

# TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

## THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL LIVES

### SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: FAITH, OBEDIENCE, PERSEVERANCE

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 19

Say: True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty. Happy is the man that hath apprehended the Purpose of God in whatever He hath revealed from the Heaven of His Will that pervadeth all created things. Say: The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso hath tasted of its sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the dominion of earth and heaven.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 63

## TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

#### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that Bahá'í laws are commandments from God that must be obeyed
- To know that there are two kinds of law: eternal law and social law
- To know the purposes of the laws of God

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- With physical demonstrations or analogies, help the students understand the concept that God speaks to us through His Manifestation, that the laws of Bahá'u'lláh are the laws of God for this Day (example: light in a mirror).
- Create a classifying activity for identifying and distinguishing between eternal laws and social laws. Have the students research in groups.
- Hold a group consultation on the purpose of laws from God, directed towards knowing laws are for our good and happiness and for man's exaltation.

#### WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand that Bahá'ís have the twin duties of recognizing Bahá'u'lláh and obeying His laws out of love for Him

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have each student act out the twin duties of recognizing Bahá'u'lláh and obeying His Laws (for example, by approaching or turning away from light).
- Encourage the use of art media to depict the twin duties of the believer.
- Use hands-on science experiments to demonstrate the power of attraction (magnets, chemical reaction) as a demonstration of the need for obedience following recognition of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Consult with the students about the connection between obeying the laws as a way of demonstrating our love for Bahá'u'lláh and cleansing ourselves to receive Bahá'u'lláh's love (use the Hidden Words to demonstrate).

**GOAL: TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**  
**TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR**  
**PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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## **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES**

- To discern the liberating effects of the laws on one's life
- To perceive the importance of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh in relation to current events and social conditions

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Share with the students brief selections from the Writings relating to the liberating effect of obedience to the Laws and discuss them. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Encourage the use of poetry or prose for expressing one's gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh for His laws.
- Have students work in groups to examine various social ills and to talk about how obedience to the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh would impact them.
- Use puppetry to demonstrate the importance of obeying, and the consequences of disobeying laws of their parents and their community; how it is even more important to obey the Laws of God.
- Share with the students the quotation from the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (p. 11) referring to the twin duties. Provide opportunity for reflection and a written response to this passage. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.



## **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

- To develop a plan of daily obedience of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh
- To explain to others the healing effects of the Bahá'í laws on individuals and society

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Assist the students in developing the habit of bringing oneself to account each day.
- Ask the students to set goals for obedience to a specific law or laws; provide the opportunity for ongoing sharing of progress and results.
- Assist the students in preparing a formal presentation of the healing and liberating effects of Bahá'í laws for presentation to peer and adult groups involved with social ills.
- Encourage the students to include in their personal teaching a discussion of the need for the laws of Bahá'u'lláh.

## TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY: ETERNAL LAWS AND SOCIAL LAWS

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that there are two kinds of laws: Eternal laws and social laws

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engaging mind and heart; Use of nature; Use of questioning; Use of the power or reasoning; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- 10 colors of embroidery floss for visual aid created in advance

**Advance Preparation:**

Create a visual aid using embroidery floss. You need 10 colors: an 8-inch length in eight of the colors, two 8-inch lengths of the ninth color (set these aside for the next activity), and a piece of the tenth color 72 inches long (as long as all the other nine colors laid end to end).

- Lay the long piece out in front of you: this represents eternal, unchanging Laws of God.
- Lay out the 8 shorter segments, end to end, alongside the long piece: these represent the changing social laws of previous Dispensations. Connect all 8 to each other and to the long thread, by tying knots that join adjoining ends **and** wrap around the long thread. You'll end up with a length of floss which looks like this:



