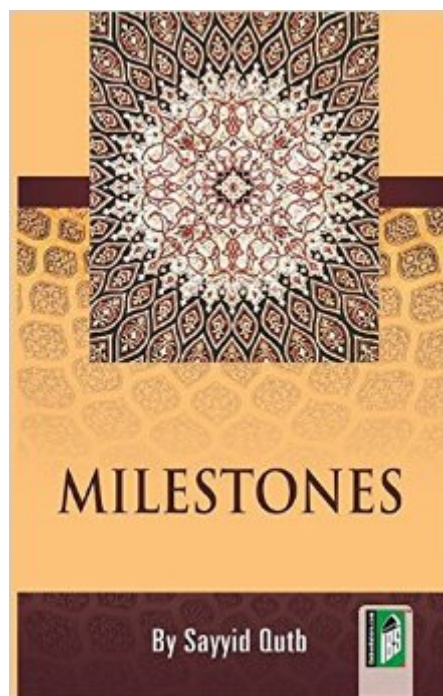


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# Milestones



## Synopsis

The author speaks about the unique Quranic generation, the nature of the Quranic method, the characteristics of Islamic society, jihad in the cause of God, and a Muslim's nationality and his belief among other things.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This treatise on political Islam is helpful in understanding the mindset of violent Muslim Jihadists in today's world. You may disagree with the logic--or after close study lack thereof, in this book. I wish this volume included a better introduction of who the historical Sayyid Qutb was, it helps put this volume and what it was/is trying to accomplish in its proper context. Qutb (1906-1966) was an Egyptian novelist and literature teacher who received a western-style education and even earning his Master's Degree in Education in the United States, where he lived from 1948-1950. At least partially due to Qutb's experience living in the United States, he developed an anti-western anti-modernization attitude. While in The United States, Qutb was horrified to witness such lewd events as Church sock-hops, where a female could look a male in the eye and talk to him without fear of having a male relative automatically assume the worst and cut her throat. He wrote: "They danced to the tunes of the gramophone, and the dance floor was replete with tapping feet, enticing legs, arms wrapped around waists, lips pressed to lips, and chests pressed to chests. The atmosphere was full of desire..." Whether this is what he actually saw at a church event in late 40's America (sounds more like Woodstock), whether it means Americans were dirty and immoral, or

Qutb's own mind simply had a particularly lascivious bent which he deigned to blame other innocent people for, the reader must decide. The fact is that this "immorality" and events similar to it he witnessed in the West, coupled with injustices he saw and experienced in Egypt before and after his sojourn in the U.S. led Qutb to become heavily involved with the conservative Muslim Brotherhood upon his return to Egypt.

One could easily argue that Sayyid Qutb's 1950s era treatise "Milestones" is the most influential and historically far-reaching Islamic text written in the past century. Qutb's work - and "Milestones" above all else - created the philosophical foundation upon which Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups have been built. For anyone looking to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates relatively well-educated, affluent and presumably sane young men to fly passenger jets into skyscrapers there is no better place to begin than here. Milestones is meant to be a handbook for a vanguard of "true Muslims" ready and willing to fulfill God's plan for humanity - a plan that was clearly elucidated and even demonstrated in Medina under Mohammed in the late seventh century. Qutb forcefully argues that this first generation of Muslims in Medina was also the last generation of true and pure Muslims. "They [the first generations of Muslims at Medina] became the bearers of this trust when no promise was made to them of worldly benefits which they could have demanded, nor were there sights fixed on acquiring such benefits. They were dedicated servants of God from the day they knew of no reward except his pleasure." Qutb calls for a new generation of Muslims willing to sacrifice worldly pleasures, throw off loyalty and commitment to their families and nations, and perhaps give their lives to join a new generation of Muslims modeled on those who lived with Mohammed. A critical objective to achieving God's Will is to remove all social, economic and political structures that impose the rule of one man over another and thus usurps God's sole and unabridgable authority to sovereignty over mankind.

Perhaps the most well known book of modern political Islam in recent years new dimensions have been added to it due to the events of 9/11 and many linking the book to the Al-Qaeda leader Bin Laden. Sadly, much sensationalism has overshadowed any hope of examining the book itself and the man who wrote it. Qutb in fact had little if any connection with the Wahhabi Saudi movement to which Bin Laden belongs, the books of Qutb are considered 'Bida' (an innovation) by Wahhabis and are by and large banned in the Gulf states. Qutb rather is a 'scholar' of political Islam, a system that ranges from electoral participation to political terrorism to retreating from city life to start a new life and system. In order to examine why Qutb came to the conclusions in his book you need to look at

the wider context in which he lived. The trauma of colonialism, the betrayal of the Nassirs revolutionaries, the disaster of the Arab-Israeli war, the cold war and the social alienation of traditional societies (which much of Egypt in Qutb's time was) from the modern world. When Qutb spoke out against corruption of political officials he struck a chord with the Arab youth who had come from the provincial towns and major cities alike and saw for themselves the nepotism that ruled political and social life. When he spoke out against the moral corruption again, for a society used to a more conservative way of life the excess as they saw of the West in particular (It is doubtful they would have had such a wide knowledge of the former Eastern block) When he spoke out against the Mosque and those that preached but did not practice he again caught the ear of the youth who saw themselves as distant from the previous generation who followed the local Sheikh, attended the Mawlid.

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