

The Aqdas As Life

Building Distinct Communities of Glory

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1. Intro

What could a community be like if the Kitab-i-Aqdas by Baha'u'llah is the primary source of guidance? As of this writing, there have been no distinct communities which emphasize the fullness of the Aqdas. The Kitab-i-Aqdas is addressed to all of creation and for the people of Baha.

My goal is to take a loving look in the Aqdas, use Baha'u'llah's teachings to explain and expand upon concepts, and to use whatever inspiration I have access to at least demonstrate the potentials the Aqdas has for you, for me, and for the rest of us who believe in Baha'u'llah.

This book is merely my own personal understanding and perspective, just one way to look at it. Perhaps you may also have your own way as well. I welcome any discussion of this book, the Aqdas, and the building of distant Aqdas communities. Thank you!

1. Intro

Part I.

The Pillars of Belief

2. Belief in God

2.1. The Lord of all Religions

The Kitab-i-Aqdas's first five verses set the table for the foundation of faith. The first foundation is a belief in God, who is the Lord of all Religions.

The first question a person could have would be what qualifies as a religion? So far in the writings of Baha'u'llah, there is nothing in particular which qualifies what makes a religion true or false. There are exhortations saying some scriptures are true, but Baha'u'llah does not say other religions who do not have a scripture are not true. Scriptures does not equal religion as many religions exist without formal scripture.

Baha'u'llah does refer to the practices of various faiths in the surrounding areas, such as ascetic practices of Hinduism.

Religion is any faith-based practice which has some kind of ritual, tradition, mode of worship, and a belief in at least one deity. The word "all" is the most inclusive word one can use. If a person were to ask "Is God the Lord of so-and-so religion?" the answer should always be "yes."

The Kitab-i-Ahd reminds the people to always remember "All is from God." This phrase is the very foundation of belief. All is from God. It is also the foundation of unity. With God being One, All is also One, even when there are differing attributes and qualities being expressed and observed. Even in polytheistic traditions, all is from God. If a religion has a practice which is different from another religion, all is from God.

2. Belief in God

2.2. Attributes and Names of God

- All-Bountiful - 1
- All-Hearing - 1
- All-Informed - 1
- All-Knowing - 4
- Almighty - 3
- All-Merciful - 3
- All-Powerful - 5
- All-Seeing - 1
- All-Sufficient - 1
- All-Wise - 2
- Ancient - 1
- Beloved - 2
- Bestower - 3
- Bountiful - 2
- Chosen - 1
- Commander - 1
- Compassionate - 1
- Creator of the Heavens - 1
- Ever-Forgiving - 1
- Everlasting - 1
- Exalted - 3
- Forgiving - 5
- Generous - 3
- Great - 1
- Lord - 5
- Lord of all Beings - 2
- Lord of Beauty - 1
- Lord of Bounty - 1
- Lord of all Creation - 1
- Lord of Dominion - 1
- Lord of your Forefathers - 1
- Lord of Grace - 1
- Lord of Grandeur - 1
- Lord of Humankind - 1

2.3. *Fear God*

- Lord of Majesty - 1
- Lord of Origin - 2
- Lord of Return - 2
- Lord of the Seen - 1
- Lord of Sovereignty - 1
- Lord of Splendor - 1
- Lord of the Unseen - 1
- Lord of the Worlds - 2
- Majestic - 1
- Manifest - 1
- Manifestation of the Signs - 1
- Most Merciful - 1
- Merciful - 6
- Mighty - 11
- One - 1
- Powerful One - 1
- Praiseworthy - 1
- Provider of all Means - 1
- Purest - 1
- Revealer of the Verses - 2
- Ruler - 1
- Self-Subsisting - 1
- Self-Sufficient - 1
- Source of Inspiration - 1
- True - 2
- Wise - 2

2.3. **Fear God**

All will perish from a single Word from God.