1. Ask the students for examples of different types of laws, such as traffic laws, laws of nature, family rules, etc. Discuss how each law creates order, promotes harmony and offers protection. Imagine scenarios in which these laws didn't exist.
2. Pose the question, "Whose laws are the most important for our happiness, and our safety?" (Assist as needed to come to the answer, "God's").
3. Encourage students to describe the reasons why God's laws are so important.
4. Extend the discussion by asking: "How does God tell us what His laws are?" Engage in a brief discussion of God's Messengers, and that they each brought God's teachings and laws for the time and place in which They appeared.
5. When presenting the visual aid, discuss how each Manifestation continues and renews the unchanging, eternal laws of God (such as the Golden Rule and the importance of prayer and fasting), but also brings new social laws that are meant to create an ever-advancing civilization. Give examples of social laws that have been abrogated by later Manifestations, e.g., Jewish laws regarding no work on the Sabbath changed by Christ.
6. Invite students to handle the embroidery floss as you explain its meaning.

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**TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR**  
**PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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**ACTIVITY: THE “TWIN DUTIES”**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that Bahá'í laws are special commandments from God that must be obeyed

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that Bahá'ís have the twin duties of recognizing Bahá'u'lláh and obeying His laws out of love for Him

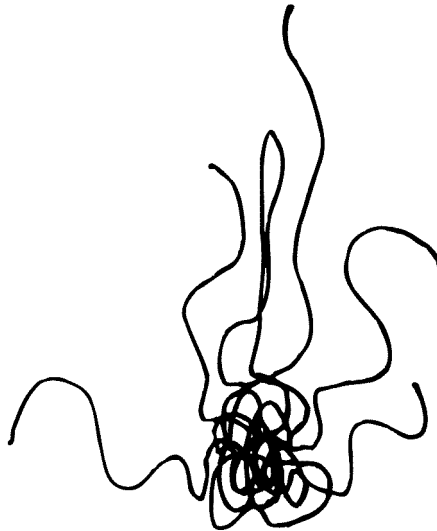
**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Engaging mind and heart; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of consultation; Use of manipulatives

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- embroidery floss from previous activity
- The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

1. Take up one of the pieces of the ninth color of floss that has not yet been attached: this represents Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation. Explain that when we accept Bahá'u'lláh, we know that He is from God, and take firm hold of His laws—grasp floss firmly between your hands.
2. Ask learners to consider what would happen if we each decided that we believed in Bahá'u'lláh, but didn't quite agree with a particular Teaching, or we weren't going to follow a particular law—as you speak, pull down on the individual threads of the floss, resulting in a tangled mess. Encourage student observations and discussion.
3. Share the first paragraph of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, p. 122, or p. 75 of this Guide.
4. Consult together on the meaning and implications of these passages. Assist the students to summarize our twin duties.
5. Take up the other piece of the ninth color of embroidery floss that represents Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation. Attach it to the long chain, to represent the acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's laws in their entirety, guiding mankind today and in the future.



**GOAL: TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

## **TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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### **ACTIVITY: NEW LAWS FROM GOD**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the importance of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh in relation to current events and social conditions

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engaging mind and heart; Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of questioning; Use of consultation

**SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY:** 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- chart paper and markers or chalkboard and chalk
- large clean stones, at least one per student
- poster paints or permanent markers to write on stones

1. Brainstorm some of the problems in the world today and in everyday life which indicate that we are in need of guidance and laws for this age. Chart these for all to see. Your list might include such problems as drug and alcohol abuse, war, racism, divorce, child abuse, poverty, etc.
2. Ask students to reflect quietly on which of these have personally affected them, whether they are simply concerned, fear it, or have experienced the problem.
3. Provide the students with a large supply (several for each of them) of clean stones. The size of the rocks should be larger than their palm if possible. If stones are unavailable, try bricks, chunks of concrete or even heavy wooden blocks.
4. Ask the students to choose one stone for each of the problems they have identified as personally meaningful. Have them use markers or poster paints to write the name of each problem or draw a symbol for it, on the stone.



