

Kitáb-i-Aqdas as Described and Glorified by Shoghi Effendi

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Introduction

“**K**itáb-i-Aqdas,” meaning the “Most Holy Book,” is not an ordinary work. It is not about a single topic, nor merely about the laws and ordinances of the Bahá’í Faith. It cannot be compared with any other book, including the Holy Bible or the Holy Koran. Therefore, it can hardly be reviewed in a single article, whatever its extent, or be explored in a single lecture, whatever its length.

The Aqdas has various aspects. These aspects seem, on one hand, to be quite independent from each other, each of them requiring a lengthy discussion for a satisfactory coverage. On the other hand, these aspects are so interrelated that none of them can be correctly understood unless the whole content of the Book is thoroughly studied. Only in this way can the spiritual power contained in this mighty work be released, guiding the reader to a better comprehension and digestion of its meaning and appreciation of its significance and force.

The writer of a short article about the entry “Aqdas” in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (v.2, 1987, pp.191-92) states: “According to a general evolutionary principle that can be seen to underlay the Bahá’í teachings, the Aqdas constitutes an energetic impulse rather than a rigid canonical code. It foresees the future abrogation of its own dispensation, but not before a thousand years.”

Since the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has been revealed (1873), numerous papers and several books have been published either debating the Most Holy Book as a whole or discussing its different facets and various topics. Some of the more recent ones are as follows:

Asráru'l-Ásár (Secrets of the Scripts), a shorter Bahá’í encyclopaedia in Persian by A. Fázil-i-Mázandarání, volume 1, entry Aqdas, pp.161-169, first published by Bahá’í Publishing Trust in Tehran, 1968

Taqrírát Dar Bári-yi Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Utterances about the Most Holy Book), a book in 420 pages in Persian by ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, 1969, edited by Vahíd Ra’fatí, Bahá’í Verlag, Hofheim-Germany, 1997, ISBN 3-87037-966-9

Ganjíni-yi Hudúd va Ahkám (Treasures of Laws and Ordinances), by A. H. Ishráq-Khávarí, first published in Teheran 1946 with many later reprints, the latest in New-Delhi 1980, 466 pages, Persian “*Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of the Bahá’í Faith*,” an article by A. Rabbani, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, a monthly periodical published in France, issue 150, May 1992, pages 12-24, Persian

“The Mother Book and the Adolescence of Mankind,” an article by A. F. Imani, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 25-28, Persian

“A Glance at the Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” an article by N. Mohammad-Hosseini, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 29-34, Persian

“*Kitáb-i-Aqdas in respect of the Bahá’í Administrative Order and the Bahá’í World Order*,” an article by Cyrus Ala’i, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 35-50, Persian

“*Kitáb-i-Aqdas in Bahá’í Literature*,” an article by V. Ra’fatí, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 51–62, Persian

“A Glance at the Literary Style of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” an article by Vahíd Behmardí, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 69–76, Persian

“Juridical Aspects of the Mother Book,” an article by G. Khávarí, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 77–81, Persian

“Scholarly Works by Bahá’í Writers on the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” B. Furqání, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 84–92, Persian

“Ethical Teachings of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” S. Rassekh, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 150, May 1992, pages 92–94, Persian

“Remarks on Sentences in Criminal Cases ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” an article by Udo Schäfer, translated from original German into Persian by D. Máání, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 161, April 1993, pages 16–22, German/Persian

“Historical Hints, Warnings and Promises in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” an article by S. Mawlaví-Nezhád, *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, issue 163, June 1993, pages 29–34, Persian

“Applicability of the Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,” by Universal House of Justice, May 1993, *Bahá’í Journal*, July 1993, English

“The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, its place in Bahá’í literature,” a statement by World Center Publications, February 1993, English

“The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book,” an article by K. Fanánápazír, *Bahá’í Journal*, June 1993, English

Unfortunately, little effort has been made to translate any of these—or indeed any other well-researched and useful works about the Kitáb-i-Aqdas—from Persian, German and other languages into English, a task worth undertaking.

However, I believe that one should, first and foremost, refer to the commentaries made on this subject by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith and the appointed interpreter of the Bahá’í holy texts. Only his explanations can constitute a sound foundation for any other commentary or research about the Most Holy Book.

