

An Analysis of the Political Thought of Nadwī, Mawdudī and Qutb

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ABSTRACT

With the fall of the Islamic K̄hilafāh in 1924, many Islamic scholars realised there was an urgent need to reinstall the Islamic K̄hilafāh. Thus political thought in Islam rose to prominence among some scholars. Consequently, many Islamic political and religious movements re-emerged in the Muslim world with the aim of establishing Islamic rule in Muslim countries. These movements presented different methodologies in restoring Islamic rule. Therefore, this article closely looks at the ideas in Islamic political thought as evinced by scholars Nadwī, Mawdudī and Qutb.

Keywords: Political thought, Islamic political system, Nadwī, Mawdudī, Qutb

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic reformers Qutb and Mawdudī responded to the ‘decadence’ of their societies by providing political solutions to what they saw as an endemic malaise which could only be resolved through political means. Thus they embarked on a project of calling people to a political project that would realise their ideal of an Islamic state (Khurshid Ahamed & Zafar Ishaq Ansari, 1979: 73-74). However, in doing so they

stretched the resources in their means to what they believed was right recourse and used modern interpretations to justify their reasons.

Nadwī heavily criticised both Qutb and Mawdudī for claiming a monopoly of understanding of certain terms referred to in the Qur’an. Nadwī used Qur’anic verses as well as logical reasoning to create a powerful critique of their arguments (Arches Quarterly Journal, 2007, pp.101-102). He did this by referring to the interpretation and understanding of the same verses by other scholars in the past to suggest that there existed a great disparity between the actual significance that politics should be

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given in Islamic political discourse and the weight that it is, in fact, given by the interpretations of Qutb and Mawdudi. This method of the caller is the same method of enquiry in Islām. We find examples of this in the life of the Prophet Muḥammed and that of all other Islamic callers. The main objective of this article is to analyse ideas in Islamic political thought evinced by Nadwī, Mawdudī and Qutb.

THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC POLITICAL SYSTEM

Most political discourse in Islam revolves around two issues: the political role played by the prophet and the political position of the ʿArab warrior clans. After the great Islamic conquest had been achieved, the latter were eager to succeed the prophet as overlords within the large, multi-national, newly formed Muslim community. Being the undisputed messenger of God secured for the Prophet the highest position of unrivalled political leader. But shortly after his death, his companions differed on the issue of who should succeed him, and on what religious basis. It was this that came to be known as the issue of *Imāmah* or political leadership, and from which different political views, sects and parties sprang. Noting this earlier conflict, al-Ṣhāhrastānī, in his *al-Milāl wa al-Nihāl* (the book of religious and philosophical sects) wrote, “the greatest conflict amongst the *ummah*, was the one of *Imāmah*; on no other Islamic principle has the sword ever been as scathing as on this (one)” (al-Balādhurī, 1988, p. 12).

Numerous definitions have been formulated by many Muslim thinkers based on the above statement to explain this system of governance. The meaning of “political power system” has always been linked to the vision of *Khilāfah* or Kingdom. The *Khilāfah* governance has ruled the Islamic world since the demise of the Prophet. al-Mawardī explained it as such: “It means protecting the religion – Islām – and ruling life with it,” (Abū al-Hasan ʿAli bin Moḥamed al-Mawardī, 1989, p. 15). Among contemporary Muslim thinkers, Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabḥānī described the *Khilāfah* as “Presidency of all Muslims in order to rule with *Shariʿah* and to carry *Daʿwah* of Islām” (Taqī al-Dīn Nabḥānī, 1997: 3). ʿAbd al-Qader Awda considered *Khilāfah* as a “Political system based on two principles that are the obeisance to Allah’s order and *Shūra*. It does not matter [what] ... name you [give] to the nature of the governance as long as this governance is respectful of those two principles” (Bukhārī. 1996: Hadith no: 2608). Nadwī opted for the definition given by Ṣhāh Wālī Allah Dihlawī (Aḥmad bin ʿAbd al-Rahīm, known as Wālī Allah Dihlawī, 1702-1762, a great scholar of India, known for his famous book, *Hujjah al-Allah al-Bālighah*) that he considered as being accurate. Ṣhāh Wālī Allah’s definition is given as: “It is general governance with a challenge of setting religion – Islām – as [the] main ruler with the revival of ... Islamic science, the set of the pillars of Islām and the *Jihād* that should be implemented with ... compelling needs” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 203).

Nadwī agreed with the definition of Ṣḥah Wālī Allah as containing an essential acceptance of the Islamic definition of political power or governance (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 49). Islamic *Kḥilāfah* does contain many definitions but Nadwī summarised it in two main words, namely, *Jihād* and *Ijtihād*, for Nadwī the *Jihād* of Muslims was to make applicable the *Shari'ah* of Allah and its recommendations (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 204). It is generally argued if it is possible to find a person with all the required criteria today i.e. the qualities of being a scholar, understanding and being able to administer the law/justice and having intelligence and wisdom,) It is obvious that this type of person does not exist. The well-guided Caliphs of old were surrounded by a consultative Parliament, the *Majlis al-Shūra*. As given in *Sūrah al-Najm*, the Prophet “nor does he speak of –his own-desire, it is only a revelation revealed” (Qur’an: *Sūrah al-Najm*). The Prophet asked for advice from the *Sahābah* on many subjects related to daily life or the battles he led. It is clear that Nadwī was aware that such a well-qualified person did not exist but he suggested that the person chosen to serve the *Ummah* should do so with faithfulness – *Ikhḥlās*. This type of person would certainly devote himself to the *Ummah* with regards to its interests. This devoted person should rule the *Ummah* as successor to the Prophet. His main target would be to work for the sake of the message sent by Allah through the Messenger – *Rasūl*. He should not seek his own glory or power by dictating his own will and desires.

Regarding the *Kḥilāfah* and its state in Islam, Nadwī emphasised its importance by referring to the Qur’an and Sunnah. Islām brought deep reforms to Arabic society. The reorganisation of social relations within the community was the main target of these reforms, which were based on moral values beneficial to everyone. That was why the community needed to be led by the *Kḥilāfah* system implemented through a Consultative Assembly, the ‘*Majlis Shūra*’. Governance by *Kḥilāfah* was to be done according to the rules of *Shari'ah*. Muslims should have an organised community life as taught by the Prophet: “If there are three people travelling together one of them should lead” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 52).

Islām as a way of life with its particular rules forbids any type of governance based on monarchy and clergy because that does not take into consideration the competencies and the values of society. This is very clear in the *Qur'an* as given in *Sūrah al-Māidah*: “Oh Messenger, Proclaim-the message- which has been sent down to you from your lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message. Allah will protect you from mankind. Verily, Allah guides not the people who disbelieve.” This verse explains clearly why the Prophet did not appoint Ali as his successor. The non-appointment of Ali as *Kḥalīfah* at the decease of the prophet was a mark of the recommendation of the *Qur'an* about the *Shūra*. However, we should not interpret that Ali and his tribe (*Banu Hisham*), which was the Prophet’s tribe as well, were not eligible for such a position. However, if that had happened Islām would have become a

type of governance-ruled system based on inheritance, and the *Banu Hisham* would have been a sort of clergy family, which is in total contradiction with the essence of the message that Islām revealed. The election of Abū Bakr as successor to the Prophet reveals the importance of the *Shūra* in Muslim society. The successor to the Prophet was the ruler, and he and those whom he ruled were there to help each other in order to facilitate a reign of justice and obedience to the *Khalīfah*, which were obligations under Islamic regulations (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, pp. 70-80). The Prophet said, “It is obligatory for one to listen and obey (the ruler’s orders) unless these orders involve disobedience (to Allah); but if an act of disobedience (to Allah) is imposed, he should not listen to or obey it” (Bukhārī. 1996. Hadith no: 203).

