

Qutb, Seyyid. *Milestones*. Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Ilm, undated.

Seyyid Qutb (1906-1966 A.D.) was an Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood educator and theologian, who wrote a thirty volume commentary on the Qur'an. Qutb's works shape the outlook of modern radical Islam.

Milestones. Mankind faces grave danger. The West lacks those values that give life meaning. Marxism is dead. New leaders must emerge who rescue what is of value in the west, but also lead mankind to new higher values consistent with human nature and practicality. These new leaders will be Islamic. Science is in decline. All other theories of life are moribund. Islam must fill the vacuum, and assume its rightful role as God's witness on the earth. Islam has been extinct for centuries. Living Islam controls its nation, enforces God's laws. To revive Islam, its original law and form must be reinstated. While God commands his people to progress materially, the Islamic peoples of today cannot hope to catch the west for centuries. We must offer what the west lacks. The west lacks a faith and way of life as vibrant as its material inventions. It lacks a Muslim society. The west's rebellion against God (*Jahiliyyah*) is seen in its belief that it creates values, legislates how men should live, without reference to God's views. Only in Islam are all men equal before God, without classes. God leads Islam. Islam worships God. This faith and way of life are the new leadership the west needs. To create an Islamic state, a vanguard must start marching, knowing the landmarks that serve as milestones marking the stages of progress toward the new leadership. One finds these milestones in the Qur'an. Qutb's book reflects his meditations on the Qur'an. Its thoughts are those of God. Its sections are disconnected, as they should be.

Chapter 1: The unique Qur'anic generation. God established Islam through Mohammed the Prophet. His companions were unique. No subsequent Islamic generation boasts so many individuals of the caliber of the companion generation. Was it the Prophet that made this difference, so his absence hobbles Islam? No, God establishes Islam as the final universal religion. The first reason subsequent generations of Muslims have been less vibrant than the first is mingling other traditions with the Qur'an. The Prophet limited Muslims to the Qur'an as Muslims' only source of guidance, excluding the insights of the surrounding cultures. Muslims must read the Qur'an solely and arrange their lives according to its precepts solely. Later generations have been less vibrant because they mingled other ideas with their learning. Second, the first generation read the Qur'an to learn what God commanded them and the people to do. Instruction is for action, not discussion or enjoyment. The Qur'an transforms those who approach it with the intention to learn and act, in dedication to God. One reads a few verses, memorizes them, then acts on them. Third, the first generation forsook their old lives utterly and adopted the nascent Muslim society as God's home for them. The Muslim derives all his life from Qur'an and Qur'anic society. The Qur'an determines a Muslim's way of life, his view of the universe, his knowledge of God, his morals and manners, and the legal and constitutional system he advocates. We begin by changing ourselves, then we change our societies. We can make ourselves as vibrant as the companions of the Prophet if we change ourselves, abandon apostate (*jahili*) society, and transform it into a Qur'anic society.

Chapter 2: The nature of the Qur'anic method. The Meccan portions of the Qur'an tell all men how to relate to God, to creation, and to each other. The first lesson of the Qur'an is that there is no god but Allah. All sovereignty reverts to Allah, dispossessing earthly rulers and authorities. The Prophet could have seized political power and imposed Islam. Allah did not permit this approach. "No god but Allah" means that there is no earthly sovereignty, law, or authority. All belongs to God. In the Prophet's time, Arabia suffered wealth maldistribution and poverty. Muhammad could have taken power and redistributed. Allah did not do this. Social equity dominates only when each person submits to Allah wholly, when society as a whole submits to Allah, and all obey for the reward in this and the next life. In worldly systems, some have due to their greed, and those who don't envy. Allah remedies such injustices. Arabia suffered immorality in oppression, fornication, and drinking and gambling. Muhammad could have conquered Arabia and imposed Islamic disciplines. Allah did not do so. True morality is built upon faith and the values faith prescribes. Qutb describes the Islamic utopia in which

oppression ends, God's justice reigns, morals excel, and human social order reaches perfection. This garden utopia emerges when men, perfected in their faith and obedience, establish an Islamic state governed by Islamic laws. Islam derives from the uniqueness of God, as a great tree with one trunk, but many branches and roots. Submission is Islam's first virtue and practicality its emphasis. From practical religion grows a community committed to the oneness of God, denying all authority but God's, challenging any other source of ideas. Islam transforms societies already committed to God's oneness. God's law (*Shariah*) guides society, offering practical solutions to real, not hypothetical, problems. Many who call themselves Muslims are not; they have Islamic heritage. Only those who devote themselves to the oneness of God in all of life's aspects are Islamic. When those become a society, they order themselves under the Qur'an and become an Islamic state. Only this is Islam. All else is false. The Qur'an's message is not academic or theoretical, but practical. The Qur'an condemns false ideas and culture, and shows a man the way out. A man learns faith and establishes a Muslim community all in one action. There is no "learn, then apply" approach. God brought faith, the community, and the Islamic tide into existence simultaneously through the thirteen years of revelations to Muhammad in Mecca. No one should attempt to prove Islam superior to other religious theories. That is dangerous. Islam "argues" by being lived in real people's lives. This is God's method; it cannot be changed by impatient men. The message and its prescribed method are one, and cannot be separated.

