

The Reconstruction of the Cultural Worldview of Islam in the Face of Modern Jahiliyah: An Examination of the Study of Ma‘ālim Fī Al-Ṭarīq by Sayyid Quṭb

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the concept of modern Jāhilīyah and the negotiation pattern of Islamic culture in Sayyid Qutb's Ma‘ālim fī al-Ṭarīq. Departing from the problem of modernity that gave rise to identity crises, secularization, materialism, and moral degradation in Muslim society, Qutb reconceptualized Jāhilīyah not as a pre-Islamic period, but as a social condition characterized by a rejection of Allah's ḥākimiyyah and the dominance of secular values. This research uses a literature approach with content and descriptive-qualitative methods, and is framed with the theories of cultural negotiation by John W. Berry, Kevin Avruch, and Stella Ting-Toomey. The results of the study show that Qutb proposed a pattern of total resistance (separation) through the concept of mufāṣalah and the formation of the Islām generation (takwīn al-jīl) as a counter culture to modern Jāhilīyah. In the context of a plural and democratic Indonesia, his thinking is relevant as a critique of secularism and materialism, but it needs to be read contextually and moderately so as not to give birth to religious exclusivism.

Keywords: *Cultural Negotiation, Islamic Culture, Modern Jāhilīyah, Sayyid Quṭb*

INTRODUCTION

Islam and culture are two entities that cannot be separated in shaping human civilization.¹ but in the practice of life, there is often a complex anomaly between Islam and modernity². On the one hand, modernity offers technological and institutional advancements; on the other hand, it gives birth to the problems of secularization, individualism, and religious reduction. In this context, there is a debate about the position of Islamic culture in the face of the dominance of materialistic global values, where

¹Julhadi, *Approaches to Islamic Studies*, cet. I (Malang: PT. Literasi Nusantara Abadi Group, 2024). 252.

²Rizem Aizid, *The Complete History of Islamic Civilization in the Classical, Middle and Modern Periods*, cet. I (Yogyakarta: Diva Press, 2021). Sec. 18.

modernity and globalization turn into fundamental problems.³ For Islam, the impact of modernity is dangerous and needs a serious response.⁴

One of the most radical responses to modernity was put forward by Sayyid Qutb in *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq*. Qutb reconstructs the concept of Jāhilīyah as a universal social condition that arises when the law of Allah is not used as the basis of life. Jāhilīyah is no longer understood as a period of pre-Islamic history, but as a value system that rejects Allah's *ḥākimiyyah*.

In the Indonesian context, the problem of modern Jāhilīyah has been manifested in various social life phenomena that give birth to corrupt behaviors such as KKN (corruption, collusion, and nepotism),⁵ group fanaticism,⁶ heretical conspiracies,⁷ secularization,⁸ and even consumerism and hedonism.⁹ The relevance of Qutb's thought in contemporary discussions of Islamic identity and culture, especially in a society struggling to maintain religious values in the midst of global cultural dominance, raises a fundamental question: how is Qutb's model of cultural negotiation relevant in contemporary religious reality?

This study will analyze two main things: first, how the concept of modern Jāhilīyah and the negotiation of Islamic culture in *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq*; second, How is it relevant in the context of Indonesian society. This research is needed for several urgent academic and contextual reasons. First, theoretically, this study enriches the study of contemporary Islamic thought by re-reading the concept of *modern Jāhilīyah* in Sayyid Qutb's *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* through a cultural negotiation approach, so that it does not

³ Muhammad Rusydy, "Modernity and Globalization: Challenges for Islamic Civilization," *TAJDID*, no. 1, 17 (June 2018): .107.

⁴ Aris, "Definition of Modernization: Characteristics, Impact and Examples," December 31, 2024, <https://www.gramedia.com/literasi/modernisasi/>.

⁵ Moh. Zahid, "Sharia and Local Wisdom in Indonesia: A Criticism of Jāhiliyyah Law Misinterpretation," *AHKAM* 22, no. 2 (2022): 455–72, <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/>.

