

# **In the Shadows of the Koran: Said Qutb's Views on Jews and Christians as Reflected in his Koran Commentary**

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# Contents

The Theory of <i>Jabiliyya</i> . . . . .	3
The Legal Perspective: <i>Dhimma</i> . . . . .	5
<i>Jihad</i> . . . . .	7
The Theoretical-Theological Perspective: from <i>Dhimmis</i> to Archenemies . . . . .	10
The Jews . . . . .	14
Conclusions. . . . .	20
Notes. . . . .	25



# In the Shadows of the Koran: Said Qutb's Views on Jews and Christians as Reflected in his Koran Commentary<sup>1</sup>

SAID QUTB (1906-1966) was one of the most important and original Islamic thinkers of the 20th century. His influence among Islamic fundamentalist movements of the modern era is profound, and hence the importance of understanding the tenets of his thought.

**B**ORN IN A SMALL VILLAGE in Upper Egypt, Said Qutb moved at the age of 14 to Cairo, where he later studied for four years in *Dar al-Ulum* ("The House of Sciences"), an establishment for higher education. After completing his schooling, Qutb worked as a teacher for several years and then served as a functionary in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. During his service in this office, he was sent on a mission to the United States, a two year experience which greatly influenced his negative view of the West and America. After returning to Egypt in 1950, Qutb decided to join the Muslim Brotherhood, the most important modern Sunni fundamentalist group in Egypt and in other Arab-Islamic countries as well.<sup>2</sup> Up to this point, Qutb did not profess radical religious ideas; his literary output during the 1930s and 1940s amounted to novels, a volume of poetry, and several essays in the field of literary criticism.

In October 1952 Qutb left his position at the Ministry of Education. Initially he had supported the revolution of the Egyptian "Free Officers," which had taken place in July of the same year. However, Qutb could not continue to support this new regime due to his belief that Islam should constitute the basis of politics and public life in Egypt. For a short while Qutb served as the editor of the Muslim Brotherhood's newspaper, but was arrested in 1954 with other leaders of the movement. After a few months in prison he was released, only to be re-arrested that same year, after an alleged attempt to assassinate the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser (Jamal Abd al-Nasir). This time Said Qutb remained in prison for several years, and was released only in 1964. It was then that he published his short work *Maalim fi-l-tariq* (*Milestones*), a radical Islamic manifesto in which

Qutb presented his theory of *jahiliyya*, or religious ignorance. Said Qutb was arrested yet again in 1965, and was accused of attempting to assassinate Nasser and to overthrow his regime. This time Qutb was sentenced to death and was executed in 1966.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to *Maalim fi-l-tariq*, Qutb's most important work is his copious Koran commentary, *Fi zilal al-quran (In the Shadows of the Koran)*. According to Jansen (see note 3), 16 volumes of this commentary out of a total of 30 had already appeared by the time of Qutb's arrest in 1954. The remaining volumes were completed by Qutb during his years in prison.

Said Qutb's attitudes towards Jews and Christians, as reflected in his Koran commentary, testify to his positions vis-à-vis the non-Muslim "other," and also explain the positions on this subject of many contemporary Islamic fundamentalists. In addition, Qutb's attitudes towards Jews and Christians reflect unconscious tensions and paradoxes that underlie Islamic fundamentalist thought in the modern period. This essay, therefore, has two main goals. On the one hand, it will aim at explaining Said Qutb's thought in the Jewish-Christian context as expressed in his own period. On the other hand, it will also underscore important elements and problems of current Islamic fundamentalist thought. Beyond this, the discussion will raise several methodological questions regarding the nature and sources of anti-Jewish sentiment prevalent among modern Islamic radicals. Lastly, it should be noted that Said Qutb was a prolific writer. Since the following analysis is based mainly on his Koran commentary, it is possible that further examination of his additional writings may yield other, perhaps slightly different, conclusions. Nevertheless, *In the Shadows of the Koran* is Qutb's most important and extensive work, and as such no doubt reflects the bulk of his most relevant ideas.

## The Theory of *Jahiliyya*

S AID QUTB'S VIEWS on Jews and Christians are based on two main pillars or principles. The first of these is Qutb's general theory regarding the social, cultural, and religious state of current day Islamic societies. This theory can be summarized by three basic terms: *jahiliyya*, *ubudiyya*, and *hakimiyya*. The second pillar or principle is the classical Islamic theory of *dhimma*.

As is well known, the term *jahiliyya* designates in the Islamic religion and consciousness the period that ended when Muhammad, the last and most perfect Prophet of mankind, appeared. This pre-Islamic period, according to traditional interpretations, was characterized by religious ignorance—polytheism and the worshiping of idols.<sup>4</sup> *Jahiliyya* therefore is the exact opposite of true faith—the belief in the one and only God, Allah, and the acknowledgement of his oneness and uniqueness (*tawhid*). However, in Qutb's own vocabulary, *jahiliyya* received a new and more relevant significance. Rather than being understood simply as a specific historical period that had pre-

ceded the coming of Islam and is now over and done with, in Qutb's thought it acquired a new meaning as a basic human condition that may exist at any given time and in any given place:

*Jahiliyya*—in light of this text [referring to the Koran, Sura 5: 50]—is not a period in time but rather a certain state. This state existed yesterday, it exists today, and will exist tomorrow.<sup>5</sup>

According to Qutb, in a *jahili* society a distorted perception of *ubudiyya* prevails—*ubudiyya* meaning servitude or subordination. Man in a *jahili* society is not subordinate to God but to culture, politics, and law that man, not Allah, created:

*Jahiliyya*—as described by Allah and defined in his Koran—is the judging/governing (*hukm*) of men by their fellowmen, for it is the subordination (*ubudiyya*) of men by their fellowmen, the abandonment of subordination to Allah, the rejection of Allah's divinity, and instead the acknowledgment of the divinity of some men and of the subordination to them rather than to Allah.<sup>6</sup>

Conversely, in an ideal Islamic society, the sovereignty as regards law and government — *hakimiyya* — is in the hands of Allah and Allah alone. In this ideal society, underlying both law and government is the Islamic religious law—the *sharia*, based on the Koran and *sunna* (i.e. the actions, sayings, and way of life of the Prophet Muhammad, as reflected in the traditions attributed to him, the *hadiths*). In contrast, Western society, which places the individual rather than God in the center of human experience, is nothing but a *jahili* society. Qutb writes,

The entire world is living today in [a state of] *jahiliyya*, in terms of the root from which life's constituents and systems emanate [...] This *jahiliyya* is based on an attack against Allah's rule on earth, against divinity's most special property—the sovereignty as regards law and government (*hakimiyya*). This *jahiliyya* rests this sovereignty upon man, making some men lords of others—not in the primitive and naïve form which was known in the first *jahiliyya*, but rather in the form of claiming falsely the right to determine conceptions, values, legal codes, laws, regimes and rules, far from the way of life [prescribed] by Allah, and regarding that which Allah has not permitted. From this attack against the rule of Allah rises an attack against human beings [*ibadihi*, literally: Allah's servants]. The humiliation of man throughout the socialist regimes, and the oppression of individuals and nations by the domination of capital and imperialism in the capitalistic regimes, are nothing but an effect of the attack against Allah's rule and the denial of the honor which Allah has established for man!<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, since the majority of Islamic societies in modern times blindly follow Western values and culture, they too are *jahili*:

We are today in [a state of] *jahiliyya*, like the *jahiliyya* which was contemporary with Islam, or worse. Everything around us is *jahiliyya*: peoples' conceptions and beliefs, their customs and traditions, the sources of their culture, their arts and literatures, their legal codes and laws. Even much of what we regard as Islamic culture, Islamic sources of authority (*maraji*), Islamic philosophy, and Islamic thought is likewise the product of this *jahiliyya*!<sup>8</sup>

The implication of this attitude towards current Islamic regimes and societies is of course severe. Accusing Muslims of being *jahilis* means that they are actually apostates (*murtadd*, pl. *murtaddun*); and apostasy in Islamic law is (principally and under certain conditions) punishable by death. This process is known as *takfir*—declaring someone to be a *kafir* (pl. *kuffar*), i.e. an infidel or a nonbeliever. The theory of *jahiliyya* implies that *jihad*—literally: effort, endeavor, meaning “holy” or just war carried out according to the rules of Islamic law—must be waged against *jahili* governments and *jahili* rulers.

From a historical perspective, this absolute rejection of Western culture is but one Islamic response to the traumatic encounter with Western power which took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Islamic modernists, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838/9-1897) and his student, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), stood for religious reformism and took an apologetic approach towards the West. Appreciating as they did Western achievements, they maintained the Islamic origin of many Western values and institutions, thereby essentially defying the unique contribution of modern Western culture. According to the modernists, these values and institutions disappeared from Islam and passed on to the West, following the slow process of degeneration which for various reasons inflicted Islamic societies. Now all that remains is to uncover and rediscover these “Islamic” values through *ijtihad*.<sup>9</sup> Contrary to this apologetic approach, Qutb represents a considerably more aggressive and self-assured position. He insists that Western values are fundamentally different from those of Islam; moreover, since Islamic values are intrinsically superior, one should reject Western culture outright.

Indeed, the difference in approach between Qutb and the modernists can be attributed to the prevailing historical conditions under which they lived and wrote. Whereas al-Afghani and Abduh experienced Western colonialism at its height, Qutb was younger and witnessed the withdrawal (some would say: the defeat) of Western colonialism, which was to be replaced by the independent Arab and Islamic states. Additionally, Qutb was persecuted and eventually executed by Nasser's fierce, albeit popular regime, a fact which no doubt contributed significantly to his negative attitude towards modern Islamic regimes and societies.<sup>10</sup>

## The Legal Perspective: *Dhimma*

THE SECOND PILLAR OR PRINCIPLE on which Qutb's views regarding Jews and Christians are based is the classical Islamic concept of *dhimma*. In theory, *dhimma* designates a quasi-contract between the Islamic community and its non-Muslim subjects, who are known therefore as *dhimmis*.<sup>11</sup> In this quasi-contract there is a mutual obligation. The Islamic community is obliged to protect the lives and properties of the *dhimmis* and to allow them religious autonomy. The *dhimmis*, on their part, are obliged to acknowledge the superiority of Islam and its political dominion. This acknowledgement is symbolized by the payment of the *jizya* (a poll tax) as well as the adherence to a variety of discriminatory regulations. Of course, a discussion of the historical development and implementation of *dhimma* is far beyond the scope of this article.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, it would be safe to say that *dhimma* is based on the recognition of Islam's absolute superiority over other religions.

