

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and all blessings be upon the Master of Prophets, Muhammad, and upon his Immaculate Household.

Significance of the Ahl al-Bayt's Thesis

The Ahl al-Bayt's principles for building a virtuous community are seen as some of the most important of all guidelines in the Islamic mission, since they cover all aspects of human life—doctrinal, intellectual, cultural, historical, and social. This is because the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are the extension of Prophethood in the form of Imamate (divinely commissioned leadership). They are also the 'men of authority' for whom obedience, loyalty and love has been imposed upon all of us by Almighty Allah. ¹ The Holy Prophet (S) in his famous *Tradition of Thaqaalayn* described the Holy Qur'an as the '*major weighty thing*' and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as the '*other weighty thing*' that never forsakes the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are the most learned in the sciences of the Holy Qur'an as they explain, elucidate, expound upon, unveil hidden points, and extract its treasures. They are also the bearers of the Holy Sunnah in all its details and examples. They thus know the actual interpretations of Qur'anic verses and Prophetic sayings in their present and future contexts.

They are also the most virtuous patterns of uprightness, patience, broad-mindedness, and nobility of character. They tread the right course by inviting to the path of Almighty Allah with wisdom and excellent preaching, practice true striving (i.e. jihad) by sacrificing their souls and properties for Almighty Allah, and are always ready to give up everything, be it precious or not, in the course of defending truth and justice and fighting oppression.

On account of these characteristics, the Holy Qur'an has referred to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) thus:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Allah only desires to keep away impurity from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (33/33)

Because they undertook the burdens of their responsibilities in an extraordinary way, responding to all objections and allegations with absolute nobility and integrity, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were documented, both in history and in the Muslim community, to have an effective and influential role that cannot be disregarded.

Their splendid achievements in all fields of life—spiritual, political, scientific, and moral—and their unrelenting support of Islam and Muslims in their encounters with enemies within and without—including deviant rulers, hypocrites, political opportunists, miscreants, heretics, deceivers, iniquitous scholars, Jews, Christians, and mischief-makers—are undeniable historical facts.

Ahl al-Bayt ('a): The Most Important Pillar

Such correlated aspects and features confirm the significance of this Islamic philosophy and, at the same time, explain various references in traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as well as other citations and assertions by the Holy Qur'an. Such Qur'anic verses and traditions reveal the fact that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) stand for one of the essential pillars on which Islam is founded if not the most important of all these pillars.

This distinctive and special rank of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is a truth almost unanimously agreed upon by all Muslims even though they have disagreed on many details concerning the profundity of this fact.

In addition to many authentic and uninterruptedly transmitted traditions, this fact can be plainly observed through the feelings of love, appreciation, submission, and loyalty that all Muslims—except the Nawasib²—have for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), even though biographies and historical events show that all the ruling dynasties were against their political and spiritual influence. This fact alone acts as the strongest evidence on the lucidity and intelligibility of their guidance. For many centuries, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were continuously exposed to murder, banishment, and material and mental siege at the hands of the Umayyad, 'Abbasid, and Ottoman ruling authorities. It was expected that such persecution would isolate, if not eradicate, both their school and them from Islamic society.

However, in spite of all the persecution faced by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), they have always enjoyed a remarkable and sacred position among Muslims. Unmistakably, the one and only reason for the perpetuation of their special position is nothing but the divinely-supported fact that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) represent one of the roots of Islam, and having been confirmed by both the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Sunnah, all Muslims accept it. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) offered Islam and the Muslims illustrious services that have been preserved by history despite all opposing factors.

Besides this, the inclination of Muslims toward the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) explains the large number of theses,

books, and writings written by Muslim scholars of various sects that deal with the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In addition to these works, Muslim scholars of various sects have openly confessed this fact in the major reference books of Muslim jurisprudence (*fiqh*), exegesis of the Holy Qur'an (*tafsir*), traditions (*Hadith*), and history as well as other fields of knowledge. The books that contain this reality are too many to mention in a single volume.

This historical phenomenon (of the unanimity of all Muslims recognizing the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to be the most virtuous exemplars in the Muslim society throughout history) cannot be explained except on the basis of the creed that the Twelver (*ithna-'ashariyyah*) Shi'ah believe about the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). This creed entails that the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is the 'fundamental pillar' on which Islam and the final Divine Message rests, which Almighty Allah has promised to protect and maintain.