⁶ Abdurrahman Wahid, *The Illusion of the Islamic State: The Expansion of Transnational Islamic Movements in Indonesia*, Cet.1 (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2009). 18-22.

⁷ Gatra Media Group, "PPIM Survey: 20%-31% of Students Believe Covid-19 Conspiracy Theories | National," accessed May 4, 2025, <https://www.gatra.com/news-532942-nasional-survei-ppim-20-31-siswa-percaya-teori-konspirasi-covid-19.html>.

⁸ Lety F and Desi F, "Dualism and the Dichotomy of Education in Indonesia (A Historical Review and Government Policy Review)," *El-Ta'dib Journal* 01, no. 02 (September 2021): 175–88.

⁹ "Flexing Hedonism and the New Identity," coil, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://kumparan.com/agus-budiman-1590771963659788149/flexing-hedonisme-dan-identitas-baru-238bq3TpO25>. See also "The Phenomenon of Artists Who Like to Show Off Their Wealth and Hedonistic Lifestyle, a Sign of the End of Time?," *SINDONews Kalam*, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://kalam.sindonews.com/read/1189361/69/fenomena-artis-suka-pamer-harta-dan-gaya-hidup-hedonis-pertanda-akhir-zaman-1693426116>.

stop at a mere ideological reading, but enters into an analysis of the construction of identity and cultural dynamics. Second, methodologically, this study bridges the study of Islamic texts with modern cultural theories (Berry, Avruch, and Ting-Toomey), which are still relatively rarely used in the study of Qutb's thought, especially in Indonesia. Third, contextually, this research is important to understand how criticism of secularism, materialism, and moral degradation can be interpreted proportionally in a plural, democratic, and multicultural Indonesian society.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach with *library research* and content analysis¹⁰. The material object is *Sayyid Quṭb's Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* as the primary source and supporting literature as a secondary source, while the formal object is cultural negotiation. Data collection was carried out through documentary techniques, namely identifying themes of Islamic cultural negotiation and modern Jāhilīyah, cultural theories, and identity negotiation analyzed through the theories of John W. ¹¹Berry, Kevin Avruch¹², and Stella Ting-Toome¹³.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biographers Sayyid Quṭb

His full name is Sayyid Quṭb Ibrāhīm Ḥusayn al-Shādhilī; he is one of the most prominent figures in contemporary Islamic thought. Born on October 9, 1906, in the village of Musyah, Asiyuth Province, Egypt, Quṭb grew up in a religious Muslim family.¹⁴ Quṭb lived with 1 son named Muhammad and two sisters, Hamidah and Aminah.¹⁵

¹⁰ Nasution, *Research Method, Scientific Research* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2001). Sec. 144.

¹¹ Berry, J. W. (2005). "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697–712.

¹² Avruch, Kevin. *Culture and Conflict Resolution*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998.

¹³ Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communicating Across Cultures, Second Edition*. New York: Guilford Press, 2018.

¹⁴ Herry Mohammad, *Islamic Figures Who Influenced the 20th Century* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2006). 296.

¹⁵ Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id Morsi, *Great Figures of Islam Throughout History* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2007). 260.

His father, Haji Quṭb Ibn Ibrāhīm, was a local leader of the National Party in the province of Asyut and editor of the newspaper of the Party of al-Liwa.¹⁶ His mother was a Muslim woman who paid great attention to the education of her children by instilling strong religious values and love for science.¹⁷ Quṭb's family home became a center of political activity where nationalists gathered to read newspapers and discuss political issues, so that from childhood Quṭb was accustomed to an environment full of socio-political consciousness.

Quṭb's formal education began at the age of 6 in a village primary school in 1912 A.D. He studied at the Modern Elementary School (madrasah) and also at the Traditional Qur'anic School (kuttāb) led by Sheikh Ahmad. In 1920 A.D., when he was 14 years old, Quṭb left his hometown for Cairo and studied there for 11 years.

