allah on some of the laws such as civil affairs. Allah will never accept this from him and Allah expels him from Divine mercy because he never actually worshiped Allah exclusively.

(أنا أغنى الشركاء عن الشرك، فمن عمل عملاً أشرك فيه معي غيري فهو للذي أشرك وأنا منه بريء) رواه مسلم من حديث أبي هريرة -رضي الله عنه. 2

What is the mission of the Islamic revival and what makes it unique?

Therefore, we are able to conclude that the sole mission for Muslims and those who want Islamic revival is to communicate, inform and declare the true Religion of Allah (swt) to all of mankind.

This is our only job, and we have no duty beyond this; we do not want to be specialists in Islamic jurisprudence; we do not want to be grammar linguistics (such as Sibaweh), nor to specialize in basic sciences, like chemistry or physics. This is not our role, not our specialization.

It is possible to know some things from every discipline, but these will not be our specialty. Even though it seems that we can be specialists in all these fields, but you would soon find out that specialists are everywhere. Even if we assume that all of us are able to hold doctorates in various fields such as jurisprudence, principles, and grammar linguistics we would realize that thousands of Azhar affiliates would be like us, so what would distinguish us from them? If we all become masters in chemistry, physics or experts in medicine, we would find out that there are thousands from the west and east who hold the same degrees, and even then we would still have to depend on them.

Then this is neither the qualification nor the specialization that we seek. Our qualification and specialization is that we know and understand the Truth about this Religion and the Truth about the Messengers' call. So we call mankind to this Truth. This is our specialization and our qualification.

We should never get dragged into the attempts to separate us from this specialty. If they come at any time to discuss with us issues in grammar linguistics, jurisprudence, principles of mathematics or even chemistry, we will simply tell them: "who claimed that we are experts in these fields? We only call you to one thing: that Allah is the only One, His authority is on everything, and we want you to submit to Allah's authority and break free from the imposed authority of men."

The case is simple, logical and straightforward. Either you accept and acknowledge, or refuse, so it is over. Why are you fighting us? Why are you torturing us? Why are you detaining us?

So if we recognize the true nature of this role, and the true nature of this case, we become proud and strong, so we would never get dragged into the narrow alleys and dead ends. Let us always be in the wide open space as we are superior. Their reaction to this might lead to our murder... so let it be welcomed: this is the extreme triumph.

Therefore, put forth in this way, the case is very simple and very clear.

Qutub states proudly and in extreme confidence that:

"Without doubt, we possess this new thing which is perfect to the highest degree, a thing which mankind does not know about and is not capable of producing."

This confidence and sureness are what we need to fill our hearts. The Muslim's or Islamic advocate's heart should be sure that he is right, so he does not hesitate in broadcasting the Message. He does not need to bargain or compromise; he has already decided that he owns something completely new for humanity which cannot produce such a thing.

This paragraph precisely describes the Islamic advocate's mind-set and heart: he is at the pinnacle of knowledge, sureness, confidence and happiness with the Message – he is extremely

empowered to challenge jahilliya. This reminds us of the Messenger of Allah, Noah (peace be on him) and relate to them the story of Noah, when he said to his people:

﴿ وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَتَذِكْرِي بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقضوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٧١﴾ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۗ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ ﴾ [يونس: ٧١-٧٢]

“O my people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of Allah's signs is too much for you, then in Allah I have put my trust. So come to a decision, you and your partners, and do not let the matter perplex you; then carry out your decision on me, and do not hold back. (71)

But if you turn away, I have not asked you for any wage. My wage falls only on Allah, and I was commanded to be of those who submit. (72)” (Surah Yunus 10: 71-72)

This is the pinnacle of challenge and confidence – this is where the Islamic advocates should be. Confidence without doubt; we do not need to argue; we do not need the professional, hired scholars to teach us Islam. If they try, we will tell them: you are not qualified to teach Islam; you do not know the real Islam. You have studied in depth all the details of cleanliness and purification but have never troubled yourselves with knowing the definition of the core of Islam, tawheed (the word that describes Allah (swt) as the sole possessor of His Divine attributes.) You have dived into the various nullifiers of ablution, but have never bothered to learn the nullifiers of the testimony “there is no deity except Allah.” You are far removed from the core issue of Islam whether you accept it or not, and this is the truth. We should not be dragged by their harassment. We know the Quran and the life example of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (the Sunnah) and how all the Messengers (peace be on them all) moved with their Religion. We have very wide knowledge in this matter – our proof is evident and our Book is illuminating.