Thus, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) represent the natural extension and continuity of the Divine Message although such extension has not been described as prophethood, since the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam 'Ali ('a):

أَنْتَ مَعِيَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي

Your position to me is the same as the position of (Prophet) Aaron ('a) to (Prophet) Moses ('a) except that no Prophet will come after me.

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are thus the interpreters of the Holy Qur'an and bearers of the Prophetic Traditions in all their details. They are also an extension of divinely commanded responsibility because they are the true guides, the manifestations of piety, the couriers of the message of the Holy Messenger (S) and the authorities after him.

Just as this final Divine Message is predestined to live and perpetuate, so also will the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) necessarily continue to live and perpetuate in order to influence the Muslim community—a fact that cannot be denied by any researcher no matter how unreasonable be his contention and refusal to face facts.

Actuality of the Ahl al-Bayt's Role

An important question needs to be answered in this regard: What role did the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) play in the lives of Muslims that caused them to obtain such an enviable position in the Islamic mission and in the spiritual and social lives of Muslims?

In answer, it is necessary to mention two major roles of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a):

First: They played the role of vicegerency (*wilayah*) and representation of the Holy Prophet (S) after his departure.

Second: They played the role of intellectual and religious authorities as regards understanding the Divine Message and all its details.

The majority of theses and studies that have dealt with this subject matter have, in one way or another, concentrated on these two major issues. However, to restrict the role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to these two major issues—not denying their great significance from a hypothetical aspect and from the general view of the Islamic mission—creates a substantial problem from the external, practical aspect. This problem restricts this ‘most important pillar’ of Islam to an academic role minus a political one.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were sidelined and not allowed to perform their divinely ordained duties, such as undertaking the role of the Holy Prophet’s vicegerency and representation, except for the few years of political rule of Imam ‘Ali and Imam al-Hasan (‘a). Similarly, the role of the Ahl al-Bayt as intellectual and religious authorities has not been internalized by all Muslims except in an extremely limited way. Only the Twelver Imamiyyah follow their teachings and guidance as was meant to be.

Compounding this problem is the fact that the majority of studies that have dealt with these two major matters have paid no attention to the vital role that such vicegerency and authority would have played in the infancy of the Islamic society. Neither have they pointed out the relationship between this vicegerency and authority, the divine message of Islam and other divine religions and their sacred goals. It is essential to mention the fact that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) themselves, through sayings and traditions, always brought to the fore the significance of this vital role and relationship.

Development of Studies about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

In order to explain the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the Islamic philosophy, we are in urgent need of a ‘special approach’ in our research and study of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). We need to reveal and explain all the aspects of their role in building the Islamic state, and highlight the relationship between these aspects and Islamic philosophy.

It seems essential to refer to a number of aspects that need to be included in these studies:

First: These studies need to explain the purpose behind establishing the concept of leadership in the message of Islam and the consequent role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). The principle of Islam, being the seal of all divine religions, should be explained and supported with evidence that shows this religion has successfully demonstrated all principles and goals in a practical way, be they specific or general.

Second: These studies need to explicate the correlation between this most important pillar and the other pillars to reveal the perfection of the pillars of Islam, and the harmony of its structure, goals, and success.

Third: These studies need to clarify the correlation between the distinctive doctrinal and intellectual premises of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School which lead to an understanding of Islam—an understanding that

is based on the concept of the divinely commissioned leadership (i.e. Imamate) of the Holy Imams ('a) and their vital role in the lives of Muslims.

For instance, such advanced studies are expected to demonstrate the correlation between Imamate and *'ismah* (inerrancy of the Holy Infallibles³), *taqiyyah* (pious dissimulation), *shafa'ah* (right of intercession), *ta'wil* (interpretation of the sacred texts), *bada'* (conversion of a judgment due to a change in the prevailing interests), *khums* (the one-fifth tax in profits), and *zawaj al-mut'ah* (temporary marriage).