In Cairo, Quṭb first studied at a teacher's training school for three years and then continued his education at Dār al-'Ulūm. There, he studied applied science, history, humanities, as well as the study of Arabic and Islam. There, he first got acquainted with secular-oriented Arabic and Islamic literature. Graduated in 1933 at the age of 27 with a Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language and Literature¹⁸.

In 1948 A.D., Quṭb was sent to the United States on a two-year educational mission. He studied at Teachers College, Wilson (now Columbia University), and the University of Northern Colorado, where he earned a Master of Education¹⁹. His study experience in the United States greatly influenced his views and thoughts on social problems caused by materialism, which he considered barren of the understanding of divinity²⁰.

Returning from America in August 1950 AD, Quṭb took up a position in the Ministry of Education, then resigned in 1952 AD. From the beginning of his residence in Cairo, he was active as a supporter of the Nationalist Party and involved in the literary world as a critic and writer.²¹ In his youth, Quṭb was known as the "ideological son" of

¹⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, 1. publ, Routledge Studies in Political Islam 2 (London: Routledge, 2006). 45.

¹⁷ Muhammad Iqbal, *Islamic Political Thought* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015). Sec. 204.

¹⁸ Sayyid Qutb, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, 1. publ, Routledge Studies in Political Islam 2 (London: Routledge, 2006). 48-49.

¹⁹ Trends Research & Advisory, *The Muslim Brotherhood Circumstances Surrounding its Establishment* (Abu Dhabi, Uni Emirat Arab: Trends Research & advisory, 2021). 166.

²⁰ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an Jld 12*, Super Lux (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000). 386.

²¹ Sayyid Qutb, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, 1. publ, Routledge Studies in Political Islam 2 (London: Routledge, 2006). 49-50.

the prolific Egyptian cleric Abbas Mahmud Aqad. *The magazine al-Risalah* provided a special space for Quṭb to express his ideas, especially on literary criticism.²² In addition to that he was also active in the Muslim Brotherhood Islamic movement and managed to become one of the most influential figures, along with Ḥasan al-Hudaybī and ‘Abd al-Qādir Audah, even In 1954 AD, he was appointed editor-in-chief of the Muslim Brotherhood daily, but the daily was closed after two months on the orders of Egyptian President Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser for criticizing the government's policies, including the Egyptian-British treaty.

In 1955 AD, Quṭb was detained along with other Muslim Brotherhood leaders after the organization was banned by President Nasser on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. On July 13, 1955, a people's court sentenced him to fifteen years of hard labor. Quṭb was then held in several Egyptian prisons until mid-1964 and released at the request of Iraqi President Abdul Salam Arif, who was on a friendly visit to Egypt²³. However, it wasn't long before Quṭb was returned to prison to face the death penalty²⁴.

Reconceptualization of *Jāhilīyah*

In the tradition of classical Islamic thought, *Jāhilīyah* is generally understood as a specific historical period before the arrival of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, before the descent of divine revelation, and still dominated by polytheistic beliefs. However, according to Quṭb: "*Jāhilīyah* is not a historical period, but a situation in which society constantly deviates from the manhaj of Islam, and this can happen in the past, present, or future."²⁵

This reconceptualization became the foundation of Quthb's critical thinking in facing the challenges of modernity faced by the Muslims. He reinterpreted so that the Muslim community would not be trapped by the pseudo-truth of modern *Jāhilīyah* products. The meaning of *Jāhilīyah* is no longer limited to ignorance but is extended to a system of values and behaviors that are contrary to Islam, "*Jāhilīyah* is foolishness, because it turns away from servitude to Allah and divine manhaj; they construct legal

²² Aksin Wijaya, *From Defending God to Defending Man: Criticism of the Rationale of Violent Religiosity* (Bandung: PT. Mizan Media Utama, 2018). Sec. 108.

²³ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an Jld 12*, Super Lux (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000). 387.

