

Huququ'llah

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HUQUQU'LLAH

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH

All passages are extracts from previously untranslated Tablets.

1. [1] O Zayn! Upon thee be My glory and My loving-kindness. Nothing that existeth in the world of being hath ever been or ever will be worthy of mention. However, if a person be graciously favoured to offer a penny-worth—nay even less—in the path of God, this would in His sight be preferable and superior to all the treasures of the earth. It is for this reason that the one true God—exalted be His glory—hath in all His heavenly Scriptures praised those who observe His precepts and bestow their wealth for His sake. Beseech ye God that He may enable everyone to discharge the obligation of Huquq, inasmuch as the progress and promotion of the Cause of God depend on material means. If His faithful servants could realize how meritorious are benevolent deeds in these days, they would all arise to do that which is meet and seemly. In His hand is the source of authority and He ordaineth as He willeth. He is the Supreme Ruler, the Bountiful, the Equitable, the Revealer, the All-Wise.

2. The one true God—exalted be His glory—hath ever been and will continue to be exalted above every expression of praise and is sanctified from the world of existence and all the riches therein. Whatsoever proceedeth from Him produceth a fruit the benefits of which revert to the individuals themselves. Ere long will they perceive the truth of that which the Tongue of Grandeur hath uttered aforetime and will utter hereafter. And such benefits will indeed accrue if the Huquq is offered with the utmost joy and radiance and in a spirit of perfect humility and lowliness.

3. Entreat thou the one true God to enable His faithful servants to fulfil that which is conducive to the good of this world and the world to come. This is the commandment of God that hath been prescribed in His weighty and inviolable Book. Today is [2] the Day of God when the preservation of the dignity of His Cause must be given precedence over all other things. He ordaineth that which will confer benefit on all mankind. Verily He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. In this connection the Pen of Glory hath revealed that which will enable every man of perception to inhale the fragrance of His loving-kindness and bounty. In truth the benefits arising from the above-mentioned injunction revert to the individuals themselves. Unto this every discerning one that observeth His precepts will bear witness.

4. It is incumbent upon everyone to discharge the obligation of Huquq. The advantages gained from this deed revert to the persons themselves. However, the acceptance of the offerings dependeth on the spirit of joy, fellowship and contentment that the righteous souls who fulfil this injunction will manifest.

If such is the attitude acceptance is permissible, and not otherwise. Verily thy Lord is the All-Sufficing, the All-Praised.

5. O Zayn! Such souls as comply with the injunction of God prescribed in the Book are regarded as most excellent in the estimation of God. There can be no doubt that whatsoever is revealed from the heaven of divine commandment is by virtue of His wisdom and is in the best interests of the people themselves. Moreover, although these insignificant amounts are not worthy of mention, they are well-pleasing, since the donors offer them for the sake of God. If the offering be but a single grain it is regarded as the crowning glory of all the harvests of the world.

6. It is clear and evident that the payment of the Right of God is conducive to prosperity, to blessing, and to honour and divine protection. Well is it with them that comprehend and recognize this truth and woe betide them that believe not. And this is on condition that the individual should observe the injunctions prescribed in the Book with the utmost radiance, gladness and willing acquiescence. It behoveth you to counsel the friends to do that which is right and praiseworthy. Whoso hearkeneth to this call, it is to his own behoof, and whoso faileth bringeth loss upon himself. Verily our Lord of Mercy is the All-Sufficing, the All-Praised.

7. [3] Huququ'llah is indeed a great law. It is incumbent upon all to make this offering, because it is the source of grace, abundance, and of all good. It is a bounty which shall remain with every soul in every world of the worlds of God, the All-Possessing, the All-Bountiful.

8. As to the question of Huquq: Reference to this matter is in no wise permissible. We have formerly enjoined upon you and Jinabi-Amin that which will redound to the glory and dignity of the Word of God and of His Cause. Touching on this particular subject We have bidden thus: Ye may relinquish the whole world but must not allow the detraction of even one jot or tittle from the dignity of the Cause of God. Jinabi Amin—upon him be My glory—must also refrain from mentioning this matter, for it is entirely dependent upon the willingness of the individuals themselves. They are well acquainted with the commandment of God and are familiar with that which was revealed in the Book. Let him who wisheth observe it, and let him who wisheth ignore it. Verily, thy Lord is the Self-Sufficing, the All-Praised. Indeed, independence of all things is as a door of guidance unto His faithful servants. Well is it with them that have severed them-selves from the world and have arisen to serve His Cause. Verily, they are numbered with the people of Baha at the court of His resplendent Beauty.

9. O Abu'l Hasan:* May my Glory rest upon thee! Fix thy gaze upon the glory of the Cause. Speak forth that which will attract the hearts and the minds. To demand the Huquq is in no wise permissible. This command was revealed in the Book of God for various necessary matters ordained by God to be dependent upon material means. Therefore, if someone, with utmost pleasure and gladness, nay with insistence, wisheth to partake of this blessing, thou mayest accept.

Otherwise, acceptance is not permissible.

*Known as Jinab-i-Amin, Trustee of the Huquq in the days of Baha'u'llah

10. Should a person acquire one hundred mithqals* of gold, nineteen mithqals thereof belong unto God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of this great bounty. We have prescribed this law unto you while We [4]are wholly independent of you and of all that are in the heavens and on the earth. Indeed there lie concealed in this command, mysteries and benefits which are beyond the comprehension of anyone save God, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Say, through this injunction God desireth to purify your possessions and enable you to draw nigh unto such stations as none can attain, except those whom God may please. Verily, He is the Generous, the Gracious, the Bountiful.

O people! Act not treacherously in the matter of Huququ'llah and dispose not of it, except by His leave. Thus hath it been ordained in His Epistles as well as in this glorious Tablet. Whoso dealeth dishonestly with God will in justice be exposed, and whoso fulfilleth the things he hath been commanded, divine blessings will descend upon him from the heaven of the bounty of his Lord, the Bestower, the Bountiful, the Most Generous, the Ancient of Days. Verily He desireth for you the things that are inscrutable to you at present, though the people themselves will readily discover them when their souls take their flight and the trappings of their earthly gaieties are rolled up. Thus warneth you the Author of the Preserved Tablet.

*See section 105

11. Question: Payment of Huququ'llah hath been revealed in the Aqdas. Are the residence, its appendages and necessary furniture among those possessions on which the Huquq is payable?

Answer: It hath been said in the Laws revealed in Persian: ". . . in this most great Dispensation We have exempted the residence and the household furnishings, that is, such furnishings as are needful."

12. Question: Is Huququ'llah payable on such equipment of a store as is necessary for the carrying on of business or is such equipment treated as are the household furnishings?

Answer: It is under the same ruling as the household furnishings.

13. Question: If the deceased hath left the Huquq or his debts unpaid, shall payment be made proportionately from his residence, personal clothing and other property, or are the residence and personal clothing set apart for the male offspring and shall the debts be paid out of remaining property; if such property is insufficient, what shall be done with the debts?

[5] Answer: The debts and Huquq shall be paid out of the remaining property; should the property be insufficient, payment shall be made out of the residence and personal clothing.

14. Question: It hath been revealed in the divine Tablets that if a person acquireth the equivalent of nineteen mithqals of gold he must pay the Right of God on that sum. How much of that sum shall be paid?

Answer: God hath commanded that nineteen be paid out of every hundred. This should be the basis of computation. The sum due on nineteen can then be determined.

15. Question: When the possessions exceed nineteen, must they equal another nineteen before the Huquq is again payable, or is the Huquq due on any exceeding sum?

Answer: The Huquq is not payable on any exceeding sum, unless it reacheth another nineteen.

16. Question: If a person hath, for example, one hundred tumans,* payeth the Huquq on this, loseth half the sum in unsuccessful transactions and then regaineth the amount on which the Huquq is payable, must he offer the Huquq or not?

Answer: In such an event the Huquq is not payable.

*Tuman is a Persian unit of currency.

17. Question: If, after payment of the Huquq, the original sum is entirely lost, and then in the course of business transactions it is regained, must the Huquq be paid a second time?

