

Translator's Introduction

The last third of the second century witnessed a bitter struggle between the school of principles (*usul*) and Akhbari trend (narrative) which prevailed at that juncture in history. The great efforts exerted by the vanguard of school of principles, al-Wahid al-Behbahani, led to laying new foundations for *'ilm al- 'usul*, and they were preserved by his disciples after him. Al-Mirza Abu al Qasim al-Qummi, who belongs to the first generation of that school, is considered the most eminent disciple of al 'Ustadh al-Wahid, as is testified by his valuable book *Qawanin al- 'usul* that remained as a curriculum for more than half a century.

Al Mirza al-Qummi has been one of the renowned men of thought in modern history, having an all-inclusive and versatile character. Moreover, the ethical pivot that distinguished his life, with the unique straightforwardness and forbearance he enjoyed despite the hard circumstances and implications he experienced throughout his blessed age. He used to spend his study nights, enduring hunger, without being affected or discouraged by this suffering. The dear reader will perceive this great man's thirst for *'ilm* (knowledge), in all its branches, till attaining to its serene foundations and imbibing from them without being quenched.

The world has shown him its back, making him taste various sorts of torment, bitterness and destitution, depriving him of even the sustenance necessities through which he could survive. But, did this enfeeble him? No, he persisted on withstanding till all the world was humbled before his feet, and the monarch of his time came to him for his flattery. Nevertheless, he never cared for all worldly lusts and enjoyments, despite all temptations of life, maintaining his loftiness and sublimity in the world of knowledge, morals and humanity.

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