Based on the above reasoning, I have chosen one of the most important works of Shoghi Effendi, entitled *God Passes By*, which appeared in 1944 on the occasion of the first centennial of the Báb's declaration. This work is distinguished from his other writings by being in the form of a book rather than an open letter.

In his foreword, Shoghi Effendi writes: “It is not my purpose...to write a detailed history of the last hundred years of the Bahá’í Faith...It is my purpose, on the occasion of an anniversary of such profound significance, to attempt in the succeeding pages a survey of the outstanding events of the century that has seen this Spirit burst forth upon the world....”

Indeed, the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas may be considered as the most outstanding event of the first Bahá’í century, and nothing better than the survey carried out by the Guardian can enlighten the manifold facets of the Most Holy Book.

God Passes By was first published in 1944 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the USA [sic]. In 1974 a revised edition appeared, a copy of which—second imprint 1979—is in my possession. It comprises four chapters in 412 pages. According to the index attached to this edition, the term “Kitáb-i-Aqdas” or the “Most Holy Book” has been referred to in eleven pages, whereas according to my own count, these terms appear in forty-eight different pages. Neither is the reason for such an obvious mistake known to me, nor is the blunder so minute and unimportant as to be ignored. According to my count, one or more ref-

erences to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas can be found in about 12 percent of the total number of pages, which in itself demonstrates the significance of the Most Holy Book in the view of Shoghi Effendi.

A Few Facts About the Most Holy Book

Before referring to the Guardian’s commentaries, a few basic facts about the Most Holy Book should be established:

1) “The Most Holy Book” is the translation of the Arabic/Persian title “Kitáb-i-Aqdas” and the term “Most Holy” should here be considered as part of a proper name rather than as an adjective. It is also called in some—mainly non-Bahá’í—literature, “The Book of Aqdas” or “The Aqdas.”

2) The Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in the House of Údí-Khammar in ‘Akká, the Holy Land. It is neither an open letter nor a tablet, addressed to an individual or a group. It is a small book in Arabic, containing some ten thousand words (the English translation contains nearly twenty-thousand words—see English edition, pp.19-88—since Arabic, unlike English, is a very concise language). It was uttered by Bahá’u’lláh and was taken down by a few scribes, in particular Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín. The clear copy, which was made later by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín from his notes and seen by Bahá’u’lláh, is preserved in the Bahá’í international archive. It is considered as the most authentic first copy of the Most Holy Book. The Book was certainly not revealed without interruptions, but very little is known about the duration of its revelation. The only known fact is that the Book was completed in 1873.

3) A reader unfamiliar with theological terms and some detailed historical events may not easily or fully comprehend some of the passages of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas except by referring to a number of indispensable notes. These notes have been carefully prepared in 194 sections by the Universal House of Justice and included in the English edition (see pp.165-251).

4) The original manuscript of the Aqdas, the numerous subsequent manuscript copies, and the early printed editions are in the form of a continuous text without punctuation or division into verses or paragraphs. Only later did the Persian Bahá’í scholar Ishráq-Kháverí divide the Holy Text into 463 verses, leaving out the opening phrase “In the Name of Him Who is the Supreme Ruler over all that hath been and all that is to be.”

In the English edition, the division of the Holy Text into verses has been ignored. Instead, it is divided into 190 paragraphs, each comprising of one or a few of the verses. However, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, verse 366 is divided into two sentences, forming two separate paragraphs 152 and 153 (see page 75), whereas verse 439 is split into two sentences, forming the closing sentence of paragraph 181, and the opening sentence of paragraph 182 (see page 85).

In the newly published Arabic/Persian edition—which is in the same format as the English edition—the verses are separated by the insertion of a star between them, but are not numbered. However, the number of each paragraph is noted in the margin. Consequently, finding a particular verse by its number would be a time-consuming exercise. It is noteworthy that in the Bahá’í literature in Persian and Arabic, when a reference was made to a passage of the Most Holy Book, until recently only the numbers of the related verses were mentioned to enable the reader to identify the given verses easily and establish their authenticity. A table matching the numbers of the verses with the numbers of the paragraphs of the Most Holy Book has been prepared but not yet published.

