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## The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

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### Course Description:

About the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi has written that it “may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Baha'u'llah, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.” He further refers to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as “the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the ‘new heaven’ and the ‘new earth,’ as ‘the Tabernacle of God,’ as the ‘Holy City,’ as the ‘Bride,’ the ‘New Jerusalem coming down from God,’ this ‘Most Holy Book,’ whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet. . . .” We will read the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and supplemental texts related to it, while studying several of its main themes: covenant, succession, and manifestation; Baha'i institutions, including the rulers and the learned, the Universal House of Justice, Houses of Worship, Feasts, Holy Days, and the Baha'i calendar; the nature and purpose of Baha'u'llah's laws; Baha'u'llah's ordinances; prohibitions and punishments; Baha'u'llah's proclamations to kings, rulers, places, and groups of people; education and transformation; and teaching the Baha'i Faith.

### Learning Objectives: To:

- Become familiar with the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, its related texts, the additional text authorized by the Universal House of Justice, and some of the better known writings about the Aqdas by Bahá'ís.
- Become familiar with the content of the Aqdas, including laws, principles, and other aspects of the Most Holy Book.
- Acquire some familiarity with the relationship of the laws of the Aqdas with the laws of the Bayan and of Islam and with the nineteenth-century Middle East.
- Develop skills to explain the texts and their contents to others
- Strengthen one's love and devotion to the Bahá'í Faith and its laws
- To demonstrate the above through postings in the course, devotionals, special research or artistic projects, or presentations to your friends

### Course Expectations and Guidelines:

This course is divided into one-week (or less) sessions beginning with an orientation unit and ending with a unit for review and summary. All units include readings, activities, and an online discussion among workshop participants. The course has been structured so that it typically requires an estimated 5 or 6 hours per week of reading and discussion.

During Unit 1, you will draft a personal learning plan (PLP) to define the goals you have set for yourself by participating in this course. If you are taking the course for credit, one of your goals will naturally be meeting the course expectations for discussions, activities, and a final project. If you are not taking the course for credit, you need to set goals that will help you develop your personal capabilities and will be achievable in and around your other daily tasks.

During the final review unit, you will refer again to your PLP and complete a self-assessment reviewing the extent to which you met the goals you set for yourself. In addition, learners seeking credit from their university will complete their final project (15-20 page research paper or equivalent) and submit it to the lead faculty.

Your instructor will periodically review your progress in the course and be available to discuss things with you. The following guidelines will help you gain maximum benefit from your participation in the course and will contribute toward a rich and rewarding experience through dialogue with others. We recommend that you consider them when drafting your PLP.

- Keep a course journal to help you track your ideas as you work on your final project.

In order to be eligible to receive a *Certificate of Completion*, you must participate in a majority of the discussions, as well as complete a majority of available unit activities and the end-of-course self-assessment. Learners taking the course for credit must also complete a final project. Your first discussion posts within each unit should address the discussion topic and demonstrate understanding of the course/unit concepts. Additional postings should provide substantive comments to other participants that are thoughtful, relevant, and help to extend the discussion.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course and to Moodle</b>	<b>April 22-25, 2016</b>
In this unit, you will review the unit topics and dates, learn how to use Moodle (our course delivery system), set up your user profile, begin developing a personal learning plan, and learn how to post and reply in the discussion forums. Learners seeking university credit through their own university or an external agency will be required to design a personal learning plan to meet external standards, including active and ongoing participation in the course discussion forums, readings, assigned activities, and completion of a 15 to 20 page research paper or a project of equivalent complexity.		
<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>In the House of `Údí Khammár</b>	<b>April 26-May 2</b>
Please read the background information below, review the study questions, and make a posting to the Forum. The photograph, courtesy of the Bahá'í World Center, is a contemporary view of the second floor of the house of Udi Khammar in Akka where the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed.		
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paras. 1-50</b>	<b>May 3-9</b>
We now begin a series of weekly units devoted to study of about forty paragraphs of the Most Holy Book. Each unit will also feature one or more supplemental scholarly works that illuminate an aspect of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The scholarly works generally are not keyed to specific themes in the paragraphs studied that week, because the Aqdas tends to be a holistic work with themes repeated in many places. Finally, we ask everyone to select one paragraph for in depth study. Please share the results with everyone on the forums. There are instructions below that describe an optimal way to offer comments to the forums.		
<b>Unit 4</b>	<b>The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paras. 51-100</b>	<b>May 10-16</b>
The learning objective of this unit is to be able to prepare a list of the major themes of this portion of the Aqdas and provide a reflection on at least one paragraph.		
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paras. 101-150</b>	<b>May 17-23</b>
The learning objective of this unit is to be able to prepare a list of the major themes of this portion of the Aqdas and provide a reflection on at least one paragraph.		
<b>Unit 6</b>	<b>The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paras. 151-190</b>	<b>May 24-30</b>
The learning objective of this unit is to be able to prepare a list of the major themes of this portion of the Aqdas and provide a reflection on at least one paragraph.		

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Unit 7	Questions and Answers	May 31-June 6
<p><u>Questions and Answers</u> was revealed by Baha'u'llah in response to questions posed by Mulla Zaynu'l- 'Abidin of Najafabad, surnamed Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin ("Ornament of Them Who Are Nigh unto God"), an Apostle of Baha'u'llah and former Shi'i mujtahid. The Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was started by Shoghi Effendi and completed under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice.</p> <p>The Learning Objective of this unit is to provide a reflection about the importance of these Questions and Answers for the future, with some examples that are most interesting to you. If you had an opportunity to present a question to His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, what would it be?</p>		
Unit 8	Scholarly Response to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas	June 7-13
<p>This week we will read through some important scholarly works about the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in English. Choose one covering a subject that most interests you to read and reflect upon.</p> <p>The <b>learning objective</b> for this unit is to write a review about it in the forums, as if you were going to share this review in a local newsletter, blog or webpage. What is it about the paper you read that you would recommend to a person studying the Kitáb-i-Aqdas? Was there a concept or idea that was new to you? If you could ask the author of the article a question, what would it be?</p>		
Unit 9	Integration and Application of Learning	June 14-16
<p>Your Personal Learning Plan (PLP) helps you focus on what you want to learn in the course and on what course project you might be interested in creating. The final project is a course requirement only if you wish to receive credit from an external agency. You will have an opportunity to share your final project with course participants.</p> <p>The following is a short list of possible ideas for final projects. Learners may propose other ideas as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit a research/reflection paper (approximately 15-20 pages including references) on a topic related to the course.</li> <li>• Create an artistic project related to the course with a written explanation about it.</li> </ul> <p>Alternative final project formats can be discussed with course instructor.</p>		
<b>Certificate of Completion</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners not taking the course for credit will receive a certificate of completion from the Wilmette Institute after course expectations were met.</li> <li>• For learners taking the course for credit, the Wilmette Institute will send a transcript to the learner and the external accrediting institution within a month of completion of the course.</li> </ul>		