Though Islam does acknowledge the other monotheistic religions—mainly Judaism and Christianity—as religions that received a true divine revelation (*ahl al-kitab*, see above note 11), nonetheless these religions in their current state are viewed as being corrupt and imperfect in comparison to Islam.<sup>13</sup> Based on these considerations, one may ask whether Islam is indeed tolerant towards the “other,” the *dhimmi*. Bernard Lewis's approach to this highly sensitive question seems both reasonable and objective. According to Lewis (see note 12), on the one hand, the institution of *dhimma* cannot be compared to the modern Western idea of tolerance, which entails absence of discrimination and full civil rights for all. On the other hand, in comparison to the medieval Christian world and its attitude towards non-Christian subjects or even non-orthodox (“heretic”) Christians, there is no doubt that the Islamic world displayed greater tolerance to the non-Muslim “other.” This more tolerant attitude is proved by the mere fact that the status, rights, and obligations of *dhimmis* were codified in the God-given law, the *sharia*.

Returning to Qutb, the latter does not deviate from the classical Islamic concept of *dhimma*. According to Qutb, *dhimmis* (mainly Jews and Christians) are entitled to religious autonomy and to Islamic protection of their lives and properties. In return, they must pay the *jizya* and adhere to a variety of discriminatory regulations. Referring to the famous Koranic verse in Sura 9: 29, Qutb explains,

The obvious change in these new laws is the command to fight the people of the book who have deviated from Allah's religion, “until they pay the *jizya* with their own hands (*an yadin*), humiliated” [see Sura 9: 29]. Henceforward, pacts of recon-

ciliation and truce (*uhud muwadaa wa-muhadana*) can be accepted from them solely on this basis—i.e. of paying the *jizya*. In this situation, the rights of *dhimmi*s who enter into a pact are established for them, and peace prevails between them and the Muslims. If they are content with the faith of Islam and embrace it, then they are considered Muslims. Indeed, they are not coerced into embracing the Islamic faith, for the proper Islamic principle is “there is no coercion as regards religion” [Sura 2: 256]. However, they are not allowed to practice their religion unless they pay the *jizya* and a pact is concluded between them and the Islamic society on this basis.<sup>14</sup>

It should be emphasized that Qutb shows little interest in the practical implementation of *dhimma* and in the details of how it is to be applied in contemporary society. This is not surprising: as in other issues discussed by modern Islamic fundamentalists (such as Islamic economy and social justice), here too fundamentalist thought encounters much difficulty in fleshing out a practical and realistic plan for the application of its theories.<sup>15</sup> However, Qutb does more than simply adopt the classical notion of *dhimma*: more than once he emphasizes that Islam is a religion of tolerance, benevolence and generosity (*samaha, tasamuh*). Islam, according to Qutb, does not reject the “other,” the *dhimmi*. To the contrary, Islam recognizes the *dhimmi*, is kind towards him, and attempts to draw him closer and closer—obviously for missionary purposes, among other things.

Qutb explains that these positive attitudes towards *dhimmi*s should not be interpreted to mean that the religion of the *dhimmi*s is in any way equivalent in status and worth to Islam. Indeed, we have seen that the contrary is true. According to Qutb, not coercing *dhimmi*s into embracing Islam should not be taken as recognition of their distorted and corrupt religion. The religion of the *dhimmi* is inferior to that of a Muslim, and for this reason the *dhimmi* must acknowledge the superiority of Islamic dominion and political rule.<sup>16</sup>

# *Jihad*

**A**T THIS POINT it is worthwhile to examine Qutb's theory regarding *Jihad*. Many modern Islamic thinkers take an apologetic approach to this issue, claiming that *jihad* is nothing but a defensive war waged by the Islamic community when attacked. In contrast, Qutb insists that *jihad* is a religious obligation that must be carried out by Muslims at all times and under any condition, regardless of whether the war is defensive or aggressive. Deriding the apologetics of various modern Islamic thinkers, Qutb writes:

Yet those who write nowadays on international relations according to Islam and the laws of *jihad* in Islam, those who apply themselves to the interpretation of the verses that contain these laws—it is grievous in their eyes and frightful that these should be the laws of Islam! And that Allah—glory be to Him—should order the believers to fight those unbelievers who are adjacent to them [see Koran, Sura 9: 123], and to continue fighting the unbelievers who are [still] adjacent to them as long as there are unbelievers who are adjacent to them! It is grievous in their eyes and frightful that the divine command should be like this, so they go on seeking restrictions for the unrestricted texts, finding these restrictions in provisional and previous texts!<sup>17</sup>

According to the majority of jurists and scholars in classical Sunni Islam,<sup>18</sup> the precept of *jihad* underwent four chronological stages during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. At first, while Muhammad was still in Mecca and suffering as he did from the fierce opposition of the unbelievers, he was ordered by Allah to disseminate the message of Islam by peaceful means such as persuasion, and was forbidden to involve himself in violent activities of any kind. In the second stage, after Muhammad had emigrated to al-Madina, he was ordered to perform solely defensive *jihad*—that is, to defend himself and his followers if necessary. In the third stage, after the Islamic strength had grown in military, political, and economic terms, Muhammad was allowed to perform aggressive *jihad* and to initiate attacks against the nonbelievers, though within certain restrictions (such as the prohibition to fight during the four holy months.) In the fourth and final stage, Muhammad was ordered to perform both defensive and aggressive *jihad*, at all times and wherever possible (under various rules of conduct). It was this final stage which abrogated (*nasikh*, from *naskh*, “abrogation”) previous stages and which was accepted from then on as the legal rule binding the Islamic community. While various modern Islamic liberals had attempted to reformulate the precept of *jihad* according to one of the three initial stages, Qutb stresses that it is only the fourth and last one which is relevant to Muslims, and has been so ever since the final years of the Prophet's activity.

Following his theory of *jahiliyya*, Qutb redefines the concept of *jihad* according to the three terms mentioned above: *jahiliyya*, *ubudiyya*, and *hakimiyya*. According to Qutb, Western *jahili* society and the many Islamic societies that follow Western culture view man, rather than God, as the source of their values. Islam, in contrast, seeks to worship Allah and Allah alone: He is the sole source of all values, law, and government. There cannot be any compromise between the *jahili* system and the Islamic system, since the former places endless obstacles and hindrances on the Islamic path. The only way Islam can survive and accomplish its goal—to summon men to worship the one and only God—is by *jihad*. *Jihad* aims therefore at bringing down *jahili* society, culture, and institutions, thereby opening the way for the Islamic call. *Jihad* is thus defined in concepts that are unique to Qutb’s thought. The practical implication of this theory is that *jihad*, according to Qutb, must be waged until the political reign of Islam spreads throughout the world; after all, Islam is a universal message, meant for all of mankind. He writes,

They [the apologetic thinkers] forget that *jihad* in Islam is “in the path of Allah” [or “for Allah’s sake,” *fi sabil allah*]. The purpose of this *jihad* is to establish Allah’s divinity on earth and to expel the idols (*al-tawaghit*) that have stolen Allah’s rule; to liberate man from the subordination (*ubudiyya*) to anything other than Allah and from the potential temptation of not submitting to Allah alone; to be set free from the subordination to men [*ibad*, literally: slaves], “until there is no temptation and the entire religion will be Allah’s” [see Sura 8: 39]. [They forget] that the purpose of this *jihad* is not to have one human doctrine prevail over another, but rather to have Allah’s way prevail over the ways of men! Not to have the rule of one people gain control over the rule of another people, but rather to have Allah’s rule gain control over the rule of men! The purpose of this *jihad* is not to establish a kingdom for man [literally: a slave], but to establish Allah’s kingdom on earth. This *jihad* must therefore be released everywhere on earth, in order to liberate all men, without differentiating between what is inside the borders of Islam and what is outside these borders. It is all [considered] “earth” inhabited by “man,” and there are idols everywhere enslaving men to men!<sup>19</sup>

However, Qutb emphasizes that the aim of *jihad* is not the coercion of *dhimmi*s into accepting Islam, since the Koran itself is explicit on this subject (see Sura 2: 256). What, then, is the purpose of *jihad*? Its purpose, Qutb explains, is to bring the whole world under the political rule of Islam, freeing man from the *jahili* obstacles that stand between him and the possibility of worshipping Allah alone. Once this is achieved, the rules of *dhimma* may be implemented and *dhimmi*s will be free to choose between converting to Islam or, alternatively, remaining in the status of *dhimmi*s:

The purpose of this *jihad* is a different matter than the coercion into [accepting] the [Islamic] faith—an entirely opposite matter. The purpose of this *jihad* is to guaran-

tee freedom of faith! For Islam, being as it is a general declaration of man's liberation on earth from the subordination to men, perpetually encounters idols on earth that render men submissive to others. It perpetually encounters regimes that are based on the submission of men to men, and these regimes are guarded by the power of the state or an organizational power of some sort. These regimes stand between those humans who are inside these regimes and the hearkening to the Islamic call (*dawa*), as they also stand between these humans and the embracing of the [Islamic] faith if it should please their souls to do so, or they might tempt them to [deviate] from this faith by various methods. This is the ugliest form of breaching the freedom of faith. It is from this point that Islam sets itself by sword to smash these regimes and to destroy these powers that protect them. Then what? It is then—after this—that Islam leaves people alone, truly free to choose the faith they want. If they wish, they can join Islam, thereby gaining the rights of the Muslims and bearing their obligations, becoming brothers in religion to those who have already become Muslims! If they so wish, they may remain with their faiths and pay the *jizya*, thereby declaring that they surrender to the dispatching of the Islamic call among them without any resistance. [By paying the *jizya*] they are also participating in the expenses of the Islamic state which protects them from the attacks of those who have not yet surrendered, and which takes on itself the responsibility for the disabled among them, the weak, and the sick—just the same as it does with Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, while *jihad*, in Qutb's eyes, does not mean religious coercion of *dhimmis*, lack of coercion on its part does not mean abstinence from *jihad*. This attempt at creating a delicate balance between forcing a political-governmental system on the one hand and the granting of religious autonomy on the other reflects, in my view, a basic tension in Qutb's attitude towards Jews and Christians. However, as I have demonstrated, this is not unique to Qutb. His position in this respect is very much in accordance with classical mainstream Sunni Islam, as reflected in its concepts of *dhimma* and *jihad*.

