

# Manslaughter

Bahá'u'lláh, The Báb

Partial translation



## Manslaughter

*"Should anyone unintentionally take another's life, it is incumbent upon him to render to the family of the deceased an indemnity of one hundred mithqáls of gold. Observe ye that which hath been enjoined upon you in this Tablet, and be not of those who overstep its limits."*<sup>1</sup>

*"...The weight of one mithqál is equivalent to nineteen nakhuds in accordance with the specification of the Bayán."*<sup>2</sup>

**"Ye have been forbidden to commit murder**

The prohibition against taking another's life is repeated by Bahá'u'lláh in paragraph 73 of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Penalties are prescribed for premeditated murder (see note 86). In the case of manslaughter, it is necessary to pay a specified indemnity to the family of the deceased."<sup>3</sup>

"...merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for murder ... given in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment or life imprisonment. Such matters as degrees of offense and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is in operation..."<sup>4</sup>

"Bahá'u'lláh states that the determination of the degree of penalty, in accordance with the seriousness of the offence, rests with the House of Justice (Q and 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."<sup>5</sup>



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1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 188

2. Baha'u'llah, Questions & Answers, No. 23

3. Notes to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas no. 35

4. Universal House of Justice, Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-86

5. Notes to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas no. 70



## Babi Dispensation

*"And if one kills another without intending to, there shall be no blame upon him, except that he must seek the satisfaction of the heirs of the one who was killed, and ask for forgiveness for them. And he shall be among those who seek forgiveness before his Lord. And his example is like a decree that befalls a soul. So let every soul fear Allah, and then you shall become righteous."*<sup>6</sup>



## Islamic Dispensation

*"Never should a believer kill a believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake, (Compensation is due): If one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have treaty of Mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah: for Allah hath all knowledge and all wisdom."*<sup>7</sup>



## Christian & Jewish Dispensation

*"Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. But if he did not do it intentionally, but God let it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate."*<sup>8</sup>

*"Select some towns to be your cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone accidentally may flee. They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that anyone accused of murder may not die before standing trial before the assembly."*<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>6</sup>. The Bab, Arabic Bayan, 16:11 (Provisional Translation)

<sup>7</sup>. The Holy Quran, 4:92

<sup>8</sup>. The Holy Bible, Exodus 21:12-14

<sup>9</sup>. The Holy Bible, Numbers 35:11-12