

Bahá'u'lláh

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

The Most Holy Book

Institutions – Spiritual Laws - Laws of Personal Status

Kitáb-i-Aqdas 3

Appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

I. The Appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Successor of Bahá'u'lláh and Interpreter of His Teachings

When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, §121)

Appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, §174)

The Guardianship

II. Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship

After Him, this authority shall pass to the Aghşán [Bahá'u'lláh's male descendants], and after them to the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then...

The House of Justice

III. The Institution of the House of Justice

A. The House of Justice is formally ordained.

B. Its functions are defined.

C. Its revenues are fixed.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

The House of Justice

The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counselors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it doth not matter. They should consider themselves as entering the Court of the presence of God, the Exalted, the Most High, and as beholding Him Who is the Unseen. It behooveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, §30)

Prayer

IV. Laws, Ordinances and Exhortations

A. Prayer

1. The sublime station occupied by the Obligatory Prayers in the Bahá'í Revelation.

We have enjoined obligatory prayer upon you.

We have set forth the details of obligatory prayer in another Tablet. Blessed is he who observeth that whereunto he hath been bidden by Him Who ruleth over all mankind.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, §6, 8)

Prayer

We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. He hath exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age.

It hath been ordained that every believer in God, the Lord of Judgment, shall, each day, having washed his hands and then his face, seat himself and, turning unto God, repeat “Alláh-u-Abhá” ninety-five times.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, §10, 18)

Prayer

2. The Qiblih:

- a. Identified by the Báb with "the One Whom God will make manifest".
- b. The appointment made by the Báb is confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh.
- c. Bahá'u'lláh ordains His resting-place as the Qiblih after His passing.
- d. Turning to the Qiblih is mandatory while reciting the Obligatory Prayers.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Obligatory Prayers

3. The Obligatory Prayers are binding on men and women on attaining the age of maturity, which is fixed at 15.

4. Exemption from offering the Obligatory Prayers is granted to:

a. Those who are ill.

b. Those who are over 70.

c. Women in their courses provided they perform their ablutions and repeat a specifically revealed verse 95 times a day.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Obligatory Prayers

5. The Obligatory Prayers should be offered individually.
6. The choice of one of the three Obligatory Prayers is permissible.
7. By "morning", "noon" and "evening", mentioned in connection with the Obligatory Prayers, is meant respectively the intervals between sunrise and noon, between noon and sunset, and from sunset till two hours after sunset.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Obligatory Prayers

8. The recital of the first (long) Obligatory Prayer, once in twenty-four hours is sufficient.

9. It is preferable to offer the third (short) Obligatory Prayer while standing.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Ablutions

10. Ablutions:

- a. Ablutions must precede the recital of the Obligatory Prayers.
- b. For every Obligatory Prayer fresh ablutions must be performed.
- c. Should two Obligatory Prayers be offered at noon one ablution for both prayers is sufficient.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Ablutions

d. If water is unavailable or its use harmful to the face or hands, the repetition, five times, of a specifically revealed verse is prescribed.

...repeat five times the words “In the Name of God, the Most Pure, the Most Pure,” (Aqdas §10)

e. Should the weather be too cold the use of warm water is recommended.

f. If ablutions have been performed for other purposes, their renewal prior to the recital of the Obligatory Prayer is not required.

g. Ablutions are essential whether a bath has been taken previously or not.

Times for Prayer

11. Determining the times fixed for Prayer:

a. Reliance on clocks is permissible in determining the times for offering the Obligatory Prayers.

b. In countries situated in the extreme north or south, where the duration of days and nights varies considerably, clocks and timepieces should be relied upon, without reference to sunrise or sunset.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Fasting

B. Fasting

1. The sublime station occupied by fasting in the Bahá'í Revelation.

We have enjoined upon you fasting during a brief period, and at its close have designated for you Naw-Rúz as a feast. (Aqdas §16)

2. The period of fasting commences with the termination of the Intercalary Days, and ends with the Naw-Rúz Festival.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Fasting

3. Abstinance from food and drink, from sunrise to sunset, is obligatory.
4. Fasting is binding on men and women on attaining the age of maturity, which is fixed at 15.
5. Exemption from fasting is granted to:
 - a. Travellers
 - i. Provided the journey exceeds 9 hours.
 - ii. Those travelling on foot, provided the journey exceeds 2 hours.
 - iii. Those who break their journey for less than 19 days.
 - iv. Those who break their journey during the Fast at a place where they are to stay 19 days are exempt from fasting only for the first three days from their arrival.
 - v. Those who reach home during the Fast must commence fasting from the day of their arrival.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Exemptions from Fasting

- b. Those who are ill.
- c. Those who are over 70.
- d. Women who are with child.
- e. Women who are nursing.
- f. Women in their courses, provided they perform their ablutions and repeat a specifically revealed verse 95 times a day.
- g. Those who are engaged in heavy labour, who are advised to show respect for the law by using discretion and restraint when availing themselves of the exemption.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Fasting

6. Vowing to fast (in a month other than the one prescribed for fasting) is permissible. Vows which profit mankind are however preferable in the sight of God.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Marriage

C. Laws of Personal Status

1. Marriage:

God hath prescribed matrimony unto you.... Whoso contenteth himself with a single partner from among the maidservants of God, both he and she shall live in tranquillity. And he who would take into his service a maid may do so with propriety.... Enter into wedlock, O people, that ye may bring forth one who will make mention of Me amid My servants.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, §63)

Marriage

- a. Marriage is highly recommended but not obligatory.
- b. Plurality of wives is forbidden.
- c. Marriage is conditioned upon both parties having attained the age of maturity which is fixed at 15.
- d. Marriage is conditioned on the consent of both parties and their parents, whether the woman be a maiden or not.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Marriage

It hath been laid down in the Bayán that marriage is dependent upon the consent of both parties. Desiring to establish love, unity and harmony amidst Our servants, We have conditioned it, once the couple's wish is known, upon the permission of their parents, lest enmity and rancor should arise amongst them.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, §65)

Marriage

e. It is incumbent upon both parties to recite a specifically revealed verse indicating their being content with the will of God.

i. Betrothal:

i. The period of engagement must not exceed 95 days.

ii. It is unlawful to become engaged to a girl before she reaches the age of maturity.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Divorce

2. Divorce:

Truly, the Lord loveth union and harmony and abhorreth separation and divorce. Live ye one with another, O people, in radiance and joy. By My life! All that are on earth shall pass away, while good deeds alone shall endure; to the truth of My words God doth Himself bear witness. Compose your differences, O My servants; then heed ye the admonition of Our Pen of Glory and follow not the arrogant and wayward.

Divorce

a. Divorce is strongly condemned.

Should resentment or antipathy arise between husband and wife, he is not to divorce her but to bide in patience throughout the course of one whole year, that perchance the fragrance of affection may be renewed between them. If, upon the completion of this period, their love hath not returned, it is permissible for divorce to take place.

[further details are skipped]

Inheritance

3. Inheritance:

[the method of dividing the estate to be applied in cases of intestacy.
Deleted here]

o. Any person is at liberty to will his possessions as he sees fit provided he makes provisions for the payment of Huqúqu'lláh and the discharge of his debts.

(Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

