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## HASSAN HANAFI'S NEW APPROACH TO THE KORAN

### Abstract

Dal 1980 sappiamo che Hasan Hanafi (1935-2021) aveva un progetto di vita che ha descritto come un triangolo. Il lato più lungo del triangolo è costituito dai suoi studi sull'eredità islamica e, in particolare, sul *'Ilm usūl al-fiqh*, *La scienza dei fondamenti della giurisprudenza*. Un altro lato è costruito dalla sua analisi e critica del patrimonio occidentale. Il terzo lato riguarda la vera "realtà", e per H. Hanafi la realtà è il Corano. L'articolo esamina il suo libro dedicato a questo tema: fu il suo ultimo libro.

*Since 1980 we knew that Hasan Hanafi (1935-2021) had a lifelong project that he described as a triangle. The longest side of the triangle is made by his studies on the Islamic heritage and, in particular, on the 'Ilm usūl al-fiqh, The science of the fundamentals of source law. Another side is built by his analysis and criticism of the Western Heritage. The third side concerns true "reality", and for H. Hanafi reality is the Koran. The article examines his book devoted to this issue: it was his last book.*

Massimo Campanini had kindly invited me to participate in the colloquium *Maimonide e il suo tempo* that he organized in Milan on the 13-14th January 2005. On the occasion he introduced me to Hassan Hanafi: they had been friends for many years and I was pleased to meet and talk to someone who has been a beacon of leftist Islamic thought for over half a century<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Prof. Pol Vandeveld, Marquette University, for his comments and corrections. The remaining errors are obviously my own.

And indeed, since Hassan Hanafi (1935-2021) defended his two theses, as required by the rules for the French *Doctorat d'État*, in a public session on June 18th, 1966<sup>2</sup>, his publications, mainly in Arabic, have never ceased to plead for a socially engaged Islam. The main dissertation was printed before its public defence, which is exceptional, with the title *The Exegetical Methods*, and the subtitle, *An Essay on the Science of the Foundations of Understanding*. *ʿIlm usūl al-fiqh*<sup>3</sup>.

The secondary PhD thesis, *From the Exegesis of Phenomenology to the Phenomenology of Exegesis*, consisted of two parts<sup>4</sup>. Hanafi himself translated them into Arabic many years later<sup>5</sup>. He describes the three volumes as his *Trilogy of Youth*:

*In fact, the trilogy of youth, The Exegetical Methods, Exegesis of Phenomenology, and Phenomenology of Exegesis, represents the sides of the triangle of the project that I made public in 1980 as Heritage and Renewal: Our Standpoint with Regard to the Ancient*

<sup>2</sup> The sources for knowing about his life are mainly autobiographic: 1. *Al-Dīn wa-l-thawrah fī Miṣr*, 8 vols. Maktabat Madbūlī, Cairo 1988-1989, Vol. 6, al-Usūliyah al-Islāmiyah, pp. 207-291: *Initial attempt at an autobiography (1952-1981)*. 2. *Humūm al-fikr wa-l-waṭn*, 2 vols., Dār Qabā, Cairo 1997-1998, Vol. 2, pp. 609-669: *Second testimony of an attempt at an autobiography*. 3. *Dhikrayāt 1935-2018*, Al-Jamʿiyah al-Falsafīyah al-Misriyah, Cairo 2018.

<sup>3</sup> H. Hanafi, *Les méthodes d'exégèse. Essai sur la science des fondements de la compréhension*, 1, Conseil Supérieur des Arts, des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, Cairo 1965.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. H. Hanafi, *L'exégèse de la phénoménologie. L'état actuel de la méthode phénoménologique et son application au phénomène religieux*, Anglo-Egyptian, Cairo 1980; Id., *La phénoménologie de l'exégèse. Essai d'une herméneutique existentielle à partir du Nouveau Testament*, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. H. Hanafi, *Ta'wīl al-zāhirīyāt. Al-hālah al-rāhinah lil-manhaj al-zāhirīyāt wa-tatbīqu-hu fī al-zāhirah al-dīniyah*, Maktabat al-Madbūlī, Cairo 2013 (*Exegesis of the Phenomenology*); Id., *Zāhirīyāt al-Ta'wīl. Muhāwala fī tafsīr wu-jūdī li-l-'ahd al-hadīth*, Madbūlī, Cairo 2013 (*Phenomenology of Exegesis*).