²⁴ M. Imdadun Rahmat, *The New Flow of Radical Islam (Transmission of Islamic Revivalism in the Middle East to Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2005). Sec. 43.

²⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an Jld 12*, Super Lux (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000).Ibid., 314.

systems, shari'a, laws, customs, traditions, norms and principles of life based on false sources outside of Rabbani sources".²⁶

Jāhilīyah is ignorance of Allah, His Messenger, His laws, the boundaries of His religion, and ignoring good morals and noble human values. According to Qutb, this definition is taken from the four Jāhilīyah contexts mentioned in the Qur'an, namely *zhan al-Jāhilīyah* (prejudice), *hukm al-Jāhilīyah* (law), *tabarruj al-Jāhilīyah* (appearance), and *hamīyyat al-Jāhilīyah* (arrogance).²⁷

Rejection of *Allah's Judgment (ḥākimiyyah)*

In Qutb's view, the main characteristic of modern Jāhilīyah is the rejection of Allah's *ḥākimiyyah* in the aspects of government and law. Qutb affirmed: "Jāhilīyah appears on the principle of opposing the intervention of Allah SWT's power on earth, especially with regard to the characteristics of the divinity (*ulūhiyyah*), namely Jāhilīyah in the power system".²⁸

This thought is inspired by the thought of Abul A'la Maududi, which is based on the Qur'anic verse Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 50:

ع ۞ اَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

"What is the Jāhilīyah law that they want? Who is better than Allah for those who believe (in his religion)?"

The above verse is the basis for criticism of the rejection of *Allah's ḥākimiyyah* as well as the rejection of the modern democratic system. Qutb saw democracy as a form of contemporary Jāhilīyah because it made people not subject to Allah's system of statehood, as a source of legitimacy of law and government.

Secularism

Secularism is the separation of religion from the public sphere. This is the most powerful manifestation of modern Jāhilīyah, according to Qutb, he states: "The Jāhilīyah society is a Muslim society that does not practice Islam, rejects the conception of the

²⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an Jld 12*, Super Lux (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000).Ibid., 283.

²⁷ Acep Ariyadi, "The Concept of Jahiliyah in the Qur'an (An Analysis of the Interpretation of Ibn Kathir and Sayyid Quthb)" (Thesis, Jakarta, PTIQ Institute, 2019). 125–157.

²⁸ Sayyid Quthb, *Ma'ālim Fī Ath-ṭarīq (The Guiding Path That Thrills Faith)* (Yogyakarta: Darul Uswah, 2009). Sec. 27.

creed and its values and considerations; ignoring the sharia, and also the guidance of his morals".²⁹

Secularism is a systematic attempt to separate social behavior from religious joints: "the jahiliyah masses are a 'secular society' that is completely detached from the relationship with religion. In other words, they respect religion, but they exclude religion from the social order altogether."³⁰

Qutb also criticized modern secular epistemology that separates science from divine values, which he calls scientific Jāhilīyah: "This is the view doubted by the proponents of 'scientific Jāhilīyah'. On the one hand, Man is the same as other living things, and on the other hand, Man is also the same as other inanimate objects."³¹ In terms of the methodology of jahiliyah thinking, the modern jahiliyah is based on the methodology of Western thought, and its products in Islamic studies."³²

Qutb is very concerned with secular epistemology because Western knowledge has reduced the role of science, which makes it an instrument of domination of the realm of power, wealth, and even knowledge, which is used as a tool of domination and colonization, resulting in the separation of knowledge from ethical and spiritual values, as well as the nature of God. This criticism is based on the Qur'anic verse Surah Ar-Rum [30]:30:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"So, turn your face straight to the religion (Islam) according to the nature (of) Allah who created man according to it. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most people do not know".

Qutb also criticizes the ideology of *Marxism* as a manifestation of scientific Jāhilīyah: "In general, Marxism is contrary to the nature of human disposition and the needs of human nature (*thabi'ah al-fitrah al-basyariyyah wa muqtadhayatuha*). This

²⁹ Ibid., 202.

