THE CONCEPT OF AL- ḤAKIMIYYAH IN THE DISCOURSE OF SELECTED CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SCHOLARS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

BY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and the proposed means of its establishment in the Muslim nations have been an interesting topic of many contemporary researchers. The topic is one of the contemporary and problematic theories due to its connection with global peace and security. The concept has been widely and globally adopted by many radical Islamic groups, who are responsible for many barbaric and unforgivable attacks that have claimed the lives of many innocents around the world. Abū ʻAlā Mawdūdī who was the pioneer of the term, and Sayyid Quṭb who promoted it, are believed to be responsible for the spread of the idea. The concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* and the means of its establishment have been the main theory around which the whole discourses of Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb revolved. Thus, both of them are commonly described as the top among the most contemporary controversial and influential radical Islamist thinkers and leading ideologues of *al-ḥākimiyyah*, who have played both formative and theoretical roles in the contemporary radical Islamic movements. Considering the claims that accuse Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Quṭb's theory of *al-ḥakimiyyah* of being responsible for the global crisis caused by the radical Islamic movements, and the unrests that resulted from uprising against the ruling authorities in Islamic countries, thorough investigation and fair assessment are needful to confirm or debunk the claim. Therefore, this research attempts to analyze the extent to which Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's concepts of *al-ḥākimiyyah* divergent from or convergent with the correct teaching of Islam. The research is expected to contribute towards the ideal way of dealing with the contemporary systems of government in various Muslim nations and render a kind of guidance to the adopters of the violent approach towards their governments. In an attempt to carry out this task, the researcher applies a qualitative method that is based on library research. The current study presents Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* from the original sources and then critically analyzed and assessed. Thus, after presenting a considerable account on their intellectual discourses on the concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and their approaches towards the establishment of the concept, it is found that their concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* is in line with the correct teachings of Islam, but enough opportunity is not given to contemplate and digest the idea. However, there are some criticisms, which are not directly affecting their main concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah*, but in one way or the other affecting their systematic and strategic approaches. Finally, Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb are believed to have been misunderstood by many contemporary Islamic movements who ascribed themselves to their school of thought.

ملخص البحث

مفهوم الحاكميّة والوسائل المقترحة لتأسيسه في الدول الإسلامية يُعدّ من أهم الموضوعات التي حُظيتْ باهتمام كثير من الباحثين المعاصرين. ويُعتبر الموضوع من أحد الموضوعات المعاصرة ذات الإشكالية، لكونه مرتبطا بالسلام والأمن العالميين. وقد تم تَبَنّي هذا المفهوم على نطاق واسع وعالمي من قبل كثير من الجماعات الإسلامية المتطرفة المسؤولة عن العديد من الهجمات البربرية التي لا تُغتفر في جميع أنحاء العالم، والتي سقط العديد من الأبرياء ضحايا لها. ويعتقد بأن أبا علاء مودودي الذي ابتكر الفكرة وسيد قطب الذي طوّر الفكرة مسؤولان عن انتشار هذه الفكرة. وقد كان مفهوم الحاكمية ووسيلة إنشائها محاورا أساسية التي دارت حولها معظم كتابات مودودي وسيد قطب. لذا، يوصف كلاهما دائما بأكبر شخصين تأثيرًا وإثارة للجدل من بين المفكرين الإسلاميين الراديكاليين المعاصرين، ومُنَظِّرَيْن بارزين لفكرة الحاكمية، الذيْن قد لعبا أدوارًا تكوينية ونظرية في الحركات الإسلامية الراديكالية المعاصرة. وبالنظر إلى الادعاءات التي تتهم نظرية الحاكمية عند مودودي وسيد قطب بالمسؤولية عن الأزمة العالمية للحركات الإسلامية الراديكالية والاضطرابات التي نتجت عن الانتفاضة ضد السلطات الحاكمة في الدول الإسلامية، فأصبح التحقيق الشامل والتقييم العادل ضروريا لتأكيد أو فضح هذه الادعاءات. لذا، يحاول هذا البحث دراسة مدى الاختلاف والتوافق بين مفاهيم الحاكمية عند مودودى وسيد قطب والتعاليم الإسلامية الصحيحة. فمن المتوقع أن يساهم هذا البحث في الطريقة المثالية للتعامل مع أنظمة الحكم المعاصرة في مختلف الدول الإسلامية وتقديم نوع من التوجيه لمتبني المنهج غير سلمي تجاه حكومتهم. وفي محاولة للقيام بهذه المهمة، استخدم الباحث المنهج النوعي باعتماده على المكتبات في جمع المعلومات. وتعرض الدراسة الحالية مفهوم الحاكمية عند مودودى وسيد قطب من المصادر الأصلية ثم يتم تحليله وتقييمه بأسلوب نقدي. وبعد تقديم الاعتبار الكافي لتراثهما الفكري حول مفهوم الحاكمية ومناهجهما في تأسيس المفهوم، تبين أن مفهومهما عن الحاكمية يتوافق مع التعاليم الإسلامية الصحيحة، ولكن