5) There are a number of passages by the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh made before the revelation of the Aqdas, heralding the forthcoming of the Most Holy Book. In addition, many later tablets by the Author of the Book and by the Center of His Covenant have been considered as addenda to the Aqdas. Some of these supplementary texts, to which we will later refer, are included in the English volume, pages 91-102.

6) After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed, Bahá’u’lláh instructed His learned and trusted scribe, Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, to peruse the Book to see if there were any ambiguities, in which case he would come back with pertinent questions to be answered by Bahá’u’lláh. As a result of this exercise, the treatise “Questions and Answers” was created, the translation of which from the original Persian is included in the English volume, pages 105-140.

7) After the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, it has been copied by hand time and again. Human error in transcription may have been the main reason for any occasional slight differences between these manuscripts and consequently any printed editions based on them. The English translation, published in 1992, is based on the most reliable original manuscript—that of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, seen by Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore, it should be considered as authentic, and all other manuscripts and printed copies should be corrected accordingly.

8) Some years after the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh had manuscript copies sent to Bahá'ís in Iran and, in 1890-91, towards the end of His life, He arranged for the publication of the original Arabic text of the book in Bombay. Thereafter, numerous printed editions of the book started appearing, based on different manuscripts, mostly ventured by a few individual Bahá'ís. However, upon the instructions of the Guardian, this process was stopped about five decades ago in anticipation of a new edition, which he was preparing, the release of which he had made a goal in the Ten Year Crusade (1953-63). Since the Guardian passed away in 1957, this duty remained for the Universal House of Justice for its completion.

In 1973, the Universal House of Justice issued an annotated summary with an introduction and selected translations by Shoghi Effendi on the centenary occasion of the creation of the Most Holy Book (1873), entitled *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. This publication in English was presented to the third International Bahá'í Convention in Haifa in April 1973 and is included in the English volume of 1992 (pages 143-164).

In 1986, the UHJ decided that the time had come when the preparation of an English translation of the complete text of the Most Holy Book was possible and essential, and made its accomplishment a goal of the six years global plan (1986-1992). About a third of the text had already been translated by Shoghi Effendi, and published in his various Letters and Books, a complete list of which is included in the English Volume (pages 255-257). The UHJ states: "We are now satisfied that the translation has reached a point where it represents an acceptable rendering of the original. Nevertheless, it will undoubtedly give rise to questions and suggestions which may shed further light on its contents."

The Guardian had adopted an elevated style for the translation of the Most Holy Book. Diana Maloof, a young Bahá'í, conducted a research on the translation norms employed by Shoghi Effendi for the Holy Bahá'í Writs and concluded that the following policies were applied by him:

- Elevate the tone of the language to befit Holy Writ;
- Beautify the English text;
- Euphonize the translation;
- Clarify and interpret the text.

The style adopted by Shoghi Effendi has been followed for the translation of the remainder of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. (See "The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, Translation Norms Employed by Shoghi Effendi," Diana Maloof, an article included in pages 129-139 of *The Vision of Shoghi Effendi*, Bahá'í Studies Publications, Ottawa, Canada, 1993, ISBN 0-920904-24-6)

It is noteworthy that Evgenii Eduardovich Bertels, the nineteenth century Russian scholar, was the first person who attempted to translate the Most Holy Book into a foreign language, namely Russian. There is also an incomplete Russian translation available by A. Tumanskij, published in 1899 in St Petersburg. The first English translation, by the Christian missionaries E. E. Elder and W. M. Miller, is entitled *Al-Kitáb al-Aqdas or The Most Holy Book* and was published in London in 1961 by the London Royal Asiatic Society, Oriental Translation Foundation. This rendering, although complete, is not always correct, especially in the notes. The older Russian version is more reliable.

9) The general religious inspiration of the Aqdas is monotheistic. As the first verse clearly states, even good works, if separated from the channel of the positive revelation, have only limited value: "The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the kingdom of His

Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed.”

A non-Bahá’í reader, or even a new convert, may be struck by the apparent lack of order in the sequence of precepts, exhortation, and warnings. The reason, in my view, is that the Aqdas is not a systematic code of law. It originated from divine revelations, which left its Author no time to think about the order of sequence, etc. He uttered His holy inspirations without any pauses for corrections or adjustments. Quite in contrary, a book of law is based on numerous sources and must be edited and re-written several times before completion. Therefore, there is no similarity between the two writings, and so they cannot and should not be compared.