# The Theoretical-Theological Perspective: from *Dhimmis* to Archenemies<sup>21</sup>

SO FAR I have focused on the legal sphere as regards Qutb's position vis-à-vis Jews and Christians. I have shown how Qutb defines the ideal relationship he envisions between the Islamic community and its Jewish and Christian subjects in terms of the classical concept of *dhimma*, which at its core is a legal concept. However, significant differences emerge when one examines Qutb's views concerning Jews and Christians from a theoretical-theological perspective.<sup>22</sup> From this viewpoint, as from the legal one, Qutb was influenced by classical Islamic ideas. These ideas need to be reviewed before presenting and explaining Qutb's own development of them.

Since the dawn of Islam, the issue of Islamic self identity was of central importance in the history of this religion. The influence of the two great monotheistic religions—Judaism and Christianity—left its stamp on Islam, and Muslims understandably felt the need to define themselves in relation to the Jewish and Christian “other.” In what way are Muslims different from Jews and Christians? What is the “legitimacy,” so to speak, for the existence of yet another third monotheistic religion? Why are the biblical patriarchs and the well-known monotheistic figures—Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and many others—not to be regarded as Christians and Jews, but rather as Muslims or “proto-Muslims”? Indeed, these questions are at the core of the Islamic view of human history and are reflected in the Koran. Inevitably, the formation of a true and original Islamic identity involved criticizing the Jewish and Christian “other.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Koran itself is permeated with polemics against both Jews and Christians.<sup>24</sup> Jews and Christians are accused of worshipping other Gods besides Allah. According to the Koran,

“The Jews say: Uzayr [Ezra] is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: the Messiah [*al-masih*, i.e. Jesus] is the son of Allah. These are their very own words, resembling the words of those who have disbelieved before. May Allah fight them; how they are deterred from the truth! They have made their learned ones and monks—and the Messiah the son of Mary—lords other than Allah. Yet they were only commanded to worship one God; there is no God but Him, glory be to Him, how far is He from their polytheism!”<sup>25</sup>

In this regard, the Christians are especially criticized for their belief in the Holy Trinity:

“Those who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary, are nonbelievers [...].<sup>26</sup>  
“Those who say that Allah is the third one among three are nonbelievers, for there is no God but one God [...].”<sup>27</sup>

In these verses and in many others, Jews and Christians are called “nonbelievers” or “infidels” (*Kafirun*, *Kuffar*). Yet no less important in the Koran is the accusation that Jews and Christians have rejected the Islamic revelation and the veracity of its bearer, Muhammad. According to this accusation, they have concealed the proofs of his true prophetic nature and mission by altering and tampering with their holy books and scriptures (*tabrif*). Jews and Christians have misread the true history of the pure and ancient monotheistic tradition and, indeed, have deviated from it.

“They say: ‘become Jews or Christians and you shall walk the right path’. Say: ‘no, but rather the religion (*milla*) of Abraham, a true monotheist (*hanif*). He was not a polytheist’. Say: ‘We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us and in what has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and in what has been given to Moses and Jesus and in what has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them, and we are Muslims [literally: we completely submit ourselves to Allah]’ [...] Or do you claim that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians!? Say: ‘are you more knowledgeable or is Allah? And who is more wicked than those who have concealed evidence they have from Allah? Indeed Allah is not unmindful of what you are doing’.”<sup>28</sup>

“Those to whom we have given the book know him [according to Muslim commentators: Muhammad] just as they know their sons. Yet a group among them hide the truth though they know [it].”<sup>29</sup>

“Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he was a true monotheist (*hanif*) and a Muslim [literally: one who has completely submitted himself to Allah]. He was not a polytheist.”<sup>30</sup>

**I**n Islamic tradition, which evolved after the Koran, these polemics continued. Dissimulation from Jews and Christians as a means of preserving Islamic self identity is reflected in countless traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (the *hadith* literature). These traditions include both legal-practical injunctions and moral prescriptions.<sup>31</sup> The great medieval Hanbali scholar Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), who is much admired by the majority of modern Islamic fundamentalists, dedicated a whole book to this subject. By quoting and explaining hundreds of Koranic verses and Prophetic traditions (*hadiths*), Ibn Taymiyya attempted to prove that dissimi-

lation from Jews and Christians is not just a simple religious obligation, but rather constitutes a fundamental principle of Islam. Disobeying this principle, that is: assimilating one's self to Jews and Christians, might bring down the whole structure of Islam. Since external actions and internal beliefs are related and connected in Islam, Ibn Taymiyya stresses that one must dissimilate one's self from Jews and Christians in every aspect of his life:

The livelier the heart and the more knowledgeable it is of Islam, [true] Islam [...] the fuller is its perception of the dissimilation from Jews and Christians, be it internally or externally, and the stronger is its distancing away from their morality, which [unfortunately] is to be found among some Muslims.<sup>32</sup>

In his Koran commentary, Qutb adopted these Koranic and post-Koranic themes, explaining and elaborating on them by employing his unique concepts of *jahiliyya*, *ubudiyya*, and *hakimiyya*:

In addition, the verse [in Sura 9: 29] describes them [Jews and Christians] as “not professing the true religion.” This is clear from what has already been explained: any belief in the lordship (*rububiyya*) of someone [else] together with Allah is not the true religion. Likewise, compliance with a legal code other than the legal code of Allah, acceptance of laws from anyone other than Allah, and submission to a rule other than that of Allah's are not the true religion. This all exists [now] among the people of the book, as it existed among them back then.<sup>33</sup>

However, Qutb does more than simply adopt the classical notions regarding Jews and Christians: he transforms them into a totally new dimension, giving them a completely different perspective. According to his view, Jews and Christians are not mere historical adversaries of Islam who stood in the way of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers during the early period of this religion. Rather, Jews and Christians are eternal enemies of Islam, representatives of evil fighting throughout history against the good, which is embodied in the true Islamic community. The aim of Jews and Christians is to destroy Islam from within and from without, to cause Islam to collapse ethically, culturally and militarily. Their ultimate goal is to have Jewish and Christian *jahili* values reign over mankind—in other words, to dispose of Allah and to place man in the center of human experience. Qutb writes,

It became evident from practical reality, stage after stage and from one experience after the other, that there can be no coexistence between two ways of life that have such a deep-rooted and long-term incongruity between them. This incongruity entails all the particulars of beliefs and conceptions, ethics and behavior, social, economic, political, and human organization—an incongruity which cannot but result

from the incongruity in beliefs and conceptions. Two ways of life: one is based on the subordination (*ubudiyya*) of men (*ibad*) to Allah alone with no associate, and the other is based on the subordination of men to men, subordination of men to falsely alleged gods and dispersed lords. Then the clash occurs between the two in every step of life, for every single step of life in such two ways and two systems is bound to be incongruous with the other, and to totally clash with it.<sup>34</sup>

Qutb's concepts of *jahiliyya*, *ubudiyya*, and *hakimiyya* are thus used in order to color the conflict between Islam and Jews/Christians with an eternal hue. The conflict in this perspective is a clash between the forces of *jahiliyya* and the forces of Islam. From Qutb's vantage point, one single line inexorably connects the battles and fighting of the Prophet against the Arab idolaters and Jews of 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia, the crusades of later medieval times, modern Western colonialism, and the current day conflict between Zionism and the Arab-Islamic world. In fact, both sides do not have any choice but to participate in this inevitable and eternal struggle between good and bad:

It is the nature of things. First of all, it is the nature of the Islamic way which is known quite well by the adherents of other ways and is felt by their very own natural disposition! It is the nature of the resolve to establish Allah's kingdom on earth; to release all people from the servitude of men and to [introduce them] into the servitude of Allah alone; to smash the materialistic barriers that stand between all humans and the true freedom of choice. Secondly, it is the nature of the contradiction between two ways of life that cannot meet on any terms; [it is the nature] of the striving on the part of the adherents of the earthly ways to crush the Lordly way—the way which threatens their existence, programs, and rules—before it crushes them! It is inevitable—neither side has really any choice!<sup>35</sup>

True, already in the Koran, Jews and Christians are accused of trying to hinder Muslims from their true belief:

“Many among the people of the book wish to turn you back into nonbelievers after you have become believers, out of jealousy in their souls, though the truth has already become clear to them [...].”<sup>36</sup>

Qutb indeed sees himself as confronting the very same situation that Muhammad and the first Muslims had confronted—surrounded, threatened and persecuted by the evil forces of *jahiliyya*. Like them, his task is to persevere and to stand steadfast despite the turmoil, hardships, and trials he suffers. Eventually, Allah will grant him and the true Muslims victory over the nonbelievers. By employing the ethos or myth of the Islamic origins—perseverance, struggle, and victory—Qutb

manages to place the modern struggle with Jews and Christians in an eternal or timeless framework. It is clear then that the Islamic heritage, and especially the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, are indispensable components of Qutb's thought.

How does this severe and extreme theoretical-theological view of history and current reality fit in with Qutb's ideas regarding the legal concept of *dhimma*? Is it possible to resolve the apparent discrepancy between the tolerance, benevolence, and generosity of *dhimma* and the eternal fight against a relentless enemy, whose only desire is to destroy Islam? At this point, it would be appropriate to examine Qutb's specific attitude towards the Jews.

## The Jews

IN THE KORAN ITSELF, the attitude towards the Jews is more negative and severe than the attitude towards the Christians:

“You will indeed find that the people who hate the believers the most are the Jews and the polytheists, and you will find that the people who love the believers the most are those who say: ‘we are Christians’ [...].”<sup>37</sup>

THE VERSES dealing with the sins of the Israelites (*banu israil*) against Allah and Moses are many, and it is clear that the Koran is more interested in the anti-Jewish polemic than the anti-Christian one. The Jews are even condemned for killing prophets who were sent to them by Allah.<sup>38</sup> Through the enumeration of their various sins committed against Allah, Moses, and other prophets, Jews are depicted as breaching their covenant or pact (*mithaq*) with Allah.<sup>39</sup> According to the Koran, the Jews are destined to live in baseness and misery or destitution, and their lack of faith is proven by their fear of dying.<sup>40</sup> Their hearts are harder than stone:

“Then your hearts hardened after that, and they were like stones or harder. For there are stones from which rivers flow, there are stones that split and water comes forth; and there are stones that fall down from fear of Allah. Indeed Allah is not unmindful of what you are doing.”<sup>41</sup>

In post-Koranic Islamic tradition, Jews were portrayed as adversaries of Muhammad who relentlessly attempted to damage his mission and hinder his activities. Moreover, according to Islamic tradition, the three Jewish tribes of al-Madina (Qaynuqa, Nadir, and Qurayza) breached the pacts they had concluded with Muhammad—namely the “pact of the nation” (*ahd al-umma*) and the

pact which was concluded between Muhammad and Qurayza. It is said that during the “battle of the ditch” (*al-khandaq*, in 627), while al-Madina was besieged by the idolaters of Mecca and their Arab allies (the *ahzab*), the leader of Qurayza, Kab b. Asad, held negotiations with Muhammad’s adversaries. However, Muhammad managed to prevent these negotiations from succeeding, and after the siege had failed, Muhammad had the Jewish tribe massacred. It is not my intention to analyze the historical validity of these traditions.<sup>42</sup> What is more interesting in the current context is the perception of the Jew in Islamic tradition.