Heritage, Our Standpoint with Regard to the Western Heritage, Our Standpoint with Regard to Reality *or a Theory of Exegesis*.<sup>6</sup>

Hanafi employs the term *jabhah* for the sides of the triangle. However, *jabhah* has the primary meaning of front line, so that it maintains a connotation of struggle, an effort to change the current situation. The first side of the triangle, *The Exegetical Methods*, is the longest and the largest productive.

*Ilm usūl al-fiqh*, *The science of the fundamentals of source law* or of jurisprudence, grew out of the need for implementing legislation based on the Koranic message. Hanafi faced a giant intellectual tradition of fourteen centuries, which had reached its full maturity already in the works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) and Sayf al-Dīn Al-Āmidī (d. 1233). After *The Exegetical Methods*, i.e., the main PhD dissertation, Hanafi devoted most of his long-lasting and impressive production to the issue, including the study of the fundamentals of faith, *usūl al-dīn*. His purpose was to reconstruct these disciplines, known as the *age-old sciences* (*al-ʿulūm al-qadīmah*) in accordance with the present conditions.

As for his *Exegesis of Phenomenology*, which was directed at the study of Descartes and Husserl, he expanded it and prepared valuable translations into Arabic, for instance, of Spinoza, commenting on them, and creating his *Introduction to the science of Occidentalism*<sup>7</sup>. Hanafi's main argument is that the West has transformed the Orient into a lifeless object, like *a historical piece in a museum*, and it has succeeded so well that the Orient sees itself as such an object, having lost its own self-consciousness. Hanafi advocates for the emancipation of the self-identity of the Orient from the cultural domination of the West through the movements of national libera-

<sup>6</sup> Id., *Taʿwīl al-zāhirīyāt* ... cit., p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. H. Hanafi, *Muqaddimah fi ʿilm al-istighrāb*, Al-Dār al-Fanniyah, Cairo 1991.

tion and by creating the science of Occidentalism as the counterweight to Orientalism that Hanafi has denounced as an instrument of Western domination.

### 1. *Discourse on a new method*

The third side and base of the triangle, i.e., *Phenomenology of Exegesis*, which, in Hanafi's own words, started with the New Testament, has been finally fulfilled in the bulky volume *Thematic Exegesis of the Sacred Koran*, explained with a second title, *The standpoint towards reality*, and a subtitle, *Theory of exegesis*<sup>8</sup>. *Thematic* (*mawdūʿī*) means the subject matter of the Koran and it refers to its contents organized by topics, such as consciousness and nature, or consciousness and history. The subtitle *Theory of exegesis* is added because the book intends to draw the theoretical frame of the research: the manner in which the meaning of the text is to be understood<sup>9</sup>. As for *The standpoint towards reality*, it should be noted that Hanafi has a particular understanding of *reality*, as we will see, but first let us hear him explaining the subject matter of this title:

The standpoint towards reality *consists in dealing with reality in a direct way, or what was called before the "direct observation of reality", that is, the direct understanding of reality, without mediation of the text, the text coming from the Ancients, and regardless of the*

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Id., *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdūʿī li-l-Qurʾān al-Karīm. Al-Mawqif min al-Wāqīʿ. Nazarīyat al-Tafsīr*, Dār Ruʾya Newbook, Cairo 2018 (*Thematic Exegesis*). The title inevitably reminds of *Nahwa tafsīr mawdūʿī li-suwar al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* (1992) by Muhammad al-Ghazālī (1917-1996), translated into English as *A Thematic Commentary on the Qurʾān*, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, VA 2000. Muhammad al-Ghazālī Ahmad Al-Saqqāʾ was a disciple of Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949) and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. Id., *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdūʿī li-l-Qurʾān al-Karīm ... cit. (Thematic Exegesis)*, p. 4.