لم يتم إعطاء فرصة كافية للتفكير واستيعاب الفكرة. ومع ذلك، هناك بعض الانتقادات التي لا تؤثر بشكل مباشر على مفهومهم الأساسي للحاكمية، ولكنها تؤثر بطريقة أو بأخرى على المنهجية والاستراتيجية المتبعة في عرض الأفكار. وفي النهاية، يُعتقد أن العديد من الحركات الإسلامية المعاصرة التي تنسب نفسها إلى مدارس مودودي وسيد قطب قد أساءت فهمهما.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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DEDICATION

I sincerely dedicate this dissertation to my beloved father and mother Alhaji Issah Obalowu, and Alhaja Shifau Obalowu, who are the source of my existence in this life and the root of all that I have become today.

To my aunt Alhaja Thuwaybah, for her care and proper upbringing which led to today's achievement. May Allah forgive her shortcomings and reward her with al-Jannah.

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ء	’	خ	kh	ش	Sh	غ	Gh	ن	N
ب	B	د	D	ص	ṣ	ف	F	هـ	H
ت	T	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	Q	و	W
ث	Th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	K	ي	Y
ج	J	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	L		
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	ᶜ	م	M		

Short Vowels	
ـَ	a
ـِ	i
ـُ	u

Long Vowels	
ا + ـَ	ā
يْ + ـِ	ī
وْ + ـُ	ū

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ……...……ii
Abstract in Arabic ……..…..…iii
Approval Page ……..……....v
Declaration Page ……....…vi
Copyright Page …….…….vii
Dedication Page ……..……..viii
Acknowledgement ……..……ix
Transliteration ……..……...…xi
Table of Contents ……..…..…xii

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION …….…....1
1.1 Introduction.……...…….……...1
1.2 Statement of the Problem …….…….…….4
1.3 Research Questions …….…….……..6
1.4 Research Objectives …….…….…….6
1.5 Justification of the Research …….…….…….7
1.6 Scope of the Study …….…….……8
1.7 Research Methodology……..….9
1.8 Literature Review……..…...……10

CHAPTER TWO: THE EVOLUTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *AL-ḤĀKIMIYYAH*, AND ITS GENERAL CONCEPT …….26
2.1 Introduction ……..…26
2.2 General Definition of *al-Ḥākimiyyah* ……..…….26
2.2.1 Literal Meaning of al-Hākimiyyah……...…..…27
2.2.2 Significance of *al-Hākimiyyah* in the Expression of *al-Qur'an* and *Hadith* ……..……..28
2.2.3 General Definition of *al-Ḥākimiyyah* ……35
2.3 Sovereignty and its Concept in the Western and Man-made System of Government ……..….37
2.3.1 Concept of Sovereignty …….…….37
2.3.2 Different Perspectives on the Bases and Sources of the Rulers' Sovereignty…….…… 39
2.3.3 Islamic Perspective on the Basis and Source of the Sovereignty.....42
2.3.4 Types of Sovereignty in Islam ……..……..43
2.3.5 The Elements of *al-Hakimiyyah* in Islam …….…….45
2.4 The Concept of *al-Ḥakimiyyah* in the Early Islamic Thought.....45
2.5 The Kharijites and the Idea of al-Taḥkīm …….……49
2.5.1 Historical Background of the Emergence of the Kharijites ……..…..50
2.5.2 Definition of the Kharijites ……..……..55