Chapter 3: The characteristics of the Islamic society and the correct method of its formation. Allah's prophets have spoken previously. The people learn God's oneness, but then forget. They lose focus by admitting other authorities and semi-deities to stand alongside God, which is called *Shirk*. The Arabic word "*Islam*" means to submit to God, thereby freeing you from other authorities to follow God's law in every part of life. Islam is a law of nature like gravity. Man's rebellion against gravity does not free him from falling. Islam-hostile societies (*Jahiliyyah*) are coherent and powerful. Islamic society cannot confront them as ideas, but only as a powerful alternate community. A Muslim severs himself from the surrounding society and devotes himself wholly to the new Islamic community. The Islamic community values men for their faith, not their skins or nations or languages. It is a pan-human society, aimed at fostering a man's humanity. All other great pluralistic societies have been based on classes and greed. Only Islam develops and emphasizes what is noble in humanity.

Chapter 4: Jihaad in the cause of God. God commanded Muhammad variously regarding non-believers, sometimes to wait, sometimes to confront, sometimes to fight. In the end, God commanded Muhammad to strive (*Jihaad*) against non-believers with the sword and hypocrites with rhetoric. Jihaad is a practical step-by-step process. Jihaad employs force to remove societal authorities averse to Islamic faith and community, but it does not compel people to Islam. Men must choose their faith without external inducements. Many Muslim people misunderstand Jihaad, failing to see its progressive pattern. This progressive jihaad supports fundamental Islamic purposes, and provides for legal relations with non-Muslims. Ultimately, any person or authority who opposes the preaching of Islam must be fought until he has surrendered or been killed. Qutb criticizes Islamic thinkers who apologize for Jihaad, trying to make it out to be a defensive militantism. Jihaad seeks to actively remove any authority that is not from God, so that men will be free to choose Allah. No religious compulsion is allowed, but neither is any religious opposition. Jihaad means working to destroy all human authority and government, replacing it with divine law. Establishing God's authority on earth means to enforce his laws upon men. If a man obeys non-divine authorities, he is no Muslim. Islam preaches true ideas and confronts the non-divine ideas. Islam also attacks non-divine laws and political systems, seeking to annihilate them so they do not stand in the way of men choosing Islam. After Islam establishes the *Shariah*, then citizens are free to choose their own beliefs, provided they adhere to *Shariah*. During the lifetime of Muhammad, Muslims were first forbidden to fight, then permitted to fight, then commanded to fight against aggressors, and then released to fight all polytheists. The Jihaad war is eternal, since it cannot end until the earth abides by God's law. The Meccan period during which fighting was restrained served to train and prepare the Islamic nation for future battle, and so too, the Medinan period of restraints on fighting. These were preparatory to fighting. Jihaad is essential to Islam. Jihaad removes godless authorities, and paves the way for people to hear the

Prophet's message without impediment. Jihaad is not "defensive warfare," as some Islamic apologists wish to portray it. Islam does not merely respond to attack. It takes the fight to godless authority and social structures and customs wherever it finds people subjected. Islam inevitably creates conflict in every place it exists, because Islam seeks to replace existing leadings and cultures with other leaders and the divine law. Islam is not a national religion. Islam is the way God demands all people live, whatever their nationality or race or sex. Islam has a divine right to attack any institution or culture that in any way inhibits the freedom of people to choose Islam or subjects one person to another. Every man must be subject to God, and no man subject to other men. Making laws for men is reserved to God. Any man or institution that pretends to make laws for men transgresses and must be opposed. Jihaad aims to order global society under Shariah, so that individual men will have no impediments in considering the claims of God upon their lives. Once the globe has become politically Islamic, Islam leaves religious choice to the individual.