*[Islamic] science, or the precondition of the Moderns, thus regardless of any religious school.*

*The question asks: Is it not possible for a contemporary Arab thinker to relate reality to the text as the Western theoreticians do within their particular reality, and we "translate" from it? At the same time, is it not possible to get the same text with this observation, either as a guidance or to explain it? Now, the exegesis is not one text, but the whole, it is the spirit of the text.*

*The standpoint towards reality is: how can I understand this reality in which I live and how can I look at it with direct observation, by taking the text as a hermeneutic hypothesis to be verified by the experience?<sup>10</sup>*

Hanafi's writing is rather heavy and often repetitive. The driving force is however clear: political Islam, and the goal is clear too: to implement political Islam through hard intellectual labour. And as for his understanding of *reality*, we should read his lengthy explanation: *Reality is a Koranic term that is mentioned tens of times with the same meaning and opposed to imagination<sup>11</sup>.*

In a footnote, he writes: *wāqi* ' (24) = *waqa* ' (7), *wāqi* ' (6), and reproduces three Koranic verses (56: 75; 22: 65; 7: 171) without giving their references. According to Arberry's English translation they read:

– Al-Wāqi 'ah: That Which is Coming (56: 75): *No! I swear by the fallings (mawāqi ' ) of the stars.*

– Al-Hājj: The Pilgrimage (22: 65): *and He holds back heaven lest it should fall (taqa ' ) upon the earth, save by His leave? Surely God is All-gentle to men, All-compassionate.*

– Al-A 'rāf: The Elevated Places (7: 171): *And when We shook the mountain above them as if it were a canopy, and they supposed it was about to fall (wāqi ' ) on them.*

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem.*

*Reality means the place where something falls down, i.e., the place, like the fallings of the stars; it means to fall down and to collapse. It is the fantastical collapse, like the collapse of the stars on the earth or the collapse of the mountain for everyone to see. Collapsing is the result of a free action that the Ash'arite [theologians] call "acquisition."*<sup>12</sup>

Then Hanafi inserts a footnote copying four Koranic verses (7: 71; 27: 82; 27: 85; 42: 22) in order to produce the support for his words:

- Al-A'rāf: The Elevated Places (7: 71): *Said he, Anger and wrath from your Lord have fallen (waqa') upon you.*
- Al-Naml: The Ant (27: 82): *When the Word falls (waqa') on them, We shall bring forth for them out of the earth a beast that shall speak unto them: 'Mankind had no faith in Our signs.*
- Al-Naml: The Ant (27: 85): *And the Word shall fall (waqa') upon them because of the evil they committed, while they speak naught.*
- Al-Shūrā: The Counsel (42: 22): *Thou seest the evildoers going in fear of that they have earned, that is about to fall (wāqi') on them.*

The body of the text continues: *The folk's proverb "The higher you fly, the harder you fall" is appropriate here. /p. 6/ 'To fall' means 'to deserve' in a derivative sense, also a result of a free action exemplified in the emigration far away from oppression, where Hanafi inserts again a footnote reproducing the Koranic verse:*

- Al-Nisā': The Women (4: 100): *whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen (waqa') on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem.*

Hanafi's mode of expression and his style for writing his ideas mirrors his education at the Sorbonne. In his years there, he read European phenomenologists and developed an appreciation for hermeneutic phenomenology. Paul Ricœur, who was a follower of Edmund Husserl, considered that phenomenology was the indispensable presupposition of hermeneutics; his views on hermeneutical phenomenology influenced Hanafi, who applied these principles in his own way. In addition to Ricœur, Maurice Merleau-Ponty also exerted an influence on him, as will be shown below.

Hanafi explains what reality is by giving nine Koranic verses as support for his assertion that *Religion is reality; the resurrection, the punishment and the reward are reality*. The first verse reads:

– Al-Wāqī'ah: That Which is Coming (56: 1-2): *When the Terror (al-wāqī'ah) descends (waqa')* (and none denies its descending [waq'ah]).

His decision to use the term *wāqī'* was fully intentional as he was very familiar with the Koranic context of the lexeme. The whole *Thematic Exegesis of the Sacred Koran* operates on a semantic interpretation of Koranic terms, which is based on Hanafi's own ontology. Although he maintains that it is a reaction *against the linguistic and historic traditional methods*<sup>13</sup>, the relationship to sciences of the language is obvious. Hanafi presents his way of treating *reality* as an innovative combination of two methods, which he already applied in previous works but separately. He wrote:

*This last part of Heritage and Renewal unites the two methods employed in the preceding volumes, except for the historical one. It unites the method of textual analysis and the method that describes emotional knowledge, i.e., living experiences.*<sup>14</sup>

Hanafi points out that his double method has no precedent, either in the hermeneutics or in phenomenology. He insists on the original-

<sup>13</sup> Ivi, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ivi, p. 8.

ity of his views and adds that this approach is even free from something *most cherished by European philosophy*, namely self-consciousness, *al-wa'y al-dhātī*, or personal consciousness. Hanafi understands that individual awareness plays a key role in European thought, from Descartes to Sartre; recognizing the importance Sartre's *La transcendance de l'égo* (1936), Hanafi himself translated it into Arabic, with a long preface<sup>15</sup>, and he refers to Sartre, Husserl and Heidegger as instances of a kind of thought that he considers arrogant toward other cultures<sup>16</sup>.

