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## **Foreword**

It has been our intention for a long time to translate into English a book that would narrate the lives of the fourteen ma`sumin (sinless ones) \_ the Prophet, peace be upon him and the people of his household, his righteous and pure daughter Fatimah az\_Zahra', peace be upon her, and the Twelve Imams, peace be upon all of them.

Such a book would, it was hoped, discuss the circumstances of the Prophet, his daughter Fatimah and the Imams of his descendants. It would present proofs of their special favor with Allah, and the exalted status with which He favored them. The book would also present proofs of the obligations with which Allah has charged all men to obey and follow them.

When *Kitabul\_Irshad ila Hujaj Allah 'alal-'Ibad* (The Book of Guidance to the Proofs of Allah over Mankind) of ash\_Shaykh al\_Mufid was recently translated into English by I. K. Howard, we felt that it had largely fulfilled our hopes for the author, Abu `Abdillah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an\_Nu'man al\_`Ukbari al\_Baghdadi, known as ash\_Shaykh al\_Mufid (336\_413/948\_1022), was one of the foremost scholars of the Imami Shi`i community, and one of its greatest jurists and theologians. We therefore decided to republish the book ourselves with a special introduction, which is now in the process of being translated. As soon as this introduction is ready, we shall, with Allah's help, proceed with our task.

It is clear, however, that *Kitabul–Irshad* lacks two important sections which are necessary for the purpose of giving an account of the fourteen sinless ones. The first would be concerned with the most honored Prophet, peace be upon him and the people of his household, and the second would deal with the righteous and pure Fatimah az\_Zahra', peace be upon her.

We have also explained in the introduction to our forthcoming edition of *Kitabul–Irshad* that these two sections would not have been appropriate for the purpose of the book of our ash\_Shaykh al\_Mufid, who was only concerned in it with the Twelve Imams and the proofs of the imamate. But they are crucial for the aim which we are seeking to achieve here.

It is important to observe that the author of the book *l'lamu 'l-Wara bi A'lami 'l-Huda,* of which this volume is a partial translation, used, in writing it the same methodology as *Kitabul-Irshad,* and was in

fact guided by it. In fact, most of the chapters of *l'lamu 'l\_Wara* are summaries of the chapters of *Kitabul-Irshad*, with important additions which the author found suitable for the subject matter as he treated it. More significant for our purpose, however, is the fact that the author added the two sections which are absent from *Kitabul-Irshad*. Finally, a translator was found who agreed to undertake the task of rendering these two sections into English.

Here we must refer to an important matter which has been treated at length in our introduction to *Kitabul–Irshad* – namely that at \_Tabrisi, like his predecessor al\_Mufid, relies, in many of the discussions of his book, on the works of the historians and *hadith* transmitters of our Sunni brothers. In our introduction also we discuss in detail the reasons which compelled them, as well as others of our worthy scholars, to do so. With regard to the book *l'lamu 'l–Wara*, the author frequently cites his compatriot the famous traditionist and learned Shafi`i jurist Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al\_Husayn al\_Bayhaqi (384\_ 458/ 994\_ 1066), while dealing with the biography of the Holy Prophet.

This is particularly the case with al\_Bayhaqi's book *Dala'ilu 'n\_Nubuwwah*. at\_Tabrisi's use of al\_Bayhaqi's work may lead to some misunderstandings of the position of Imami Shi`is on some of the traditions cited from this book in *I'lamu 'l-Wara*. An example of this is certain traditions which at\_Tabrisi quotes from al\_Bayhaqi asserting that Abu Talib (the Prophet's uncle) died without believing in the Muhammadan dispensation (see below, p. 81).

Yet all the Imams have agreed on the falsity of this view, and were followed in this by Imami Shi`i, and even the entire Shi'i community. The authenticity of yet another tradition concerning particular men among the Prophet's companions spending of their wealth in provisioning the army for the Battle of Tabuk (see below, p. 188), which at\_Tabrisi also quotes from al\_Bayhaqi, is questioned by non\_Shi'i traditionists. They held a different view of this event, which we omit to mention here in order that we might not be accused of sectarian fanaticism.

