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Home > Shining Sun - In Memory of 'Allamah Tabataba'i > Part One > 1. Introduction

1. Introduction

I seek refuge in Allah, from the repelled Satan

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

May Allah's greatest mercies be upon our master Muhammad and his pure progeny; and may their enemies be far from Allah's mercy forever. And there is no movement and no power save by Allah, the Supreme, the Magnificent.

The best and highest praises be to God, Who guides mankind by His Lordly manifestations from the darkness of ignorance to the heights of knowledge and unity (*tawhid*). And may the most ample mercies be upon the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, and upon his successor, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, his eleven descendants, and especially upon the Imam of our Time, al-Hujjat ibn al-Hasan, may our spirits be sacrificed for him.

And may the choicest blessings be upon the pure souls of the upright scholars and thinkers of Islam, who train the pupils of the path of salvation, and direct them to the Threshold of Unity and the exalted stations of God-reliance (*tawakkul*), satisfaction (*rida*), entrustment (*tafwid*), and submission (*taslim*). And particularly upon our recently-deceased master, the missing figure of knowledge and ethics, the matchless teacher and 'allamah [lit. 'most learned'], Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i Tabrizi. O Allah, enter him into Thy highest mercies and blessings; amen, O Lord of all.

In following the practices of the rightful Imams, these scholars have strived to raise the flag of *tawhid* in zealous hearts. They have conveyed the message of faith and certitude to the far coastlines and profound depths of the wakeful souls.

'Knowledge rushed them toward true insight, and they embraced the spirit of certitude. They found easy what was difficult for the extravagant souls, and became intimate with what frightened the ignorant. Their bodies were in this world while their spirits had clung to the Supreme Realm. Only those are Allah's heirs on earth, who call to His religion. Oh, Oh! How I yearn to meet them!'1

These are the words of Imam 'Ali describing the divine scholars, who are Allah's proofs on the earth.

'They preserve the Divine signs and Lordly proofs from becoming old, rejected or wiped out. They are very few in number, but very high in rank and merit. Allah protects His signs and proofs by them, until they entrust them to their equivalents and plant them in the hearts of their likes.'2

'Allamah Tabataba'i exemplified Imam 'Ali's above description. He was a protector of the *hawzah* (seminary) and its students, and a promoter of knowledge, ethics, faith, and forbearance. With his departure, the world of knowledge was hit by sorrow and the society of scholars was deeply grieved. Truly 'Allamah Tabataba'i's ethics, insight, and knowledge illustrated those of the pure Imams. His face was a reminder of those noble lights, and his approach and practice resembled their saintly spirits.

I, this humble being, have made use of Ayatollah 'Allamah Tabataba'i's thoughts throughout my Qur'anic, scientific, mystical, and philosophical writings. Therefore his precious teachings are readily available. In what follows, I have presented some of what I know about him in a relatively extensive memorial, to honour his pure departed soul. It is titled *Mihr-i Taban* (*Shining Sun*).

May Allah assist the travellers of the path of sincerity and the vision of the Exalted Deity to advance toward their destination. May Allah keep up their efforts until they achieve their goal, by means of studying the description of great figures such as our outstanding master, 'Allamah Tabataba'i. O Allah, resurrect him with Muhammad and his pure progeny, protect his descendants in his absence, and assist, strengthen, and support the followers of his school on the path of salvation. And O Allah, assist us and all of our brothers with benefits and blessings from his writings and his soul.

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Husayni Tihrani Mashhad, the sanctified city of Imam Rida (peace be upon him) Friday, 26 Rabi' al-Awwal, 1402 AH (21 January 1982)

- 1. Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying no. 147.
- 2. Ibid.

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