

Introduction

O Allah! Just as You covered our sins and shortcomings in this short life,
Do cover them also on the Judgment Day, The Day of sighs and regrets,
The Day each of us, humans, shall see his deeds before his very eyes...

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

This book contains biographies and some writing samples of three scholars whom the world lost to the brutal tyranny of the "Butcher of Baghdad", Saddam Hussein, who assassinated them all despite their undeniable contribution to the intellectual world, to authorship and scholarship from which Saddam and his hoodlums, as well as those who brought Saddam to power in the first place, foreign and domestic, were and still are quite distant.

The lion's share in this book is the lot of martyr Muhammad-Baqir Haidar al-Sadr whom I started translating when I came across his works through my Atlanta, Georgia, roommate, Hassan Jabbar Abbas, may Allah reward him. Hassan was one of al-Sadr's students, and for this reason he was tortured so harshly that he had to flee the country, his hair turning gray and his body full of bruises.

In 1974, I started the publication and distribution of a bimonthly newsletter, Islamic Affairs, and al-Sadr's works, their richness, depth and vast knowledge provided me with first class material for my newsletter which continued publication until 1989. I am honored to be the very first person ever to translate the works of martyr Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr and to write his biography which was published by Iraqis in London shortly after his martyrdom.

My translation of A General Outlook at Rituals, the first book I translated for this great scholar, was published in 1979 when the author was still alive. I followed it with my translation of Contemporary Man and the Social Problem which was published in 1980, the year of his martyrdom.

In 1979, I moved from Georgia to Maryland where the harshness of my living conditions, living in a rooming apartment and sharing the kitchen and bathroom with other tenants, could not prevent me from translating two more of al Sadr's works: *The General Bases for Banking in the Muslim Society* and *What Do You Know About Islamic Economics?* Both were published in Maryland, the second by an Indian friend of mine whereas the other by myself.

Unfortunately, when I moved from Maryland to Virginia in 1982, I lost the copies of my translation of *The General Bases of banking in the Muslim Society* perhaps due to friends who borrowed and never returned them. In that year, I did not have a personal computer of my own, so the text was not stored in a file.

I have been fortunate recently, now I am back home in Iraq, to become acquainted with a bright and active Iraqi lady who wrote about the sister of this great man, i.e. Amina daughter of Haidar al Sadr who is better known by her penname "Bint al-Huda," daughter of guidance. This lady acquaintance wrote an essay about Bint al Huda which I translated and incorporated into the text of this book, and it may be the first detailed essay about Bint al-Huda published in English.

As for the third Sadr martyr discussed in this book, he is his late eminence Muhammad son of Muhammad-Sadiq al-Sadr who was assassinated in 1999 by the Baath Party that ruled Iraq for more than a third of a century. He predicted his own assassination, so he used to deliver his fiery and fearless sermons wearing his white burial shrouds, thus sending a message to the brutal and oppressive government that he was ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the faith which the said government fought with all its might and means.

When he was martyred, a number of Iraqis in Virginia organized themselves and obtained a permit to demonstrate against Saddam's government. We used to gather on Saturdays in front of the White House to air our grievances and decry the American government's blind support for the "Butcher of Baghdad" while knowing what kind of beast he was. A loudspeaker was given to me to speak about the atrocities and injustices meted to the people of Iraq at the hands of Saddam and his clique.

Even some secret service officers near the White House had the chance to listen to our viewpoint which contrasted that of the U.S. government at the time and that of the biased news media in the U.S. in particular and in the West in general. I regret to admit that I could not find English translations for some of the works of martyr Muhammad Muhammad-Sadiq al Sadr, so I listed his Arabic books.

This book, as its title suggests, is a humble tribute to these three great scholars, social and political leaders who deserve much, much more than this humble effort. I apologize for my shortcomings and plead to all those who know and admire these three saints to forgive me for them, and I urge them to translate works of these heroes so people may benefit from their knowledge. Their works at present lie like buried treasures waiting for people to find and disseminate them.

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