As at\_Tabrisi himself says concerning the verse of the Cave (see *at\_Tawbah*, 9:40): "The Shi'ahs have something to say in connection with this verse concerning the Prophet (may the prayers of Allah and peace be upon him and his family) and the *sakinah* (i.e., the peace or tranquility which was sent down by Allah), which we have thought better not to relate so as not to be accused of anything (i.e., fanaticism)."1

The author of *l'lamu'l\_Wara bi A'lami'l\_Huda*, Ash-Shaykh Aminu'd\_Din Abu 'Ali al\_Fadl ibn al\_Hasan ibn al\_Fadl at \_Tabrisi (c. 468 \_ 548/1076 \_1154), was one of the foremost scholars, jurists and Qur'an commentators of the Imami Shi`i community. He is the author of the well\_known commentary on the Qur'an, *Majma'u'l\_Bayan li `Ulumi'l Qur'an*.

The author studied with a large number of both Shi`i and Sunni scholars. His disciples and those who transmitted *ahadith* (traditions) from him were likewise numerous, and all were well\_recognized scholars. at \_Tabrisi wrote books and treatises on many religious, scientific and literary subjects.

A detailed account of at\_Tabrisi and of his life, teachers, students and works (already written) will accompany the preface to a future complete translation of this important work. of the author \_ as it is our hope that Allah, the Exalted, will soon provide us the means to complete this work. Here, however, we will confine ourselves to what was said concerning him by two figures prominent in the fields of, belles\_lettres, and biography.

At\_Tabrisi's contemporary and townsman the well known historian, 'Ali ibn Abi 'l-Qasim ibn Funduq al\_Bayhaqi (493 \_ 565/ 1100 \_1169 or 70) says: "al\_Imam as\_Said Abu 'Ali, was originally from Tabris, a place between Qashan and Isfahan. He then settled in Mashhad\_i Sanabad (i.e., present day Mashhad) at Tus, and his tomb is now to be found there near the Qatlagah Mosque . . .

The Imam was unique in his age in the science of grammar . . . and had expertise in the other sciences such that many were able to benefit and learn from him. He moved to Bayhaq in 523/1129, and settled there, where a school was founded for him in the quarter of Darwazah\_i `Iraq (`Iraq Gate). He also composed a great quantity as well of poetry in his youth . . ., and has many other words also. He was distinguished in arithmetic and algebra. He died in the capital city of Sabzawar (i.e., Bayhaq) on the night of al\_Adha, on the 10th Dhi'l\_Hijjah, 548 (26th February, 1154), and was taken to his resting\_place in Mashhad (*Tarikh\_i Bayhaq*, ed., Qari Sayyid Kalim Allah Husayni".2

Another learned and well\_known scholar, the Wazir Jamalu'd\_Din, Abu 'l\_Hasan 'Ali ibn Yusuf al\_Qifti (564 \_646/1172\_1248), says: "He lived in Bayhaq where he was a grammarian and exegete, and foremost teacher of these sciences. Students flocked to him to benefit from his great knowledge, and from his eloquence both in poetry and in prose."

*l'lamu 'l\_Wara bi A'lami 'l\_Huda, is* divided into four parts. The first part deals with the Prophet and Fatimah az–Zahra', and the second part deals with the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. The third part narrates the lives of the rest of the Imams, except the Twelfth. The fourth part discusses the imamate of the Twelve Imams, as well as the birth and occultation of the Twelfth Imam.

The edition used for this translation (ed., `Ali Akbar Ghifari, pub. Dar al\_Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1399/1979), based on a manuscript in the private collection of the well\_known traditionist as\_Sayyid Jalalu'd\_Din al\_Urmawi, as well al-Majlisi's *Biharu'l-Anwar*, where the entire book is copied in various contexts in several volumes. Another important source used in preparing the edition was *Kitabu'l\_Irshad*, which was extensively used by at\_Tabrisi himself, used in this translation. Finally, the editor consulted all the sources which at\_Tabrisi himself cites in the book.

This small volume was translated and annotated by Dr. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, research associate of the Centre of Religious Studies, and Lynda G. Clarke, doctoral candidate of the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of Toronto, Canada. It is our hope that the rest of the book *I'lamu'l\_Wara bi A'lami'l\_Huda*, will be one day translated into English by Dr. Ayoub and Mrs. Clarke, or that someone else qualified would undertake this worthy task.

World Organization For Islamic Services, (Board of Writing, Translation and Publication ). 17/3/1406 30/11/1985 Tehran \_ IRAN.

- 1. Majma'u 'I-Bayan, Matba'atu'I\_`Irfan, Sayda (Lebanon), 1355/1936, vol. 5, p. 32.
- 2. Hyderabad, Deccan: Da'iratu'l\_Ma'arif al\_`Uthmaniyyah, 1388/1968), pp. 420\_ 21.

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