

al-Sidrah: An Introduction

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The Ahl al-Bayt Islamic Seminary was established with the mission of training Islamic scholars and leaders who can guide the Muslim communities in the West. To succeed in this mission, in addition to preparing strong scholars rooted in the rich heritage of traditional Islamic learning, the Seminary will require an intimate spiritual and academic connection to the communities it serves. It is the individuals and institutions of these communities who are the primary audience and beneficiaries of the Seminary's message and mission.

The Seminary's publication, *al-Sidrah*, aims to create that essential link between the Seminary's specialized offerings on the one hand and the broader needs of our society on the other. By producing and imparting critical scholarship and engaging vital societal and cultural issues, *al-Sidrah* will serve as a forum to foster a deeper appreciation for the values and teachings of Islam.

The publication's name, al-Sidrah, is inspired by the celestial "lote-tree" mentioned in the Qur'ān in connection with the Prophet's night journey to the heavens. The lote-tree symbolizes Divinely-inspired knowledge and the connection between the celestial and the mundane realms, and the name, al-Sidrah, reflects the believer's yearning to remain ever connected to the spring of Divine guidance and knowledge.

On behalf of the students and faculty of the Ahl al-Bayt Islamic Seminary, we invite you to join the Seminary's community by participating in its intellectual and spiritual mission—and we hope that *al-Sidrah* will be a worthy companion as you set out on this path.