Answer: In this event as well the Huquq is not payable.

18. The minimum amount subject to Huququ'llah is reached when one's possessions are worth the number of Vahid (19); that is, whenever one owneth 19 mithqals of gold, or acquireth possessions attaining this value, after having deducted therefrom the yearly expenses, the Huquq becometh applicable and its payment is obligatory.

19. As to the question thou hast asked concerning the minimum amount of property on which Huquq is payable, this was mentioned [6] in His exalted and glorious presence and the following is what the Tongue of Grandeur uttered in reply: This matter was revealed in the Most Holy Book in conformity with the pronouncement in the Bayan. Later, however, as a token of wisdom on Our part, We laid down the ruling whereby the minimum amount of property liable to the payment of Huquq is fixed at Nineteen. The purpose underlying this law is to ensure that the General Treasury is strengthened in the future. Further details may be furnished later.

20. According to that which is revealed in the Most Holy Book, Huququ'llah is fixed at the rate of 19 mithqals out of every 100 mithqals worth of gold. This applies to possessions in gold, in silver or other properties.

Moreover certain rights have been fixed for the House of Justice. However, before its establishment and the appearance of its members, the appropriation

of such funds is and will be subject to the approval of Him Who is the Eternal Truth. Beseech ye God—exalted be His glory—to enable the people to honour the obligation of Huquq, for had everyone perceived the advantage of such a deed and desisted from withholding the Right of God, the friends in that region would not have experienced any hardship.

21. Question: May a person designate in his will certain of his properties to be spent after his death for charitable purposes, apart from the Huquq and his other obligations; or hath he no right to anything except the expenses of enshrouding, transportation and burial, and is everything else for the inheritors as commanded by God?

Answer: A person is free in the disposition of his possessions. If he hath paid the Huquq and is not in debt to others, whatever he writeth in his will and testifieth to is acceptable. God hath permitted him to do as he willeth with what God hath bestowed on him.

22. A number of people in various regions are at present illumined with the light of faith, but with the exception of a few, they have not been privileged as yet to observe the injunctions revealed from His presence.

[7] Previously We wrote to thee* that had the friends there observed the payment of Huququ'llah, the people of that region would have enjoyed ease and comfort. Before this law was revealed there was no obligation on the part of any soul. The Pen of Glory held back from revealing laws and ordinances for a number of years, and this was a token of His heavenly grace. Were the people of the world to recognize what inestimable benefits the ordinances of the All-Merciful would bring forth, they would arise to fulfil His commandments and would observe His bidding....

The Pen of the Most High hath ordained that the Huququ'llah is payable on nineteen mithqals of gold. That is, the Huquq is levied on money equalling this amount. As to other possessions in silver or otherwise, it is payable when they equal this in value, not in number. The Huququ'llah is payable only once; for example if a person acquireth a thousand mithqals in gold and payeth the Huquq thereof, the Right of God ceaseth to be applicable to that amount, except in regard to what accrueth to it through commerce and transactions; when such profits reach the prescribed minimum, one must carry out what God hath decreed. When however, the original sum changeth hands, the Huquq is again payable as it was the first time; in this event the Right of God must be given.

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, and may of their own accord carry out that which would purify them and cause them to attain everlasting life....

The Primal Point hath said that they should pay Huququ'llah on the value of whatsoever they possess, but notwithstanding, We have in this greatest Dispensation exempted the residence and household furnishings; that is, such

furnishings as are needful. Thou hast asked which is to take precedence: the Huququ'llah, the debts of the deceased, or the cost of burial. It is God's command that the cost of burial take precedence, then payment of debts, then the Right of God. Verily He is the One Who will pay due recompense, the All-Rewarding, the All-Generous. If the property is not equal to the debts, the estate must be distributed in [8] direct proportion to each debt. The settlement of debts is a most important command set forth in the Book. Well is it with him who ascendeth unto God, without any obligations to Huququ'llah and to His servants. It is evident that the Huququ'llah hath priority over all other liabilities; however, as a token of mercy, He Who is the Dawning-Place of Revelation hath commanded that which hath been revealed by His life-giving and omniscient Pen in this Tablet.

*Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin

23. It hath been decreed by God that a property which is not lucrative, that is, yieldeth no profit, is not subject to the payment of Huquq. Verily He is the Ordainer, the Bountiful.

24. The payment of the Right of God is conditional upon one's financial ability. If a person is unable to meet his obligation, God will verily excuse him. He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Generous.

25. This is the Book of Generosity which hath been revealed by the King of Eternity. Whoso adorneth himself with this virtue hath distinguished himself and will be blessed by the All-Merciful from His exalted Kingdom of Glory. However, despite his high rank and prominent position, were he to pass beyond the limits, he would be regarded among the prodigal by the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Cling ye unto moderation. This is the commandment that He Who is the All-Possessing, the Most High hath enjoined upon you in His Generous Book. O ye that are the exponents of generosity and the manifestations thereof! Be generous unto them whom ye find in manifest poverty. Oh ye that are possessed of riches! Take heed lest outward appearance deter you from benevolent deeds in the path of God, the Lord of all mankind.

Say: I swear by God! No one is despised in the sight of the Almighty for being poor. Rather is he exalted, if he is found to be of them who are patient. Blessed are the poor that are steadfast in patience, and woe betide the rich that hold back Huququ'llah and fail to observe that which is enjoined upon them in His Preserved Tablet.

Say: Pride not yourselves on earthly riches ye possess. Reflect upon your end and upon the recompense for your works that hath been ordained in the Book of God, the Exalted, the Mighty. Blessed is the rich man whom earthly possessions have been powerless to hinder from turning unto God, the Lord of all names.

[9] Verily he is accounted among the most distinguished of men before God, the Gracious, the All-Knowing.

Say: The appointed Day is come. This is the Springtime of benevolent deeds,

were ye of them that comprehend. Strive ye with all your might, O people, that ye may bring forth that which will truly profit you in the worlds of your Lord, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised.

Say: Hold ye fast unto praiseworthy characteristics and goodly deeds and be not of them that tarry. It behoveth everyone to cleave tenaciously unto that which is conducive to the exaltation of the Cause of God, your Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful.

Say: Behold ye not the world, its changes and chances, and its varying colours? Wherefore are ye satisfied with it and with all the things therein? Open your eyes and be of them that are endued with insight. The day is fast approaching when all these things will have vanished as fast as the lightning, nay even faster. Unto this beareth witness the Lord of the Kingdom in this wondrous Tablet.

Wert thou to be enraptured by the uplifting ecstasy of the verses of God, thou wouldst yield thanks unto thy Lord and say: "Praise be unto Thee, O Desire of the hearts of them that hasten to meet Thee!" Rejoice then with exceeding gladness, inasmuch as the Pen of Glory hath turned unto thee and hath revealed in thy honour that which the tongues of creation and the tongues of transcendence are powerless to describe.

26. They that have kept their promises, fulfilled their obligations, redeemed their pledges and vows, rendered the Trust of God and His Right unto Him—these are numbered among the inmates of the all-highest Paradise. Thus from His mighty Prison doth the Wronged One announce unto them this glad-tiding. Blessed are the servants and maidservants that have performed their deeds and blessed is the man that hath cleaved tenaciously unto praiseworthy acts and fulfilled that which is enjoined upon him in the Book of God, the Lord of the worlds.

27. For a number of years Huquq was not accepted. How numerous the offerings that on reaching Our presence were returned to the donors, because they were not needed then. However, in recent years We have, in view of the exigencies of the times, accepted the payment of the Huquq, but have forbidden solicitation [10] thereof. Everyone must have the utmost regard for the dignity of the Word of God and for the exaltation of His Cause. Were a person to offer all the treasures of the earth at the cost of debasing the honour of the Cause of God, were it even less than a grain of mustard, such an offering would not be permissible. All the world hath belonged and will always belong to God. If one spontaneously offereth Huquq with the utmost joy and radiance it will be acceptable, and not otherwise. The benefit of such deeds reverteth unto the individuals themselves. This measure hath been ordained in view of the necessity for material means, for "averse is God from putting aught into effect except through its means." Thus instructions were given to receive the Huquq.