2. Belief in God

2.4. Love God

2.5. Win God's Love

3. Belief in the Manifestation of God

3.1. The Dawning Place of Revelation

3.2. The Pen of Revelation

3.3. The Supreme Pen

3.4. The Pen of the Most High

3.5. The Station of His Own Self

3.6. The Desired One

3.7. The Promised One

3.8. The Sun of Truth and Explanation

3.9. The Sun of the Bayan

3.10. The Key to the Hidden Treasure is My Love

3.11. The Horizon of Radiance

3.12. No Manifestation For 1,000 Years

Baha'u'llah says that whoever declares a proclamation before 1,000 years has expired is an imposter. The Kitab-i-Aqdas was first written in 1873, so this

3.13. We Are With You

could mean at least by the year 2873. The proclamation would include a command of new revelation which could change the law of God. This also ensures there is a duration in the implementation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas to allow for the development of the nations.

Anyone who makes such a proclamation without later repenting will be punished severely by God. No one else has any authority to punish such a person.

3.13. We Are With You

Baha'u'llah and the Manifestations will be with you in all conditions, even when He is no longer physically among you. He will assist you with the truth.

3.14. Informs of What is Hidden

3. Belief in the Manifestation of God

4. Belief in the Commands of God

4.1. Greatest Means For the Order of the World

4.2. Preservation of Nations

4.3. Keys of God's Mercy

4.4. Lamps of God's Care

4.5. Lamp of Wisdom

4.6. Lamp of Success

4.7. Sun of Wisdom

4.8. Sun of Explanation

4.9. Fragrance from God's Garment

4.10. Nectar of Justice

4.11. The Choice Sealed Wine

4.12. Carry Out Ordinances of God With Love

4.13. Pearls of Laws

4.14. Water of Life

5. Break the Boundaries of Self

5.1. Turn Towards God

5.2. Abandon Illusions

5. *Break the Boundaries of Self*

Part II.

Acts of Worship

6. Obligatory Prayer

6.1. Who is Required to Pray

The age of maturity is the age when a believer is first required to pray, as well as other religious duties. In Questions and Answers, Baha'u'llah defines the age of maturity to be 15 years old for all people. This means anyone under 15 years old should not be expected, required, or forced to pray, even if you are the parent of a child under 15 years old.

Prayer is also not required if any person is ill or if they are in old age. Old age is not defined, but at this time is up to the believer. Any person who is not required to pray may do so if they feel compelled to.

A woman who is menstrating does not have to perform obligatory prayer nor fast. She is to perform the ablutions and repeat the phrase “Glory be to God, the Lord of Splendor and Beauty” 95 times in a 24-hour period starting at noon.

The prayers, whether obligatory or not, are to be done on an individual basis and in private. The emphasis is the individual's relationship with God and their individual spiritual journey. The exception to this is the Prayer for the Dead. All of these can be done in your native language, or any language you know where you understand what is being said.

6.2. Preparation for Prayer

Ablutions are required in preparation for prayer. An ablution is the washing of your hands and face with water. If ablutions cannot be performed, the

6. *Obligatory Prayer*

short prayer should be offered to God prior to the obligatory prayer “In the Name of God, the Purest, the Purest” five times.

6.3. Length of Prayer

The length of the obligatory prayer was to consist of nine rak’ahs. A rak’ah is a sequence of movements performed during the prayer, such as prostrating and standing up. However, after the Kitab-i-Aqdas was revealed, Baha’u’llah provided three different obligatory prayers. One can be chosen each day. The small prayer is quite short and can be remembered and conducted quite easily. The midmost prayer follows the structure most like the original obligatory prayer and can take a few minutes to perform. The great prayer is designed more for a deep meditation which can take at least fifteen minutes. All of the times can vary depending on if you sing, take time to reflect on the words, or even repeat some of the invocations.

6.4. Time of Day

The obligatory prayer was originally to be performed three times per day. Once in the morning between sunrise until noon. The second time would be between noon and sunset. The final time is from sunset until two hours after sunset. These instructions follow with the midmost prayer, which is designed most closely to the original prayer prescribed in the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

The small prayer is to be performed at noon, which is from noon until sunset. The great prayer is to be performed anytime in the 24 hour period.

For believers who are in high latitudes where the time of day can vary greatly depending on the season, the use of watches and clocks to determine prayer times are acceptable. For example, in Calgary, Canada, sunset is close to 10pm during the summer solstice and closer to 8pm during the spring equinox. In Quito, Equador, sunset was at 6:21pm. In Quito, sunset is usually around the same time due to its location at the equator. A person in Calgary could choose to do the evening prayer closer to 8pm year-round as

6.5. Direction of Prayer

that could be similar to the spring equinox, or maybe they choose a random location near the equator such as in Quito. Any of these alternatives are acceptable as it can be reasonably be sunset somewhere in that longitude.

