

# Individual Laws: Endowments

Bahá'u'lláh



## Endowments

Endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. None hath the right to dispose of them without leave from Him Who is the Dawning-place of Revelation. After Him, this authority shall pass to the Aghṣán, and after them to the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then—that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Places which have been exalted in this Cause, and for whatsoever hath been enjoined upon them by Him Who is the God of might and power. Otherwise, the endowments shall revert to the people of Bahá who speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed in this Tablet—lo, they are the champions of victory betwixt heaven and earth—that they may use them in the manner that hath been laid down in the Book by God, the Mighty, the Bountiful.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, para. 42)

“Aghṣán” (plural of Ghusn) is the Arabic word for “Branches.” This term is used by Bahá'u'lláh to designate His male descendants. It has particular implications not only for the disposition of endowments but also for the succession of authority following the passing of Bahá'u'lláh (see note ) and of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. Bahá'u'lláh, in the Book of His Covenant, appointed ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest son, as the Center of His Covenant and the Head of the Faith. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Will and Testament, appointed Shoghi Effendi, His eldest grandson, as the Guardian and Head of the Faith.

This passage of the Aqdas, therefore, anticipates the succession of chosen Aghṣán and thus the institution of the Guardianship and envisages the possibility of a break in their line. The passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 precipitated the very situation provided for in this passage, in that the line of Aghṣán ended before the Universal House of Justice had been established (see note ).

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes NO. 66)

## “revert to the people of Bahá “

Bahá'u'lláh provides for the possibility that the line of Aghṣán would terminate prior to the establishment of the Universal House of Justice. He designated that in such a



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situation “endowments shall revert to the people of Bahá.” The term “people of Bahá” is used with a number of different meanings in the Bahá’í Writings. In this instance, they are described as those “who speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed in this Tablet.” Following the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, the Hands of the Cause of God directed the affairs of the Cause until the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 (see note ).

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes NO. 67)