28. Well is it with those who have met their obligations in respect of the Right of God and observed that which is prescribed in the Book.... The payment of Huquq is conclusively established in the Book of God, yet for a number of

years it had been forbidden to receive it. Later, however, in view of certain considerations and in order to arrange some essential matters, permission was granted to accept such payments. Verily He is the Ordainer, the Compassionate, the Forgiving, the Bountiful.

29. As to the Huququ'llah: This is the source of blessings, and the mainspring of God's loving-kindness and tender love vouchsafed unto men. Verily He can dispense with whatsoever hath been and will be. Until two years ago the matter of Huquq was undisclosed. When it was revealed it was by virtue of His grace. If a person be privileged to fulfil that which is prescribed in the Most Holy Book, it would assuredly be better for him, and to his greater behoof. However, the observation of this injunction dependeth upon one's circumstances. Verily He speaketh the truth and guideth aright.

30. Thou hast written concerning the minimum amount of property on which Huququ'llah is payable. This is as set forth to Jinabi-Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin—upon him be the glory of the Most Glorious. The minimum sum liable to Huquq is based on the number Nineteen, in accordance with the text of the blessed, the Most Holy Book. Therein reference is made to the amount of Huquq payable and not to the minimum sum on which Huquq falls due. Verily, He is the Expounder both in the Beginning and [11] in the End. Until the present year no mention had been made regarding the Huququ'llah. To wit, this servant* had never heard a single word uttered by the Tongue of Holiness as being indicative of payment of Huquq. However, in this year† His binding decree hath been put into effect and His commandment hath shone forth above the horizon of divine Revelation. Thus whosoever is willing to offer Huququ'llah spontaneously and in a spirit of radiant acquiescence it would be graciously accepted.

The Trustees should receive these offerings and, as instructed, notify His Holy Presence. Although the Most Holy Book had been revealed some years ago with the injunction concerning the Right of God clearly set forth therein, nevertheless the permission authorizing receipt of Huquq was not granted until this year. Verily He is the Ordainer, the Omnipotent, the Gracious, the Most Exalted.

*The amanuensis of Baha'u'llah.

†1295 A.H.—1878 A.D.

31. Thine intention to pay a visit to the blessed House is acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of this Wronged One, provided it is accomplished in a spirit of joy and radiance and would not prove contrary to the dictates of wisdom.

Say: O people, the first duty is to recognize the one true God—magnified be His glory—the second is to show forth constancy in His Cause and, after these, one's duty is to purify one's riches and earthly possessions according to that which is prescribed by God. Therefore it beseemeth thee to meet thine obligation to the Right of God first, then to direct thy steps toward His blessed house. This hath been brought to thine attention as a sign of favour.

32. Whoso is privileged to pay the Right of God will be numbered with such as have observed the ordinances of the one true God—magnified be His glory—and have fulfilled that which is set down by the All-Glorious Pen.

Time and again have We written and commanded that no one should solicit such payment. The offering of every person that voluntarily tendereth the Huququ'llah with the utmost joy and pleasure may be accepted, otherwise acceptance was not and is [12] not permissible. Those that are oblivious of their duty should be briefly reminded. Deeds must be performed with willingness and in all circumstances high regard must be given to the dignity of the Cause of God. Formerly We have mentioned that were a person to possess the whole world and would tender his possessions at the cost of degrading the honour of the Cause, even to the extent of a grain of mustard, it would be essential and imperative to refuse to accept such wealth. Such is the Cause of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Well is it with them that act accordingly.

The ordinance prescribing the payment of Huquq is but a favour vouchsafed by the one true God—exalted be His glory—and the benefits arising therefrom shall fall to the donors themselves. It behoveth all to render thanks unto God, the Most Exalted, Who hath graciously enabled them to meet the obligation of Huquq. We held back the Pen for a long period during which no instruction was issued in this respect, until such time as the requirements of His inscrutable wisdom demanded the acceptance of Huquq. "Averse is God from putting aught into effect except through its means." It is essential for certain people to receive aid and others need attention and care, but all this must take place by the leave of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

33. O thou that bearest My Name! God grant that everyone may be graciously aided to honour the Huquq. The Huquq is exclusively assigned unto Him Who is the sovereign Truth, but as you are aware, there are at present many individuals diligently engaged in the service of the Cause in various regions, who are unable to earn their living. And inasmuch as God hath made the achievement of everything conditional upon material means, therefore the injunction prescribing payment of the Huquq hath been revealed from the heaven of His Will, and the blessings flowing from this deed shall fall to the donors themselves.

34. In this day it is incumbent upon everyone to serve the Cause of God, while He Who is the Eternal Truth—exalted be His glory—hath made the fulfilment of every undertaking on earth dependent on material means. Hence it is enjoined upon every individual to offer that which is the Right of God.

35. [13] If a person is willing to offer the Right of God, such offering should be received by the Trustees, to whom reference hath been made in the Book of God. This ordinance hath, in view of certain considerations, been revealed from the heaven of divine Revelation as a token of His grace. The advantages arising therefrom shall fall to the individuals themselves. Verily He speaketh the truth and there is none other God but Him, the Mighty, the Powerful.

The Trustees are present in the land of Ya (Yazd). Whosoever desireth to fulfil

that which is enjoined upon him in the Book, may refer to them. Any amount received by them will be transmitted. Great is the blessedness of them that observe His bidding.

36. 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.

37. O Zayn! It behoveth thee to entreat God to graciously enable His faithful servants to meet the obligation of Huquq. The world is evanescent, and one's life fleeting. Therefore if one is privileged to offer that which is binding upon him, such an act hath ever been and will be nearer to piety and righteousness.... It is incumbent upon everyone to fulfil that which hath been set forth in the Book of God—exalted be His glory.

38. The Right of God is an obligation upon everyone. This commandment hath been revealed and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory. However, it is not permissible to solicit or demand it. If one is privileged to pay the Huquq, and doeth so in a spirit of joy and radiance, such an act is acceptable, and not otherwise. As a reminder to the friends, a general appeal should be made once at the meeting, and that should suffice. They that are assured, steadfast and endowed with insight will act spontaneously and observe what hath been prescribed by God, thereby reaping the benefit of their own deed. Verily, God is independent of all mankind.

The people of God should not be grieved. By the righteousness of God, that which is destined for them is far beyond the power of reckoners to reckon.

39. [14] Great God! In this glorious Dispensation the treasures laid up by kings and queens are not worthy of mention, nor will they be acceptable in the presence of God. However, a grain of mustard offered by His loved ones will be extolled in the exalted court of His holiness and invested with the ornament of His acceptance. Immeasurably exalted is His bounty, immeasurably glorified is His majesty. And yet, when an offering was adorned with the glory of His acceptance and reported by Jinab-i-Amin, twice that amount was ordered to be paid out to the poor and the needy. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded man of insight, and those that are truthful and trustworthy.

40. The benefits accruing from benevolent works shall fall to the individuals concerned. In such matters only a word would suffice. Should anyone offer Huquq with utmost joy and radiance, manifesting a spirit of resignation and content, his offering shall be acceptable before God, otherwise He can dispense with all the peoples of the earth.... Well is it with them that have fulfilled that which is prescribed in the Book of God. It is incumbent upon everyone to observe that which God hath purposed, for whatsoever hath been set forth in the Book by the Pen of Glory is an effective means for the purging, the purification and sanctification of the souls of men and a source of prosperity and blessing. Happy are they that have observed His commandments.

Whenever they make reference to the Huquq, let them confine themselves to a mere word uttered for the sake of God and this will suffice; coercion is unnecessary, inasmuch as God hath never wished that those engaged in His service should experience any hardship. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.... No goodly deed was or will ever be lost, for benevolent acts are treasures preserved with God for the benefit of those who act. Blessed the servant and the maidservant who have fulfilled their obligation in the path of God our Lord, the Lord of all worlds.... The Right of God must be paid whenever possible and should be offered in a spirit of joy and radiance. Those that are unable to pay will be invested with the ornament of His forgiveness.

