

Publisher's Note

Studying the life and *sira* of the Infallible ones (as) is incumbent upon every Muslim, as their life is a full-length mirror reflecting the Islamic thought and they are considered as the symbols of the purified Prophetic Sunna. First of all, it is to be noted that both the Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Imams (as) have all enjoyed Divine and human virtues and excellences. From this perspective, there is no difference between them; and if a virtue is more saliently symbolized in one of them, it is due to the circumstances and conditions that the Imam has been situated in.

The Imams (as), themselves, say: “Whatever we have is from the Holy Prophet (S) and whatever the Holy Prophet (S) has is from Allah (S.W.T.).”

In *Surat al-Shura*, Allah (S.W.T.) says to His Apostle:

{قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۖ وَمَن يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ} 23

﴿Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.” Whoever performs a good deed, We shall enhance for him its goodness. Indeed Allah is All-forgiving, All-appreciative.﴾ (Q: 42/23)

It may be said that over one fourth of the Holy Qur’an concerns the values which can be found in the Prophet (S.A.) and his pure and noble progeny, all enjoying a sublime status before God Almighty. The Holy Prophet (S.A.) states: “The parable of my Ahl al-Bayt among you is that of the Ark of Noah; whoever boards it is safe; and whoever remains behind, is drowned.”¹ He is also quoted as saying: “The parable of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of the Remission Gate (*Bab Hitta*) among the Israelites, whoever enters it is forgiven.”²

Accordingly, the Shi‘as believe that the Prophetic Mission is sealed with the Prophethood of Muhammad (S); however, the *wilaya*, which is the continuation of Prophetic Mission, would live on and sustain through holding on fast to the twelve Infallible Imams (as). Besides, continuity of Imamate and *wilaya* is secured with the existence of Imam al-Mahdi (as), who will one day fill the world with justice and equity

with his reappearance.

The Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi is honored to undertake the promotion of the thoughts and words of the Infallible Imams (as), which represent the pure Islamic intellectual thought. Accordingly, with the translation of *Chahardah Akhtar-i Tabnak* into English (*The Fourteen Luminaries of Islam*) and publishing it in a single volume as well as fourteen separate volumes, this Foundation has tried to take a step, however small, toward the introduction of these luminary figures and the dissemination of Islamic and human values.

Chahardah Akhtar-i Tabnak, originally written by the late eminent researcher Ahmad Ahmadi Birjandi (a member of the Islamic Research Foundation), is such a valuable and concise work that has managed to address a great number of seekers after perfection and has been published several times. Being decided to be published in English; however, the Persian version was assigned to the IRF Department of History of Islam to be revised and then handed over to the Translation Department to be rendered into English.

It is hoped that this English translation may pave the way for further familiarization of the interested readers with the profound and prominent Islamic culture.

Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi

[1.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, 23/124.

[2.](#) Ibid, 23/119.

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