

Preamble

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise be to Allah for opening the gates of knowledge for us to establish the Islamic sciences and single us out as the Imamiyyah Shi'ah, a praise by which we precede those who take precedence in attaining His pleasure. Blessings and peace be on the most excellent and outstanding of His creatures, Muhammad, the master of His messengers, the founder of His creed (*shari'a*), the one who is sent with the noblest of His books, the seal of what has preceded and opener of what is to come and on his noble Household, who are the keys to Islam.

When I wrote my book *Ta'sis al-Shi'ah al-Kiram li Funun al-Islam* (Founding the Islamic Sciences by the Honourable Shi'ah), I arranged the chapters according to chronological order of the birth of these Islamic disciplines instead of following the alphabetical order of their names. I also mentioned the categories of their pioneers in a similar way as a tribute to those dignitaries who excelled in those fields of knowledge, thereby, giving seniority due recognition.

In that book, each chapter comprises of the disciplines in which the Shi'ah are pioneers, with sections about the first people who founded each of these disciplines, the first to write on them, the first to contrive and compose a new discipline by incorporating parts of an earlier one, the first to coin a concept which others followed, the first to isolate a class of disciplines and treat the works written on that class and so forth. Besides, every chapter includes a section about the celebrated masters of each field.

The fact that no one has preceded me in taking up this topic i. e. the precedence of the Shi'ah's contribution to Islamic disciplines, is undeniable. "So when we recite it, follow its recitation. And its explanation rests with us." The book was voluminous because it included biographies of the authors of various categories and also some rarities (*nawadir*).

Therefore, a respectable member of my family requested me to prepare a summary that might serve better the purpose for which the book was written. He also proposed that the title of the abridged version should be *Kitab al-Shi'ah wa Funun al-Islam* (The Shi'ah and Islamic Disciplines). So I prayed to Allah through *istikharah* to choose for me what is best on whether to accept this suggestion or not and the *istikharah* showed that the matter was auspicious. I, therefore, prepared the abridged version but instead

of following the original order in the arrangement of chapters, I arranged them according to the prominence of the disciplines.

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