There were two types of government in the point of view of Nadwī. One was established to collect money through taxes and to enrich the state and its agents regardless of the social and economic situation of the people. The second was aware of the needs of the people and worked to make a significant contribution by laying aside all the governing protocols established by its predecessors who had transformed the *khalīfah* governance to monarchical reign, and instead, spread Allah’s recommendations on the path of *Hidāyah*. This type of government would certainly bring prosperity and peace to society (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1967: 104-106). Nadwī considered ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al Aziz as the right example when he

took over the governance of the Umayyad dynasty. He was governing as a well-guided *khalīfah*, and re-established his ties with the Muslim population.

Nadwī compared the Abbasid reign to that of the Umayyad before the advent of ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Muḥamed al-Fateh and the rise of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and Asia bolstered a sense of confidence and strength within the Muslim population. Unfortunately, this Empire failed to regenerate the *khalīfah* governance correctly, and established instead the monarchy system of governance. As the centuries passed, Islamic governance drifted away from rule by the *ʿulama*. The *ʿulama* were consulted by the governor as an independent process in governance. Once the *ʿulama* became distanced from governance they lost influence or impact on decisions taken by the governors. Some of them accepted the status of simple manservant while some others preferred to resign. As the governors grew more and more to represent themselves and their interests, they became less knowledgeable of Islām as a religious guide for Muslims. Everybody has lost faith in their leaders and that is why the Islamic world is accusing such deficiency in all areas of development and progress and became a colonial country (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, pp. 159-170).

Reformers have always been the pillars of governance in Muslim society. The book written by Nadwī about Islamic reformers, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwa fī al-Islām*- stated

his position on these reformers: “We should recognise that reformers have always been in the forefront at any time ... Muslim society was in need of revival...” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1956, p. 20). Nadwī did not deny that some political issues in the history of Islām stemmed from the negative actions of the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers such as Yūsuf al-Qardhāwī. However, it would be incorrect to give the impression that Muslim civilisation was tyrannical under the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires. It would also be incorrect to state as do some orientalist that these empires made conquests of other countries only to grab the wealth and to make subjects of the populations of those countries (Yūsuf al-Qardhāwī, 1997, p. 172).

Nadwī noticed the consequences of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire on different Arab and Muslim countries. In some Arab countries, the rise of dictators led to a failure to adhere to Muslim rules and regulations within the population. He suggested that for those countries not to experience a total collapse in their faith and practice of Islam, they would have had to return to the prophet’s way, and this only through a large-scale mass protest. The political system established in those countries was not mainly for the benefit of the population or for the preservation of Islam (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1978, pp. 25-26). Nadwī claimed that political campaigns were all based on promises and wishes. In the name of total freedom lies were permitted as long as they could help governance. That was why Nadwī talked about the total absence

of political consciousness in those Arabic and Muslim populations. The people did not make any distinctions between their enemies and their friends. This is in contrast with western countries, where the involvement of the people in the political process in western countries was proof of the very high level of its political consciousness and the political leaders would not try to misguide the people through deception.

Nadwī claimed that “in order to restore the Muslim society to its real identity justice [as given in] ... Allah’s *shari‘ah* should rule ... society. Our leaders do not believe in ... Islamic values as a way of life and happiness. They are submitted to the western values and ignore the essential[s] of Islām. They are imposing their own view of life ... [on] our [people] ... and that’s why there ... [are] always clash[es]. They then try to cut the source of what they call roots of troubles by implementing ... [an] education system with non-Islamic values. This education system is not the real answer to the expectations of these ... [people]” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1990: 180). Nadwī always supported Islām as being indispensable in ruling Muslim society and considered the return to true Islamic an obligation. Islamic governance would avoid any political agenda or clashes between the people and their leaders. The main reason was because everyone would be involved in building an Islamic society with the intention of making applicable Allah’s rule and law, which he called *al-Hakīmiyyah*. Nadwī supported by referring to the Qur’anic verse: “And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression,

and there prevail justice and faith in Allah” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Anfāl: 39).

It is absolutely important to consider the establishment of an Islamic political system as a paramount priority not only by leaders but also the people, who have to involve themselves in achieving this target. An Islamic political system ruling in Muslim countries would prevent the society from falling into immorality and sin. It would also maintain society on the path of the Islamic faith. Leading society is a great duty which must fall to someone who has a clear and thorough understanding of Allah’s obligations and rules. The idea of establishing religion as the ruler of society has legitimacy in the *Qur’an*, where in *Sūrah Shūra*, verse 13 says: “He-Allah- has ordained for you the same religion-Islamic monotheism-which he ordained for Noah, and that which we have revealed to you–Mohamed–and that which we ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus, saying you should establish religion-to do what it orders you to do practically-and make no divisions in it-religion-intolerable for the *Mushrikīn* is that to which you–Muḥammed–call them. Allah chooses for himself when he wills, and guides unto himself who turns in repentance and in obedience.” This verse confirms that religion is the ruler of society in its daily life, which doesn’t mean *Khilāfah* and governance only, for that what al-Mawdudī has always called . In this context al-Mawdudī asked, “What are the political purposes in order to achieve an Islamic state?” For al-Mawdudī the answer to this question was in *Sūrah al Hadid*, verse

25: “Indeed we have sent our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed to them the scripture and the balance –justice-that mankind may keep up justice.” In *Sūrah al-Hajj*, verse 41, it says: “Those –Muslim rulers-who, if we give them powering the land , they enjoin to perform the five compulsory congregational at to pay the *Zakāt* to enjoin *al-maruf* and forbid *al-munkar*”

Regarding the Hadith narrated by ‘Uthman, the Prophet Muḥammed said: “Certainly Allah will perform by the power which cannot be performed by the *Qur’an*” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1990: 180). Islām is in need of a governmental authority to eliminate what the *Qur’an* recommendation cannot do. The purpose of the Islamic state does not only focus on defending borders, raising the people’s quality of life and making the country safe. It is also to lead the people towards goodness –*Hasanah*, which Islām has always recommended for the benefit of humanity. This means that any action performed by the government must consider goodness that can be achieved by the people.

THE VIEW OF NADWĪ ON THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MAWDUDĪ AND SAYYID QUTB

Mawdudī (1903-1979) is one of the leading Islamic scholars of the Indian subcontinent in the 20th century. However, his ideas have made him quite controversial from the point of view of the traditional ‘*ulama*. He explained in his writings the main Islamic concepts of ‘*Ibadat* (act of worship

or devotion; denoting Man's relationship with God) as well as *Mu'āmalat* (social intercourse, indicating relations among human beings), giving a different definition. In his book, '*al-Mustālahāt al-Arba'a fī al-Qur'an*', he said worship was instituted by Allah as a means to prepare Muslims to work for the cause of establishing Islamic rule on earth. Islamic terms such as *ʿIbadat*, *Rabb*-(Lord), *Ilah* (Lord, Master) and *Dīn* (faith way of life) were interpreted politically in relation to divine sovereignty. However, he did not claim his interpretations were new, but argued that these were actually the original meanings of the terms and their real meaning had remained obscured from the inception of the Islamic caliphate. In his writings he criticised the performance of religious personalities throughout Islamic history such as Hassan al-Banna, Hassan al-Hudaibi and Qutb (Abū al-A'la al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 28).

Undoubtedly, this is the perfect and most suitable method. But some *Du'at* or some reformers who came after Mawdudī came to believe incorrectly that the words from their mouths covered not only the value of calling-*Da'wah*-but also that they completely explained the religion. So it is apparent that their flaws originate from this point. These explanations become generalised beyond the limits of the *Da'wah* movement (missionary work for Islam). When a thought occurs to a *Dā'ī*- he believes that it explains the entire religion. Therefore, he starts to explain the religion according to the idea that had occurred to him (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, pp. 30-31).