Depending on perspective, one may feel a longer prayer will have more merit than the other, but really Baha'u'llah did not say either is preferred. The intention is to follow your own heart and express your spirit depending on your own circumstances each day. It is important that it is performed daily, as prayer is the foundation of a loving relationship with God.

As God has also prescribed work as an act of worship, I would recommend not getting too concerned about how to balance a busy lifestyle with the devotional act of prayer. This will develop naturally as your relationship grows. You will start to develop a sense of when you need to pray, or which prayer is the best for that day. I have found the great prayer difficult to recite word for word. When I get a little lost, I paraphrase or just start expressing what feels right within myself. Sometimes I also use prerecorded music to guide me.

No matter what, the important aspect is that prayer is done at least once per day.

6.5. Direction of Prayer

The direction of obligatory prayer is called the Qiblih, or the point of adoration. As the point is currently the point where the Sun of Truth and Explanation had set, this would be the mansion of Bahji in present day Acre, Israel.

As a simple sidenote, Acre is one of the world's longest continuously lived settlements, going back to the Bronze Age. It also served as the final stronghold for Christian Crusaders before they were defeated by the Mamluks. Today Acre is a diverse small city with a well-balanced mix of people of various religions.

Today, there are various apps which can be used to determine the most correct direction for prayer. However, if you are travelling and don't have a

6. Obligatory Prayer

tool to use, it is acceptable to face the direction you feel is the most right. As with everything in religion, intention is the most important aspect. For prayers which are not obligatory, a believer can face in any direction. God is in all directions.

6.6. The Prayer for the Dead

The prayer for the dead provides for two options. The first option is to recite the full prayer revealed. There is a version for the male deceased and another for the female deceased. The second option exists if the believer has not remembered the full prayer. This second option is to say Allahu-Akbar six times. The prayer is performed during Qunut, which is based on the Muslim tradition of praying in a standing position, with the palms facing outward towards the sky. The Qunut is also a part of the obligatory prayers and signifies a position and condition of praise towards God. No other requirements exist in the prayer for the dead.

The Prayer for the Dead is the only prayer allowed to be performed in a congregation. This is a beautiful way for a community to honor the life of a loved one. With the repetition of the six verses 19 times, this can create a powerfully emotional experience as the departed journeys towards God.

6.7. The Recitation of Alláh-u-Abhá

Each day, the recitation of Alláh-u-Abhá (God is Most Glorious) is to be done 95 times while facing the Qiblih. Ablutions need to be done prior.

6.8. No Restrictions on Hair and Clothing

A person can wear their hair as they wish. Baha'u'llah refers to bones and the like as not being able to invalidate the prayer. The clothing materials worn during prayer also do not invalidate prayer. These are items which religious

6.9. Clean Flooring

scholars and leaders had often described as making a person impure, or their prayer to have less effect. It is a primary reason why you might see a Muslim woman put on a clean and white outer garment before she prays. Baha'u'llah states these rules were not in the Qur'an and in the Aqdas, He is explicitly stating a believer can wear their hair and clothing as they wish.

I believe the main purpose of this is to demonstrate what truly matters in prayer is the spirit and sincerity of the person. Baha'u'llah and God are for the reformation of hearts, and prayer is spiritual communion with God. With prayer also meant to be done in private, it also helps demonstrate the fact that God does not see us as these sexual creatures, or with sexual eyes. He sees our spirit. He feels our soul. The rules by scholars who say otherwise are attributing desire on God, giving God human and animal attributes falsely.

A female believer can also interpret these lack of restrictions as they please. Could a woman, in private, pray without any clothing? Could a woman wear athletic shorts and a sports bra? Could she wear a burqa? This is entirely left up to her and her only.

6.9. Clean Flooring

For prostration, Baha'u'llah allows for any clean surface. This does mean the surface must be clean. A person may use a clean prayer rug, but a prayer rug is not required. You could be on an old wooden flooring and it is acceptable if it is clean. You could be on the finest marble and it is acceptable if it is clean. Once again, the idea is for prayer to be accessible and focused on the spirit, not the material.