2.5.3 Kharijites' Titles ……..……..57
2.5.4. The Principles and Specifications of the Early Kharijites …….……...58
2.6 Prophetic Prophecy on the Emergency and Features of Kharijites ……...…61
2.6.1 Features of the Kharijites as Stated the Hadith …….…..….61
2.6.2 Natural and Physical Appearance and Their Origin …….……..…63
2.6.2.1 General Description of the Kharijites …….…....63
2.6.2.2 Specific Identification of Some of their Members …….….64
2.7 How *Ṣahabah* (Companions) and their Successors Dealt with the Case of Kharijites when they Emerged ……...…64
2.8 Historical Background of The Contemporary Islamic Movements (Radical and Moderate Ones) ……..…67
2.8.1 Time Limitation for the Emergence of the Kharijites ……..…...67
2.8.2 Classification of the Contemporary Radical Islamic Movements…..…..69
2.8.3 Resurgence of the Contemporary Radical Islamic Movements.....69
2.8.4 Historical Background of the Contemporary Radical Islamic Movements……...…...71
2.8.4.1 Impact of Western Hegemony on Islamic Civilization in the Resurgence of Contemporary Radical Islamists …….……71
2.8.4.2 Impact of Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahab' dawah on the Resurgence of the Contemporary Radical Islamists ……...…...73
2.8.5 The Impact of Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahab's Dawah on the other Contemporary Reformers and the Transformation of their Efforts Towards the Confrontation of the Colonial Power ……...……75
2.8.6 Islamic Movements in the Ninetieth Century Upward …….……..…78
2.9 Conclusion……..…..82

CHAPTER THREE: A BRIEF HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUNDS OF ABU AL-'ALĀ MAWDŪDĪ AND SAYYID QUṬB, AND THE IMPACT OF THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIST GROUPS……..….86
3.1 Introduction……..……..…….……86
3.2 MawdūdīsHistorcalBackground…….....……..…….…….87
3.2.1 Family Background……..…..87
3.2.2 Intellectual Background……...…..…..89
3.2.3 Social Activities……..…..……...…91
3.2.3.1 Involvement in Journalism……..……..……..91
3.2.3.2.1 His Political Activism……..……...…..92
3.2.3.2.1 His Political Motive…….……92
3.2.3.2.2 His Transformation to the Islamic Revivalist…….93
3.2.3.2.3 The Birth of a New Islamic Political Party……..…..……94
3.2.4Towards the End of His Life……...….95
3.2.5 Intellectual Contribution…….……96
3.3 Sayyid Quṭb Historical Background……..……..……...97
3.3.1 Family Background…….……....97
3.3.2 Academic Background…….……..……..……98
3.3.2.1 Early Education…….……..……98

3.3.2.2 Further Pursuance of His Education in Cairo……..…..…..…99
3.3.4 Social Life…….……..…….……...99
3.3.4.1 Career Development…….……..……99
3.3.4.2 Journey of Thought/Ideological Development……...……..…100
3.3.5 Intellectual Contribution……..…..…...103
3.3.6 Affliction of Sayyid Qutb/Sayyid Qutb in Prison……..……..….104
3.3.7 The Impact of Sayyid Quṭb's and Abū 'Āl'a MawdūdĪ's Thoughts on the Contemporary Islamic Groups…….…..……....105
3.3.8 Conclusion……...……..…..110