**V**ARIOUS PASSAGES in classical Islamic literature—mainly in the genre known as the *sira*, the biography of the Prophet—portray the Jewish adversaries of Muhammad as bearing rancor and hate towards Muhammad and Islam. Such is the case with the most famous biography of the Prophet—the *sira* of Ibn Hisham (died in 828 or 833), based on the work of Ibn Ishaq (704-767). The Jews are described in Ibn Hisham’s *sira* as being jealous, since Muhammad and the Arabs were the ones to receive God’s grace and were chosen as recipients for the last and most perfect divine revelation. This is also the reason the Jews did their utmost to hide the signs and proofs of Muhammad’s prophecy, which originally had constituted an authentic part of their Torah.

The Jews are accused of constantly trying to sow discord among the followers and supporters of Muhammad in al-Madina, and of scheming to bring down Muhammad by cooperating with his pagan adversaries from Mecca and the various Arabian tribes. They tried to hinder the Prophet from his belief in Islam and even attempted to kill him, according to some traditions.<sup>43</sup>

Of course, one cannot generalize from these traditions as to the “Islamic” attitude towards Jews. Does the *sira* of Ibn Hisham reflect in the Jewish context other biographies of the Prophet, or other literary genres as well? Can different and perhaps contradictory tendencies on this subject be detected and defined? Classical Islamic literature is extremely vast, and Islamic history and culture are far too extensive for any sort of unequivocal generalization. Nevertheless, the anti-Jewish sentiments in Ibn Hisham’s *sira* do raise questions in the current context that can only be answered, or at least addressed, through further research into the classical Islamic corpus.<sup>44</sup>

Regarding the anti-Jewish sentiment in classical Islamic literature, Bernard Lewis has argued that Islam lacks the Christian-like anti-Semitism which is based mainly on theological foundations. Lewis points out that in classical Islam, the Jew is not naturally and morally corrupt, nor does he plot to gain control over Islam and the world. Rather, the Jew is miserable and pathetic, thus posing no danger to Islam.<sup>45</sup> I will return to Lewis’s theory in the concluding paragraph of this essay. It is clear, however, that after Muhammad’s lifetime and during the medieval period, Jews did not constitute any military-political danger in the eyes of Muslims. The latter were mainly concerned with confronting the Christians—the Byzantines, the Reconquista movement in Spain, and the Crusaders—as well as pagan enemies from the East, i.e. Turkish elements from Central Asia and the Mongols. This is one of the reasons why polemics between Muslims and Jews in medieval times were usually not very significant and central as they were between Christians and Jews. Likewise,

polemics with Jews in Islamic territories were not as emotionally charged as in Christian lands, nor were they followed by pogroms or the burning of books.<sup>46</sup>

It was only in the modern era, when the Muslims witnessed the rise of Western-Christian colonial power and the establishment of the state of Israel, that this situation changed dramatically. The improvement in the status of *dhimmis*, namely Christians and Jews—due to the growing influence of the colonial powers—threatened the stability and the old values of the Islamic worldview. *Dhimmis* were now perceived by Muslims as foreign agents, cooperating with Western enemies and plotting to weaken Islamic society and state. Regarding the Jews, European anti-Semitic ideas and images began to penetrate Arab and Islamic culture. Various anti-Semitic writings, such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, were imported into the Arab and Islamic world—initially by Arab Christians and Europeans. The rise of fascism and Nazism, and the relations between Nazi Germany and certain parts of the Arab-Islamic world, enhanced the absorption of European anti-Semitic ideas. Finally, the rise of Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel were indeed an important factor in the growing anti-Jewish sentiments among Arabs and Muslims.<sup>47</sup>

No doubt, Said Qutb well reflects these developments. In an attempt to demonize the Jews, Qutb combines Koranic and post-Koranic anti-Jewish sentiment with ideas and images derived from European anti-Semitism. According to Qutb, the sins of the Israelites against Allah and Moses, and their troublesome relationship with the Prophet Muhammad, testify to their treacherous nature, their perpetual machinations, and their eternal hatred towards Islam. Qutb:

They have broken their covenant (*mithaq*) with Allah under the mountain,<sup>48</sup> and later dissolved their pacts (*uhud*) with their Prophets. Finally, a group among them dissolved the pact they had confirmed with the Prophet, may Allah's prayer and blessing be upon him, when he had arrived at al-Madina.<sup>49</sup> This is the pact in which he had reached reconciliation with them under certain terms. Yet they were the first ones to assist his enemies against him, the first ones to charge his religion with unsoundness and attempt to disseminate division and discord<sup>50</sup> among the Islamic ranks, disobeying the pact they had concluded with the Muslims.<sup>51</sup>

**I**N CONTINUATION of the Koranic and post-Koranic allegations against the Jews, Qutb sees one line connecting the breaching of the divine covenant by the Israelites and the treachery of the Medinese Jews. By much scheming, the latter tried for a certain while to maintain their economic and political status by sowing discord among the Medinese Arabs. After Muhammad had arrived and managed to “block the breaches from which the Jews used to infiltrate” by uniting the Islamic ranks with his new message, the Jews became more threatened and began fighting Muhammad and his religion. In addition, the Medinese Jews believed that prophets can only be Jewish, the Jews being the “chosen people;” Muhammad's spiritual and materialistic success enhanced their jealousy.<sup>52</sup>

However, according to Qutb's view, the problems with the Jews did not end with the victory of the Prophet over the Medinese Jews and the defeat of the Arab idolaters of the Arabian Peninsula. Rather,

From that day on began the war which has never ceased until this very day between Islam and the Jews!<sup>53</sup>

Regarding the Jews, various Koranic Suras tell of their positions, their actions, their intriguing, craftiness, and war. History contains all of this—all that which has not ceased for one single moment, since the first day they were confronted by Islam in al-Madina and until the current moment! These *Shadows* [i.e. this Koran commentary] are not the place in which to survey this long history. Nevertheless, we will only point to a small bit of this insatiable war which has been waged by the Jews against Islam and its adherents throughout history.<sup>54</sup>

Qutb has a lot to say about the Jewish nature. Thus, such terms as *makr* (craftiness, deceitfulness), *kayd* and *dasisa* (intriguing, machinating) appear numerous times in his discussions of the Jews.

They [the Jews] welcomed him [the Prophet in al-Madina] with machinations, lies, doubts, and discord, casting these into the Islamic ranks in al-Madina by all the twisted and deceitful ways that are well perfected by the Jews.<sup>55</sup>

Jewish nature (*fitra*) does not allow the possibility of believing. The use of the term *fitra* (literally: natural disposition) in this context is not accidental; according to Islamic law and theology, all human beings are born with an innate ability to believe in one God, i.e. with the potential of becoming true monotheists—that is, Muslims. It is only parents and society, through education and culture that prevent this ability or potential from being fulfilled. According to Qutb, the Jews rejected (and still reject) the Islamic message and revelation, not because of theological or intellectual reasons, but because their nature is crooked. Jews are thus not considered by Qutb as belonging to the same category as other human beings—due to their deformed *fitra*.<sup>56</sup> The Jewish nature entails disbelief, treachery, violation of contracts or pacts, and even murder; Jews are materialistic, always deal with money, and control global media and economy.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Jews are to be blamed for the process of secularization which has spread throughout the Islamic world. They are the ones responsible for civil unrest (*fitna*, p. *fitan*, see above note 50) and discord among Muslims, in the past and in the present. Qutb:

The Islamic nation is still suffering from the machinations of the Jews and their craftiness—the very same machinations and craftiness from which the ancestors of

this nation have also suffered. Yet unfortunately, the Islamic nation fails to benefit from these Koranic instructions and this divine guidance, from which the ancestors of this nation have benefited, thereby overcoming the intriguing of the Jews and their craftiness in al-Madina—while the religion was still young and Islamic society was in its infancy. By their meanness and craftiness, the Jews are still leading this nation astray from its religion, they are still deterring this nation from its Koran, so that it will not take from the Koran its sharp weapons and protective equipment—for they are safe as long as this nation is deterred from the true sources of its power and the pure wellsprings of its knowledge. Therefore, anyone who deters this nation from its religion and from its Koran is an agent of the Jews, whether he knows it or not, whether he wants it or not [...].<sup>58</sup>

**I**T SHOULD BE NOTED that in some traditions of classical Islamic literature, Jews are blamed for the civil unrest among Muslims and for different heresies that have deterred various Muslims from the true form of Islam.<sup>59</sup> Qutb claims that the Jews were responsible for the first civil war in Islamic history—the *fitna* which began with the murder of Uthman b. Affan, the third Caliph after Muhammad. This allegation can be found in classical Islamic sources, in which “Allah’s enemy,” Abd Allah b. Saba—a Yemenite Jew who had converted to Islam—is blamed for the murder of Uthman and for the civil war which followed.<sup>60</sup>

What other methods do the Jews employ in order to accomplish their wicked plans, according to Qutb? An interesting allegation in this regard (which is echoed by later Islamic fundamentalists) has to do with *israiliyyat*. The *israiliyyat* are classical Islamic traditions and legends derived from Jewish and Christian sources such as the Old and New Testaments and the Jewish *midrash*. These traditions and legends deal mainly with the history of the Israelites and their prophets, and already in medieval times a debate was conducted among Islamic scholars concerning these traditions, their validity, and their legitimacy. According to Qutb, the Jews have tried to destroy Islam by infusing these *israiliyyat* into Islamic religious literature. Returning to the holy Koran—one of Qutb’s most important and central ideas (see above note 24)—is thus conceived by him as a means of “cleaning” Islamic sources from “Jewish contaminated” traditions.<sup>61</sup>

Yet the Jews do more than this: they are attempting to bring down Islam through a tight alliance between “global Zionism” (*al-sahyuniyya al-alamiyya*) and the “global crusaders” (*al-salibiyya al-alamiyya*), by spreading communism,<sup>62</sup> and through the academic works of orientalists, many of whom have been Jews.<sup>63</sup> The Jews, Qutb states, are responsible for wars and discord or civil unrest (*fitan*) between various nations of the world. The Jews aim at destroying the foundation of human life which is religious faith—the belief in the one and only God. The Jewish goal is to establish a *jahili* society, in which a distorted conception of *ubudiyya* and *hakimiyya* prevails. It is therefore obvious that the Jews’ purpose is to bring down humanity and gain control over it; these Jewish plans, Qutb explains, are also documented in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>64</sup>

Bernard Lewis claims that the major negative change in Arab-Islamic attitudes towards Jews occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, specifically after the 1956 war and especially after the 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. From a cultural perspective, this change, prompted by political and military events, was primarily caused by the influence of European anti-Semitism. According to Lewis, Qutb and his immediate radical successors belong to an earlier stage in the development of Islamic anti-Jewish notions; for them, “the anti-Jewish theme, though present, is of secondary importance, and is still expressed in Islamic terms.”

