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Foreword

The precious legacy left behind by the Holy Prophet's Household [Ahl al-Bayt] (may peace be upon them all) and their followers' preservation of this legacy from the menace of extinction is a perfect example of an all-encompassing school [maktab] which embraces the different branches of Islamic knowledge and this school has been able to train many talented personalities by quenching them with the fountain that gushes-forth.

The school has presented scholars to the Muslim community [ummah] who, by following the Holy Prophet's Household ('a), have occupied the station of clarifying the doubts and skepticisms brought forth by various creeds and intellectual currents both inside and outside the Muslim society and, throughout the past centuries, they have been the presenters of the firmest answers and solutions to these doubts.

Anchored in the responsibilities it is shouldering, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly has embarked upon defending the sanctity of *ris* lah [apostleship] and its authentic beliefs—truths which have always been opposed by the chiefs and leaders of anti-Islamic sects, religions and trends. In this sacred path, the Assembly regards itself as a follower of the upright pupils of the Ahl al-Bayt's ('a) school—those who have always been ready to refute accusations and calumnies and have tried always to be in the frontline of this struggle while trying to conform to the demands of our time.

Experiences in this field, which have been preserved in books of the scholars of the Ahl al-Bayt's ('a) school, are unique in their own right. This is because the experiences have been based upon knowledge ['ilm] and the preeminence of intellect and reasoning, and at the same time, are devoid of any iota of blind prejudice as well as whims and caprice. These experiences address the experts, scholars and thinkers in such a manner that is acceptable to a healthy mind and pure human natural disposition [fierah].

In a bid to assist those who are in quest of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly has endeavored to enter a new phase using these worthy experiences within a framework of research by drawing upon works of contemporary Shi'ah writers and those who, through divine guidance, embraced this noble school.

This Assembly is also engaged in the study and publication of valuable works of pious predecessors and outstanding Shill ah personalities of the past, so that those who are thirsty for truth can quench their thirst from this refreshing fountain by understanding and embracing the truths which the Holy Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered as a gift to the entire world.

It is hoped that the esteemed readers will assist the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly with their valuable views and suggestions as well as constructive criticisms.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating pure Muhammadan (E) Islam.

We ask God, the Exalted, to accept this modest effort and enhance it further under the auspices of His vicegerent on earth, Hadrat al-Mahd (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his glorious advent).

It is appropriate here to express our utmost gratitude to the group of scholars of the Office of the Supreme Leader in the Universities for writing the book 1 and to Mr. Mansoor Limba for translating it, as well as to all our honorable colleagues in accomplishing this task especially the dear friends in the Translation Office who performed their responsibilities admirably.

Cultural Affairs Department

Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

1. - Ma'erif-e Isleme (Qum: Office of the Supreme Leader in the Universities, Spring 1379 AHS (2000)), volumes 1-2.

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