They must also answer the question of whether controversy among Muslim schools of thought is purely doctrinal and jurisprudential (that is, dependent upon the understanding of each school regarding a certain statute) or there is an apposite correlation between such issues and the original Islamic philosophy, which has resulted in dividing the Muslim community.

Fourth: These studies need to shed light on the theoretical and practical correlation between the multifaceted situations, activities, and aspects that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) undertook in the various ages of the Islamic community in the interest of the supreme goals of Islam. Although it is an undeniable fact, we must suppose that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), as interpreters of the Divine conception and pattern of the final Divine Message, possess a cohesive perspective of ideas, events, and social facts (i.e. actual interests and risks). Hence, they have been just like the prophets who would agree with each other in perspectives, words, deeds, and situations if they were to live in the same age.

However, from one time to another, we stumble upon an obvious dissimilarity in the *forms* of these situations. At other times, we notice such dissimilarity even in words, behavior, course, and method—the same thing that can be noticed in the Holy Qur'an regarding the prophets themselves. Such being the case, we have to find a convincing answer to the following question: What is the common factor that can be inferred from the words, deeds, situations, and behavior of those divinely appointed individuals, on the basis of which all such dissimilarities are justified reasonably?

Undoubtedly, the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and the efforts of the scholars following them can together form a vital heritage to sustain such advanced studies.

One of the most important efforts for widening the scope of studies about the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are those of the great Muslim thinker and martyr, Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr—may Allah be pleased with him—who inaugurated involvement in such studies through his writings and lectures. Unfortunately, his work could not be completed in quantity and quality because of his assassination by the ruling authorities of the Baathist regime in Iraq.⁴

Such research requires extensive preliminary studies that institute an extensive encyclopedia on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Moreover, it must analytically dissect “the intellectual, historical, ethical, and doctrinal heritage” inherited from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and found in the reference books of Hadith (reported traditions), tafsir (exegesis of the Holy Qur'an), ethics, du'a' (supplications), and ziyarah (prescribed verses addressed to holy persons while visiting their shrines or from a distance).

Studies in the fundamentals of Muslim jurisprudence (i.e. *usul al-fiqh*) are advanced, and there is tangible progression in the fields of *fiqh* (Muslim jurisprudence), *usul al-fiqh*, *'ilm al-rijal* (science of the biographies of narrators), and *tafsir*. However, studies in the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) with respect to these fields are stagnant and inactive. In plain words, studies in this field remain unattended as compared to studies in the other fields of Islamic sciences.

Without such development, all theoretical research in this field will rest upon the raw material available, which suffers from an intermixture of the authentic and the unauthentic, the conditional and the unconditional, the general and the specific, the decisive and the allegorical, etc. Likewise, studies in this field will depend upon the classic scientific results arrived at by past scholars. In point of fact, these results, though of great importance and scientific value, are intuitive, since they were deduced under certain circumstances and with partial perspectives.

Hence, what is required is that a research-oriented group of scholars, since it cannot be done by one person, undertakes this essential work by resuming studies in the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to establish a general concept in this regard, acceptable to all schools of thought.

Prospects for Research on Heritage of Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

In the face of all such scientific and objective difficulties, I found myself, a few years ago, engaged in a simple attempt to write about this theoretical aspect. In the international foundational conference of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly, I wrote an essay expressing an attempt to put forth some of the general concepts of this theory. I received some encouragement—that I do appreciate—from some participants.

Correspondingly, I believed that the most important step in this regard was to take the initiative and carry on presenting this theoretical aspect with the hope that it (i.e. the theoretical aspect) would perhaps reach the hands and minds of other researchers and scholars.

Such preoccupation was completely different from, if not contrary to, engaging in cultural and intellectual activities, and I had to stay away from the centers of scientific activities; namely, the Hawzah, and from its ambience and services provided therein. In spite of all this, I tried my best to review and analyze my work. By doing so, a number of points that represent major items necessary for this research surfaced:

- Presentation of the theoretical and practical existence of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in the final Divine Mission which would emphasize the shared aspects of the Holy Imams ('a)
- Presentation and explanation of the situations of each Imam during his own age and presentation of the principles applied by him to every situation as being always in keeping with the main goals of Islam. This also required a classification of the history of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) into distinct phases and stages with all their peculiarities clarified.