This is how Mawdudī and Qutb seem to have approached religion – from the slant of politics. In their point of view, all the parts of religion are based on politics, and for them, politics is a basic unit of *Dīn*-Religion (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 32). It is an undisputable fact that politics is part of religion. No one argues with the views that are expressed by Mawdudī in his book "*al-Mustālahāt al-Arba'a fī al-Qur'an*" (Abū al-A'la al-Mawdudī, 2006: 14), in which he urged that the *Da'ī* compel Muslims to pay attention to one specific area which was the need of the hour, the Islamic State. He further argues that there could not be any revolutionary act if the *du'at* or callers of Islam failed to adopt this method. He blew the political angle out of proportion. He used politics as the basis of religion.

Al Nadwī states that since the first part of the 17th century there had been a decline in Islamic thinking and politics due to the influence of changes in European political thought. Therefore, it was felt that a similar shift needed to be made in the Islāmic thought. A large number of youth travelled to Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century or in the first part of the twentieth century. As they moved closely among and with Europeans, their belief in Islām was shaken and some quit Islām. Most of them were greatly influenced by Western civilisation and thinking. In my opinion, it is true that the Muslim way of life was westernized by the local people in the name of modernity. So, when this happened, writers and scholars living in the different parts of the Islamic world rallied together

to face the difficult situation. They left no stone unturned to defend Islām, its *shari'ah*, its civilisation and its history. In the middle of the 20th century Mawdudī, whose articles began to appear in the magazine, “*Tarjumat al-Qur’an*”, which was published in Hyderabad, India, drew the attention of a large number of educated Muslims. He made a tremendous contribution to criticising the Western way of life and its civilisation under the basis of Islamic principles. There is no doubt that his writings, replete with evidence, made a tremendous impact. It is an undeniable fact that his books and writings made a huge contribution towards creating awareness of Islam within the Islamic world. It would be a great injustice to him if this fact were ignored (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 10-11).

In the point of view of Nadwī, if Mawdudī had paid his whole attention to this point it would have been a great contribution to Islām, and this would have satisfied Muslims. However, he tried to give a new interpretation of Islamic thought by going beyond this point. For this purpose he wrote a book called *al-Mustālahāt al-Arba’a fī al-Qur’an*. Through this he tried to give the political form for the establishment of the Islamic rule (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 15-16). When we examined the stance of Nadwī on the political views of the two scholars (al Mawdudī and Qutb), it is pertinent to put forward some quotes taken from the book, *al-Mustālahāt al-Arba’a fī al-Qur’an*.

AL-MUSTĀLAHĀT AL-ARBA’A FĪ AL-QUR’AN - THE FOUR KEY CONCEPTS OF THE QUR’AN

The contemporary Islamic thinker, Abū al-A’la al-Mawdudī, when trying to explain these terms and their importance on the life of Muslims in his book, mentioned that “these four words are the base of Qur’anic meaning and the whole *Da’wah* of the Holy Qur’an rotates centred around them. It means Allah is one, the Eternal God. There is no God but Allah. No one companies in his divinity. So, man should accept Allah as God and reject the divinity of others; he should worship Him alone and not others. In addition, he should purify his religion of Allah and reject all other religions, except Allah’s religion. It is clear that anyone who wants to learn the Holy Qur’an deeply should get the real meaning and the comprehensive understanding of the four terms mentioned above (Abū al-A’la al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 30).

Mawdudī confirms that these Islamic basic terms are completely understood by the people on whom the Holy Qur’an was addressed to because the Holy Qur’an is in Arabic and the people know the meaning of *Ilah* and *Rabb* as these two words had been used before the revelation of the Holy Qur’an. The other two words, *‘Ibadah* and *Dīn*, are commonly used in their language. Those who opposed the call knew the implications of their refusal while those who accepted the call knew that they had to discard their superstitious beliefs and embrace the new message. Likewise,

‘*Ibadah* and *Dīn* knew what ‘*Ubudiyyah* and what *Dīn* stood for.

However, these gradually changed. The truth began to disappear. The dust of ignorance and sin covered them and not only eroded their broader and real meaning, but also restricted these four Qur’anic terms to a particular nuance. He forwarded two reasons for this sad state of affairs. Firstly, the majority of later generations could not understand the real meaning of some of the pure Arabic words. Secondly, the real meanings of these terms used in the *Jahīliyyah* society did not remain in the Islamic societies that followed it. Hence, the linguists and the scholars who gave explanation to the holy Qur’an interpreted them as they understood. Actually, their interpretations were different from the original meaning of the Arabic language. He gave two examples for this. They made the term *Ilah* similar to the word idols and gods, and they made the word *Rabb* similar to the people who are providers and sustainers, and the word ‘*Ibadah* was defined by them for the activities such as prayers and religious observances. Meanwhile, the word *Dīn* was given the meaning in religious term. The word *Taghūt* was explained by them as Satan or idol (Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 2006, pp. 35-36). Consequently, the people found it difficult to get the real meaning of the word *da‘wah* of the Holy Qur’an.

Thus, let’s highlight this weakness in understanding Mawdudī in the following lines, which were taken from the criticism of Nadwī, and shared by many expert Islamic scholars. Nadwī aptly started his criticism

with a question of historical importance as follows: “Were these terms not understood for many centuries or ages and was the real spirituality of Islam kept hidden” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 42-43). The main points on the criticism of Nadwī are:

- The competence of the Islamic *Ummah* -Muslim societies- of learning and understanding the clarity of the features of the holy Qur’an
- Islamic *Ummah* never became victims of digression or were in complete ignorance in any given period of time or ages (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 42).
- The focal point of the four Qur’anic terms in balance (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 33).
- The Islamic rituals between Means and Goals (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 109).
- Similar statement was also expressed by Sayyid Qutb (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 71).

The aforementioned points are given in detail in the subsequent subsection.

The Competence of the Islamic Ummah of Learning and Understanding the Clarity of the Features of The Holy Qur’an

Al-Mawdudī explains the meaning of these Qur’anic terms completely in terms of the political perspective. The views taken from his famous book “*al-Mustālahāt al-Arba‘a fī al-Qur’an*” clearly indicated that politic was the main and real aim of the Holy Qur’an.

Such a thought as that of Nadwī, sees, that it makes Islamic people who do not possess a deep knowledge of Islām come under the wrong impression that they are not kept well-informed of the Holy Qur'an until scholars such as al-Mawdudī and Sayyid Qutb unveiled it (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 33). Although such explanation seems to be not dangerous, they can become deep rooted, and cause harmful consequences to the Islamic thought because it may create doubts in the competence of the *Ummah* and its leadership and *Da'wah* position. Moreover, it may also create suspicion on the understanding of the Holy Qur'an by *Ummah* and thereby create room for anarchy in their deeds. Further, it devalues the foot prints of the reformists and the hard working scholars as the Holy Qur'an has not been understood for a long period of time and thus, creating doubts about its clarity. Not only that, everything mentioned in respect of the Holy Qur'an may become doubtful at present and in the future (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 34).

Nadwī proves his point of view through some concrete historical evidences pointing out the example of the activities of the group called the *al-Bātīniyyah*. They adopted precisely the same strategies to cut off the connection between the words, terms and their meanings that depend on the basis of Islamic life. It was used to twist the meanings of the terms, as they wanted to destroy Islām. With the growth of the Greek philosophy, the history of *Mazhabs*-school of thought- and groups witnessed a new turmoil, which was most detrimental

to Islam. It was the backdrop of their confusion of *al-Bātīniyyah*. The majority of the *al-Bātīniyyah* were individuals and communities that lost their rulers and leadership in the confrontation with the opponent rulers who had fought against their Muslim rulers. There were no hopes for them to get back their regime tough war. Also, it was impossible for them to take refuge in atheism as it would create an uprising among the Muslims. Therefore, in order to achieve their target without disturbing the Muslims, they adopted a new method (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 133).