Trying to explain the alleged shift in Islamic attitudes towards Jews, especially after the 1967 war, Lewis states,

The Jew—not just the Zionist—was depicted as mean, treacherous, cowardly, vicious, cunning, and of course implacably hostile to Islam. These anti-Jewish stereotypes had been present since early Islamic times, but they had been a secondary theme in Islamic literature. Even as late as the 1950s, Said Qutb, the leader of the Muslim Brothers, wrote an essay on “our struggle against the Jews” [see above note 64], but accorded them a minor place among the enemies that menace Islam—capitalism, communism, secularism, and worst of all, the neopaganism of renegade Muslim dictators. What was new was not so much the themes, as the nature and extent of their use [...] With few exceptions, Muslim writers did not yet present the Jew as an incarnation of evil, a child and agent of the devil, a poisoner of wells, a perpetrator of ritual murder, a drinker of blood, and a wicked plotter seeking to subjugate all mankind and to rule the world.”<sup>65</sup>

**T**HOUGH QUTB (to the best of my knowledge) does not refer to the Jew as “a poisoner of wells, a perpetrator of ritual murder, a drinker of blood,” he does nevertheless view him as “an incarnation of evil,” as “a wicked plotter seeking to subjugate all mankind and to rule the world” and even (in a certain sense) as “a child and agent of the devil” (see above note 50). The discussion in this essay sheds a different light on Qutb’s place in the modern history of Islamic anti-Jewish sentiment. For Qutb, it is the Jew who stands behind all evil phenomena faced by the Muslims. Though the Christian also shares similar goals and negative intentions with the Jew, in relation to the Islamic religion and Islamic society, nonetheless it is clear that the Jew poses the greatest danger for Islam and the Muslims. His wicked and sophisticated methods are as clever as they are old; the battle against the Jew is virtually eternal, and thus there can be no compromise with this cosmic evil.

These ideas professed by Qutb prove that extreme anti-Jewish concepts were present in radical Sunni thought and indeed held much significance already in the 1950s-1960s, prior to the Six Day War of 1967.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, in the context of Qutb’s own writings, it seems to me impossible to detect any evolution, shifts, or changes as regards his attitude towards Jews. Though it is true that

his short 1964 *Maalim fi-l-tariq* (*Milestones*, see above) was mainly concerned with the *jahiliyya* theory and not with the Jews,<sup>67</sup> nevertheless, it is clear from the current discussion that Qutb was obsessed with the Jews and that in his eyes the latter constitute the *jahili* forces “par excellence.” In Qutb’s view, the first and most urgent goal of the true Islamic movement should be the deposing of “pseudo-Islamic” *jahili* regimes (an approach which obviously gained much relevance and significance during Qutb’s imprisonment); only then should the fight against Israel take place. However, this does not contradict the fact that the real enemy according to Qutb is the Jew; the way to tackle the latter is by internal Islamisation first, and only then by external fighting against Israel. It is therefore safe to conclude that Qutb adhered to his anti-Jewish ideas throughout his writing activity as a radical Muslim.

## Conclusions

IT IS THUS CLEAR that a serious tension and even contradiction exists in Qutb’s thought, as regards his attitude towards Jews and Christians. On the one hand, Qutb adheres to the classical Islamic concept of *dhimma*; on the other, Qutb views Christians and Jews as archenemies of Islam whose perennial and eternal aim is to destroy Islam by any means possible. This is especially true of the Jews. Following the severe anti-Jewish polemic of the Koran and Islamic tradition, and adopting European anti-Semitic ideas, Qutb portrays a horrific image of the Jew—deceitful, intriguing, machinating, disbelieving, treacherous, and materialistic. Worse than all, the Jew in Qutb’s eyes constantly attempts to bring down Islam, the only true and complete religion of mankind, and hence the only possible vehicle of human salvation.

How are we to explain these discrepancies in Qutb’s thought? One option (probably the one Qutb himself would have chosen) is to claim that no real contradiction exists. As we have seen, according to Qutb, *jihad* must be waged against any *jahili* regime, be it Christian, Jewish, or of any other form. As long as these regimes exist and *jihad* is waged against them, Jews, Christians, and other *jahilis* are to be considered archenemies that must be fought against, in accordance with the rules of *jihad*. Yet once victory is achieved, and Islam gains political control over the entire world, then Jews and Christians will cease to be an immediate danger. Only then can they enjoy the benefits of *dhimma*. This interpretation does well to explain the dynamics and complexities from a legal perspective; however, from a theoretical-theological perspective, the tension and discrepancies remain unresolved.

It is obvious that the two basic notions underlying Qutb’s thought—*dhimma* versus an eternal struggle against archenemies—are a product of different historical circumstances. These varying historical realities yielded a different perception of the “other.” The first notion, the classical idea

of *dhimma*, was born in the early middle ages, when Islam was the leading culture of the day. Muslims enjoyed military achievements and a political-economic golden age. The other notion was a result of the turmoil and constant defeats faced by Islamic societies in modern times. Islam suffered (and still suffers, according to many Muslims) severe attacks, culturally and militarily, carried out by the West. The first notion views *dhimmis*—namely Jews and Christians—as being pathetic and destitute, in need of Islamic protection in return for their recognition of Islamic supremacy. The other notion views Jews and Christians as dangerous and relentless enemies, threatening the sheer existence of Islam. Obviously, modern events and developments—the growing power of the West, its colonialism, the success of Zionism, the establishment of the state of Israel—have all affected the attitude of Said Qutb and his followers towards the “other.”

**H**OWEVER, ONE SHOULD REMEMBER that the negative attitude towards Jews and Christians—especially so regarding Jews—is influenced not only by modern events but also by the Koran and Post-Koranic Islamic tradition, as shown in this essay. The place of this classical tradition in modern fundamentalist thought, in the context discussed here, has not been sufficiently addressed in modern scholarship. It is therefore in need of further examination. Are we to view the severe anti-Jewish notions prevalent among modern Islamic radicals as an essentially Western-European phenomenon? In other words, are the anti-Jewish notions of Qutb and his followers basically Western ideas Islamicized or colored with Islamic features?<sup>68</sup> Or are these notions essentially an internal Islamic phenomenon, enriched by various anti-Semitic ideas and images of European origin? These questions cannot be thoroughly dealt with in the current context, and as already stated, they must await further research.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the sources analyzed in this essay, I would propose as a working thesis to view the second option as a more accurate depiction of the historical development of modern anti-Jewish attitudes among radical Muslims. In my opinion, these anti-Jewish attitudes cannot be understood without their classical Islamic background.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, although Said Qutb does refer to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and indeed employs different ideas and images that are clearly of European origin, nevertheless the core ethos or core myth that stands in the center of his worldview is Islamic. This ethos or myth—inspired and shaped by the saga of the Islamic beginnings and especially by the Prophet’s biography—entails an eternal combat with the evil forces of *jahiliyya*.

Foremost among these forces are the Jews; they are depicted as the worst *jahili* enemies of Islam not because the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* say so, but because the Koran and the biography of the Prophet say so—that is, according to Qutb’s interpretation. The Koranic and post-Koranic terminology and concepts are indispensable elements in Qutb’s mythology and are more central than those of Western origin. European anti-Semitism alone could not have provided Qutb with the necessary tools to transform the struggle between Islam and Judaism into an eternal-cosmic fight between good and bad. Rather, Qutb could only have achieved this goal by employing, in his

own unique way, anti-Jewish notions that are indeed found in classical Islam. By thus interpreting the Islamic sources, Qutb grants a mythological depth to the current conflict between Jews and Muslims. In accordance with the biography of the Prophet and the history of the first Muslims, Qutb portrays the path he believes Muslims should take in their confrontation with the Jews (or the Christians, for that matter): from suffering and hardships in the face of evil *jahili* forces, to perseverance and struggle, until finally victory is achieved.<sup>70</sup>

One cannot understand Qutb's anti-Jewish worldview solely on the basis of the European model of anti-Semitism. This last model has indeed influenced Qutb's attitudes towards the Jews, but it did not create them nor grant them their essential nature. Christianity—which stands at the basis of European anti-Semitism—is not Islam; though both religions have a lot to say about Judaism and indeed are “obsessed” with the Jewish “other,” nonetheless they are two different religious systems. Each one evolved under diverse historical circumstances. Therefore, one cannot analyze anti-Jewish sentiment and notions in radical Islam through a prism based on the European model of anti-Semitism.<sup>71</sup> There is no point in trying to compare Islam and Christianity in order to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate Islam's anti-Jewish sentiment. The Jews did not kill the Islamic God. Unlike the Christians and their anti-Jewish polemics, Muslims were not very interested in the Old Testament or in other Jewish books.<sup>72</sup> And race seems to be unimportant in current radical Islam, contrary to modern anti-Semitic theories, namely Nazism.

On the basis of the discussion so far, it seems to me that any future model or theory concerning the nature of anti-Jewish notions in radical Islam should address the following issues:

## IDENTITY:

Bernard Lewis states that “The Muslims did not conceive or present themselves as the new and true Israel; they did not therefore feel threatened or impugned by the obstinate survival of the old Israel.”<sup>73</sup> He also claims that Islam lacks the theological foundations on which Christian anti-Semitism is based (see above). However, as shown above, the Muslims were “obsessed” with their self identity and sought to define themselves in relation to both Christians and Jews.

