

GOETHE MEDAL 2017

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY EMILY NASRALLAH

WEIMAR, 28 AUGUST 2017

- Check against delivery -

First I would like to thank the Goethe-Institut for choosing me for this great honour granting me the Goethe medal, especially the president of the Goethe-Institut Klaus-Dieter Lehmann and all its members who worked for the success of this event.

This occasion also allows me to thank the persons who made my writing be known to the German reader, especially Dr. Hartmut Fähndrich, who was the first to select one of my novels for translation, "Birds of September", then followed it by translating "Flight Against Time". It will be important here to mention that Dr. Fähndrich has already translated more than sixty novels from Arabic to German.

My thanks also go to Mani Pournaghi, Director of the Goethe-Institut in Lebanon, and Abdallah Annan, Assistant to Director, who have been of great help and support and who were the first to visit me in my home to announce to me the Medal.

Finally I want to thank my dear friend Barbara Kassir who has been present at all the events we shared at the Goethe-Institut in Beirut throughout the years.

When my first book appeared in the German language, I was invited to a seminar in Berlin, about the novel. I asked this question: "what interest would a German reader have in a novel that takes place in a small remote village in the South of Lebanon?" I remember Dr. Doris Kiliass who was directing the seminar answering me: "I come from a small village in Germany and I found myself sharing many experiences with the main character in your book."

Since then I have visited Germany several times to participate in Seminars and Conferences, and when our Ministry of Culture wanted to honour me, they chose Frankfurt Book Fair to do so.

My connection to Germany is not restricted to my visits to your homeland, but extends to Lebanon as well, where, for many years and on regular basis, I have received, in my home in Beirut, the German Cultural Tourists visiting with "Dar Assalam", who promote Cultural Tourism between Lebanon and the world and organize tours.

In conclusion, I would like to invite you all to Lebanon, to keep sharing and exchanging our respective cultures.

Thank you

Emily Nasrallah