41. In this day it is incumbent upon everyone to meet the obligation of the Right of God as far as it lieth in his power. For a number of years it was not permitted to accept the payment of [15] Huquq. Recently, however, We have issued instructions to receive it. Therefore the friends in that region should, as far as possible, collect the payments, and remit the amounts either to Zaynu'l Muqarrabin—upon him be the glory of God—in Hadba' (Mosul) or to the Trustee of God in the land of Ya (Yazd) who will forward them. The observance of this ordinance hath been and will always be conducive to prosperity, to divine increase and to salvation. Great is the blessedness of him who hath observed that which is prescribed in the Book of God, the Gracious, the Mighty.

42. And now concerning what thou hast mentioned regarding the Huquq. This hath been ordained especially for the one true God—exalted be His glory—and should be forwarded to the court of His Holy Presence. In His grasp is the source of authority. He doeth what He pleaseth and ordaineth what He chooseth.

Since thou hast enquired about this subject, the following answer was revealed from the heaven of His tender mercy:

This ordinance is binding upon everyone, and by observing it one will be raised to honour inasmuch as it will serve to purify one's possessions and will impart blessing, and added prosperity. However, the people are as yet ignorant of its significance. They continually endeavour to amass riches by lawful or unlawful means in order to transmit them to their heirs, and this to what advantage, no one can tell. Say: In this day the true Heir is the Word of God, since the underlying purpose of inheritance is the preservation of the name and traces of men. It is indubitably clear that the passing of centuries and ages will obliterate these signs, while every word that hath streamed from the Pen of Glory in honour of a certain individual will last as long as the dominions of earth and heaven will endure.

43. If the people had not withheld the Right of God they owe but rather had paid what was due, or would pay it now, they could be recipients of God's loving-kindness. We entreat God to graciously grant them abundance.

44. This Huquq which hath been mentioned, and the command of which hath issued forth from the horizon of God's Holy Tablet, hath benefits which are the prescribed lot of the individuals themselves. By God! Were the people to know

what hath been concealed from their eyes and become fully aware of the ocean of grace [16] which lieth hid within this divine command, all the people of the world would offer everything they possess in order to be mentioned by Him. Blessed is the man who hath been privileged to observe that which he hath been commanded by God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise....

As bidden by Him, no one is allowed to solicit payment of the Huquq. In the Book of God everyone is enjoined to offer the Huquq spontaneously and in a spirit of joy and fellowship. I beseech Him, the Most Exalted, to graciously enable everyone to do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him.

And now concerning the poor, thou hast written to ask whether it is permissible to pay them out of the Right of God. This is conditional upon permission having been granted. In each locality where the Right of God is being received, details of it must be submitted to His exalted presence together with a statement describing the position of the needy ones. Verily He doeth what He willeth and ordaineth what He pleaseth. If permission were to be given universally it would lead to strife and give rise to trouble.

45. It is indubitably clear and evident that whatsoever hath been sent down from the heaven of divine commandment—magnified be His glory—is intended to confer benefits upon His servants. The question of Huquq is highly significant. It hath been and will always be conducive to divine increase, prosperity, dignity and honour.... It is obvious and manifest that the whole world is devoid of any real value. On numerous occasions—and to this everyone here would testify—large sums have been sent to His holy court but were not adored with the ornament of His acceptance. At present, however, in view of the ingathering of the friends and the requirements of the time, payment of the Huquq is accepted. The object is to show that this acceptance is but a token of divine favour and a proof of His loving-kindness and tender compassion.

46. To discharge one's obligations is highly praiseworthy in the sight of God. However, it is not permitted to solicit Huquq from anyone. Beseech ye the one true God to enable His loved ones to offer that which is the Right of God, inasmuch as the observance of this injunction would cause one's possessions to be purified [17] and protected and would become the means of attracting goodly gifts and heavenly blessings.

47. O Samandar! How many are the souls who with the utmost endeavour and effort, collect a handful of worldly goods and greatly rejoice in this act and yet in reality the Pen of the Most High hath decreed this wealth for others; that is, it is not meant to be their lot or it may even fall into the hands of their enemies! We seek shelter in God from such an evident loss. One's life is wasted; by day and by night, troubles are endured, and wealth becometh a source of affliction. Most of the wealth of men is not pure. Should they follow what is revealed by God, they would assuredly not be deprived of His grace and they would, in all circumstances, be protected under His bounty and blessed by His mercy.

48. There can be no doubt that whatsoever hath been revealed from the

All-Glorious Pen, be it ordinances or prohibitions, conferreth benefits upon the believers themselves. For example, among the commandments is that of the Huququ'llah. If the people attain the privilege of paying the Huquq, 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. As thou dost observe, large portions of people's wealth are lost to them as God causeth strangers, or heirs in Company with whom strangers would have been preferable, to lay hands on their possessions.

God's consummate wisdom is far beyond any description or fitting mention. Verily, people see with their own eyes and yet deny; they are aware, yet they pretend not to know. Had they observed the ordinance of God they would have attained the good of this world and the next.

49. Someone must needs remind the servants of God, that perchance they may be privileged to meet their obligation of Huquq, thus attaining a sublime station and gaining a reward that would last for ever. The payments for the Huquq should be kept in the custody of a trusted person and a report submitted so that steps may be taken according to the good-pleasure of God.

50. [18] The question of the Huquq dependeth on the willingness of the individuals themselves. From every true believer who is willing to tender the Right of God spontaneously and with the utmost joy and radiance, the offering is graciously acceptable, but not otherwise. Verily, thy Lord is independent of all mankind. Consider thou that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'an: "O men! Ye are but paupers in need of God, but God is the Self-Sufficient, the All-Praised."*

At all times one must have the utmost regard for the dignity and honour of the Cause of God.

*Qur'an 35:15

51. No one should demand the Huququ'llah. Its payment should depend on the volition of the individuals themselves, namely such souls that are devout, faithful and well-disposed. who would make their offerings of Huququ'llah in a spirit of willing submission and contentment.

52. It is not permissible to solicit Huquq. If anyone offereth something of his own volition, thou mayest accept it, but it is not thine to demand anything from anyone. Verily thy Lord is the All-Bountiful, the Most Generous.

53. As to what thou hast written concerning the Right of God: The binding injunction of God is set forth in the Book, but this matter is conditional upon the willingness of the individuals themselves; inasmuch as the one true God—magnified be His glory—hath, by reason of His all-encompassing mercy, acquainted everyone with that which is enjoined in the Book. Well is it with them that act accordingly.

Demanding the Huquq hath never been regarded with favour. Every deed must be performed in a spirit of joy and radiance. If a person is willing to make his

offering with utmost contentment, its acceptance is permissible, otherwise our merciful Lord is independent of all mankind. In this day one must observe that which is conducive to the glory, loftiness and exaltation of the Cause of God. Thus hath spoken the Lord of Truth, the Knower of things unseen....

[19] O My friend! Were the people to perceive the sweetness of the commandments enjoined by God and to discover the benefits arising therefrom, they would certainly, one and all, carry them out with the utmost joy and eagerness. We entreat the one true God to aid everyone to observe that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him. Verily, He is the Helper, the Confirmer, the All-Wise.

It hath been enjoined that whatsoever the loved ones of God may offer as gifts for His holy court, should be treated as the donor wisheth, lest the hearts of the faithful and the souls of the true believers be obscured by the dust of despondency and sorrow. But in the case of gifts that are offered as Huquq it is permissible to have them sold....

At all times and under all conditions one must have high regard for the dignity of the Cause. Solicitation of Huquq is in no wise permitted. Whoso is willing to tender payments for Huquq with the utmost joy, radiance and good-pleasure, his offering may be accepted, otherwise God is the Self-Sufficient, the All-Praised.

Consider that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'an—exalted is His Word: "Some of them injure themselves through evil deeds, others follow a middle course, and others vie with each other in charitable works."* Indeed any benefits arising from praiseworthy deeds shall fall to the individuals that have performed them. Were the people to comprehend this truth, they would compete with each other in benevolent works....