³⁰ Ibid., 178.

³¹ Ibid., 101.

³² Ibid., 252.

understanding will develop in situations of chaos, or in an atmosphere that favors a dictatorial system for a long period of time."³³

John Calvert in *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islāmism* states that Qutb's critique of *Marxism* represents a rejection of any ideology that reduces man to mere products of historical or economic determinism, ignores the inherent spiritual dimension in human nature, so that man is relegated to being without true direction and purpose.³⁴

Materialism and Hedonism

Qutb strongly criticized the materialism and hedonism that are rampant in modern society as a form of contemporary Jāhilīyah. He declared: "The present civilizations—which have amazed many and affected the pleasure of their souls—are nothing but a part of the Jāhilīyah system, which is inferior and inferior in comparison with the system of Islam."³⁵ Because hedonistic civilization is based solely on materialism, while the physicals in the eyes of Islam are inferior and cannot be said to be a civilization."³⁶ According to Qutb, man has been reduced to *homo economicus*, merely material-economic beings. Meanwhile, Islam condemns people who are trapped in economic confinement. He quotes the Qur'an in Surah At-Takāthur [102]: 1-2:

أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

Taking pride in multiplying has neglected you. until you go into the grave.

He also quoted a hadith narrated by Saheeh Muslim no. 2956. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said that the world is a prison for the believers and a paradise for the unbelievers".³⁷

Moral Degradation and Sexual Exploitation

Qutb highlights moral degradation, especially in the relationship between gender and sexuality, as a characteristic of modern Jāhilīyah. "In various modern Jāhilīyah

³³ Ibid., 19.

³⁴ John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). 213 – 217.

³⁵ Ibid., 298.

³⁶ Ibid., 219.

³⁷ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2956>

societies, there is an acute moral decadence, in which society brings human beings closer and appreciates the nature and disposition of animals".³⁸

In Sunan Ibn Majah 4019, narrated from Abdullah bin Umar,³⁹ warns of five forms of social corruption that invite the wrath of Allah. One of them is heinous acts that are done openly. Acts of *fāḥisyah* (deviant sexual practices, pornography, adultery, and sexual exploitation that are normalized by public culture. It identifies modern culture as a system that makes humans subject to lust. It is even supported by the media system for the sake of momentary economic interests: "Writers, journalists, and columnists in Jāhilīyah societies here and there in their commentary on the scandal unabashedly say that free sex is not morally reprehensible."⁴⁰

Quṭb also criticized the exploitation of women disguised as emancipation, stating: "When women's job is only to make-up, seduce, and stimulate lust.....then this is where the 'backwardness of civilization' or '*Jāhilīyahan*' lies."⁴¹ He also said: "An equally severe phenomenon is the animal-like freedom they call 'promiscuity'; the exploitation of slavery under the guise of 'women's emancipation'..."⁴².

The temptation of women is a seductive world (*al-ḥulwah al-khaḍrah*). The modern world makes it a product of economically competitive exploitation, while women also respond to it as the progress of the modern world, which actually plunges women into a business tool and lowers their self-esteem. Abu Sa'id Khudri in the Muslim narration no. 2742, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: The world is sweet and green, and indeed Allah will appoint you as a caliph in it to see how you act. So keep away from the temptation of women: indeed, the first temptation for the Israelites was caused by women. And in a hadith narrated from Ibn Bashshar, it is stated: "So that He may see how you act."⁴³

Total Resistance and Ideological Separation (*Mufāṣalah*)

The quotations in *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* show a very strong pattern of cultural resistance to what is considered to be modern Jāhilīyah. Once analyzed, the quotes show

³⁸ Ibid., 215.

³⁹ <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:4019>

⁴⁰ Ibid., 216.

⁴¹ Ibid., 212.

⁴² Ibid., 305 – 306.

