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**Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī and the “Islamic Awakening” of the late
20th Century**

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**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

**Institute of Islamic Studies
McGill University
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Abstract

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This study is an attempt to present the thought of Yusuf ‘Abd Allah al-Qaradāwī and his views on the Islamic awakening of the last two decades. Considered one of the contemporary world’s leading moderate Islamic thinkers and activists, he has undertaken the mission to promote the idea of what he sees as a “true Islam,” which he envisions as a moderate force that is all-encompassing in human life. An Egyptian, now living in Qatar, he leads a major stream within the Islamic movement today, the *tayyār al-wasāṭiyah al-Islāmiyah*, which believes in the “inevitability of the Islamic solution.” Al-Qaradāwī recommends a “long-term plan,” seeking in the first place to transform individuals as a prelude towards changing society. The chief step toward accomplishing this mission involves renewing the religion by rediscovering Islam’s soundest foundation and going back to its purest sources, i.e., the Qur’an and Sunnah, in addition to applying the “moderate” methodology of the *salaf* (early Muslim generation). Al-Qaradāwī employs this traditionalist methodology and the *wasāṭiyah*’s ideology in his approach to guiding the Islamic awakening and to directing the Islamic movement in its particular fields of work (which include education, politics, social work, economics, *jihād*, the media and propaganda, and finally, thought and learning) out of a conviction that these domains represent the crucial issues facing the Muslim world today. Yet despite al-Qaradāwī’s fondness for logical discourse, he is a victim of the tendency to make axiomatic statements, which in turn endangers the entire structure of his arguments and leads him into inconsistencies. Despite these problems, his moderate voice is a welcome corrective to some of the more extremist discourse of today.

Résumé

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Titre: Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī et le “réveil islamique” de la fin du 20ème siècle.
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Cette étude est une tentative de présenter la pensée de Yūsuf ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaradāwī ainsi que ses vues sur le réveil islamique des deux dernières décennies. Considéré comme un important penseur musulman et comme un militant modéré du monde contemporain, al-Qaradāwī s’est donné la mission de promouvoir l’idée de ce qu’il considère comme le “véritable Islam,” perçu comme une force modérée et qui englobe tout les aspects de la vie humaine. En tant qu’égyptien habitant au Qatar, al-Qaradāwī dirige un courant de pensée majeur au sein du mouvement islamique d’aujourd’hui, le *tayyār al-wasatīyah al-Islāmīyah*, qui prône “l’aspect inévitable de la solution islamique.” Le penseur recommande un “plan à long terme,” recherchant en premier lieu à transformer les individus en un prélude vers le changement social. La principale étape afin d’accomplir cette mission implique le renouvellement de la religion en redécouvrant les meilleures fondations de l’Islam et en retournant à ses sources les plus pures, c’est-à-dire le Qur’ān et la Sunna, tout en appliquant la méthodologie “modérée” du *salaf* (premières générations musulmanes). Al-Qaradāwī emploie cette méthodologie traditionnelle ainsi que l’idéologie du *wasatīyah* dans son approche servant à guider le renouveau musulman et à diriger le mouvement islamique dans des domaines de travail précis (éducation, politique, travail social, économie, *jihād*, média et propagande, pensée et savoir) en partant de la conviction que ces domaines représentent des questions cruciales auxquelles doit faire face le monde musulman d’aujourd’hui. Toutefois, malgré l’affection d’al-Qaradāwī pour le discours logique, il est néanmoins la victime de la tendance à effectuer des déclarations axiomatiques, menaçant même la structure de ses arguments qui, finalement, mène le penseur vers des conclusions incongrues. Malgré ces problèmes, le ton modéré d’al-Qaradāwī apporte un correctif bien accueilli à certains discours actuels plus extrémistes.

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Montreal, May 16, 2001

Nadia Wardeh

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Note on Qur'ānic Citations and Transliteration

Quotations from the Qur'ān are taken from the translation of Yūsuf 'Alī entitled *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1991). However, 'Alī's convention of capitalizing the first letter of each verse has not been retained.

The transliteration system employed is that of the Library of Congress, as detailed in the publication *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for Non-Roman Scripts* (Washington: Cataloging Distribution Service, Library of Congress, 1991).

Introduction

Great external and internal crises have affected the world of Islam over the course of the last three centuries. The call for pan-Islam, advocated in the nineteenth century by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838/9-1897), as a response to Western colonialism, received a setback in the aftermath of World War I by virtue of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Istanbul-based Caliphate in 1924. In the inter-war era the call for Islamic solidarity took several forms of expression, such as the continued defense by Islamic thinkers of the necessity for Islamic solidarity. Moreover, the decline of Ottoman and Persian power in the face of European imperial might provided the impetus for Muslims to review the tenets of Islam and the foundations of the Islamic polity.

As in centuries past, the crisis milieu produced an indigenous response—the call for a return to Islam and its fundamental precepts. Since the beginning of the fifteenth Islamic century (A.D. 1980) the appeal for a return to the roots of the faith has assumed a powerful, self-propelling dynamic with significant religious, political, economic, and strategic implications. At the same time, the last twenty years of this century have seen the rise of the so-called Islamic awakening (*al-ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah*)¹ on the heels of the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979. During this period, the term *al-ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah* has emerged and Muslim scholars have launched a campaign to appeal to Muslim

¹ This new “Islamic consciousness” has been characterized variously as revivalism, rebirth, fundamentalism, reassertion, awakening, reformism, return to Islam, and the march of Islam. In this study the term Islamic awakening is employed due to the fact that it is the term preferred by al-Qaradāwī.

masses to return to Islam and its fundamental precepts. In the Arab world, particularly, the “gradual decline since the late 1960s of revolutionary Arab nationalism as the dominant ideology and movement has created a hospitable environment for an Islamic alternative.”²

By the late 1970s much of analysis of the Islamic awakening was being presented by people from outside the movement, in some cases even outside of the Islamic community. At the time, there were many more individual publications and movement activities than reflections on the concept. Nonetheless, by the 1990s, there was a growing body of interpretation of the awakening written by Muslims directly involved in the dynamics of the process itself, either as advocates or opponents. In this growing literature, there are many different approaches and perspectives.

Specifically, this study traces a particular, yet very influential voice in the awakening— that of Shaykh Yūsuf ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaradāwī, who leads a major stream³ within the Islamic movement today. The proponents of this stream describe their movement as *tayyār al-wasāṭiyah al-Islāmiyah*, or simply *al-wasāṭiyah* (the moderates). Their basic premise is that “Islam is the only solution” to the crises besetting Arabs and Muslims; hence the “inevitability of the Islamic solution” (*ḥatmiyat al-ḥall al-Islāmi*)

Al-Qaradāwī sees the worldwide Islamic awakening today as a revival aimed at rebuilding the individual and society and at reconstructing a nation’s thought and politics based on Islam. For him the Islamic movement has been able to discover new

² Ali Hillal Dessouki, *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World* (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1982), 3.

³ According to Dekmejian, “the Islamist mainstream is an amorphous collectivity encompassing the Muslim Brotherhood, its affiliates outside Egypt, and several dozen “independent” shaykhs

aspects of Islam, following in the steps of great scholars of previous centuries like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) and Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328), as well as those of more recent times, such as Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) and Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949). For him the ideas of these men, among others, gave birth to the modern Islamic movement which rediscovered the Islamic foundation on which to build life. According to al-Qaraḍāwī, who adopts al-Bannā's ideology in this respect, Islam is not a mixture of individual beliefs, rituals, or manners; rather, it is a comprehensive way of life and a system to mold societies.

However, after a comprehensive survey, I have found that Western libraries are largely in want of concrete data about al-Qaraḍāwī, and Western scholars largely ignorant of him, despite the notable position he holds in both the Arab and Muslim countries as well as among Muslim communities in the West. He is highly appreciated and is considered one of the most moderate Islamic thinkers, in addition to being one of those who combine traditional knowledge of the *shari'ah* with an understanding of contemporary problems. Today, al-Qaraḍāwī's name is recognized throughout the Islamic world for his writings and lectures promoting moderation in religious matters and, for many Muslims today, he has become one of the leading Muslim moderates and one of the world's leading Islamic thinkers.

By employing a descriptive, analytical and, to some extent, critical methodology, the present study will attempt to shed light on al-Qaraḍāwī's life, and explore his ideological and methodological individuality. It will also address the phenomenon of

and intellectuals who have chosen to remain outside the main groups." For more details see R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (New York: Syracuse Press, 1995), 213.

and theory behind the Islamic awakening, according to his view, particularly its domains of activity or, to use his own terminology, its major “fields of work.”

This study relies on a vast body of material, but especially on primary sources in the form of al-Qaradāwī’s own works. These include, among others: *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah fi al-Marḥalah al-Qādimah*, *al-Ḥall al-Islāmi Farīdah wa-Ḍarūrah, min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah Tujaddid al-Dīn wa-Tanḥaḍ bi-al-Dunyā*, and *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī wa-al-Islāmi*. These works in particular are especially revealing of al-Qaradāwī’s thought, and are of great help in tracing the general frame of his ideology and methodology, in depicting his overall view on the phenomenon of the Islamic awakening, and finally in revealing his practical proposals for guiding and directing the proponents of both the Islamic awakening and the Islamic movement. By contrast, secondary sources dealing specifically with al-Qaradāwī are few in number, and mainly in Arabic; European language sources have been consulted wherever these could help to provide a context for his thought. Chief among these is Joyce Davis’s *Between Jihad and Salaam*, which provides us with an integral, and, in fact, the only English interview with al-Qaradāwī.

Structurally, this study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter offers a detailed biography of al-Qaradāwī with special attention given to his early involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the role of Ḥasan al-Bannā’s thought in forming our author’s Islamic ideology. The second chapter deals with al-Qaradāwī’s ideology and methodology. A detailed analysis of his concept of Islam as a global religion and as a comprehensive way of life will be discussed. Moderation (*waṣāṭiyah*), a significant theme within that ideology, will also be presented and analyzed. And as far

as his methodology is concerned, two major themes will be discussed in detail—**traditionalism and renovation.**

The third chapter concentrates on al-Qaradāwī's view of the Islamic awakening with special reference to its definition, causes, objectives and relevance to the Islamic movement, besides offering a detailed discussion of the major fields of work of the awakening, and the role of the Islamic movement in guiding and directing the process.

Al-Qaradāwī's Life and Intellectual Contributions

The Egyptian Sunni scholar Shaykh Yūsuf 'Abd-Allāh al-Qaradāwī occupies a distinguished position in the contemporary Muslim world. He is at the forefront of today's generation of Islamic activists and has undertaken the important mission of trying to promote the idea of a "true Islam" with teachings rooted soundly in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Today al-Qaradāwī's name is recognized by Muslims everywhere in the Islamic world and elsewhere for his writings, lectures and *fatwās* promoting temperance in religious matters. He is also considered one of the world's leading moderate Islamic thinkers, in that he combines traditional knowledge of the *shari'ah* with an understanding of contemporary problems.⁴ To have attained such recognition as a religious authority is no easy feat: it has required of al-Qaradāwī much hard work and commitment in his lifetime, beginning with his dream in early childhood to become a reliable 'ālim (Muslim scholar), a dream which has been fulfilled in his current senior standing among his contemporaries.

Born on 9 September 1926, in the ancient village of Ṣafaṭ Turāb in the Lower Egyptian province of al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā, he was the only child in his devoutly Muslim peasant family. At the age of two he lost his father, and so, along with his religious mother, it was his uncle who looked after his interests. Al-Qaradāwī was

⁴ Joyce Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 220; Muḥammad 'Amārah, *al-Duktūr Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī: al-Madrasah al-Fikriyah wa-al-Mashrū' al-Fikrī* (Cairo: Nahdat Miṣr lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1997), 14-15; Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Islamic*

enrolled at an early age in the village's *kuttāb* (Qur'ānic school) where he studied and memorized the Qur'ān. He had this text by heart by the age of nine, and from that date onwards his mother, uncle, relatives and friends addressed him by the title of shaykh. As a small boy, al-Qaradāwī used to attend most of the lectures held in the village's mosque on different occasions and to participate in many other religious events. He was just ten years old when the people of his village granted him the honor of leading the prayer in the mosque, where his distinctive way of reciting the Qur'ān was remarked upon by many.⁵

Since his early childhood, al-Qaradāwī was fond of reading; in fact, he indulged this passion to the extent that he covered most of the main, traditional sources, be they of a religious or a literary nature, by the time he became a teenager. For instance, he was only 14 years old when he first encountered al-Ghazālī's (1058-1111) thought in the pages of his works *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Minhaj al-'Abidin*. He was amazed by al-Ghazālī's initiative to revive the religious sciences as well as to rectify mistaken conceptions about Islam. "Al-Ghazālī has influenced my intellect and my heart respectively."⁶

As a result of all of these factors -- al-Qaradāwī's character, his personal efforts, the surrounding religious environment and his primary religious education at the village's

Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism ed. A.S. Al-Shaikh-Ali and Mohamed B.E. Wasfy (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995), verso of front cover.

⁵ Ḥasan 'Alī Dabā and al-'Azab al-Ṭayyib al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī" [muqābalah], *al-Khalij* (Doha, Qatar), issue 7560 (30 Jan. 2000), supplement "Malaffāt al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn [al-Malaff 50]," 7-9; 'Amarah, *al-Madrasah al-Fikriyah wa-al-Mashru' al-Fikri*, 3; Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Hawla Qadāyā al-Islām wa-al-'Asr* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1992), 5-6; Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Risālat al-Azhar bayna al-Ams wa-al-Yawm wa-al-Ghad* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1984), 3.

⁶ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Imām al-Ghazālī bayna Mādihih wa-Nāqidih* (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā', 1988), 6-8 and 105.

kuttāb -- there formed in him a desire, interest and determination to become a religious scholar.

My local environment influenced me, it inspired and directed me toward a religious vocation. My dream of going to al-Azhar dates from when I was a little child when I used to attend the lectures of religious scholars and shaykhs in our village. I loved them and realized that everyone loves and admires them. Hence, I adored al-Azhar and I wished to become one of its scholars... for me, then, al-Azhar was the stronghold of religion and science.⁷

As a matter of fact, when al-Qaradāwī finished his primary education, his uncle thought of teaching him a craft to provide his nephew with a source of income. But the young shaykh had other ideas. He was eager to continue his education in order to realize his “noble” dream and to acquire more knowledge about Islam.

After my memorization of the Qur’ān, I constantly longed for the day when I could join the Azhar schools to learn religion, language and literature. I wanted to be qualified for teaching, performing public speaking and preaching.⁸

Ultimately he managed to convince his uncle of the strength of his will, and again the kind uncle's generosity paved the way for al-Qaradāwī's Islamic education. He was enrolled at Ma'had Ṭantā al-Dīnī (The Religious Institute of Ṭantā), one of several schools then affiliated to the Azhar, for the primary and secondary stages of his education, where he was consistently top of his class. Besides his scholastic excellence, al-Qaradāwī was interested in Arabic literature and used to read all the renowned writers of the time.⁹ He also demonstrated a significant talent for writing poetry and was always selected to recite his own verse on cultural occasions at the school. After his

⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *Risālat al-Azhar*, 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

graduation he traveled to Cairo to attend al-Azhar University where he enrolled in the Faculty of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (The Fundamentals of Religion). In 1953 he matriculated with the graduate diploma (*al-shahādah al-‘āliyah*), obtaining the highest mark in his year.¹⁰

During the period 1953-1960 he pursued graduate studies in the same institution. In 1954, he was ranked first in a class of 500 students enrolled in the teaching certification program given by the Faculty of Arabic Language and obtained his diploma (*shahādah al-‘ālimiyah*). In 1957 he obtained another graduate degree in language and literature from the Graduate Institute of Arabic Studies. At the same time as he was working towards the latter goal, he enrolled in the graduate program offered by the Department of Qur’ān and Sunnah Sciences of the Faculty of the Fundamentals of Religion. He was the only student among his classmates to pass the preliminary examination and graduated in 1960 having obtained his Master’s degree in Qur’ān and Sunnah Sciences. In the very same year he embarked on studies for the Ph.D. degree in Islamic jurisprudence; nevertheless the crackdown by President ‘Abd al-Naṣīr’s (d. 1970) regime on members of the Muslim Brotherhood¹¹ led to inevitable delays in his progress, so that it wasn’t until 1973 that he was able to defend his thesis entitled "*Zakāh* and its effect on solving social problems," passing his Ph.D. with distinction.

⁹ In a press interview, al-Qaradāwī mentioned that he used to read, among others, ‘Abbas Mahmūd al-‘Aqqād (d. 1964), Ahmad Shawqī (d. 1932), Hafīz Ibrāhīm (d. 1932), and Luṭfi al-Manfalūṭī (d. 1924).

¹⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *Hawla Qaḍāyā al-Islām wa-al-‘Aṣr*, 5; Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī," 7-9.

¹¹ Al-Qaradāwī had joined the Muslim Brotherhood as early as the days of his primary education in Ma’had Ṭanṭā al-Dīnī. For details see pp. 11-13 in chapter I.

With this degree from al-Azhar, al-Qaraḍāwī realized his childhood dream and secured a place in the intellectual hierarchy of Islamic scholarship, becoming an official *‘ālim*.¹²

Al-Qaraḍāwī fulfilled a variety of other roles as well, among them those of teacher, reformer, preacher and *muftī*. His profound religious and traditional education allowed him to engage with eminent Muslim scholars either directly-- in a student-teacher relationship-- or indirectly-- through their writings. Among those who contributed to his scholarly and religious development were Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949),¹³ Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1917-1996), and Maḥmūd Shaltūt (1876-1963). Al-Qaraḍāwī has also long admired the writings of earlier scholars such as al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935). Each one of the above has left an impact on al-Qaraḍāwī’s general methodology. With the exception of al-Bannā, all were in one way or another his teachers at al-Azhar and thus transferred to him their traditional methodology of understanding and interpreting Islam on the basis of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, besides the inherited traditional sciences (*turāth al-salaf*).

However, of the above-mentioned scholars it was Ḥasan al-Bannā who had an especially significant influence on al-Qaraḍāwī’s emotional and intellectual identity. He states on many different occasions in his works that al-Bannā was his foremost mentor. Although he met him on only a few occasions, the impact of al-Bannā’s personality on the young shaykh was tremendous, as he constantly affirms. He even considers his first meeting with him to have been an instance of Divine intervention:

¹² Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 221; ‘Amārah, *al-Madrasah al-Fikriyah wa-al-Mashrū‘ al-Fikrī*, 3-4; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Contemporary Fatwas* (New York: Islamic Book Service, 1999). 1:7-8; Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, “al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī,” 7-9.

It was God's Will and Grace that paved the way for my encounter with the martyr, Ḥasan al-Bannā, in 1941. I was around 14 years old, a first year student in the primary grade at Ṭanṭā's Azharite Religious Institute¹⁴... I still recall his sermon. It was original, distinct, focused, well-ordered, and useful, unlike many other sermons that I used to attend that were delivered by other preachers. His words left behind their impact on both my mind and my heart.¹⁵

In fact, al-Qaraḍāwī was so impressed by al-Bannā's character at that first meeting that he took care thereafter never to miss any of his sermons in Ṭanṭā or in other surrounding towns. He became so attached to him that years later he could still recall his mentor's words:

I still recall his last meeting with us in Ṭanṭā's [Religious] institute. He recommended that we cultivate three attributes: excellence in the field of learning, uprightness in religious observance, and a solid loving relationship with one another.¹⁶

Naturally, al-Qaraḍāwī's attachment to al-Bannā made him eager to join the latter's movement. He kept searching for a way to do so until he got the chance to participate in a cultural activity that was arranged by the student branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Ṭanṭā. This group invited him to recite a poem on any religious matter he chose. He seized the opportunity and made the most of it:

I climbed up to the stage at the *Ikhwān* Center for the first time in my life and recited a poem about the occasion. At that point I became one of the Muslim Brotherhood students... and after that a member of the propaganda group.¹⁷

For al-Qaraḍāwī, becoming a member of the Muslim Brotherhood was a turning point in his life.

¹³ Ḥasan al-Bannā founded the Muslim Brotherhood movement in 1928.

¹⁴ "Ma'had Ṭanṭā al-Dīnī al-Azharī," i.e., the Ma'had Ṭanṭā al-Dīnī referred to above on page 3.

¹⁵ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1999), 49; *Shumūl al-Islām: Fī Daw' Sharḥ 'Ilmī Mufaṣṣal lil-Uṣūl al-'Ishrīn lil-Imām al-Shahīd Ḥasan al-Bannā* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1997), 5; Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī," 8.

¹⁶ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, 6-8.

¹⁷ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Shumūl al-Islām*, 6.

I consider my affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood movement to be a quality transformation from individual religiousness to awareness of Islam as a comprehensive system and a movement in life that seeks reform.¹⁸

In this school of thought, al-Qaraḍāwī learned more about Islam and came to understand al-Bannā's message that Islam is not just an ideology, but a comprehensive way of life and an inclusive universal system. In addition, al-Qaraḍāwī's studentship in al-Bannā's school opened his eyes to the problematic position of Islam in the modern world. He observed a vast gap between Muslims and Islam, indeed a separation between the ideal Islam and the one applied in reality. Also in al-Bannā's school of thought, al-Qaraḍāwī perceived the great need for an organized Islamic movement which would have the duty of alerting Muslims to the dangers they faced and of awakening them from their long slumber, thereby forming a new generation that would live and die under the teachings of Islam as a comprehensive way of life.¹⁹ In an effort to apply these teachings, he started to preach at mosques and to deliver the Friday sermon when he was just 17. He was proud of the movement and especially proud of being one of al-Bannā's students. He boasted, "I'm one of the *Ikhwān* and a disciple of Ḥasan al-Bannā."²⁰

Nevertheless, during most of that time, Ḥasan al-Bannā was in Cairo, so al-Qaraḍāwī didn't get the chance to see him often or to study directly under him. Therefore he was looking forward to finishing his studies in Ṭantā so that he could move to al-Azhar University in Cairo and be closer to al-Bannā and become his pupil.

¹⁸ Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī," 2.

¹⁹ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah fi al-Marḥalah al-Qādimah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1992), 9. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-'Arabī wa-al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1998) 16.

²⁰ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, 354.

However, destiny outpaced him and al-Bannā was assassinated in 1949 before al-Qaradāwī could join him in the capital.

I was in prison when I was stricken by the news of al-Bannā's assassination... Thus I was deprived of studying under him. All that I had left was to follow his ideas by reading his writings, and by learning from his companions and disciples.²¹

Since then, al-Qaradāwī devoted himself to studying and comprehending al-Bannā's works. He read everything that al-Bannā wrote that was available but he acknowledges a particular debt to his *Risālat al-Ta'ālim* (Book of Teachings). He considers the latter a "uniquely concentrated work in which al-Bannā distilled the essence of his knowledge and experience and thus stabilized the pillars of a collective, organizational effort."²² This *Ta'ālim* contains twenty principles that must be comprehended and then implemented by any active member of the *Ikhwān*.

Any Muslim brother who understands his religion according to these twenty principles, will have perceived the meaning of the slogan: The Qur'an is our constitution, and the Prophet is our example.²³

As a trusted student of Ḥasan al-Bannā and an active member of the *Ikhwān* movement, al-Qaradāwī was made responsible for the Islamic movement's activities in al-Azhar University in the early fifties. He was also a member of the organizing committee of the Azharite volunteers fighting the British occupation of the Suez Canal in 1952. In his book entitled *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, he states that he was "honored to participate [in some way] in al-Ikhwān's *jihād* against the British presence in the Suez Canal."²⁴ However, when the guerrilla operations ended there in 1952, al-Qaradāwī

²¹ al-Qaradāwī, *Shumūl al-Islām*, 6-7.

²² *Ibid.*, 8.

²³ al-Qaradāwī, *Shumūl al-Islām*, 18.