- Spelling out the intellectual, doctrinal, and legal issues by which the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School is characterized and the relationship between these issues and the Islamic theory as interpreted by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). It is worth mentioning that our scholars have fully researched the theological and jurisprudential aspects in the study of these issues.
- Chronological documentation of the efforts of the Ahl al-Bayt's followers after the occultation of Imam al-Mahdi—may Allah hasten his advent—along with major stages that have been accomplished and their roles in undertaking this huge responsibility. This will be the study of 'The Virtuous Referential Religious Authority'.

The Ahl al-Bayt's Role in Islamic Life

I have also observed that the first study, being the key and the major work, requires covering a number of theoretical and practical researches so significant that each of them requires an independent book. The goals of the thesis on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) can however be summarized in the following points:

- (1) Establishing the (divine) proof and witnessing the human response
- (2) Divine vicegerency; that is, the general religious management or the leadership of the Islamic government
- (3) Intellectual and religious authority of Muslims
- (4) Embodiment of perfection for the individual and the entire society
- (5) Defense of Islam, which includes defense of the Islamic doctrine and political entity
- (6) Defense of the Muslim community (terminologically, *ummah*) and the maintenance of its existence, characteristics, and unity
- (7) Building a virtuous community and distinctive individuals who can undertake its responsibilities

Before thrashing out these points, there is in fact need for shedding light on and explaining the conception of the divine Imamate (leadership) of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in the light of the Islamic mission. This Imamate is the center around which all other roles and missions revolve. There is another need to demonstrate why this phenomenon is exclusively found in the Islamic mission.

Without a doubt, to work on all these disciplines requires much time, appropriate devotion, and availability of a number of suitable assistants.

Despite the difficulties, I found myself diving into this virtuous work; therefore, I put all my trust in Almighty Allah and sought His help as I betook myself to Him with pure intention and sincerity in the hope that He would guide me to what is right in this respect, as He has promised, saying:

(وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا (65/3)

And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Lo! Allah brings His command to pass. Allah has set a measure for all things. (65/3)

I have also found myself beginning by writing about the seventh goal, namely the building of a virtuous community. The reason for selecting this topic to begin with might have resulted from my feeling that there is a tangible need for the existence of a perfect notion of a virtuous community in theory and practice, which can provide an actual pattern for those who are engaged in the fields of political and social activities to take as an example and follow.

This study, I feel, would fill a gap found in the curricula of religious studies. It would also have efficacy for religious preachers and missionaries as well as faithful educated individuals in Islamic homelands and in countries of emigration, where such people cannot easily obtain the sources to acquaint themselves with the details of this concept.

Nowadays, our Islamic world is witnessing great progress in Islamic seminaries, propagational activities, general education of Islam, and emigration to the Western countries. This book will thus present to people involved in these activities greatly needed general information about Islam for their discourses, i.e., knowledge about the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and guiding concepts for the foundation of a virtuous community.

More than all else, I personally believe that we are in urgent need of presenting the actual, external pattern of a virtuous community through the existence and application of which Islamic theory can be actualized and not remain in the hypothetical arena in the midst of this self-seeking world.

Some Difficulties

Prior to the writing of this book, I composed in my mind the general concept I would discuss. I then started writing and encountered a number of difficulties, two of which are mentioned as follows:

The First Difficulty was time: It was difficult to find enough time to write the book; therefore, I had to use a portion of the time I had dedicated to other work. In view of this, on occasion, I had to interrupt the writing of a particular idea for a period of several months and even a whole year; therefore, when I came back to writing, I was forced to begin certain ideas over again, especially taking into consideration the theoretical nature of the work. At other times, I had to stop citing the references of the texts to save time, which caused problems in the preparatory stages of printing the book due to additional effort required for excerpting the unreferenced texts, which was done by some brothers working in the *Risalat al-Thaqalayn* Magazine issued by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly. Seizing this opportunity, I do appreciate and thank all such efforts.

The Second Difficulty was that this research essentially depended upon raw materials, such as traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), historical and jurisprudential texts, and the biographies of reporters. All such material requires revision, comprehension, examination of the trustworthiness of reporters, and then comparison with each other to deduce the theory. Of course, all these efforts were time-consuming. Owing to the existence of encyclopedias of traditions and reference books of biographies compiled by our scholars—may Allah endue them with the best rewards—I was able to inch ahead.