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**TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR**  
**PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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**ACTIVITY: GOD'S LAWS LIBERATE US**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the purposes of the laws of God

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To discern the liberating effect of the laws on one's life

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Engaging mind and heart; Use of consultation; Use of manipulatives; Use of power of reasoning

**SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY:** 35 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- stones from previous activity
- large sheet of paper for each student
- markers, pens, scissors

1. Have students “take on” their fears and concerns by carrying around their stones, or by sitting with them laying in their laps, or on their shoulders, or something else long enough to create some discomfort.
2. Share the good news that Bahá'u'lláh's Laws have been given to us to free us from the burdens of these problems.
3. Consider one of the problems at a time: consult together on which of Bahá'u'lláh's Laws would alleviate that situation.
4. Write a brief description of that Law on a large sheet of paper. Invite everyone who had a particular fear or problem that is eliminated by that Law to free themselves by placing that stone in a pile on the floor. Cover those stones with the paper with the Law written on it.
5. Continue this process for every problem, until every student is free of stones and all the stones are in piles, covered with paper marked with Laws of Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Encourage open discussion of the liberation we feel as the stones are removed.
7. What happens when we break a Law? Make a cut in one of the papers, exposing the stones. Facilitate discussion.
8. Pose the question, “What is the purpose of God's Laws?”
9. Then share the passage from *Gleanings*, p.336 (also on p. 114 of *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*).

“Say: True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty.”

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 336

10. Memorize this passage.



**GOAL: TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

## **TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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### **ACTIVITY: DEDICATION TO THE LAWS**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To develop a plan of daily obedience to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engaging mind and heart; Use of stories; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- stones from previous activities
- 3"x5" cards

1. Read and discuss one of more of the stories in *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, pp. 113-28. How do these stories illustrate the importance of the laws of God?
2. Provide attractive pocket size cards on which the learners can write down one or more of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh—Laws that they wish particularly to strive to obey, or to pray for their acceptance in the world at large.
3. Remind students of Bahá'u'lláh's injunction to bring ourselves to account each day: suggest that they keep their cards close to them, to remind themselves daily of the importance of that law.
4. Reflect on how the stories illustrate the need to develop a plan to obey the laws of God.
5. In future classes, invite the students to share their successes and plan ways to address challenges related to our obedience of these laws.

### **ACTIVITY: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S LAWS**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To explain to others the healing effect of the Bahá'í laws on individuals and society

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engaging mind and heart; Use of creativity; Use of arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- poster board
- markers and art supplies

1. Have students work in teams to create posters of various laws as well as oral presentations about the importance of these laws.
2. Arrange to use the posters in a Bahá'í display and oral presentations at a public event concerned with social issues.



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TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR  
PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES

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Resource Pages

Say: True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleamings, p. 336*

IN THE NAME OF HIM WHO  
IS THE SUPREME RULER  
OVER ALL THAT HATH BEEN  
AND ALL THAT IS TO BE

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 19*

**GOAL: TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

# **TOPIC: THE NEED FOR LAWS TO GOVERN OUR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIVES**

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## **LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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### **Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star*: "Law and the Cord of Love," Nov/Dec 87

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*

Furutan, 'Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 23, 30-34

Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 102-03, 114-15, 132-33

### **Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star*:

"Powerful Protection" Jan/Feb 01

"What Does God Want Us To Do?" SpEd 93

Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 103, 115, 133

### **Activities:**

*Brilliant Star*:

"Drawn by a Magnet" Mar/Apr 98

"Gravity and Other natural Things" Mar/Apr 96

"The Spirit of Obedience" SpEd 94

"Sacrifice" SpEd 94

"Dry in the Sea" Nov/Dec 94

"Catch a Fragrance" Nov/Dec 94

"Ornaments" SpEd 93

"If It Be Thy Pleasure. . ." SpEd 93

"The Stronghold" SpEd 93

"Why Did God Create You?" May/June 93

Coleman, Alonzo and Sandra, and Petit, Diane Gobolub, *Hands On!*: "Breaking Rules"

"The Foundation of the New World Order is the Law"

### **Music:**

Engle, Susan and Marks, Jean White, *Come and Sing*: "Obedience"

### **Games:**

*Brilliant Star*: "Mining Your Gems" SpEd 93

### **Drama:**

*Brilliant Star*: "Tarred and Feathered" SpEd 93

### **List other favorite resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.

# TO KNOW AND APPRECIATE THE LAWS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

## THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

### AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
OBEDIENCE, LOVE, STEADFASTNESS**

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 20*

Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: “Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.”