Ye may relinquish the whole world, but must not forgo even one jot of the dignity of the Cause of God. Such is the divine exhortation that hath been inscribed in the Crimson Book by the Pen of the Most High. Well is it with them that act accordingly....

*Qur'an 35:32

54. It is the binding command of God that in every locality whatever hath been or will be made available for the Huququ'llah should be submitted to His holy presence. Any instructions issued in this respect should be observed accordingly, so that all matters may be well-ordered.

It is highly pleasing if whatever is prescribed in the Most Holy Book be observed, so that everyone may be invested with the ornament of the purpose of the Best Beloved of the world.

55. [20] There is no objection to offering for sale that which is donated in the name of Huquq. Thus proclaimeth the All-Glorious Pen from His noble habitation at the behest of the King of Eternity.

56. Whoso desireth to offer Huququ'llah with the utmost joy and eagerness

should pay it to trustworthy persons like unto thyself* and obtain a receipt, so that whatsoever is effected may conform to His sanction and permission. Verily He is the Knowing, the Wise.

*Haji Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikai

57. Thou hast written that they have pledged themselves to observe maximum austerity in their lives with a view to forwarding the remainder of their income to His exalted presence. This matter was mentioned at His holy court. He said: Let them act with moderation and not impose hardship upon themselves. We would like them both to enjoy a life that is well-pleasing.

58. Payments for the Huququ'llah cannot be handed over to every person. These words have been uttered by Him Who is the sovereign Truth. The Huququ'llah should be kept in the custody of trusted individuals and forwarded to His holy court through the Trustees of God.

59. There is a prescribed ruling for the Huququ'llah. After the House of Justice hath come into being, the law thereof will be made manifest, in conformity with the Will of God.

60. Magnified art Thou, O Lord of the entire creation, the One unto Whom all things must turn. With my inner and outer tongues I bear witness that Thou hast manifested and revealed Thyself, sent down Thy signs, and proclaimed Thy testimonies. I testify to Thy self-sufficiency from aught else except Thee, and Thy sanctity above all earthly things. I entreat Thee by the transcendent glory of Thy Cause and the supreme potency of Thy Word to grant confirmation unto him who desireth to offer what Thou hast prescribed unto him in Thy Book and to observe that which will shed forth the fragrance of Thine acceptance. Verily Thou art the All-Mighty, the All-Gracious, the All-Forgiving, the All-Generous.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHA

All passages are extracts from previously untranslated Tablets unless the source of publication is given.

61. [21] As preordained by the Fountainhead of Creation, the temple of the world hath been fashioned after the image and likeness of the human body. In fact each mirroreth forth the image of the other, wert thou but to observe with discerning eyes. By this is meant that even as the human body in this world which is outwardly composed of different limbs and organs, is in reality a closely integrated, coherent entity, similarly the structure of the physical world is like unto a single being whose limbs and members are inseparably linked together.

Were one to observe with an eye that discovereth the realities of all things, it would become clear that the greatest relationship that bindeth the world of being together lieth in the range of created things themselves, and that co-operation, mutual aid and reciprocity are essential characteristics in the unified body of the world of being, inasmuch as all created things are closely

related together and each is influenced by the other or deriveth benefit therefrom, either directly or indirectly.

Consider for instance how one group of created things constituteth the vegetable kingdom, and another the animal kingdom. Each of these two maketh use of certain elements in the air on which its own life dependeth, while each increaseth the quantity of such elements as are essential for the life of the other. In other words, the growth and development of the vegetable world is impossible without the existence of the animal kingdom, and the maintenance of animal life is inconceivable without the co-operation of the vegetable kingdom. Of like kind are the relationships that exist among all created things. Hence it was stated that cooperation and reciprocity are essential properties which are inherent in the unified system of the world of existence, and without which the entire creation would be reduced to nothingness.

[22] In surveying the vast range of creation thou shalt perceive that the higher a kingdom of created things is on the arc of ascent, the more conspicuous are the signs and evidences of the truth that co-operation and reciprocity at the level of a higher order are greater than those that exist at the level of a lower order. For example the evident signs of this fundamental reality are more discernible in the vegetable kingdom than in the mineral, and still more manifest in the animal world than in the vegetable.

And thus when contemplating the human world thou beholdest this wondrous phenomenon shining resplendent from all sides with the utmost perfection, inasmuch as in this station acts of cooperation, mutual assistance and reciprocity are not confined to the body and to things that pertain to the material world, but for all conditions, whether physical or spiritual, such as those related to minds, thoughts, opinions, manners, customs, attitudes, understandings, feelings or other human susceptibilities. In all these thou shouldst find these binding relationships securely established. The more this interrelationship is strengthened and expanded, the more will human society advance in progress and prosperity. Indeed without these vital ties it would be wholly impossible for the world of humanity to attain true felicity and success.

Now consider, if among the people who are merely the manifestations of the world of being this significant matter is of such importance, how much greater must be the spirit of co-operation and mutual assistance among those who are the essences of the world of creation, who have sought the sheltering shadow of the heavenly Tree, and are favoured by the manifestations of divine grace; and how the evidences of this spirit should, through their earnest endeavour, their fellowship and concord, become manifest in every sphere of their inner and outer lives, in the realm of the spirit and divine mysteries and in all things related to this world and the next. Thus there can be no doubt that they must be willing even to offer up their lives for each other.

This is the basic principle on which the institution of Huququ'llah is established, inasmuch as its proceeds are dedicated to the furtherance of these

ends. Otherwise the one true God hath ever been and will always be independent of all else beside Him. Even as He hath enabled all created things to partake of His boundless grace and loving-kindness, likewise is He able to bestow riches upon His loved ones out of the treasures of His power.

[23] However, the wisdom of this command is that the act of giving is well-pleasing in the sight of God. Consider how well-pleasing must this mighty act be in His estimation that He hath ascribed it unto His Own Self. Rejoice ye then, O people of generosity!

We earnestly hope that in this Most Great Cycle the wondrous attributes of the All-Merciful may, through the infinite bounty and blessings of the King of Glory, find expression in the lives of the servants of God in such wise that the sweet savours thereof will shed fragrance upon all regions.

This matter needeth further details, but We have treated it in brief.

62. O my heavenly friends! It is certain and evident that the Incomparable One is always praised for His absolute wealth, distinguished for His all-embracing mercy, characterized by His eternal grace, and known for His gifts to the world of existence. Nonetheless, in accordance with His inscrutable wisdom and in order to apply a unique test to distinguish the friend from the stranger, He hath enjoined the Huquq upon His servants and made it obligatory.

Those who have observed this weighty ordinance have received heavenly blessings and in both worlds their faces have shone radiantly and their nostrils have been perfumed by the sweet savours of God's tender mercy. One of the tokens of His consummate wisdom is that the payment of the Huquq will enable the donors to become firm and steadfast and will exert a great influence on their hearts and souls. Furthermore the Huquq will be used for charitable purposes.

63. O friends of 'Abdu'l-Baha! The Lord, as a sign of His infinite bounties, hath graciously favoured His servants by providing for a fixed money offering (Huquq), to be dutifully presented unto Him, though He, the True One, and His servants have been at all times independent of all created things, and God verily is the All-Possessing, exalted above the need of any gift from His creatures. This fixed money offering, however, causeth the people to become firm and steadfast and draweth Divine increase upon them.

(Will & Testament p. 15)

64. [24] As regards the Huquq which hath been explicitly prescribed in the Book: This is intended for the benefit and prosperity of the individuals themselves and is conducive to their happiness and constancy. Otherwise the one true God hath been and will always be self-sufficient in all things.

65. Thou hast enquired about the Huquq. From one's annual income, all expenses during the year are deductible, and on what is left 19% is payable to the Huquq. Thus, a person hath earned L1,000 income out of his business. After deducting his annual expenses of say L600, he would have a surplus of L400 on which Huquq is payable at the rate of 19%. This would amount to L76 to be offered for charitable purposes to the Huquq.

The Huquq is not levied on one's entire possessions each year. A person's wealth may be worth L100,000. How can he be expected to pay Huquq on this property every year? For instance, whatever income thou hast earned in a particular year, you should deduct from it your expenses during that year. The Huquq will then be payable on the remainder. Possessions on which Huquq was paid the previous year will be exempt from further payment.