As I realized that this method was neither adequate nor effective, I resorted to the method of delivering lectures, albeit in an interrupted manner, and then making corrections and referring details to their sources. It is true that this method is not as accurate as writing, but it can be useful in enkindling additional ideas and maintaining the origins of others.

Arrangement of the Books

In this book, I have observed the following steps:

The book has seven sections, each of which comprises independent chapters and sub-chapters. The sixth and seventh sections of the book comprise more sub-chapters.

The first section of the book is composed of two chapters: “goals” and “characteristics.”

The second section, which deals with “the principles and foundations of building a virtuous community”, is composed of chapters discussing the “intellectual”, “ethical”, “cultural”, “spiritual-mental” and “politico-social” principles and foundations, respectively.

The third section, which deals with “the general system of community”, is composed of chapters about “the referential religious authority”, “the identity of the virtuous community”, “the nation’s relationship with the religious authority” and “the internal and external relations”.

The fourth section, which deals with “the security system of the virtuous community”, is composed of two chapters: “security lines” and “security policies”.

The fifth section, which deals with “the economic system of the virtuous community”, is composed of chapters about “general laws of economics”, “private laws of economics” and “economic activities”.

The sixth section, which deals with “the system of social relations of the virtuous community”, has two parts: “dimensions and foundations of the theory” and “superstructure of the theory”. The first part is further divided into two chapters: “aspects of the theory” and “foundations of the theory”. The second part is composed of two chapters: “superstructure and features of the theory” and “superstructure and foundations”.

The seventh section, which deals with “rituals and acts of worship”, is the largest among these sections. It is composed of two parts: “rituals” and “acts of worship”. The first part is made up of three chapters: “rituals of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)”, “devotional acts for days and nights” and “mosques and holy places”. The second part is also made of chapters all of which deal with “timed acts of worship” and “untimed acts of worship”. The chapters of “timed acts of worship” are four: “daily acts of worship”, “weekly acts of worship”, “monthly acts of worship” and “yearly acts of worship”. The chapters of “untimed acts of worship” include “prayers”, “fasting”, “supplication”, “*dhikr*” and “jihad”.

On many occasions, these sections, chapters, and sub-chapters include preambles intended to introduce the topic and present its significance or epilogues that comprise conclusions or summaries of the ideas according to the impact of the topic, the extent of research, or other needs for such epilogues.

Perhaps, this order of sections and chapters might seem odd at first because it does not correspond with the usual order followed in books on similar topics. In addition, the titles of some sections and chapters may seem unprecedented. Yet, the unfamiliar nature will definitely vanish when the book is read, especially when the points mentioned are taken into careful consideration.

Second, the main purpose of this book is to manifest the practical role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the formation and construction of a virtuous community and the establishment of a theory about this topic, followed by a demonstration of the features and details of such a virtuous community.

This matter will be helpful for the virtuous community as well as all other Muslims who seek the truth in order to commit themselves to it. Likewise, it will also be beneficial for all truth-seeking researchers.

Third, after demonstrating this theory, the book will attend to and concentrate on the distinctive features of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School, without delving into common points that explain and mention details of causes and effects. Rather, a swift reference will be made to such points which, though very important at times, have been discussed in detail in general researches of Muslim scholars; therefore, as they can easily be obtained from other sources and would take this book away from its specific goal, only a quick reference is necessary.

Fourth, special attention has been devoted to the inference of the features of this theory from primary references (namely, the Holy Qur’an, the Holy Sunnah, and the authoritative texts reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) regarding the reporting, explanation, and elucidation of the Holy Sunnah). In addition to these, the Ahl al-Bayt’s reported texts that interpret the details of the policies, courses, methods, and situations appertaining to this theory have been mentioned.

Fifth, because the inference of this theory involves accurate *ijtihad*⁵ dependent upon sources and precise principles of *ijtihad*, I have committed myself to the scholarly deduction of the fundamentals of this theory, as well as its major and central ideas, by relying upon the authoritative texts or the deductive opinions that are familiar in the milieu of Shi’ite scholars, in order that my ascription of such ideas and notions to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their group would be as accurate as possible. Moreover, I have

referred to examples and texts supporting this *ijtihad*.