Nevertheless, Hanafi admits to be following the steps of the modern Koranic commentators from the Reformers to *In the Shade of the Qur'ān* of Sayyed Qotb<sup>17</sup>. Sayyed Qotb (Sayyid Qutb) was radical and revolutionary, and he strived for establishing a universal rule guided by the sole teachings of the Koran<sup>18</sup>. Hanafi explains:

*This does not mean denying the efforts of former commentators, and we include the exegeses of the Reformers, such as The Commentary of al-Manār by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, or the exegeses of the Irate such as In the Shadow of the Qur'ān by Sayyed Qotb. This attempt wishes to inherit from both.*<sup>19</sup>

The result is a thousand-page commentary organized according to the tree form, or *divisio textus*. It comprises eight sections (*bāb*): 1. growth of consciousness; 2. self-consciousness; 3. emotions and passions; 4. imagination and ethical consciousness; 5. purposes and actions; 6. I and the Other; 7. consciousness and nature; 8. consciousness and history. The body of the text contains the commentary and the footnotes provide the related Koranic verses, without

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. J.P. Sartre, *Ta 'ālī al-anā mawjūd*, Dār al-Tanwīr li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tibā', Beirut 2005. Translated by Hasan Hanafi, *Dār al-Thaqāfah al-Jadīdah*, Cairo 1977.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. *ivi*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ivi*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> H. Hanafi, *Al-Taḥsīn al-Mawdū'ī li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm* ... cit. (*Thematic Exegesis*), p. 25.



identification, as we have seen above when dealing with the definition of reality.

The eight main sections are divided into chapters (*fasl*). For instance, *Consciousness and history* is divided into *History of consciousness* and *Historical consciousness*, and these, in turn, into entries. The first entry of *History of consciousness* is *Sources for the history of consciousness (The histories of the prophets)*. Hanafi's new approach consists of hundreds of entries, but the entry God, Allah, is not found, and he gives the reason: *God cannot be assigned to one chapter and excluded from the rest; the term God does not designate a particular subject*<sup>20</sup>.

His approach is as foreign to an argumentation through reasoning as it is to an argumentation from authority. However, Hanafi is convinced of the coherence of his new method, which is based on spontaneity, insofar as he wants to grasp the intuitive meaning of the transmitted text and the intuitive designation of the individual life experience. His method aims at spontaneously presenting the coincidence between the two aspects, the text and the experience, in a simple and natural way<sup>21</sup>.

How did Hanafi collect the large amount of Koranic material? He informs us that he used the authoritative dictionary of Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī<sup>22</sup>, indexing all relevant Koranic terms<sup>23</sup>. To relate Koranic verses to conceptual clusters on the sole basis of the coincidence of the term is appealing, but it is also disputable. Hanafi leaves it to his readers to decide about the value of his approach.

<sup>20</sup> Ivi, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. ivi, p. 27.

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. ivi, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Abd al-Bāqī, *Muhammad Fu'ād. Al-mu'jam al-mufahras li-alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Bi-hāshiyat al-mushkhaf al-sharīf*, Dār al-Hadīth, Cairo 2001 (1st ed. Cairo 1945).

## 2. *The new method applied*

We saw above that Hanafi considers self-consciousness as that which is *most cherished by European philosophy*. Since he dedicates Chapter 2 to the subject matter of self-consciousness<sup>24</sup>, it deserves a particular attention.

The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty was a prominent figure of phenomenology, being also a disciple of Edmund Husserl. In his *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945), he deals with the concepts of the human body, the experience of the world, the being-for-itself, the being-in-the-world, which are replicated in Hanafi's work as headings of its main divisions. Self-consciousness means *the absolute certainty of my existence for myself*<sup>25</sup>. It is one of the key concepts of phenomenology in general.

