



A Child From the Village (Middle East Literature In Translation)

Sayyid Qutb

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The book documents the era between 1912 and 1918 a decade of immensely important influence on the creation of modern Egypt. Written with much tenderness toward childhood memories, it has become a classic modern Arabic autobiography.

The book offers a clear picture of Egyptian village life in the early twentieth century, its customs and lore, educational system, religious festivals, relations with the central government, and the struggle to modernize and retain its identity. Translators John Calvert and William Shepard have captured the beauty and intensity of Qutb's prose in their rendering of the work into English. Their masterly introduction situates the book in its cultural environment and Sayyid Qutb in his historical context.

Although Qutb (1906-1966) is not a household name in the United States, he is well known throughout the Islamic World as the foundational thinker for a significant portion of the contemporary Muslim intelligentsia, including such non-Arab countries as Pakistan and Malaysia. In 1965 he published his famous book, *Mallem Fittareek* (Milestones) after which he was accused of conspiring against the Egyptian president, Abdul Nassar and arrested. He was tried and sentenced to death.

A Child From the Village was written just prior to Qutb's conversion to the Islamist cause and reflects his concerns for social justice that would eventually express itself in Islamic terms. There has been an increase in the general public's interest in Qutb since 9/11: he has received attention in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*, to name a few.

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