

# Age of Maturity

Bahá'u'lláh

Partial translation



## Age of Maturity

(religious obligations)

(become accountable for their actions)

*"We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity..."<sup>1</sup>*

**“Question:** Concerning the age of maturity with respect to religious duties.

**Answer:** *The age of maturity is fifteen for both men and women.*"<sup>2</sup>

**“Question:** In a treatise in Persian on various questions, the age of maturity hath been set at fifteen; is marriage likewise conditional upon the reaching of maturity, or is it permissible before that time?

**Answer:** *Since the consent of both parties is required in the Book of God, and since, before maturity, their consent or lack of it cannot be ascertained, marriage is therefore conditional upon reaching the age of maturity, and is not permissible before that time.*"<sup>3</sup>

"Bahá'u'lláh defines the "age of maturity with respect to religious duties" as "*fifteen for both men and women*" (Q&A 20). For details of the period of fasting, see note 25."<sup>4</sup>

"The institution of the House of Justice consists of elected councils which operate at the local, national and international levels of society. Bahá'u'lláh ordains both the Universal House of Justice and the Local Houses of Justice in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. 'Abdu'lBahá, in His Will and Testament, provides for the Secondary (National or Regional) Houses of Justice and outlines the method to be pursued for the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In the verse cited above, the reference is to the Local House of Justice, an institution which is to be elected in a locality whenever there are nine or more resident adult Bahá'ís. For this purpose, the definition of adult was temporarily fixed at the age of 21 years by the Guardian, who indicated it was open to change by the Universal House of Justice in the future.

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1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 10

2. Baha'u'llah, Questions & Answers. No. 20

3. Baha'u'llah, Questions & Answers. No. 92

4. Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas, no. 13



Local and Secondary Houses of Justice are, for the present, known as Local Spiritual Assemblies and National Spiritual Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that this is a “temporary appellation” which,

...as the position and aims of the Bahá’í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.”<sup>5</sup>



### Babi Dispensation

The Bab ordained the age of maturity at eleven years of ages for both male and female.<sup>6</sup>



### Islamic Dispensation

The Holy Qur’an does not set a specific age. Islamic schools of thought differ regarding the age of puberty. They base their assessment on three signs: puberty, the growth of coarse hair above the pubic area, and ejaculation (ejaculation). The Hanafi school states that it is 18 years for boys and 17 years for girls. The Shafi’i and Hanbali schools of thought state that it is 15 years for both boys and girls. Another school states that it is 15 years for boys and 9 years for girls.



### Christian Dispensation

The New Testament in the Holy Bible does not set a specific age, hence no fixed biological ages across all Christian traditions. The Age of Maturity varies by denomination (~7, 12, 16, ...)



### Jewish Dispensation

The Torah does not explicitly mention the bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies. These rites of passage are rooted in Jewish tradition and developed over time.

- Boys: 13 years old — Bar Mitzvah

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<sup>5</sup>. Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas, no. 49

<sup>6</sup>. See Arabic Bayan, Wahid XIV, Chapter VIII

- Girls: 12 years old — Bat Mitzvah

