

## **HUQUQU'LLAH – AN UNEXPECTED ADMIRER**

My dad carried a handgun and lots of cash. He was suspicious, cynical, a self-proclaimed atheist, and rough. But he was loved by many in the neighborhood, and our family revered him as an awesome dad and grandfather. He had a huge heart and made everyone laugh. I only mentioned the former side of him not to judge him but to put into context.

Most of our family was engaged in the commercial construction industry. There were lots of closed-door agreements that seemed unfair, especially to my young innocent mind. Dad also worked for an organized crime family as a "bagman" in that he collected 'protection money': The crime boss would be handed the cash payments less my dad's cut, and the compliant establishments would remain open.

I was never comfortable with these questionable transactions, but dad always assured me, "That's just the way business is done." He said I was naïve. At one point, while I was still in college, he and his partners sent me to Ron X, reputed for his 'knowledge' of business law. They told Ron to train me in the intricacies of making money in construction without leaving incriminating evidence. The tutoring was intriguing, but privately I remained apprehensive.

About the same time, I learned about the Baha'is and met other idealistic young adults. It gave me renewed hope in the world, new friends, and sufficient inner strength to leave the family business. I eventually started my own company in the same construction industry and tried to run it on sound principles.

Word leaked out I was being confidentially interviewed by the Feds regarding bid rigging. I was boycotted overnight, and the lines went silent. I kept my private phone but moved to an undisclosed location until things settled down. Profits plummeted and I planned on liquidating everything.

Shortly before closing my relatively new business, I learned about the Baha'i "Right of God" (aka Huququ'llah or Huquq). It's a fascinating teaching that broadly involves offering a portion of our savings for the poor and needy and to help build a better world – while benefiting ourselves as donors! Surprisingly, I found myself anxious to make a payment before going bankrupt.

But something inexplicable happened! After I mailed a check to Huquq, I received a private call from Sal X, an associate of one of the local crime families. Sal informed me I'd no longer be blacklisted or in physical danger. Later the same day another person called to offer me a large business deal, no strings attached. I remembered reading about the Right of God also giving protection and prosperity to the donors, but this sudden turn of events was too much. All I knew for sure was something fantastic and mysterious was happening.

After my dad retired, he helped me with the business. At first, when I'd write a check to Huquq he'd argue loudly and try to stop it. No matter how much I guaranteed him that nobody was getting selfishly rich and Baha'i wasn't a cult, he remained distrustful. But as my career, life, and family continued to prosper in untold ways, he grew less defensive and eventually became the biggest advocate of the Right of God I knew. In the end dad associated all good things happening in my life (and his) with the Right of God!

Later in life he bragged to some of his aging cronies that Huquq kept my family more protected and prosperous than their 'protection money' ever could. On his deathbed, he said God was surely alive in my religion and instructed me to keep "Huquq'ing away," as he lovingly called it before closing his eyes.

*Please see References*