

Priesthood

Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi

Translated



Priesthood

*"How many a man hath secluded himself in the climes of India, denied himself the things that God hath decreed as lawful, imposed upon himself austerities and mortifications, and hath not been remembered by God, the Revealer of Verses. Make not your deeds as snares wherewith to entrap the object of your aspiration, and deprive not yourselves of this Ultimate Objective for which have ever yearned all such as have drawn nigh unto God. Say: The very life of all deeds is My good pleasure, and all things depend upon Mine acceptance. Read ye the Tablets that ye may know what hath been purposed in the Books of God, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Bounteous. He who attaineth to My love hath title to a throne of gold, to sit thereon in honour over all the world; he who is deprived thereof, though he sit upon the dust, that dust would seek refuge with God, the Lord of all Religions."*¹

*"The pious deeds of the monks and priests among the followers of the Spirit—upon Him be the peace of God—are remembered in His presence. In this Day, however, let them give up the life of seclusion and direct their steps towards the open world and busy themselves with that which will profit themselves and others. We have granted them leave to enter into wedlock that they may bring forth one who will make mention of God, the Lord of the seen and the unseen, the Lord of the Exalted Throne."*²

*"Those divines, however, who are truly adorned with the ornament of knowledge and of a goodly character are, verily, as a head to the body of the world, and as eyes to the nations. The guidance of men hath, at all times, been, and is, dependent upon such blessed souls."*³

"We should also bear in mind that the distinguishing character of the Baha'i Revelation does not solely consist in the completeness and unquestionable validity of the Dispensation which the teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha have established. Its excellence lies also in the fact that those elements which in past Dispensations have, without the least authority from their Founders, been a source of corruption and of incalculable harm to the Faith of God, have been strictly excluded by the clear text of Baha'u'llah's writings. Those unwarranted practices, in connection with ... priestly domination ... have one and all been rigidly suppressed by the Pen of Baha'u'llah..."⁴

1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 36

2. Baha'u'llah, Glad Tidings, The Eighth Glad-Tidings

3. Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf



TRANSLATION

"Nor can the Baha'i Administrative Order be dismissed as a hard and rigid system of unmitigated autocracy or as an idle imitation of any form of absolutistic ecclesiastical government, whether it be the Papacy, the Imamate or any other similar institution, for the obvious reason that upon the international elected representatives of the followers of Baha'u'llah has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Baha'i writings. Neither the Guardian of the Faith nor any institution apart from the International House of Justice can ever usurp this vital and essential power or encroach upon that sacred right. The abolition of professional priesthood with its accompanying sacraments of baptism, of communion and of confession of sins, the laws requiring the election by universal suffrage of all local, national, and international Houses of Justice, the total absence of episcopal authority with its attendant privileges, corruptions and bureaucratic tendencies, are further evidences of the non-autocratic character of the Baha'i Administrative Order and of its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs."



4. Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah, pp. 22