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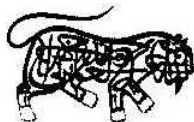
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**The Shī'a Imams
in the Words of
Preeminent Sonnī Scholarship**

A New Case for the Rightfulness of the
Claim to Leadership of the Twelve Shī'a Imams

Mas'ūd Emāmī

Translated and Annotated by
Blake Archer Williams



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Introduction

This book is a presentation of the views of a large and representative sampling of the opinion of Sunnī scholarship about the exalted rank of eleven Imams of the Shī'a in terms of the breadth of their knowledge and their spiritual station. This overall representative view is then used as the basis for a proof for the rightness of the claim of the Imams for the leadership of the community. This proof is based on specific rational and epistemological principles which we shall explore briefly in the first chapter of the book. On the basis of these confirmed epistemological principles, the nature of the probative force of this proof is such that it is capable of being strengthened with the addition of other supplementary evidence and factors. We therefore bring to bear some of these factors as evidence in another section of the book. The application of the rationale provided by this supplementary evidence has been used extensively in the

past and has a long history in the annals of apologetics and dogmatic argumentation (*kalām*), but the primary proof here presented has not, to the best of my knowledge, been used before in the history of demonstrations which relate to the doctrine of the imāmate. Thus, it can be said that what is presented in the essay which is before you is a new proof for [the rightfulness of the claim to] the imāmate of the twelve Imams of the Shī'a (unto all of whom be God's peace).