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONCEPT OF AL-ḤAKIMIYYAH IN THE DISCOURSE OF ABU AL'ALĀ MAWDŪDĪ AND SAYYID QUṬB……...112
4.1 Introduction…….……...…112
4.2 The Concept of al-Ḥakimiyyah in the Discourse of Abu 'Alᾱ Mawdūdī……112
4.2.1 Essential Principles of al-Ḥakimiyyah…….…..……..…..114
4.2.2 Inevitability of al-Ḥakimiyyah and its Essential Need For the Prosperity of Mankind…….……..…..117
4.2.3 Opinion and Attitude of Man in Searching for Solution to the Life's Problems…….……..….123
4.2.3.1 Sheer Ignorance…….……..…...124
4.2.3.1.1 Characteristics of Society Built Upon this Conduct…….125
4.2.3.2 Fundamental Problems…….……...126
4.2.3.3 Islam…….…….…...127
4.2.3.1 The Brief on the Viewpoints of the Prophets about Man and the Universe……..……..128
4.2.3.2 Scrutiny of Islamic Viewpoints…….…….……...130
4.2.3.3 Impact of the Idea on Individual…….……..131
4.2.4 Why Do People Deny Shari'Ah (Islamic Law)?.....132
4.2.4.1 Assessment of the Objections Raised against the Enforcement of Islamic Law…….….133
4.2.5 Mawdūdī's Approach and Tactic Towards the Establishment of al-Ḥakimiyyah…….…….….136
4.2.5.1 Prerequisites of al-Ḥakimiyyah……..…..136
4.2.5.2 Steps to The Achievement of al-Ḥakimiyyah…….…….….138
4.2.5.2.1 Educating and Enlightening of the Public……..…….138
4.25.2.2 Revolution against the Secular Systems…….…..138
4.2.6 Mawdūdī's Evaluation on the Contemporary Muslim Communities...140
4.3 The Concept of al-Ḥakimiyyah in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb……..…..142
4.3.1 Sayyid Qutb's Notion on al-Ḥakimiyyah…….....142
4.3.2 Necessity of al-ḥakimiyyah Ever in the Past, and Particularly in the Contemporary World……..…..143
4.3.3 Prerequisite of al-Ḥakimiyyah……....….148
4.3.5 Sayyid Quṭb's Approach and Tactic on the Establishment of al-Ḥakimiyyah…….…….....150
4.3.5 Sayyid Quṭb's Evaluation on the Contemporary Muslim Nations…..……...….153

4.13 Conclusion……..……..……...154

CHAPTER FIVE: AN EVALUATION OF MAWDŪDĪ'S AND SAYYID QUṬB'S CONCEPT OF AL-HĀKIMIYYAH……...….156

5.1 Introduction……..…….……156
5.2 Evaluation and Justification of the Usage of the Term "al-Hakimiyyah"…..156
5.3 Evaluation of Quṭb's and MawdūdĪ's Concept of al-Ḥakimiyyah…….…158
5.3.1 Views of Other Scholars on MawdūdĪ's and Sayyid Quṭb's Concept of al-Ḥakimiyyah……..…..161
5.4 Analysis and Evaluation of Making al-Ḥakimiyyah as a Determinant and Factor of Īmān, and as a Division and Independent Type of Faith…….…...172
5.5 Declaration of Kufr (Infidelity) on the Muslim Rulers Who are not Enforcing Islamic Law, and Declaration of Infidelity on the General Muslims and Consideration of Muslim Communities as the Ignorant Communities and Dār al-Ḥarb Which are not Deserved Muslims' Loyalty…….……....179
5.5.1 Islamic View on Ruling with Man-Made Law……..……182
5.5.2 Analysis and Evaluation of Describing Muslim Communities asJahiliyyah Community (Ignorant Community) ……..……....189
5.5.2.1 Literal and Technical Meaning of al-Jahiliyyah……189
5.5.2.2 Jahiliyyah in Expression of the Qur'an and Hadith……..190
5.5.2.3 Jahiliyyah in the Discourse of Mawdūdī and Quṭb……...194
5.5.3 Advocacy for the Secession and Isolation from the General Muslims…….……....198
5.5.4 Description of the Muslim Nations Whose Rulers do not Enforce the Rules of Islam Accordingly as Dār al-ḥarb……..……..…199
5.6 Evaluation of Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's Approach Towards the Establishment Of Al-Ḥākimiyyah…….…...202
5.6.1 Justification and Application of the Concept……...…203
5.6.2 Analysis and Evaluation of the Concept…….…….….204
5.6.3 Danger and Failure of this Method…….…….…207
5.7 Conclusion……..……209