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 20*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Book of Laws prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh.
- To know the laws that are appropriate to the lives of students.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Introduce the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to the students, teaching them to handle it with reverence.
- Recount the story of when, where, and under which circumstances Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
- Teach the students the literal translation of the title, the Most Holy Book.
- Introduce the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Have the students study it to identify the laws that are appropriate to their lives now.
- Assist the students in memorizing passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that hold special meaning for them, and can then be recited to touch the hearts of others. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.

### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is more than a mere code of laws. It is:
  - The Most Holy Book
  - The Mother Book of His Dispensation
  - The Charter of His New World Order
- To understand that we obey the laws of God out of love for Him. (*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 12)
- To understand that the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas will bring the social order necessary for the well being of humanity.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students symbolize visually how all the principles and Laws of Bahá'u'lláh stream forth from this Book.
- Share with students a passage from the Writings regarding how one's love for God is expressed by obedience to His laws. Provide opportunity for reflection and meditation.
- Encourage the students to use art media to portray the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as the point of reference and authoritative guidance for all social issues and questions.
- Ponder and discuss why the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has been designated by Bahá'u'lláh as the Most Holy Book.
- Explain and discuss with the students the age of maturity (15 years) in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, and its relationship to following certain laws.

## TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

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### SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern that obedience to the laws in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is an important step in one's spiritual development.
- To understand that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reveals laws we all must follow in our personal lives.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Create role playing situations that demonstrate that obedience to the laws of God is a sign of maturity, and disobedience a sign of immaturity.
- Study the lives of Bahá'í heroes and heroines, perceiving how obedience to Bahá'u'lláh transformed them. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Consult about the challenges of obeying the laws: those our parents face—those we face.
- Have the students reflect on their own spiritual development, and consider how a further compliance with the Kitáb-i-Aqdas will affect their growth.
- Have the students create a dance performance that shows the transformation of a person as the result of following the laws.
- Discuss with students their individual responsibility to follow the laws of Bahá'u'lláh and to understand the role of the institutions of the Faith in promoting these laws (distinguish between personal and social/community related laws).



### ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To explain to others the spirit of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, not only as a guide for our personal lives but also as a guide to the development of society.
- To read the Kitáb-i-Aqdas with appreciation for the spiritual inspiration and the detailed guidance it contains.
- To use Bahá'u'lláh's laws as the standard with which one makes one's personal choices in life.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide a forum for the students to share their concerns, and seek guidance regarding the application of Bahá'u'lláh's laws in their lives.
- On the anniversary of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas have students prepare a special gathering for the community in which they recite and perform and exhibit the results of their study, and invite a special speaker to discuss the importance and value of this Most Holy Book.

## TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY: THE MOST HOLY BOOK

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Book of Laws prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that we obey the laws of God out of our love for Him

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of stories; Use of questioning; Use of the power of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, wrapped as a gift
- *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*

1. Read one or more of the stories, “Once Poor/Once Wealthy,” “Mirza Abu'l-Fadl and the River of Mercy,” and “Now I Understand,” *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, pp. 130-46. Discuss the questions p. 182 of that book.
2. Reverently present a beautifully wrapped copy of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Discuss the power of this book to change the lives of the characters in these stories, the love of the characters in the stories for Bahá'u'lláh, and the effect of obedience to His laws in their lives.