Bahá’u’lláh could have re-arranged the Book later, but chose not to. Indeed, He kept His answers to the questions of His scribe separate from God’s Words, as He believed that the Holy Passages should remain intact.

10) Applicability of the laws of the Aqdas: The introduction to the English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas states that its publication does not increase the number of laws which are binding on Bahá’ís. Besides the previous binding laws—see the letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland, dated June 9, 1974—the law of Huqúqu’lláh was applied universally at Ridvan 1992. In due course, the Universal House of Justice will announce further applications of the laws when the friends have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Most Holy Book, and when it is propitious to do so.

Indeed, some of these laws are meant for the Golden Age of the Bahá’í Era and may not be applicable within the near future.

Commentaries by Shoghi Effendi

The commentaries by Shoghi Effendi on the Kitáb-i-Aqdas can be found in forty-eight different pages of his work *God Passes By*. For our purpose, they are divided into nine categories according to the subject to which they refer:

1) How the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was created, and its rank and importance:

“Unique and stupendous as was this proclamation [referring to the Chapter of Temple—Súrih Haykal], it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry—the promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitáb-i-Íqán; the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the ‘new haven’ and the ‘new earth,’ as the ‘Tabernacle of God,’ as the ‘Holy City’ as the ‘Bride;’ the ‘New Jerusalem down from God;’ this ‘Most Holy Book’ whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Bahá’u’lláh, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His new World order.” (page 213)

“Revealed soon after Bahá’u’lláh had been transferred to the house of ‘Údí Khammár (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of his Faith, this Book, this treasury enshrining the priceless gems of His Revelation, stands out, by virtue of the principles it inculcates, the administrative institutions it ordains and the function with which it invests the appointed Successor of its Author, unique and incomparable among the world’s sacred Scriptures. For, unlike the Old Testament and the Holy Books which preceded it, in which the actual precepts uttered by the Prophet Himself are non-existent; unlike the Gospels, in which the few sayings attributed to Jesus Christ afford no clear guidance regarding the future administration of the affairs of His Faith; unlike even the Qur’án which, though explicit in the laws and ordinances formulated by the Apostle of God, is silent on the all-important subject of the succession, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, revealed from first to last by the Author of the Dispensation Himself, not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future world order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded.” (page 213-214)

“...this Book [Kitáb-i-Íqán]...occupies a position unequalled by any work in the entire range of Bahá’í literature, except the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book.” (page 139)

“...a Book designated by its Author as ‘the source of true felicity,’ as the ‘Unerring balance,’ as the ‘Straight Path’ and as the ‘quickener of mankind’...” (page 215)

2) Shoghi Effendi refers to a number of tablets and passages from the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh written before the revelation of Aqdas, heralding the creation of the Most Holy Book:

“well it is with him, who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and rendereth thanks unto his Lord. For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán.’ [a passage from the third Unit of Bayán] It is with that self-same Order that the Founder of the promised Revelation, twenty years later—incorporating that same term in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas—identified the System envisaged in that Book, affirming that ‘this most great Order’ had deranged the world’s equilibrium, and revolutionized mankind’s ordered life.” (pages 25–26, see also page 59)

“...the Prayers for Fasting, written in anticipation of the Book of His Laws;” (page 172)

“...Bahá'u'lláh instructed...Nabil to recite on His behalf the two newly revealed Tablets of the Pilgrimage [Hajj], and to perform, in His stead, the rites prescribed in them, when visiting the Báb’s House in Shiráz and the Most Great House in Baghdad—an act that marks the inception of one of the holiest observances, which, in a later period, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was to formally establish.” (page 177)

“...Súrih Ghusn [the Chapter of the Branch] was revealed...a Tablet which may well be regarded as the harbinger of the rank which was to be bestowed upon Him [‘Abdu'l-Bahá], in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas....” (page 177)

3) Shoghi Effendi refers to some later treatises and tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá, included as an appendix or addendum to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:

“The formulation by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of the fundamental laws of His Dispensation was followed, as His Mission drew to a close, by the enunciation of certain precepts and principles which lie at the very core of His Faith, by the reaffirmation of truths He had previously proclaimed, by the elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws he had already laid down, by the revelation of further prophecies and warnings, and by the establishment of subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions of His Most Holy Book. These were recorded in unnumbered Tablets, which he continued to reveal until the last days of His earthly life, among which the ‘Ishráqát’ (Splendours), the ‘Bishá'rát’ (Glad Tidings), the ‘Tarázát’ (Ornaments), the ‘Tajalliyát’ (Effulgence), the ‘Kalamát-i-Ferdawsíyyih’ (Words of Paradise), the ‘Lawh-i-Aqdas’ (Most Holy Tablet), the ‘Lawh-i-Dunyá’ (Tablet of the World), the ‘Lawh-i-Maqṣúd’ (Tablet of Maqsúd), are the most noteworthy.” (page 216)

“The Document [the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá] establishing that Order [Administrative Order], the Charter of a future world civilization, which may be regarded in some of its features as supplementary to no less mighty a Book than the Kitáb-i-Aqdas;....” (page 328)

4) References to the rulers (kings and presidents etc.) and the learned (religious leaders):

“In this Charter of the future world civilization its Author—at once the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Unifier and Redeemer of mankind—announces to the kings of the earth the promulgation of the ‘Most Great Law; pronounces them to be His vassals; proclaims Himself the ‘King of Kings; disclaims any intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; reserves for Himself the right to ‘seize and possess the hearts of men; warns the world’s ecclesiastical leaders not to weigh the ‘Book of God’ with such standards as are current amongst them; and affirms that the Book itself is the ‘Unerring Balance’ established among them.” (page 214)

“The significant summons issued to the Presidents of the Republics of the American continent to seize their opportunity in the Day of God and to champion the cause of Justice; the injunction to the members of parliaments throughout the world, urging the adoption of a universal script and language; His warnings to William I [Wilhelm I], the conqueror of Napoleon III; the reproof He administers to Francis Joseph [Franz Joseph], the Emperor of Austria; His reference to ‘the lamentations of Berlin’ in His apostrophe to ‘the banks of the Rhine; His condemnation of ‘the throne of tyranny’ established in

Constantinople, and His prediction of the extinction of its ‘outward splendour’ and of the tribulation destined to overtake its inhabitants;” (page 215)

The essence of these passages are detailed and repeated in many other pages of *God Passes By*. One can refer to page 206 for Bahá’u’lláh’s further announcements to the kings; page 208 and 226 for His announcement to William I and to Francis Joseph; page 225 where Sultan ‘Abdu’l-Azíz is mentioned; pages 207, 254 and 396 where the Rulers of America and the West are referred to; and to page 395 where Queen Marie’s acknowledgement of the Divine Message are described as the first fruits of the vision which Bahá’u’lláh had seen long before in His captivity, and had announced in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

“In immortal passages of His Kitáb-i-Aqdas...He bids the entire company of the ecclesiastical leaders to ‘fear God;’ to ‘rein in’ their pens, ‘fling away idle fancies and imaginings, and turn them towards the Horizon of Certitude’....” (page 209)

5) The laws and ordinances:

One should refer to the other major Holy Books, in particular the Koran and the Bayán, in order to recognize the roots of some of the laws ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Although the mould of some of the ordinances prescribed in those Holy Books, such as fasting, obligatory prayers and pilgrimage, have been kept in the Most Holy Book, their form and content have been changed. The Báb had made the applicability of His laws dependent upon the approval of the One Whom God will make manifest. Bahá’u’lláh, being that promised Manifestation, confirmed some of those ordinances, such as the Nineteen Day Feasts and the new Calendar, and rejected or changed many others. Although this is a useful and desirable study, it is not a prerequisite for the understanding and absorption of the laws and ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

“The laws and ordinances that constitutes the major theme of this Book, Bahá’u’lláh, moreover, has specifically characterized as ‘the breath of life unto all created things,’ as ‘the mightiest stronghold,’ as the ‘fruits’ of His ‘Tree,’ as ‘the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples,’ as ‘the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence,’ as ‘the sweet smelling savour of His garment,’ as the ‘keys’ of His ‘mercy’ to his creatures. ‘This Book,’ He Himself testifies, ‘is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions.’ ‘Blessed the man,’ He, moreover, has stated, ‘who will read it, and ponder the verses sent down in it by God, the Lord of Power, the Almighty.’” (pages 215-216)

