

Individual Laws: Destruction of Books

Bahá'u'lláh



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.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, para. 77)

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.

(Glad-Tidings, Bishárát, Bahá'u'lláh)

In the Tablet of Ishráqát Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the fact that the Báb had made the laws of the Bayán 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 Bayán 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 Bayán.

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

The severe laws and injunctions revealed by the Báb 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 Bábí 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 Báb and His followers were taken with the view of undermining the very foundations of Shí'ah orthodoxy, and thus paving the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. To assert the



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independence of the new Dispensation, and to prepare also the ground for the approaching Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb 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.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes No. 109)