66. In brief, after having deducted the yearly expenses, if there is still any surplus left, then Huquq will be applicable to this surplus at the rate of 19% and no further payment of Huquq will fall due on it. In the following year however, after the annual expenses, if there is still an excess of income over the expenditure of that second year, then Huquq will be applicable to the amount of the excess only.

67. As to the Huquq, it is payable on whatever is left over after deducting one's yearly expenses. However, any money or possession which is necessary in producing income for one's subsistence, and on which Huquq hath once been paid is exempt from Huquq. This exemption also applieth to a property on which Huquq hath already been paid, and the income of which doth not exceed one's needs.... Disposition of the Huquq, wholly or partly, is permissible, but this should be done by permission of the authority in the Cause to whom all must turn.

68. Huquq is applied on everything one possesseth. However, if a person hath paid the Huquq on a certain property, and the income [25] from that property is equal to his needs, no Huquq is payable by that person.

Huquq is not payable on agricultural tools and equipment, and on animals used in ploughing the land, to the extent that these are necessary.

69. As to the way the Huquq must be paid: Having deducted the expenses incurred during the year, any excess of income derived from one's property, profession or business is subject to the payment of Huquq.

70. As to the question of Huquq: In no wise shouldst thou make statements requiring any person to pay the Huquq. However if a devoted and self-sacrificing soul freely and spontaneously offereth thee something in the name of Huquq or for the poor then thou mayest accept.

71. According to the explicit text of the Most Holy Book the amounts offered for the Huquq should be deposited in a place and be disbursed, as necessary. However thou shouldst not require anyone there to offer the Huquq unless someone is prepared to do so willingly and of his own free choice.

72. The Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His Dust—hath emphasized through His decisive Word that the utmost honesty hath to be observed in matters related to the Huquq. The institution of Huquq is sacred.

73. A third requisite [for them that take counsel together] is the promulgation of the divine commandments among the friends, such as the Obligatory Prayers, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Huququ'llah and all the other ordinances.

74. Since the loved ones of God in Persia are regarded as veteran friends, it

is by virtue of the tremendous affection I cherish for them that their offerings for Huquq are accepted. They must rejoice exceedingly for having been invested with such a bounty.

75. Render thou thanks unto God, for He hath graciously enabled thee to observe the injunction set forth in His Most Holy Book, [26] inasmuch as thou hast arisen to fulfil the obligation of Huquq and God hath accepted thy goodly deed.

Know thou, moreover, that those who faithfully serve the All-Merciful will be enriched by Him out of His heavenly treasury and that the Huquq offering is but a test applied by Him unto His servants and maidservants. Thus every true and sincere believer will offer Huquq to be expended for the relief of the poor, the disabled, the needy, and the orphans, and for other vital needs of the Cause of God, even as Christ did establish a Fund for benevolent purposes.

76. It behoveth thee to render thanks unto God, inasmuch as He hath aided thee to fulfil the obligations of Huquq. This is a confirmation that God hath vouchsafed unto thee. Therefore yield thou praise unto Him for the bounty of this divine ordinance which is prescribed in the Epistles of thy Lord, the Ancient of Days. Verily He is the Clement, the Bountiful.

77. As regards the donation thou hast offered as Huquq, We have received this as if it were a treasure, inasmuch as it was tendered with profound love and devotion. We shall use it soon for His Holy Shrine, that thy name may thereby be immortalized for ever.

EXTRACT FROM THE UTTERANCES OF 'ABDU'L-BAHA

78. [27] Question: As to the matter of Huquq, does it mean 1/19th of one's net income or one's gross income? For example, in America, there is a tax on the gross income, after certain exemptions are made. How is the Huquq to be worked out?

Answer: The substance of 'Abdu'l-Baha's explanation was: After one has paid all his necessary expenses 19% of what is left is then taken by him and given as Huquq. For example, if a person has 100 piastres left after all his expenses have been paid, then 19 piastres are taken as Huquq for the Cause of God. This is done at the end of the year after he has ascertained what his expenses are. For every hundred piastres, 19 are taken for Huquq.

He pays this once, then there is no more Huquq to be paid on that sum. It is finished. Next year he will pay on the amount he has left over in his possession after his expenses have been deducted, and after the amount he paid Huquq on the previous year is also deducted. For example, at the end of the first year a man has 1000 piastres left after all his expenses are paid, then 190 piastres are taken as Huquq; at the end of the next year after all expenses are determined, he may have 2000 piastres left. As he has already paid Huquq on 1000 piastres the previous year this sum is deducted from the 2000 and he pays Huquq on 1000 piastres (or 190 piastres). The third year the net amount of what he owns may be 2500 piastres, he deducts 2000 piastres from this amount

and pays 19 per cent on 500 piastres or 95 piastres. If at the end of the 4th year he has 2500 piastres, no Huquq is taken.

Question: In the deduction of our necessary expenses, are contributions to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, teaching and other activities of the Cause considered a part of Huquq or should they be taken separately?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Baha replied that Huquq was separate and independent of these and came first. After that had been determined then the other affairs could be looked after. He smiled and [28] said when Huquq is given 'Abdu'l-Baha will ascertain how much of it is for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, how much for teaching and how much for the needy, etc.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

79. [29] To offer contributions towards this end [in support of the activities of the Spiritual Assembly] is one of the pressing requirements of the Cause of God, is deemed highly essential, and is of fundamental importance. Next to the payment of the Huquq it is the obligation of every Baha'i.

(27 February 1923

—translated from the Persian)

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

To individual believers unless otherwise noted.

80. Regarding the Huququ'llah. . .this is applied to one's merchandise, property and income. After deducting the necessary expenses, whatever is left as profit, and is an addition to one's capital, such a sum is subject to Huquq. When one has paid Huquq once on a particular sum, that sum is no longer subject to Huquq, unless it should pass from one person to another. One's residence, and the household furnishings are exempt from Huquq.... Huququ'llah is paid to the Centre of the Cause.

(4 April—3 May 1927

—translated from the Persian)

81. You will find references to the Huquq in the Book of Aqdas, manuscript copies of which I believe are to be found among a few believers in America. All matters not specifically provided by Baha'u'llah are to be referred to the Universal House of Justice.

(26 December 1927)

82. Concerning Huquq, the Guardian wishes me to inform you that at present it is not obligatory for the friends to pay, but that they should be urged to contribute to the local and national funds.

(19 September 1929)

83. [30] As regards Huquq, it is really 19 per cent or one's income payable to the Guardian. But it is not obligatory now.

(19 December 1929, "Dawn of a New Day" p. 27)

84. You enquired concerning the Huquq. Shoghi Effendi would much prefer if the friends in America concentrate their financial resources towards the completion

of the Temple, rather than dissipate their energy along channels that do not as yet call for immediate attention. When the time comes that the Cause would need the enforcement of this religious donation, Shoghi Effendi would say it and would set forth the amount prescribed. It is only gradually that the teachings of Baha'u'llah can be enforced. The time has to become ripe if the desired result is to be obtained.

(15 February 1932)

85. With reference to your question concerning the "Huquq", Shoghi Effendi wishes me to inform you that, although it has been prescribed by Baha'u'llah and referred to by 'Abdu'l-Baha in His "Will and Testament", he is nevertheless reluctant to emphasize it, in view of the paramount necessity of preserving the dignity of the Cause, and also in view of the increasing national expenses of the Faith.

(10 February 1935)

86. Regarding the subject of Huquq; Shoghi Effendi is reluctant to emphasize it at present, in view of the urgent needs of the Cause in America. But when the time comes for him to explain it to the friends, he will not fail to do so; suffice it to say now that the Huquq constitutes nineteen per cent of one's income, and not nine as some seem to think.

(31 May 1937)

87. One mithqal consists of nineteen nakhuds. The weight of twenty-four nakhuds equals four and three-fifths grammes. Calculations may be made on this basis.

