

# Individual Laws: Destruction of Books

Bahá'u'lláh

Translated



## Destruction of Books

*“God hath relieved you of the ordinance laid down in the Bayán concerning the destruction of books. We have permitted you to read such sciences as are profitable unto you, not such as end in idle disputation; better is this for you, if ye be of them that comprehend.”<sup>1</sup>*

**“The tenth Glad-Tidings:** *As a token of grace from God, the Revealer of this Most Great Announcement, We have removed from the Holy Scriptures and Tablets the law prescribing the destruction of books.”<sup>2</sup>*

**“The fifteenth Glad-Tidings:** *In former religions such ordinances as holy war, destruction of books, the ban on association and companionship with other peoples or on reading certain books had been laid down and affirmed according to the exigencies of the time; however, in this mighty Revelation, in this momentous Announcement, the manifold bestowals and favors of God have overshadowed all men, and from the horizon of the Will of the Ever-Abiding Lord, His infallible decree hath prescribed that which We have set forth above.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“The unbelievers and the faithless have set their minds on four things: first, the shedding of blood; second, the burning of books; third, the shunning of the followers of other religions; fourth, the extermination of other communities and groups. Now however, through the strengthening grace and potency of the Word of God these four barriers have been demolished, these clear injunctions have been obliterated from the Tablet and brutal dispositions have been transmuted into spiritual attributes.”<sup>4</sup>*

In the Tablet of Ishraqat Baha'u'llah, referring to the fact that the Báb had made the laws of the Bayan subject to His sanction, states that He put some of the Báb's laws into effect “by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words,” while others He set aside.

With regard to the destruction of books, the Bayan commanded the Báb's followers to destroy all books except those that were written in vindication of the Cause and Religion of God. Bahá'u'lláh abrogates this specific law of the Bayan.

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1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 77

2. Baha'u'llah, Glad-Tidings

3. Baha'u'llah, Glad-Tidings

4. Baha'u'llah, Lawh-i-Dunya



TRANSLATION

As to the nature and severity of the laws of the Bayan, Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf provides the following comment:

The severe laws and injunctions revealed by the Bab can be properly appreciated and understood only when interpreted in the light of His own statements regarding the nature, purpose and character of His own Dispensation. As these statements clearly reveal, the Babi Dispensation was essentially in the nature of a religious and indeed social revolution, and its duration had therefore to be short, but full of tragic events, of sweeping and drastic reforms. Those drastic measures enforced by the Bab and His followers were taken with the view of undermining the very foundations of Shi'ah orthodoxy, and thus paving the way for the coming of Baha'u'llah. To assert the independence of the new Dispensation, and to prepare also the ground for the approaching Revelation of Baha'u'llah, the Bab had therefore to reveal very severe laws, even though most of them were never enforced. But the mere fact that He revealed them was in itself a proof of the independent character of His Dispensation and was sufficient to create such widespread agitation, and excite such opposition on the part of the clergy that led them to cause His eventual martyrdom.<sup>5</sup>



## Babi Dispensation

The Bab commanded that all non-Babi books be burnt and not study sciences and philosophy books.<sup>6</sup>



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5. Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 109

6. Persian Bayan 9:10 & 11:6