²⁴ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, 217.

turned his attention to internal conditions at al-Azhar University and formed a delegation of students who met with several senior shaykhs there in an attempt to improve the Azhar curriculum. This effort won the absolute sympathy of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khaḍīr Ḥusayn, (1876-1958), who was Grand Imam of al-Azhar at that time. In brief, the committee's aim and major concern was to redevelop al-Azhar curriculum in a comprehensive fashion so as to help it retain its position at the forefront of religion and learning and to maintain its leading role in the Islamic *ummah*.²⁵ The committee, guided by al-Qaraḍāwī, proposed three major goals: the first was to partake in promoting Islamic awareness and in raising a new generation of Muslims who would have a better comprehension of Islam, and introduce it into all aspects of life and work hard for its cause. The second goal was to unite all of al-Azhar's students and graduates in pursuit of the latter objective. The third, which was the cornerstone of the whole reform movement, was concerned with a comprehensive development of al-Azhar's general condition and the reform of its curriculum.²⁶ Nevertheless, the history²⁷ of the reform process is "a long and troubled one."²⁸ Instead, our focus here will necessarily be on the reform ideas of al-Qaraḍāwī suggested in his book *Risālat al-Azhar bayn al-Ams wa-al-Yawm wa-al-Ghad*, which will be discussed in more detail the following chapter.

During the period of his graduate studies, al-Qaraḍāwī had already begun his professional life; in the fifties he worked as a preacher and instructor in various Cairo

²⁵ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Risālat al-Azhar*, 6-7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

²⁷ By the late nineteenth century, al-Azhar was in a critical state; it had suffered decades of neglect and deterioration. There was no administration, no formal rules governing the appointment of shaykhs or their conduct, no fixed salaries, and no examinations. For more details see Kate Zebiri, *Maḥmūd Shaltūt and Islamic Modernism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 17-21.

mosques and later on became a supervisor of the Ma'had al-A'imma (Imams' Institute) in the Ministry of Endowments. However, due to his involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaradāwī was soon banned from preaching²⁹ and was transferred to the Directorate-General of Da'wah and Religious Publicity³⁰ at al-Azhar. In this department he worked as supervisor of publications and was also in charge of the Office of the Propaganda and Guidance (Maktab al-Da'wah wa-al-Irshād). He also used to write for the journal *Minbar al-Islām*, which was published by Religious Affairs section of the Ministry of Endowment. He used to sign his articles under the name Yūsuf 'Abd Allāh, omitting al-Qaradāwī,

for fear that the name al-Qaradāwī would raise the opposition of the investigating services, which purposely set up hindrances in the face of all the public activities that I wanted to undertake and address to the population at the time. This was the same situation in both the domains of education and of religious and spiritual guidance, which were the only two domains open to me, and which corresponded to my training and specialty. It also happened that I applied for any available teaching position in the institutes operated by al-Azhar. My name was the first on the list of those who were accepted and the total of my marks was the highest of all the applicants from the three schools of al-Azhar: The School of the Foundations of Islam, The School of Jurisprudence, and The School of the Arabic Language. When the names were submitted to the investigating services, my name was dropped. That is why I used to

²⁸ Zebiri, *Mahmūd Shaltūt*, 16; J. Jomier, "Al-Azhar," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 1: 813-21.

²⁹ At that time all mosques came under the supervision of the new Ministry of Waqfs. This resulted from the nationalization of the public endowments (*awqāf khayriyah*) in 1957 by 'Abd al-Nāsir. Zebiri, *Mahmūd Shaltūt*, 17-18.

³⁰ According to the official al-Azhar web-site, this directorate was established in 1928 to perform "the duty of Da'wah to Allah". Among its objectives were to strengthen religious consciousness and morality, as well as study of social problems facing individuals and groups with a view to finding a solution for them. Later its da'wah efforts were expanded to involve schools, universities, clubs, youth centers, societies, military camps, hospitals and other public and private organizations. The department was also active in the field of Islamic reform through the publication of *Nūr al-Islām* Magazine, and a great number of books. For more information see:

www.alazhar.org/english/about/da3wa-religious.htm (accessed November 29, 2000).

use a name other than my real one to sign my articles, so that the investigative agents would not discover me.³¹

Al-Qaraḍāwī's involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood ultimately led to his detention in Egyptian prisons in the year 1949, during the period 1954-1956 and for a brief period in 1961. In his book, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, al-Qaraḍāwī describes a day in his life in al-Ṭūr prison with the rest of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood during the summer of 1949.

An hour or more prior to dawn, the prisoners started to wake up for night prayer and devotion. I still recall that brother, walking in the dark of night among the prisoners' cells calling us to wake up for adoration. Immediately, we responded to this sacred call. In no time the prison was transformed into a beehive, as everyone was reciting from the holy Qur'ān or praying till the dawn prayer. Everyone then took his place to pray reverently behind the Imam. The Imam of our mosque was Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī. We used to vary our daily activities in worshipping, reading, exercising, socializing and helping each other... that's why we used to say about this prison, sarcastically: it's the *Ikhwān*'s permanent camp for 1949.³²

Consequently, in order to obviate the government's control over him, al-Qaraḍāwī was sent in 1961 by al-Azhar University to Qatar to serve as dean of the Qatar Secondary Institute of Religious Studies. After that he was banned by the Egyptian government from returning to Egypt. Forced, therefore, to remain in Qatar, he decided to work hard to improve the institute and to develop its curriculum. Soon afterwards he transferred to Qatar University, where he founded the Islamic studies department and became its director and then the faculty dean. By nature an active individual, al-Qaraḍāwī accomplished a number of things and established several colleges and religious institutes within the university. He spearheaded the establishment of the School of Education and in 1977 laid the foundations for the Faculty of Islamic Shari'ah

³¹ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min 'Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah* (Ṭanṭā: Dār al-Bashīr, 1994), 3-4.

³² *Ibid.*, 224-25.

in the University of Qatar, becoming the faculty dean. In the same year he founded the Center of Sirah and Sunnah Research and became its director -- a post that he has occupied to this day.³³

Throughout his intellectual life and academic career al-Qaradāwī's activities on many committees and within a number of societies reflected his wide-ranging interests and his respected position among contemporary scholars. In addition to his academic vocation, he is a member of many Islamic academic societies and associations. He was named chairman of the Academic Council of the University of al-Amīr 'Abd al Qādir for Islamic Sciences in Constantine, Algeria, and is an advisor on Islamic affairs to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Algeria. He is also a trustee of the Oxford Center of Islamic Studies, (OCIS) and holds other posts. He is a member of the Fiqh Council of the Muslim World League, a trustee of the European Center of Islamic Studies (France), and a consultant for the Islamic Fiqh Council of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He is also the head of the *Shari'ah* board of several Islamic banks.³⁴

Besides his scholastic and administrative responsibilities al-Qaradāwī is a *mufti*, a poet,³⁵ a writer and an active propagandist. He has written over a hundred books, including the well known *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*,³⁶ *The Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase, Towards a Sound Awakening, Contemporary*

³³ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 221; Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī," 9.

³⁴ 'Amārah, *al-Madrasah al-Fikriyah wa-al-Mashrū' al-Fikrī*, 4; Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, "al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī," 12; Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 220-21; al-Qaradāwī, *Islamic Awakening*, verso of front cover; Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 196.

³⁵ At the beginning of his career al-Qaradāwī was well known as a poet, having published two collections of poetry, *Nafahāt wa-Lafahāt* (1988) and *al-Muslimūn Qādimūn* (1994).

³⁶ In this book, al-Qaradāwī "discussed everything from dress to capital punishment." Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 222.

Fatwas, Islam and Secularism, Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism,³⁷ etc. Besides these and other books al-Qaradāwī has published numerous articles and essays in different newspapers, magazines and academic journals. At the same time he is a much sought-after guest on various TV programs, conferences and lectures, all around the world. Also up until today, and despite his advanced age, al-Qaradāwī is still an energetic person who does not miss even the slightest opportunity to promote what he sees as “the true Islam”. He uses a variety of tools to serve his goal, extending all the way from the mosque³⁸ pulpit to the Internet³⁹.

By shedding light upon his writings one can easily identify the general features of his thought, methodology and ideology, as we will see in the next chapter. Undoubtedly, al-Qaradāwī is an active and multifaceted author, having written on a variety of topics, among them: jurisprudence, Islamic economy, Qur’ān and Sunnah sciences, Islamic ideology, ethics, education, preaching, Islamic awakening, socio-cultural matters, history, and literature. Throughout his works he preserves a moderate, independent position which has earned him a remarkable standing among his contemporaries. Indeed al-Qaradāwī’s writings continue to be popular in most corners of the Muslim world,

³⁷ “It was his book *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism* that interested me most. He had written the book for Muslim youths, who by the millions were looking to Islam for an identity distinct from the Western world and for a solution to the many ills plaguing their societies. The book was especially intended for those youths who believed Islam justified expressing their rage and frustration through acts of violence.” Ibid., 220-21.

³⁸ Since 1962 al-Qaradāwī has been consistent in always broadcasting the Friday sermon. He delivers the *Khutbah* and leads the prayers in ‘Umar Ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb mosque in Qatar.

³⁹ Al-Qaradāwī believes in using all kinds of media, including the internet, to promote Islam. He has an official site on the internet that covers most of his works, lectures, *fatwas*, activities, etc.

while the majority of his works have been reprinted and some even translated into various languages.⁴⁰

In fact his balanced, moderate viewpoint have made him one of the most revered thinkers among Muslim youth in particular. He in fact focuses his efforts on guiding them, since he considers them “the future of the *ummah*.”⁴¹ Thus during the 1980s and 1990s, he contributed greatly to helping young Muslims find guidance, and succeeded in gaining their confidence.

To youths in Islamic movement, his was one of the most respected of all voices. And most of his teaching channeled their passions away from an outer jihad to an inner jihad of self-control and peace.⁴²

In appreciation for his contributions and efforts, al-Qaradāwī has received many different prizes⁴³ from various Muslim countries and organizations for his cultural and educational contributions. Furthermore, in February 1997, in a special move, Horizons Media & Information Services launched a special web site for al-Qaradāwī in order to make his knowledge and heritage available to Muslims and non-Muslims all over the world. On inaugurating the project, Horizons’ general manager said:

The company is undertaking this non-profit project because it believes in using today's technologies to deliver the pure message of Islam. Dr. al-Qaradāwī was

⁴⁰Those of his works that have been translated appear in English, French, Germany, and Chinese, among others. See bibliography.

⁴¹ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 229.

⁴² Ibid., 226.

⁴³ These include the Islamic Bank Award in the Field of Economic Development (1990); The International Islamic University of Malaysia Award for Distinguished Intellectual Contribution (1996); King Fayṣal Universal Award in the field of Islamic Studies (1992); Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Award in the Field of Jurisprudence Studies (1997); Sultan al-ʿUways of UAE Award for Cultural and Scientific Accomplishment (1999) and the International Islamic Personality Award for the year 2000. See Dabā and al-Ṭāhir, “al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, 13; Ḥaṣan ʿAli Dabā, “Awraq majhulah min ḥayāt al-Qaradāwī I,” *al-Ahrām al-ʿArabi* (Kuwait), no.193 (2 Dec. 2000), 44-47.

selected because he is an internationally renowned Islamic authority known for his unique scholarly knowledge and moderate, modern approach.⁴⁴

In essence, al-Qaradāwī's admirers and followers, whether from the masses or the intellectual elite, and including Muslim world leaders, consider him the foremost Sunni *'ālim* and *muftī* of the age. He is very popular and known for his knowledge and modesty. He has initiated a comprehensive intellectual project and formed a particular school of thought based on facilitation, simplification and moderation in all religious matters.⁴⁵ His chief goal in this project is to help Muslims know "true Islam" and apply it in their practical life. He wants to narrow the gap between Muslims and Islam. Therefore he has devoted himself to this cause and has carried out the obligation to preach, elucidate, and guide people to the straight path. Accordingly, during the last twenty years, and particularly since the 1980s, al-Qaradāwī has launched a public campaign appealing to Muslims to return to Islam and its fundamental principles. His goal is to "alert Muslims and awaken them from their long slumber."⁴⁶ He has devoted all his intellectual and social activities to achieving this mission. He seeks the formation of a new generation with a "better understanding of Islam," one that will carry this message to humanity so that everyone then will live in peace under the tenets of Islam.⁴⁷ However, in order to accomplish such an ideal, sophisticated goal, there is a specific ideology that must first be adopted, and an exhaustive methodology that must be employed, as we will see more clearly in the following chapter.

⁴⁴ <http://www.qaradawi.net/arabic/main/arabic-frames.htm> (accessed August 20, 2000).

⁴⁵ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 220-24; 'Amārah, *al-Madrasah al-Fikriyah wa-al-Mashrū' al-Fikrī*, 30-32.

⁴⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-'Arabī wa-al-Islāmi*, 10.

Al-Qaradāwī's Ideology and Methodology

Ideological Discussion

Al-Qaradāwī's religious environment, his lifelong Islamic education and his early involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood movement were all factors in the development of his Islamic ideology. It was an ideology that had been framed and nourished along the guidelines established by Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949). Under the latter's tutelage, al-Qaradāwī had constructed a personal vision of Islam as a comprehensive, universal way of life. He had also been made aware of the problems of societal decline faced by Muslims in the modern world and was concerned with finding the best possible solutions to this dilemma. Above all, he had come to realize that Muslims have a duty towards themselves, their society, and humanity as well.

However, it is useful to start our discussion of al-Qaradāwī's ideology by shedding light on his most fundamental belief: the notion that religion in general is essential to mankind and that Islam in particular is the divinely approved religion. In the majority of his works, al-Qaradāwī starts off any discussion by speaking--at least in broad terms-- of a human *fiṭrah*⁴⁷ (natural predisposition) for religious feeling, affirming that "the cause

⁴⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 184-87.

⁴⁸ The concept of *fiṭrah* is an essential element of Islamic belief, the basis for which notion is (Q.30:30): "So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the faith: to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought by Allah: that is the standard religion..." *Fiṭrah* also has a significant meaning in the Prophetic tradition, "its theologically important usage is in the saying of Muḥammad, ' Every infant is according to the *fiṭra* ('*ala* 'l-*fiṭra*, i.e., Allāh's kind or way of creating); then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a

of religion is an inherent instinct in the human soul⁴⁹ that guides man towards his creator and thus leads him to follow the path of God—a predisposition that is at the core of any religion.⁵⁰ He also argues that “believing in God is not only an inherent instinct, but also an intellectual necessity.”⁵¹ In this he echoes Shaltūt’s (1876-1963) identical claim that man is by nature a religious creature:

Religion is necessary for man in his battle against evil, or against his lower self. Only religion can provide man with the true happiness and security that the enormous scientific and material progress of this century, which has enabled mankind to conquer space, has not been able to provide.⁵²

It is al-Qaradāwī’s view that “the need of the human soul for religion is like the need of the human body for food, water and air.” He also argues that the materialistic civilization of today has failed to fulfil all the needs of the human soul, or satisfy its hopes and aspirations. It has not explained the essence of its life and the secret of its existence, nor has it quenched its thirst for eternity. Yet it is not the function of materialistic civilization or that of materialistic philosophy to achieve these things; rather, it is the function of religion. The reality, he maintains, is that people feel their need for religion growing daily, and that their resentment against the materialism of civilization, its instruments and extremism, grows at the same rate.⁵³

Magian.” D.B. Macdonald, “Fitra,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), II:931-33.

⁴⁹ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah Tujaddid al-Dīn wa Tanḥaḍ bi al-Dunya* (Tanta: Dār al-Bashīr, 1994), 131.

⁵⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *al-'Ibādah fī al-Islām* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1985), 11-16; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ḥall al-Islāmi Farīdah wa-Darurah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1983), 49; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Khasā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islām* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1986), 11-14; al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 131.

⁵¹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-'Ibādah fī al-Islām*, 16.

⁵² Zebiri, *Mahmūd Shaltūt*, 39-40; al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 130-33.

⁵³ al-Qaradāwī, *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmi wa-Shubuhāt al-'Almaniyyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1988), 43-55; *Ibid.*, 131-132.

So, they complain about the emptiness, boredom, futility and aimlessness of their hectic and tumultuous lives. Science has provided them with the means of life, but has not provided them with its aims. It has embellished its superficial appearances, but has not taken them to its depths and secrets. It has provided them with pleasure, but has not helped them achieve tranquility, which is the key to happiness.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, it can be seen from the preceding explanation that al-Qaradāwī has done little to strengthen the argument or to present any thing more than a restatement of Shaltūt's claim that religion is essential to mankind. Instead, he largely reproduces it, adding a few common details that any religious preacher might use to convince his audience of the importance of religion, even to the point of regarding it as logically self-evident truth without questioning its rationality. As will be shown afterwards, this deficiency and the extent to which it is based on this primary statement acts upon his entire ideological-methodological discussion.

Nevertheless, once the need for religion has been accepted, al-Qaradāwī concludes that there is no need to justify man's selection of Islam as the most sound of the religions. In an attempt to justify the latter allegation, al-Qaradāwī maintains that Islam best suits the human *fiṭrah* and offers the "only path to happiness and fulfillment, as it is God's way for all people." He uses the selfsame traditional argument: that even though Islam is over 1,300 years old, its general principles are sufficiently flexible for adaptation to any place or time. Thus it is the best possible system for mankind inasmuch as it is the embodiment of certain ideal characteristics: divinity, humanism, comprehensiveness, moderation, practicality, clarity, and a combination of firmness and

⁵⁴ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 132.

flexibility. As such, Muslims must not only strive to adhere to its teachings but also to spread it to all humanity.⁵⁵

When we invite people to adopt Islam, we do not invite them to myths, incapacity or inertia. We do not call for a state run by clergy or a government of dervishes. When we call people to Islam, we call for a true scientific method, sound logical thought, and useful humanistic work and creativity, virtuous social solidarity, just world peace, and idealistic civilization. A civilization that integrates mind and matter, accommodates both spirit and heart, and establishes fairness between the individual and society, and brotherhood between man and man, while at the same time strengthening the link between Allah and man.⁵⁶

This concept, however, is not new to Islamic intellectual history. Indeed, “when Islam is felt to be under attack there is the need, felt especially by the preacher, to present Islam as a unified organic entity: aesthetically appealing, logically satisfying, commanding admiration.”⁵⁷ Al-Qaradāwī is no exception as he also devotes himself in his writings to clarifying what he sees as “true Islam” and to presenting it as “the only solution” to any worldly problem.⁵⁸

Taking into account the qualities outlined above, al-Qaradāwī concludes that Islam is the only genuine religion and the only sound system capable of molding a virtuous individual and of constructing an ideal life on this earth and in the hereafter. He bases his argument on what he sees as a rational, self-evident fact: that Islam is the “only available divine system.”⁵⁹ As such, all through his works al-Qaradāwī promotes Islam

⁵⁵ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1985), 5; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islam*, 5; al-Qaradāwī, *al-'Ibadah fi al-Islām*, 49.

⁵⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Saḥwah Rāshidah*, 134. In this passage, al-Qaradāwī applies the adjective *insānī* (humanistic) quite liberally; for the sake of a more felicitous translation, it has been used sparingly here.

⁵⁷ Zebiri, *Mahmūd Shaltūt*, 39.

⁵⁸ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Falāḥ al-Islāmi*, 44.

⁵⁹ For details see pp.46-47 in chapter II.

as the religion that contains those “greatest characteristics” and hence is worthy of being spread throughout the world with all its “factual teachings”.

One of the strengths of Islam is that it is not the creation of man, but a revelation of the God of all humans. The divine aspect of Islam has freed it from exaggeration or negligence, and from the deficiency and incompleteness that usually affects every system that humans create for themselves. This distinction allows the general public to access it and comply with it more easily, because it is guidance offered to a man by a God who has created and straightened him. He also provided him with his blessings, and covered him with His compassion. Man also aspires to His requital and fears his punishment.⁶⁰

Moreover, the notion of human nature in al-Qaraḍāwī’s Islamic ideology is that it is originally righteous;⁶¹ therefore mankind is naturally disposed to believe in God. Furthermore, “the Qur’ān itself appeals to man’s inherent knowledge as a witness to *tawḥīd* (oneness of God).”⁶² Under any normal circumstances, human beings are always predisposed to obey God’s commands, and this is due to the force of their own human nature; indeed, all the prophets or messengers in history were sent by God to arouse this natural spirit in man.⁶³

Islam does not impose anything on humans that is either against their instincts or their minds...Islam is a religion that presents a person with a way to wash his body, a spiritual cure for his mind and a way to help him balance this life with the afterlife. Islam gives balance between the mind and the heart, the spiritual and the material, the soul and the body, this world and the afterlife. You cannot find this balance in other religions, only in Islam.⁶⁴

If one accepts Islam as a God-made system and perceives it as being in accordance with human nature, then it is logical to suppose that this makes it easier to practice,

⁶⁰ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 193; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Khaṣa’iṣ al-‘Ammah lil-Islām*, 34.

⁶¹ There is no concept of original sin in Islam. For more details see: al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Khaṣa’iṣ al-‘Ammah lil-Islām*, 73-74.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁶⁴ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 231.

which leads al-Qaradāwī to his statement of the distinctive characteristics of Islam. Hence, al-Qaradāwī's claim that Islam is the required religion is grounded in "arguable" statements in spite of his conviction that these are "unquestionable." It is not my intention to review all these characteristics; nevertheless, it can be observed that divinity is chief among them, for in fact all the other characteristics are simply a natural outgrowth of divinity.

In short, because Islam, in al-Qaradāwī's view, is a God-created system so, by nature, is it free of deficiency in all of its aspects. God knows, absolutely, what man needs, as He is the Creator and thus is able to provide him with the best possible system -- one that is in perfect agreement with his nature and answers all his human needs. Likewise, due to its divinity or Godly nature it is indeed comprehensive, in that it deals with all aspects of life in a balanced, moderate fashion. Due to this nature it is, consequently, a practical system that acknowledges temporal matters to be just as important as the spiritual, and in like manner, combines firmness with regard to its ideological beliefs and flexibility with regard to temporal matters. Based on these considerations, al-Qaradāwī concludes that the divine character of Islam makes it perfectly suited to any place or time.⁶⁵

Let us now take al-Qaradāwī's discussion of the above-mentioned particular Islamic characteristics --those that render it the only possible system for mankind--and test it against this simple question: What are the rational foundations for his claims? Al-

⁶⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Shari'at al-Islām Ṣāliḥah lil-Tatbiq fi Kull Zaman wa Makān* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1997), 11-14; al-Qaradāwī, *Madkhal li-Dirāsāt al-Shari'ah al-Islāmiyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1993), 27-28; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Khaṣā'iṣ al-'Ammah lil-Islām*, 44-46; al-Qaradāwī, *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmi*; Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *'Awāmil al-Sa'ah wa-al-Murūnah fi al-Shari'ah al-Islāmiyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwah, 1985), 9-11.

Qaradāwī's answer, of course, as he repeats throughout his works, is that Islam is the "only available preserved, divine system," and he clearly regards this statement as a rational, self-evident fact. This dogmatic justification has earned him much criticism, forcing him to describe the most important of these characteristics, i.e., divinity, as the "rational cause." Still, for the sake of his argument, let us retain the latter justification. Here again, we have no choice but to refute his entire argument, since his sole proof is the Qur'an,⁶⁶ and only a believing Muslim could accept this premise as true. However, if we were to persist in maintaining that Islam is not as self-evidently ideal as al-Qaradāwī and others would prefer it to be, he would answer promptly that this Islam on which our statement is based is not the "true Islam"⁶⁷ and he would insist that the problems facing Muslim society today owe nothing whatsoever to Islam. Rather, they may be ascribed to a misunderstanding of the true Islam either by design or by ignorance. Al-Qaradāwī's primary mission is to correct these misconceptions of Islam, beginning with individual Muslims.

Problems and their Solutions

In principle, al-Qaradāwī observes that in the present-day Islamic world there are, mainly, two categories of people, one of which rejects Islam intentionally and does not wish "Islam to prevail, its people to lead, or its glory to return." He regards the

⁶⁶ al-Qaradāwī appeals to several verses in support of his point, among them: "...And indeed it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: it is sent down by one full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise." (Q. 41:41-42); see Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marjī'iyah al-'Ulyā fi al-Islām lil-Qur'an wa-al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1992), 21-22.