(17 November 1937)

88. Concerning your question whether the heirs to whom the principal residence, furniture and clothing of the deceased are transferred by way of inheritance will be exempt from the payment [31] of Huquq or not, he said: Since the residence, furniture and the tools of trade have, in accordance with the explicit Text, been granted exemption from the Huquq, therefore when the transfer of ownership takes place such possessions continue to be exempt.

(29 September 1942)

to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran
—translated from the Persian)

89. Regarding the questions raised in your letters: The Huquq is a conscientious obligation; but the Guardian has not felt the time was ripe to stress this in the West.

(24 March 1945)

90. Great is the recompense that God has ordained for the true and devoted souls, the pure and detached beings who have spontaneously bequeathed a portion of their earthly possessions to the Cause of God, either during their own lifetimes or through their wills, and have had the privilege and honour of discharging their obligations to Huququ'llah.

Give assurance on my behalf to the donors and to the survivors of those who have ascended unto God, affirming that these efforts and donations are bound to

attract divine confirmations, heavenly blessings and incalculable favours, and to promote the manifold interests of the International Baha'i Community. Well is it with them, inasmuch as God has enabled them to fulfil that which shall elevate their stations in this world and in the world to come.

(23 June 1945—translated from the Persian)

91. The Guardian does not wish at present to go into the subject of Huquq; but the general principle is that once you have paid on your capital you don't have to pay it again.

(28 July 1946)

92. The paying of the Huquq is a spiritual obligation; the friends must not be obliged by the assemblies to pay it, but they should be encouraged to fulfil this spiritual obligation laid upon them in the Aqdas.

(12 October 1946)

to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

93. The Huquq is payable to the Guardian individually by the believers; but he has not, in view of the many financial demands [32] of the work the American believers, are accomplishing, thought it timely to stress this point. They are free to do as they wish in this matter; later, when the time comes, he will explain fully to them the details of this matter.

(27 March 1949)

94. Huquq is at the present time the same as the International Fund, and therefore I am sending you a receipt stating it is for the International Interests of the Faith.

(8 June 1947)

95. As regards Huquq: it is the payment of 19 per cent, not one 19th. George Latimer's understanding was quite correct.

(4 October 1950)

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

To individual believers unless otherwise noted.

96. [33] Since the Huququ'llah has, according to the injunction in the Book, been designated as one of the institutions of the Cause, and inasmuch as the fulfilment of this obligation is binding on the people of Baha, therefore it is deemed appropriate that your Spiritual Assembly should fully familiarize the dear friends in Persia with the significance of this momentous responsibility and to promulgate gradually in the entire community such ordinances related to Huququ'llah as are laid down in His perspicuous Book. Obviously in pursuance of the explicit Texts solicitation of the Huququ'llah is not permissible, but it is the responsibility of those Trustees of the Cause to address appeals of a general character to the dear friends, so that they may become more informed about this essential obligation. God willing, through the occasional reminders issued by your Assembly, they may gain the privilege and honour of achieving this benevolent deed—a deed that draws forth heavenly blessings, serves as a means of purifying the earthly possessions of the devoted friends, and promotes

the international activities of the people of Baha.

The Trustee of the Huququ'llah, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Ali-Muhammad Varqa, has been asked to designate, whenever advisable, certain representatives for the Huququ'llah in various townships, provinces and neighbouring countries, so that the offering of the Huququ'llah may be facilitated for the friends in those regions.

It is evident to those Trustees of the Merciful that this Body, by virtue of the explicit Text of the sacred Writings, is the Body to which all things must be referred, and the Huququ'llah can be used to promote the interests of the Cause throughout the Baha'i [34] world only with the permission of the Authority in the Cause to which all must turn.

(27 October 1963,

to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

—translated from the Persian)

97. The payment of the Huququ'llah is one of the essential spiritual obligations that the wondrous Pen of Baha'u'llah has laid down in the Most Holy Book.

It would be preferable and more fitting if these two accounts, namely contributions to the Funds and payments of the Huququ'llah were to be kept separate. This means that in the first instance you should pay your Huququ'llah, and then you may offer your devoted contributions at your own discretion to the International Fund which is now being used for achieving the goals of the Nine-Year Plan.

(18 August 1965

—translated from the Persian)

98. Recently one of the friends asked the following question: Were a person to offer his property, partly or wholly, to the Baha'i Funds, what responsibility does he still have for payment of the Huququ'llah?

This is what was stated in reply: The payment of Huququ'llah is one of the essential spiritual obligations of the people of Baha which has been revealed in the Most Holy Book by the Pen of Glory. Therefore the friends should separate the account of Huququ'llah from that of their other contributions . Thus they must first settle their obligations concerning Huququ'llah, then they may make other contributions at their own disposition, inasmuch as the disposition of the funds of the Huququ'llah is subject to decision by the Authority in the Cause to which all must turn, whereas the purposes of contributions to other Funds may be determined by the donors themselves.

(22 August 1966

—translated from the Persian)

99. Undoubtedly the friends are illumined with the light of the fear of God and are fully conscious of the need to purify and protect their possessions in accordance with the decisive Words revealed by our Lord, the Most High.

In these turbulent days, we that yearn for Him, fervently turn in prayer to the

court of the Lord of mankind that He may graciously enable that august Assembly to repeatedly remind the lovers of [35] the Beauty of the All-Merciful of the vital importance and the binding character of this sacred and heavenly injunction. Through issuing announcements, distributing leaflets and in gatherings, schools and conferences held by the followers of our Zealous Lord, they should be guided and encouraged to observe strictly and conscientiously that which His divine commandment has enjoined upon them, so that those believers who are adorned with the fear of God may be shielded from the dire consequences foreshadowed in His ominous warnings, may become the recipients of His assured blessings and be enabled to partake of the outpourings of His infallible spiritual grace.

(12 September 1969

—translated from the Persian)

100. Some of the dear friends who observe their Huququ'llah obligations have written asking about the relationship that exists between contribution to the Funds and the payment of Huququ'llah. That is, if a person who intends to meet his Huququ'llah obligations offers contributions to other Funds and projects instead, would he be exempted from the payment of Huququ'llah or not?

The Holy Texts relevant to this matter are clear but, since this question has been repeatedly asked by the friends, it was decided to elucidate it for their information.

Payment of Huququ'llah is a spiritual obligation binding on the people of Baha. The injunction is laid down in the Most Holy Book, and clear and conclusive explanations are embodied in various Tablets.

Every devoted believer who is able to meet the specified conditions, must pay the Huququ'llah, without any exception. Indeed according to the explicit Text of the Most Holy Book, failure to comply with this injunction is regarded as a betrayal of trust, and the divine call: "Whoso dealeth dishonestly with God will in justice be exposed," is a clear reference to such people.

The Centre of the Covenant has affirmed the obligation of Huquq in these words: "The Lord as a sign of His infinite bounties hath graciously favoured His servants by providing for a fixed money offering [Huquq], to be dutifully presented unto Him, though He, the True One, and His servants have been at all times independent of all created things."

This weighty ordinance, as testified by the Pen of Glory is invested with incalculable benefit and wisdom. It purifies one's [36] possessions, averts loss and disaster, conduces to prosperity and honour and imparts divine increase and blessing. It is a sacrifice offered for and related to God, and an act of servitude leading to the promotion of His Cause. As affirmed by the Centre of the Covenant, Huquq offerings constitute a test for the believers and enable the friends to become firm and steadfast in faith and certitude.

In brief, payment of Huququ'llah is one of the binding spiritual responsibilities of the followers of Baha'u'llah and the proceeds thereof

revert to the Authority in the Cause to whom all must turn. Moreover, the Ancient Beauty—magnified be His praise—has affirmed that after the establishment of the Universal House of Justice necessary rulings would be enacted in this connection in conformity with that which God has purpose(l, and that no one, except the Authority to which all must turn, has the right to dispose of this Fund. In other words, whatever portion of one's wealth is due to the Huququ'llah belongs to the World Centre of the Cause of God, not to the individuals concerned.

Thus the friends should not follow their own volition and judgement in using any of the funds set aside for Huququ'llah for any other purpose, even for charitable contributions of the Faith.

