

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

April 22, 2016

Dear Friends,

It is with joyous hearts that the Board of Trustees of Huququ'llah writes to those assembled in Calgary for the National Convention of the Baha'is of Canada at the threshold of the new Five Year Plan. Each year the Board attempts to share an insight related to the wondrous law of Huququ'llah – a “*law based on love rather than fear of retribution*”<sup>1</sup> and given to us by “*The Lord, as a sign of His infinite bounties*”.<sup>2</sup>

God has “*bestowed upon man unlimited power of comprehension and adorned him with great capacity, intellect, and wisdom ... to enable him to progress in the spiritual realms of God and acquire unlimited divine qualities and attributes, and not to deprive himself of the benefits of the physical world ... but to partake of its bounties and riches.*”<sup>3</sup> However, this “*wealth is a great test for man. In moderation it is the source of prosperity, felicity, and good life; however, if it transgresses the boundary of moderation, it pulls man downward and becomes a source of selfishness and ego.*”<sup>4</sup>

Man's life on this planet is a continual struggle between spiritual and material forces. The spiritual is nourished by passing through “*a cleansing, edifying, and perfecting process*”<sup>5</sup> that enables one to become freer of the material world. It is this spiritual “*force which facilitates the progress of man's soul ... gives him the capacity to reflect the spirit of God in his innermost being, and adorns him with the garment of detachment, generosity, and sacrifice.*”<sup>6</sup> The other, material, force is “*nurtured by man's physical nature, which, through its powerful attraction, connects him to the physical environment and influences him to obtain as much as he can from material blessings and gifts in order to add more pleasure, colour, and ornament to his life.*”<sup>7</sup>

When balanced and in equilibrium, “*these two influential elements of our life are not incompatible, rather they complement each other*”.<sup>8</sup> However, we conduct our “*lives in the midst of a society acutely disordered in its material affairs.*”<sup>9</sup> “*Materialism, rooted in the West, has now spread to every corner of the planet, breeding, in the name of a strong global economy and human welfare, a culture of consumerism. It skilfully and ingeniously promotes a habit of consumption that seeks to satisfy the basest and most selfish desires, while encouraging the expenditure of wealth.*”<sup>10</sup>

Baha'u'llah exhorts us ‘to cling to’ and ‘act with’ moderation since, in “*all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil*”<sup>11</sup> and will “*cease to exert a beneficial influence.*”<sup>12</sup> The Universal House of Justice outlines “*Yet another sacred duty ... that of clinging to the cord of moderation in all things, lest they who are to be the essence of detachment and moderation be deluded by the trappings of this nether world or set their hearts on its adornments and waste their lives.*”<sup>13</sup>

Surrounded as we are in a “*cesspool of materialism*”<sup>14</sup> it is often difficult to appreciate how our choices, views, and pre-occupations may be influenced by the prevailing culture and perhaps exceed the limits of moderation. We pray to God to “*free us from the fetters of material existence*”<sup>15</sup> and try to live up to the exhortation of ‘Abdu'l-Baha that we not let our “*hearts be fettered by the material things of this world ... not to lie contentedly on the beds of negligence, prisoners of matter, but to arise and free yourselves from its chains!*”<sup>16</sup>

One means to freedom is to reflect on and distinguish “needs” from “wants” in one's life. Integral to obeying the law of Huquq, this exercise of deciding what is truly necessary and what is not, increases awareness and aids in assessing where moderation ends and extravagance begins.