⁴³ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2742>

patterns of cultural resistance, making them the most dominant theme. The ideological separation (*Mufāṣalah*) became the main foundation in Quṭb's view of the relationship between Islam and Jāhilīyah. In the quote, it is stated unequivocally that: "Islam knows only two types of society: the Islamic society and the Jāhilīyah society".⁴⁴

This shows a firm dichotomy with no room for a middle position. Total resistance is also seen in the quote that confirms: "There is no other choice of attitude, such as 'half Islām – half Jāhilīyah'. Islām and Jāhilīyah cannot be combined or compromised."⁴⁵ This separation is a form of resistance to all forms of syncretism and acculturation that try to combine Islamic and non-Islamic values. narrated from Abdullah bin Umar in Sunan Abī Dāwūd No. 4031:

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو النَّضْرِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ،
حَدَّثَنَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي مُنِيبِ الْجُرَشِيِّ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ قَالَ
" مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ " . رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

"The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: Whoever imitates a people, he is among them."⁴⁶

The above hadith shows that a person's identity is determined by what he imitates and practices in daily life. In the context of cultural negotiations, this hadith supports a total rejection of cultural syncretism because to imitate the culture of Jāhilīyah means to be part of it. Furthermore, the NBI-32 quote proposes the concept of an alternative society: "Islām must develop another dynamic organic society outside the Jāhilīyah community, that is, an independent society separate from the Jāhilīyah organic society – which Islām wants to destroy."⁴⁷

This became the basis for structural resistance through the formation of separate Islamic communities. As affirmed in the Qur'an:

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

"Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." Ali 'Imran [3]:85.

Moral Degradation and Sexual Exploitation

⁴⁴ Ibid., 202.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 284.

⁴⁶ <https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4031>

⁴⁷ Ibid., 97.

Qutb highlights moral degradation, especially in the relationship between gender and sexuality, as a characteristic of modern Jāhilīyah. "In various modern Jāhilīyah societies, there is an acute moral decadence, in which society brings human beings closer and appreciates the nature and disposition of animals".⁴⁸

In Sunan Ibn Majah 4019, narrated from Abdullah bin Umar,⁴⁹ warns of five forms of social corruption that invite the wrath of Allah. One of them is heinous acts that are done openly. Acts of *fāḥisyah* (deviant sexual practices, pornography, adultery, and sexual exploitation that are normalized by public culture. It identifies modern culture as a system that makes humans subject to lust. It is even supported by the media system for the sake of momentary economic interests: "Writers, journalists, and columnists in Jāhilīyah societies here and there in their commentary on the scandal unabashedly say that free sex is not morally reprehensible."⁵⁰

Qutb also criticized the exploitation of women disguised as emancipation, stating: "When women's job is only to make-up, seduce, and stimulate lust....then this is where the 'backwardness of civilization' or 'Jāhilīyahan' lies."⁵¹ He also said: "An equally severe phenomenon is the animal-like freedom they call 'promiscuity'; the exploitation of slavery under the guise of 'women's emancipation'..."⁵².

The temptation of women is a seductive world (*al-ḥulwah al-khaḍrah*). The modern world makes it a product of economically competitive exploitation, while women also respond to it as the progress of the modern world, which actually plunges women into a business tool and lowers their self-esteem. Abu Sa'id Khudri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: The world is sweet and green (attractive) and indeed Allah will appoint you as a caliph in it to see how you act. So keep away from the temptation of women: indeed, the first temptation for the Israelites was caused by women. And in a hadith narrated from Ibn Bashshar, it is stated: "So that He may see how you act."⁵³

In John W. Berry's theory of acculturation, this kind of pattern of total resistance falls into the category of separation, where groups choose to maintain their original

⁴⁸ Ibid., 215.

⁴⁹ <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:4019>

⁵⁰ Ibid., 216.

⁵¹ Ibid., 212.

⁵² Ibid., 305–306.

