

Translator's Introduction

The Akhbari trend was destined to make of Karbala' its centre, after 'ilm al-'usul suffered a severe setback that was about to destroy it totally. The sensitive intellect ('aql) played a role that excited the Akhbaris, prompting them to adopt an extreme position against it. All circumstances remained to be on the side of the Akhbari trend, till the very Karbala' witnessed the emergence of a new school in fiqh and usul, under its great revivalist leader Muhammad Baqir al-Behbahani (d. 1205 H.). Thereat a fierce struggle started between the two trends, that ended with the triumph of 'ilm al-'usul , and the defeat of the Akhbari trend and its vanishment afterwards.

Al-Behbahani's concerted efforts managed to lay down a separating boundary between the two eras, of the history of scientific thought in fiqh and usul.

This book may not be more than an attempt to review the documentary aspect in the life of one of great dignitaries in our modern history, and the door is still open for exploring the unknown dimensions of that giant personality. Nevertheless, the dear reader will expressly witness three brilliant signs in his bright life:

First: His peerless curiosity for knowledge-seeking, as knowledge used to be his permanent concern and only solicitude wherever he be.

Second: His profound zuhd (asceticism) toward the world and its perishable means.

Third: His glorification for the humane reason, the essence of Divine creation for choosing the way, that leads man toward bliss in the two abodes – the world and Hereafter.

Further, we should never neglect that spiritual transparency which may sublimate al-Behbahani the great, high to an elevated luminous world.

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