They noted that the Islamic basis, its beliefs and its rules and regulations were presented through the words that were indispensable to convey every new message sent by Allah who says, "And we sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the message) clear to them. Then, Allah misleads who He wills and guides who He wills. And He is the All mighty the All – wise" (Qur'an: Sūrah Ibrahim: 4). There were such words with similar meanings that were commonly used and the Islamic *Ummah* were very much familiar with them. So, the words *al-Nubūwwah* (Prophethood), *al-Malāikat* (angel), *al-Ma'adh* (resurrection), *al-Jannah* (heaven), *al-Nār* (Hell), *al-Shari'ah* (Islamic law), *al-Fard* (obligatory duty), *al-Halāl* (allowed), *al-Harām* (forbidden), *al-Zakāt* (charity), *al-Hajj* (pilgrimage) that give the specific meanings were well understood by Muslims in unison. This same view was passed on from one generation to another

in the Muslim *Ummah*. These words are a protected asset, which can be changed by none. Each and every Muslim should adhere to it (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 134).

Al Bātīniyyun well understood that the close link between the religious terms and their meanings which formed a basis of the Islamic life and the main body in terms of education and thought. Therefore, they tried to pollute it by saying that the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muḥammed have both inner and outer meanings as that a seed has got two separate parts, shell and the kernel (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1999, p. 112). Al-Nadwī confirms that the unity of the Muslims is dependent upon this link. Through this link, the Muslims get connected with their past. If the link between words and meanings is cut off, the Muslims will become victims of every philosophy and the forged *da'wah*. When this happens, it will pave a way for everyone to say what he wants, and thus create rational and religious turmoil in the Islamic society (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 36). Nadwī explains this through the historical evidence that the basic characteristics of the Holy Qur'an contradict with the Islamic basic terms and these have not been understood for ages.

The Holy Qur'an has many characteristics. One of the main features of the Holy Qur'an is that its verses are crystal clear. Allah says, "It is He who has sent down to you Muḥammed the Book (this Qur'an). al Nadwī also mentioned there are fifteen places where different forms of words are found, and this ensures

that the Holy Qur'an is explanatory and crystal clear. For an instance, Allah says "It is He who created you from a single person (Adam), and has given you a place for residing (on the earth or in your mother's wombs) and a place of storage [in the earth (in your graves) or in your father's loins]. Indeed, we have explained in detail our revelations (this Qur'an) for people who understand" (Qur'an: Sūrah al-An'am: 98). Through this Nadwī proves that Muslims generation to generation got not only the mere book but also words and meanings. Allah has described in many places in the Holy Qur'an that it is crystal clear. Allah says, "These are the verses of the clear book (the Qur'an that makes clear the legal and illegal things, legal laws a guidance and a blessing). Verily, we have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand." (Qur'an: Sūrah Yusuf: 1-2) The above-mentioned reality and descriptions contradict the view that the Holy Qur'an has not been understood for many centuries. Therefore Nadwī raises a question, "Can a rational thinking person believe that these four words which contain belief, deeds and *da'wah* cannot be understood?" When Allah repeatedly mentions that the Holy Qur'an is crystal clear. Another question arises here, "Were the Muslim *Ummah* took such a long time to understand what Qur'an said; were they so ignorant to the basic teaching of Qur'an?" (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 42). This matter will be discussed further in the subsequent paragraph.

Islamic Ummah never Becomes Victims of Digression or Incomplete Ignorance in Any Given Period of Time or Age

Nadwī criticises the thinking of Mawdudī by showing evidence of *Sunnah* rational witness and the comments written by Hasan al-Hudaibi (i.e. the leader of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood organization, who was appointed after the assassination of the founder, Hassan al-Banna, in 1949; cited in Sivan & Emmanuel, 1985, p. 49) to counter the ideas of Mawdudī. Nadwī considers such research methods and thinking methodology taken from Mawdudī to have paved a way for the people to devalue the work of reformists and scholars who strived hard for the cause of Islām and the foot prints left by them. Therefore, theoretically, it would be understood as if Muslims had been ignorant throughout all these four terms for a long time. This further raises the doubt that the Muslim *Ummah* has been in sheer ignorance, complete neglect, and clear perversity. The Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, however, clearly declare that the Muslim *Ummah*, unlike in the other communities, never get engaged in perversity (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 47). This view is confirmed by great *Imāms* and scholars who are expert in Hadith. According to a Hadith, "There is a group of my *Ummah* who perpetually remain on truth and those who plot against them cannot cause any harm to them until the Day of Judgment (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 49). Ibn Kathīr, when describing the following verse "And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger Muḥammed after the right path

has been shown clearly to him and follows other than the believer's way..." (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 67), ensures that the total Muslim *Ummah* never rallies around falsehood as they had unshakable respect and trust towards their prophet. Nadwī proves his point through evidence of rationalism and by quoting Hasan al-Hudaibi in the following manner.

Islām has given an important place to education and research, unlike other religions (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 46-47). This is clearly stressed in many places in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Hence, the Islamic scholars have written excellent books on all subjects and left none. As the neutral European researchers mentioned, it is the education which was left by the Muslims that became the fountain of the rise, development of education and growth of the civilization of Europe when it plunged into the darkness of ignorance. The European author, 'Karinsky' says that modern knowledge shows us how much we are indebted to the Islamic scholars, who spread the light of education when Europe sank in complete darkness (cited in Zaook al-Hijr, 2000, p. 161). Nadwī criticises the thought of al-Mawdudī saying that a flawless rational thinker cannot believe that the religion which created many scholars and intellectuals in different spheres has been ignorant of the basic truth of the Holy Qur'an. It is evident that al-Mawdudī also stressed this point when he was giving explanation on the *Ahādith*, "*Imāms* are from the tribe of Quraish". He questioned whether the total *Ummah* was wrong in

understanding the text of the *Ahādith* (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 48).

A number of scholars and the research in the Islamic and Arabic world wrote comments in their respective criticisms about the view of al-Mawdudī. Among them are Hasan al-Hudaibi, an Egyptian, Muḥammed Jerisha also an Egyptian, Ḥussain Aḥmed al-Madanī, an Indian, Yusuf Bin Nūri, a Pakistani, and others along with al Nadwī. Nadwī echoed the views of Hasan al-Hudaibi, written in the book “*Du‘at lā Kud‘aāt*”, in a reply to the views of al-Mawdudī saying that the above statement of al-Mawdudī was unacceptable as the Holy Qur’an mentions each and every word in a clear definition. Thus, there is no necessity to go towards any other interpretation. Here, Nadwī raises a question whether it can be told that a larger part of the Holy Qur’an has not been understood despite the fact that it is a divine guidance.

The Focal Point of the Four Qur’anic Terms on Balance

The criticism of Nadwī on the views of the late al-Mawdudī and Qutb centred around the use of the four terms, *al-Ilah*, *al-Rabb*, *al-‘Ibadat* and *al-Dīn*. The last two words get pushed towards the first two words. Thus, it is pertinent to highlight the following points to summarize his thought. The limitation of the meanings of the terms *al-Ilah* and *al-Rabb* within the framework of sovereignty; the nature of the link between the Lord and the Slave, and the major aim of the *da‘wah* movements. These points will be dealt with in details in the following subsection.

Limitations of the Meanings of the Terms *al Ilah* And *al Rabb* within the Framework of Sovereignty

Al-Mawdudī, when describing the term *al Ilah*, says that its meaning refers to everything that belongs to him in terms of divinity. The basis of divinity is sovereignty and Allah says, “It is He (Allah) who is the only *Ilah* (only God be worshipped) in the universe. He is the all-wise and the all knower” (Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 47). Al-Mawdudī, having cited the above verses to support his view, further says that all these verses from the word underline the main idea that both divinity and sovereignty are closely interwoven, giving no difference between them, so the one who does not have sovereignty can not be an *Ilah* (God) (Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 54). Al-Mawdudī, on the other hand, takes shelter in a number of verses of the Holy Qur’an to explain the word *al-Rabb*, and gives an example: “Indeed your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then He rose over the throne (really in a manner that suits His majesty). He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly, and (He created) the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to his command. Surely, His is the creation and commandment. Blessed is Allah the lord of the ‘*Alamīn* (mankind jinn and all that exists)” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-A‘raf, p. 54) says that the lordship is equal to sovereignty and he describes *al-Rabb* that he is the ruler of this universe and he is the owner of it. It is only his order. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him” (Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 2006,

pp. 120-121). He further says that the reality of *al-Rabb* is the superpower, and worshipping and slavery mean completely obeying this super power and the prophet is the representative of the *sultān* (Lord), and under this basis, people should obey him. Ruling and sovereignty are homogeneous and inseparable. Believing and obeying other than Allah is polytheism (Abū al-A^ola al-Mawdudī, 1978, p. 217). Meanwhile, Nadwī responded to al-Mawdudī in the side of understanding both names (*al-Ilah* and *al-Rabb*). *Al-Ilah* for Nadwī gives a deep understanding of the only God, while *al-Rabb* refers to the role of God (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 31).