#### ACTIVITY: THE STATION OF THE LAWS IN THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

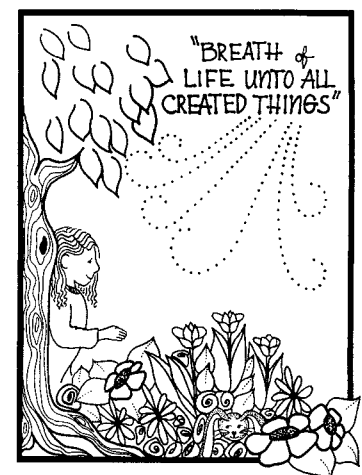
**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is more than mere code of law. It is: the Most Holy Book; the Mother Book of His Dispensation; the Charter of His New World Order

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engaging mind and heart; Use of arts; Use of the power of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- poster (prepared in advance) or handout of phrases on p. 84 of this Lesson Planning Guide
  - The Kitáb-i-Aqdas
  - art supplies, paper
1. Display a poster on which are written phrases from Shoghi Effendi's Summary, p. 84 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Share with students that these words are Bahá'u'lláh's description of the laws and ordinances that make up a major portion of this Book.
  2. Following this preparation, read aloud slowly, reverently, pausing for reflection, the first five paragraphs of the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, provided on p. 85 of this Lesson Planning Guide.



3. Invite the students to work in pairs, each pair to choose one of the eight phrases above, or one of the three titles in the Wisdom Objective above, and create a work of visual art to symbolize that phrase.
4. Display the works around the room, as inspiration for the continued study of these laws, in the activities to follow.

# TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

## ACTIVITY: STEPS IN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE LAWS OF THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE** To appreciate that obedience to the laws in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is an important step in one's spiritual development

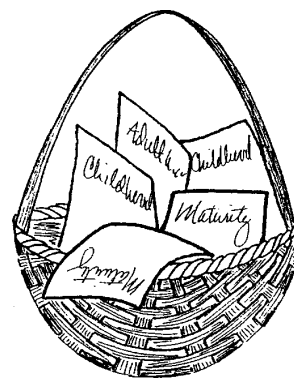
**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To explain to others the spirit of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas not only as a guide for our personal lives but also as a guide to the development of society

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of manipulatives; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- bridge materials, such as bricks and planks
- laws, ordinances, or prohibitions pre-selected and printed on different colored papers

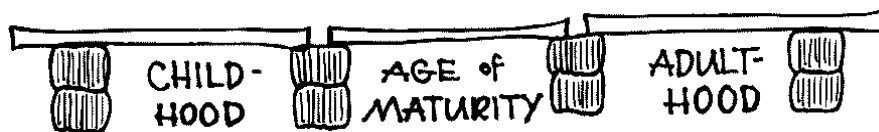


1. Set up inside or outside 3 distinct areas labeled “Childhood,” “Age of Maturity” and “Adulthood,” with symbolic bridges linking the first to the second, and the second to the third area.
2. Each area should be large enough for a group of students to move about; these may be defined with rugs, or borders marked with string, chairs, etc. Bridges may be planks elevated by a brick at each end.
3. Pre-select 5 or 6 laws, ordinances, exhortations or prohibitions applicable to each of these three stages of development. You may use those printed on pp. 86-87 of this Lesson Planning Guide, if desired. An example for each stage might be:
 

**Childhood:** “...greater than all...is regard for the rights that are due to one’s parents.” Q106

**Age of Maturity:** “We have commanded you to pray and fast from the age of maturity...” K10

**Adulthood:** “It is incumbent upon each of you to engage in some occupation - such as a craft, trade or the like.” K33
4. For each stage, print each different law on a different color paper; make enough copies for each student to receive one of each law at each stage.
5. In each of the three areas, scatter all the copies of all the laws for that stage of development.
6. In each area have the students collect all the different laws they find there (**one of each color**). Consider providing students with baskets or sacks for collecting their laws. When all are found, share together by reading each different law aloud. Take time for comments and for encouragement that that law **can** be carried out at that stage of one’s development.
7. Discuss what marks one’s advance to the next stage: The Age of Maturity is simply one’s 15th birthday; adulthood is marked by eligibility to vote in Bahá’í elections at age 21.
8. Before crossing the bridge to the next stage, point out that we don’t leave behind the guidance for this stage—we carry it with us.
9. Culminate the activity by discussing how our responsibilities and obligations to Bahá’u’lláh’s laws accumulate as we develop—as evidenced by the accumulated gems in each person’s basket.