Why the Islamic revival should begin in the Islamic world, and how does it begin?

Qutub says:

“Without doubt, we possess this new thing which is perfect to the highest degree, a thing which mankind does not know about and is not capable of producing.”

“But as we have stated before, the beauty of this new system cannot be appreciated unless it takes a concrete form. Hence it is essential that a community arrange its affairs according to this system and show the world. In order to bring this about, we need to initiate the movement of Islamic revival in some Muslim country.”

Why does Qutub say “in a Muslim country?” This may be due to the fact that there are some points of common understanding in these countries: they believe in the Quran and that Muhammad (sas) was the last Messenger. They believe that Allah (swt) is One, He is the Creator, the Giver, the only One Who can benefit and harm. On this basis we can start the dialogue. This does not mean that other nations should not be called to Islam, but there is no doubt that the Islamic area, with its history and common facts is the potential nidus for starting the Islamic rise.

Qutub then continues:

“How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam? It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path...”

Any idea must be represented by a human being. This person should call for the idea, become enthusiastic and loyal for its sake, and totally emulate this idea.

Therefore, there must be a vanguard which sets out with determination, and determination is the most important thing that the individuals of the group must have as they commence for any work or action.

Thus, several stages are passed before a determined group gets established. Initially, there is formation of an idea or concern, which is then followed by strong feelings and sentiment which leads to passion and enthusiasm, which finally materializes into determination.

﴿ فِيمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۗ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۗ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٥٩]

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you to be severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when you have taken a decision put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)”
(Surah Aali-'Imran: 3:159)

So determination is the last step that immediately precedes execution. To continue with what Qutub said:

“It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of jahilliya which has encompassed the entire world. During its course, it should keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing jahilliya and should also keep some ties with it...”

When this vanguard truly adopts Belief in the Truth and starts its first steps in facing this vast ocean of jahilliya, it spontaneously fulfills this isolation, aloofness or detachment from jahilliya. This isolation is not something pretended or superficial, but it is something that imposes and forces itself naturally through the realization of this Truth and projection of it on reality.

Thus, when we find ourselves on a Religion and our people on another religion, then this “aloofness” or emotional detachment happens as a result of not being from this nation anymore. We are no longer from this nation's fabric, neither with our thoughts, aspirations, methods, feelings, amusement, nor serious endeavors. Nothing about us is similar to these people. All means and mediums have been severed and we have become something different from them. So the matter of isolation, aloofness or detachment cannot be fabricated, nor is it something that we just induce in our inner selves.

Whoever does not sense this isolation when he knows the Truth then he must be assured that he really has not yet known the Truth, and this Truth has not yet found the way into his heart. However, when this Truth comes in through the proper inlet and is mixed with our blood, feelings and fills our hearts with contentment, then this emotional isolation occurs spontaneously, and it is an emotional isolation because we did not yet decide to apply the physical isolation.

Although in our lives there is isolation, there is also some sort of connection with jahilliya in other aspects: we live inside jahili society, take and receive in the world of trading, relations, neighbors, social life and education. We still live within the boundaries of jahilliya and we still deal with

them. That is why there are still bridges between us and them, and especially between the ones meant for the call. Especially for this reason, there must be bridges between us and them.

Therefore, we do not isolate ourselves both emotionally and physically at the same time and go live in caves and deserts. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (sas), did not do that, in fact he continued to live among jahilliya, calling the people, preparing banquets, developing friendships and relations. They trusted him with their possessions, and he did business with them. All this happened while he held to the Truth in his heart and insisted.

When this vanguard walks the path, and sets out with determination, then emotional isolation will have to take place, although in reality they will still be dealing with jahilliya. Therefore, this vanguard will need the landmarks, the sign-posts, and the milestones of the road.