Nature of the Link between the Lord and the Slaves

According to the views of al-Mawdudī, the link between God and man is that of the ruler and the ruled. The description of sovereignty and omnipotence is the original beautiful of his names and characteristics. The *da^owah* means believing the sovereignty of Allah, and leading the life according to it. It was the aim of the prophethood. And it was also the purpose of revealing the Holy Books, Nadwī in his reply says that the real link between the creator and the creations and slaves and the Lord is the most comprehensive, wide, deep and precise rather than the link of the ruler and the ruled. Allah has mentioned his beautiful names and the characteristics in detail in a beautiful manner. They never say what is expected from the slave, believing only in his sovereignty. For an example, Nadwī quotes these two verses, “He is Allah

beside whom *Lā Ilaha Illā Huwa*, none has the right to be worshiped as the king. He is the Holy, the One free from all defects, the creator, the cherisher, the sustainer, and the protector of His creatures and He is the All mighty, and the supreme. Glory to Allah (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with him” (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 81-82). “He is Allah, the creator, the inventor of all things, and the provider of all forms. To him belong the best names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify him. And He is the All mighty, the All-wise” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Hashr: 22-23). He says that the names and characteristics described in the Holy Qur’an request the Prophet to love Allah by his heart and to sacrifice himself for the satisfaction of Allah as a deep love cannot emerge without knowing the characteristics of Allah well. This can be seen in the life of all prophets, especially that of Prophet Muḥammed’s teachings and prayers. The paradigm of the deep love towards Allah and the way of worshipping him could be seen in his companions such as *Tābi^ouns* and *Tābi^ou al Tābi^ouns*, following two generations (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 84).

Ibn Taimiyyah also agrees with this interpretation. According to Ibn Taimiyyah, obedience and submission alone do not fulfil the duty of worshipping; worship should be completed with much love. The definition of the word *Ilah* is that He should be loved by heart, respected, feared and hoped (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1963, p. 6). When the definition of Ibn Taimiyyah on Lord and worship is compared with the

definition given by al-Mawdudī on *Ilah* and *Rabb*, it is obvious that there is a big discrepancy in them. As pointed out by Nadwī, the formal lord hardly requires him to show much love or remembering him; he will simply expect others to abide by his rules and regulations. Nadwī underlines the dangerous consequences of this type of narrow thinking. He says, “whoever confines the characteristics and the duties of Allah within the framework of sovereignty, I fear whether the following verse will be applicable to them (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 84). “They did not evaluate Allah with the evaluation due to him...” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-An‘am: 91).

The Major Aim of the *Da‘wah* Movements

From al-Mawdudī’s point of view, there is no difference between polytheism in the rules and polytheism in worship, i.e. submitting oneself to others (none other than Allah) in his rules with political meaning is polytheism as worshipping others apart from Allah. Politics seems to be the focal point in the efforts and the thoughts of al-Mawdudī. That is why Nadwī criticises his thought, which runs towards a single direction, saying that his call was targeted towards political submission, by submitting himself towards his sovereignty. All his writings and efforts are merely based on this point. This thought will certainly create negative impacts on the society whose members’ religious awareness is feeble read the books, and the articles of Mawdudī will understand that his thoughts are in essence atheism

in politics and theism in worship (Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 47). On the contrary, Nadwī urges that *da‘wah* is for the oneness of Allah, and it completely rejects idolatry, innovations and suppressions and for salvaging the people from the evils. These are the main goals of prophethood. The purpose of sending prophets is to also achieve this goal (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 90). The Holy Qur’an declared the deity of human beings as *al-Arbab*, the lord. Allah said “They (Jews and Christians) took their *Rabbis* and their monks to be their lords besides Allah” (Qur’an: Surah al-Tawba: 31). Allah further describes the deities made of stone as –*Shirkh al-Akbar* – as great polytheism, and –*al-Rijs* – as abomination and –*Kawl al-Zūr* – as falsehood. “So, shun the adulation of idol and shun falsehood” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Hajj: 30). “Be true to the faith in Allah and never assign partners to Him: if anyone assigns partners to Allah, he would resemble a person who had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or a person whom the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown into an endless precipice” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Hajj: 31). The second polytheism is not easier than the first from the point of view of Nadwī. Prophet Muḥammed gave preference to fight against idolatry. The same practice was carried out by the earlier prophets. When prophet Muḥammed was victorious in Mecca, he broke with his own hands 360 deities that were around the *Ka‘bah*. Prophet Muḥammed kept on reciting the following verse when he was breaking the statues, “And say: Truth (i.e.

Islamic monotheism or this Qur'an or *Jihād* against polytheists) has come and –*Bātil*-falsehood (i.e. Satan or polytheism) has vanished. Surely –*Bātil*- falsehood is ever bound to vanish” (Qur'an: Sūrah al-Isra': 81). Prophet Muḥammed did not stop there. He began to send brigades to destroy deities wherever they were found (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 93). When Prophet Muḥammed was on his death bed, he said “Curse be on the Jews and Christians, as they took the graves of their prophets as (the places of worship” (Bukhārī, 1996; Hadith no. 727). This clearly shows that he was much concerned about idolatry. Prophet Muḥammed, giving prominence to stop idolatry, indicates that idolatry was an old disease that was afflicted on the people from one generation to another. He warned the *ummah* to be vigilant against the idolatry that would creep into them (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 94).

There is evidence to show various types of idolatry that are practiced from time to time. For instance, twelve centuries after *Hijrī*, some people began worshiping trees in the Arabian Peninsula. This indeed compelled Muḥammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhāb to take steps to renovate the call for monotheism. Remnants of the idolatry could be seen even now in some rituals such as getting blessing by touching tombs, reciting *Mawluds*, and other similar innovations (ʿAli Muḥammed Juraisha, 1991, p. 28). There is a common feature among all prophets, that is, they all encountered the problem of idolatry and they fought against it. Other forms of *Jāhiliyyah* are obeying

others against the principle of none other than Allah, accepting verdicts of others against the principle of no verdict except that of Allah and following the legislation made by others, shunning divine legislation. All such deviations are equally sin as idolatry. Therefore, no one should make attempts to underrate the seriousness of committing the sin of worshipping idolatry. At the same time, any act of idolatry should not be allowed to occupy any place at the corner of *Jihād* and *Daʿwah*. Therefore, Nadwī insists that such idolatry should not be named as silly *Jāhiliyyah*. Nadwī further warns that such naming does not only cause harms to the *daʿwah* of the prophets and their efforts, but also create doubts on the perpetual existence of the Holy Qur'an. A consequence of such contradictions could be felt in real life, and we can see them in different forms today. That is what the companion of the Prophet learnt from versus such as this (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 97).