## **TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES**

### **ACTIVITY: CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE LAWS APPLICABLE TO STUDENTS**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the laws that are appropriate to the lives of students

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reveals laws we all must follow in our personal lives

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To read the Kitáb-i-Aqdas with appreciation for the spiritual inspiration and detailed guidance it contains

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of questioning; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

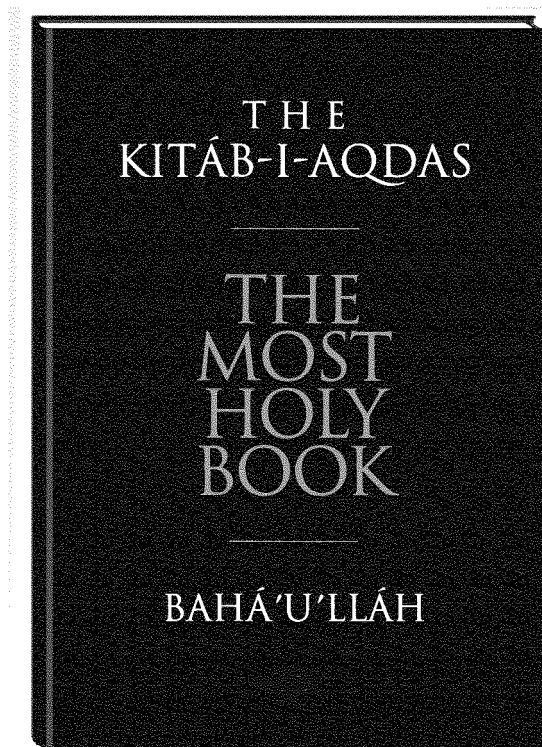
**Materials Needed:**

- The Kitáb-i-Aqdas
- listing of laws provided on p. 86-87 of this Lesson Planning Guide

1. Provide a hand-out listing laws, ordinances, prohibitions and exhortations that are most applicable to children and youth.
2. Have students work in teams to research one law from the list, each team researching a different law.
3. Supply each team with a copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Facilitate research by first acquainting them with the various parts of the Book, especially:
  - the introduction by the Universal House of Justice
  - a description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by Shoghi Effendi
  - the actual text
  - Questions and Answers
  - a synopsis and codification of the laws
  - Notes

Assist students in learning how to use the Index to find each part of the Book.

4. Have each team look in the Index for all the references regarding their chosen law and then read for understanding.
5. Have each team give a verbal report and answer questions from the group. Repeat the research process with another law for each team as time permits.





## TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

### ACTIVITY: OBEDIENCE THROUGH LOVE

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To use Bahá'u'lláh's laws as the standard with which one makes one's personal choices in life

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of stories; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- chalkboard or chart paper
- student journal or writing paper and pen for each student

1. Display the following quotation on the chalkboard or chart paper.  

Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 20
2. Discuss the meaning of this short passage.
3. Memorize the quotation.
4. Encourage the students to think of examples of believers' obeying Bahá'u'lláh's commandments out of their love for Him. Invite the students to recall a time when they themselves made a personal choice to obey one of Bahá'u'lláh's laws out of their love for His Beauty. Perhaps they will think of a habit that they have worked to cultivate, or perhaps a time when they chose the path of moral rectitude, race unity, or a chaste and holy life when others around them were making other choices, or an occasion when they resisted the temptation to backbite. Allow enough time for each student to recall a particular incident when they made the choice to obey.
5. After this period of reflection, invite the students to share their memories in the whole group. While one student speaks, ask the others to listen carefully and see if they can identify the law that was obeyed, the principle that was upheld, or the spiritual quality that was displayed. Encourage them to share their insights and encouragement in response to the speaker.
6. After students share their memories and respond to each other's stories, invite the students to individually and quietly select another of Bahá'u'lláh's laws that they would like to strive to obey more completely in the future. Invite them to use their journals or writing paper to record a plan to develop that obedience by:
  - learning one or more quotations about the law,
  - finding examples of individuals who choose to obey the law,
  - planning exactly when, where, and how they will strive to translate their understanding into action, and
  - monitoring their efforts, so that they can acknowledge their successes and find ways to overcome their challenges.
7. Conclude the session with prayers for divine assistance. Remember to encourage the students to share their successes and challenges with each other in subsequent classes.