⁶⁷ At this point, al-Qaradāwī speaks frankly about the only Islamic current that exemplifies the "true Islam": "*tayyār al-wasāṭiyah al-Islāmi*" (the moderate Islamic current). For details see pp.31-32 in chapter II.

members of this group as “enemies of Islam who will not be satisfied until Islam and its people are annihilated.”⁶⁸ Al-Qaraḍāwī does not in fact waste much time with this category, describing its representatives as beyond hope, resistant to change and addicted to argument for the sake of argument. Instead, he would prefer to invest his time in more productive issues, and turns his attention to the second category, the one that represents the majority and is made up of non-religious Muslims who, despite their sins, still retain the potential for faith:

[These] fear the return of Islam [as a comprehensive order]...because they carry with them the wrong impression about Islam. Such an impression was formed by their ignorance. It is an idea that they have inherited from the times of backwardness, and decadence. These made for them a picture of Islam as a coercive faith, a formal worship, negative morality, and inert thinking and life. With such an attitude it discourages scholarship and activity, hinders progress, denies innovation, kills creativity and drugs people.⁶⁹

It can even be said that all of his writings seek to explain that Islam is free of these negative aspects, and that he devotes the most attention to those who fall into the latter category in an attempt to remove the veil from their mind and educate them about the “true Islam.” His mission is to lead them back into the precincts of Islam so as to build a core of renewed Muslims with a proper understanding of Islam. Here, al-Qaraḍāwī tends to look upon Muslim society in an optimistic light and with a favorable judgment. In this he runs counter to Sayyid Qutb’s (1906-1966) ideology,⁷⁰ which he regards as an incorrect, despondent vision.

⁶⁸ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 188.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 188-89.

⁷⁰ In short, according to Qutb, the contemporary Muslim has a duty to struggle against the forces of the *jāhiliyyah* in order to re-establish the perfect community and, more ambitiously, to elevate Islam to its rightful position as a dominant universal creed. Above all this means restoring God to his place as the only rightful sovereign and ensuring that the divine law, the *sharī’ah*, is the only law governing the community. This of course means the abolition of so-

With this reference to Qutb, al-Qaradāwī touches on one of his main themes: that some Islamists have formed an incorrect, overly pessimistic impression of Muslim society. They regard the whole society to be “as pagan as the pre-Islamic people.” They maintain that everything in life is a sin and that all people are either unbelievers or hypocrites. They see in the universe nothing but evil actions, and consider all people’s deeds in life to be effectively *ḥarām* (unlawful).⁷¹

As far as al-Qaradāwī is concerned, it was Qutb’s writings and ideas that contributed the most to the misconception on the part of subsequent generations of Muslims as to the real message of Islam. Those writings, al-Qaradāwī maintains, conflict with the spirit and teachings of Islam.

They were full of ideas that advocated branding society as an unbelieving society, and advised postponing the call for an Islamic system. He [Qutb] mocked the idea of renewing and developing Islamic jurisprudence and reviving *ijtihād*... He advocated the idea of cutting off relations with non-Muslims and called for launching an offensive *jihād* against all people in general. He slighted the advocates of tolerance and flexibility and accused them of naiveté and psychological defeat in the face of Western civilization.⁷²

Al-Qaradāwī, therefore, believes that it is due to the above-mentioned “radical ideology” that “rigidity and obstinacy came to dominate the Islamic way of thinking,” and as such, “the tolerant, easy spirit of evenly balanced thinking was forced to give ground for some time.”⁷³

called “man-made” laws and the removal of the political systems which enforce them. In order to bring these ideas into practice, Qutb called for *jihād* (struggle) to restore the *shari’ah* to its rightful place in society. For more details see for example: Ali Rahnama, *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1994), 162; Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992), 203-212.

⁷¹ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 108-109.

⁷² Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ijtihād al-Mu’āsir bayna al-Indibāt wa-al-Infirāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawzī’ wa-al-Nashr al-Islāmiyah, 1994), 110-111.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 111.

Using Quṭb's ideas as his basis, al-Qaradāwī develops a set of antithetical doctrines that he regards as perfectly corresponding with the "true Islam." He rejects, for instance, Quṭb's ridicule of the efforts to renew and develop *fiqh* or revive *ijtihad*, and instead declares this whole process as the only way to revive Islam, insisting besides that renovation is an "axiomatic, firmly established" theme in Islam.⁷⁴ Likewise, he refutes the idea of cutting off relations with non-Muslims and calls instead for a positive dialogue with them regardless of their race or ideology.⁷⁵ In like manner, he disagrees with Quṭb's notion of an offensive *jihad* against all people and interprets it quite differently. For him, *jihad* in our time can take on many modes, the least important of which is the offensive, military one.⁷⁶ By contrast, the mode that is most necessary to the present age is scientific *jihad*, in which youth perform *jihad* by searching for knowledge of the secular sciences in order to secure a place in the dominant Western scientific environment.

It should be observed that the competition between Muslims and non-Muslims for mastery of secular sciences is at its highest. When a Muslim seeks to learn, to excel, and to acquire insight into such sciences for the sake of Allah he is actually performing *'ibadah* and *jihad*.⁷⁷

Furthermore, al-Qaradāwī rejects the general intolerance and inflexibility in Quṭb's views of Islam and Muslim individuals, equally. As an alternative to such an approach,

⁷⁴ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Harakah al-Islāmiyah*, 101.

⁷⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Ghayr al-Muslimin fī al-Mujtama' al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1977), 49.

⁷⁶ Al-Qaradāwī acknowledges the military *jihad* in only one case, to defend Muslims and their countries from any harmful attack or any kind of occupation, such as in the case of the establishment of the state of Israel on Arab-Muslim land. Yet he suggests that Muslims should be well prepared for such *jihad* before performing it, and that when they are practically, militarily and spiritually ready, they should not hesitate to clear Muslim lands of such aggressors.

he underscores moderation to be the most significant feature of Islam in general and the most characteristic mark of his own methodology in particular. Indeed, he regards a “moderate, balanced” ideology as containing the solution to most of the problematic issues in modern Muslim life. Since moderation lies at the root of his ideological and methodological individuality it is discussed more fully in the following section.

Moderation as Ideology

Moderation, or *al-wasāṭiyah* in Arabic, is the most popular term in al-Qaradāwī’s lexicon. It is the one, substantial feature that marks out his scholarly identity. He has even been given the title of *Imām al-wasāṭiyah al-Islāmiyah*. Moderation in this sense is more than a mere notion: it is a fundamental motif that plays a dual role. It forms al-Qaradāwī’s general ideological view and characterizes his entire methodology.

I am among those born moderate by temperament; this was given to me by God almighty. This is one of my gifts. I am at the other end of the spectrum from people who are distinguished by going to extremes, either to the left or to the right. My stance is in the middle of these two groups.⁷⁸

The above statement clarifies al-Qaradāwī’s major methodological position and an important theme within his ideology. Whenever al-Qaradāwī speaks of the “middle” he means moderation, a policy to be applied in all matters. He regards moderation as the “true message of Islam” and the “straightforward path that Allah calls *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*.”⁷⁹ Moderation, he maintains, is not only a general characteristic of Islam; indeed, it is a fundamental landmark. In an attempt to support his argument, he quotes

⁷⁷Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, “Ṣaḥwat al-Shabāb al-Islāmi,” in *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah: Ru’yah Naqdiyyah Min al-Dākhil* (Beirut: al-Nāshir, 1990), 38.

⁷⁸ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 227-28.

at length Qur'ānic verses and some recognized sayings of the Prophet. For him, Islamic texts call upon Muslims to exercise moderation and to reject and oppose any kind of extremism. As such he has chosen to follow the “straightforward path” by adopting what he calls a “balanced ideology” and has written many books to propagate this notion and to popularize it. He has achieved some success and become the popular advocate of a recognized Islamic current, i.e., *tayyar al-wasatīyah al-Islamiyah*.⁸⁰

This current, or path that I have dedicated myself to in the last few years and for a long time, is what we call “the middle way” in Islam, and it is not my phrase, it is from Islam itself. As the Qur'ān itself says, “We made you the middle nation.”⁸¹

Such an ideology, in al-Qaradāwī's eyes, represents the real Islam and as such, reflects “an intermediate, balanced, comprehensive attitude towards people and life, a balanced attitude of an evenly balanced *ummah* (Muslim community)⁸² that is far from being extremist or negligent.”⁸³ However, it is his observation that “the rule in our societies today is to go to either extreme, and the exceptions are few.” This, in his view,

⁷⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, 21.

⁸⁰ “Within the Islamist spectrum, the growing dominance of mainstream Islamism is manifest in most Arab countries. The Islamist mainstream is an amorphous collection of Muslim Brotherhood, its affiliates outside Egypt, and several dozen ‘independent’ shaykhs and intellectuals who have chosen to remain outside the main groups. Its many proponents describe their movement as *tayyar al-wasatīyah al-Islamiyah*, or simply *al-wasatīyah* (the moderates).” For more details see: R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 213.

⁸¹ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 227.

⁸² The word *ummah* (translated by Davis in the above quotation by the word “nation”) usually refers to the Muslim community, while “in the Qur'ān, *umma* usually refers to communities sharing a common religion, whereas in later history it almost always means the Muslim community as a whole while admitting of regional, essentially non-political expressions (as ‘the Umma in North America’, the American ‘Prison Umma’ and so forth). The pl. *umam*, although occurring in the Qur'ān, means ‘nations’ in modern usage and is therefore distinct from the Islamic meaning normally associated with *umma* (e.g. *al-Umam al-Muttahida*, ‘the United Nations’).” F.M. Denny, “Umma”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden: Brill, 2000), X: 859-863.

⁸³ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Harakah al-Islamiyah*, 107.

causes a real problem as neither one of the above-mentioned groups represents what he sees as true Islam. Therefore it is the Islamic movement's obligation to take such a position in order to convey the true message of Islam. Thus, al-Qaradāwī believes that the

Islamic movement today has to free itself from thought which was developed in times of distress or crisis (*fīkr al-mihnah*).⁸⁴ It should move on to the moderate, balanced ideology that expresses the evenly balanced Muslim community and the evenly balanced Islamic way of life.⁸⁵

Due therefore to his leading position in the contemporary Islamic awakening, al-Qaradāwī avows a moderate position even towards what he calls major issues, *qadāyā kabirah*, adopting a middle position between the following extremes :

- The advocates of strict *madhhabiyah* (adherence, in theology, jurisprudence, etc., to one certain school of Islamic law) and the advocates of loose or non-*madhhabiyah* observance (abandoning any abidance to the rules of any school of Muslim law whatsoever).
- Those who support Sufism whether it deviates or invents, and those who oppose Sufism regardless of whether it is proper and abides by the *shari'ah*.

⁸⁴Here, al-Qaradāwī is pointing to the Muslim Brotherhood's oppression under 'Abd al-Nāṣir's regime, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s when Qūṭb's ideas found popular appeal. He states: " The idea of judging others as sinners and heretics, even unbelievers, found a rich breeding ground, and was helped to grow and proliferate by the oppressive environment in which the Islamic movement and its advocates lived at that time. In that period, the advocates of the Islamic movement were hanged in public, tortured to death in secret or subjected to all kinds of persecution, while the doors were opened wide to communists, secularists and enemies of Islam of every color. It was in that period that the books of Sayyid Qūṭb, which reflected the last phase in his thought, were published." al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 110.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

- The advocates of an uncontrolled international open-door policy, and the advocates of an unjustified closed-door policy.
- Those who refer to reason even if it goes against conclusive texts and those who never refer to reason even in understanding these texts.
- Those who regard heritage as sacred even if it shows evidence of human failure and those who disregard heritage even when it shows signs of heavenly inspiration.
- Those who indulge in politics at the expense of education, and those who neglect politics completely on the pretext of devotion to education.
- Those who regard organizational structures as idols to be worshipped, and those who shirk any organized work.
- Those who go to the extreme in obeying their leaders, and those who violate the principles of obedience and detach themselves completely from the group.
- The advocates of globalization regardless of local conditions, and the advocates of regionalism with no connection to global affairs.
- The overly optimistic who disregard obstacles and problems in their societies, and the overly pessimistic who see nothing but darkness.
- Those who go to an extreme in forbidding things, as if there were nothing *halal* in this world, and those who exaggerate in allowing every thing as if there were nothing *haram* in it.⁸⁶

The extreme positions listed above provide the essential framework for al-Qaradāwī's ideological stance, in that they point to the major issues that face the modern Muslim world. From this groundwork al-Qaradāwī has developed a broader

ideology which expresses mainstream *wasatīyah* doctrines and which has consequently been employed by his followers in addressing social policy. Briefly, it can be described as a long-term plan for changing the current problems facing Muslim society. This ideology can be said to have six major characteristics:

1. **Eclecticism:** where it seeks to combine the major tenets of *salafiyah* and *tajdid* (traditionalism and renovation) into a workable view for the contemporary era.
2. **Proselytism:** wherein its plan gives priority to *da'wah* (missionary work) as a preliminary step toward establishing an Islamic state.
3. **Gradualism:** where it rejects radicalism and favors *al-marḥaliyah* (gradualism) in targeting sociopolitical objectives.
4. **Pragmatism:** where it stresses practical action in social and political affairs, instead of ideological controversies and superlative goals that are almost impossible to achieve.
5. **Legalism:** where it accepts co-operation with nationalistic and semi-democratic regimes, by accepting their legality yet not their legitimacy, at least until such time as Islam replaces nationalism as the governing ideology.
6. **Universalism:** where it engages in national politics in order to Islamize individual regimes to pave the way for seeking the universal *ummah*.⁸⁷

The preceding attributes of *al-wasatīyah*, in addition to al-Qaradāwī's stance on major issues, reflects an open-minded, pragmatic, long-term policy towards local and global issues. It also points to its ability to accommodate various groups and different

⁸⁶ Ibid., 107-108.

⁸⁷ Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 213-214.

trends, yet it also reveals its tendency to marginalize all other “radical groups,”⁸⁸ particularly liberals (including secularists), and fundamentalists (including *jihādists*).⁸⁹ Furthermore, those who espouse this ideology believe in the decency of their course and regard it the only one capable of presenting the “true Islam,” which is based on a “golden” theme: moderation.

The power of this [*wasatīyah*] current emerges from a number of sources. First, at least in my opinion, it is the right one as it agrees with the spirit of Islam. Second, this current is older, having more established roots than other currents, which are rootless and will not last for long. With time they will vanish. Third, moderation has the broadest base; it has more people, [more] public opinion, behind it.⁹⁰

As was mentioned previously, al-Qaradāwī is absolutely opposed to any person, trend or ideology that veers from the middle. He plainly condemns what he sees as the two most radical trends in the Arab-Muslim world today: the *jihādists*, or radical fundamental Islamists, and the secularists.⁹¹

In elaborating on his view of the latter group, al-Qaradāwī argues that “being Muslim defines our doctrinal position, ideological and civilizational identity, and in no way abolish our historical position or geographical location.”⁹² What this means, in al-Qaradāwī’s view, is that Muslims, who are heirs to an ancient and glorious civilization, are caught in the web of civilizational and philosophical conflict, especially with the West. Therefore the best way to restore mental equilibrium is to examine anew the

⁸⁸ Ibid., 214.

⁸⁹ By *jihādists* I mean the militant Islamic groups who believe in forcing Islam on people and whom al-Qaradāwī called the radical Islamists.

⁹⁰ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 228; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣahwah al-Islamiyah wa-Humum al-Watan al-‘Arabī*, 34.

⁹¹ al-Qaradāwī has devoted several works to demonstrating the defects of these two extremes. Among them are: *al-Islam wa-al-‘Almaniyyah Wajhan li-Wajh*, and *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*.

clear, unsullied foundations of Islam. In other words, al-Qaradāwī's point of departure is doctrinal and Qur'ānic (or normative) Islam, whereas the secularists, in his words, argue for "an Islam that carries the burdens of history."⁹³ Hence, al-Qaradāwī's own, carefully thought-out concept of Islam, which is disseminated today by the "committed, balanced, and enlightened trend of Islamic awakening,"⁹⁴ is dominated by the following characteristics: reason, renewal, *ijtihad*, moderation, pragmatism, respect for women and acknowledgement of their rights in all aspects of life, belief in education, rejection of priesthood, belief in the right of the *ummah* to elect its rulers, preservation of private property, taking care of social justice, and encouraging love of the *ummah*.⁹⁵ Thus, al-Qaradāwī argues, since these issues are the major concern of the *wasatīyah* trend, then why applaud secularism? Instead, Muslims must reject it along with its advocates because it is a concept foreign to Islam and because "it does not emanate from a stable foundation." Secularism is a "Western commodity that did not grow in our soil; consequently, it does not measure up to our doctrines and conceptual premises."⁹⁶

To the same extent, al-Qaradāwī strongly disapproves of the ideology and actions of those Islamists he considers to be extremists. In his view, an extremist readily accuses people and quickly passes judgment contrary to the generally accepted norm of "innocence until guilt is proven." The extremist considers a person guilty the moment he is suspected of something. The extremist jumps to conclusions rather than looks for

⁹² al-Qaradāwī, *al-Islām wa-al-'Almānīyah wajhan li-Wajh* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1997), 21.

⁹³ Ibrahim, Abu Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 263; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Islām wa-al-'Almānīyah*, 32-33.

⁹⁴ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Islām wa-al-'Almānīyah*, 35.

⁹⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Hawla Qadāyā al-Islām wa-al-'Asr* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1992), 36-47; Abu Rabi', *Intellectual Origins*, 263.

explanations. The slightest mistake is blown out of all proportion; a mistake becomes a sin, and a sin becomes a mortal sin. Such a reaction, in al-Qaradāwī's words, is a stark violation of the spirit and teachings of Islam which encourage Muslims to think well of other Muslims, to search for an excuse for their misbehavior and to help them improve their words and deeds.⁹⁷ In his view however, extremism reaches its utmost limit when a single group deprives all people of the right to safety and protection, and instead sanctions their killing and the confiscation of their lives and property. This occurs when an extremist holds all people (except those in his group) to be unbelievers. This kind of extremism, al-Qaradāwī maintains, cuts off every bond with the rest of the Islamic community.⁹⁸

Accordingly, al-Qaradāwī strongly disapproves of violence among Muslims, and condemns the ideology and actions of *Jamā'at al-Takfir wa-al-Hijrah*.⁹⁹ In his view, this organization is following in the footsteps of the Khārijites,¹⁰⁰ and, like the latter, is prepared to brand as an unbeliever anyone who sins or fails to implement the *shari'ah*, as well as people who submit to rulers they disapprove of. Still more sinful in their view

⁹⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Islām wa-al-'Almāniyah*, 52.

⁹⁷ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, "Bin ich ein radikaler?" *Du* (Zurich), Heft 7/8 (Juli/August 1994), 170-171.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁹⁹ A militant Islamic group in Egypt.

¹⁰⁰ In short, "Khārijites are members of an early Islamic sect, the origins of which are confused and obscure but which may be reconstructed as follows. The name of the group's members, in Arabic *Khawārij*, means 'those who seceded' (i.e. from supporting 'Alī b. Abī Tālib); it derives from Arabic verb 'to go out,' 'to secede' (*kharaja*). The first notable secession was that of a group of 'Alī's soldiers at the Battle of Siffin who objected to any form of arbitration at the battle and protested that the judgment should be left to God alone, before leaving the main army. They were joined on a later occasion by other erstwhile supporters of 'Alī from al-Kūfah and it is this later incident which gave the Khārijites their name. Khārijism, whose beliefs were by no means uniform, divided into a number of sub-sects, some increasingly fanatical and exclusivist, teaching, for example, that grave sinners would go to Hell and they thereby placed themselves outside the community; that non-Khārijites were *kāfir* and could thus be killed." Ian Richard Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam* (Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 1997), 145.

are the religious scholars who do not openly condemn these people as unbelievers.¹⁰¹ Moreover, anyone who first pledges support for their cause and joins their group, then decides to leave it, is considered an apostate and must be put to death. Indeed, they regard all history after the fourth century AH as a period of ignorance and unbelief, and given over to the worship of the idol of tradition rather than God.¹⁰² In this way, al-Qaradāwī concludes, the group became so excessive in its accusations of unbelief that they spared neither the dead nor the living. They quickly ran into trouble, since accusing Muslims of unbelief is a very serious matter, with very serious consequences.¹⁰³

According to al-Qaradāwī, religious law teaches that those who embrace Islam with certainty of mind can only be expelled from its fold by proven and substantiated evidence. Even major sins such as murder, fornication, and drinking alcohol do not justify the accusation of unbelief, provided that the person concerned shows neither disrespect nor contempt for religious law. Furthermore, religious law has prescribed different punishments for crimes like murder, fornication, and drunkenness -- "Had all these been unbelief, they would have been punished in accordance with the law of apostasy."¹⁰⁴ At the same time al-Qaradāwī agrees that a Muslim guilty of being *kāfir* would be subject to the harshest penalty under Muslim law -- death. Yet, to be declared a *kāfir*, according to him, a person would have to deny one of three things: that Allah

¹⁰¹ This group and many others of like ideology, accused al-Qaradāwī of being a *kāfir* (unbeliever) due to his divergent opinions and due to what they consider a lenient position on many fundamental issues.

¹⁰² Ibid., 44-45.

¹⁰³ Among those consequences are: "his killing and the confiscation of his property become lawful. And as an apostate, he must be separated from his wife and children; there can be no bond between him and other Muslims; he must be deprived of his inheritance and cannot bequeath to others; he must be denied Islamic burial and the prayer for the deceased; and he must not be buried in a Muslim graveyard." Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 225.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 225.

was God, that Muḥammad was His prophet, or that the Qur'ān was the revelation of God. He complains that people have often been wrongly condemned as *kāfir* for the slightest affront or for breaking religious taboos. Under his strict definition of *kufir*, it would be difficult for a Muslim to be so condemned without proof of intentional and obvious infidelity. It could even be argued that Muslims who acted in this manner knowing the penalties might be deemed mentally ill, thus exempting them from punishment. Moreover, such penalties in al-Qaraḍāwī's view can be applied only to Muslims guilty of *kufir* and not to non-Muslims. He notes furthermore that anyone who professes that "there is no God but Allah" has embraced Islam and consequently his life and property should be granted safety.¹⁰⁵

In conclusion, al-Qaraḍāwī stands at a point mid-way between those who reject Islam as a comprehensive system and those who want Islam to rule at any cost. He has to undertake the important mission of trying to restrain the violent elements among Islamists, and to clarify the misconceptions about Islam among secularists, with teachings based soundly on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Thus, al-Qaraḍāwī believes that to ignore religion as an inclusive order in Muslim life is as risky as forcing it upon people. The best solutions al-Qaraḍāwī suggests, is a "long-term plan" that seeks in the first place to transform individuals as a prelude towards changing the whole society, working, so to speak, from the bottom-up. In short, his plan depends inclusively on the third and fourth components of *wasatīyah* ideology (gradualism and pragmatism).

Establishing an Islamic state which applies the *shari'ah* and strives to unite all Muslims under the banner of Islam, is of course the duty of the whole *ummah*. All this

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 225-226.

requires time and great perseverance. Until that hope is realized, people must unite their efforts to serve their communities and to improve their societies. Such engagements will mold, prepare, and test the abilities of future generations for the leadership of the *ummah*. It is for example unacceptable for a Muslim who could, if he so wished, provide a cure for a patient at a public clinic or a charitable hospital, but refuses to do so because he is waiting for the Islamic state to be established and provide such services.¹⁰⁶

In adopting gradualism, its advocates undertake *da'wah* activities in order to build individuals who will form the core of the Islamic community and who will, eventually, fulfill the responsibility of establishing an Islamist state. In the meantime, however, it is important to cooperate with the current national regime in order to avoid any conflict that might affect the stability of the *ummah*. Likewise, it is important to become involved in sociopolitical affairs as a step towards Islamizing individual regimes in an attempt to build the universal *ummah*.

Still, as Dekmejian points out, “one of *al-wasāṭiyah*’s challenging tasks is combining *salafiyah* with *tajdid*—the core fundamentals of Islam with its changeable elements—in order to effect renewal and reform.”¹⁰⁷ The answer to this challenge, as far as al-Qaradāwī is concerned, is not only to adopt *wasāṭiyah* as a fundamental ideology, but also to implement it as a distinctive methodological approach.

