

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

April 25, 2024

To the delegates gathered for the 74th National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Dear Friends,

With great joy and love, the Board of Trustees wishes to convey its greetings to you at the outset of this blessed gathering of friends from every region of this vast land. We are most grateful to the National Spiritual Assembly for this opportunity to share some thoughts on the individual's responsibility in observing the mighty law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh and its transformative impact on the entire world.

This past year we have all been blessed with the release of the final unit of Ruhi Book 11, Material Means, entitled “The Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh”. Building on our developing attentiveness to the themes of unit 1, “Giving: The Spiritual Basis of Prosperity”, and unit 2, “The Institution of the Fund”, unit 3 “*seeks to foster an understanding of the significance of the law for the individual and society and to inspire a commitment to discharge this sacred obligation.*”¹ During the study of this unit, we are reminded that, “*as the laws and principles of the Faith are propagated and applied more and more widely, the pattern of the World Order that is to emerge in the fullness of time will gradually take shape before our eyes.*”² We learn that the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is “*fundamental to the individual's spiritual life, and the attitude with which it is carried out is an essential feature of its observance.*”³

We observe this law as individuals, and yet its collective impact is far-reaching. Bahá'u'lláh has stated, “*If the people attain the privilege of paying the Ḥuqúq, the one true God—exalted be His glory—will of a certainty confer blessing upon them. Moreover, such payment will enable them and their offspring to benefit from their possessions.*”⁴ Elsewhere, in reference to the Right of God, Bahá'u'lláh writes, “*Beseech ye God—magnified be His glory—to grant that His loved ones may be privileged to take a portion from the ocean of His good pleasure, for this would serve as the means for the salvation of mankind*”⁵. Further, the Universal House of Justice has written that obedience to this law has thus far had a “*profound impact... on the worldwide activities of the Bahá'í community, an impact which portends far-reaching implications for the transformation of society.*”⁶

The conversations that we have within our families and the choices that we make through consultation together contribute to the advancement of civilization. “*The family unit offers an ideal setting within which can be shaped those moral attributes that contribute to an appropriate view of material wealth and its utilization.*”⁷ Rearing our children to see that their welfare is inseparable from the welfare of others highlights the principles of cooperation, mutual aid and reciprocity “*on which the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is established*”⁸. While each believer has the personal responsibility to observe this mighty law, “*upholding one's right to adhere to one's spiritual principles and to carry out one's spiritual obligations*”⁹, in the case of married couples “*the Universal House of Justice has indicated that they may choose to pay their Ḥuqúqu'lláh jointly*”¹⁰.

Contributions to the Right of God may be made by a corporate body, a business, a company, or a professional practice owned wholly by Bahá'ís, or even by one Bahá'í. However, “*the obligation to pay Ḥuqúqu'lláh rests on individual believers, not on corporate bodies*”¹¹ and these contributions do not “*reduce the obligation of the individual believers concerned to pay their own Ḥuqúqu'lláh.*”¹²

Observing the law of the Right of God does not necessarily mean that a payment is required. Each individual must assess their own situation and determine if a payment is owing. This is a “*profoundly private act of conscience that promotes the common good, which directly connects the individual believer with the Central Institution of the Faith*”¹³. Obedience to the law is manifested in how we live our economic lives: “*the moral*

duty to lead a coherent life demands that one's economic decisions be in accordance with lofty ideals, that the purity of one's aims be matched by the purity of one's actions to fulfil those aims."¹⁴

Our individual duty extends to the writing of our will. *"In truth, the wisdom of this perspicuous and most mighty ordinance is that no one should draw breath without a will."*¹⁵ This spiritual duty, to be implemented after our passing, allows the deceased to *"be carried to his resting-place with dignity and honour."*¹⁶ We are also reminded that *"the event of death does not remove from a believer his obligation to pay Ḥuqúqu'lláh."*¹⁷ To ensure that the payment is made according to our wishes, clear provisions should be made in our last will and testament. It may also be helpful to have conversations with our executor so that they may be guided in their approach to this sacred task.

The Writings and guidance make it clear, then, that each of us has the individual responsibility and immense bounty to observe the law of the Right of God. In the words of the Chief Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá:

The effect on individuals of obedience to the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is reflected in the creation or development of divine virtues and attributes, including trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty to and firmness in the Covenant, and the ability to maintain balance in their personal lives and home economics. Bahá'u'lláh says:

It is indeed a most excellent favour, a boundless grace vouchsafed unto whosoever is privileged in this day to render service to the Cause of God and to offer the Right of God, for its goodly results and the fruits thereof will last as long as the kingdom of earth and heaven will endure.

*Ḥuqúqu'lláh is a spiritual discipline capable of transforming human attitudes and behaviour. Through this law, the Blessed Beauty has honoured humanity with a kind of partnership between us and Himself. Being God's partner in this respect, and eventually His trustee, motivates man to behave accordingly, so that God's presence is observable in all one's activities and actions.*¹⁸

Dear friends, in the coming year the members of the institution of the Right of God stand ready to facilitate and support education in this mighty law. Our hope is that all in Canada may be touched by the bounties associated with observing Ḥuqúqu'lláh and that we can all learn more, together, about our personal application of this law. We are eager to assist. We yearn to serve.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Board of Trustees of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in Canada

^{1, 2, 3} Ruhi Institute, Book 11, Unit 34 Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 2009 ed., no. 17

⁴ Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 2009 ed., no. 17

⁵ Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 1985 ed., no. 22

⁶ The Universal House of Justice, 21 June 2016 letter to the International Board of Trustees of Ḥuqúqu'lláh

⁷ The Universal House of Justice, 2 April 2010 letter to the Bahá'is in Iran.

⁸ Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 2009 ed., no. 23

⁹ Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, 5 August 1992 letter to an individual believer

¹⁰ Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 2009 ed., no. 74

^{11, 12} Compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh 2009 ed., no. 76

¹³ The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1991 letter to the Bahá'is of the world

¹⁴ The Universal House of Justice, 1 March 2017 letter to the Bahá'is of the World

¹⁵ Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Reference Library

¹⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 28

¹⁷ The Universal House of Justice, 5 August 1994 memorandum to the Office of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh

¹⁸ Chief Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, October 1999, excerpts from a talk given during the Ḥuqúqu'lláh Conferences in Barcelona, Spain, and Hofheim, Germany