6.10. In Times of Exceptional Natural Phenomena

The Bab had outlined a specific prayer for the signs, or natural phenomena. Baha'u'llah has abrogated this and says we only need to say, “Greatness belongs to God, the Lord of what is seen and what is unseen, the Lord of all the worlds.”

6. *Obligatory Prayer*

The verse is a great reminder in times of fear and distress. Sometimes in the greatness of human potential, nature offers humbling and dangerous experiences. Being able to remember that whatever we are experiencing, no matter how great or awe-inspiring it seems, it is not as great as God. God is the Lord of what we observed and the Lord of what we have not yet observed. Hopefully these words can provide solace in those times of exceptional natural phenomena, the signs of God.

6.11. During Travel

During travel, obligatory prayer may be replaced while taking rest. The first option is to do a single prostration on a clean surface and recite “Glory be to God, the Lord of Grandeur and Majesty, of Bounty and Grace.” If one is unable to find a clean surface or is unable to prostrate for any reason, the second option is to say “Glory be to God.”

After the prostration, sit in the position of unity. I interpret this as a cross-legged position common to many religions, but you may have another way to sit which demonstrates reverence. While seated, say “Glory be to God, the Lord of Dominion and Sovereignty” 18 times. This totals to 19 repetitions of Glory.

It should be noted that after the Kitab-i-Aqdas was released, the obligatory prayer had changed to include the short prayer. This can, at a minimum, take just a minute although the length can vary depending on how you recite the prayer.

7. Fasting

7.1. Who Is Required to Fast?

The age of maturity is the age when a believer is first required to fast, as well as other religious duties. In Questions and Answers, Baha'u'llah defines the age of maturity to be 15 years old for all people. This means anyone under 15 years old should not be expected, required, or forced to fast, even if you are the parent of a child under 15 years old.

Fasting is also not required if any person is ill or if they are in old age. Old age is not defined, but at this time is up to the believer. Any person who is not required to pray may do so if they feel compelled to. A traveler also does not need to fast.

A woman who is menstruating does not have to fast or pray. She is to perform the ablutions and repeat the phrase "Glory be to God, the Lord of Splendor and Beauty" 95 times in a 24-hour period starting at noon. Additionally, if a woman is nurturing a baby, such as in pregnancy or nursing, does not need to fast.

7.2. When?

The month of fasting is the month of 'Ala (Loftiness).

7.3. How?

Refrain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset.

7. *Fasting*

8. Worship

Exalt the Lord with joy and gladness

Magnify the Lord with Joy and gladness

Glorify the Lord with Joy and gladness

8.1. Worship in the Houses of the Lord

Congregational worship, also described as the remembrance of the Lord, is encouraged. See the section of the “Houses in the Name of the Lord” regarding their function and purpose.

8.2. Seeking Forgiveness

A believer is only allowed to seek forgiveness from God, not from any other person as a religious act. Repentance is only to be sought for by yourself and with God only. Also associated with this act of worship is the prohibition from kissing the hands of another person in an attempt to seek forgiveness.

No person can determine if you are saved, condemned, or any other form of divine judgment. God is Mighty and Forgiving. There are no exclusions based on any act, any perspective, or the like. The Aqdas does say the first command is about believing, which without belief makes you in error no matter what good deed you do. Without belief, you wouldn't even seek forgiveness from God. From who then, would grant you heaven?

8. Worship

8.3. Reflection

Reflect, during the dawn and evening, on the mercy and favors of God. Give thanks.

8.4. Pilgrimage

Men are to perform pilgrimage to the House. The House is defined as the house where Baha'u'llah lived in Bahji, at Acre. The men are to be able-bodied and have the means to do so. If a man is not able to, it will not be held against him. Women are not required to, but are also allowed to if they so choose.

This difference in ruling is not about gender inequality, or saying women are less able to perform pilgrimage. This is about women having less of an obligation in God's eyes to perform a task. This is about mercy and generosity.

8.5. Engaging in an Occupation

Engaging in an occupation is an act of worship. The purpose is to engage in activities that benefit yourself and others. This requires trusting in God, who is the provider.