Methodological Discussion

A number of scholars who have written about al-Qaradāwī have addressed him by the title *al-salafī al-mujaddid* (traditionalist-renewer), a title that reflects a traditional tendency but also underscores his role as a renewer or a reformer. Our first task is therefore to look at the two concepts, i.e., traditionalism and renewal, in the thought of

¹⁰⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, 161.

al-Qaradāwī and to examine the degree to which these attributes can be applied to him and to the general framework of his methodology.

Traditionalism as Methodology

Al-Qaradāwī always reveals himself in his writing to be a traditionalist by his insistence that traditionalism is the best methodology if it is correctly understood. Not surprisingly, he has a particular understanding of the term *salafiyah*.¹⁰⁸ For him, it is an “ideology based on an application of the understanding of the provisions of the Qur’ān and the guidelines of the Sunnah by the best generation of the *ummah*.”¹⁰⁹ The key words in this definition are “understanding” and “application.” He believes that the “best generation of the *ummah*” were such due to their correct understanding of the two authentic Islamic sources: the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. Thus, they were able to apply its teachings accordingly to all life’s affairs. By insisting on this he at the same time proclaims three fundamental methodological sources: Qur’ān, Sunnah, and *salaf* (early Muslim generation).

¹⁰⁷ Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 214.

¹⁰⁸ *Salafiyah*: An Arabic expression which has borne a considerable number of cultural and religious meanings over the years. It derives from the Arabic word *salaf* meaning basically “ancestors,” “predecessors.” In a religious sense, these were the early generation after Muḥammad, i.e., such groups as the *ṣaḥābah* (Prophet companions) and the *tābi’ūn* (the followers), whose example constituted a religious paradigm for later generations. *Al-salafiyah* was also the name borne by the Egyptian reformist movement whose founders were ‘Abduh and al-Afghānī. The *salafiyah* tried, among other things, to identify a *via media* between the strict doctrine of Islam and the ideas of secular society and modern sciences. ‘Abduh extended the compass of the word *salaf* to embrace later generations of theologians. However, today the word *salafiyah* has been used as one of the attempts in Arabic to render the word “fundamentalism” and it is in this sense a synonym of *uṣūliyah*. Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*. 221-222.

¹⁰⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyat al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 96.

In this sense al-Qaraḍāwī shares with earlier reformers, like Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Rashīd Ridā, Maḥmūd Shaltūt and Ḥassan al-Bannā, the belief that Muslim weakness and vulnerability to Western domination have always stemmed from the failure of Muslims to recommit themselves to understanding and living according to Islam as defined by its scriptures and as exemplified by the *salaf*-- particularly the period of the first four caliphs, which represented the concrete historical manifestation of a comprehensive Islamic order. From this, al-Qaraḍāwī concludes that the problems faced by Muslims both in the past and the present are due primarily to their misunderstanding of Islam as a comprehensive order.

Our problem is that as individuals we pretend to be Muslims, while Islam is the official religion of some of our countries whose constitutions state this fact. We are Muslims by name, by our birth certificates, and through some rites which link some of us with our religion. We are officially and geographically Muslims on account of our being in the land of Islam. The reality however is that our life is not Islamic; it is an incompatible mixture of Islam, materialism, paganism, and moral and emotional alignment.¹¹⁰

However, for al-Qaraḍāwī, Muslims have reached this problematic position in their lives due to another reason besides the one mentioned-above. The reason for this, he maintains, is the long-term effects of imperialism on their countries. Even though foreign armies and administrators have long since departed, yet their intellectual, psychological, legal and social monuments and influences are still in use and are still influencing Muslims. Many of the latter in fact continue to defy the religion and legislation of Islam through the legacy of the numerous disciples who receive schooling at their hands or under the supervision of their advocates and missionaries.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 185.

¹¹¹ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ḥulūl al-Mustawradah wa Kayfa Janat ‘Alā Ummatīnā* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1977), 17-24.

These are still spread throughout our countries, and are in charge of intellectual, political and administrative leadership and guidance. This has led to a situation whereby religion is consulted only in matters that have to do with ablutions, prayers, breast-feeding, divorce and such matters. As to the policies of government, the social and economic systems, the methods of instruction and education, and constitutional and legal matters, Islam is no longer given a say, except to approve, bless and wish the governors victory.¹¹²

In order to resolve this problematic situation, al-Qaradāwī recommends continuous effort “with objectivity and loyalty to bring Muslims back to true Islam,” meaning by the latter the faith, legislation, morals, and total and distinctive civilization that Islam represents.

In saying this, al-Qaradāwī means that Islam is not just an ideology, but a comprehensive way of life. However, the idea of the comprehensiveness of Islam has become almost an article of faith among Muslims today, particularly among Islamists who seek the implication of Islam in all aspects of life as an alternative to all other imported ideologies. These latter have failed, in al-Qaradāwī’s view, to provide a stable living system, and have instead brought troubles and misfortunes for Muslims and non-Muslims respectively.¹¹³ Accordingly, following in the steps of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaradāwī recommends finding an Islamic solution—a familiar slogan for all Islamist organizations—to the problems facing both Arabs and Muslims in the present age. However, the fact that al-Qaradāwī regards imperialism as the primary cause of the current, intolerable situation does not, in his eyes, absolve Muslims themselves of all responsibility for this crisis.¹¹⁴ Therefore it is up to Muslims now to rediscover their own religion and to fulfill their obligations towards God, towards themselves, and finally towards humanity as a whole.

¹¹² al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Saḥwah Rāshidah*, 187.

¹¹³ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ḥulūl al-Mustawradah*, 8.

What we lack as Muslims and what mankind also lacks, is the existence of an *ummah* which is represented by Islam and which in turn represents Islam by adopting it as an encompassing system in its life, and then introduces it [Islam] to the world as a guiding and rescuing message. Therefore it is about time that the Arab Muslim world frees itself from Western and Eastern subordination, and rejects any imported ideology, accepting nothing but the sound Islam as the solution to all its problems.¹¹⁵

The first step towards a rediscovery of Islam's soundest foundations is to go back to its purest sources, even though they do not cover every area of life in detail; and yet, in al-Qaradāwī's view, they do contain the elementary principles which can provide guidance for all eventualities. These sources consist of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the *salaf*.

Traditional Sources

1. Qur'ān and Sunnah

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah are the "supreme authentic referential sources that have only one origin: Divine Revelation."¹¹⁶ This statement expresses unequivocally al-Qaradāwī's position with regard to the above-mentioned Islamic sources. As a matter of fact, he devotes an entire book to the question, entitled *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā fi al-Islām lil-Qur'ān wa-al-Sunnah*, wherein he discusses in detail what he sees as the truly sound methodology for understanding and interpreting Islam on the basis of these "authentic sources." while my aim here is to identify al-Qaradāwī's use of sources as part of his traditional methodology, and not his approach to the sources themselves, it can nevertheless be stated that this approach consists in understanding the Qur'ān in

¹¹⁴ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Ayna al-Khalal?* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1990), 25.

¹¹⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Hulūl al-Mustawradah*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā*, 8.

the light of the Sunnah, and understanding the Sunnah in the light of Qur'ān, mainly by applying the cross-referential method.¹¹⁷

In the above-mentioned book, among others,¹¹⁸ al-Qaradāwī determines the sources of Islamic knowledge to be the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Therefore, he uses different verses from the Qur'ān to affirm this matter and regards the following as the rule. “It is not fitting for any believer, man or women, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His messenger, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.” (Q.36: 33)

Muslims, he maintains, are required in the first place to comply with those sources to acquire knowledge and understanding of any matter concerning their life. And they must accept only the opinions that are in agreement with those Divine sources.¹¹⁹

Although al-Qaradāwī, theoretically, puts the Qur'ān and the Sunnah on the same level of prestige, nevertheless in practice he tends to assign greater authority to the first source. In examining his works, one can easily observe the distinct stature of the Qur'ān above the Sunnah. The Qur'ān is the constitution which carries the primary rules and fundamentals of Islam. Accordingly, it holds the uppermost position in his entire ideological-methodological discussion. A Qur'ānic verse takes first place in his argumentation and quotation as a self-evident truth. It is the final revelation and last message from God to all of humanity. Therefore, it comprises all that is needed to ensure happiness for mankind and contains the law that will apply for all time.

¹¹⁷ For details, see al-Qaradāwī's book *al-Marjī'iyah al-'Ulyā fi al-Islām lil-Qur'ān wa-al-Sunnah*.

¹¹⁸ Those other works are: *Kayfā Nata'āmal ma' al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, *Kayfā Nata'āmal ma' al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah*, and *al-Sunnah Maṣḍaran li-al-Ma'rifah wa-al-Ḥaḍārah*.

¹¹⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marjī'iyah al-'Ulyā fi al-Islām*, 8.

Moreover, the Qur'ān has defined the goal of life and the purpose of man's existence. It commands followers to obey and lays upon their shoulders a higher duty, i.e., "to guide humanity to the truth and to lead all mankind to the good, and to illumine the whole world with the sun of Islam."¹²⁰

For him, like others, Islam means the attainment of peace through conscientious and loving submission to the Will and Guidance of Allah. This was the mission of all Prophets and messengers in human history. It is the same fundamental faith that was revealed to Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad.¹²¹ Given this fact, like any other Muslim believer, al-Qaraḍāwī accepts that it was God's choice to select Islam to be the "seal of the divine messages," the Qur'ān to be the final revelation, and Muḥammad to be the seal of the prophets.¹²²

He also believes that the original revelations given to Moses and Jesus are no longer available in their complete, original and unadulterated form. The Qur'ān, he claims, is the only divine revelation that was meticulously preserved from change, addition or diminution. As such, he concludes, it should be used as the criterion by which to judge the authenticity of the present forms of previous revelations.¹²³

Underlying this exceptional status of the Qur'ān in al-Qaraḍāwī's thought, is his absolute belief that it is the "only divine, unadulterated form [of scripture]." This allows him to conceive of its verses as axioms. In support of this claim, however, al-Qaraḍāwī uses the Qur'ān itself as a solid proof, leading to an apparent logical paradox.

¹²⁰ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfā Nata'āmal ma' al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1999), 11-12.

¹²¹ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-'Ammah lil-Islām*, 95-97.

¹²² al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā*, 6.

Moreover, al-Qaradāwī's final declaration of the Qur'ānic verses as axiomatic, leads him, naturally, to regard the Sunnah as the second most important source of Islamic knowledge after the Qur'ān. Indeed "the Qur'ān commands the believer to obey the Prophet as they obey Allah," al-Qaradāwī says, appealing for support to different Qur'ānic verses.¹²⁴

What is the Prophet's task but to illustrate to people what has been sent down to them [the Qur'ān]. It is not sound, then, [to say] that the demonstration (*al-bayān*) [the Sunnah] can be in conflict with the demonstrated (*al-mubayyan*) [the Qur'ān], just as the branch can never be inconsistent with the root.¹²⁵

Al-Qaradāwī affirms that God's promise to preserve the Qur'ān necessarily implies that the Sunnah is to be preserved as well. He argues that verse 15: 9¹²⁶ designates the guarding of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah respectively. As for the Sunnah, "this guarding is by means of the sense of congruity (*bi-dalālat al-muṭābaqah*), whereas the guarding of the Qur'ān is by that of content (*bi-dalālat al-taḍammun*)."¹²⁷ Consequently, al-Qaradāwī does not relegate the Sunnah to an inferior rank as compared to the Qur'ān; quite the contrary, as he tends to regard the Qur'ān and Sunnah as being one source with no discrimination between the two whatsoever.¹²⁸

¹²³ al-Qaradāwī, *Shari'at al-Islām*, 11; al-Qaradāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma' al-Qur'ān*, 30-31; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā*, 5.

¹²⁴ "The Qur'ān says: "No, by your Lord they do not believe until they submit to your judgment in all disputes between them, then they do not find themselves oppressed with your decisions and they completely submit." (Q.4:65) Again, Allah says "When a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, it does not behoove a believer, man or woman, to have choice in their matter. One who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, is indeed on a clearly wrong Path." (Q.33:36) Furthermore, Allah says "What the Messenger teaches you, take it, and what he forbids you, avoid doing it." (Q.59: 7) al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā*, 64-65.

¹²⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma' al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*, (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1990), 93.

¹²⁶ "We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

¹²⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā*, 84.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 63

In his eagerness to place the Sunnah on the same level as the Qur'ān, however, al-Qaradāwī overlooks an obvious point that assuredly undermines his argument. Simply put, just as his guarantee of the authenticity of the Qur'ān is the Qur'ān only, and that of the joint authenticity of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah the Qur'ān as well, the proof of the authenticity of the Sunnah relies on the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the *ijma' al-ṣahābah* (consensus of the Companions of the Prophet), collectively.¹²⁹ Hence the Sunnah does not have the same level of authority as the Qur'ān. It does not prove the authenticity of the Qur'ān, while the Qur'ān, according to al-Qaradāwī, does so for the Sunnah, thus consigning the latter to a lower rank than the former. This not only undermines his claim as to their equal status, it also shows the weakness of his whole argument, wherein he judges the authenticity of the sources by the sources themselves, inevitably resulting in a circular argument.

Perhaps it is in recognition of this failing that, in the introduction to his book *al-Marji'iyah al-'Ulyā fi al-Islām lil-Qur'ān wa-al-Sunnah*, al-Qaradāwī tries to move away from the sources and instead speaks of a rational or reasonable proof to support his claim. He states that the authenticity of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, “was accepted by decisive, reasonable evidences.”¹³⁰ Here again, though, he fails to live up to his claims and again ultimately seeks support for the “correctness” of his statement in the sources themselves.

In conclusion, al-Qaradāwī, like most of the traditional Islamists, regards the Qur'ān and Sunnah as the primary sources for acquiring a sound knowledge of life in general and of Islam in particular. In his view, Muslims fail in life when they abandon these

¹²⁹ Ibid., 21 and 63.

fundamental sources and neglect their teachings and instead adopt a foreign methodology. However, they will taste renewed success if they apply those teachings inclusively in their lives, as was the case with the *salaf* (the early Muslim generation).

2. The *Salaf*

Beside the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, al-Qaraḍāwī considers the *salaf* an example worthy of imitation due to their “correct understanding” of religion as a comprehensive way of life. The opinions of this institution make up the third necessary source in his methodology. In making special reference to the *salaf*, he constantly emphasizes that what he means is to adopt not just their judgment but their traditionalist methodology as well, which in his view embraces the following fundamentals:

1. Judging by the “infallible texts” (Qur'ān and Sunnah), not by men's sayings.
2. Having recourse, in determining the meaning of the ambiguous texts, to the perspicuous ones, and of the inconclusive ones to the conclusive ones (*radd al-mutashābihāt 'ilā al-muḥkamāt, wa-al-ẓanniyāt 'ilā-al-qaṭ'iyāt*).
3. Understanding secondary concepts and subsidiary judgments in the light of established principles and generalities.
4. Advocating *ijtihād* and renewal, and denouncing rigidity and imitation.
5. Advocating commitment to proper conduct, not looseness, in the field of morals.
6. Advocating facilitation, not complication in the field of jurisprudence.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 22.

7. Advocating *tabshir* (being affable to people and showing them a kind example) rather than *tanfir* (scaring them away by behaving harshly with them) in the field of guidance.
8. Devoting attention to the cultivation of true and firm belief, not argumentation, in the field of faith.
9. Devoting attention to content, not form, in the field of worship.
10. Obedience in religious matters, and a spirit of renewal in earthly matters.¹³¹

A detailed discussion of some of the themes outlined above will be provided in the next chapter. Suffice it to say at this point that, as a whole, they constituted the traditional methodology that al-Qaradāwī adopted and called upon others to follow. He is convinced that the first Muslim generation internalized and applied just such a methodology.

Thereby they undertook conquests, spread justice and goodwill, established a state of science and belief and laid the foundations of a universal, moralistic, humanitarian and religious civilization whose memory is still alive in history.¹³²

In other words, al-Qaradāwī insists on applying, not just the decisions themselves, but the entire methodology of the *salaḥ*. One should “seek its goals while disagreeing with some of the opinions, as every time has its own circumstances.”¹³³ This is, for example, how al-Qaradāwī differs from Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim, among others.

I do respect and appreciate their overall methodology, but that does not make me accept all that they say. If I accepted all their sayings, I would be imitating them in everything, and thus violating the very methodology which they advocated and for which they had to contend with so much trouble and opposition. For their

¹³¹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Thaqāfah al-'Arabīyah al-Islāmiyah bayna al-Aṣālah wa-al-Mu'āṣarah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1994), 135; al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 96.

¹³² al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 96-97.

¹³³ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Thaqāfah al-'Arabīyah al-Islāmiyah*, 60-61.

methodology called for contemplation, judging by proof and weighing the judgment by itself, not by its sayers.¹³⁴

Accordingly, in the field of jurisprudence, for instance, al-Qaradāwī denounces *taqlid* and defines it as “blindly, fanatically following the sayings of a specific scholar, or being restricted to a specific *madhhab*” (school of jurisprudence). He is entirely in disagreement with this method or with its advocates. “It was a blessing from Allah that I was free from being tied down to a *madhhab*”¹³⁵ he writes. Instead, he prefers and advocates *ijtihad* considering it the cornerstone to renewing and reviving Islam, stressing its vital role in ensuring Islam’s adaptability and serviceability in any place or time.¹³⁶

It is interesting to note that, whenever al-Qaradāwī makes reference to the *salafiyah* method, he directly attributes to its proponents the intention of renewing the faith, just as his own goal is renovation of the faith, or at least returning Islamic piety to its original shape. Therefore, whenever he speaks of *salafiyah* he does so primarily in term of *al-tajdid* (renovation) in religion, and regards the latter as an essential, required, legitimate factor in the project of reviving Islam.

¹³⁴al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 98-99.

¹³⁵al-Qaradāwī, *Contemporary Fatwas*, 8. However, al-Qaradāwī’s official studies of jurisprudence reflect the tradition of the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfah.

¹³⁶In fact al-Qaradāwī speaks of the need for a new *fiqh*, which he regards as an essential basis for the Muslims in the present age. He calls in fact for five new kinds, which are: *fiqh* of practices, *fiqh* of ranks of deeds, *fiqh* of differences, *fiqh* of balances, and *fiqh* of priorities. al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 25.

Renovation as Methodology

Since his early childhood, al-Qaraḍāwī has given considerable attention to new ideas, as evidenced by his enthusiasm for what he saw as al-Bannā's new way of interpreting Islam. Later, on becoming a student at al-Azhar, he convinced other students to support attempts to reform the teaching there. His primary goal was to revise the curriculum in the strong belief that education is the cornerstone of forming an individual's way of thinking. As such he disapproved of the policy at al-Azhar of restricting the curriculum to, for the most part, traditional sciences, and of refusing to tolerate modern sciences. At that time he believed that students should be exposed to all kinds of knowledge, including those of a temporal nature, due to their utility in life. In addition, he believed that al-Azhar had to be able to combine traditional knowledge and all other modern sciences and languages in order to comply with the requirements of modern times. Next, one of his major demands was to open more schools and institutes for girls who, forming half of the society, must be given the same opportunity of education as boys.¹³⁷ These initial concerns hint, to some extent, at al-Qaraḍāwī's gradual evolution of a more modern attitude. It was an attitude that developed with time, and allowed him to speak frankly of reforming, not only the Azhar's curriculum, but also the religion itself.

Al-Qaraḍāwī has developed his vision of renewing religion on the basis of a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū-Hurayrah: "Allāh shall send down a man who will renew the religion of this *ummah* at the start of every hundred years."¹³⁸ It is on the basis of this (apparently

¹³⁷ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Risālat al-Azhar*, 4-80.

¹³⁸ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 9; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-'Arabi*, 37.

sound) *ḥadīth* that al-Qaraḍāwī legitimizes the act of renovating the religion. A further look at al-Qaraḍāwī's interpretation of the *ḥadīth* will demonstrate his overall view of what constitutes sound renovation.

As to "who" this *ḥadīth* refers to, al Qaraḍāwī explains that most commentators take it to mean a specific individual who will revive the religion. Many have actually tried to identify an individual from among the prominent theologians and imams whose deaths fell near the turn of every century of the Islamic calendar. Other *ḥadīth* commentators are of the view that the "who" fittingly implies the plural as much as the singular, indicating that the "renewer" could be a group and not an individual. Al-Qaraḍāwī in fact accepts the latter interpretation, and adds to it as well. In his view, the renewer of Islam should not necessarily be a group in the sense of a specific number of people. Rather, they may be a group in the sense of a school, a movement of thought and action that "advocate good deeds and patience" and that works in unison to renew the religion.¹³⁹ Accordingly different individuals or groups may undertake the task of renovation, each from different positions or points of interest and specialty. This diversity of fields and the diversification of the forms of action and renovation should reflect, in al-Qaraḍāwī's view, a positive diversity and specialization instead of reflecting contradiction and enmity.¹⁴⁰ Thus, al-Qaraḍāwī disapproved of associating the activity of renovation with a single extraordinary individual, whose supposed advent is

¹³⁹ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 15-21.

¹⁴⁰ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah Bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrū' wa-al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1990), 157.

“brought about by a universal miracle which suddenly descends from the sky, or ascends from the earth” to improve the difficult conditions suffered by Muslims.¹⁴¹

In view of this explanation, it seems that al-Qaraḍāwī chooses to interpret the *ḥadīth* in a practical sense, and in the light of the Islamic understanding of the rule of the *ummah*. He has a tendency to involve the whole *ummah* in the required activity of renovation, where each individual is assigned to a specific task of preparing the ground for the “renovation” expected to come about. In such a situation, “the question that every Muslim will ask is: ‘What is my role in the program of renovation and what is my duty?’ instead of wondering when the next renewer is going to appear.”¹⁴² However, because the “renovation process” is a collective effort, everyone in the community should correctly understand its significance and field of application.

In an effort to prove the validity of renovation as a principle, al-Qaraḍāwī considers the definition of religion to be prerequisite to proving his claim. The word “renew” in the *ḥadīth*, in al-Qaraḍāwī’s words, “applies to the noun ‘religion’.” In this case, he considers the use of the word “religion” to refer to one of two ideas. First, “religion” in the sense of God’s action in sending the Prophet to reveal His book, which includes the beliefs, forms of worship, morality and laws regulating the relationships of man with God and of people with each other. Al-Qaraḍāwī sees this as giving the religion stability, such that it does not undergo change or accept renovation, for it is “an external truth.” The second meaning, however, is the way in which man relates to religion as defined above, both intellectually and emotionally as well as in practice and behavior. It is in this sense that one may be referred to as having a weak or a strong religion, or as

¹⁴¹ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 22-25.

one whose Islam is perfect or imperfect. Religion in this situation is mobile and changing. It may increase or decrease, weaken or strengthen, become clear or troubled, straighten or deviate, according to man's understanding of it, his belief in it and his commitment to its instructions.¹⁴³

So it is to the latter meaning of religion that al-Qaradāwī allows improvement. Moreover, in his discussion of the meaning of renovation, he points in this context to a particular meaning of the term. According to his definition, renovation of something is the effort to return it to its initial and original state, so that in spite of its old age, it appears as if it were new. This, he maintains, can only be achieved through the strengthening of what has weakened in it, and through the restoration of what has collapsed, so that it takes on again an image as close as possible to its original one.¹⁴⁴ Hence renovation does not mean the change of the nature of what is old, or its substitution by something else that is newly created; rather, it consists in the retrieval of some essential nature of that thing. Above all, renovating the religion of Islam means to take it back to its original state as it was during the time of the Prophet, his Companions and those who have followed in their line. As such al-Qaradāwī sees no contradiction between renovation and traditionalism; on the contrary, for him, the two of them are two faces of the same coin. This explains his central rule: "renovation is true only when it is traditionalist and traditionalism is true only when it is revivalistic."¹⁴⁵ It seems that al-Qaradāwī wants to say that a return to the original version of the religion

¹⁴² Ibid., 25.

¹⁴³ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 29.

