

# Bahá'u'lláh

# The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

The Most Holy Book

An Introduction

Kitáb-i-Aqdas 1

# A Study Class

This study class to “The Most Holy Book”, Bahà'u'lláh's Book of Laws, can only give an overview of its profound contents. It is organised in accordance with the *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* anticipated by the Guardian and published in 1973. Within this, relevant texts from the Book itself as published in 1992 are included to provide access to some of the original texts.

# A Study Class

The selection is based on those laws most immediately relevant to individual practice and Bahá'í administration at the present time. Parts of the Synopsis with details of personal status not immediately relevant, such as marriage, dowry and inheritance, have not been included. *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* as published also includes Questions and Answers, and detailed notes explaining many provisions, so it should be referred to beyond the texts studied here.

# Introduction

Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Kitáb-i-Aqdas around 1873, some twenty years after He had received, in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán, the intimation of His Revelation. In one of His Tablets He indicates that even after its revelation the Aqdas was withheld by Him for some time before it was sent to the friends in Iran.

(Universal House of Justice, from the Introduction)

# Introduction

Of the more than one hundred volumes comprising the sacred Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is of unique importance. *“To build anew the whole world”* is the claim and challenge of His Message, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Charter of the future world civilization that Bahá'u'lláh has come to raise up. Its provisions rest squarely on the foundation established by past religions, for, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, *“This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.”* In this Revelation the concepts of the past are brought to a new level of understanding, and the social laws, changed to suit the age now dawning, are designed to carry humanity forward into a world civilization the splendors of which can as yet be scarcely imagined.

(Universal House of Justice, from the Introduction)

# Introduction

In its affirmation of the validity of the great religions of the past, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reiterates those eternal truths enunciated by all the Divine Messengers: the unity of God, love of one's neighbor, and the moral purpose of earthly life. At the same time it removes those elements of past religious codes that now constitute obstacles to the emerging unification of the world and the reconstruction of human society.

(Universal House of Justice, from the Introduction)

# Introduction

“The laws revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in the Aqdas are, whenever practicable and not in direct conflict with the Civil Law of the land, absolutely binding on every believer or Bahá’í institution whether in the East or in the West. Certain laws ... should be regarded by all believers as universally and vitally applicable at the present time. Others have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today... What has not been formulated in the Aqdas, in addition to matters of detail and of secondary importance arising out of the application of the laws already formulated by Bahá’u’lláh, will have to be enacted by the Universal House of Justice.” (letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 1935)

(Universal House of Justice, from the Introduction)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

...the Book itself is the *“Unerring Balance”* established amongst men. In it He formally ordains the institution of the *“House of Justice,”* defines its functions, fixes its revenues, and designates its members as the *“Men of Justice,”* the *“Deputies of God,”* the *“Trustees of the All-Merciful”*; alludes to the future Center of His Covenant, and invests Him with the right of interpreting His holy Writ; anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship;...

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

...bears witness to the revolutionizing effect of His World Order; enunciates the doctrine of the “*Most Great Infallibility*” of the Manifestation of God; asserts this infallibility to be the inherent and exclusive right of the Prophet; and rules out the possibility of the appearance of another Manifestation ere the lapse of at least one thousand years.

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

In this Book He, moreover, prescribes the obligatory prayers; designates the time and period of fasting; prohibits congregational prayer except for the dead; fixes the Qiblih; institutes the Ḥuqúqu'lláh (Right of God); formulates the law of inheritance; ordains the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár; establishes the Nineteen Day Feast, the Bahá'í festivals and the Intercalary Days;...

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

...abolishes the institution of priesthood; prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, monasticism, penance, the use of pulpits and the kissing of hands; prescribes monogamy; condemns cruelty to animals, idleness and sloth, backbiting and calumny; censures divorce;...

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

...interdicts gambling, the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks; specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft; stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions;...

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

...imposes the obligation of engaging in some trade or profession, exalting such occupation to the rank of worship; emphasizes the necessity of providing the means for the education of children; and lays upon every person the duty of writing a testament and of strict obedience to one's government.

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

Apart from these provisions Bahá'u'lláh exhorts His followers to consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with the adherents of all religions; warns them to guard against fanaticism, sedition, pride, dispute and contention; inculcates upon them immaculate cleanliness, strict truthfulness, spotless chastity, trustworthiness, hospitality, fidelity, courtesy, forbearance, justice and fairness; counsels them to be “*even as the fingers of one hand and the limbs of one body*”; calls upon them to arise and serve His Cause; and assures them of His undoubted aid.

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

He, furthermore, dwells upon the instability of human affairs; declares that true liberty consists in man's submission to His commandments; cautions them not to be indulgent in carrying out His statutes; prescribes the twin inseparable duties of recognizing the "*Dayspring of God's Revelation*" and of observing all the ordinances revealed by Him, neither of which, He affirms, is acceptable without the other.

(Shoghi Effendi, from *God Passes By*)

# Summary of Contents

- I. The Appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Successor of Bahá’u’lláh and Interpreter of His Teachings
- II. Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship
- III. The Institution of the House of Justice
- IV. Laws, Ordinances and Exhortations
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  - B. Fasting
  - C. Laws of Personal Status
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- V. Specific Admonitions, Reproofs and Warnings
- VI. Miscellaneous Subjects

*(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)*