Notice the purpose of the occupation is not necessarily to become wealthy, although wealth is one mode to benefit yourself and others. The goal is to find a way to benefit others and trust in God to provide.

Part III.

Personal Conduct

9. Personal Appearance

9.1. In Prayer

No restriction on hair.

No restriction on clothing.

No restriction on clothing material.

9. *Personal Appearance*

10. Personal Conduct

10.1. Arise to Serve the Cause

We are commanded to serve the Cause of God in such a way where we are not influenced by the sorrows of disbelievers.

Carry out the ordinances out of love for God.

10.2. Exalt Baha'u'llah's Word

Baha'u'llah will be with us in all conditions and will aid us with the truth.

10.3. Be Steadfast

10.4. Desires and Intentions

Break the boundaries of self

Break the boundaries of desire

Beware lest your desires prevent you from this bounty that has been decreed in the Book.

Do not let actions be the partner of hopes. The spirit of deeds is God's approval.

Read the Tablets to know what is intended in the Books of God.

10. Personal Conduct

10.5. Do Not Rejoice in Your Possessions

In the morning they will belong to another.

There is no permanence in what is possessed.

There is no glory in self-exaltation

Do not collect luxurious ornaments.

Will spend what is possessed to have their names remembered before the Throne.

10.6. Fidelity

There is permanence in fidelity, which is faithfulness to obligations, duties, and other observations.

10.7. Reflect On Your Past Days

10.8. Blessed Are Days In Remembrance of God

Hours devoted to His Praise.

10.9. Provide for yourself

Do not waste your time in idleness and sloth.

The most despised of men in the sight of God are those who sit idle and seek sustenance.

Do not seclude yourself

Do not seek ascetic hardships

10.9. Provide for yourself

Do not deny yourself what God allows

10. Personal Conduct

11. Warnings to Particular Groups

11.1. Concourse of Ulama (Religious Scholars)

Do not worship the idols of your own desires. Do not view yourself as greater than God. Even Nimrod is in the lowest depths of Hell. Abandon your illusions and turn towards God.

11. Warnings to Particular Groups

Part IV.

Community and Family Life

12. The Badi Calendar

12.1. Ayyam-i-Ha (Days of Giving)

Also known as the intercalary days, which are not bound by the limits of the year and its months.

Provide for yourself

Provide for relatives

Provide for the poor

Provide for the needy

Exalt the Lord with joy and gladness

Magnify the Lord with Joy and gladness

Glorify the Lord with Joy and gladness

12.2. Ala

Fast the entire month

12.3. Baha

Naw-Ruz - Festival

12. The Badi Calendar

13. Actions Towards Others

13.1. Providing for Others

Provide for relatives

Provide for the poor

Provide for the needy

13.2. Do Not Be Wicked with Power

13.3. Violent Acts

13.3.1. Murder

Murder is prohibited. This is the first clear prohibition in the Kitab-i-Aqdas. In the West, there are different definitions for homicide and murder, along with defining intention. In the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Baha'u'llah uses the Arabic word “al-qatl” , (قتل) where upon the various types of murder add onto the base word qatl.

This means any loss of human life by another human is prohibited, whether intended or not. The impact of any loss of life by another person is too great. It weakens the fabric of the community, causes trauma, distrust, and potentially thoughts and feelings which can betray which God desires for us.

13. Actions Towards Others

In another sense, it is an act of shirk, the Arabic concept of joining partners with God. Ultimately God has all power of creation, but murder is where a person tries to take this power away from God. The person is deciding when another's spiritual journey will begin the next stage.

13.4. Sexual Acts

13.4.1. Adultery

Adultery is prohibited. This prohibition does not necessarily mean all kinds of sexual acts are forbidden, despite being based on the Arabic word zina. Adultery is when a married person consents to sexual acts with a person who is not their spouse. Adultery can also include when a non-married person consents to sexual acts with a person they know is married.

There are many reasons why adultery is prohibited. The first one is that marriage is usually considered a promise to God and is a sacred union. Violating this promise also signifies a broken promise to God. Perhaps the most important reason is the impact it can have upon the family. Within marriage, negative actions spouses take against each other have negative consequences for the children of the spouses. Adultery can break the bonds of affection for the married couple and betray their mutual ability to provide a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment for children to grow up in.