We will explain later how this vanguard should deal with jahilliya: what are the fields of relations, what are the rules that regulate these relations, what are the values, goals and methods, and how will they accomplish the isolation in their inner selves? This will be the course of explanation in the rest of the book.

The milestones of the road to Islamic revival

Qutub continues:

“It is imperative for the group, who decides to re-establish Islam afresh, to have milestones. These milestones will teach them the characteristics of their role, the real job that is waiting for them and the goals they are striving to achieve in the long run. These milestones will help them understand where to start their long journey, the nature of their stance toward jahilliya that has spread all over the earth and what type of relationships they will have within the society they live – when to co-operate with others and when to separate from them. These milestones will also help Islamic advocates understand what are their characteristics and what are the characteristics of the jahilliya surrounding them; how they will address jahilliya with the language of Islam, and what issues they will present. In addition, they will clearly know their source for determining all of these milestones and the manner of approaching this source of guidance.

It is very important that these milestones are firmly established on the Quran as this is the ultimate source of the Islamic creed. It is also important to understand how the Quran guided the first generation that Allah chose for this Religion and how they transformed the history of the world we live in.”

The following are the milestones and we will comment on each:

The first important milestone is to recognize **“the characteristics of their role,”** or the nature of the duty which is leadership: that is leading mankind to Allah and to His Guidance. They must realize that they have inherited an enormous and critical task, so they never lessen nor diminish from the nature of their role nor themselves. They must be full of confidence and comprehend the immensity of their job. Allah (swt) says about them:

﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ آمَرَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۗ مِّنْهُمْ

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿ آل عمران: ١١٠ ﴾

“You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.”

(Surah Aali 'Imran 3: 110)

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٠٤]

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.” (Surah Aali 'Imran 6 : 104)

The individual must be full of faith for he is commissioned for a vast role; he might perceive himself little, simple and humble but since Allah (swt) has employed him then he must rise to the level of this employment and accept the grant from Allah (swt) for choosing him from all this jahilliya, telling him to go and walk on the path of the Messengers.

﴿اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٢٤]

“Allah knows best where (and how) to carry out His mission.” (Surah Al' Ana'am 6: 124)

Allah (swt) does not favor anyone without merit, nor does He commit any injustice; He (swt) is All-Aware, and He never does anything arbitrarily or out of futility, and He is raised far above all this. Allah (swt) acts out of His own Mercy, Will and Knowledge.

The second milestone is understanding “**the real job that is waiting for them,**” which is to communicate Allah's Message and to guide mankind to this Truth. This is their duty, and this is the most glorious duty a person can fulfill; it had been the duty of all the Messengers of Allah, and now, it is ours as well, to call people to this Truth. Scholars are the successors of the Messengers, and we have to know that this job is the greatest among all jobs. This means we have to spare no effort and really strive. We have to work with the utmost capacity to accomplish the requirements of this job. It is not justice to give this job the left-overs of our time or snippets from our strength and efforts. We must give this job the most valuable time and the most valuable efforts.

The third milestone is be aware of “**the goal,**” which is to be a devoted servant of Allah. The ultimate purpose is worshiping Allah the Great and Almighty. We do not seek power; we do not seek money; we do not seek prestige and we do not seek high worldly ranks. We do not care for any of this. We are content to live and die without anyone hearing about us. We are only after our ultimate purpose, which is to worship Allah (swt).

Worshiping Allah means that our desires should not follow anything that Allah does not want. This is the ultimate worship. This is the pinnacle that needs hard work from us in order to be able to climb and reach the level where our desires are aligned with what the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (sas) came with, which is the Truth³. How do we reach this high peak? This needs effort where there is no sleep, waste or play.

We have to be aware that this purpose is so high and grand that it deserves and needs all this effort. Thus the third milestone is to be aware of the ultimate purpose which is worshiping Allah (swt) and fulfilling whatever this worship demands from representation and characteristics.

قال رسول الله ﷺ: (لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به) 3

The fourth is to be aware of **“where to start their long journey,”** the starting point of delivering the Message, which is to begin with the core fundamental Beliefs of Islam, summarized by the great Truth and testimony **“there is no deity except Allah.”**

The fifth is **“the nature of their stance toward jahilliya that has spread all over the earth,”** which is to clearly identify their position toward jahilliya, being isolated and distinguished from jahilliya.

