



Political Islam Online

Is there a “disconnect” between Islamist Groups and the masses?



Recently, Arab writers have noted the diminishing influence of Islamist groups on the masses. The Islamist writer “*Al-'Abdah*¹” echoes this sentiment and accuses these groups of pursuing an elitist factional self-centered policy through a selective recruitment process which is leading to their isolation from the masses.

In an unusual critique of one of the main founders of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Al-'Abdah* sees the ideas of *Sayyed Qutb* as instrumental in developing such a policy, which he labels “the factional disease,” that is spreading through all Islamist groups.

- The writer reproaches these groups’ lack of adaptability to achieve the supreme goal within the Arab World, namely the adoption of Islam in all factions of life. *Al-'Abdah* also laments the continued existence of socialist, Nasserite and nationalistic tendencies within the Arab World.
- To confront this problem, *Al-'Abdah* advocates the elimination of a breach between Islamist group scholars and the Ummah (the Muslim nation), which he attributes to selective recruitment methods which dismiss the majority of the masses as useless to the cause.
- He argues that, as they become more isolated from the Muslim masses, Islamists party members are unable to benefit from the ideas of others and equally unable to communicate their knowledge to a larger Muslim audience. *Al-'Abdah* also accuses the leadership of these Islamist parties of restricting and discouraging their party members from educating themselves to facilitate control of the masses, and above all, to instill loyalty and obedience.

While *Al-'Abdah* condemns these groups for their tightly controlled propaganda, his resentment appears directed more at their elitist policy than at their extreme ideologies. **On the surface *Al-'Abdah* criticizes these extremists groups and their estrangement from the rest of the Muslim nation, but upon closer scrutiny, his ideas reveal a deeper agenda, i.e., to transform the entire Arab World into a religious shari’a-governed “motherhood.”** By directing his criticism at the

¹ *Muhammad Al-'Abdah*, born in Syria, graduated from Damascus University with a degree in Law. Co-founder of *Albayan* magazine, he became its chief editor from 1986 until 1993. *Al-'Abdah* resides in London where he presently writes, mostly in “*Islamselect*,” and where he continues to have a relatively large group of Islamists followers, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula.

ideology espoused by *Sayyed Qutb*, one of the main founders of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Al-'Abdah* uses his criticism to achieve a stature to rival this important figure in the conservative Islamic movement.

PI 503 - Author: *Muhammad Al-'Abdah* - Source: *Islamtoday*

URL: http://www.islamtoday.net/albasheer/show_articles_content.cfm?id=72&catid=77&artid=8933