Hanafi refers to the *Phenomenology of Perception* at the beginning of Chapter 2 *On Self-consciousness*. Self-consciousness, and other kinds of consciousness, such as consciousness of the world and consciousness of the other, are concepts and terms commonly used in philosophy, but not in the Koran, Hanafi remarks. [*Consciousness*] *is a quality common to God and man*<sup>26</sup> and, in a footnote, he refers to Merleau-Ponty's work, in general terms, i.e., with no indication of the page numbers.

Merleau-Ponty identifies the Cartesian *Cogito* with self-consciousness<sup>27</sup> and thus rightly affirms that self-consciousness causes the *coincidence between God and myself*<sup>28</sup>. Hanafi's interpretation is credible, although he continues by saying that *it [consciousness]*

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. H. Hanafi, *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū'ī li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm ... cit. (Thematic Exegesis)*, pp. 113-322.

<sup>25</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, Paris 1946, p. iii.

<sup>26</sup> H. Hanafi, *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū'ī li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm ... cit. (Thematic Exegesis)*, p. 115.

<sup>27</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, Paris 1946, p. 426: *La conscience de soi est l'être même de l'esprit en exercice*.

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, p. 428.

is an attribute of hearing<sup>29</sup> and he produces two Koranic verses to support his affirmation:

1. al-Ma'ārij: The Ascending Stairways (70:18): *who amassed and hoarded* (It refers to the sinner in the Day of Judgement).
2. al-Inshiqāq: The Sundering (84: 23): *and God knows very well what they are hoarding*.

In fact, *hoarding* belongs to the root w'y, *to hold*, the same from which *consciousness* may have originated. We do not need to go into any philological digression to clarify the possible relationship between *holding* and *consciousness* because Hanafi tells us that his method is based on spontaneity, (*badāhah*) *simple or natural way*. Do the two verses of the Text coincide with our experience of consciousness in a simple and natural way of understanding? Is not the analogy purely connotative and not denotative?

*Consciousness is an attribute of hearing*: God's attributes are the subject matter of any theological treatise. God's hearing, sight, and speech belong to the *sam'iyāt* attributes, i.e., accepted *ex auditu*, which are believed to be accessible only through revelation. On the contrary, His life, power, will, and knowledge are *'aqlīyāt*, known through reason. Hanafi justifies identifying consciousness with God's hearing because *hearing is not just a sense impression, but it also produces a cognitive consciousness*<sup>30</sup>, and he refers to Koran, Al-Haqqah: The Inevitable (62: 12): *that We might make it a reminder for you and for heeding ears to hold*. Heeding, attentive ears, *udhun wā'iyah* become *cognitive consciousness* on the basis of the root w'y, *to hold*. The internal dialog moves from the philosophical tenet that consciousness is common to God and human beings to the Koranic admonishment of the sinner following the path of an Arabic root.

The chapter comprises a series of entries, presumably related to self-consciousness: *consciousness, self* (or essence), *wakefulness, sleep, probability, suspicion, doubt, opinion, futility, conjecture*,

<sup>29</sup> H. Hanafi, *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū'ī* ... cit., p. 115.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

*reckoning, certainty, reason (intellect), pure, thought, fiqh (jurisprudence), etc. The body of the text produces a full string of sentences dealing with the term of the entry, and the lower margin, Koranic verses containing the same term or another of the same root. The reader faces a flow of separate thoughts:*

*Qur'ān: It is the longest derivation from the root qara'a. The Qur'ān is for reading and reciting. It is a sound, a melody, an art of reciting, and a tune. The oral Qur'ān is different from the compiled codex. It is the difference between the auditive and the visual arts. The Merciful is the one who taught the Qur'ān. It was sent down from the All-Wise All-Knowing.<sup>31</sup>*

Hanafi continues to list this kind of reflections across six printed pages, and finally raises seven questions that he leaves unanswered:

1 The divine science, is it with or without language? Just meanings?

2 The Well-Preserved Table, and it is compiled, [but] in which language is it? Is it all the divine science, or part of it? and How does the infinite stay in the finite?

3 In Gabriel's mind, in which language is it? The Torah and the Gospel, were they brought before?

4 In Muhammad's mind, in which language is it, before his tongue spoke it in Arabic?

5 On Muhammad's tongue, and how was it translated into Arabic, the dialect of Quraysh?

6 In that which the Companions perceived by hearing, does it coincide in their minds with that which was in Muhammad's or Gabriel's mind?