¹⁴⁴ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Bayna al-Aṣālah wa-al-Tajdīd* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwah, 1986), 27-28.

should not frighten anyone, as this return in reality is a return to the correct meaning of Islam as it was understood by the *salaf*.

He who reads the comments of the Prophet's Companions and those who have followed their method will find that they are the most knowledgeable of the spirit and aims of Islam. And these people did not take everything literally and were not unduly formal. They were wholly attached to Allah's laws and at the same time they interpreted these laws with a magnanimous spirit, to show people that Allah established His religion for their benefit. It also shows them that Allah wants them to live in ease and not in difficulty. Their method was like what Imam `Afi referred to as giving predominance to the 'middle path' which can be reached by the one who follows and to which the one who precedes can return.¹⁴⁶

Taking into consideration this theory of renovation, and in addition his definition of religion, we can conclude that, even for al-Qaraḍāwī, renovation does not cover all aspects of life. For under no condition can renewal ever impinge on the realm of the so-called *al-qaṭ'iyāt* (conclusive issues), where al-Qaraḍāwī believes that "Islam has passed its decisive judgment on the various aspects of doctrine, worship, morals and legislation, which embody the doctrinal, spiritual, intellectual and behavioral unity of the Muslim community."¹⁴⁷ For him then, the fundamental rule is that Muslims should "follow in religious matters and renovate in temporal matters."¹⁴⁸ A closer look at the latter quotation will shed much light on the kinds of renovation that al-Qaraḍāwī stands for and supports.

In his view, no one can argue with the fact that human life is subject to much change and evolution. However, this evolution does not occur in the essence of man; rather, it affects his environment. Furthermore, each human being has instinctive, stable

¹⁴⁵ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 101; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Thaqāfah al-'Arabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, 59.

¹⁴⁶ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 31.

¹⁴⁷ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Malāmiḥ al-Mujtama' al-Muslim alladhī Nanshuduh* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1993), 183-34.

motives that never change, although the ways of satisfying them may indeed do so. Besides, there are original religious and moral values that still have their weight and merit in the life of human beings and their behavior, “even if they have sometimes been overcome by unconsciousness, or contaminated by rust.”¹⁴⁹ This belief in and understanding of human nature has influenced al-Qaradāwī to restrict the domain of renovation to temporal matters due to their changeable nature, and to reject its application to eternal, unvarying morals and values.

Since al-Qaradāwī believes that moderation is the best ideology and methodology to be adopted in all matters, he naturally takes a moderate position in the debate raging between secularists and fundamentalists. He denounces the opinion that allows renovation in all matters including religious values and morals. Likewise he disapproves of the contrary opinion that refuses to renovate any aspects of life including practical, temporal matters. He stands between what he calls the “fanatics” who want to freeze life and stand in the way of its progress, and the “extremely liberal”¹⁵⁰ who want to reduce life to chaos with no religious or moral values.¹⁵¹ However, al-Qaradāwī, over and over again, affirms that this is not his personal position alone; indeed, it is the truly Islamic one.

Islam combines firmness and leniency in its judgments and teachings; firmness in its goals and leniency in its instruments; firmness in its fundamentals and general conceptions and leniency in its branches and details; firmness in behavior and religious values and leniency in its materialistic and worldly matters. Islam provides a

¹⁴⁸ al-Qaradāwī, *Ayna al-Khalal*? 12.

¹⁴⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rashidah*, 67.

¹⁵⁰ The phrase “extremely liberal” here is used to translate al-Qaradāwī’s Arabic word *mutaḥallilūn*.

¹⁵¹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Thaqāfah al-‘Arabīyah al-Islāmīyah*, 133.

greater leniency in worldly matters be they technical or artistic concerning ways and means. It is in this context that the Prophet said: 'You are in a better position to know about worldly matters.'¹⁵²

Thus it is only earthly matters that al-Qaraḍāwī approves of developing and changing, matters that he invites Muslims to master and excel in. He sees no harm in Muslims learning and adopting from other people regardless of their beliefs or ideologies. Accordingly, true reform is to understand clearly what aspects of life need to be changed and developed, and what must remain firm and stable. In other words the rule is that any action must revolve around a steady, firm core, i.e., religion, particularly in the case of Islam. However, al-Qaraḍāwī acknowledges that the major problem facing Muslim societies in modern times is an inverse application of this rule, setting in stone what should naturally be inclined to change and introducing change in what should be subject to firmness, eternity and stability.¹⁵³

Apparently, one can link al-Qaraḍāwī's views on renovation with his overall notion of Islam as ideology and methodology. Here it may be useful to quote al-Qaraḍāwī at some length in order to show the implication of his basic belief in Islam as a superior creed and ideology by virtue of its unquestionable, divine nature. He says:

God meant for His last words to humanity to be comprised in this religion, after it [humanity] had reached its maturity and deserved that He send it an inclusive, eternal message. It comes as no surprise that He incorporated in it a certain ease and leniency that help it to face evolution and fit every context, nation and generation. Furthermore, He also endowed this message with values, ideas, moral, intellectual and legal foundations that lead to growth, action and progress. He also included in it what is sufficient to create a moderate civilization that is divine and human at the same time, where both religious and worldly matters are in harmony, and where science and faith, or civilization and morality, are also harmonious. Islam neither refuses evolution which includes knowledge, wisdom, truth and goodness, nor does it accept evolution

¹⁵² al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Alj Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 68.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 71.

which includes in its process deviance, delinquency and failure. It confronts everything with the Qur'ān, which Allah has revealed, with truth and justice in order to provide people with a standard by which they can evaluate everything in life.¹⁵⁴

In conclusion, one can see that the key to the renovation of religion in al-Qaradāwī's view is awareness and understanding. The required understanding of Islam must depend on the guidance of the first generation which formed the best possible example of the sound spirit of Islam. As such, Muslims today must follow the *salaf's* methodology as described in al-Qaradāwī's ten points. Indeed, an understanding of the traditionalist methodology is essential to shake off any distortions of Muslims doctrines and reform Islam along the lines of its original teachings, yet in a way that is also compatible with the requirements of the modern age.

Al-Qaradāwī applauds this traditional methodology since, for him, its masters were attentive to the distinctive features of Islam, which consist in comprehensiveness, moderation and leniency, and an ability to distinguish between important issues and details, between essential and minor laws, between what is stable and permanent and between what is flexible and changing. They also distinguished between the ranks and levels of actions in the eye of the law, be they good deeds or sinful ones. For example, he suggests that disbelief is not like sins, even if they be major ones, and that major sins are not like minor offences; whereas offences that are considered minor are not like ambiguous ones over which scholars disagree. Forbidden acts, moreover, are not like reprehensible ones, and forbidden reprehensible acts are not the same as unprohibited reprehensible acts, while the latter are not necessarily the opposite of the former. All these acts are ranked, and each rank has its assigned punishment. Al-Qaradāwī

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

furthermore states that it is very dangerous to try to blur the differences between these ranks and acts, and to consider them all the same. "Putting together what Allah has separated is like separating what Allah has put together-- both approaches are equally sinful."¹⁵⁵

It is clear from the above analysis that al-Qaradāwī stresses the importance of a large-scale intellectual and cultural renovation encompassing especially the field of jurisprudence-- a renovation that could restore to *ijtihād* its life and dynamism. This *ijtihād*, in al-Qaradāwī's final analysis, is much needed nowadays to face and solve problems, and is ideal because it seeks solutions from within Islamic ideology. Furthermore, the required renovation must allow for Islam to be restated in the language of a given age, and must address each people in its own language.

Talking to people who have reached the surface of the moon cannot be the same as talking to people who have been living in caves. Each of them has its own uniqueness and dialogue, and we have to differentiate between them. We need fully to understand each of them before embarking on a communicative dialogue.¹⁵⁶

Accordingly, al-Qaradāwī proposes an inclusive reformative project in order to improve the means and methods of renovating and spreading Islam. He proposes an Islamic educational system having as its goal the creation of the Muslim individual, the Muslim home, the Muslim community, and the Muslim government, by employing the *wasatīyah* principles outlined above to their utmost. This will become clear in our discussion of the issues surrounding Islamic awakening in the following chapter. To put it briefly, his project gives priority to educating the individuals who will undertake this mission, and proposes that the required renovation should aim to revise the fields of

¹⁵⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Fī Fiqh al-Awlawīyāt, Dirāsah Jadīdah fī Daw' al-Qur'ān wa-al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1995), 157-168; *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 32-33.

human and social sciences from within a genuine Islamic outlook, which takes its inspiration from the universal philosophy of Islam. This revision should take into consideration the way Islam views religion, life, humanity, society and history and should benefit from all the established schools of thought and from the results of their research and analyses. Nevertheless, it should not become a slave to any single one of its philosophies, still less so to all of them. By this al-Qaradāwī means that Muslim universities and educational institutions, for instance, should work towards liberating their systems from the yoke of imitation of Western thought. Instead he proposes a return to the roots and origins of the Islamic “glorious heritage,” borrowing from it and enriching it or developing it in the process. This, in his words, “will allow the birth of generations of independent thought combining the authenticity of Islam and modernity.”¹⁵⁷ And this is what al-Qaradāwī believes to be a truly traditionalistic-renovation. On this account, it would seem that al-Qaradāwī’s title of *al-salafī al-mujaddid* concords perfectly with his overall ideological-methodological individuality.

¹⁵⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *Min Ajl Ṣaḥwah Rāshidah*, 34.

¹⁵⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 85.

Islamic Awakening¹⁵⁸: The View of al-Qaradāwī

This awakening signifies a natural, healthy phenomenon which is clearly indicative of a return to *fiṭrah* (natural predisposition), to one's roots, which— for those of us in our Muslim homeland— is simply Islam: the beginning and the end, in which we seek refuge from difficulties, and from which we derive the strength of spirit, of hope, and of guidance.¹⁵⁹

Causes and definition

The phenomenon of Islamic awakening, in al-Qaradāwī's view, is a factual event which may be clearly observed in its different manifestations and multifarious domains. For him, it is foreign neither to the Muslim *ummah* nor to Islam as a whole. Indeed, what would be strange is for it not to have happened. To reinforce his argument, al-Qaradāwī seems to lean on his crucial notion of Islam in its capacity as a "distinct religion." This leads him to speak of the reason that he thinks is essential to the unfolding of the Islamic awakening. In one way or another, this is related to what he conceives of as the "substantial nature of Islam and its inherent motivational factors."

¹⁵⁸ The specific term *al-ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyyah* has been used since the middle 1970s to describe the Islamic response to the decline of Arab nationalism. With the death of `Abd al-Nāṣir in 1970, the popularity of this notion began to retreat, clearing a space for Islamic ideas to emerge as an alternative ideology. Proponents and sympathizers of the latter ideology "frequently use the following expressions: *al-ba'th al-Islami* (Islamic resurrection), *al-saḥwah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic awakening), *iḥya' al-Dīn* (religious revival), *usuliyyah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic fundamentals)." Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 4. Although it is hard to determine the very first appearance of the term "*ṣaḥwah*," yet it is important to note that the term *al-ṣaḥwah* was used only in the Arab world for, we believe, its advocates have wanted to present themselves in a positive, pacifist form and to be identified as a moderates that people should trust and respect instead of as revolutionaries, as for instance, in the case of the Islamist situation in Iran. The latter described themselves as the advocates of "the Islamic revolution" a term that reflects a more radical tendency. However, it is not my aim to discuss the history of the terminology, for the aim of this study is to highlight the Islamic awakening as a factual phenomenon from one of its advocates' point of view—Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī.

He is convinced that “it is the nature of the Islamic *ummah* that makes it impossible to remain idle, or in an unconscious state of being for a long period of time,” for Islam, by nature, stimulates and motivates awareness and the means of arousing this among Muslims. In an attempt to explain the foregoing assumption, al-Qaradāwī refers afresh to his methodological sources, maintaining that it is by reason of the uncorrupted Qur’anic teachings, the authentic Muḥammadan traditions, and the glorious history of the *salaf* that Muslims shall never fall into a “coma.” Such guidelines, in al-Qaradāwī’s view, ensure that Muslims can be awakened in any place and at any time.¹⁶⁰

However, because al-Qaradāwī is so sure of the so-called “substantial nature of Islam and its inherent motivational factors” as the supreme cause of the *ṣaḥwah*, he rejects all other explanations that ascribe its genesis to other, more rational reasons such as social, economic and psychological factors.¹⁶¹ Instead, he constantly stresses his own ideological view that the “distinct nature” of Islam and its *ummah* is the sole reason for the awakening, and he describes all other explanations, although more rational, as false.¹⁶² Nonetheless, al-Qaradāwī seems to recognize in one way or another the infirmity of his argument, and so he buttresses his argument with what we may identify as a “historical dimension,” lending to his ideological certainty a particular rational aspect.

¹⁵⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, 149.

¹⁶⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī*, 11; Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ummah al-Islāmiyah Ḥaqīqah lā Wahm* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1995), 38.

¹⁶¹ By psychological factors, al-Qaradāwī means the arguments used by some analysts to explain that people have returned to religion as a reaction to the 1967 Catastrophe, at which time Israel won its war with the Arabs and occupied the rest of Palestine, Sinai and the Golan heights. For more details see for example Ali Hillal Dessouki, *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*, 3-25.

¹⁶² al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī*, 24-26.

The contemporary [Islamic] awakening, whose effects and aspects we witness today, did not emerge out of a vacuum, nor did it arise all at once. It is indeed a continuation and renovation of Islamic movements and of the intellectual and practical schools of thought established previously, some of which have perished, while others are still standing in one form or another. These movements were founded by sincere men, who tried their very best to renovate the religion or to revive the *ummah* in one area or another of the Islamic lands, or in one aspect or more of life such as beliefs, thought, or behavior.¹⁶³

Although al-Qaradāwī tries to reinforce his argument by subjoining to it what we have called a “historical dimension,” he mitigates its rational basis by focusing only on Islamic history and only on those aspects that serve to confirm his thesis. He merely points to the historical background of the current Islamic awakening, ignoring or, possibly, pretending to have forgotten to ask about, the reasons behind the emergence of these other Islamic movements in the past. In short, his historical justification is effectively the same as the one he identifies as the root cause of the contemporary Islamic awakening, i.e., the supposed distinct nature of Islam and its *ummah*.

As for the standard usage of the term *ṣaḥwāh* (awakening) itself, al-Qaradāwī declares it to be linguistically correct, and then concludes that it best describes the contemporary Islamic awakening:

The term *ṣaḥā* in Arabic denotes alertness, consciousness, and wakefulness. The opposite state of “slumber” (*al-nawm*), or “drunkenness” (*al-sukr*) can specify it. We say: he woke up from his slumber, or sobered up from his drunkenness so as to regain consciousness. This state of being occurs as an outcome of a natural cause, i.e., sleep, or as a result of an unnatural reason, i.e., drunkenness. In this sense, nations may be afflicted by a state of unconsciousness for varied periods of time due to their eternal slumber and their inattentiveness, or as a result of different external causes. The Islamic *ummah* is no exception: yet while it may be exposed to the same situation, due to the nature of its religion, it will awake at one point, as is the case with the current Islamic awakening.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Ibid., 26-27.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 10-11.

Here, it seems that al-Qaraḍāwī is pointing to what he considers to be the essential factors behind the present troubles faced by Muslims. It is more than likely that what he means by “eternal slumber” and “inattentiveness,” is nothing but his standard notion of how Muslims misconceived Islam, leading to neglect of its teachings and commands. Also, his reference to what he calls “external factors” points clearly to confrontation with imperialism and colonization, and likely to the current weakness of the Muslim *ummah* in the face of a dominant West.

Based on al-Qaraḍāwī’s definitions and analysis, we can describe *al-ṣaḥwāh* as a state of consciousness that stimulates action; therefore, al-Qaraḍāwī assigns it considerable importance as the groundwork for any Islamic movement.

The awakening should correct misconceptions and straighten crooked paths, awaken sleeping minds, stir the living, inject some soul into still bodies and re-instill improvement and development.¹⁶⁵

A closer look at the above quotation, may perhaps reveal a certain confusion on al-Qaraḍāwī’s part, in that here he speaks of “awakening” as a tangible movement with specific objectives, whereas in his analysis of the term “*ṣaḥā*,” referred to earlier, he tends to define the “awakening” as intangible, as a particular state of mind. However, this confusion is only apparent; it can be resolved if we look at the Islamic movement as the practical embodiment of this awakening. This separation of the concept of awakening into intangible and tangible domains can be of help in analyzing al-Qaraḍāwī’s discussion of its influence on the Islamic movement, although he never conceives of the two as a disconnected bodies.

¹⁶⁵ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 13.

Awakening or Movement?

In theory, therefore, al-Qaradāwī draws a distinction between “awakening” and “movement.” In his view, a movement represents an organized group or groups with specific objectives and a clear-cut course, whereas an awakening is a general current that encompasses individuals and groups, whether organized or diverse. Between the two of them there is, logically speaking, an absolute generality and an absolute particularity; hence, al-Qaradāwī concludes that while every movement may be an awakening, not every awakening is a movement. Therefore, “an awakening has a wider, more extensive scope than a movement.” From al-Qaradāwī’s perspective, an awakening is a tributary that supplies and reinforces a movement; a movement is a guide that steers an awakening in the right direction. They are, however, related through interaction.¹⁶⁶ In other words, using philosophical terminology, one can conceive of the *ṣahwah* as movement in potentiality, yet when it starts to move toward achieving its objectives, it resolves itself into a movement in actuality. Nevertheless, the aim of the Islamic movement, according to al-Qaradāwī, is to direct the *ṣahwah*, instead of trying to contain or dominate it, for the *ṣahwah* is more effective when allowed to operate freely, independently, with no association to a specific group or organization whatsoever.¹⁶⁷

However, al-Qaradāwī constantly claims that whenever he refers to the Islamic movement, he means the Islamic movement in its all-embracing sense, “not any particular movement.”¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in reality, his most frequently cited examples are of the Muslim Brotherhood, for of course this was the movement in which he grew up

¹⁶⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 4.

¹⁶⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *Ḥawla Qaḍāyā al-Islām*, 68.

¹⁶⁸ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 3

and through which he “shared in many of the events it witnessed over almost half a century.”¹⁶⁹

The Islamic movement is a popular effort based mainly on self-motivation and personal conviction. It is an effort performed out of faith and for nothing other than the sake of Allah. The core of this self-motivation is the disquiet that a Muslim feels when the awakening visits him and he feels turmoil deep inside him, as a result of the contradiction between his faith on the one hand and the actual state of affairs of his surroundings on the other. It is then that the individual launches himself into action, driven by his love for his religion, his devotion to Allah, His Messenger, the Qur’an and the Muslim *ummah*, and this feeling of his, and his people’s, neglect of their duty. In so doing, he is also stimulated by his keenness to discharge his duty, eliminate deficiencies and contribute to the revival of the neglected duties (*fara’id mu’attalah*) of enforcing the *shari’ah* sent by Allah.¹⁷⁰

So the Islamic movement for al-Qaradāwī, is an organized, collective project, undertaken by people to restore Islam its place of leadership in society by reviving the so-called “neglected duties,” duties which just happen to reflect the Islamic movement’s broad objectives from al-Qaradāwī’s perspective. Among the more significant ones are, first of all, “uniting the Muslim community around the Qur’an”—an ambiguous statement that can admit of several meanings, such as when al-Qaradāwī invites Muslims to apply the “divine legislation” to their lives instead of the human-made variety.¹⁷¹ In other words, al-Qaradāwī here is referring, indirectly, to the well-known Islamist principle of *al-ḥakimiyah*,¹⁷² a notion developed and popularized by Sayyid

¹⁶⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Sahwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī*, 105-107.

¹⁷⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 9.

¹⁷¹ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar’iyah*, 18.

¹⁷² According to Qutb (1906-1966), governance or *ḥakimiyah* belongs exclusively to God and not to individuals. Therefore, legislation must belong to the *ḥakim*, or God. “The reason behind this notion is that submission to God takes on a vital significance in the conscience and heart and, more importantly, in political matters. The real goal for establishing God’s laws on earth is not merely the work for the next life; for this and other life are two integral parts; and the divine law (*shari’ah*) plays the role of harmonizing the two stages. This harmony should be of the entire life of man with the general divine will as revealed in the Holy Qur’an; thus, the Muslim’s duty manifests in applying the divine law and realizing on earth the Islamic system.” Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, 150.

Quṭb in the 1960s. Another objective is to liberate Muslim lands from all external aggression or non-Muslim control, expressing by this his notion of the justifiability of military *jihād* and referring at this point to the establishment of the state of Israel on Muslim land in Palestine. Yet another important objective, in al-Qaraḍāwī's words, consists in "reinstating the system of the Islamic caliphate to the leadership [of the *ummah*]." This clearly reflects his belief that the caliphate is the only means of reuniting Muslims, of protecting and promoting Islam and, thus, of preparing for further objectives such as spreading the call to Islam, and enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong— this last objective encompassing in itself all the others required to effect changes in Muslim societies.¹⁷³

Notwithstanding, al-Qaraḍāwī conceives that the required objectives can gradually be achieved by the Islamic movement by adopting three fundamental strategies. The first would be the formation of an Islamic vanguard that is capable, through integration and co-operation, of leading contemporary society according to Islamic principles, without isolation or leniency, and of "remedying the ailments of Muslims with medicines that Islam alone prescribes." This vanguard must comprise individuals whose ranks are cemented by deep-rooted faith, sound learning and close personal ties.¹⁷⁴ The second strategy would be to form Muslim public opinion so as to provide a broad, popular base that stands behind Islam's protagonists, loving and supporting them after having become aware of their general objectives, and showing confidence in their faithfulness and capability. However, the *ummah* can do this only "after having rid

¹⁷³ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ummah al-Islāmiyah*, 28-31.

¹⁷⁴ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Sahwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Humūm al-Waṭan al-'Arabi*, 108; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Hall al-Islāmi Fariḍah wa-Darūrah*, 242.

itself of the effects of the mud-throwing campaigns against Islam and Islam's protagonists and movements."¹⁷⁵ The last strategy would be the preparation of a worldwide public climate that accepts the international existence of the Muslim community. This, according to al-Qaraḍāwī, will occur once the true aspects of the Islamic message and civilization are understood and cleansed of the evil effects left by "the fanaticism of the Middle Ages and the lies and distortions concocted by anti-Islamic campaigns."¹⁷⁶ Such public opinion, according to him, would tolerate the emergence of Muslim power alongside other global powers, in the realization that Muslims have a right to rule themselves according to their own creed, since they are in the majority in their own countries.¹⁷⁷

It is evident from the above delineation of strategy that al-Qaraḍāwī places considerable weight on the capacity of the contemporary Islamic awakening to encourage "an assertion of Muslim identity, thereby allowing Muslim society to be itself by reactivating its social and cultural heritage."¹⁷⁸ This is because he regards the Islamic awakening as a self-defense mechanism to which Muslim societies have recourse in order to "transcend internal fragmentation, loss of autonomy and inner unity and is a means of bridging social, political, cultural, sectarian gaps and problems."¹⁷⁹

However, al-Qaraḍāwī is all too aware of the difficulties and barriers that stand in the way of any effort to pursue such a strategy. To counter such obstacles, he calls for a

¹⁷⁵ al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Hall al-Islāmī Farīdah wa-Darūrah*, 242.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-92.

¹⁷⁸ Abdul Wahab Saleh Babeair, "Contemporary Islamic Revivalism: a Movement or a Moment?" *The Islamic Quarterly* 37 (1993), 6.

¹⁷⁹ Ibrahim Abu Rabi', "Islamic Resurgence and the 'Problematic of Tradition' in the Modern Arab World: The Contemporary Academic Debate," *Islamic Studies* 34 (1995), 57.

wide distribution of tasks or responsibilities as the first in implementing the strategies of awakening the *ummah*.

It is important at this point to mention that our discussion in this chapter will focus only on general fields of action, for these fields reflect, in one way or another, the main issues behind the awakening. The latter, however, may be summarized as follows: The awakening, from al-Qaradāwī's point of view, should extend to every aspect of society, starting with the individual, and ending with the founding of an Islamic state, or even reestablishing the "lost Caliphate." Moreover, for al-Qaradāwī, in order to achieve these fixed objectives, *wasatīyah* methodology is the strategy he recommends, as we saw in the previous chapter.

