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Publisher's Foreword

"In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful"

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has given many scholars to the Muslim *ummah* who, following in the footsteps of Imams of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defence of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Sh'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in edition and publication of the valuable works of leading Sh'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their

suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Mu□ammad (□).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Im□m al-Mahd□, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Ayetullah Naser Makarim Shirazi, the author of the present book, and Mustapha Muhammadi, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

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