We earnestly hope that everyone may be privileged to observe this sacred and blessed obligation which would ensure the attainment of true happiness and would serve to promote the execution of Baha'i enterprises throughout the world.

Verily God is Self-Sufficient above the need of His creatures.

(25 October 1970

to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

—translated from the Persian)

101. 'Abdu'l-Baha in one of His Tablets has stated: "Disposition of the Huquq, wholly or partly, is permissible, but this should be done by permission of the authority in the Cause to whom all must turn." The provision in His Will and Testament that the Huququ'llah "is to be offered through the guardian of the Cause of God..." is clearly in accord with this principle. In another Tablet 'Abdu'l-Baha referred to the Universal House of Justice as "the authority to whom all must turn" and it is clear that in the absence of the Guardian it is the supreme and central institution of the Cause. Moreover, before 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'u'llah had revealed the following: "There is a prescribed ruling for the Huququ'llah. After the House of Justice hath come into being, [37] the law thereof will be made manifest, in conformity with the Will of God." In accordance with these explicit texts it is clearly within the jurisdiction of the Universal House of Justice to decide about the receipt and disbursement of Huququ'llah at the present time.

(2 March 1972

to the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land)

102. Payment of Huququ'llah has not yet been applied to the western world. It will undoubtedly be universal at some future time but at present the believers in the West are able to discharge their material obligations to the Cause by contribution to the Funds.

(12 July 1972)

103. We are deeply touched by your loving letter of 27 December 1972 expressing the wish to follow the Law of Huququ'llah with respect to your inheritance from your mother.

Although, as you correctly state, this Law is not at present applicable to the friends in the West, any believer is free to observe it if he wishes.

This Law of the Aqdas stipulates that nineteen per cent of one's capital is payable as Huququ'llah when such capital has reached an amount of at least "nineteen mithqals in gold".... In determining the amount a believer should pay, he should first deduct any debts and expenses he may have, and pay nineteen per cent on the remainder of his capital if it is equal to at least nineteen mithqals of gold.

If you decide that you wish to observe this Law of the Aqdas at the present time, you should determine the total value of your inheritance in cash and other assets less any expenses or debts you may have, and consider the circumstances under which you may be able to pay Huququ'llah on the net value of your inheritance. The time and conditions of payment are left to each individual.

For example, if one's assets include property or shares in addition to cash, he may find it disadvantageous or inconvenient to pay nineteen per cent of the value of the non-cash assets until they are disposed of, at which time he would prefer to fulfil this spiritual obligation. Any expenses that may be involved in disposing [38] of one's assets should be deducted before calculating the net value on which Huququ'llah is payable.

(21 January 1973)

104. ...The devoted believer who is privileged to pay "the Right of God", far from seeking excuses for evading this spiritual obligation, will do his utmost to meet it. On the other hand, inasmuch as obedience to this Law is a matter of conscience, and payment of Huququ'llah is a voluntary act, it would not be seemly to go beyond informing the Persian friends of their spiritual obligation, and leaving to them to decide what they wish to do about it.

The same principle applies to those friends who spend lavishly on their families, who purchase or build residences and furnish them far in excess of their needs, and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huququ'llah. Likewise those friends who marry non-Persians and reside in Europe or other countries should not be pressed, but informed and left to decide for themselves.

(26 February 1973)

105. ...many details in the computation of Huququ'llah have been left by Baha'u'llah to the judgement and conscience of the individual believer. For example, He exempts such household equipment and furnishings as are needful, but He leaves it to the individual to decide which items are necessary and which are not. Contributions to the funds of the Faith cannot be considered as part of one's payment of Huququ'llah; moreover, if one owes Huququ'llah and cannot afford both to pay it and to make contributions to the Fund, the payment of Huququ'llah should take priority over making contributions. But as to whether contributions to the Fund may be treated as expenses in calculating the amount of one's assets on which Huququ'llah is payable; this is left to the

judgement of each individual in the light of his own circumstances.

The Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf that "one mithqal consists of nineteen nakhuds. The weight of twenty-four nakhuds equals four and three-fifths grammes. Calculations may be made on this basis." Nineteen mithqals therefore equal 69.191667 grammes. One troy ounce equals 31.103486 grammes, thus 19 mithqals equal 2.224563 oz. At the current rate of \$339.10 per ounce, 19 mithqals of gold would amount to \$754.35. Thus on [39] a savings of \$754.35 an amount of \$143.33 (i.e. 19%) would be payable as Huququ'llah. (16 September 1979)

106. It is clear from the Writings that a person is exempt from paying Huququ'llah on his residence and such household and professional equipment as are needful. It is left to the discretion of the individual to decide which items are necessary and which are not. It is obvious that the friends should not spend lavishly on residences and furnishings and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huququ'llah. No specific text has been found exempting capital used to earn income. The Universal House of Justice leaves such matters to the consciences of individual believers. (9 April 1980)

107 . The House of Justice further points out that however weighty are the obligations resting upon the believers to pay the Huququ'llah and to support the other funds of the Faith, these are spiritual obligations which are to be fulfilled voluntarily, and under no circumstances may contributions to any of these funds, even the Huququ'llah, be demanded or solicited from individual believers. Appeals and exhortations must always be made to the generality of the friends, not to individuals. (7 May 1980)

108. He who after setting aside his annual expenses owns a surplus worth at least nineteen mithqals of gold is liable to the payment of Huququ'llah. (20 October 1981
—translated from the Persian)

109. As to your second question asking whether, where there is perfect understanding between husband and wife and she is empowered to manage her husband's property as well as her own, she could pay the amount of Huququ'llah applicable to all their possessions or, since the husband owns a portion of the property, she should pay only the amount of Huququ'llah on her own share of the property.

In answering this question one should remember that the Huququ'llah is payable on possessions that are indisputably recognized as being one's own and not on property that one merely [40] controls or uses. However, in cases similar to the one you have mentioned above, it is incumbent on husband and wife to take counsel together and to define precisely the limits of their personal belongings, then they should either jointly or individually render to the Huquq the amount they consider to be their binding obligation.

As regards Mrs...., since her husband is an American and the law of Huququ'llah does not apply at this time to the friends in the West, the payment of Huququ'llah on the part of her husband is neither binding nor prohibited.

(10 January 1982

—translated from the Persian)

110. The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 10 September 1982 enquiring about the responsibility of a Baha'i couple to pay Huququ'llah where one partner is American and the other Persian, and we have been instructed to provide you with the following clarification.

1. Your letter refers to basing the calculation of Huququ'llah on one's income. As you will realize from a study of the texts, however, the computation is made on the net value of one's possessions after deducting a number of exempt items such as residence and necessary furnishings, and on subsequent annual increases to this net property arising from surplus income after the payment of necessary expenses. It is, moreover, calculated on units of property equal in value to 19 mithqals of gold (2.22456 troy ounces).

2. No hard and fast rule can be laid down as to the share of a couple's property on which Huququ'llah should be paid where one partner is a westerner and the other a Persian. This depends upon the way the husband and wife themselves regard the ownership of the family's property. Thus it is basically a matter for consultation between husband and wife and, as stated previously, Baha'u'llah has left many of the details of the computation of Huququ'llah to the judgement of the individual believers.

(11 October 1982)

111. As to the question raised by Mr...., kindly inform him that in a letter to an individual believer the beloved Guardian explained that Huququ'llah is payable only once on a given property, whether personal or real, but should this property pass from one person to another, such as through inheritance, it becomes again subject [41] to the payment of Huququ'llah. This in effect means that heirs receiving a share of their inheritance from an estate must pay Huququ'llah, if the share they are receiving increases their wealth to a level calling for the discharge of this sacred obligation.

(1 June 1983

to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

112. As regards your question concerning the principal residence and subsidiary rulings relevant to it, we wish to let you know that in these days it is not deemed advisable to enact detailed rulings for Huququ'llah. Thus the friends are left free, and whenever no definite rulings exist they may fulfil in each case that which they understand from the texts, and may honour their Huququ'llah obligations according to their own judgement and the promptings of their own conscience.

(4 March 1984

—translated from the Persian)

— Huququ'llah (Used by permission of the curator)