Resource Pages

THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS IS:

“the source of true felicity,”

the “Unerring Balance,”

the “Straight Path

the “quickener of mankind”

“the breath of life unto all created things,”

“the mightiest stronghold,”

the “fruits” of His “Tree,”

“the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples,”

“the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence,”

“the sweet smelling savor of His garment,”

the “keys” of His “mercy” to His creatures.

“This Book is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions.”

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Pages: 215-16

## TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

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### First five paragraphs of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

1

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

2

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them is accounted among the abject and foolish. We, verily, have commanded you to refuse the dictates of your evil passions and corrupt desires, and not to transgress the bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed, for these are the breath of life unto all created things. The seas of Divine wisdom and Divine utterance have risen under the breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding! They that have violated the Covenant of God by breaking His commandments, and have turned back on their heels, these have erred grievously in the sight of God, the All-Possessing, the Most High.

3

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.

4

Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty." Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe. By My life! He who hath drunk the choice wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour will circle around My commandments that shine above the Dayspring of My creation.

5

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 19-21

**Some Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas**

...but greater than all, after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one's parents.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Questions and Answers, p. 139*

Burden not an animal with more than it can bear. We, truly, have prohibited such treatment through a most binding interdiction in the Book. Be ye the embodiments of justice and fairness amidst all creation.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 87*

Take heed that ye enter no house in the absence of its owner, except with his permission. Comport yourselves with propriety under all conditions, and be not numbered with the wayward.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 72*

We have permitted you to read such sciences as are profitable unto you, not such as end in idle disputation

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Notes, p. 214-15*

We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 22*

The Lord hath granted leave to whosoever desireth it that he be instructed in the divers tongues of the world that he may deliver the Message of the Cause of God throughout the East and throughout the West...

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 62*  
*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 26*

O people of Bahá! It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some occupation—such as a craft, a trade or the like.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 30*

Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Notes, p. 224*

Teach your children the verses revealed from the heaven of majesty and power, so that, in most melodious tones, they may recite the Tablets of the All-Merciful in the alcoves within the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkárs.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 74*

Adorn your heads with the garlands of trustworthiness and fidelity, your hearts with the attire of the fear of God, your tongues with absolute truthfulness...

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 62*

Ye have been forbidden in the Book of God to engage in contention and conflict, to strike another, or to commit similar acts whereby hearts and souls may be saddened.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 72-73*

Be ye the very essence of cleanliness amongst mankind. This, truly, is what your Lord, the Incomparable, the All-Wise, desireth for you.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 47*

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 85*

None must contend with those who wield authority over the people; leave unto them that which is theirs, and direct your attention to men's hearts.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 54*

Ye have been forbidden ... to engage in backbiting or calumny; shun ye, then, what hath been prohibited in the holy Books and Tablets.

Resort ye, in times of sickness, to competent physicians

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 60*

Gambling and the use of opium have been forbidden unto you. Eschew them both, O people, and be not of those who transgress.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 75*

Enter into wedlock, O people, that ye may bring forth one who will make mention of Me amid My servants. This is My bidding unto you; hold fast to it as an assistance to yourselves.