However, due to the fact that these issues and objectives are so widely discussed nowadays in Islamist discourse, as well as the fact that al-Qaradāwī has nothing original to add (since he normally adopts the stance of Muslim Brotherhood ideology), I will direct my attention towards particular fields of endeavor that al-Qaradāwī feels should be the prime focus of efforts at reawakening the *ummah*. Consequently, I will discuss in the following al-Qaradāwī's message to the proponents of the Islamic movement, as these are the people who translate the objectives and issues of awakening into action.

The fields of work in the Islamic awakening

The fields of work awaiting the Islamic movement in the coming phase are wide and extensive. The activist leaders and intellectual theorists of the movement should

make a careful scientific study of these fields. Such a study must be based on documented and confirmed statistics and data.¹⁸⁰

There are seven major domains to which al-Qaradāwī believes the current awakening, represented by his *wasatīyah* stream, should give attention, for these domains constitute the most crucial issues facing the Muslim world today. These domains are education, politics, social work, economics, *jihād*, the media and propaganda, and finally, thought and learning (*al-fikr wa-al-`ulūm*). Al-Qaradāwī believes that efforts in all these fields are essential and that none of them should be neglected or put off. What is essential is “to distribute forces and capabilities among them according to what each of them needs on the one hand and what forces and capabilities are available on the other.”¹⁸¹

In order to make progress towards achieving this desired end, and taking into account his general methodology and his suggested “long-term plan” (seeking in the first place to transform individuals as a prelude towards changing the whole society), al-Qaradāwī recommends that the first field of effort should be that of education, for it is there that the seeds of a new Muslim generation must be planted.

1. Education

Education is an important field for forming human “cadres” and Islamic vanguards by raising the hoped-for generation of victory,” whose members will understand and believe fully in the knowledge, work, call and struggle (*da`wah* and *jihād*) of Islam.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 16.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸² al-Qaradāwī, *Jil al-Naṣr al-Manshūd* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1984), 6-7; *Ibid.*, 73.

For al-Qaraḍāwī, members of this future generation will carry the call of Islam first to their own *ummah* and then to the rest of the world. As such, the movement should focus on certain qualitative standards in training its future leaders, particularly where the nurturing of faith and thought is concerned.

We must prepare ideological, educational and political leaderships. This is [the goal] we must seriously think of, taking the practical steps and measures to achieve it. We have to bring it about from theory to application.¹⁸³

For this purpose al-Qaraḍāwī suggests that an institute be established to prepare Islamic leaders. Its students should be selected from among the “faithful, talented elements who possess the required mental, psychological, and behavioral qualities.” They should first, however, sit pass for various written and oral examinations before they are admitted. The institute, in al-Qaraḍāwī’s words; “had better be a boarding school so that the students may live in it as a community.” The curriculum, however, should be comprehensive, profound and diversified, combining traditional with contemporary knowledge, mixing religious with human sciences from an Islamic perspective, and giving due attention to the study of the local, Arab, Islamic and international states of affairs, with an emphasis on examining and analyzing any force that is either inimical to or simply divergent from Islam. The faculty should be selected from among trustworthy professors who combine high qualifications with mature thought and true belief. They should be far from being either liberals or fanatics, and there should be a harmony among them in terms of the general way of thinking on major issues and in terms of the general philosophy that will be adopted in the institute.¹⁸⁴ In

¹⁸³ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 83-85.

¹⁸⁴ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Hawla Qaḍāyā al-Islām*, 149-152; al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 83-85.

conclusion, al-Qaradāwī expects that once the work in the field of education is accomplished, the new, highly-qualified Muslim generation will emerge and accordingly assume a leading role in their respective countries -- becoming new Muslim leaders.

2. Politics

In the political field efforts should be directed towards removing power from the hands of all “weak traitors” and instead placing it in the hands of the powerful new Muslim generation, while also focussing on the development of ideas and practices with regard to local and international political relations, so as to break the movement’s domestic isolation and external blockade and ensure its flexibility and universality.¹⁸⁵

A closer look at the foregoing quotation will reveal that al-Qaradāwī’s interim goal is to place the current political leadership with a new set of Islamist leaders who will then carry out the reforms necessary—on the basis of sound political ideas and principles—for implementing the desired Islamic political system. In order to achieve this goal, al-Qaradāwī calls for a renewed application of so-called “political *fiqh*.”¹⁸⁶ The importance of adhering to such *fiqh*, in al-Qaradāwī’s view, lies in its utility for Muslims in the modern age. Among the fundamental subjects in the present age that it must address are the question of political freedom and democracy, the status of ethnic and religious minorities and dialogue with others, including the West. Because these three issues are constantly referred to in contemporary Islamist discourse, it is essential to present al-Qaradāwī’s views on them in the following pages.

¹⁸⁵ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 119.

¹⁸⁶ Al-Qaradāwī believes that the so-called “political *fiqh*”, has never received enough attention from Muslim scholars either in the past or in the present. Their attention was mostly devoted to

A. Political Freedom and Democracy¹⁸⁷

I cannot imagine that the Islamic movement would support anything other than political freedom and democracy.¹⁸⁸

The foregoing statement reveals al-Qaradāwī's image of the ideal Islamic political system. In rejecting systems that fail to conform with democratic values, he urges the representatives of the Islamic movement to stand firm against totalitarian and dictatorial rule, political despotism and usurpation of people's rights. In another passage he asserts that "the movement should always stand by political freedom, as represented by true, not false, democracy," which he further clarifies by stating that "Islam is not democracy and democracy is not Islam," and that, preferably, Islam should not be attributed to any other principle or system. Islam for him is unique in its means, objectives and methodologies, such that Western democracy cannot be carried over to Muslims "with its own ideologies and values" without adding to it a particular set of Islamic values and ideologies. Nevertheless, for him, the tools and guarantees created out of democracy come as close as any man-made system can to realizing Islamic political principles. These principles are: *shūrā* (consultation); enjoining what is proper

other kinds of *fiqh* such as *fiqh al-'ibādāt* (*fiqh* of worship) and *fiqh al-mu'amalāt* (*fiqh* of transactions). For more details see al-Qaradāwī, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah*, 19-26.

¹⁸⁷ Al-Qaradāwī's general notion of political freedom and democracy is based on essential judicial principles : public interest (*maṣlahah*) and necessity (*ḍarūrah*). These two principles follow the rule "*lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirar*," which permits that, in exceptional circumstances, the divine commandments may be suspended in order to avoid the major damage their application might cause to the community. However, according to Gudrun Krämer, it is by this means that al-Qaradāwī, "who does not oppose the existence of political parties as such, conceives the possibility that a communist party could be tolerated on the territories of Islam. Communism, [al-Qaradāwī] argues, is against Islam as it is against all religion... but... there are situations where the interest of Muslims (*maṣlahah*) is better served if communists are allowed to act openly rather than being pushed underground, where they may pose a much greater danger to the community." Gudrun Krämer, "Islam and Pluralism" in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, ed. Rex Brynen, et al. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), vol. I, 119.

and forbidding what is evil; disobeying illegal orders; resisting free-spoken unbelief; and changing wrong by force whenever possible.¹⁸⁹ For al-Qaradāwī, these Islamic principles are reflected clearly in today's theoretical understanding of democracy, for it is only in the latter (or in a free political system) that the power of parliament is evident and that people's deputies can withdraw confidence from any government that breaches the constitution, just as it is only in such an environment that the strength of a free press, a free parliamentary, opposition and the voice of the masses is most felt.¹⁹⁰

In fact, some Islamists, according to al-Qaradāwī, still have reservations as regards democracy, and are even cautious of the word itself. However, al-Qaradāwī sees no reason for such anxiety, as it is only under such a system that even the Islamic movement itself can ever hope to work freely.

The fears of some [Islamists] that democracy makes the people a source of power and even legislation--although legislation is Allah's alone-- should not be heeded here, because we are supposed to be speaking of a people that is Muslim in its majority and has accepted Allah as its Lord, Muḥammad as its Prophet and Islam as its religion. Such a people would not be expected to pass a legislation that contradicts Islam and its incontestable principles and conclusive rules.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, these fears are real, and can only be overcome, from his perspective, by instituting a constitutional provision stipulating that any legislation contradicting the incontestable provisions of Islam shall be automatically null and void. The basis for this would be the fact that Islam is the religion of the state and the source of the legitimacy of all its institutions and therefore cannot be contradicted. Furthermore, al-Qaradāwī insists that acceptance of the principle that legislation or rule belongs to Allah

¹⁸⁸ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 154.

¹⁸⁹ al-Qaradāwī, *Maḥāṣin al-Mujtama' al-Muslim*, 125-126.

¹⁹⁰ al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah wa-Ḥumūm al-Waṭan al-'Arabī*, 120-121.

does not rob the *ummah* of its right to develop the laws it requires to regulate its ever-changing life and worldly affairs.

What we seek is that legislation and codes be within the limits of the "flawless texts" and overall objectives of the *shari'ah*. However, those "flawless texts," are very few, unlike the area of "permissibility" or "legislative" free space which is quite wide. Besides, the texts themselves are flexible and capacious in order to accommodate various understandings and accept several interpretations, which lead to the existence of several schools and philosophies within the expansive framework of Islam.¹⁹²

Thus al-Qaradāwī believes that political freedom and democracy constitutes the system most deserving of support and indeed adoption by the Islamic movement, and ultimately by any future Islamic state. The issues raised by this position, however, forced al-Qaradāwī to review the issue of the ethnic and religious minorities within an Islamic state, as we shall see in the following.

B. Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Al-Qaradāwī pays considerable attention to the question of ethnic and religious minorities in an expected Islamic state. He appeals to advocates of the Islamic movement to take seriously their responsibility towards the above-mentioned groups in the Arab and Muslim worlds. As far as ethnic minorities are concerned, they do not constitute any problem within the Islamic system envisioned by the movement, for Islam embraces all races under one creed and regards Muslims as one community regardless of origin, color, tongue or homeland. Indeed, it can hardly be said that there is any ethnic problem from the Islamic perspective; on the contrary, al-Qaradāwī even

¹⁹¹ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 155.

¹⁹² al-Qaradāwī, *al-Islām wa-al-'Almāniyah*, 128-129; al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 154-156.

regards Islam as an infallible remedy to such a problem.¹⁹³ He therefore devotes little space to discussing this issue, and instead addresses in greater detail the problem of religious minorities,¹⁹⁴ or what he calls in one study the problem of “*Non-Muslims in a Muslim Society*.”¹⁹⁵ In this same study, al-Qaradāwī addresses the issue of the role, rights, and obligations of non-Muslims within the prospective Islamic state. As Vatikiotis puts it, he “states boldly that the legal position of non-Muslims in Muslim society is that they have the same rights and duties as the Muslim except in certain clearly defined exceptional cases.”¹⁹⁶

In answering the allegations by some secularists that the drive for Islamic solutions and Islamic law violates the principle of freedom for non-Muslims, al-Qaradāwī asserts that this ignores a more significant point: that abandoning Islamic law and Islamic solutions for the sake of non-Muslims where they are in the minority, runs against the

¹⁹³ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawīyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 157.

¹⁹⁴ According to Yvonne Haddad, “the contentious nature of the debate on the status and role of non-Muslim in an Islamic state has persisted for several decades in Egypt. Much literature has been produced, with a great deal clearly at stake in whether a given author belongs to the minority (in this case mainly Coptic) or the majority Muslim community. At times, the debate has appeared as a free-for-all engaged in, among others, by religious and secular activists (both Christian and Muslim), parliamentarians, commentators, and religious leaders as well as scholars.” For more details see Yvonne Haddad, “Christians in a Muslim State: The Recent Egyptian Debate,” in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Haddad and Wadi Haddad (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 381-397.

¹⁹⁵ This study in Haddad’s words “was published at the time when relations between Coptic and Islamic revivalist groups were tense because Coptic property was being destroyed by angry mobs—episodes that appeared after the Iranian revolution, which inspired growing demands for the institution of shari`a as the constitution of Egypt. While the book is apologetic in tone, affirming the tolerance evident in the history of Islam, it does outline some areas of liberty currently enjoyed by Copts that would be restricted in an Islamic system. Such restriction as he suggests, however, are in no way comparable either to the demands of the conservative Islamic groups or to the fears that Copts have about such demands. Thus while al-Qaradāwī’s work outlines the classical model as defined within the Islamic heritage, he presented it in such a light that other authors have been able to use his definition and broaden its scope to provide a more progressive Islamic interpretation as defined in the Qur’an and the sunna of the Prophet.” Haddad, “Christians in a Muslim State,” 385-386.

¹⁹⁶ P.J. Vatikiotis, *Islam and the State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 91.

principle of freedom for Muslims.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, he argues that in the light of the so-called “logic of democracy,” where the rights of the minority conflict with the right of the majority, the latter should be given precedence over the former.

This is what goes on in all countries of the world; however, the system that can gain the approval of everybody is yet to be invented, for people were created different and can never be brought to accept the same thing. It should be enough for any given system to gain the acceptance of the majority, provided that it does not do wrong or injustice to the minority or transgress on the minority’s sanctities.¹⁹⁸

The foregoing, however, amounts to little more than a rhetorical argument, since his actual position is that there is no real contradiction between the two groups. A Christian, for instance, who is content with living in a secular system, should have no problem with living under an Islamic order. Moreover, a Christian who follows his religion correctly should welcome the rule of Islam, since this latter is based on belief in God and seeks to reinforce the values of faith and religious morality called for by all the prophets. It would be good for faithful Christians, in al-Qaradāwī’s view, to accept an Islamic system, looking at it as no different from any other order or system, while Muslims of course look at it as a system that best pleases their Lord and brings them closer to Him.¹⁹⁹

Al-Qaradāwī also tries to disprove the secular view which holds that a Muslim regime would involve forcing non-Muslims to do things that run contrary to their faith. He takes the position that Islam has four aspects-- creed, worship, morals and law-- and that the *shari’ah* is sufficiently distinct from the first two as to exempt non-Muslims from any purely Islamic obligations.

¹⁹⁷ al-Qaradāwī, *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmi*, 233.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 234; al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 160.

In term of worship especially, al-Qaradāwī points out that

Islam is so considerate that it does not [for example] require non-Muslims to pay *zakāh* (alms) or perform *jihād*, as these are major [components] of Islamic worship; *zakāh* being a financial tax and *jihād* a military service. Instead, Islam requires non-Muslims to pay another tax—*jizyah*,²⁰⁰ from which women, children, and poor and disabled men are exempted.²⁰¹

As for the *jizyah*, al-Qaradāwī insists that it is collected from non-Muslims as a substitute for the two above-mentioned religious obligations, and rejects the prevailing opinion that deems it a form of punishment to non-Muslims for their refusal to convert to Islam.²⁰²

As regards morals, al-Qaradāwī sees these as corresponding on the whole with their counterparts in other religions, “for morals are the same in the eyes of religions.” This however, according to al-Qaradāwī, allows the *shari‘ah* to retain its particular meaning—that of a set of laws that regulate interrelations among people, such as the individual’s relations with his nation, his community and his state, and the state’s relations with its subjects and with other states.

As for other domains, such as civil, commercial or administrative laws, non-Muslims are, like any others, subject to laws that are derived from a variety of sources

¹⁹⁹ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Ghayr al-Muslimīn fī al-Mujtama‘ al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risālah, 1983), 80; al-Qaradāwī, *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmī* 234-235.

²⁰⁰ The *jizyah* or “poll tax [was] imposed in medieval times on non-Muslims who were Ahl al-Kitāb [people of the Book] in areas ruled by Muslims. However, the subject of taxation in early Islam is an immensely complicated one.” Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, 138. There is precious little guidance about the nature of *jizyah* in the *ḥadīth* collections. “This lack of textual guidance has led to considerable confusion in regard to its definition and regulation.” Vincent J. Cornell, “Jizyah,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), II: 377.

²⁰¹ al-Qaradāwī, *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmī*, 237; *Ghayr al-Muslimīn fī al-Mujtama‘ al-Islāmī*, 32-33.

²⁰² Al-Qaradāwī accuses the orientalist and the missionaries of demonizing this issue by depicting it as a tax to humiliate and punish non-Muslims for their refusal to convert. Haddad, “Christians in a Muslim State,” 387.

and which are accepted by the majority.²⁰³ In the same way, non-Muslims are expected to abide by the rules of the *shari'ah*. They are allowed, for example, to work and make a living but not to charge or accept interest. They are banned from trading in alcohol and pork in Muslim lands and from opening bars for drinking so as to prevent the spread of evil.²⁰⁴ Finally, al-Qaradāwī asserts that non-Muslims can be employed by the government in any post except for those that are religious in nature such as Imam, head of state, judge in cases involving Muslims, or leader of the armed forces, since the latter are responsible for carrying out *jihād*, an essential form of Islamic worship.²⁰⁵

When considering al-Qaradāwī's stance in favor of democracy, it is clear that he places himself in an awkward position. For essentially, democracy is nothing other than a political system that acknowledges the sovereignty of the people, whereas in Islam sovereignty lies with God alone. In a democracy, the people or their representatives have the right to change a constitution whenever there is any kind of contradiction between rights and freedoms, on the one hand, and the articles of the constitution, on the other. However, in Islam—and, we must assume, in the Islamic state envisioned by al-Qaradāwī—when such contradictions occur no change will be possible since the Islamic constitution (the Qur'an) is believed to be of divine origin and therefore unchangeable. He in fact acknowledges this when he insists on a clause affirming the inviolability of scriptural laws. Thus al-Qaradāwī's enthusiasm for democracy seems to be founded on an intentional misunderstanding of the very nature of the concept. To

²⁰³ al-Qaradāwī, *Ghayr al-Muslimin fi al-Mujtama' al-Islāmi*, 33

²⁰⁴ Although al-Qaradāwī applauds these provisions, yet he states that a number of Muslim scholars have opined that Christians "may eat pork, drink wine and trade both amongst themselves and in their own villages, provided they do not spread them in Muslim communities

give him credit, he does acknowledge the differences between it and Islam, but these are not allowed to stand in the way of his vision of an idealized Islamic democracy.

In practical terms, this misunderstanding impacts on other elements of his argument, such as the status of religious minorities within an Islamic state. We have seen how al-Qaradāwī claims to believe in democracy and a free political system, and attention has been drawn especially to his faith in the majority's right to impose its political will. But his entire model is predicated on the assumption that the vision of the advocates of the Islamic movement would dominate, rather than that of the advocates of a secular or radical or any other Islamic political stance. At the same time he allows himself to speak on behalf of the minorities, in this case the Christians, by declaring that they would be happier under an ideological regime, i.e., Islam, than under a secular, non-ideological one. Furthermore, it is obvious that al-Qaradāwī's whole argument is constructed on his primary notion that every individual is by nature a religious creature, as we saw in the first chapter of this thesis. Accordingly he cannot conceive that someone might not consider himself fortunate to live under a religious political system. Finally, when al-Qaradāwī speaks of democracy he ignores a fundamental aspect of the democratic system, i.e., that of equal opportunities for every citizen to serve in any profession or office in the state. And yet under the system he envisions, Christians would be banned from jobs that he regards as off-limits to non-Muslims, even public ones. In view of these difficulties, it is hard to credit his claim to support political freedom and democracy in an expected Islamic state.

or defy the feelings of Muslims with them." For more details see al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Harakah al-Islāmiyah*, 163.

²⁰⁵ Haddad, "Christians in a Muslim State," 287; al-Qaradāwī, *Ghayr al-Muslimīn*, 21-23.

C. Dialogue with Others

The Islamic movement should not confine itself in the next phase to addressing just itself. It must, rather, enlarge its scope to address others as well... Therefore, we say that the motto of the Islamic movement in the next phase should be 'welcome to dialogue with others.'²⁰⁶

By "others," al-Qaradāwī means here those who differ with the Islamic movement in terms of objectives, means, and ideologies. For him such dialogue should pursue the best means of ensuring "persuasion of the mind and awakening of the heart." He recommends in particular four different dialogues with the following groups: secularists, local rulers, Westerners (including men of religion, orientalist and politicians) and, finally other Islamic forces (particularly official Islamic institutions). For the most effective results, al-Qaradāwī believes that such dialogue ought to be adapted to suit each group.

As for the first group, i.e., the secularists, al-Qaradāwī calls for a rational dialogue and not a debate. For the word debate in itself gives the impression of a challenge and the possibility of one or the other side winning. For him, such a debate could not do much good, as neither side would be likely to give ground or abandon its fundamental position for that of its opponents; on the contrary, they may even become more obstinate and fanatic. He admits that in some cases the Islamic side may have no choice but to engage in debate if challenges by the secularists "leave it no option but to accept the challenge in order to avoid being accused of fleeing the confrontation or deserting the battlefield." Otherwise, al-Qaradāwī recommends that the Islamic movement avoid such debates, and instead initiate a positive dialogue in which proper manners are

observed, as the Qur'an urges Muslims to "argue in ways that are best."²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, although al-Qaradāwī in theory seems to adopt an open-minded attitude towards his opponents, in reality he acknowledges that the ultimate goal of such dialogues is to convince opponents of the Islamic or Islamist point of view. The problem is that he is so convinced of the correctness of the Islamic argument that he cannot conceive of anyone dissenting when confronted with it.

The second dialogue that al-Qaradāwī calls for is one with the rulers of each nation. By adopting the *wasatīyah*'s strategy,²⁰⁸ he assumes that there is nothing that stands in the way of arriving at some sort of truce or agreement with these rulers, even though the movement may not approve of their behavior or their affiliations. For the movement, guided by the *fiqh* of balances,²⁰⁹ understands that such a position would be better than objections, refusal, or continuous animosity towards them. He affirms, here again, what was mentioned in the previous chapter, that a strategy of this kind is recommended until such time as Islam is able to replace the non-Islamic system as the governing ideology. Nevertheless, for al-Qaradāwī, it is important to be aware that such a submissive attitude must never revert to flattery of these rulers. For him, "there is a big difference between pacification and hypocrisy with respect to rulers."²¹⁰

In fact al-Qaradāwī does not spend much time or effort in discussing the dialogue to be held with rulers. We may attribute this to the fact that, on the one hand, he is

²⁰⁶ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawīyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 164.

²⁰⁷ Hasan 'Ali Dabā, "Awraq majhūlah min ḥayāt al-Qaradāwī 10," *al-Ahrām al-'Arabi* (Kuwait), no. 203 (10 Feb. 2001), 42-45; al-Qaradāwī *Awlawīyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 167-169.

²⁰⁸ See pp. 23-35 in chapter II.

²⁰⁹ See pp. 103-106 in chapter III.

²¹⁰ al-Qaradāwī *Awlawīyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 170-171; al-Qaradāwī, *Ḥawla Qadāyā al-Islām*, 139; al-Qaradāwī, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyyah*, 226.

content here to follow the classical, official Islamist policy of conciliation with temporal regimes, while on the other hand such a deferential attitude may be nothing more than a practical embodiment of some *wasatīyah* principles such as gradualism, pragmatism and legalism.

Of the four varieties of dialogue perhaps the most important one in al-Qaradāwī's eyes is the one with the West. Despite the fact that the path of such a dialogue may be strewn with difficulties and obstacles,²¹¹ yet he insists that it is an essential one for various reasons.

Whether we like it or not, it is the West that has been ruling the world for centuries and it owns the civilization that prevails in our contemporary world. It ruled our countries and occupied our land for varying duration, though the Westerners left, but still affect us directly or indirectly and influences our decision-makers in one way or another.²¹²

Moreover al-Qaradāwī accepts that it is no longer possible for a group of people to live alone with their creed and principles isolated from the world around them for, after all, technological changes in the field of communications have actually made the world a "global village." Correspondingly, al-Qaradāwī believes that a dialogue with the West is a *fariḍah* (religious obligation). In fact he suggests that the required dialogue with the West should be on three particular levels: religious, intellectual and finally political.