13.5. Social Acts

13.5.1. Backbiting

Backbiting is prohibited. Backbiting is speaking about the negative traits and actions of another person without the person being present. What is being discussed can be true, but the person does not have an ability to defend themselves or contribute what they also believe is true.

13.5. Social Acts

Additionally, Baha'u'llah regularly taught us to refrain from discussing the sins of others, because we are also sinners. This prohibition does not mean a person cannot discuss truthful facts with the person present, but there must be a greater purpose. For example, the previous prohibition regarding all forms of murder. Say you observed a community member dumping something unknown into a river used for drinking water. Another in the community becomes ill and dies due to a toxic substance in the water. Backbiting would be telling others you saw the person dumping toxic chemicals into the water, and the person is not there. The person is unable to say what they put into the river, why, or anything else. The person observed could be at risk of retributive actions, which again puts the greater community at risk of non-spiritual perspectives and actions. Instead, the person should go to the person in question and say "I saw you put some substance into the river. What was it?" The response is up to the truthfulness of who was being asked, but it could keep someone from being falsely accused.

The backbiter could have gotten someone accused of murder, or viewed by community members as someone capable of murder even if they are found not guilty. This harm exists in even less obviously impactful situations.

Now, if there is an investigation into the cause of death, it is not prohibited to provide facts. Honestly state what you observed, without adding assumptions.

Finally, backbiting also has a perspective of a person being more consumed with the faults of others while lacking the ability to see the faults in themselves. With the People of Glory being told to bring themselves to account each day, we can see Baha'u'llah is very concerned with how we view ourselves and others. Do we have empathy? Do we act with love?

13.5.2. Slander

Slander is prohibited. Slander is the knowingly false negative information about another. Slander is purposefully designed to degrade another's reputation and can also cause substantial harm to the victim. The impacts of this can lead to lower earnings potential, ruined personal and professional relationships, and less ability to sincerely be positive contributors to their

13. Actions Towards Others

community. It would be difficult to have a healthy assembly of the People of Glory if members are being subjected to backbiting and slander.

13.6. Seeking Forgiveness From Others

Baha'u'llah forbids anyone to seek forgiveness from another as a religious duty. Only God can grant forgiveness if you repent from a sin.

This command also helps assure there is no hierarchy among the people of the community. This keeps one from exalting themselves over you, and also assures another does not place you in a position above them. We are all equals, born with a noble soul.

14. Inheritance

14.1. Obligations Prior to Inheritance

Inheritance cannot be distributed until certain obligations have been addressed. These obligations include the funeral expenses, debts, and the Right of God payment.

14.2. Inheritance Distribution

Split from the Letter Z (Number 7)

- I. Descendants - Book \bar{T} (9) according to number of M, Q, T - $540 + 540 = 1080$ (42.8%)
- II. Spouses - Book \bar{H} (8) according to number T and F - $480 - 90 = 390$ (15.5%)
- III. Fathers - Book Z (7) according to number T and K - $420 - 90 = 330$ (13.1%)
- IV. Mothers - Book W (6) according to number R, F, Y, A - $360 - 90 = 270$ (10.7%)
- V. Brothers - Book H (5) according to number Sh - $300 - 90 = 210$ (8.3%)
- VI. Sisters - Book D (4) according to number R and M - $240 - 90 = 150$ (6.0%)
- VII. Teachers - Book J (3) according to number Q and F - $180 - 90 = 90$ (3.6%)

14.3. How Shares are Calculated

The Books add up to 42. This is the portion each category will receive. For example, the descendants will receive 9 of 42 parts (21.4%). Originally, the part with the according to whichever letters adds up to 2520 shares. 540 of 2520 shares is also 21.4%. If you divide the 2520 shares by the 42 books, each book is worth 60 shares.

Baha'u'llah changed the Babi distribution to double the portion to descendants. This ended up being another 540 shares, with 90 shares being removed from the other 6 categories.

14.4. Inhabited House

If the house is inhabited by descendants, the male descendants inherit the house. If the house is uninhabited, the house could be sold and the proceeds distributed accordingly.