Nadwī explains, until the world gets rapid changes, time gets advanced and Islam makes a long journey this danger continues to exist. Therefore, it is the responsibility duty of the scholars, Islamic *Daʿīs*, and the representatives of the apostles to take the necessary measures that can eradicate the problem (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, pp. 94-95). According to our view, the first idolatry, i.e. accepting other gods apart from Allah, is one of the most appalling deviations that makes grave impacts on the Muslim *Ummah*. Therefore, equal efforts should be made to eradicate both forms of

idolatry. Although al-Mawdudī considers the basis of divinity as sovereign and sees no difference between them, the Holy Qur'an makes *al-Rubūbiyyah* worship as similar to sovereignty, and its origin and reality is one's loyalty, obedience and submission (Abū al-ʿAla al-Mawdudī, 2006, p. 47). Having examined this point, let us come to a question, "what is the status of *ʿIbadah* and its deeds and its forms that are made compulsory in *Shariʿah* and the prophet Muḥammed loved them very much?" The possible answers to this question are elaborated in the following subsection:

The Islamic Rituals between Means and Goals

The Islamic rituals such as prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage are the pillars of the edifice of Islām. Islām is built on five pillars. They are *Imān* or faith - establishment of prayer, giving alms, fasting during the month of *Ramadhān* and performing *Hajj*. How will the building exist if the pillars are weak? According to the analysis of al-Mawdudī, the Islamic rituals are considered as a means to achieve the target of making political changes. Therefore, acts of worship become secondary in his thought. Fully getting engaged in *ʿIbadah* is a result of ignorance of not knowing the spirituality of Islām according to him. In explaining this further, he said that the elements of worship include devotion towards Allah, obedience towards him and respecting him. In order to clarify this point, he also puts forward a question, "What is your opinion regarding a servant who has been commanded to do

a task and unlike the one who is carrying it out. He keeps on standing with his hands folded, repeating the name of his superior millions of time. In such a situation, can it be considered that the servant obeys his superior? (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 103). However, Nadwī refutes this method of al-Mawdudī's interpretation that devalues the *ʿIbadahs* with evidence from the Qur'anic verses and prophets', saying that encourages doing such rituals. He coins some evidence from a historical perspective, as follows:

- Evidence from the Holy Qur'an: Nadwī reveals that, on the contrary, the Holy Qur'an encourages doing *ʿIbadah* and it adores a person who does a great deal of *ʿIbadah*. Allah says, "Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allah's cause) out of what we have done on them" (Qur'an: Sūrah al-Sajadah: 16), and He says "And those who spend the night in worship of their lord, prostrate and standing" (Qur'an: Sūrah al-Furqān: 64). "And the men and women must remember Allah with their hearts and tongues" (Qur'an: Sūrah al-Ahzāb: 35). And He says, "Oh you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance and glorify Him with praises morning and afternoon [the early morning (*ḥajr*) and *ʿAsr*] prayers" (Qur'an: Sūrah al-Ahzāb: 41-42).
- Evidence from the Sayings of Prophet Muḥammed: Note that only one Hadith will be discussed in this regard, although there are countless of Hadiths on this

particular subject. °Abd Allah Ibn Bisir narrated that a man who came to Prophet Muḥammed and asked the Messenger of Allah, “there are many rituals in Islam and can you tell me one of them that I can perpetually do it? The Prophet replied that your tongue should always remember Allah” (Bukhārī, 1996. Hadith no: 3375).

Historical Evidences of Reformation: Nadwī says that the reformists and religious scholars called the people to concentrate on enhancing their spiritual development, prayer, *Zikr* and other acts of worship. None of these scholars attempted to devalue the act of worship as al-Mawdudī did (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p 103). His thoughts, efforts and writings completely focused only on the political aspect of the life. He has repeated it several times. He mentions that the purpose of sending prophets to this world is to make changes in the shorter worldly life. In his views, the prophets were sent to this world to ensure the establishment of divine rule (Abū al-A°la al-Mawdudī, 1997, p. 28). Nadwī sheds light on the dangerous consequences of this thought, especially on the negative effects it would cause on the minds of the people of the contemporary generation who have not got sound education. He further pointed out that whoever comes across this thought and confines his studies to Mawdudī’s, his bond with Allah will narrow down and he becomes soulless, especially when the focus is entirely diverted from Him. With this, the main thought of al-Mawdudī, which centred around the Islamic state (an Islamic state is

a type of government, in which the primary basis for government is the Islamic religious law), makes all other acts of Islamic worship and the four pillars of Islām (prayer, charity, fasting and *Hajj*) as the means of achieving the end of the Islamic government. This view of al-Mawdudī is severely criticised by Nadwī who stated that the Holy Qur’an clearly states *Jihād* and the state are the means, but prayer is considered as an aim. “Those who, if we give them power in the land enjoin *Iqāmah* as to pay *Zakāt* and they enjoin right (*al Ma’ruf*) and forbid wrong (*al Munkar*) and with Allah rests the end of matters” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Hajj: 41) (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 107).

Nadwi also puts forward an evidence from the models of Prophet Muḥammed to establish the status prayers and concludes that prayers were introduced by Prophet Muḥammed. Prophet Muḥammed, when describing about his attachment to prayer, said the best treatment to his eyes is found in prayer (Bukhārī, 1996; Hadith no: 3950). Prophet Muḥammed said to Bilāl, “Oh Bilāl, call for the prayer so as to have peace of mind” (Bukhārī, 1996; Hadith no: 4977). Man will be questioned regarding such obligatory duties and if he is found to be indifferent to them, he will be punished. Allah says, “What has caused you to enter Hell? They will say, “We were not of those who used to offer the prayer nor we used to feed (*al Miskīn* or poor), and we used to talk falsehood with vain talkers and we used to believe the Day of Recompense” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-Muddassir: 42-47). Nadwī, at the end of his critical analysis, comes to a

conclusion that these acts of worship are the pillars of Islām and man will be questioned about it on the Day of Judgment. However, other things like establishing a divine rule are of secondary importance in the religion. In other words, the people need to be educated at the first state with the pillars of Islam in order to establish the Islamic law and regulation (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 107).

The Psychological Impact of Considering Acts of Worship as a Mean

Based on the above-mentioned evidence, it is clear that the acts of Islamic worship and Islamic pillars cannot be used as a means of achieving the aim of establishing the Islamic state that al Nadwī envisages. This is because considering the acts of worship as a means will cause negative impacts on the minds of human beings (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 115). The connection of heart with the acts of worship gets cut off. Hence, one cannot perform the acts of worship piously. However, the Islamic acts of worship and the Islamic pillars should be performed according to or as mentioned by Allah who says, “Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the lord of the (‘*Alamin*) the Cherisher of the Worlds. He has no partner. And of this, I have been commanded and I am the first of the Muslims” (Qur’an: Sūrah al-An’am: 163-166).

On the other hand, can we interpret the acts of worship and the Islamic pillars as Mawdudī did? According to Nadwī, there is no necessity for such distinction, stating that

those are not the means for the establishment of an Islamic state (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 115). Qutb also had a similar idea, but al-Mawdudī and Nadwī criticize him for the explanations he gives in his writings since the three of them agreed accordingly on what an Islamic state is, i.e. a type of government, and in which, the primary basis for a government is the Islamic (religious) law (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 47; Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, 1997, p. 88; Qutb, 1987, p. 79).

THE VIEW OF QUTB

Every Muslim who reflects the recent history of the revival of Islām in African and Asian continents will gratefully thank the grace of Almighty Allah for blessing the *Ummah* with such fine scholars in the calibre of Hasan al-Banna, Abū al-A‘la al-Mawdudī, Qutb, and the like. Qutb returned to Cairo on 20 August 1950. At that time, he was not a member of Ikhwan. His experience in the United States, and his observations of the Western attitudes towards Ikhwān and Islām, together with Ikhwān’s appreciation of his writings, have helped to draw his attention to their cause. Qutb had decided from America to devote the rest of his life to a social programme in his country. Qutb is best known in the Muslim world for his work on what he believes to be the social and political roles of Islām (Qutb, 2006, pp. i-iii). Qutb is also considered as the first thinker who paired them to a radical, sociopolitical ideology. Qutb’s social justice in Islam, published in 1949, is considered as the first major theoretical work of religious

social criticism. He is considered as an Islamist and the leading intellectual of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 1950's and 60's. His extensive Qur'anic commentary, *Fī Dhilāl al-Qur'an* (in the Shades of the Qur'an), has contributed significantly to the modern perceptions of the Islamic concepts such as *Jihād*, *Jāhiliyyah*, and *Ummah*. The *Ma'alim Fī Tārik* or Mile Stone is considered as the final form of Qutb's thought (Qutb, 1987, p. 7).