In regard to the religious-level, al-Qaradāwī calls for a Christian-Muslim dialogue in an attempt to achieve three major objectives. The first will be to stand in the face of

²¹¹ Al-Qaradāwī holds the dialogue with the West to be a critical one due to what he sees as fundamental differences between the West and the Muslims. "There is a difference of religion, as the West is predominantly Christian while we are Muslims. There is difference of trend, for the West is materialistic and realistic but we are spiritual and idealistic. There is difference of politics, because the West is, in most cases, on the side of Israel and against us, though this attitude may differ in its strength from one Western country to another." al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmīyah*, 172.

the atheist, materialistic trend that challenges and resists religions and morality. The next one is to confirm the points of agreement between the two religions, which are “pointed out by the Qur’an in speaking of how to argue with people of the Book.”²¹³ The final objective is to purge “the remnants of hostile feelings” left over by the Crusades of the past and the imperialism of the present, and promote instead feelings of brotherhood, humanism and charity—in short, to turn over a new leaf consisting in purer and more transparent relations.²¹⁴

I know that many Islamists are suspicious of a dialogue of this kind. For they regard it as a suspect dialogue hiding invisible hands that move and exploit it for special purposes, and because they believe Muslims to be the unsuspecting weak side of a dialogue that is used by the strong side without its knowledge. Therefore, anyone who takes part in such a dialogue is a target of accusation in their eyes, for he will be either simple-minded or a traitor.²¹⁵

On the other hand, al-Qaraḍāwī regards such suspicion as unnecessary. For though such doubts may occasionally be justified, it is certainly not always the case. He maintains that such dialogue is important and that Islamists must enter it while standing on firm ground, believing that dialogue with others is better than fighting or escape.

Some dialogue of this sort did take place, and it achieved positive results, [for example] a dialogue took place between a delegation of the Muslim World League, headed by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥarakān, then Secretary-General, including some other Muslim scholars and representatives of the Vatican in Rome. The dialogue resulted in improving the image of each side in the eyes of the other, especially the image of Islam that had been distorted unjustly and maliciously. This has reflected on Muslim-Christian relations ever since then.²¹⁶

²¹² Ibid., 172.

²¹³ At this point in his discussion al-Qaraḍāwī cites this verse: “... But say, we believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is one; and it is to Him we bow [in Islam]” Q.29: 46.

²¹⁴ al-Qaraḍāwī *Awlawīyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmīyah*. 175-176.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 176.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 177.

Still, the above-mentioned religious dialogue with the West should be coupled with another that complements it, that is, the dialogue with orientalists. Such dialogue is extremely important, especially with those scholars who are interested in intellectual trends, modern revivalist movements and the contemporary Islamic awakening. It is furthermore necessary for correcting concepts, bringing viewpoints closer, clearing the air between the two sides and paving the ground for better relations.

If dialogue is possible with clergymen and representatives of the Church, who are more fanatic by virtue of their positions and their deep-rooted ideological beliefs, then dialogue with orientalists and intellectuals should be easier and more beneficial, though many people see no difference between "missionaries and orientalists." They say that the only difference is that the former are dressed in priestly attire, while the latter don the clothing of scholars, the two of them being only two faces of the same coin.²¹⁷

Faced with such an attitude, al-Qaradāwī tries to convince Islamists that the above-mentioned concerns can be overcome and hence, indeed, dialogue is not impossible if it is sought with a strong will and with a clear objective. Universities and intellectual establishments, he suggests, can take the initiative by bringing representatives of the two sides together to launch joint research projects on certain topics that can be decided in an academic, objective atmosphere that is free from bias or provocation. For him it is important to take into account the fact that the orientalists "are not equal in their attitude towards Islam, the Muslim *ummah* or the Islamic awakening." Further, al-Qaradāwī believes that it is very important, for the sake of an effective dialogue, to choose those orientalists as partner who are more fair and moderate. Nonetheless, he believes that today's orientalists are closer to fairness and farther from exaggeration and

²¹⁷ Ibid., 178.

fanaticism than those of the past, “whose writings were more like special reports than general studies.”²¹⁸

Finally, it is extremely important, for al-Qaradāwī, that after effecting these preliminary levels of dialogue that the Islamic movement should move ahead towards inaugurating a third level of discussion with the West-- political dialogue, particularly, with the decision-makers, and thus not only those who stand on stage but also those who work behind the scenes.

I believe that the two previous dialogues should pave the way for this important dialogue. The Church, while officially kept away from politics, still wields much influence over men of state, and still operates from behind the scene in the field of foreign policy, especially where Islam and Muslims are concerned. Orientalists, while appearing as mere academics, have undeniable connections with intelligence and national security agencies and ministries of foreign affairs.²¹⁹

The logic of the West in dealing with others, according to al-Qaradāwī, is “well known.” For them “there is no permanent friendship or permanent enmity, rather, there are only permanent interests.” Accordingly, he sees no objection to starting from the principle of establishing what is of mutual interests to the two sides. He assumes that the West’s interest lies in avoiding the hostility of a thousand million Muslims and winning their trust, friendship and respect. Muslims, in turn should seek to improve their image in the eyes of the West, “so as to change that image formed over the ages through bitter conflicts that were not free of exaggeration and fiction.” However, according to al-Qaradāwī, such strong “illusions” do not just fade away by themselves, or disappear overnight; rather, they can only be dispelled by means of good intentioned, long-lasting dialogue that should be “based on frankness and straightforwardness, not on

²¹⁸ Ibid.,178-180.

²¹⁹ Ibid.,180.

maneuvering and elusiveness.” Although al-Qaradāwī regards such dialogue as unlikely in politics, yet he claims that it is attainable.

If we manage to convince the West’s leaders and those who influence its policies that we have a right to live by our Islam, governed by its *sharīa’h*, and guided by its values and morals...then we will have covered a long way towards our objective of establishing the Muslim *ummah*. For no doubt that the first obstacle standing in the way to this objective is our rulers who stand guard over us, watching our every move and resisting any tendency for establishing Islam as the rule in governing all aspects of life.²²⁰

It is obvious from the above quotation that al-Qaradāwī devotes considerable attention to the West and places on its rulers and decision-makers the greater share of responsibility for the unstable atmosphere in Muslim countries. For he believes that

Westerners leaders constantly warn Muslim rulers against Islam, and cast fear of Islamists in their hearts, making them suspicious of Islamic movements by direct and indirect means, and through covert and overt statements.²²¹

It can be seen, however, that al-Qaradāwī’s approach to religious and intellectual dialogue with the West is more detailed, certainly more so than his approach to political dialogue. Perhaps this is because he sees the latter as a natural outgrowth of the religious and intellectual dialogues though he is far from clear on the issue.

Moreover, al-Qaradāwī’s discussion as regards dialogue with politicians is somehow confusing and lacking in rationality. He naively concludes that persuading the West of the necessity of the emergence of Islam as a guiding and leading force (assuming this were possible), will make it easier for him to persuade Arab and Muslim leaders as well! Moreover, though he believes that regionalism represents an obstacle to the Islamic movement, he still recommends acting in conformity with national laws. Furthermore, he never suggests that dialogue is appreciated with Arab and Muslim

leaders. Indeed, any interaction with rulers in this region would not take the form of dialogue; it would instead be a search for compromise and reconciliation. However, by endorsing such an approach, al-Qaradāwī is inconsistent, casting aside a fundamental rule he always cites and applauds; i.e., enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Instead, he suggests that dialogue with Western politicians will in turn lead to their speaking on behalf of the Islamists to convince their regional rulers of their rights!

Finally, the last important dialogue that al-Qaradāwī regards as essential for the movement to enlist support is one between the movement itself and other Islamic forces (including groups and individuals) in order to bridge the gap between them and to form a common ground and common objectives. And the most important of these Islamic forces in his opinion are official Islamic institutions.

For al-Qaradāwī, the Islamic movement must work hard in the next phase to win official religious institutions over to its cause in order “to invade them from within.” It should conciliate their members with the ultimate intention of supporting a renewed Islamic ideology, so that it may carry out its responsibility of spreading the true teachings of Islam. Through such cooperation and even integration between the popular movement and official institutions, al-Qaradāwī believes that a front supporting the Islamic call and its great cultural efforts can be formed. If the Islamic movement succeeds in doing so, it will stand to make significant gains. In the first place it will be able to avert collision with the members of these institutions, many of whom still enjoy the favor of the Muslim masses and still possess the ability to distort the image of the movement in their eyes. It will also be possible for the movement to draw on the official

²²⁰ Ibid.,182-183.

religious institutions' ability to influence people to spread the awareness of Islam's major causes. What is more, the movement will also find it possible to refute the excuses of those governments that try to shirk the adoption of Islam's rules as a guide of life and a social standard. These governments, according to al-Qaradāwī, take as a pretext for their attitude the *fatwās* of some weak and misguided members of the official religious institutions.²²²

Ultimately, for the above-mentioned dialogue to be effective, al-Qaradāwī urges both the Islamic movement and the proponents of Islamic awakening to unite their objectives and efforts in an attempt to form a solid front to work towards "helping Islam and establishing it on the earth." This front must play an active part in promulgating the proper modes for an effective dialogue, and the right ways for dealing with opposing views, so as to lay the groundwork for cooperation in agreed matters and for tolerance in areas of disagreement:

Ḥasan al-Bannā sought with his every effort to close the ranks of Islamic groups in Egypt and laid down the famous "twenty principles" as the "minimum" set of concepts that should be agreed upon. However, this is what the Islamic movement should follow in order to achieve its major objectives. For the movement is strong only through the strength of all the groups working in the Islamic arena.²²³

A-Qaradāwī's point is that any Islamic group will be making a fatal mistake if it thinks that it can undertake single-handedly the establishment of a modern Islamic state able to withstand both internal problems and external interference. He is convinced

²²¹ Ibid., 183.

²²² Ibid., 184.

²²³ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrū' wa-al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1990), 152-155.

that all groups and movements should actually “consolidate their efforts and close their ranks to form a formidable Islamic order.”²²⁴

What I fear most is that selfishness should overcome the Islamic spirit of brotherhood. As such, each group will be trying to prove itself and to show others as incapable to the extent of focussing its efforts on destroying others instead of building itself into a strong part of a larger edifice comprising the whole.²²⁵

In fact, the establishment of a “strong Islamic rule” that can revive the religion of the *ummah* and develop its earthly life is an objective that al-Qaraḍāwī believes should be collectively undertaken by all Islamic groups and forces, regardless of their differences. He claims that the Islamic movement will succeed only if it has managed to recruit and unite the efforts of all Islamic forces towards this aim. Furthermore, in his effort to direct the attention of these groups towards accomplishing these objectives, al-Qaraḍāwī stresses the importance of adhering to the general ideology and methodology that we discussed in the previous chapter.

From this it can be seen that al-Qaraḍāwī blames some Islamists for their exclusive concern with political issues, neglecting in the process other domains that he regards as equally important— such as social and economic issues, which we will discuss in the following.

3&4. Society and the Economy

On the social and economic levels, al-Qaraḍāwī suggests that the Islamic movement’s activities should be aimed at remedying poverty, ignorance, disease and corruption, and facing up to those suspect institutions that make social and charitable

²²⁴ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Ayna al-Khalaf?* 35-38.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

work a “tool for altering the community’s identity and weakening its ties with its creed.” As an alternative, al-Qaraḍāwī, proposes the Islamic order as the ultimate solution to any social problem.

For example, in dealing with poverty and economic insecurity-- critical problems for any society-- al-Qaraḍāwī explains that the *ṣaḥwāh* is all too aware of the current issues facing the Arab and Muslim world in regard to this matter, and have acknowledged the effects of economic conditions on human affairs. Showing his understanding of the problem, al-Qaraḍāwī contends that, more than anything else, poverty and hunger are dangerous for the peace and tranquility of any society. For mankind cannot accept unequal distribution of the means of subsistence, or oppression of the poor by the rich, in addition to a social situation where the interests of the majority are ignored for the sake of the luxurious lifestyle of a minority. As a result of such an imbalance, the worst case scenario would be for the poor and destitute, for reasons of poverty and hunger, to be provoked into severing all mutual relations of brotherhood and love. Likewise, poverty is also dangerous for the sovereignty of any nation:

The desire for self-defense can hardly be created in a nation that pays no heed to relieving the suffering and starvation of the poor, who in turn are members of the same nation, and who lag behind to extend helping hands to pull the downtrodden out of the jaws of poverty. How can it be possible that the defense of a country be dumped on the delicate, poverty-laden shoulders of some while others relax in the lap of luxury.²²⁶

Moreover, starvation and poverty will also tell upon the health of a person, rendering him narrow-minded and peevish, and create in him anger and hatred, jealousy

²²⁶ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Economic Security in Islam*, trans. Muḥammad Iqbal Siddiqi (Lahore: Kazi Publication, 1981), 13-14.

and enmity, all of which sap away his energies and weaken him in the social and economic fields. In order to overcome such conditions, al-Qaradāwī afresh recommends the Islamic comprehensive resolution, since for him, unquestionably, Islam guarantees complete economic security to every individual living in an Islamic state.²²⁷

As such, the establishment of an Islamic state is a prerequisite for the success of an Islamic social and economic system. For it is unlikely that any principle introduced by the *ṣaḥwah* or movement will bear fruit within a non-Muslim sociopolitical system, or a system where “un-Islamic adjustments are made here and there.”²²⁸ However, until this aim is attained, the movement should play an effective role in educating people about the harm of non-Islamic approaches in their social and economic lives, and also work on providing alternative Islamic social and economic establishments. As for the economic field in particular, the contribution of the Islamic movement must be directed, chiefly, to the development of the community to free it from subordination and to unburden it of usury-based loans, as a prelude to building Islamic economic institutions.²²⁹

In fact, al-Qaradāwī seems entirely certain of the capability of the Islamic awakening to ensure an ideal social and economic order, as long as it is given the chance to apply its desired Islamic principles.

Today, if the Islamic system of living were allowed to be completely implemented in any society, it is possible that poverty, hunger, and all other social problems may be entirely eliminated and the springs of wealth [for example] would flow enabling people to lead a peaceful and tranquil life, till every individual obtains sustenance in

²²⁷ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Mushkilat al-Faqr wa-Kayfa 'Alajahā al-Islām* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1994), 3.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

²²⁹ Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Dawr al-Qiyam wa-al-Akhlāq fi al-Iqtisād al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1995), 220-221; al-Qaradāwī, *Mushkilat al-Faqr*, 134-145; al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmīyah*, 16.

abundance. As such, production will increase and there will be fair distribution of wealth under the just system of Islam.²³⁰

Therefore, al-Qaradāwī sees it as important always to educate people about the advantages of having an Islamic system ruling their lives, and for this reason pushes the Islamic movement's advocates to expend even more time and effort to developing the fields of media and propaganda for their critical role in popularizing the Islamic Call.

5. Media and Propaganda

The essential mission of the Islamic movement, al-Qaradāwī asserts, is to spread Islamic ideas and explain their teachings in such a way that would restore faith in their nature as a middle course and in their comprehensiveness, thereby eliminating all the ambiguities and lies that may mar their clarity. The Islamic movement should use all the types of media available, from written publications to audio and visual aids.²³¹ Accordingly, al-Qaradāwī believes that one of the most pressing needs of the Islamic movement is the establishment of a data bank, or a center for information and research that can cope with this age – the age of the “information revolution.”²³² Here, the focus should be on certain social brackets at which the movement should aim and among whom the awakening should first take place.

The Islamic movement should work hard to extend its activity to all the groups and classes of the community, and to spread horizontally by implementing a public Islamic awakening. In this way, no area in social life will be untouched by the movement's presence and activity. This can only be achieved through working in the field of propaganda and mass media in an organized and well-planned manner that makes use

²³⁰ Al-Qaradāwī, *Economic Security in Islam*, 198.

²³¹ al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 195.

²³² Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Thaqāfat al-Dā'iyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1978), 6-8; al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 17.

of the latest new methods and technologies of information and mass media developed to date by science.²³³

Preceded by the Islamic awakening, the Islamic movement should be spread first to the educated elite, and then to the masses, including workers and merchants. Al-Qaraḍāwī believes that the educated elite should be targeted first, particularly the youth among them, so as to correct its conception of Islam and its creed, laws, culture and history, and to “enlighten its members about the Islamic movement and its objectives and achievements.”²³⁴ In addition, al-Qaraḍāwī insists that it is important to direct this group to the best sources for learning about Islam and to provide them with the proper Islamic teachings, so that they may learn “that Islam is evidence against ‘false’ Muslims, but Muslims are not evidence against Islam.”²³⁵

In one way or another, al-Qaraḍāwī speaks of two approaches that the Islamic movement should take when dealing with this group. The first is a curative approach whereby it should attempt to remedy wrong concepts harbored by the elite, mainly by bringing them around through quiet, objective, academic argument. The second approach, however, is a preventive one that aims at establishing a sound, documented Islamic culture that combines academic accuracy with clear expression. The purpose of such a step is to give “adequate doses of understanding of Islam and to rectify those wrong concepts that have proliferated among them.” In suggesting such approaches, al-Qaraḍāwī is apparently concerned to guard youth against any non-Islamic ideologies. Essentially, in al-Qaraḍāwī’s words: “the knowledge they will acquire will serve as a

²³³ Ibid., 43.

²³⁴ Ibid., 49.

²³⁵ Ibid., 45.

'vaccine' against the ideological plagues that sweep overtly over our land or covertly infiltrate it."²³⁶

Expanding such efforts among the educated elite does not mean that the masses should be neglected; indeed, for al-Qaradāwī, the two actions are not conflicting. Populism is a major characteristic of the Islamic movement, he says. The movement is popular in the sense that it is not a governmental or official movement, nor is it an aristocratic one. It is a movement that has emerged from the heart of society in order to express its feelings and interact with the masses, speaking on their behalf and supporting their demand for rights. Assuredly the Islamic movement will be successful only when it manages to persuade the people to keep pace with it, supporting its cause, appreciating its stance and efforts and "cursing its enemies." As such, al-Qaradāwī believes that it is very risky for the movement to isolate itself from the people through arrogance, accusation, disregard, desperation or preoccupation. For him, there is a real danger that the movement may forget its interrelationship with the people, and neglect their problems and afflictions.

The movement will be successful when focusing its efforts on merging into the people, running through them like blood through veins, and mingling with them, like body with soul and vision with eyes, so that neither can be separated from the other. This will be possible only when the Islamic movement adopts the causes of the people and reacts to their feelings, feeling joy at their happiness and becoming sad at their grief, sharing in their bitter and evil times, and becoming one with them.²³⁷

As such, al-Qaradāwī encourages the movement to communicate with the masses about their role in society. For him, it is a mistake simply to advocate Islamic slogans and solutions for their problems. When Muslims chant slogans such as "Islam is the

²³⁶ Ibid., 50

²³⁷ Ibid., 51.

solution” or “Islam is the only way out of our economic, social and political problems,” the common people imagine that merely by repeating this message and supporting their advocates, all problems will be magically or miraculously solved. Since this is unlikely, in al-Qaradāwī’s opinion, it is the Islamists’ obligation to explain, plainly and directly, that Islam solves the problems of people through the people themselves, and that Allah will not send down His angels to the earth to do the work of human beings, by reviving trade or building infrastructure. It is rather the people themselves who should perform all these tasks and the other tasks needed for a good and prosperous life for individuals and for society as a whole.²³⁸

As for the movement’s task among the working classes in Muslim society, it is al-Qaradāwī’s observation that it has had little effect on workers thus far. Whatever the reason for this, he believes the Islamic movement should review its strategy in this area, “for workers are a vital group in the Muslim community.” Al-Qaradāwī still sees Islam as a strong driving force and stimulant of the masses, particularly when these latter realize that “Islam is the religion that best recognizes work and workers’ rights.” He affirms that Islam’s economic, social and legal regulations protect workers and their rights and support them against those who would do them wrong or try to exploit or manipulate them. He also insists that the Islamic system is able to provide work for every unemployed person and guarantees social care for every disabled member of society. In accordance with this belief, al-Qaradāwī advises the Islamic movement to work hard towards appealing to the working classes and taking advantage of the

²³⁸ Ibid., 53-54.

collapse of communist philosophy and of what he sees as the defects of capitalism, by filling in the gap with Islamic ideology.²³⁹

By the same logic, al-Qaradāwī recommends that the Islamic movement should also implicate itself among traders, businessmen and financiers. For him, merchants and businessmen (among others) hold a large portion of any nation's wealth and have considerable influence over the nation's economy and financial policy. According to him, this category of persons should not be regarded beyond hope or outside the scope of the awakening because they are too preoccupied with their worldly life to care. They are human beings like other people, such that "promises and warnings affect them," and they can be influenced by words of wisdom and a suitable approach. Therefore, the Islamic movement should communicate with them to make them aware of what they should and should not do. Here al-Qaradāwī chooses to make an important point in regard to material contributions and donations, for he observes that there are many rich Muslims who are "pious and straightforward who wish to give of their wealth in quest of Allah's pleasure." These individuals, he maintains, donate much and give freely and generously; however, they need to know how and where to spend their money, for "it is not as important to spend the money as it is to spend it in the right ways." Accordingly, it is vital to arrange priorities, giving precedence to what is most important, followed by what is merely important, and so on.

It is really regrettable that the majority of rich Muslims, particularly those who spend their money on charitable purposes, pay most of their attention to the construction of mosques and similar institutions of a purely religious nature. This has been a cause for many complaints from workers in the field of propaganda...Experts and faithful supporters of the Call agree that there is something that is more important than

²³⁹ Ibid., 57-59.

building mosques: it is the building of people, the men who build civilizations... Building a center for spreading Islam and enhancing the awareness of Muslims is one of the first deeds that bring a Muslim closer to Allah and serve Islam in a proper way. Spending money in such a way is a priority, a great deed that will earn a Muslim the favor of Allah. Such a center will help in promulgating the right Islamic ideology among the young Muslims, correcting their doctrine and reforming their conduct.²⁴⁰

In fact, al-Qaradāwi believes that working for improvement in the above-mentioned fields should be considered a type of *jihad*, for the latter is comprised of many different modes other than the familiar, armed one. As such he believes that directing the awakening and the movement's proponents towards a sound understanding of the concept of *jihad* is an important step, in itself a vitally important field of work for the movement.

6. *Jihad*

As we saw earlier, al-Qaradāwi disagrees with those radical Islamic militant groups who believe *jihad* to consist in nothing more than the exertion of armed action for the sake of Islam and its *ummah*. Rather, in most of his writings, he promotes the idea that any activity intended to improve the situation of the Muslim community in all aspects of life is the best form of worship and is therefore *jihad* for the sake of God. Furthermore, everywhere in his writings he directs and channels activist Muslim youths "away from an outer *jihad* to an inner *jihad* of self-control and peace."²⁴¹ He likewise encourages them to perform what he sees as the required *jihad* of this age-- seeking knowledge and advancement in all the sciences.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 62-63.

²⁴¹ Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, 226.

²⁴² al-Qaradāwi, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, 152-153.

As far as al-Qaraḍāwī is concerned, in order to understand this aspect of *jihad*, it is vital for both those involved in the Islamic awakening and activists in the Islamic movement to understand the aim of armed *jihad*— that of liberating Muslim lands, resisting forces that oppose the Islamic call and the Muslim *ummah*, and preserving the freedom of the Muslim will and the independence of Muslim decision-making.²⁴³

Judging by what al-Qaraḍāwī defines as the general objectives of armed *jihad*, we can conclude here that he sees it as a defensive and not an offensive tool.²⁴⁴ He acknowledges that many of the new Muslim generation involved in the Islamic awakening and in the Islamic movement misconceive the meaning of *jihad* and act accordingly, but he insists that they are wrong to do so.²⁴⁵

At every opportunity in his works, therefore, al-Qaraḍāwī invites these proponents of Islam to understand that there are other important, different forms of *jihad*. For example, he recommends a kind of sociopolitical *jihad* that involves working within the existing system, instead of confronting it. In order to accomplish this he suggests standing for election, and advancing social welfare and reform through charitable, religious, and educational organizations.²⁴⁶ This, for him, is the preferred form of *jihad*, not the armed, aggressive one.

Despite this constructive tone, it should nevertheless be pointed out that al-Qaraḍāwī has no concrete proposals to put forward in the field of *jihad*; instead, he

²⁴³ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 17.