The sixth is to recognize **“what type of relationships they will have within the society they live – where will they meet and where do they separate from others,”** which is practically understanding where to cross paths with the people and where to separate, hence the issue of loyalty and enmity. The vanguard must be aware of how to deal and cooperate with people and when to depart, and the basis by which this is determined.

The seventh is to be aware of the **“their characteristics and the characteristics of the jahilliya surrounding them.”** This can also be described as recognizing the current reality. It is imperative for the vanguard to know the current reality very well: to know their own characteristics, then to know the characteristics of jahilliya surrounding them in order to determine the distance between themselves and jahilliya and also determine the starting point in dealing with jahilliya.

The eighth is to recognize **“how they will address jahilliya with the language of Islam, and what issues they will present.”** This is essentially the methodology of the Islamic Movement. We have to be keenly mindful of methodology when addressing jahilliya. Not every speech and communication is proper, and not every starting point and engagement is correct. Similarly, we cannot condone any and all methods to address jahilliya. Application of the appropriate methodology is what distinguishes between all Islamic movements.

The ninth is that **“they will clearly know their source for determining all of these milestones,”** and **“that these milestones are firmly established on the Quran as this is the ultimate source of the Islamic creed”** - this is the highly important issue of being aware of where and how we receive guidance. Determining the source that will establish the Truth and guide us to the proper methodology is a very important matter.

Lastly, the tenth is **“the manner of approaching this source of guidance”** and **“how the Quran guided the first generation that Allah chose for this Religion and how they transformed the history of the world”** - This is to be aware of how and with what spirit Islam was initially established by the first shining group - the chosen group – the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. Allah indeed used them to establish Islam as He willed. The Companions are the perfect example that we should be following when applying the fundamentals of Islam. We have to see how they developed themselves, and how they established Islam as a living reality. We see how Omar (may Allah be pleased with him) transformed from Omar the rigid, violent and arrogant to the guided, scholar, leader, and merciful servant of Allah. How did this transformation take place? How did Khalid bin Al-Waleed (may Allah be pleased with him) transform from being an enemy of Islam to Allah's drawn sword, struggling for the sake of Islam? How did Al-Moghiera Bin Sho'ba (may Allah be pleased with him) transform from being a criminal bandit to being a star among the greatest members of the first Islamic society?

We need to know how Islam appeared in living examples, so that we can imitate them in our own lives. When we were in the Muslim Brotherhood we were told to search among the companions of the Messenger of Allah to see if we could find anyone similar to our own selves. Then we could try to take him as a practical model. For example, whoever observes himself calm and likes

devoutness and piety searches among the companions of the Messenger for someone who was characterized by these qualities, and then learn how that companion lead the battle with himself and Satan. Similarly, whoever is quick-tempered and nervous, searches for an example like Omar (may Allah be pleased with him), to see how Omar managed to transform from this arrogant-violent man to become a mercy for Muslims. It is a pleasant idea that perhaps we can emulate. So everyone from us should search for his alike among the Messenger's companions to imitate and follow. We should be encouraged given that the Messenger's companions were humans like us whereas it would be very hard or impossible to imagine reaching the Messenger's horizon, because after all, he was the Messenger of Allah, sinless.

Nevertheless, we can hope to be like Omar; why not? Why don't I be like AbdulRahman Bin Ouf? Why don't I be like Ali? Why don't I be like Muhammad Bin Maslama? Why don't I be like Abi Saeed Al-Khudri? We should try to understand how they dealt with themselves to achieve these high grand peaks.

In conclusion, these are the ten milestones, or the sign-posts that are the core of this book. We will find – when we comment about the book – the requirements for leadership and its characteristics, the methods of advocacy and the call to Islam, and the meaning of worship and its properties. We will learn about the Belief and how to start with and how to explain this core concept. We will also learn the meaning of being distinct from this jahilliya and how we should interact with the realities surrounding us. We will also learn about the way of living that this Religion instructs us and the source of obtainment of this guidance. We will understand the nature of our relationship with this jahilliya in terms of loyalty and rejection, and the model and example that we must imitate in our lives.