

# Rulers and Learned in Bahá- The Connection

## From the Kitáb-i-Ahd

It is incumbent upon everyone to aid those daysprings of authority and sources of command who are adorned with the ornament of equity and justice. **Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá.** They are My trustees among My servants and the manifestations of My commandments amidst My people. Upon them rest My glory, My blessings and My grace which have pervaded the world of being. In this connection the utterances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are such that from the horizon of their words the light of divine grace shineth luminous and resplendent.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 220)

## From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

Happy are ye, **O ye the learned ones in Bahá.** By the Lord! Ye are the billows of the Most Mighty Ocean, the stars of the firmament of Glory, the standards of triumph waving betwixt earth and heaven. Ye are the manifestations of steadfastness amidst men and the daysprings of Divine Utterance to all that dwell on earth. **Well is it with him that turneth unto you and woe betide the froward.** This day, it behoveth whoso hath quaffed the Mystic Wine of Everlasting Life from the Hands of the loving-kindness of the Lord his God, the Merciful, to pulsate even as the throbbing artery in the body of mankind, that through him may be quickened the world and every crumbling bone.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pg. 82)

183. **O ye the learned ones in Bahá** # 173 Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

Bahá'u'lláh eulogizes the learned among His followers. In the Book of His Covenant, He wrote: **“Blessed are the rulers and learned among the people of Bahá.”** Referring to this statement, Shoghi Effendi has written:

In this holy cycle the **“learned”** are, on the one hand, the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His Teachings who do not rank as Hands, but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching work. As to the **“rulers”** they refer to the members of the Local, National and International Houses of Justice. The duties of each of these souls will be determined in the future.

The Hands of the Cause of God were individuals appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and charged with various duties, especially those of protecting and propagating His Faith. In Memorials of the Faithful Abdu'l-Bahá referred to other outstanding believers as Hands

of the Cause, and in His Will and Testament He included a provision calling upon the Guardian of the Faith to appoint Hands of the Cause at his discretion. Shoghi Effendi first raised posthumously a number of the believers to the rank of Hands of the Cause, and during the latter years of his life appointed a total of 32 believers from all continents to this position. In the period between the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 and the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, the Hands of the Cause directed the affairs of the Faith in their capacity as Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth (see note 67). In November 1964, the Universal House of Justice determined that it could not legislate to make it possible to appoint Hands of the Cause. Instead, by a decision of the House of Justice in 1968, the functions of the Hands of the Cause in relation to protecting and propagating the Faith were extended into the future by the creation of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, and in 1973 through the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, which has its seat in the Holy Land. The Universal House of Justice appoints the Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre and the Continental Counsellors. Members of Auxiliary Boards are appointed by the Continental Counsellors. All these individuals fall within the definition of the "learned" given by Shoghi Effendi in the statement quoted above.

**Ponder a bit how these above quotations interrelate. Then:**

**Additional Quotations and there are incredible amounts more**

1. O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship. By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancour. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind. Let your eye be chaste, your hand faithful, your tongue truthful and your heart enlightened. **Abase not the station of the learned in Bahá and belittle not the rank of such rulers as administer justice amidst you.** Set your reliance on the army of justice, put on the armour of wisdom, let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favoured of God.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 138)

2. Consider, how can he that faileth in the day of God's Revelation to attain unto the grace of the "Divine Presence" and to recognize His Manifestation, be justly called **learned**, though he may have spent aeons in the pursuit of knowledge, and acquired all the limited and material learning of men? It is surely evident that he can in no wise be regarded as possessed of true knowledge. Whereas, the most unlettered of all men, if he be honoured with this supreme distinction, he verily is accounted as one of those divinely-learned men whose knowledge is of God; for such a man hath attained the acme of knowledge, and hath reached the furthest summit of learning.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán pp. 145-146)

3. An authoritative Tradition states: “As for him who is one of the **learned**:<sup>[1]</sup> he must guard himself, defend his faith, oppose his passions and obey the commandments of his Lord. It is then the duty of the people to pattern themselves after him.”

[1 Ulama’, from the Arabic ‘alima, to know, may be translated learned men, scientists, religious authorities.]

For every thing, however, God has created a sign and symbol, and established standards and tests by which it may be known. The **spiritually learned** must be characterized by both inward and outward perfections; they must possess a good character, an enlightened nature, a pure intent, as well as intellectual power, brilliance and discernment, intuition, discretion and foresight, temperance, reverence, and a heartfelt fear of God. For an unlit candle, however great in diameter and tall, is no better than a barren palm tree or a pile of dead wood....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization pp. 21-22; pp. 23-24; pp. 33-34)