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION…….…...….211

6.1 Conclusions…….……...211

BIBLIOGRAPHY…….…….224

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The notion of *al-ḥākimiyyah* (Sovereignty) and the struggle towards its establishment in the entire Muslim nations, and even in the whole universe, are believed to be one of the fundamental pillars upon which the contemporary Islamic movements stand and the main pivot around which their discourses revolve. Moreover, the idea is thought to have been the chief instigator that triggers contemporary Islamists' terrorism and their attacks against society.

Abu 'Alα Mawdūdī who was the founder of *al-Jamā'ah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Group) in Pakistan, the largest Islamic organization in Asia during his time, is believed to have been the pioneer in politicizing Islam. Besides, the modern conceptualization of the Islamic state is strongly attributed to Mawdūdī. Nevertheless, the traces of the claim are actually evident in Mawdūdī's writings. He proposes the gradual establishment of the Islamic State in a democratic way that will recognize the sovereignty of Allah and establish its entire social and political affairs on the principles of *sharī'ah*. *Ḥakimiyyah* Allah has been the main theory around which the whole discourses of Mawdūdī revolved. He is confirmed to be the pioneer and originator of the term, as the exact word is neither mentioned in the Qur'an, not it used in the Prophetic expression. Sayyid Quṭb as well is believed to have been influenced by Mawdūdī's thoughts. He as well is commonly known

as one of the most contemporary controversial and influential radical Islamist thinkers. He is also considered as a leading ideologue of *al-ḥākimiyyah,* who has played both formative and theoretical roles in the contemporary radical Islamic movements. He is rather considered as the first political theologian of God's sovereignty in the Sunni Islamic space.[1] Despite the past of more than a half of century since the death of Sayyid Quṭb and more than 40 years since the demise of Mawdūdī, the names and the impacts of both revivalists, especially Sayyid Quṭb, continue to be mentioned in parallel with the activities of the contemporary Islamic movements, especially radical ones.

The concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and its other related topics that were developed and discussed by both revivalists are believed to have been chiefly instigated the contemporary religious violence that has been globally carried out by different radical Islamic movements. However, there are different scholarly opinions on the activities of both revivalists between those who see them as the true representatives of Islamic *da'wah* and sincere revolutionary thinkers who have not been deceived by the revolution of modernity. Some other intellectuals regard their ideas as excess and exaggeration in theorizing without adequate consideration of the real situations of the Muslims. While some others even see both figures as the chief responsibility for the emergence of the contemporary Islamist armed groups and their terrorism against society.[2] Moreover, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement themselves, to which Sayyid Qutb belonged in the late period of his life, and which is believed to have inspired him, also have different opinions on his

[1] Dragos C. Stoica, *In the Shade of God's Sovereignty: The Anti-Modern Political Theology of Sayyid Qutb in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, (PhD thesis, Concordia University Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2017), iii.

[2] Ahmad Ṭayyib, *"Shaykh al-Azhar: Mafāhīm jāa biā Sayyid Qutb…",* CNN Arabic, (07 March, 2015), via https://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2015/03/06/azhar-qotob-muslim-brotherhood, Accessed 20 September, 2018.

approaches; some of them give full support to the ideas, while others oppose him on all or most of his perspectives.