⁵³ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2742>

culture and reject the new culture. However, it is different from the context in which Berry discusses the adaptation of the immigration community.⁵⁴ The resistance in *Ma'ālim fi al-Ṭarīq* is ideological in nature and is based on the theological belief that Islam is an absolute truth that cannot be compromised.

Islām Counter Culture and the Formation of the Generation of Islām (*Takwīn al-Jīl*)

Discussing the contradiction between Islam and modernity above, Quṭb wanted to show that Islam was worthy of being a *counter culture* to modern Jāhilīyah, which was worthy of being practiced by the younger generation of Muslims. Quṭb stated that "The Da'wah of Islam has given birth to a group of generations of human beings – that is, the generation of the companions of Ridhwanullah 'alaihim – transforming into a very special generation in the history of Islam in particular, and throughout human history in general."⁵⁵

Islam is required to remain steadfast in maintaining the purity of its religion despite being in a minority position ideologically, socially, and culturally. Quṭb emphasized the importance of the formation of alternative communities: "Individuals whose hearts have been sterilized from servitude to other than Allah should be united in an Islamic community."⁵⁶

This shows a strategy to develop a counter culture through the strengthening of a monotheistic collective identity. In this context, the concepts of purification (*tazkiyah*) and education (*tarbiyah*) became important instruments in the formation of a new generation that was expected to challenge the hegemony of Modern Jāhilīyah. Quṭb said: "A Muslim should have engaged in a great jihad against the devil within himself."⁵⁷

Quṭb emphasized that jihad is *harakah*: "Harakah will not allow anyone to remain silent. Every individual member of this society must take the initiative of *harakah*."⁵⁸ Quṭb emphasized that Islam as a counter culture must be active and dynamic, not just a passive thought system, but in the form of a movement (*harakah*).

⁵⁴ John W. Berry, "Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29, no. 6 (2005): 697–712, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014717670500132X>.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 168.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 226.

The emergence of the term *harakah al-jil* (Youth movement), in the perspective of cultural negotiation, represents what Kevin Avruch identifies as the formation of a new cultural identity consciously designed to counter the most dominant. ⁵⁹influences. Thus, these findings suggest that in *Ma‘ālim fī al-Ṭarīq*, the concept of *Takwīn al-Jīl* focuses not only on the teaching of Islamic doctrine but also on the formation of different habituses of Jāhilīyah society. It involves the formation of a distinctive Islamic disposition, way of thinking, and cultural practices.

Negotiation and Synthesis Patterns

From the analysis of the quotations, the pattern of cultural resistance and the cultural characteristics of the Islamic discourse in *Ma‘ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* indicate that the main approach proposed is total resistance (rejection) to the modern Jāhilīyah. Development and articulation of authentic Islamic cultural identity (characteristics of Islamic culture). The formation of alternative communities as a counter culture. Meanwhile, the low frequency of citations that lead to acculturation and assimilation indicates the lack of interaction space in negotiations provided for the process of adaptation and absorption of culture from the outside.

In the context of cultural negotiation as proposed by Ting-Toomey, *Ma‘ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* tends to reject a model of cultural negotiation that relies on the exchange of values, the adaptation of cultural identity, and the creation of space for intercultural dialogue.⁶⁰ Instead, the text advocates a clear model of resistance and the construction of an alternative identity separate from the modern Jāhilīyah current.

Analytical Table: Reconstruction of the Islamic Cultural Worldview in the Face of Modern Jāhilīyah

⁵⁹ Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998). 310.

⁶⁰ Stella Ting-Toomey, *Communicating Across Cultures, Second Edition* (New York: Guilford Press, 2018). 43-68.