²⁴⁴ In this al-Qaraḍāwī is following the guidelines of some other Muslim reformers like Muḥammad `Abduh (1849-1905) and Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā (1865-1935) who argued that “peaceful coexistence is the normal state between Islamic and non-Islamic territories and that *jihad* is only allowed as a defensive warfare.” Rudolph Peters, “Jihad,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), II: 372.

²⁴⁵ Dabā, “Awraq majhūlah min ḥayāt al-Qaraḍāwī 10,” 48.

merely offers some advice and a narrower definition of some of its forms. In a sense it can be argued that al-Qaradāwi has committed a big mistake in regarding *jihad* as an independent field of work. For each field of work necessitates, as al-Qaradāwi himself states, devoted individuals and specialists who should be highly qualified to perform the required activities. In the case of *jihad*, though, al-Qaradāwi fails to demonstrate a need for such expertise, or the qualifications required, among others, in order to work effectively in the field of *jihad*. It may be that in considering *jihad* a particular field of work, he is thinking of armed *jihad* as an independent field of work where the proposed new state will need to commit resources, such as armed forces entrusted with fulfilling the traditional objectives of *jihad* as described earlier.

It should also be pointed out that, while al-Qaradāwi fails to deal with the field of *jihad* effectively, it is clear that he considers the work in all the foregoing fields to be a kind of *jihad* and struggle for the sake of Islam, an idea that is more in conformity with his general view and understanding of this institution.

Still, the problem that faces the proponents of awakening, as he sees it, is where to start the struggle, and what field of work is to come first. Al-Qaradāwi therefore invites all the Islamic movement's proponents to undertake work in the intellectual field, or what he calls "thought and learning."

7. Thought and Learning

Although al-Qaradāwi regards all the above-mentioned fields as important steps toward attaining the objectives of the Islamic awakening, yet the field that needs the

²⁴⁶ Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Jāhiliyah," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic*

most attention, in his opinion, is this last one of thought and learning, since it also forms the basis for the enhancement of both the educational and propaganda fields.

Speaking of this field, al-Qaraḍāwī affirms that the Islamic movement should direct its attention towards correcting the perception of Islam in the minds of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It should also set right those wrong concepts and deficient *fatwas* (Islamic legal opinions) which have proliferated among some Islamist groups themselves, so as to establish a mature, inspired understanding of the Islamic movement. Such understanding, in the words of al-Qaraḍāwī, “will be based on a legal foundation derived from the texts and goals of *shari‘ah*,” and it must especially be established among the elite of educated Muslims, who have never really had a chance to know Islam in a full and proper way. The focus at this point must be on certain concepts that have to be clarified, generalized and deepened.²⁴⁷

It appears to me that our dilemma is an intellectual one in the first place. There is a clear deficiency in the understanding of Islam among many people, and an obvious lack of knowledge of Islam’s teachings and their relevant hierarchy of importance, [i.e.,] which is higher and most important, which is just important, which is not important at all. There is a lack of knowledge of the present time in which we live; of the reality that surrounds us. There is an ignorance of others, in which we fall prey to either overestimation or underestimation, while others know everything about us. There is even an ignorance of ourselves. Up to this day, we have not put our fingers on our points of strength or weakness. This ignorance is not restricted to the Muslim masses, but it does also include the vanguard on which the hope for helping the cause of Islam now rests, and which represents the groundwork on which the aspired Islamic work will be built.²⁴⁸

World (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), II: 353-354.

²⁴⁷ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Malāmiḥ al-Mujtama‘ al-Muslim*, 178; al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyat al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 17.

²⁴⁸ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 21.

The only way to overcome this intellectual problem, in al-Qaradāwi's view, is to adopt a new type of *fiqh*.²⁴⁹ However, though it is not possible here to discuss al-Qaradāwi's notion of *fiqh* in any detail, it will nevertheless be useful for the sake of our discussion to present briefly just two of its aspects because of their direct, crucial relation to the foregoing field. These are *fiqh al-muwāzanāt* (the *fiqh* of balances) and *fiqh al-awalawiyāt* (the *fiqh* of priorities.)

A. *Fiqh* of balances

Fiqh of balances for al-Qaradāwi means several things. First of all, it means to balance interests against each other, in terms of size and capacity, value and effect, and capacity to endure, so as to determine which should be given precedence and which should be discarded. The next meaning is to balance evils against each other in the same way, so as to determine which may be accepted and which avoided. Finally, the last meaning is to balance interests against evils, so as to determine when to give the

²⁴⁹ At this point, al-Qaradāwi states that by *fiqh* he does not mean the *fiqh* as it is used in Islamic terminology, i.e., the science of jurisprudence that determines the particular terms and judgments of *sharī'ah* from their detailed evidence. Neither does he mean the sense in which the word "*fiqh*" is used in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, "since it was one of those words and concepts that have changed over time." Instead, al-Qaradāwi discusses five types of *fiqh*, that he regards as necessary for Muslims today. A part of his argument is included in his book *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, dealing with the "*fiqh* of practices and the *fiqh* of ranks of deeds." Another part of the argument is included in his book entitled *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrū' wa-al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm*, dealing with another type of *fiqh*, i.e., the "*fiqh* of difference." He also discusses in details two other kinds of *fiqh* i.e., *fiqh* of priorities and *fiqh* of balances in his books *Fiqh al-Awlawiyāt* and *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah fī al-Marḥalah al-Qādimah*. For details, see his works: *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrū' wa-al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm*; *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah fī al-Marḥalah al-Qādimah* and *Fiqh al-Awlawiyāt*.

avoidance of evil precedence over the gaining of interests, and when to forgive evil for the sake of interests.²⁵⁰

As far as al-Qaraḍāwī is concerned, the *shari'ah*, on this point, is clear in principle, but it is not enough to accept this concept in theory; rather it should be applied in reality for, he thinks, many of the conflicts among the active Islamist groups are related to some major issues that should be resolved in the light of these balances. Amongst these issues are:

- Is alliance with non-Muslim forces acceptable?
- Is reconciliation with governments that do not adhere to Islam acceptable?
- Is it allowed to participate in a ruling regime that is not purely Islamic and operates under a non-Islamic constitution?
- Should the Islamists join an opposition front that comprises political parties in order to topple an infidel regime?
- Is it acceptable to establish Islamic economic institutions in an environment dominated by a usury-based, man-made economic system?²⁵¹

Although al-Qaraḍāwī favors a positive response to all of these questions (as was alluded to earlier in this chapter), yet he is fully aware of the difficulties involved in putting the *fiqh* of balances into practice for, he believes, it is “not easily grasped by the common people or by others who can raise a hue and cry for the slightest cause.”

Ḥasan al-Turābī²⁵² and his brothers in Sudan [for example] were attacked by some Islamists because they had decided to join the Socialist Union and had accepted some

²⁵⁰ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fi Fiqh al-Awlawiyat*, 27.

²⁵¹ al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyat al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 28-29; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah*, 302-303.

²⁵² Dr. Ḥasan al-Turābī was born in Kassala, Eastern Sudan, in 1932, and “is considered to be one of the leading figures in the international Islamic movement and one of the most influential

government appointments under Numeiri's regime [1971-1985], even before his announcement of the application of the *sharī'ah* in Sudan. Likewise, our brothers in Syria faced the same [opposition] when they decided to ally themselves with some non-Islamic forces to resist the regime that was seeking to annihilate them.²⁵³

Despite these difficulties, al-Qaradāwi asserts that it is important to apply the *fiqh* of balances in most aspects of life, particularly in dealing with what he calls *al-siyāsah al-shar'iyah* (legal-Islamic politics). In the light of this *fiqh*, he approved participation in non-Islamic rule or alliances with non-Muslim forces. "Prophet Moḥammad allied himself with the tribe of Khuḏā'ah who were polytheists, and he also sought the support of one polytheist group against another at times."²⁵⁴

In conclusion al-Qaradāwi believes that the *fiqh* of balances should not be ignored, for if it disappears from the scene, "we will be closing many doors of good and blessing in our own faces," making the philosophy of rejection a way of dealing with everything, and taking self-isolation as a pretext for avoiding problems. It would be so easy for any Islamist then to "say no, or that this is *haram*" to every proposal that requires thought or *ijtihad*. Instead of such a situation, al-Qaradāwi recommends applying the *fiqh* of balances, in order

to find a way to compare one situation to another and weigh profits against losses in the short and long runs and at individual and collective levels, and then choose what we judge as leading to the realization of interest and the avoidance of evil in the best way possible.²⁵⁵

thinkers." His major ideas focus on revitalizing Islamic thought and responding to the issues and questions posed by modernity. See his *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West: A Round Table with Dr. Hasan Turabi*, ed. Arthur L. Lowrie (Tampa: World and Islam Studies Enterprise and the University of South Florida, Committee for Middle Eastern Studies, 1993).

²⁵³ al-Qaradāwi, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah*, 303.

²⁵⁴ al-Qaradāwi; *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islamiyah*, 29.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

B. *Fiqh* of priorities

By the *fiqh* of priorities, al-Qaradāwi means to put everything in proper perspective, with no prominent issue postponed, and no minor issue given prominence; thus, no issue, no matter how big, should be underestimated, and none, no matter how small, exaggerated. However, the *fiqh* of priorities is related to the *fiqh* of balances, and in certain domains the two of them overlap or run parallel to each other. This balancing process may lead to a certain priority, and thus fall under the *fiqh* of priorities. The importance of the latter lies in its critical view of the *shari'ah* where it embraces the observance of proportions among actions and *shari'ah* commands.²⁵⁶

Upsetting the proportions set by Islam among the *shari'ah*'s commands would badly damage both religion and worldly life. In Islam, [for example] belief comes before work, as belief is the foundation and work is the building. No building can stand without a foundation.²⁵⁷

In fact, al-Qaradāwi holds that the problem with the many groups of the Islamic awakening is that the *fiqh* of priorities is nonexistent for them, so that they often address secondary issues before paying attention to the principles, trying to examine the particulars before grasping the generalities, and trying to understand controversial questions before familiarizing themselves with the established ones. Such a situation, for al-Qaradāwi, holds back the awakening progress. Therefore, applying this kind of *fiqh* is the best and indeed only way to decide on the issues that are the most worthy of attention. Thus, for al-Qaradāwi, if the Islamic movement's advocates adhere to these *fiqh* guidelines, they will know which battle is the most worthwhile waging, and which

²⁵⁶ al-Qaradāwi, *Fi Fiqh al-Awlawiyat*, 9.

²⁵⁷ al-Qaradāwi, *Awlawiyat al-Ijrahah al-Islamiyah*, 35.

groups of people require the most attention on the part of members of the movement.

These he divides into different categories:

There are the Muslims, the unbelievers and the hypocrites. Unbelievers have in their ranks the pacifists and the militants. This latter category includes those who not only do not believe but [...] in addition block the path to Allah [for others]. Hypocrites include those of the lesser hypocrisy and those of the greater hypocrisy.²⁵⁸

In view of the above-mentioned ranks with all their manners and actions, al-Qaradāwi observes that some issues will come into play, such as: With whom should the Islamic movement begin its activities? Then, which area is in most urgent need of attention? However, in al-Qaradāwi's view, the only way to answer such a question appropriately is to apply the *fiqh* of priority accompanied by the *fiqh* of balances.

Finally, in order to apply these two types of *fiqh* accurately, al-Qaradāwi reviews two essential levels of "understanding." The first consists in a sound understanding of Islamic law. "This is based on a profound understanding of the texts and objectives of the *shari'ah*," so as to approve of the soundness of the "principle of balances" and determine its evidences. The second level of "understanding" is that of understanding reality. It is a rather positivistic understanding based on the study of contemporary reality-- a study, in al-Qaradāwi's words, "that is careful, inclusive and dependent on the most accurate information and statistics." After all, both levels are important and should be integrated in order to reach the proper balance that is, in al-Qaradāwi's typical words, "free from both extremism and neglect."²⁵⁹

In the end, al-Qaradāwi recommends that the Islamic movement should take every care in its future planning to ensure that a number of competent individuals work full-

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 38.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 26-27.

time in all the strategic positions and fields. It should not remain dependent only on part-time volunteers, although, for al-Qaradāwī, this may detract from the contributions of volunteers who devote much of their time and efforts to the movement. Yet, such contributions are vitally important and greatly useful; nevertheless, for him, the best effort can be made only when the individual is working full-time to serve the movement and promote its objectives. This effort should be augmented with the necessary qualifications and specialized preparations in all walks of life.²⁶⁰

The Islamic movement is rich in talent, but its talented children are not properly distributed in the fields and places where they are needed most. We frequently see a concentration of members of certain specialization, such as medicine, pharmacology or engineering, while the Islamic movement can lay claim to only a few specialists in rare scientific fields, and even none at all in some cases. This applies to human and social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, economics, political sciences, mass communications and the like, which the youth shirk and head only for applied science studies, despite the fact that these sciences are closer to the community and affect it more.²⁶¹

It is obvious from the above quotation that al-Qaradāwī is calling for an Islamic presence in all fields of knowledge as a prelude towards Islamizing them. And he is fully aware of the fact that this objective will never be accomplished without the help of specialized experts who can provide the Islamic alternatives for all disciplines that exist today. For him, this is one of the premium objectives that the Islamic movement should

²⁶⁰ In an attempt to support his call for specialization and diversification, al-Qaradāwī appeals to Q.9:122 “Nor should the believers all go forth together. If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish their people when they return to them, so that they (may learn) to guard themselves.” He interprets this to mean that the Qur’an forbade that all of the Muslims at the Prophet’s time should go to the field of *jihād*, although it is a special holy field of endeavor, and neglect another field that was no less sacred than *jihād*, and might even have been more sacred at some times— such as the field of learning their religion. al-Qaradāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Harakah al-Islāmiyah*, 16-18.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 194-195.

work on and facilitate²⁶² in order to achieve the objective of restoring Islam to the leadership of Muslim society.

Ultimately, for al-Qaraḍāwī, if the movement achieves success in all of the foregoing seven fields, it will transform the awakening from its static state into a dynamic, one where each individual will contribute to the revival of what al-Qaraḍāwī has described as “neglected duties.” For him, working on these duties constitutes the short-term objective of the awakening, something to work on until the time comes to realize the long-term desired end of establishing an Islamic State. However, for al-Qaraḍāwī, the activist Islamists cannot remain immobile, waiting only for the establishment of the supposed expected State; rather, they should work hard for the sake of their society and contribute to its development and advancement, on both the national and international levels, by adopting, particularly, the *wasatīyah*’s ideology and strategy “until God should pave the way to realizing the great aim.”²⁶³

²⁶² Money, he says, should be no problem in this respect, for “spending money for this purpose is one of the best ways of seeking Allah’s pleasure.” The necessary funding can be obtained from the resources of *zakah* and *awqaf* (religious trusts) and other similar funds. Moreover, al-Qaraḍāwī approves profiting from the interest generated by capital deposited in local and foreign banks affirming that the movement “should not shrink from using it on the basis that it comes from a *ḥarām* source, for it is *ḥarām* only to the depositor of the capital but *ḥalāl* for use in promoting Islamic interests, at the forefront of which comes the full-time employment of workers for the Islamic movement.” al-Qaraḍāwī, *Awlawiyāt al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah*, 193.

Conclusion

This study has traced an influential voice in the contemporary Islamic awakening, that of the Egyptian Sunni scholar, Shaykh Yusuf ‘Abd Allah al-Qaradāwi. Considered one of the Muslim world’s leading moderate thinkers al-Qaradāwi is at the forefront of today’s generation of Islamic activists, and for this reason we have tried to present his vision of how best to promote what he sees as “true Islam.”

It was due to his early involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood movement,²⁶³ particularly under Ḥasan al-Banna’s tutelage, that al-Qaradāwi developed a personal perception of Islam as a comprehensive, universal way of life. This perception forms the basis of his vision of Islam as the only approved religion, the one that guarantees happiness and peace for all of humanity due to its supposed divine nature. Based on these considerations, al-Qaradāwi concludes that the divine character of Islam makes it perfectly suited for any place or time.

Al-Qaradāwi regards Islam not just as an ideology, but also as comprehensive order and way of life. However, the idea of the exemplariness and comprehensiveness of Islam has become almost an article of faith among Muslims today, particularly among

²⁶³ al-Qaradāwi, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, 221.

²⁶⁴ In his book entitled *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, al-Qaradāwi declares that he no longer has any organizational position with the Muslim Brotherhood, whether inside or outside Egypt. He states that this was formerly the case, but that he resigned (speaking in 1999) “several years ago” to devote his efforts to serve Islam as a whole through “thought and learning” in addition to “preaching” and *da‘wah* activity. He says: “I consider myself property of all Muslims and not only of the Muslim Brotherhood.” However, he asserts that this position does not mean that he has renounced the Muslim Brotherhood movement; rather, he affirms that the latter still consider him to be their “theorist (*munazzir*) and their *mufti*.” al-Qaradāwi, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, 287.

Islamists who seek to implicate Islam in all aspects of life as an alternative to all other imported ideologies. These latter have failed, in al-Qaradāwi's view, to provide a stable system of living, and have instead brought troubles and misfortunes for Muslims and non-Muslims. Accordingly, following in the steps of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaradāwi recommends finding an Islamic solution—a familiar slogan in that it is repeated by all Islamist organizations—to the problems facing Arabs and Muslims in the present age.

The key word in al-Qaradāwi's lexicon is moderation, Islam as a moderate force, one that is all-encompassing in life. Al-Qaradāwi envisions "true Islam" as a moderate, adaptable religion, and a desired way of life for all mankind. He leads a major stream within the Islamic movement today—the *tayyar al-wasāṭiyah al-Islamiyah* (the moderates). The basic premise of the latter is that "Islam is the only solution" to the crises besetting Arabs and Muslims; hence the "inevitability of the Islamic solution" (*ḥatmiyat al-ḥall al-Islami*). In this sense the moderates are not much different from others in the movement.

For al-Qaradāwi, in order to achieve this goal a "long-term plan" is needed, one that seeks, in the first place, to transform individuals as a prelude towards changing the whole of society—working, so to speak, from the bottom-up. His plan depends ultimately on the *wasāṭiyah's* ideology. This ideology can be said to have six major characteristics, namely, eclecticism, proselytism, gradualism, pragmatism, legalism, and universalism. These attributes of *al-wasāṭiyah* are reflected in al-Qaradāwi's approach of adopting a long-term policy towards local and global issues. We have seen in this study how al-Qaradāwi employs this approach in an effort to direct the Islamic movement

toward working in specific fields of work out of a conviction that these domains form the core issues facing the Muslim world today. These domains include education, politics, social work, economics, *jihād*, the media and propaganda, and finally, thought and learning (*al-fikr wa-al-'ulūm*). For al-Qaradāwī, work in these fields is a fundamental step since it will gradually pave the way to achieving the Islamists' foremost objective—establishing an Islamic state.

Nevertheless, it is our observation that in his eagerness to achieve the latter, al-Qaradāwī has trapped himself in an inconsistent position. On several occasions during our discussion of al-Qaradāwī's ideology and methodology, we saw that, at least in theory, he constantly speaks in term of gradual change in Muslim society, and rejects implicitly the ideology favored by Qutb (among others) of the need for the immediate establishment of an Islamic state as a prerequisite to any desired changes. Al-Qaradāwī also adopts this position when proposing the key fields of activity, to which the Islamic movement should put all its efforts in order to effect changes in society. Thus, when discussing the field of education, he explains how the work will gradually pave the way for future generations of Muslims to rise to positions of leadership and thereupon facilitate and effect the establishment of an Islamic state. Basically, then, al-Qaradāwī sees the establishment of an Islamic state as an outgrowth of various kinds of changes, an organic, (so to speak) sociopolitical process.

Yet, when we came to discuss al-Qaradāwī's view of the social and economic aspect of the Islamic awakening, we encountered an apparent contradiction. For here he puts forward an antithetical opinion, affirming that the establishment of an Islamic state is a prerequisite for the success of any Islamic social and economic system. He even

explains this position by stating that it is unlikely that “any principle introduced by the *ṣaḥwah* or movement will bear fruit within a non-Muslim sociopolitical system, or a system where un-Islamic adjustments are made here and there.”²⁶⁵ Hence it is safe to say that al-Qaraḍāwī, at least in this instance, is inconsistent, having trapped himself in a circular argument!

Typically, for al-Qaraḍāwī, the essential step towards accomplishing his mission consists in renewing the religion. Renovation, according to his understanding, means turning again to the roots and rediscovering Islam’s soundest foundations as defined by its scriptures—the Qur’ān and Sunnah-- and as exemplified by the *salaf*-- particularly the period of the first four caliphs, which represent for him the concrete historical manifestation of a comprehensive Islamic order. From this, al-Qaraḍāwī concludes that the problems faced by Muslims both in the past and the present are due primarily to their misunderstanding of Islam as a comprehensive order. This dogma, however, is common to Islamic intellectual history. Whenever Islam is felt to be in a position of particular weakness, spokesmen tend to present Islam as a unified organic entity. Al-Qaraḍāwī is no exception, as he also devotes his discourse to clarifying what he sees as “true Islam” and to presenting it as “the only solution” to any worldly problem.

Nonetheless, al-Qaraḍāwī does have the tendency in his discourse to come out with axiomatic statements that don’t necessarily stand up. One of these is his statement to the effect that man is a religious creature who was created for a specific purpose: to embody the will of God by leading a righteous life and following *al-ṣiraṭ al-mustaqim* (the straight path). For him, the operational content of such a life is described in detail

²⁶⁵ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Mushkilat al-Faqr wa-Kayfā ‘Ālajahā al-Islām*, 139.

in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Yet apart from the difficulty entailed in creating and sustaining a social order in the moral image outlined in the Islamic texts, there is no doubt that many would seriously contest this axiom, and in doing so demolish his entire argument. Another axiom that undermines his discourse is his dependence on the concept of *al-hākimiyah* (the rule is for God only), for him a self-evident truth. He regards it as fundamental to the objective of establishing an Islamic state that will inclusively “unite the *ummah* around the Qur'an”-- meaning by this to employ God's order instead of the one applied by humankind.

In fact, we can easily look at such notions as “uniting the *ummah* around the Qur'an” or its equivalent “the rule is for God only” as utterly ambiguous. Indeed, the idiom in itself is contradictory, bearing in mind that humans are always the agents who interpret the supposed divine message and transform its divine teachings into human practice based on their own individuality and experience, among many other factors. So, when al-Qaradāwi claims that Islam is the solution for any problem since its teachings comprise all that is needed to ensure happiness for mankind, and that it contains the law that will apply for all time by virtue of its divine nature and origin, he is neglecting an essential fact: that the process of interpreting the “text” is absolutely human, though putatively divine in origin.²⁶⁶

Likewise, in his proposed formula for the “awakening,” while al-Qaradāwi seems to have a practical project in mind that might bluff the masses, in reality (like most

²⁶⁶ This issue is explored in greater detail in the works of the following contemporary Arab-Muslim scholars: Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Naqd al-Khitāb al-Dīnī* (Cairo: Sīnā lil-Naṣhr, 1992); Fu'ād Zakariya, *al-Ḥāqiqah wa-al-Wahm fī al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyah al-Mu'asirah* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr, 1986); idem, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyah fī Mizan al-'Aql* (Beirut: Dar al-Tanwir lil-Ṭiba'ah wa-al-Naṣhr, 1985).

Islamists today), he is advocating moral principles rather than providing real programs or concrete solutions to social problems. It should be recalled that in his proposal he focuses a great deal on the superiority of his Islamic moral and ideological claims. It would have been better for him perhaps to suggest more practical programs and policies focusing more on reality rather than on ideological claims.

In the end, however, despite our own judgment regarding al-Qaraḍawī's inconsistent arguments on major issues in his discourse, it is important to give him credit for his attempt to formulate a comprehensive project for the Islamic movement to work on, and for his effort in forming a particular school of thought based on facilitation, simplification and moderation in all religious matters. This is in addition to his constant efforts, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, to guide and direct the Islamic awakening toward a more moderate approach by rejecting fanatic tendencies and explaining in detail the drawbacks of extremism.

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