Their theories are broadly spread and widely regarded as one of the most influential theories of Sunni Islamic radical discourse. They are both usually considered as radical theorists who have highly contributed both key concepts and an ontological model to the construction of the contemporary radical Islamic movements. Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb agreed upon the necessity of the revolution against the current political system in the Muslim nations and proposed radical transformation from the present systems to the absolute Islamic system. They proclaimed that the entire world including Muslim nations are leaving in *jāhiliyyah* (ignorance), since Allah's law is not fully implemented in any place on the surface of the earth. Therefore, Sayyid Quṭb in special and Mawdūdī as well, out of their perceptions on *al-ḥākimiyyah*, called for the global strive to liberate mankind from being enslaved by the current ruling authorities and restore *al-ḥākimiyyah* which is the absolute right of Allah that is being snatched and claimed by the political authorities. Sayyid Quṭb argues that one of the main objectives of Islam which is the global liberation of mankind from being enslaved by other men like them through enforcing their own wishes on them, and from being under the servitude of their personal egos to the total submission of man to the sovereignty of Allah the Almighty has been hindered by two major factors. First, *al-jāhiliyyah* (ignorance) that prevails over the ideas and beliefs of mankind and manifests in their system of life. Thus, the preaching and persuasive approaches should be employed to reform those ideas and beliefs. Second, the current political systems that prevent people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, but rather force them to obey their erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of Almighty

Allah. Hence, physical power and *jihad* must be used to confront and abolish those *jahiliyyah* systems and their authorities.

Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb claim that it is high time to revive Islamic social and political systems which are the only answer to the restoration of those missed vital Islamic values which are not only necessary for the healthy development and real progress of the nations but also important for the liberation of man from political, economic and social oppression. Likewise, they are significant for man's freedom from the racial and discriminative problems, and essential for the provision of a harmonious, practicable, positive, and constructive way of life that corresponds with the human instinct and the nature of the universe. Whereas the Western and other contemporary social and political systems have failed to present any healthy values for the guidance, spiritual tranquillity, and everlasting happiness of mankind. So, such systems possess nothing to enable them to rule the world or to justify their continuity. Thus, in order to achieve the mission and establish *al-ḥakimiyyah* in the universe, Sayyid Qutb and Mawdūdī propose some radical approaches, among which many are problematic and seem infeasible. This research, therefore, intends to explore their concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and their approaches towards its establishment, to figure out the extent of the proximity between their theories and the correct teachings of Islam.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The concept and the principle of *al-ḥākimiyyah* advocated by some contemporary Muslim scholars, particularly Abu 'Alā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Qutb are chiefly believed to be the primary source of what is globally known as the Islamic radicalism and its terrorism against

the society. The principle has been widely adopted by many radical and *Jihadist* groups who are connected with Islam in one way or the other. However, the ideology of *al-ḥākimiyyah* and the efforts towards its establishment across the globe have been one of the main fundamental pillars upon which the contemporary Islamic movements stand. Many terrorist attacks that are believed to be instigated and motivated by the idea of *al-ḥākimiyyah* have been carried out within and outside the Muslim nations, which have globally tarnished the image of Islam in the view of non-Muslims and common Muslims as well. The approach seems to have been proven wrong and failed inside and outside the Muslim nations, particularly during what is known as "Arab Spring". This approach does not achieve anything but leads to more destruction of the nations, dispersion of the families, tyranny, and oppression of the governments. Considering the claims that affirm the impact and role of Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's thoughts, especially their concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah,* on the event of "Arab Spring" and other radical Islamist groups' attacks, a thorough investigation needs to be done on the extent of the conformity and correspondence between Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's perspectives on *al-ḥākimiyyah* and the principles of Islam in one hand, and the extent of the genuineness of the claim in the other. Therefore, this research attempts to analyze the extent to which Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's approaches and concepts of *al-ḥākimiyyah*, which are considered as the primary source of the contemporary Islamic terrorism, divergent from or convergent with the principles of Islam.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the light of the problem stated above, this research will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How is the concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* defined in the discourse of the Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb?
2. To what extent do the views of Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb on the concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* conform with the principles of Islam; are their approaches divergent from or convergent with the principles of Islam, and what is the extent of the feasibility of the approach?
3. How does the concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* advocated by Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb influence the contemporary Islamic movements, especially radical ones?
4. What are the recommended Islamic principles and approaches towards the establishment of *al-ḥākimiyyah* and its application in the social order?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims at ascertaining the concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* in the discourse of Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb. Hence, the research will attempt to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the definition and concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* in the discourse of Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb.
2. To discuss the extent of conformity between the views of Abu ʻAlā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb on the concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and the principles of Islam, and to

examine the convergence and divergence between their approaches and the teachings of Islam, as well as the feasibility of that approach.