14.5. Specified Garments

Specific garments are to be given to the male descendants. This may not exactly mean common clothing defined by gender roles. Instead, this could mean garments which have a significant meaning or purpose within the family. Ceremonial, spiritual, and culturally significant garments would be included. This also implies these types of garments are not to be sold as part of the estate, and remain a part of the family.

14.6. Heirs Younger Than the Age of Maturity

Their portion is to be managed as a trust by a trustee. The trustee could be a lawyer, institutional investor, a family member, or anyone else specified to act as a trustee. This should be managed as a legal trust. The trustee is not

14.7. Exceptions

entitled to any of the money within the trust, but is entitled to an agreed upon portion of any profit created from investments. The inheritance will be distributed once the heir reaches the age of maturity.

14.7. Exceptions

If there are no descendants, their portion will go to the House of Justice. (1080 of 2520 shares)

If the deceased has descendants but no other specified heirs, 2/3rds will go to the descendants and 1/3rd will go to the House of Justice. For example, if there is no spouse, 260 of 2520 shares will be added to the descendants for a total of 1340 shares. 130 shares will go to the House of Justice.

If there are no direct heirs from the first 6 categories but there are nephews, nieces, or their children, 2/3rds will go to them and 1/3rd to the House of Justice.

If there are no direct heirs and no nephews, nieces, or their children, the inheritance from the first 6 categories will go to the House of Justice.

14.8. The Spiritual Aspect of Inheritance

Throughout the verses regarding inheritance, Baha'u'llah reminds us that God is bountiful and merciful. No matter the amount of inheritance provided, any person who receives some should be grateful for the bounty provided. There are no exceptions based upon judgments of character or other qualifications to receive. This ensures there is no vying for an increased portion, or any attempts to deny another their portion. This should reduce inter-family conflict over the estates of the deceased.

There is no distribution for random non-profit causes. However, there are possibilities where the House of Justice will receive a portion of the inheritance. With these portions, the House of Justice is to act as trustees for the benefit of orphans, widows, and the general benefit of others. With this in

14. Inheritance

mind, there is an opportunity, such as in the case of a financially successful person to bestow upon certain demographics a substantial bounty. Orphans are pre-maturity people without parents. They generally reach maturity without anything in their name. The inheritance law can change this if the House of Justice acts according to Baha'u'llah's command. Those acting as trustees have an important function in ensuring the loss of a beloved's life is beneficial for the community.

15. Houses in Name of the Lord

The assemblies of creation, or at least anywhere where believers do assemble, are commanded to build houses in the Name of the Lord of all Religions. They are to be build in the best possible manner. This does not mean they need to cost an exorbitant amount of money, nor to be symbols of wealth and success. They are merely to be built in the best way a community is capable of.

There are not supposed to be any pictures or images. This also signifies that in any place where there is worship, even in a congregation, images, pictures, or other likenesses are not to be used. The purpose of the Houses in the Name of the Lord of all Religions is for the remembrance of the Lord, and no other person. This remembrance must be done with spirit and fragrance.

(This may also exclude remembering the Manifestations of God)

15.1. Remembrance with Spirit

Remembrance with Spirit signifies the heart-felt passion which exists when there is sincere belief. There are great examples of this type of worship in various communities, and it involves letting go and being uninhibited. Do not be conscious of the observations of those around you, and just let the Spirit move you and work within you.

15.2. Remembrance with Fragrance

A fragrance is symbolic of that which pleasantly emanates from the source. The fragrance attracts others, like a bee to the sweetest nectar. The remem-

15. Houses in Name of the Lord

brance of the Lord in the House should be in a way which is attractive to those who are also seeking to be moved by the Spirit.

There are many things which I have found attractive in congregational worship. Moving music, rhythmic chanting, impassioned praise, and a welcoming community which embraces everyone who comes in as one of their own. There is no judgment, no absolute set way to do things, and no particular script to follow. The remembrance of God is not limited to form or tradition, and when sincerely moved by the Spirit, will always attract the hearts and souls.

15.3. Purpose of the House

The purpose of the House in the Name of the Lord of all Religions is for hearts to be illumined and eyes are comforted. God is the ultimate Lamp, and for a person to witness others who act as though they have the light of God within them is inspiring. It helps to feel that God is active in the hearts of the assembly and in the heart of the community.