7 What is collected in 'Uthmān's codex, was it the whole [Qur'ān] of some part? And the part [the other codices] that was burnt, is it

<sup>31</sup> H. Hanafi, *Al-Taḥsīn al-Mawḍū'ī li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm* ... cit. (*Thematic Exegesis*), p. 187.

repeated? Is there any addition to the 'Uthmān's codex or any deletion from it?

If we had hoped for a critical approach to the Koran, we would be disappointed because all these questions are left unanswered. What remains is that long string of paraphrasing sentences – which occasionally use philosophical terminology – in the main body, and many Koranic verses in the lower margin.

### 3. *Disappointment and longing for a new beginning*

In fact, disappointment pervades Hanafi's final thoughts in the volume building the third side of his *Legacy and Renewal*. His life-long project has been the enactment of political Islam using the instruments supplied by German and French phenomenology and hermeneutics to renew the Islamic legacy. As many of his contemporaries, he pinned his hopes on the Revolution of 1952 but his expectations were disappointed.

In January 2011, masses of Egyptian people, many of them well-educated citizens, occupied the squares and public spaces. In the chapter on *Historical Consciousness*<sup>32</sup>, Hanafi gives a pessimistic overview of human history since inequity often prevails, and reminds us that the term *hulk* (destruction) occurs 99 times in the Koran. Yet, rebirth is possible by virtue of the spirit of social solidarity<sup>33</sup>. He then concludes his book with some pages of autocritique, where he shows solidarity with the youth revolutions of 2011, and sees ties between them and his revolutionary project. He goes so far as affirming that the revolting youth, the students and the young journalists, were influenced by his project, but he can only point to a higher common source to justify his words:

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 1001-1038.

<sup>33</sup> *Ivi*, p. 1016.

*God is the revolution impelling the believers in God to move. God is the earth that pushes the one who dwells here to defend it ... God is the revolution of the masses that impels human beings to move towards the squares after leaving the mosques.*<sup>34</sup>

Despite all this praise, Hanafi feels himself attached to the reformist movement initiated by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. However, the strongest bond he recognizes is to the Muslim Brotherhood. For him, Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the movement, strived for authentic reform, but his assassination forced the association *to become withdrawn into itself*. Sayyed Qotb took the leadership but he was incarcerated and, after his release, was killed. Hanafi connects Qotb's sufferings in prison to his radicalization, which he summarizes in Qotb's assertion that suzerainty belongs to God alone: *al-hākīmīyah li-l-Lāh*. He consequently accused the Muslim rulers of unfaithfulness and divided human beings between believers and non-believers<sup>35</sup>.

In a strict sense, his project *Legacy and Renewal* failed and he himself recognizes it in the following and final lines, which express his disappointment and in which he wonders whether he should have followed another philosophical school:

*I do not have many years left to live, otherwise I would have written Hegel and the Young Hegelians (The Hegelian Left)<sup>36</sup> in order to prove how Hegel was able to transform religion into thinking, the [Christian] Trinity into dialectics and then, how the Young Hegelians were able to criticize Idealism in the interest of the human being (Feuerbach), of self-consciousness (Bauer) or the social class*

<sup>34</sup> Ivi, p. 1047.

<sup>35</sup> Ivi, p. 1052.

<sup>36</sup> For an introduction to the subject, see S. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx. Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1936.

(Marx), namely, disclosing reality instead of jumping from religion to revolution, as we use to do in our contemporary Islamic movements.<sup>37</sup>

Hanafi continues also decrying the conservative attitudes of immobility in religion and exclaims: *Our heart is busy with the sorrows of reality, bread and freedom*<sup>38</sup>, out of despair, I suppose. Massimo Campanini is no longer among us, I wish I could ask him for his view and as for myself, I would distinguish two aspects of Hanafi's endeavour. There is a specific aspect, implementing political Islam by means of phenomenology and hermeneutic philosophy; such attempt does not seem to have been successful. There is a wider aspect, his lifelong effort for achieving truth and justice. Hanafi combines extensive knowledge of the Islamic tradition with deep insight into the European philosophy, which makes the uniqueness of his project.

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<sup>37</sup> H. Hanafi, *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū'ī li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm* ... cit. (*Thematic Exegesis*), p. 3.

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