The Jews were perhaps not a military and political threat after the time of the Prophet, yet from the very beginning of Islamic history the Muslims were well aware of the Jewish religion and realized its importance and centrality in the monotheist tradition. The Muslims therefore strived to establish their legitimacy and supremacy over the Jews by proving that the latter were not worthy of being the bearers and heirs of the true monotheist tradition. In this regard, the Muslims indeed felt threatened by the Jews. In modern times, this Islamic feeling was very much enhanced by the success of the Jews in establishing a strong and prosperous state. In explaining modern anti-Jewish sentiment among radical Muslims, the issue of Islamic self-identity must be taken into consideration. As proven above, this issue is indeed of fundamental theological importance.<sup>74</sup>

## THE KORAN:

As seen above, the Koran is paramount in forming anti-Jewish stereotypes in the radical Islamic worldview. The many verses dealing with the sins of the Israelites portray an image of a religious nation that suffers from various negative traits and has an almost natural tendency for disbelief, the violation of covenants, and so forth. Since the Koran is the most central component in Islamic religion (see above note 24), together with the Prophet's heritage, and since it is recited daily or weekly and greatly revered by most Muslims, the verses dealing with the Jews should be regarded as a vital factor when addressing the subject under discussion here.

## THE PROPHET:

“Muhammad never claimed to be Messiah or Son of God; only God's apostle. The Jewish opposition to his apostolate failed while he was still alive. It was in any case less significant, less wounding, less of a reproach than the Jewish rejection of Christian claims.”<sup>75</sup> Although Muhammad obviously did not see himself as a son of God, the Jewish rejection of his apostolate was not “less significant, less wounding, less of a reproach than the Jewish rejection of Christian claims.” The struggle between Muhammad and the Jewish tribes of al-Madina, though short and retroactively speaking of little military-political importance, was significant in forming a lasting anti-Jewish sentiment in Islamic tradition. The Jews did not kill the Islamic God or his son (unheard-of ideas in Islam), but their complete rejection of Muhammad's prophetic nature and their various attempts to destroy his mission do constitute a grave sin in the eyes of Muslims. The important status and centrality of the Prophet Muhammad in Islam cannot be overemphasized; any past attempt at harming the Prophet or any current endeavors to damage his reputation are conceived of as a direct offense against the core and basis of the Islamic religion—an obvious act of sheer evil. Therefore, the negative relations between Muhammad and the Jews play an important and central role in the formation of Islamic anti-Jewish concepts.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

The military-political confrontation between Jews and Muslims ended with the Prophet's conquest of Mecca (630), after which the Jews ceased to be a military-political problem. This continued to be true throughout medieval times, and only in the modern era did this confrontation come back to life with the rise of Zionism and later the establishment of the Jewish state. However, this historical reality does not mean that the anti-Jewish sentiment in Islamic culture was nonexistent during medieval times, or that anti-Jewish concepts in their entirety were imported into the modern Islamic world from Europe. Rather, the Islamic anti-Jewish sentiment did exist, only to be revived and, indeed, reinterpreted by modern radical thinkers. This reviving and reinterpretation were not

only a result of the influence of European anti-Semitism, but mainly a result of the modern military-political developments in the relationship between Jews and Muslims.

These historical developments—not European anti-Semitic writings—forced Islamic radicals to rediscover the anti-Jewish concepts in their heritage and to disproportionately enhance their significance. Western anti-Semitism provided various tools, images, and a certain stimulus; but the main key to understanding the current anti-Jewish sentiment among Islamic radicals and its unprecedented magnitude lies in the connection between the Islamic past and the Islamic present, not in Christian and European anti-Semitism.<sup>76</sup> By searching for internal religious factors in addition to external influences and developments, we may better understand how and why this anti-Jewish sentiment gained such enormous, extreme, and indeed monstrous dimensions, prevalent not only among Sunni radicals, but also among various other segments of Islamic societies.<sup>77</sup> Current Islamic anti-Jewish notions cannot be dismissed as a pale and pallid adoption of *Der Stürmer*-style cartoons and an occasional publication of a blood libel; rather, these notions many times constitute part of a larger and complex theological worldview.

## DIVERSITY:

This essay has dealt with the theories of a leading Sunni radical. However, anti-Jewish conceptions can also be found among Shiite fundamentalists, among liberal, communist/socialist, and pan-Arab intellectuals, in the governmental media, in non-governmental satellite channels, in Arab countries, and in Non-Arab Islamic states (see note 77). It is therefore logical to assume—at least as a working thesis—that anti-Jewish notions in Islamic societies vary to one degree or another in form, content, motifs, images, and the sources that have influenced them. These diversities must be taken into consideration when analyzing the subject under discussion here.

To summarize: this essay has illustrated the tension underlying Said Qutb's views regarding Jews and Christians and has also raised some methodological questions as to the nature and sources of Qutb's anti-Jewish worldview. Since Qutb was one of the most influential Islamic fundamentalist thinkers of the modern era, the conclusions of this discussion and the problems it has raised may help to explain current Islamic fundamentalist theories and conceptions regarding the West, Israel, and the Jews.

The tension in Said Qutb's thought inevitably raises another intriguing question—whether or not the theoretical-theological aspect might eventually affect the legal considerations. Will the classical concept of *dhimma* change, reflecting the new and extremely negative attitude towards Jews and Christians? Only time will tell.<sup>78</sup>

## NOTES

1. This article is based on a seminary paper written under the supervision of Professor Isaac Hasson of the Arabic Language and Literature Department in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I wish to thank Professor Hasson for his assistance and support.
2. On the Muslim Brotherhood see R. P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).
3. On the life and works of Said Qutb, see Salah Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, *Said qutb: min al-milad ila l-istishbad*, (Damascus: Dar al-qalam, 1994); *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), "Said Kutb," vol. IX pp. 117-118 (Jansen). On Qutb's visit to America and his negative impression of American society and culture, see Emmanuel Sivan, *Hitnagshut betoch haislam (The Clash within Islam)*, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2005), pp. 57-65 (in Hebrew).
4. The term can also be interpreted as meaning the period in which the Arabs were unrestrained and acted immoderately with cruelty, violence and tribal fanaticism; see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (translated by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern), (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), vol. I pp. 201-208.
5. Said Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, (Beirut: Dar al-shuruq, 1986), p. 904.
6. Ibid.
7. Qutb, *Maalim fi-l-tariq*, (Beirut: Dar al-shuruq, no date), p. 8. Ontologically speaking, human beings are considered to be God's servants and that is why they are called *ibad*.
8. Ibid, pp. 17-18. For the medieval and modern Islamic sources of Qutb's theory of *jahiliyya*, see Ahmad ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtida al-sirat al-mustaqim mukhalafat ashab al-jahim*, (Cairo: Dar al-hadith, 1999), pp. 78-79; Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 16-49, 83-129.
9. Literally: effort, endeavor. In Islamic legal theory, *ijtihad* means the independent issuing of verdicts by religious scholars on the basis of the *sharia* and personal judgment. It is opposed to *taqlid*—imitation, acting solely according to legal precedents. For a basic introduction to the history and thought of the modernist movement in Islam, see Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), especially pp. 4-17, 104-143; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), "Djamal al-Din al-Afghani," vol. II pp. 416-419 (Goldziher and Jomier); *ibid*, "Muhammad Abduh," vol. VII pp. 418-419 (Schacht); and more recently, Uriyah Furman, "Mishnato shel shaykh muhammad abduh keparshanut shel hamoderniyut: iyun mehudash ("The Thought of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh as an Interpretation of Modernity: a Reconsideration)," *Hamizrah bahadash* 46 (2006), pp. 121-150 (in Hebrew).
10. See also Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 50-82.
11. One should not confuse *dhimmis* ("those who partake in the *dhimma*") with *ahl al-kitab* ("People of the Book," i.e. religions that are recognized by Islam as having received in the past a heavenly scripture). While *dhimmis* is basically a legal category, *ahl al-kitab* is more of a theological category aimed at defining certain non-Muslim religions (initially Judaism and Christianity). The correlation between the two categories is not obvious; it is a historical fact that the category of *dhimmis* was expanded in the course of time (during the Middle Ages) in order to include religiously diverse populations that were not necessarily regarded at first as belonging to *ahl al-kitab*. However, many medieval Islamic scholars attempted to connect the two categories, explaining the inclusion of various populations in the category of *dhimmis* by defining them as *ahl al-kitab*. Such was the case, for example, regarding the Zoroastrians.
12. Concerning these issues see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), "Dhimma," vol. II pp. 227-231 (Cahen); Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 3-66 (see also the references to Mark Cohen's studies below in note 42); Milka Levy-Rubin, "Shurut Umar and its Alternatives: The Legal Debate on the Status of the Dhimmis," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005), pp. 170-206; see also Suha Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," in S. Taji-Farouki and B. M. Nafi (eds.) *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris), 2004, pp. 320, 330-332.