Chapter 5: "La ilaha illa Allah" – The way of life of Islam. Only God is God, and Muhammad is God's prophet. These articles of faith penetrate the believer utterly. On them is Islam built. A Muslim community puts this faith into practice in both its citizens and its structures. No other or mixed foundations are permitted. This primary article of faith guides Islam in building its community, the method of doing so, how to overthrow cultures with non-divine bases, and how to restructure human life. Every aspect of Islamic society grows from worship of God alone, without admixture of other principles. Islamic society must first focus on purging other gods from the hearts of people. Then it can form groups or communities, which must then seek political and spiritual power sufficient to hold out or dominate its surrounding hostile-to-God (*jahili*) cultures. Jahili societies resist Islam. Jahili societies include any that worship God alone, but permit any law other than Shariah. Jahili societies include communism, animisms found in Japan, India, Philippines, and Africa, all existing Jewish and Christian societies, and all existing Muslim societies, and democracies. Islam considers all such societies hostile-to-God and illegal. Law must derive from the Qur'an, where a text is available, or from judgment deeply influenced by God and the Qur'an. There is no room for dissent. All who advocate any rule or law other than Shariah are unbelievers. Goodness comes to man only by observing the Shariah.

Chapter 6: The universal law. Islam builds upon its creed, requiring total submission to God alone. In so doing, Islam grows consistent with universal law, which governs the universe. As the physical universe follows God's laws, so too should mankind. As to man's choices, God prescribes the Shariah to guide human action. Shariah can be likened to physical laws; it comes from God and cannot be disobeyed. Humans cannot understand the universe; so, they cannot establish laws in harmony with the universe. Obedience to the Shariah is obedience to God. This obedience brings men into harmony with the universe and themselves and their fellows. Truth is unitary, not divisible into spiritual and physical. One general law, the law of God, governs all and punishes its transgressors. Were it not for human rebellion, the universe would run in perfect synchrony, without conflict. Following truth brings the harmony of the next life into this life. The truth lies within mankind. When men follow the Shariah, God is well worshipped and no man subjugates another, for God rules all.

Chapter 7: Islam is the real civilization. Societies are either Islamic or jahili. Jahili societies may be communist, deistic, or religiously tolerant. They may even be full of Muslims, and nominally Islamic. Only *bona fide* Islamic society is civilized; all others are primitive. Civilized society frees every individual from the rule of others in favor of God's direct rule, which dominion guides all attitudes, values, habits, and traditions, including all laws. Man is spirit and reason. In an Islamic society, both are respected. In jahili society, the crucial differentiating characteristics are race or color and national origin. Islamic society is trans-national, based on this one unifying belief in God, whose prophet is Muhammad. Backward societies emphasize materialism, the communists as a theory, and the United States and Europe as generalized acquisitiveness. Where Islamic faith dominates, a global community emerges. Islamic society emphasizes those distinctions unique to humans, not those in common with animals. Human values are changeless, deriving from God. Civilized societies, that is, Islamic societies, are built upon the family,

division of labor between men and women, and child-rearing. If women divert their resources from child-rearing to making money, a society becomes jahili. The family system determines whether a society is Islamic. In jahili societies, morality and ethics are indefensibly delimited. But humans progress by controlling animal passions. Civilized societies provide powerful boundaries and supports to the family, so it is not corrupted by passions. Islamic society venerates God, frees men from servitude to men, adopts and obeys the Shariah, explores the universe and applies what is discovered to human benefit. Man is God's deputy on earth. Islamic society emerges from a movement. The movement begins with God, outside the world. When God brings one man to Islam, the community of Islam is born. He delivers God's message, and when they are three, the community exists. Every individual has a role, and all must move within jahili society, continuing to fight for Islam until the resurrection. Islamic society is mankind's future. The values of Islamic society are: the unity of God and worship of God alone, human relationships bound by common faith in God, preeminence of humans over things, control of animal impulses, family, man's representation of God on earth, and obedience to God's Shariah, God's way of life for man. Islam is flexible; it uses what resources it finds in a society to create Islamic life.

Chapter 8: The Islamic concept and culture. Shariah is more than legislation. Shariah controls all of human existence, its scientific and personal thoughts, moral and empirical principles, legal matters, political structures, values and inner workings of society and the personal mind. Others may think it odd to find aesthetic and scientific guidance in the Qur'an. Principles relate to a man's inner life, and this inner life is God's province. Muslims should seek instruction only from devout Muslims. Until Islamic society comes into existence, Muslims may seek instruction in sciences and technical matters from non-Muslims. Learning these abstract matters from a non-Muslim does not threaten the individual's faith in God. Excluded from such scientific matters are history, cosmology, and origin of life issues, on which the Qur'an touches. Muslims may study non-Muslim thinkers, to learn the nature of jahili thought. Some jahili thought derives from world Jewry, whose purpose is license in all matters, including religion, so their evil plans can be wrought, including global financial domination through usury. Science's true home is Islam. The scientific method was invented by Muslims. Qutb notes he spent forty years reading jahili literature, then turned to the divine text. Where the Qur'an speaks, one must rely on it. Where it is silent, rely on devout Muslims. All jahili scientists know only appearances; Muslims cannot rely upon their views for guidance in things psychological or principles of life. Western science is anti-religious, and particularly anti-Islamic. When learning science from western scientists, Muslims must carefully guard against vapid speculations. Godless scientific imagining may sully the pure waters of Islam.