*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 41*

## TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND ITS LAWS AND ORDINANCES

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### SOME LAWS, ORDINANCES, PROHIBITIONS, AND EXHORTATIONS IN THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

#### General

- Bahá'í Festivals
- The Nineteen Day Feast
- The Intercalary Days
- The age of maturity
- Education of children
- Repetition of the Greatest Name 95 times a day
- Obligatory Prayer

#### Prohibitions:

- Interpretation of the Holy Writ
- Cruelty to animals
- Backbiting
- Entering a house without the owner's permission
- Striking or wounding a person
- Contention and conflict
- Plunging one's hand into food

#### Miscellaneous Exhortations:

- To associate with the followers of all religions with fellowship
- To honour one's parents
- Not to wish for others what one does not wish for one's self
- To teach and propagate the Faith after the ascension of its Founder
- To assist those who arise to promote the Faith
- Not to depart from the Writings or to be misled by those who do
- To refer to the Holy Writ when differences arise
- To immerse one's self in the study of the Teachings
- Not to follow one's idle fancies and vain imaginations
- To recite the holy verses at morn and at eventide
- To recite the holy verses melodiously
- To teach one's children to chant the holy verses in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*
- To study such arts and sciences as benefit mankind
- To take counsel together
- Not to be indulgent in carrying out the statutes of God
- To repent to God of one's sins
- To distinguish one's self through good deeds
  - To be truthful
  - To be trustworthy
  - To be faithful
  - To be righteous and fear God
  - To be just and fair
  - To be tactful and wise
  - To be courteous
  - To be hospitable
  - To be persevering
  - To be detached
  - To be absolutely submissive to the Will of God
  - Not to stir up mischief
  - Not to be hypocritical
  - Not to be proud
  - Not to be fanatical
  - Not to prefer one's self to one's neighbour
  - Not to lament in adversity
  - Not to contend with those in authority
  - Not to lose one's temper
  - Not to anger one's neighbour
- To be closely united
- To consult competent physicians when ill
- To respond to invitations
- To study languages for the furtherance of the Faith
- To be the essence of cleanliness:
  - To wash one's feet
  - To perfume one's self
  - To bathe in clean water
  - To cut one's nails
  - To wash soiled things in clean water
  - To be stainless in one's dress

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- "What Does it Mean to be a Bahá'í?" Jan/Feb 02
- "Case of the Mysterious Marriage" Jul/Aug 01
- "Case of the Missing Meals" Mar/Apr 01
- "Virtueman: lean, Clean and Mean" Nov/Dec 00
- "The Book" May/June 00
- "Keeping Clean" Sept/Oct 99
- "Me...Married?" Mar/Apr 99
- "Opening Our Hearts to God" Sept/Oct 98
- "Our Bahá'í Wedding" Jan/Feb 94
- "Asking Permission" Jan/Feb 94
- "The Right of God" SpEd 93
- "The Most Holy Book" SpEd 93
- "A Year Without Isla" Nov/Dec 94
- "Do What You Will" Mar/Apr 92

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*

- Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Blessed Beauty*, p. 87
- Garst, Hitjo, *From Mountain to Mountain*, "The Most Holy Book, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas"
- Oldziey, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 34-35, 104-05, 112-13, 116-17, 164-65, 168-69

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- "A Fortress for Well-Being" Mar/Apr 99
- "Diving into the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" Nov/Dec 98
- "Do What You Will" Mar/Apr 92
- Nathesan, S., *Bahá'í Activities for Children*, p. 6
- Oldziey, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 35, 105, 113, 117, 165, 169

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- "The Scented Soap" Sept/Oct 00
- "We've Got You Surrounded" SpEd 98
- "The Cord of the Covenant" May/June 98
- "Prayer Counts" Sept/Oct 98
- "Bahá'u'lláh's Gift to the World" Nov/Dec 95
- "My Family and the Fast" Jan/Feb 94
- "Do What You Will" SpEd 93
- "Prayer Beads" Jan/Feb 87

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- "Sweet Morning" Sept/Oct 98
- "Prayer and Fasting" Mar/Apr 85
- Mackay, Caroline, *O Most Mighty Ocean: Selected Passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*

**Poetry:**

- Brilliant Star:* "The Sweetest Word" (Huqúqu'lláh) Sept/Oct 96

**Videos:**

- Khadem, Ramin and Badiyan, Fred, *Huqúqu'lláh, the Right of God*

**List other favorite resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.