

Theft

Bahá'u'lláh

Partial translation



Theft

*"Exile and imprisonment are decreed for the thief, and, on the third offense, place ye a mark upon his brow so that, thus identified, he may not be accepted in the cities of God and His countries. Beware lest, through compassion, ye neglect to carry out the statutes of the religion of God; do that which hath been bidden you by Him Who is compassionate and merciful. We school you with the rod of wisdom and laws, like unto the father who educateth his son, and this for naught but the protection of your own selves and the elevation of your stations. By My life, were ye to discover what We have desired for you in revealing Our holy laws, ye would offer up your very souls for this sacred, this mighty, and most exalted Faith."*¹

*"They who dwell within the tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbor, however vile and worthless he may be."*²

"Question: Concerning the penalties for adultery, sodomy, and theft, and the degrees thereof.
Answer: The determination of the degrees of these penalties rests with the House of Justice."³

"The people of the Days of Ignorance engaged in many practices which the law of Islám later confirmed. ... They would, likewise, cut off the right hand of a thief." Can one, God forbid, assume that because some of the divine laws resemble the practices of the Days of Ignorance, the customs of a people abhorred by all nations, it follows that there is a defect in these laws? Or can one, God forbid, imagine that the Omnipotent Lord was moved to comply with the opinions of the heathen? The divine wisdom takes many forms. Would it have been impossible for Muḥammad to reveal a law which bore no resemblance whatever to any practice current in the Days of Ignorance? Rather, the purpose of His consummate wisdom was to free the people from the chains of fanaticism which had bound them hand and foot, and to forestall those very objections which today confuse the mind and trouble the conscience of the simple and helpless."⁴

1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 45

2. Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, sec. 137

3. Baha'u'llah, Q&A No. 49

4. Abdul-Baha, Secret of Divine Civilization



“Exile and imprisonment are decreed for the thief

Baha’u’llah states that the determination of the degree of penalty, in accordance with the seriousness of the offense, rests with the House of Justice (Q&A 49). The punishments for theft are intended for a future condition of society, when they will be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice.”⁵

“On the third offense, place ye a mark upon his brow so that, thus identified, he may not be accepted in the cities of God and His countries

The mark to be placed on the thief’s forehead serves the purpose of warning people of his proclivities. All details concerning the nature of the mark, how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Baha’u’llah for the Universal House of Justice to determine when the law is applied.”⁶



Islamic Dispensation

“As to the thief, Male or Female, cut off his or her hands: A punishment by way of example from Allah, for their crime, and Allah is Exalted in power, full of wisdom.”⁷



Christian Dispensation

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God”⁸



Jewish Dispensation

“Thou shall not steal”⁹



⁵. Notes to the Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 70

⁶. Notes to the Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 71

⁷. The Holy Quran, Al-Maidah, 5:35

⁸. The Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹. The Holy Bible, Exodus, 20:15