Worthy of reflection too is the link between moderation and justice. “*Whoso cleaveth to justice, can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation ... All ... things are subject to this same principle of moderation.*”<sup>17</sup>

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Spiritually minded individuals recognize their Creator and Sustainer, their relationship to Him, and their connectedness to their fellow beings and to the planet that physically sustains them. They are embedded in the physical world yet aware of their true reality. They appreciate the many bounties and unending graces bestowed by God, and – in order to express their love, appreciation, and gratitude to the “*Source of all beings, the Fashioner, the Almighty, the Maker, the All-Wise*”<sup>18</sup> – they long to give back to Him and have their offering accepted. If “*a soul is endowed with the attributes of true faith and characterized with spiritual qualities he will become to all mankind an emblem of the outstretched mercies of God.*”<sup>19</sup> If “*any man neglects these high purposes he can never prove acceptable in the sight of God; he stands out with all his shortcomings and claims perfection, and destitute, pretends to wealth.*”<sup>20</sup>

Spiritual maturity stirs the conscience of the believers to fulfil Baha’u’llah’s law of Huququ’llah.<sup>21</sup> Doing so, “*creates and develops our spiritual quality which leads us towards perfection; it harmonizes and balances our material endeavour, protects us from excessive desire which is born in our human nature, and when unleashed turns into a preventive element for our spiritual growth. When man realizes that a part of his income will be honoured by the acceptance of the Lord, the presence of God is felt in all his endeavours, and undoubtedly he will strive to live his life in a just and legitimate manner.*”<sup>22</sup>

In its recent message to the Continental Board of Counsellors, the Universal House of Justice writes that “*ultimately, voluntary giving fosters an awareness that managing one’s financial affairs in accordance with spiritual principles is an indispensable dimension of a life lived coherently. It is a matter of conscience, a way in which commitment to the betterment of the world is translated into practice.*”<sup>23</sup> Obeying the law of Huququ’llah – whether or not payment ever becomes due – is a pre-requisite to managing our “*financial affairs in the light of the teachings*”.<sup>24</sup> Those “*who have drunk from the fountainhead of certitude and knowledge, abstained from extravagance and followed the path of moderation would indeed do their utmost to perform their obligation to Huququ’llah as part of their essential spiritual duty.*”<sup>25</sup>

“*The future civilization envisaged by Bahá’u’lláh is a prosperous one, in which the vast resources of the world will be directed towards humanity’s elevation and regeneration, not its debasement and destruction.*”<sup>26</sup> As this law permeates our actions more and more, its promised blessings, added prosperity, honour, and divine protection will surely become more and more manifest in the community of the Most Great Name. May God enable all “*to fulfil that which is ordained in the Book, and ... not be hindered by vain imaginings and the transitory things of the world.*”<sup>27</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Varqa, Dr. Ali Muhammad, 27 September 2007 letter to the Deputy Trustees and Representatives attending the annual conference on the Right of God in Canada

<sup>2 & 27</sup> *Huququ’llah – The Right of God*, April 2007, Amended August 2009, #22 & 90 respectively

<sup>3 to 7 & 25</sup> Varqa, Dr. Ali Muhammad, “Huququ’llah – The Socio-Economic and Spiritual Law of the Kitab-i-Aqdas”, talk given during the meetings held in the U.S. in June 1997

<sup>8</sup> Varqa, Dr. Ali Muhammad, “Huququ’llah – Contribution as a Token of Love”, talk given during the Counsellors’ Conference following the 7th International Baha’i Convention, 4 May 1993

<sup>9, 23, 24 & 26</sup> Universal House of Justice, 29 December 2015 letter to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, p. 14

<sup>10</sup> Universal House of Justice, 2 April 2010 letter to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

<sup>11</sup> Baha’u’llah, “*Tablets of Baha’u’llah*”, p. 68

<sup>12 & 17</sup> Baha’u’llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah*, CX & CLXIV respectively

<sup>13</sup> Universal House of Justice, 10 February 1980 to the dear Iranian believers resident in other countries throughout the world

<sup>14</sup> Shoghi Effendi, 5 April 1956 letter to an individual, *Lights of Guidance*, #2047

<sup>15</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 91

<sup>16</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p.37

<sup>18</sup> Bab, *Selections from the Writings of the Bab*, p. 20

<sup>19 & 20</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 55 & 58 respectively

<sup>21 & 22</sup> Varqa, Dr. Ali Muhammad, “Huququ’llah – The Right of God”, talk given during the Sixth International Convention on 1 May 1988