

approximately 40,000 girls studying in Alexandria University, not a single one of which observed the wearing Islamic dress, except one.

There was a girl in the College of Literature, who happened to be the niece of Sayyid Qutb – may Allah have mercy on him. She wore Islamic dress, and was eventually able to convince one of her classmates to start wearing long clothes also. However, when she did so, her family went crazy, and said to her, “*You will cause a calamity to befall us! Where did you get these clothes from?*” The girl had had a dress sewn, or had taken it from the niece of Sayyid Qutb. On the day of her first exam, which was at 8.30 or 9am, her family took her *jilbaab*¹² and threw it into some water so that she would not be able to wear it, thus they could force her to go to the exam wearing shameful clothes. Therefore, she telephoned her friend and simply said, “*Bring me your other jilbaab when you pick me up, so I can wear it to university.*” The atmosphere in Egypt at that time was tense, nobody was allowed to talk about Islam at all. Islamic knowledge had died out so drastically among the masses that we used to have a maid who would come to help Umm Muhammad¹³ at home. Umm Muhammad said to me one day, “*Can you believe that there could be a woman who doesn't know that menstruation annuls fasting? She is fasting while she is menstruating.*” It was forbidden for anyone to talk about Islam at all.

His Ties to Marwan Hadeed

In Cairo, he became acquainted with Marwan Hadeed¹⁴ – may Allah have mercy on him. His name indeed reflected his character; he really was *Hadeed* (iron).

*He would shout while difficulties were staring at him
And he is unique in the field of time
A Muslim, O difficulties, you will not overcome me,
My severity is cutting, and my determination is iron*

¹² *Jilbaab*: single cloth worn by Muslim women that covers the head and chest

¹³ Umm Muhammad: the wife of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam

¹⁴ Marwan Hadeed from Syria. The founder of the *At-Tali'ah Al-Muqatilah* (*The Fighting Vanguard*) group, in Hama, Syria, in 1965, that was one of the first Islamic groups to fight the Ba'athist Syrian regime. He died in a Syrian prison in 1975.