

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH IN CANADA
CONSEIL DES MANDATAIRES DU HUQÚQU'LLÁH AU CANADA

April 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

It is always a privilege for the Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh in Canada to share with the delegates to the National Convention a few thoughts about the power, the grandeur, and the importance of the law of the Right of God – “*a multidimensional injunction that binds together love and law with the goal of serving humanity*”.¹ Observed out of love rather than fear of retribution, it is unique in religious history and “*a reflection of the stage of maturity that is expected of humanity in this era*”.²

‘Abdu’l-Bahá often writes of what distinguishes human beings from animals in the world of nature. The animal, “*without knowledge of God*”;³ is restricted to material existence and acts accordingly. A human being, however, created after the image and likeness of God, has the potential to “*differentiate and consciously distinguish himself an infinite degree above the kingdoms of existence below him*”;⁴ thereby, moving ever closer to another plane of existence that is Divine and Heavenly. Man is “*a reality which stands between light and darkness ... his nature is threefold: animal, human and divine*.”⁵

“*Nature is uninformed of God*”⁶ and one of its characteristics is a ceaseless struggle for existence and, consequent, physical survival of the fittest in both the plant and animal kingdoms. The motivation for this struggle in both those kingdoms is survival. Some human beings in impoverished circumstances also struggle to exist and their motivation is, as in the plant and animal kingdoms, survival. Other human beings also struggle to exist. Their aim, however, is to amass more for themselves, their families, and/or their nation. Their motivation is not survival but rather greed, self-interest, or unbridled competition.

The “*world of nature unassisted is imperfect because it is a plane upon which the struggle for physical existence expresses itself*.”⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls this struggle the “*very source of error and misapprehension in the opinions and theories of men*”⁸, “*the fountain-head of all calamities*”,⁹ an obstacle to human happiness,¹⁰ and “*the supreme affliction*.”¹¹ He extols “*the ideal of self-sacrifice*”¹² and contrasts those whose “*highest wish centereth on the eradication from among men of the struggle for existence*”¹³ to the “*mass of the people ... occupied with self and worldly desire ... immersed in the ocean of the nether world ... captives of the world of nature*”.¹⁴ And, He equates the struggle for existence with war¹⁵, indicating that as long as prejudice persists, “*the struggle for existence must remain dominant, and bloodthirstiness and rapacity continue*.”¹⁶

In “*this day there is no more important matter in the world than that of universal peace*.”¹⁷ Peace, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, “*is mutual aid and cooperation among the peoples of the world*”.¹⁸ Must not the Right of God – based as it is on the principle of cooperation, reciprocity and mutual aid – therefore be destined to play a significant role in eliminating war and establishing universal peace?

“*The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the brink of war*.”¹⁹ The “*time has come when each human being on earth must learn to accept responsibility for the welfare of the entire human family. Commitment to this revolutionizing principle will increasingly empower individual believers and Bahá’í institutions alike in awakening others to the Day of God and to the latent spiritual and moral capacities that can change this world into another world*.”²⁰ It is through the breaths of the Holy Spirit working through the “*Collective Center of the Kingdom, embodying the institutions and divine teachings*,”²¹ that miracles like brushing aside antagonistic aims, abrogating the struggle for existence, and raising the canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity on the apex of the globe can happen.²²

From His ship, the Celtic, leaving New York City in 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave the following call to the believers He left behind in North America: “*You must consider all His servants as your own family and relations. Direct your whole effort toward the happiness of those who are despondent, bestow food upon the hungry, clothe the*

*needy, and glorify the humble. Be a helper to every helpless one, and manifest kindness to your fellow creatures ... perchance, through your efforts the light of universal peace may shine and this darkness of estrangement and enmity may be dispelled from amongst men, that all men may become as one family and consort together in love and kindness ... You have no excuse to bring before God if you fail to live according to His command, for you are informed of that which constitutes the good-pleasure of God. You have heard His commandments and precepts.”*²³

*“Every member of the human family has not only the right to benefit from a materially and spiritually prosperous civilization but also an obligation to contribute towards its construction.”*²⁴ *“Justice demands universal participation.”*²⁵

Voluntary sharing, as one of the economic proposals in the teachings of Baha’u’llah, is practicable and causes no distress to society.²⁶ It is a fundamental ordinance applicable to, and binding upon, every believer from the age of maturity onward regardless of economic circumstance, ethnic origin, gender, geographic location, occupation, social status, or stage of life. *“Just as the heart’s beating is the motivating power that pumps the blood through the arteries and guarantees the nourishment of the organs, so the power of the Covenant, the excitement and enthusiasm of the believers to obey their Lord, provides a force that moves them to act on God’s commandments and execute His will.”*²⁷ *“In all aspects of this ordinance the sweet fragrance of God’s mercy and independence is inhaled.”*²⁸ and all are called to *“participate in the chain of mutual assistance and cooperation that links the component parts of human society.”*²⁹

Being faithful to the law involves *“a growing understanding of the Right of God, a love for this mighty law, and an effort to apply it to one’s life. When one makes a Huququ’llah payment it creates a special connection between the believer and the Head of the Faith. And for those whose modest means do not obligate them to make a payment, the very act of bringing their wealth into account in light of this law is a life discipline and an expression of their love for God.”*³⁰ Because the Right of God occupies *“a high station and is a demonstration of obedience to God’s command ... It is an unparalleled honour for believers who offer it to be gratified by the acceptance of God and, through this act of love and devotion, contribute to the well-being of others.”*³¹

Worldwide, members of the institution of Huququ’llah have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to assist others to learn about the law of Huququ’llah; in particular, its inner meaning and spiritual significance. We stand ready to do so. May all rejoice in the *“soft-flowing waters that are the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty.”*³²

With loving regards,
The Board of Trustees of Huququ’llah in Canada

^{1 & 2} Varqá, Dr. Ali Muhammad, 27 September 2007 letter to the beloved Deputy Trustees and Representatives of Huququ’llah and friends participating in the annual conference on the Right of God in Canada

^{3 & 4} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks at Green Acre, 17 August 1912: 90, Bahá’í Reference Library (BRL) at www.baha.org/library

⁵ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks in New York, 4 December 1912: 139, BRL

⁶ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks in Philadelphia, 9 June 1912: 63, BRL

^{7 & 8} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks in Washington, 7 November 1912: 120, BRL

^{9, 11, 15-18 & 26} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*: 227, First Tablet to the Hague, 17 December 1919, BRL

^{10 & 23} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks in New York, 5 December 1912: 140 On Board Steamship Celtic, BRL

¹²⁻¹⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*: 223, BRL

¹⁹ Universal House of Justice, October 1985 letter to the Peoples of the World

²⁰ Universal House of Justice, 24 May 2001 letter to the Believers Gathered for the Events Marking the Completion of the Projects on Mount Carmel

^{21 & 22} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, 14: Tablet to the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, BRL

²⁴ Universal House of Justice, 26 November 2012 letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies

²⁵ Universal House of Justice, *Ridvan*, 2010 to the Bahá’ís of the World

^{27-29 & 31} Varqá, Dr. Ali Muhammad, *“Huququ’llah – The Right of God”* Talk given during the Huququ’llah Conferences in Barcelona, Spain and Hofheim, Germany, October 1999

³⁰ International Board of Trustees of Huququ’llah, 9 September 2019 letter to all Boards of Trustees of Huququ’llah

³² ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*: 97, BRL