The Political Thought of Qutb

On the issue of Islamic governance, Qutb differed with many modernist and reformist Muslims who claimed democracy was Islamic because the Qur'anic institution of *Shūra* supported elections and democracy. In addition, Qutb also pointed out that the *Shūra* chapter of the Qur'an was revealed during the Mecca period, and therefore, it did not deal with the problems of government. It makes no reference to elections and calls for the rulers to consult some of the rules, as in the particular case of the general rule of the *Shūra*, which argues a 'Just Dictatorship' would be more Islamic (Qutb, 1994, p. 14). Qutb said that Muslim should resist any system where men are in 'Servitude to other men' (means to obey to other men) as an un-Islamic and violation of God's rules. Qutb opposed to the popular ideology of 'Arab Nationalism, having become disillusioned with the 1952 Nasser revolution. In his book "Islām and Capitalism" published in February 1951, Qutb pointed out the royal capitalist system and its negative impacts on the Egyptian society. He drew

on the socio-political problems in Egypt and emphasized the incapacity of the capitalist system to continue in Egypt. Qutb also stressed Islām as a system of life that is capable of resolving the Egyptian problem (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 19). He exclaimed that state cannot be communist unless its laws and codes are derived from communism (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 19). The Islamic state based on the *Shari'ah* is not rigid; instead, it is flexible and can adopt from the experiences of other states and nations whatever implements of freedom, justice and equality are sanctioned by the *Shari'ah*. Qutb stated his belief that there was no decent life for this *Ummah* unless they returned to a great 'aqīdah. This great 'aqīdah today, in the case of Egypt, is not anything but Islām. Qutb stresses Islām as a national identity with the capacity to protect the life of the nation in place of secular patriotism. Qutb is reading patriotism on the basis of Islām. The Islamic system does not mean this specific form of the first Islamic society, but any social model that is based on the total Islamic idea of life. Hence, the Islamic system has the capacity to accommodate tens of models to answer the requirements of society and age (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 20). Qutb stresses Islām as a religion of the 'great unity' in this vast universe. This idea implies the relationships between the Creator and the creation, the universe, life and humankind. Qutb views Islām as a unique system with the ability to provide guidance for the entire range of human activity. Islām does not separate spiritual from secular

life. In fact, Islām is comprehensive as it covers all aspects of life, just as capillaries and nerves direct themselves to all parts of the body. Qutb drew on early Islām to emphasize his educational programme and ideological training of the individuals and groups in society. His programme is not to change the government, but to reform the Islamic thinking and discourse. At that time, Qutb, together with Nasser and other Free Officers, was enjoying the honeymoon of the revolution. To draw the attention of the new regime, Qutb provided his programme as follows: what is required today is not only to reform the Muslim individuals from the perspective of *‘aqidah* and behaviour, but we should also demonstrate social programmes based on the Islamic idea that is derived from the Islamic *Shari‘ah* at the same time (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 8).

Truth and falsehood cannot coexist on this earth; Islam must be incarnated in a dynamic political society, and is totally obedient to God’s sovereignty as expressed in the *Shari‘ah*. Any society or government that does not fully implement the *Shari‘ah* as the sole source of its legislation is *Jāhili*. *Jāhiliyyah* is not a pre-Islamic historical era of paganism - it is an ever present condition of denying God’s rule, usurping His authority, and living by man-made laws that enslave men to their rulers and engender oppression and tyranny. All contemporary Muslim societies are to be denounced as *Jāhili*. No truly Islamic state exists in the world today. *Jihād*, or striving in God’s cause, is the duty of every Muslim Separation (*hijrah, mufassalah*) from *Jāhili*

society is a necessary step for establishing borderlines and identity. It is not conceived of as total physical separation but as a spiritual separation, whilst staying in society to proclaim and recruit (Qutb, 2006, p. 22). Qutb’s idea that Islām must govern could be seen as having a significant influence on the later Islamic groups of the 1970s and 1980s, i.e. after Qutb’s death. They took the idea but turned a blind eye to Qutb’s educational programme, and tried to open the door of the palace to Islām by force.

The Concept of Hakimiyyah - Sovereignty

Many scholars considered that Qutb arrived at the concept of sovereignty only in his later writings of the mid-1960s (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 19). However, this is not the case. Qutb developed the concept of Sovereignty over many years. Its seeds could be traced back to his early works between 1925-1935, and its genesis took place gradually since then onwards, until this concept finally appeared in his Social Justice in Islām and the later writings (1949) (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 19). In the sovereignty of Allah, Qutb emphasised that all creations issued from the one will and there was no intercession or mediation between the will and the creation. There was harmony among all parts of this universe. The idea of Islām about the universe, life and humankind was used by Qutb to emphasize that the notion of peace was interwoven into the nature of Islām and its teaching, and that in his view, all the Islamic systems, doctrines, legislation and rituals are built on this fundamental idea (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 19). It is crucial to

note that there is no a single English word that could be translated accurately without the risk of seriously misconstruing or losing the force and intent of this Arabic term. We can only give the descriptions and the characteristics of this word. The nature and the meaning of the *Ḥakimiyyah* that Qutb speaks about are different from the nature and the meaning of 'sovereignty' known today. The word 'sovereignty' is derived from the Latin word *Superanus*, which means super above or supreme. In dictionary terms, the definitions of the term sovereignty are varied, but signify human governmental and legal authority (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 27). What Qutb means is that Islām is a religion and state in one. To him, the state is not a vague concept but it is clearly defined and characterised by sovereignty. In the Islamic state, God is the supreme legislator and the ultimate source of governance and legal authority. Government in Islām is thus specifically designed to implement the Islamic Law, that is, to administer justice in accordance with its decrees. Enforcing the law and facilitating its applications requires Islām to function as a religion and a state. However, the belief in the sovereignty of Allah over the universe, life and humanity is an integral part of *Tawhīd* (Qutb, 1973, p. 12). The ultimate goal of Qutb is to establish an Islamic state. In his analysis, Qutb used a number of comprehensive ideas to foster his ideological discourse. In the Shade of Qur'an, for instance, Qutb states that the judgement should be according to the law of Allah, deals with the most important and serious (*akhtār*) issue (*qadiyyah*) in Islamic

creed. This is because this particular group of verses in its positive terms precisely defines governance in Islam. This matter concerns government, the Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) and legitimisation (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 8).

Sovereignty and the System of Governance

Every government that is based on the principle that *Ḥakimiyyah* (absolute sovereignty) belongs to none but Allah and implements the *Shari'ah* is an Islamic government. Hence, every government that is not based on this principle and does not implement the *Shari'ah* cannot be called Islamic, even if the government is run by official religious organisations. The obedience of the people is to be given only if, and as long as, the government recognises that *Ḥakimiyyah* belongs to Allah alone and then implements the *Shari'ah* without any qualification other than justice and obedience. This means, the source of governmental authority in the Islamic state is not the Muslim Community or the results of election, but the activity of implementing the Law (*Sharia'ah*) (Qutb, 1973, p. 18). In other words, applying the law is the only source from which the government derives its authority. The Islamic political system can be explained as rules through consultation obedience to the ruler depend on his fidelity in adhering to the Islamic Laws (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 35).

