

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

8 February 2001

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Applicability of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

On 9 May 1993, each National Spiritual Assembly was sent a copy of a letter written to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland on 9 June 1974, which listed those laws not at that time binding upon the Western world. The covering letter noted that the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh had been made universally binding at Riḍván 1992. On 28 December 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the Bahá'ís throughout the world informing them of the universal application of the remaining aspects of the laws of prayer and fasting.

Therefore, to bring the information up to date, we have been asked to send you the enclosed list of laws not yet universally applied, to replace the one sent to you in May 1993.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

LAWS OF THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS
NOT YET UNIVERSALLY APPLIED

28 December 1999

Following the universal application of the laws on prayer, fasting and the recitation of the Greatest Name, the Universal House of Justice has provided the following list of laws noted in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which are not at present universally binding upon the friends. The numbers of the sections are given for ease of reference.

- IV.C.1.i The laws governing betrothal.
- IV.C.1.j The law concerning the payment of a dowry by the groom to the bride on marriage.
- IV.C.1.l The laws concerning the traveling of a husband away from his wife.
& m
- IV.C.1.n The laws relating to the virginity of the wife.
& o
- IV.C.2.b That part of the divorce law relating to fines payable to the House of Justice.
- IV.C.3 The law of inheritance. This is normally covered by civil laws of intestacy at the present time.
- IV.D.1.a The law of pilgrimage.

- IV.D.1.d The law of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* is gradually being put into effect.
- IV.D.1.f The Bahá'í Festivals are being celebrated by the western friends on their anniversaries in the Gregorian calendar until such time as the Universal House of Justice deems it desirable to pass supplementary legislation necessary for the full implementation of the Badí' calendar.
- IV.D.1.j The age of maturity applies only to Bahá'í religious duties as yet. On other matters it is subject to the civil law of each country. The age of administrative maturity in the Bahá'í community has, for the time being, been fixed at 21.
- IV.D.1.k For the burial of the dead the only requirements now binding in the West are to bury the body (not to cremate it), not to carry it more than a distance of one hour's journey from the place of death, and to say the Prayer for the Dead if the deceased is a believer over the age of 15.
- IV.D.1.p The law of tithes.
- IV.D.1.r The law concerning the hunting of animals.
- IV.D.1.t,
u, v &
w The law relating to the finding of lost property, the disposition of treasure trove, the disposal of objects held in trust and compensation for manslaughter are all designed for a future state of society. These matters are usually covered by the civil law of each country.
- IV.D.1.y,
xiv, xv,
xvi &
xvii Arson, adultery, murder and theft are all forbidden to Bahá'ís, but the punishments prescribed for them in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* are designed for a future state of society. Such matters are usually covered by the civil laws of each country.
- IV.D.1.y,
xxv,
xxx,
xxxi &
xxxii The laws prohibiting the use of the type of pools which used to be found in Persian baths, the plunging of one's hand in food, the shaving of one's head and growth of men's hair below the lobe of the ear.

All the exhortations listed in section IV.D.3 are applicable universally at the present time insofar as it is possible for the friends to implement them; for example, the exhortation to teach one's children to chant the Holy Verses in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* can be literally carried out only on a limited scale at the present time, but the friends should, nevertheless, teach their children the Holy Writings as far as possible.