When it feels as though God is operating within the assembly, it also moves the heart in a way which gives peace and comfort. It is impossible not to be touched if you are seeking God as your Beloved. The Spirit working through the House and the assembly is a Spirit which can bring hope regardless of the circumstances in life. The Spirit can help inspire pathways for believers to act in the commands of God at home, at work, and within their relationships with family, friends, coworkers, and whomever you may cross paths with.

16. Disbelievers

16.1. Qualities of Disbelievers

People of error

Like the ignorant masses

They hold onto their own conjectures and illusions.

Clung to their own principles instead of those of God

Sorrowful.

Seek prestige

Claim hidden knowledge.

Claim esoteric understanding

Denied what God has permitted

Borne ascetic hardships

Makes actions the partner of hopes.

Among the dead

16.2. Deceived by Knowledge

Veiled from God's Name, the Self-Subsisting. See themselves as greater than Nimrod. They worship their own idols of desire.

16.3. They are Asleep

If they were to awaken, they would hasten with their hearts towards God. Their sleep is caused by the intoxication of desire, in such a way they cannot see the Lord. They will awaken but not find anything of what they missed in the days of the Lord.

Glory of the Exalted Will Not Endure

The Ornaments of the Wealthy Will Not Endure

The Power of the Wicked Will Not Endure

16.4. How to Act Towards Them

We should act in a way where their own sorrows do not overcome us.

17. Prophecy

17.1. A Clamor In Every Land

17. Prophecy

Part V.

The Houses of Justice

18. Form

18.1. Where?

A House of Justice should be established in every city.

18.2. When?

When the individuals who believe gather in the number of 9 or more.

18.3. Perspective of the Members

The members should regard themselves as entering the presence of God. This means there should be a perspective that within the House of Justice, God is presiding. The Houses of Justice are one of the first official organizations established by God to promote justice and governance. Unlike most religious institutions, it is not designed for worship or other religious acts. Still, this does not mean the members should not act as if their roles are separate from their beliefs, nor separate from the rest of the commands of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

They will act as the trusted ones and representatives of God for all who dwell on Earth. The functions of a trustee, representative, and other roles will be discussed later, but it should be important to note the trustees and representatives must have the perspective towards all of humankind, not just believers of God and Baha'u'llah. This

18. Form

They should also consult on the welfare of the servants, those who do believe in God and Baha'u'llah. This welfare, affairs, and consultation would not operate as a clergy, but help ensure the community in each city is taking care of each other according to the guidance given by God.

The members are also commanded to not neglect anything explicitly stated within the Tablet. This demonstrates how important the role of the Houses of Justice serve.

19. Funding

19.1. From Inheritance

The House of Justice receives the portion from the descendants if the deceased has none. This is 42.8% (1080 of 2520 shares).

The House of Justice receives 33% of the portion from specified heirs from Books 2-6, if the deceased has descendants.

The House of Justice receives 33% of the portion from Books 1-6 if the deceased has nephews and nieces.

The House of Justice receives 100% of the portion from Books 1-6 if the deceased has no nephews and nieces.

The House of Justice receives all 100% of the entire inheritance if the deceased has no inheritors.

This money will be allocated towards:

1. Orphans
2. Widows
3. General benefit

19. Funding

20. Functions

20.1. Trustees of the Merciful

Use the descendants portion of inheritance to assist orphans, widows, and the general benefit.

For all who dwell on earth

20.2. Representatives of God

For all who dwell on earth

20.3. Consult on the Welfare of the Servants

Choose what is best.

20.4. Endowments

Administer endowments dedicated to charitable purposes. These endowments are to be used in elevated places for the Cause. They are to be used for whatever has been commanded by God.

20. *Functions*

21. Leadership Before the House of Justice

21.1. Aghsán (Branches)

The Branches refer to Baha'u'llah's male direct descendants. He had 5 sons who made it to adulthood, and 4 who were surviving by the time the time He ascended to heaven.

21.1.1. Responsibilities Specified

Manage endowments in the absence of a House of Justice, in accordance to the Tablet of God.

21.2. People of Baha

Do not speak except by His permission. Only judges according to what God decrees in the Tablet.

21.2.1. Responsibilities Specified

Manage endowments in the absence of a House of Justice, in accordance to the Tablet of God.