As for the details, I have exerted all possible efforts in relying upon authenticated texts and common texts that can be trusted as authentic, except in some secondary points that do not affect the original sense of the theory; rather, they clarify and explain it. In view of this, it becomes possible to justify the reference to some reported texts of similar purport or indicate the pluralism or acceptability of such texts.

Originally, I rested upon the general jurisprudential ‘Rule of Condescendence in Evidence on Religious Traditions’⁶ in my reference to the details of the recommended acts, especially rituals and devotional acts. This is because such details would clarify the theory and its dimensions and prove my painstaking attempts to mention the authenticity and authoritativeness of the traditions when it is appropriate to confirm an idea.

At the same time, I have tried to exclude peculiar ideas that are not found in authoritative sources.

As a final point, I would like to emphasize that this book represents an initial attempt. Such initial attempts are often associated with errors, flaws, and defects. I therefore beseech Almighty Allah to forgive me for such flaws, to accept my humble work, and to grant success to complete this project. I also beseech Him to make this work admitted and approved by Him, His Holy Prophet (S), the Immaculate Imams (‘a), and especially our master and leader, the Patron of the Age, Imam al-Mahdi—may Allah expedite his advent.

I also hope that readers and researchers would kindly highlight flaws and inform me about them through their valuable communications so that they may be rectified.

Finally, Almighty Allah is the Source of all success, guidance, and acceptance.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and upon his Household—the immaculate and infallible.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِكْرَامًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا
(مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۗ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ (2/286)

Our Lord: Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord: Do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our Lord: Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us, grant us protection, and have mercy on us. You are our Patron; so, help us against the unbelieving people. (2/286)

Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim

Dhu'l-Qa'dah 14, AH 1417.

¹ - This fact has been practically and theoretically explained with evidence in my first book ‘al-Imāmah’ (The Divinely

Commissioned Leadership).

2. – Nawasib (pl. of Nasibi) are those who openly declare enmity to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and to their partisans. Addressing the Shi'ah, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) defined a Nasibi as one who shows enmity to the followers of the Holy Imams.

3. – The Holy Infallibles, in the Shi'ite terminology, are the Holy Prophet, Lady Fatimah al-Zahra', and the twelve Imams ('a).

4. – In 1980, the ruling regime of Saddam murdered Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his virtuous sister, Bint al-Huda, whom were found guilty of nothing except steadfastness on their principles. This was not Saddam's first crime. He murdered thousands of true virtuous believers in a wide-ranging scheme aimed at eradicating the Islamic existence in Iraq. This scheme continued for more than seventeen years.

(Translator's comment: In fact, Saddam's crimes against the Islamic tendency in Iraq did not stop until the collapse of his dictatorial regime in 2003.)

5. – In Islamic terminology, the word *ijtihad* is a polysemous term. Lexically, it means the exertion of efforts in the attainment of a matter. In the initial emergence of *ijtihad*, it took the meaning of dependence upon personal views and issuance of personal judgments in religious issues even if this would violate the sources of the Islamic laws since such judgment would agree with private or public interests. In the Sunni jurisprudence, *ijtihad* signifies the independent or original interpretation of problems not precisely covered by the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Sunnah, and the other sources of Islamic law from the viewpoint of Sunni scholars, such as analogy (*Qiyas*), consensus (*Ijma'*), etc. In Shi'ite jurisprudence, *ijtihad* signifies the exertion of all possible efforts in the deduction of the religious laws from their original sources. To sum up, the concept of *ijtihad* in the Sunni doctrine is different from the Shi'ite concept. While it stands for a personal conclusion in Sunni doctrine, it has its definite principles and fundamentals that cannot be contravened and are based upon divine texts in the Shi'ite doctrine. The latter is the denotation that is meant from the word *ijtihad* in this book. [translator]

6. – The 'Rule of Condescendence in Evidence on Religious Traditions' (*al-tasamuh fi addilat al-sunan*) is a jurisprudential principle entailing inclusion of a certain state within a common ruling even if this state has not been proven to belong to it. [translator]

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