Analytical Aspect	Findings in <i>Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq</i>	Theoretical Lens	Worldview Implication
Concept of Jāhilīyah	Jāhilīyah is defined as a universal condition when law is not based on divine sovereignty.	Secularism critique	Modernity is framed as an epistemological crisis
Ḥākimiyyah (Divine Sovereignty)	Absolute authority belongs to God alone	Critique of secular authority	Reintegration of religion and law within a tawḥīdic system
Attitude toward Modernity	Rejection of the compromise between Islam and Jāhilīyah	Berry (Separation)	Ideological boundary-making as cultural strategy
Collective Identity	Clear dichotomy: Islamic society vs Jāhili society	Ting-Toomey (Identity differentiation)	Strengthening symbolic boundaries and communal solidarity
Project of Transformation	Formation of the “Unique Qur’anic Generation” (al-jīl al-Qur’ānī al-farīd)	Counter-culture framework	Gradual reconstruction through moral-spiritual reform
Moral Critique	Rejection of materialism and hedonism	Civilizational critique	Reorientation toward transcendent ethical values

Brief Synthesis

The table demonstrates that the reconstruction of the Islamic worldview in *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* by Sayyid Qutb operates on three interconnected levels:

- (1) **Epistemological** – restoring divine sovereignty as the foundation of knowledge and law;
- (2) **Identity-based** – reinforcing cultural differentiation through a separation strategy;

(3) **Civilizational** – establishing an alternative moral and social order in response to modern Jāhilīyah.

Thus, the response proposed is not an accommodation to modernity, but a comprehensive reconstruction of cultural and normative foundations.

The relevance of Sayyid Quṭb's thought to the religious conditions in Indonesia

Quṭb's thoughts on the cultural negotiation of Islam with modern Jāhilīyah have significant relevance to religious dynamics in Indonesia. Seeing that religious conditions in Indonesia are very distinctive, plural, democratic, but also prone to occur due to the influence of uncontrolled currents of modernity. On the other hand, the plural, multicultural nature of Indonesian society, with a long history of accommodating local values in Islam, demands a non-frontal approach to da'wah. Religion, especially Islam in Indonesia, is still an important factor in people's lives.

Although Quṭb wrote in the context of Egypt and the Arab world in the mid-20th century, the spirit and direction of Quṭb's criticism remains relevant to be reread in the religious context in Indonesia today. In short, Quṭb's thoughts for the author remain relevant to build a critical awareness of the modern system of life that moves away from divine values, especially in Indonesia. His thinking teaches the importance of courage and consistency in fighting for Islam as a manhaj of life.

However, in the Indonesian context, the common thread of this thought must be translated wisely by considering local values, cultural approaches, and inclusive da'wah strategies, not as a model of practice that must be imitated rawly.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* by Sayyid Qutb, it can be concluded that the concept of modern Jāhilīyah is a radical reconceptualization of the classical term Jāhilīyah into a socio-cultural category that is time-crossed. Jāhilīyah is no longer understood as a pre-Islamic historical phase, but rather as a condition of society that rejects Allah's ḥākimīyyah and places man as the source of the sovereignty of law. Its manifestation can be seen in secularism, materialism, hedonism, moral degradation, and secular epistemology that separates science from the value of monotheism.

From the perspective of cultural negotiation, the pattern offered by Qutb tends to be in the form of separation through the concept of *mufāṣalah* and the formation of

alternative Islamic communities (*takwīn al-jīl*). Islām is positioned as a counter culture that refuses to compromise with the modern Jāhiliyah system and seeks to build a collective identity based on monotheism independently and ideologically. Thus, the negotiations offered are not synthesis or acculturation, but total resistance to values that are considered to be contrary to the manhaj of Islam.

However, in the context of a plural, democratic Indonesia and a long history of Islamic interaction with local culture, Qutb's thought needs to be read contextually and critically. The spirit of his criticism of secularization and the dominance of materialism remains relevant to build ethical and spiritual awareness, but its application must be adapted to the principles of moderation, dialogue, and social welfare so that it does not develop into exclusivism or the legitimacy of extreme attitudes. Thus, this study confirms that Qutb's thought has a strong reflective value, but requires a proportionate reinterpretation in the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian culture.

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