Chapter 9: A Muslim's nationality and his belief. Islam establishes a new regime for mankind. One who adheres to Islam loves God; all others serve Satan. Following Islam takes one to God; any other path does not. For all non-Islamic beliefs are false. To meet God, obey the Shariah. Anything else is impetuous. Islam lives where the Shariah is the law of the state. Where Shariah is not the law, Islam may have a contract with those people or war. A Muslim forsakes his country and family for faith and other believers. A Muslim may treat non-believers with respect, especially parents, if they do not openly declare for non-belief. If they do so, all filial duties are abrogated. Believers become brothers; unbelieving family are ostracized. Qutb cites Qur'anic references to Noah and Abraham for support of this proposition. The Islamic homeland is not territory, but a state of faith. Where the Shariah becomes the law of the state, that place is the home of Islam. Where the Shariah is rejected, a Muslim must be prepared to make war, though the place is that Muslim's home. Islam consists in this faith and obedience, and nothing else. Islamic constitutions, or empty confessions of faith, or Muslim parentage matter nothing. Islam frees people from the fetters of biology. To die fighting for God's purposes is to die a martyr. The Islamic nation is faith, its homeland wherever the Shariah rules, its king God, and its constitution the Qur'an. Avoid doubts about unbelieving peoples; doubt invites confusion.

Chapter 10: Far-reaching changes. Islam differs from all prior conceptions of life. In Islam, God gives humanity a life structure. No man can compromise Islam with unbelieving societies. Jahiliyyah society contradicts Islam; one or the other will prevail. The highest duty of Muslims is

to fight Jahiliyyah societies, to take them over, and to impose the divine Shariah. The reason for this revolution is to free people from the chains of their desires. Similarities between Jahiliyyah society and Islamic society are merely apparent. Each springs from an independent source. Jahiliyyah society wells up from ignorance and narcissism, leading men to lord it over others. Islam wells up from God. Knowing this, the Muslim presents God to outsiders with sympathy and compassion. In presenting Islam to unbelievers, one condemns people's ideas and ways of living, urges them that God wishes to cleanse them and lift them out of their degradation. They only need accept a life-enveloping change. Muslims must not defend Islam against the slanders of unbelievers. Yes, present Islamic nations are backward. They are so for having abandoned Islam. Muslims cannot offer a watered-down Islam to the world. Islam changes everything for believers and for persons in true Islamic society. Muslims who live with jahili customs and ideas are not Islamic. They need to be re-converted, just like any other non-believer. There can be no justification for Islam before Jahiliyyah arguments. Preachers of Islam must condemn Christianity, capitalism, failure of sympathy, broken family relations, mixing of the sexes, feminism, marriage and divorce laws, and materialism of Western cultures. The West pressures Islam, especially Muslim women. Islam and Jahiliyyah dwell on opposite sides of a vast chasm over which no bridge can be erected. One lives in one place or the other.

Chapter 11: The faith triumphant. Qutb cites *Qur'an* 3:139 about the ultimate victory of believers. This promise is divine, and remains true even when believers are losing, few, and poor. Muslims rely on God for strength as they undertake opposing their dominant jahili cultures. Muslims are superior in their belief in God, their values, the conscience and morality, their law and government. When defeated, the Muslim remains victorious and superior. Even facing death, the Muslim envisions the divine Garden in martyrdom. Faith brings labor, yearning, fighting, and martyrdom. Jahili life brings domination, pleasures, desire, and damnation.

Chapter 12: This is the road. Qutb retells the Qur'anic story (*Qur'an* 85:1-16) of the pitmakers, unbelievers who burned Muslims to death for their opposition to the pitmakers, which the Muslims endured bravely, keeping their faith. These believers are lost in this world. God sees the matter differently. They kept faith, which is most precious to the divine. All men die; some blessed few are martyred for Islam. From the perspective of God, the angels, and the Garden, those who die for faith win. For unbelievers, Hell awaits. The struggle of faith continues even after death. God does not always work his judgment in this world. The pitmakers survived; the faithful perished. These decisions belong to God alone. The Muslim is God's worker. History unfolds from God and his wisdom. Qur'anic promises of victory occur in Medina, after the Meccan opposition. This shows that victory comes from God, and he expects the faithful to work regardless of their fortunes. Those who call others to faith need to see these milestones along the path, so they guide others faithfully. Believers and unbelievers struggle over faith; their conflict is not economics or race or politics. Western imperialism masks their crusading spirit. Only liars argue otherwise.