Thus, the law can be seen as a fundamental tenet above the state and citizens. This is Qutb's thinking of sovereignty or *Ḥakimiyyah*. In the Islamic system, the *Ummah* chooses the ruler and

gives him the legitimacy to administer their government on the basis of the Islamic Law. The *Ummah*, however, is not the source of *Ḥakimiyyah*, which gives the law its legitimacy. Instead, the source of *Ḥakimiyyah* is Allah (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 35). His article entitled *Adāb al Inḥilāl* (literature of degradation) for the Egyptian radio was written on 10 August 1952, i.e. two weeks before the revolution. However, the radio staff of the old regime rejected the article. The literature of degradation is the literature of slaves - *ʿAbid* -, i.e. the slaves of oppression and the slaves of desires. In this sense, the literature of degradation is the literature of *ʿUbudiyyah* (servitude), which prevails when the people do not strive for higher horizons. You find writers, singers, and poets appear and take their positions in this vacuum to represent reversion in the heat of desires and the heat of *ʿUbudiyyah* (Qutb, 2006, p. 56). There are people who listen to writers who play the roles of lull the people. The oppressors of any time helped such writers, poets and singers and facilitated their works of degradation. Qutb found history on his side as he analysed some accounts from the Umayyad and Abbasid. Using the past to assess the present, Qutb asserted that the Umayyad consolidated them in power, secured themselves from the people of Hijāz and diverted society, through gifts to flatterers, entertainers and singers and the facilitation of their works. Comparing this condition with that in Egypt, Qutb criticised the royal regime who facilitated the works of those writers, poets and singers, who in turn glorify his

majesty. To him, this is the literature of degradation. It is the *ʿUbudiyyah* of the same nature; *ʿUbudiyyah* or servitude of desires and *ʿUbudiyyah* of oppression. Qutb clearly explained in his book milestone, “this *Dīn* (Religion) is a universal declaration of the freedom of man from slavery to other men to his own desires, which is also a form of human servitude. It is a declaration that the sovereignty belongs to only Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. It challenges all such systems based on the sovereignty of man, where man attempts to usurp the attribute of divine sovereignty. Any system in which the final decisions are referred to human beings, and in which the sources of all authority are men, deifies human beings by designating others than Allah as lords over men” (Qutb, 2006, pp. 56-59). For Qutb, the present life is not based on the Islamic bases. Therefore, there is a conflict between the religious conscience and the practical life of the people.

Qutb also listed the concept of *Ḥakimiyyah* and its characteristics, as follows:

- The system of government in Islām is not similar to any other system.
- It is distinct from all forms of government in secular democracies.
- It is constitutional.
- It is not inherently theocratic or autocratic.
- The form of the Islamic government has no impact on the Islamic identity of the state. All the items listed above are depending on each other, which means,

if one of them leaves it behind, the concept of *Hakimiyyah* will collapse (Qutb, 1994, p. 23).

Islām, as Qutb asserts, does not impose a specific form of government. The political system in Islām can be understood as a rule by *Shūra* (consultation). *Shūra* is a basic principle in the *Shari'ah* and it is essential to the organs of state and its overall Islamic identity (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 29). The *Shūra* appears to be different from that known today as the parliamentary government of any type or a form of democracy or any other system. Meanwhile, through '*Lā Ilaha Illā Allah*', Qutb understands that *Hakimiyyah* should be placed in all affairs to Allah. He says "*Lā Hakimiyyah Illā Li Allah*" (or no sovereign except Allah). Through this statement of Qutb, Nadwī sees that he makes *al-Hakimiyyah* as one of the most important characteristics of sovereignty (Abū al-Hasan al-Nadwī, 1979, p. 71). Qutb mentioned this reality in his book entitled, "*Fī Zilāl al-Qur'an*" when he described the following verse, "The command is of none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him that is the straight religion, but most men know not" (Qur'an: Sūrah Yūsuf: 40), and the rules belong to Allah because *Hakimiyyah* is one of the divine characteristics of Allah (Qutb, 1994, pp. 35-38).

Nadwī criticised Qutb in a fair and constructive manner by presenting the views of al Hudaibi regarding this point. Several other prominent thinkers like al Hudaibi who had realised the negative

side of the thought of Qutb joined Nadwī in criticising him. Nadwī presented the statement of al Hudaibi because both the scholars (al Hudaibi and Qutb) belonged to the movement of al Ikhwān and both were trained in the same camp, and thus, it is not surprising that they came to an agreement. However, al Hudaibi presented his idea on the contrary to Qutb on this particular subject. As Qutb said, "There is no Islam without state" (Qutb, 1973, p. 67). The matter of Allah's power (or *al Hakimiyyah al Ilahiyyah*) is not the creation of Mawdudī and Qutb, simply because it is mentioned in their books and statements many times. However, the Qur'an has confirmed this many times, "the command rests with none but Allah" (Qur'an: Sūrah al An'am: 53). Meanwhile, Yūsuf al Qardhawī explained that what we should understand by the statement of Mawdudī and Qutb about the *al Hakimiyyah* is that the *Shari'ah* rules, which do not mean that Allah is appointing someone (kings/ leaders) to command on his behalf. The support of the political authority belongs to the *Ummah* who has the right to elect or to resign the leader-*al Hakim* (Yūsuf al-Qardhawī, 1996, p. 62).

By perusing the statements of these scholars, as a researcher, I can understand the environment which has shaped Nadwī's position; he categorically rejected the opinions of Mawdudī's and Qutb's as something that would lead to obey human rulers and he branded that view as *Jāhiliyyah*-pre Islām of the twentieth century. In Nadwī's point of view, state power is a minor issue blown out of proportion by

these scholars and it is also tantamount to polytheism and worshipping deities. The environment where Nadwi grew and spent his life is full of millions of idol worshipers as he himself declared, “when Qutb was living in society which was facing the problem of governance/ *Hakimiyyah*”. When al-Mawdudī thought about an independent Islamic state from the Hindus, Nadwī rejected it completely and never thought about an Islamic government. His biggest hope was to see the Islamic minority of India living safely, peacefully, and freely within the greater united India, together with the Hindus.

In his book ‘Milestone’, Qutb expressed that the Muslim world has ceased to be and reverted to pre-Islamic ignorance known as *Jāhiliyyah* because of the lack of the *Shari‘ah* law (Qutb, 2006, p. 81). Consequently, all states of the Muslim world are not Islamic and thus illegitimate, including that of his native land Egypt. The idea of *Takfīr* in the above is their strategy. Even though there are disagreements among the Ikhwān members in the above issue, they unanimously agreed that the contemporary society is in the condition of *kufr* which must be changed and the Islamic state be established (Sayyid Khatab, 1997, p. 43). The main reason of Nadwī’s criticism on the thought of Qutb is that his term *al-Hakimiyyah* (sovereignty) is made as an essential part of divinity by him. It is worthy to mention that Qutb was very much attracted by the book of al-Mawdudī, “*al-Mustalāh al-Arba‘a fī al-Qur’an*”, and he completely agreed with his thoughts. This

was the reason why Jan Peter Hartung, in his published research work on Nadwī, clearly pointed out that Qutb is Mawdudī’s intellectual son in Egypt and the Arabic-speaking world (Jan Peter Hartung, 1998, p. 124).

CONCLUSION

Both al-Mawdudī and Qutb were attacked by Nadwī for sending prophets to the world charged with the mission of establishing divine sovereignty on earth, and this became the main pre-occupation of those who came after them. They also believed that the prime objective of worship is to assist the establishment of divine rule on earth. Besides the Islamic movements, Nadwī also engaged in dialogues with many others including the non-Muslims of India, with whom he considered dialogue as essential for communal harmony between the communities. He also believed that people of all communities must learn to resolve issues and co-exist in harmony despite their differences, which is inevitable in the course of human interactions. The partitioning of India and Pakistan demanded that the ensuing imbalance of Muslims compared with Hindus necessitated that Muslims’ vulnerability was compensated for by better interfaith relations. His interfaith dialogue programme was not restricted to India, but saw the ‘Arab and Western worlds as being in need of Islām and related how they could benefit from the Islamic message.

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