“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 ‘Trusties 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;
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.
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 Qiblah [the center all must turn to for obligatory prayers];
institutes the Huququ’lláh [Right of God];
formulates the law of inheritance;
ordains the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár [Bahá’í Temple];
establishes the Nineteen Days Feasts, the Bahá’í festivals and the Intercalary Days;
abolishes the institution of priesthood;
prohibits slavery,

asceticism,
mendicancy,
monasticism,
penance,
the use of pulpit
and the kissing of hands;
prescribes monogamy;
condemns cruelty to animals,
idleness and sloth,
backbiting
and calumny;
censures divorce;
interdicts gambling,
the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks;
specifies the punishment for murder,
arson,
adultery,
and theft;
stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions;
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.
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 assured them of His undoubted aid.
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 the
observing all the ordinances revealed by Him, neither of which, He affirms, is acceptable without
the other. (56 sections, pages 214-215)

Further references to Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (Bahá'í Temple) can be found on pages 255, 300 and 340; to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on page 325; to the Houses of Justice on page 331; and to Huqúqu'lláh (Right of God) on page 328.

6) Projections and prophecies:

"...the words of cheer and comfort He addresses to His native city [Teheran], assuring her that God had chosen her to be 'the source of the joy of all mankind'; His prophecy that 'the voice of the heroes

of Khurásán’ will be raised in glorification of their Lord; His assertion that men ‘endued with mighty valour’ will be raised up in Kirmán who will make mention of Him; and finally, His magnanimous assurance to a perfidious brother who had afflicted Him with such anguish, that an ‘ever-forgiving, all-bounteous’ God would forgive him his iniquities were he only to repent—all these further enrich the contents of a Book designated by its Author as ‘the source of true felicity’ as the ‘Unerring Balance,’ as the ‘Straight Path’ and as the ‘quickener of mankind’...” (page 215)

“The Sovereign who, as foreshadowed in Bahá’u’lláh’s Most Holy Book must adorn the throne of His native land and cast the shadow of royal protection over His long persecuted followers, is as yet undiscovered.” (page 411)

“The conclusion of the terrible conflict [the first world war]...fulfilled the ominous predictions made by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,...” (page 305)

7) The Bahá’í Faith is an independent religion:

“...dissociation of the System envisaged in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas from the Sunni ecclesiastical Law in Egypt [referring to the judgement of May 10, 1925 in Egypt], has paved the way for the recognition of that system in the Holy land itself,...” (page 34; see also pages 365 and 367)

Referring to the proclamation of the independence of the Bahá’í laws from other ecclesiastical systems, Shoghi Effendi wrote: “In the United States of America...the special stress laid on some of the fundamental laws contained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas regarding daily obligatory prayers....” (page 373; see also pages 370 and 374)

8) Covenant:

“... identifies Him (Abdu’l-Bahá) with ‘the One Whom God hath purposed,’ ‘Who hath branched from this pre-existent Root,’ referred to in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas....” (pages 239–240)

“On Him (Abdu’l-Bahá), at a later period, the Author of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, in a celebrated passage, subsequently elucidated in the ‘Book of My Covenant,’ had bestowed the function of interpreting His Holy Writ, proclaiming Him, at the same time, to be the One ‘Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root’....” (page 242, also see pages 238 and 112)

9) Other subjects:

“His [the Báb’s] well-known commentary on the Súrih of Va’l-Asr... which Bahá’u’lláh refers to in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas....” (page 14)

“As to the significance of the Declaration let Bahá’u’lláh Himself reveal to us its import. Acclaiming that historic occasion as the ‘Most Great Festival,’ the ‘King of Festivals,’ the ‘Festival of God,’ He has, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, characterized it as the Day whereon ‘all created things were immersed in the sea of purification’....” (page 154)

“Bahá’u’lláh had thus addressed His followers in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ‘and will assist whosoever will arise to aid My Cause with the hosts of the Concourse of high, and a cohort of the angles, who are nigh unto Me’....” (page 376)

At the end, it should be noted that the topics referred to in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are not limited to what is mentioned in this paper. The purpose of this article has only been to provide some basic information about the Aqdas and whet the appetite of the reader to peruse the whole of the Most Holy Book.