3. To highlight the way through which the concept of *al-ḥakimiyyah* advocated by Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb influence the contemporary Islamic movements, especially radical ones.
4. To discuss the typical Islamic teachings and approaches towards the establishment of *al-ḥakimiyyah* and its application in the social order.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

Considering the present situation of some Muslim nations in terms of political instability and loss of many souls and properties on the daily basis, which is believed to have been resulted from the uprising against the ruling authorities, and the various terrorist attacks that have been carried out locally and internationally by different radical Islamists groups, all which are believed to have been instigated and masterminded by the concept and approach of some contemporary Islamic scholars towards *al-ḥākimiyyah,* and calling for the social justice, especially Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's theories, the evaluative and analytical study of those concepts and approaches of *al-ḥākimiyyah* in the discourse of Sayyid Quṭb and Mawdūdī are highly needed. After conducting an extensive review of the available literature and examining the writings on the topic concerned, the researcher found that lots of research conducted in this area focus on the analysis of Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Qutb's biography, their contributions on socioeconomic issues, their impact on the contemporary Islamic movements and the threat of their thoughts to the nations. The issues related to the extent of conformity of their notions on the concept of *al-hākimiyyah* with

the principles of Islam are partially and briefly discussed by few researchers. However, those studies are very sketchy and do not thoroughly investigate the level of conformity between their views and the principles of Islam. More so, some of those studies are characterized with random conclusions, while some others are questionable. Thus, there is a need for thorough analysis and evaluation of their views and approaches on *al-ḥākimiyyah* to determine the level of convergence and divergence between the concept and the teachings of Islam. Especially, when both revivalists are considered as the top influential radical Islamist figures who have adopted and subscribed to the idea of *al-ḥākimiyyah*, and they are commonly known as the leading radical theorists who have highly contributed both key concepts and an ontological model to the construction of the contemporary radical Islamic movements. So, this study will contribute towards the clarification of Sayyid Qutb's and Mawdūdī's concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah*, the highlight of the extent to which their views are divergent with or convergent from the teachings of Islam, and the uncovering of the level of the feasibility of their approaches in the contemporary time. Hopefully, the study may also serve as a kind of contribution towards the system of dealing with the contemporary systems of government in various Muslim nations and render a kind of guidance to the subscribers and adopters of jihadist and violent approaches towards their government.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are many issues in the discourse of Abu 'Alā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb which have been raised by them, for the purpose of leading the *Ummah* to the successful establishment and achievement of *al-ḥākimiyyah* and social justice on the earth, and for the universal

liberation of mankind from the servitude to other men like them, and from the servitude to their personal desires, and also for the total submission of man to the sovereignty of Allah alone. However, *al-ḥākimiyyah* is the main theme that all their discourses revolve around. Therefore, this study will limit its scope to the analysis and evaluation of the concept of *al-ḥākimiyyah* in the discourse of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdūdī within the paradigm of the Islamic principles.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies a qualitative method which is based on library research. Moreover, the analytical, descriptive, critical, and historical approaches will be widely used throughout the study. A descriptive and analytical approach will be used to review the data from Sayyid Qutb's and Mawdūdī's writings and other relevant academic sources. The critical approach will be applied for assessing and criticizing the data, while the historical method will be applied for exploring the evolution and historical background of *al-ḥākimiyyah* as well as the important aspect of Quṭb's and Mawdūdī's life. The primary pattern of this study is chronological in nature. It starts the discussion with the historical background of *al-ḥakimiyyah* from the onset of Islam till the emergence of the Kharijites. Then, the discussion proceeds by highlighting the historical background and evolution of the contemporary Islamic movements, including the radical ones. The discussion continues with a brief about the important and relevant historical background of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdūdī and then followed by the analysis of their concepts and approaches towards the establishment of *al-ḥākimiyyah*. Lastly, the critical analysis of their theories and the impact of those theories on the contemporary radical Islamic movements are discussed, together