13. For other Islamic opinions on this subject, see Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*, pp. 13-39.
14. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1620. The Koranic expression *an yadin* is obscure. Different interpretations can be found for it both in the Islamic tradition and in modern scholarship. According to some of these interpretations, the expression implies in one way or the other the humiliation of the *dhimmis*; see Uri Rubin, "Quran and Tafsir: the Case of *an yadin*," *Der Islam* 70 (1993), pp. 133-144; idem, "Quran and Poetry: More Data Concerning the Quranic *jizya* Verse (*an yadin*)," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006), pp. 139-146. The translations of Koranic verses in this article are my own.
15. See Uriyah Furman, *Islamiyyun: dat vebevrach bemishnatam shel neemaney haislam bney zmanenu* ("Islamiyyun—Religion and Society in Contemporary Islamist Thought"), (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 2002), pp. 174-198, 251-269 (in Hebrew). Qutb himself explains that there is no use in discussing the details of such issues, so long as Islamic societies are still in a state of *jabiliyya*. Only when these societies are transformed into true Islamic communities, will it be possible to discuss the practical aspects of concepts such as *dhimma*. Nevertheless, Qutb does emphasize the importance of maintaining a reciprocal and balanced relationship between theory and practice or between thought and action; see *Fi zilal al-quran*, pp. 420-423 (commentary on the Koran, Sura 3: 65-92), 1634 (Sura 9: 29-35), 1735-1736 (Sura 9: 111-129); idem, *Maalim*, pp. 31-45.
16. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, pp. 215-218 (Sura 2: 213), 732-733 (Sura 4: 89), 848 (Sura 5: 1-11), 915, 923 (Sura 5: 51-66), 1633-1634 (Sura 9: 29-35); see also Qutb, *Al-Adala al-ijtimaiyya fi-l-islam* ("Social Justice in Islam"), (Cairo and Beirut: Dar al-shuruq, 1995), pp. 146-150.
17. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1737 (Sura 9: 111-129).
18. See, for example, Ali b. Muhammad al-Mawardi, *Al-Hawi al-kabir*, (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ilmiiyya, 1994), vol. XIV pp. 102-116; Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Sarakhsi, *Sharh kitab al-siyar al-kabir li-muhammad b. al-hasan al-shaybani*, (Cairo: Mahad al-makhtutat, 1971), vol. I pp. 187-188; Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: the Origin of Holy War in Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); *Encyclopaedia of the Quran*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, s.v. "Jihad," vol. III pp. 35-43 (Ella Landau-Tasserou).
19. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1737 (Sura 9: 111-129); see also *ibid*, pp. 1545-1548 (Sura 8: 61), 1589-1592 (Sura 9: 1-28), 1736-1741 (Sura 9: 111-129); idem, *Maalim*, pp. 55-82.
20. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1738; see also *ibid*, pp. 1598-1603 (Sura 9: 1-28), 1718 (Sura 9: 111-129). For discussions in Islamic sources concerning the Koranic verse 2: 256 see Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*, pp. 102-106. Theoretically and generally speaking, as oppose to non-Muslim monotheists or *ahl al-kitab*, polytheists and idol worshippers may only choose between embracing Islam or death. It is interesting to compare Qutb's logic regarding *jihad* to the arguments of Franciscus de Victoria, a Spanish Dominican scholar of the Sixteenth Century, concerning a similar dilemma. De Victoria was asked whether it is permitted to force the Indians of South America to convert to Christianity, and his answer was negative. However, de Victoria added that if the Indians do not allow the Spanish missionaries to carry out their missionary activities, then it is permissible to fight the Indians in order to enable the missionaries to achieve their objectives. See J. T. Johnson, "Historical Roots and Sources of the Just War Tradition in Western Culture," in J. Kelsay and J. T. Johnson (eds.) *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 16-19, 26.
21. I use here the term "theological" in its broadest sense: not necessarily in relation to dogmas concerning God's nature, but rather those dogmas dealing with other religions, the meaning of human history, etc.
22. Though Qutb himself would never agree to such a distinction between the legal and theoretical-theological spheres (see note 15 above), in reality, differences between the two spheres do exist in Qutb's thought.
23. From early on in Islamic history, *jihad* seems to have played an important role in the formation of the Islamic self image and identity. This is reflected, for instance, in the famous *hadith* (a tradition attributed to the Prophet Muhammad): "Every nation has its monasticism, and the monasticism of my nation is *jihad* in Allah's path" (or: for Allah's sake, "Inna li-kulli ummatin rahbaniyyatan wa-rahbaniyyatu ummati l-jihadu fi sabili llahi"); see Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn Abi Asim, *Kitab al-jihad*, al-Madina: Maktabat al-ulum wa-l-hikam, no date, vol. I p. 186. This tradition implies both an Islamic awareness of other religions (in this case, Christianity with its strong monastic tradition) and an attempt to establish an Islamic uniqueness (*jihad*). In this respect, Qutb and current Islamic fundamentalists who follow his ideology are attempting to define their Islamic identity vis-à-vis the West by reviving the ethos of *jihad*. The revival of this ethos is perceived as being

- authentically Islamic, not “contaminated” by Western concepts such as those that are adopted by Islamic liberals.
24. The Koran has profound significance in Qutb’s eyes, as is the case among most believing Muslims. However, as a fundamentalist (one should remember that this is a Western term), Qutb believed and emphasized that modern Muslims must return to the pure moral teachings and practical instructions of the Koran; see, for example, *Maalim*, pp. 11-19.
  25. Literally: “How far is He from what they associate [with Him],” Koran, Sura 9: 30-31. On Ezra in the Jewish and Islamic traditions, see Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), chapter 3.
  26. Koran, Sura 5: 17; see also verse 72 in the same Sura.
  27. Koran, Sura 5: 73; on Jesus and Mary see also 3: 35-64; 4: 156-159; 5: 110-120; 19: 1-40.
  28. Koran, Sura 2: 135-136, 140. On the term *hanif* see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Second Edition), s.v. “Hanif,” vol. III pp. 165-166 (Watt); Shlomo Pines, “Jahiliyya and ilm,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990), pp. 192-194.
  29. Sura 2: 146.
  30. Sura 3: 67; see also 2: 75, 87-91, 105, 124-141, 159-160; 3: 64-74, 83-84, 95-99, 187; 5: 59-66.
  31. See M. J. Kister, “Do Not Assimilate Yourselves...: La tashabbahu...’,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 12 (1989), pp. 321-371; see also Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Quran: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1999); idem, “Apes, Pigs and the Islamic Identity,” in Uri Rubin and David Wasserstein (eds.) *Dhimmis and Others*, (Tel Aviv: Israel Oriental Studies, 1997), pp. 89-105.
  32. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtida al-sirat al-mustaqim*, p. 15 (“wa-kullama kana l-qalbu atamma hayatan wa-arafa bi-l-islami lladhi huwa l-islamu [...] kana ihsasuhu bi-mufaraqati l-yahudi wa-l-nasara batinan aw zahiran atamma wa-buduhu an akhlaqihimu l-mawjudati fi badi l-muslimina ashadda”).
  33. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1633; see also idem, pp. 105-106 (Sura 2: 104-123), 117-119 (Sura 2: 134-141), 406-407, 409-413 (Sura 3: 65-92), 1620-1625, 1635, 1641-1643, 1646-1647 (Sura 9: 29-35). Some of Qutb’s interpretations regarding Sura 9: 31 have their roots in medieval Islamic exegesis; see, for example, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, Beirut: Dar al-fikr, 1401h, vol. II p. 349; and see above note 8.
  34. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 1586 (Sura 9: 1-28).
  35. Ibid, pp. 1586-1587 (9: 1-28); see also pp. 100, 105-109 (Sura 2: 104-123), 672-674 (4: 51-57), 907-926 (5: 51-66), 1504 (8: 30-40), 1620-1650 (9: 29-35). On the significance of the crusades in modern Arab-Islamic thought, see Emmanuel Sivan, *Mitosim politiim araviim* (“Arab Political Myths”), (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1997), pp. 15-52 (in Hebrew).
  36. Sura 2: 109; see also 2: 120; 3: 69, 72-73, 100; 4: 44-45.
  37. Sura 5: 82.
  38. On the killing of Prophets see Sura 2: 61; 4: 155; 5: 70. This anti-Jewish accusation seems to have been adopted from Christian sources, see The New Testament, Matthew, 5: 12; 23: 29-36; see also Ofer Livne-Kafri, *Iyunim bemamadab shel yerushalaim baislam haqadum* (“Jerusalem in Early Islam”), (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2000), pp. 10-11 (in Hebrew).
  39. See, for example, Sura 2: 40-103; 4: 153-162; 5: 12-13, 20-26, 41-45, 70-71; 7: 138-171; 17: 4-8; 20: 80-98.
  40. Sura 2: 61, 94-96, 243-252; 62: 6-8.
  41. Sura 2: 74.
  42. For the historical aspect of the relationship between Muhammad and the Jews, see N. A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979); M. J. Kister, “The Massacre of Banu Qurayza: a Re-Examination of a Tradition,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986), pp. 61-96; M. Lecker, “Did Muhammad Conclude Treaties with the Jewish Tribes Nadir, Qurayza and Qaynuqa?,” in Rubin and Wasserstein (eds.), *Dhimmis and Others*, pp. 29-36; see also Mark R. Cohen, “The Jews under Islam: from the Rise of Islam to Sabbatai Zevi,” in *Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies*, New York: 1976, pp. 169-229; idem, “Islam and the Jews: Myth, counter-Myth, History,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 38 (1986), pp. 125-137; idem, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and the reference to Lewis above in note 12.
  43. See Abu Muhammad Abd al-Malik b. Hisham, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya* (eds. Mustafa al-Saqa, Ibrahim al-Abyari, and Abd al-Hafiz Shibli), (Beirut and Damascus: Dar al-khayr, 1990), vol. II pp. 119-162, vol. III pp. 40-42, 43-48, 184-199, 276; see also Etan Kohlberg, “Dmut hanavi muhammad keshahid” (“The Image of the Prophet Muhammad as a shahid”), in

