

Preface

Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) are the treasure-keepers of knowledge. The rivers and streams of knowledge, which have inundated and refreshed the farms of human souls in the past fourteen centuries, have originated from the heavenly pinnacles of this mountain of light. ‘Ali (a.s.), the Imam of the learned and the mystics said, “The flood water [of knowledge] flows down from me and no bird [flight of mind] can soar up to me.”

The prosperity and freshness of the land of knowledge and awareness is because of the glittering radiance of this Household’s divine knowledge; as the Great Prophet (S) said, “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its gate.”

The Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) knowledge is of perceptive rather than learnable type, and this is because they have perceived the truth of knowledge by their heavenly souls. Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) describes mystics (of whom he is the master) as: “Knowledge has led them to real understanding, so they have associated themselves with spirit of conviction.”

The Great Prophet (S) was the original founder of this dynasty of light and luminescence, and although unschooled, his message was knowledge and his mission was recitation and reading, erudition, and awareness.

His mission started with *iqra’* (recite), and continued with knowledge and insight, which filled up souls with rapture and bliss.

It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom. ﴿Qur’an: 6/60.

With his prophetic mission, he led the dead souls out of their mundanity and misguidance into the heavenly gardens of life and livelihood; and called the mankind gone astray and lost in the crooked roads of corruption to the highways of guidance and straight path and breathed a new soul into mankind’s dead body:

...when he summons you to that which will give you life. Qur’an: 8/28.

He relieved them of the heavy burdens of ignorance

...and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them. Qur'an: 7/157.

Having drunk their fill from his fountain of life, the household of his Holiness, like him, held up the torches of knowledge and awareness aflame and radiant to the seekers of knowledge and spiritual insight over the centuries; and with the aid of his Divine Lights, illuminated the way for seekers and made their souls radiant and replete with celestial splendor.

And today, in the age of modern paganism, what settles down the dust from the path before the perfection-seekers and can illuminate their way is the return to the fountainhead of that same knowledge and spiritual insight that the great Prophet (S) and his holy and pure Household presented to mankind. Perhaps today, more than ever before, human beings are in dire need of what the Prophet of mercy presented to humanity.

There is no doubt that delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) fountainheads of light and re-reading the life-story (*sira*) and teachings of those noble figures in our days – like in all eras – is a great service to humanity, which is incomparable to any other services.

Therefore, it is incumbent on all those whose hearts throb for human beings that by mulling over and delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) Gnostic knowledge, to extract the pure pearls and liberating doctrines of this splendid Divine treasure and present them to the contemporary desperately sorrowful and thirsty mankind.

We are duty-bound, as neighbors to the Holy Shrine of the learned one of the Prophet's household [Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.)], to wish prosperity and best of health for all the followers of this path and all those who make endeavors in revitalizing directives of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and their divine teachings and knowledge, particularly the noble and esteemed authors who have contributed to the writing and compilation of this precious collection, and pray for their success from the All-Knowing and Ever-Living Allah.

Also, we ask the respected pilgrims to transform the unique opportunity of paying pilgrimage to the blessed body of the progeny of Rasul Allah (S) into a chance for fulfilling their spiritual and intellectual requirements through enjoyment of the thoughts, words, and life history of that magnanimous Imam; and by studying valuable works such as the present collection, to store up provisions of bliss and perfection for their present world and Hereafter, remembering to pray for their servants in this Holy Sanctuary, as well.

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