

Publishers Preface

The great scholar and brilliant Islamic thinker, as-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr, one of the great scholars and jurists of Imami (Twelvers) Shi'ism, in the noble city of an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq, is too well known through his works and originality of thought for us to introduce him to readers in the Muslim world.

He has written, on Islamic philosophy, *Falsafatuna* (Our Philosophy), a comparative study of Islamic philosophy and other schools of philosophy in the West, both ancient and modern, with special attention to the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

He has also written *al-Usus al-mantiqiyyah li'l-istiqrā'* (The Logical Foundations of Induction), a study with a new approach to the inductive argument aiming at the discovery of the common logical foundation of scientific investigation and faith in God. The present book is based on that study, and contains a good summary of it.

In the field of Islamic economics, the author has written *Iqtisaduna* (Our Economics), in two volumes. The first volume is dedicated to a comparative and objective study of contemporary schools of economics, especially Marxist economics. The second volume is an attempt to discover a basis for an, Islamic economics, or an Islamic school of economics. This study is thorough and broad in its scope.

The author has also written in this field *al-Bank al-la rabawi fi al-Islam* (Towards a Non-usurious Islamic Bank), which is a dissertation presenting an Islamic alternative to usury. Usury, which is the foundation of the banking and exchange business in modern capitalist society, is strictly prohibited by Islam. The author has also written a detailed study of all aspects of banking in the light of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). On a somewhat related subject, he has also written a book entitled *al-Insan al-mu'asir wa'l-mushkilah al-ijtima'iyyah* (Contemporary Man and Social Problems).

In the field of historical studies, the author has written *Fadak fi 't-tarikh* (Fadak in History), which is a study of the political history of Islam during the first century of the *hijrah*. The starting point of this study is the investigation of Fadak, a region of the Hijaz, near Medina, the Illuminated, which the Prophet gave as an inheritance to his daughter, the pure and righteous Fatimah az-Zahra (the Radiant); peace be upon her.

The author examines in this book the opinion adopted by the authorities which came to power after the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his household, concerning this inheritance. It is a study of the point of view of the rulers and their attitudes towards this problem, as well as the point of view of those who were wronged and whose rightful claim to their usurped property was ignored; these are the people of the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them all.

The Sayyid has composed another work on *wilayah* (authority of the Imams), which relates on the one hand to the study of Fadak, and on the other to the fundamentals of Islamic faith. In this work, he attempts to answer two questions: How did Shi'ism originate and how did the Shi'ah community arise? This book was originally written as an introduction to another work entitled *Tarikh al Imamiyyah wa aslahim min ash-Shi'ah* (A History of the Imam's and their Shi'ah Predecessors), written by Dr. `Abdullah Fayyad.

The Sayyid's introduction was later extracted from the book and published separately in several editions. He has written several other works on the fundamental of Islamic belief, other than the work under consideration, including a book on the al Mahdi, and the present study. Similarly, in *usul al fiqh* (Fundamentals of Jurisprudence), which is the author's primary field of specialisation, he has written a number of works. All his books appeared in closely successive editions, a fact which proves much more than can be expressed here concerning the eminent place which the author occupies as a scholar.

Among the many works of the author is the present study, small in its size, but large in its significance and scope, a book of great benefit. This treatise was first written as an introduction to the author's book *al-Fatawa al-wadihah* (Clear Legal Opinions) and published with it. Later, however, it was detached and published separately.

When we decided to bring out this profound study in an English translation, we saw fit to let the book itself and our brief introduction to some of the author's works suffice to introduce him to English readers. God, praised be He, has provided Dr. Mahmoud Ayoub, a professor at the University of Toronto, Canada, to undertake the task of translation.

We pray God, praised and exalted be He, to make of this book a source of blessing and benefit. We pray also that he prolong the life of His Eminence, the author, and grant success to the translator. We pray that God accept our endeavour as a pure offering for the sake of his noble face and that He set our steps firmly on the straight path and grant us success to do that which pleases Him. He alone is the best Master and best Supporter.

Peace be upon you, God's mercy and His blessings.

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