- Iyunim ba'islam haqadam: dvarim sheneemru beyom ivun lichvod m. j. kister bimlot lo tishim shana*, (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Science, 2005), pp. 45-71 (in Hebrew); Ronald L. Nettler, "Islamic Archetypes of the Jews: Then and Now," in R. S. Wistrich (ed.) *Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary World*, (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 65. On Ibn Hisham and Ibn Ishaq see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), "Ibn Hisham," vol. III pp. 800-801 (Watt); *ibid*, "Ibn Ishaq," vol. III pp. 810-811 (Jones). The *Sira* of Ibn Hisham was translated into English, see A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1955).
44. Contrary to the genres of *sira*, *hadith*, and Koran exegesis—in the **current context** dealt with here, i.e. the image of the Jew—the genre of Jewish-Muslim polemics in medieval times has indeed been studied by modern scholars. However, this polemical literature (which was much less significant in Muslim culture and religious life than the genres of *sira*, *hadith*, and Koran exegesis) deals more with the tenets of Judaism and its holy scriptures than with the nature and image of the Jew. See Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*; *idem* (ed.) *Sofrim muslemim al yehudim veyahadut* ("Muslim Authors on Jews and Judaism"), (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1996, in Hebrew; an extensive bibliography of the subject in English, Hebrew, and Arabic can be found on pp. 155-160); Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: from Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996).
45. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, (New York: Norton, 1986), pp. 117-139; *idem*, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 3-66.
46. See references above in note 44 and below in note 72.
47. Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, pp. 117-235; *idem*, *The Jews of Islam*, 107-192. On the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* see also Y. Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (translated by M. Louvish), (London: Vallentine and Mitchell, 1972), pp. 229-237; Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism: a Clear and Present Danger*, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 2002), pp. 3, 11-15, p. 47 n. 8; Cesare G. De Michelis, *The Non-Existent Manuscript: A Study of the "Protocols of the Sages of Zion"* (translated by Richard Newhouse), (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2004) [Originally published as *Il manoscritto inesistente: I 'Protocolli dei savi di Sion': Un apocrifo del XX secolo*, (Venezia: Marsilio, 1998).]
48. According to the Jewish legend (the *midrash*), when God wanted to give the Israelites the Torah he threatened to bury them under the mountain if they do not accept it; see the Talmudic tractate *Shabat*, 88:a; and the Koran, Sura 2: 63, 93.
49. Qutb is referring here to the "pact of the nation" (*abd al-umma*), in which Muhammad had formulated basic regulations concerning the relationships inside the new Islamic community and between this community and the outside world. The Jews in this pact (which is considered by many modern scholars to be authentic in its core) formed a part of the Islamic community. See Uri Rubin, "The 'Constitution of Medina': Some Notes," *Studia Islamica* 62 (1985), pp. 5-23.
50. "Discord"—*fitna*, literally: temptation, and hence: discord, civil unrest and civil war—the idea being that these are actions of the devil, who always attempts to seduce the Islamic community and hinder it from the right path. Thus *fitna* also means a trial or a test: the Muslims are examined by Allah in order to see if they can overcome the alluring force of the devil. On Jews and the devil see also Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, pp. 31 (the introduction to Sura 2), 1275-1279 (7: 10-25).
51. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 94 (Sura 2: 75-103).
52. *Ibid*, pp. 31-33 (the introduction to Sura 2), pp. 63-64 (Sura 2: 40-74), 443 (Sura 3: 93-120), 674-684 (4: 51-57), 2845-2849 (33: 26-27).
53. *Ibid*, p. 2846 (33: 26-27); see also pp. 63-64 (Sura 2: 40-74).
54. *Ibid*, p. 1627 (Sura 9: 29-35).
55. *Ibid*. On "discord" (*fitan*) see above note 50.
56. *Ibid*, p. 94 (Sura 2: 75-103); see also pp. 72, 75-77 (Sura 2: 40-74), 1364 (Sura 7: 138-171); A. Z. Lopatin, "The Uncircumcised Jewish Heart in Said Qutb's Tafsir: Quranic Parallels to Jewish Conceptions," in R. L. Nettler (ed.) *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*, (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993), pp. 75-84. On the concept of *fitra* in Islamic law and theology see G. Gobillot, *La Conception originelle (fitra): ses interprétations et fonctions chez les penseurs musulmans*, Institut français d'archéologie orientale: 2000 (*Cahier des annales islamologiques* 18); Camilla Adang, "Islam as the Inborn Religion of Mankind: the Concept of *Fitra* in the works of Ibn Hazm," *al-Qantara* 21 (2000), pp. 391-410; Yasien Mohamed, "The Interpretations of *Fitrah*," *Islamic Studies* 34 (1995), pp. 129-151; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*, pp. 59, 109-115.
57. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, pp. 64-67 (Sura 2: 40-74), 212-213 (Sura 2: 204-214), 262-267 (Sura 2: 243-252), 676-682, 857-860 (Sura 5: 12-26), 926-930 (Sura 5: 51-66), 947, 1366, 1375 (Sura 7: 138-171).

58. Ibid, pp. 83-84 (Sura 2: 75-103).
59. See Nettler, "Islamic Archetypes of the Jews," pp. 78-83; see also F. Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: a Bibliography of Sources and Studies*, (London: I. B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2004), p. 87.
60. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, p. 3557 (Sura 61: 6-9); *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Second Edition), s.v. "Abd Allah b. Saba," vol. I p. 51 (Hodgson); Nettler, "Islamic Archetypes of the Jews," p. 66.
61. Like various other fundamentalist notions, this critique of the *israiliyyat* has its origins in the thought of Islamic reformists such as Muhammad Abduh and his student Rashid Rida. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), "Israiliyyat," vol. IV p. 211 (Vajda); M. J. Kister, "Haddithu an bani israila wa-la haraja," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 215-239; Ronald L. Nettler, "Early Islam, Modern Islam and Judaism: The Israiliyyat in Modern Islamic Thought," in R. Nettler and S. Taji-Farouki (eds.) *Muslim-Jewish Encounters: Intellectual Traditions and Modern Politics*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 1-14; Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," pp. 324-325, 346-347.
62. One should remember that Qutb's writing activity took place in the 1950's and 1960's, when communism and socialism were extremely popular throughout the Arab-Islamic world.
63. On the negative attitude towards orientalists and Jews among more recent Islamic fundamentalists, see W. M. Brinner, "An Egyptian Anti-Orientalist," in G. R. Warburg and U. M. Kupferschmidt (eds.) *Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), pp. 228-248.
64. Qutb, *Fi zilal al-quran*, pp. 68 (Sura 2: 40-74), 88, 90, 93-95 (Sura 2: 75-103), 99-105 (2: 104-123), 409-418 (3: 65-92), 534-536 (3: 180-189), 947-953 (5: 78-81), 959-966 (5: 82-86), 1032-1034, 1087-1088 (6: 40-41), 1275-1279 (7: 10-25), 1315-1316, 1364-1388 (7: 138-171), 3557-3558 (61: 6-9). See also idem, *Marakatuna maa l-yahud* ("Our Battle against the Jews"), (Dar al-shuruq, 1986), pp. 20-38, where Qutb's ideas regarding the Jews are summarized; for an English translation see Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987). The essay called "Our Battle against the Jews" seems to have been written in 1950-1951. In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (see reference above in note 3) it is implied that Qutb himself did not have recourse to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* while writing "Our Battle against the Jews." Rather, the footnotes in which the *Protocols* are mentioned in this essay were only added in 1970 by a Saudi editor. However, it is clear from Qutb's Koran commentary that he indeed knew the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and that he made use of it in his anti-Jewish arguments.
65. Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, pp. 193, 204.
66. Emmanuel Sivan admits that Qutb did profess anti-Jewish ideas in his Koran commentary, but states (like Lewis) that Qutb's main target of criticism and hatred was the "pagan" regime of Nasser (al-Nasir). Only after the 1967 war did this attitude change for the worse among younger Islamic radicals. See Emmanuel Sivan, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism," in R. S. Wistrich (ed.) *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World*, (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press in association with the Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1990), pp. 74-84; see also idem, "Antishemiyut vefundamentalism muslemi" ("Anti-Semitism and Muslim Fundamentalism"), *Kivunim* 5 (1993), pp. 29-34 (in Hebrew).
67. See Jeffrey T. Kenney, "Enemies Near and Far: The Image of the Jews in Islamist Discourse in Egypt," *Religion* 24/3 (1994), pp. 253-260. Kenney compares Qutb's "Our Battle against the Jews" (written presumably in 1950-1951, see above note 64) with *Milestones* (written in 1964), but does not refer to Qutb's most important and longest work—his Koran commentary. As stated above, about half of this commentary had been published before 1954 and the rest was completed by Qutb in the following years during his stay in prison.
68. See Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, pp. 117-139, 192-235; Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel*, pp. 218-303; I. Radai, "From Father to Son: Attitudes to Jews and Israel, in Asad's Syria," *Acta (Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism)* 29, (Jerusalem: The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2007), p. 36.
69. See also Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism*, pp. 1-10; Nettler, "Islamic Archetypes of the Jews," p. 67.
70. See also Nettler's discussion of Islamic "archetypes" regarding the Jews, in *ibid*, pp. 63-73.
71. See also Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," pp. 335-339, 358-359 n. 56. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to totally disregard the influence of Christian anti-Jewish concepts on Islam; see, for instance, the motif of the killing of Prophets, above in note 38.
72. Contrary to the Christians who have always endeavored to interpret the Bible (the Old Testament) according to their beliefs and theology, most Islamic scholars did not take much notice of the Bible. The prevailing view among them was

- that the holy books of the Christians and Jews were altered and tampered with (*tabrif*) and therefore it is pointless to try and interpret them in an Islamic framework. This is one of the reasons why Jewish-Muslim polemics in medieval times were not as fierce as the Jewish-Christian ones. See Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*; Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, pp. 118-119.
73. *Ibid*, p. 118.
74. See also Nettler, “Islamic Archetypes of the Jews,” pp. 63-64.
75. Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, p. 118.
76. Even conspiracy theories regarding Jews—supposedly a strictly Christian-European motif—are to be found in classical Islamic sources; see above notes 59-60; see also Haggai Ben-Shammai, “Jew-Hatred in the Islamic Tradition and the Koranic Exegesis,” in S. Almog (ed.) *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 1988), pp. 162-163, 165.
77. See Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, pp. 192-235; Raphael Israeli, “Anti-Jewish Attitudes in the Arabic Media, 1975-1981,” in Wistrich (ed.) *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World*, pp. 102-120; Kenney, “Enemies Near and Far,” pp. 260-270; Wistrich, *Muslim Anti-Semitism*; Esther Webman, *Anti-Semitic Motifs in the Ideology of Hizballah and Hamas*, (Tel Aviv: Project for the Study of Anti-Semitism, 1994); Menahem Milson, “Mahi haantishemiyut haaravit?” (“What is Arab Antisemitism?”), *Gesher* 147 (2003), pp. 65-71 (in Hebrew); Rivka Yadlin, *An Arrogant Oppressive Spirit: anti-Zionism as anti-Judaism in Egypt*, (Oxford: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism by Pergamon Press, 1989); Taji-Farouki, “Thinking on the Jews,” pp. 318-367; see also <http://www.memri.org/antisemitism.html>; [http://www.adl.org/main\\_Arab\\_World/default.htm](http://www.adl.org/main_Arab_World/default.htm). The current discussion and the sources quoted in this footnote make it clear that anti-Jewish notions in Islamic societies today can no longer be described as “functional and political, not social” or that “it presents the Jews mainly as a political, not a social threat, and it is partially directed by the administration which conducts the political struggle, or at least gives it its blessing” (Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel*, p. 298). Lewis too (*Semites and Anti-Semites*, p. 201) admits that “Indeed, the demonization of the Jew in modern Arabic writings goes further than it had ever done in Western literatures, with the exception of Germany during the period of Nazi rule.” It is my view that the model I propose here does better in explaining why this is so.
78. For a recent case study examining the status of non-Islamic minorities during the 1990’s under the Islamic fundamentalist regime in the Sudan (led by Hasan al-Turabi), see Amir Weissbrod, *Turabi: dover haislam hakanai* (“Turabi: Spokesman of Radical Islam”), (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 1999), pp. 73-88 (in Hebrew). Weissbrod’s conclusions indicate that the classical concept of *dhimma* tends to corrode as a result of the negative attitude towards non-Muslims in modern Islamic fundamentalist thought.



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