

# Daily Readings for the Nineteen Bahá'í Fast

## March 1 – March 19

sunset February 28<sup>th</sup> – sunset March 19<sup>th</sup> 2017

NOTE: *Naw-Rúz is Monday March 20<sup>th</sup>*

~ for Phoenix, Arizona

The fasting period ... is essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul. Its significance and purpose are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires.

~ Shoghi Effendi, *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 9

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### February 28<sup>th</sup> Theme: Memorization of the Holy Books

Sunset: 6:25 p.m.

It is very good to memorize the logical points and the proofs of the Holy Books. Those proofs and evidences which establish the fact that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfillment of the Promises of the Holy Books. These proofs ought to be collected and memorized. As soon as someone will ask you – What are your proofs? – you may cry out at the top of your voice and say: 'Here they are!'

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Star of the West*, Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 4

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### March 1<sup>st</sup> Theme: Meditation

Sunrise: 6:56 a.m. | Sunset: 6:25 p.m.

Bahá'u'lláh says there is a sign (from God) in every phenomenon: the sign of the intellect is contemplation and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at one time – he cannot both speak and meditate ... You cannot apply the name 'man' to any being void of this faculty of meditation; without it he would be a mere animal, lower than the beasts.

Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit – the bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation ... Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves. ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 174-175

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### March 2<sup>nd</sup> Theme: Observing the Fast

Sunrise: 6:55 a.m. | Sunset: 6:26 p.m.

These are, O my God, the days whereon Thou didst enjoin Thy servants to observe the fast. With it Thou didst adorn the preamble of the Book of Thy Laws revealed unto Thy creatures, and didst deck forth the Repositories of Thy commandments in the sight of all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth. Thou hast endowed every hour of these days with a special virtue, inscrutable to all except Thee, Whose knowledge embraceth all created things. Thou hast, also, assigned unto every soul a portion of this virtue in accordance with the Tablet of Thy decree and the Scriptures of Thine irrevocable judgment. Every leaf of these Books and Scriptures Thou hast, moreover, allotted to each one of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 242

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### March 3<sup>rd</sup> Theme: The Infallible Balance

Sunrise: 6:54 a.m. | Sunset: 6:27 p.m.

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the

truth of this Cause – a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established.

Say: This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth. ~Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 136-137

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**March 4<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: The Covenant of God*

Sunrise: 6:52 a.m. | Sunset: 6:28 p.m.

The Covenant of God ... is a lifeboat and ark of salvation. All true followers of the Blessed Perfection are sheltered and protected in this ark. Whoever leaves it, trusting in his own will and strength, will drown and be destroyed. The Covenant is like the sea and the believers as the fishes in the sea. If a fish leaves the water it cannot live. There is nothing to equal, nothing so effective as the Covenant of God to bring about and continue unity. ~ 'Abdu'-Bahá, *Star of the West*, Vol. 8, p. 222

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**March 5<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: The Wisdom of Prayer*

Sunrise: 6:51 a.m. | Sunset: 6:29 p.m.

O thou spiritual friend! Thou hast asked the wisdom of prayer. Know thou that prayer is indispensable and obligatory, and man under no pretext whatsoever is excused from performing the prayer unless he be mentally unsound, or an insurmountable obstacle prevent him. The wisdom of prayer is this: That it causeth a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state man with all heart and soul turneth his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion. The greatest happiness for a lover is to converse with his beloved, and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar with the object of his longing; that is why with every soul who is attracted to the Kingdom of God, his greatest hope is to find an opportunity to entreat and supplicate before his Beloved, appeal for His mercy and grace and be immersed in the ocean of His utterance, goodness and generosity.

Besides all this, prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening and mindfulness and conducive to protection and preservation from tests.... ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 368

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**March 6<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Spiritual Nature of Fasting*

Sunrise: 6:51 a.m. | Sunset: 6:29 p.m.

Fasting is a symbol. Fasting signifies abstinence from lust. Physical fasting is a symbol of that abstinence, and is a reminder; that is, just as a person abstains from physical appetites, he is to abstain from self-appetites and self-desires. But mere abstention from food has no effect on the spirit. It is only a symbol, a reminder. Otherwise it is of no importance. Fasting for this purpose does not mean entire abstinence from food. The golden rule as to food is, do not take too much or too little. Moderation is necessary.

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 184

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**March 7<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Submission to the Will of God*

Sunrise: 6:50 a.m. | Sunset: 6:29 p.m.

Were any man to ponder in his heart that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed and to taste of its sweetness, he would, of a certainty, find himself emptied and delivered from his own desires, and utterly subservient to the Will of the Almighty. Happy is the man that hath attained so high a station, and hath not deprived himself of so bountiful a grace. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 340

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God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing! ...In Him let the trusting trust.

~ *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 631

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: The Essence of Love* Sunrise: 6:47 a.m. | Sunset: 6:31 p.m.

The essence of love is for man to turn his heart to the Beloved One, and sever himself from all else but Him, and desire naught save that which is the desire of his Lord. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 155

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**March 9<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Obtaining Sovereignty* Sunrise: 6:46 a.m. | Sunset: 6:32 p.m.

O SON OF SPIRIT! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words* #1

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**March 10<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Station of Fasting & Prayer* Sunrise: 6:45 a.m. | Sunset: 6:33 p.m.

As regards fasting, it constitutes, together with the obligatory prayers, the two pillars that sustain the revealed Law of God. They act as stimulants to the soul, strengthen, revive and purify it, and thus insure its steady development. ~ Shoghi Effendi, *US Bahá'í News*, March 1936, #98 p. 1

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**March 11<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: True Belief* Sunrise: 6:3 a.m. | Sunset: 6:33 p.m.

True belief in God and recognition of Him cannot be complete save by acceptance of that which He hath revealed and by observance of whatsoever hath been decreed by Him and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 50

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**March 12<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: The Essence of Faith* Sunrise: 6:43 a.m. | Sunset: 6:34 p.m.

The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds; he whose words exceed his deeds, know verily his death is better than his life. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156

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**March 13<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: The Effect of Prayer* Sunrise: 6:42 a.m. | Sunset: 6:34 p.m.

Prayer and supplication are so effective that they inspire one's heart for the whole day with high ideals and supreme sanctity and calmness. One's heart must be sensitive to the music of prayer. He must feel the effect of prayer. He must not be like an organ from which softest notes stream forth without having consciousness of sensation in itself. ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Star of the West*, May 17, 1917, Vol. VIII, No. 4

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**March 14<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Prayer for Parents* Sunrise: 6:40 a.m. | Sunset: 6:36 p.m.

IT is seemly that the servant should, after each prayer, supplicate God to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his parents. Thereupon God's call will be raised: 'Thousand upon thousand of what thou hast asked for thy parents shall be thy recompense!' Blessed is he who remembereth his parents when communing with God. There is, verily, no God but Him, the Mighty, the well-Beloved.

~The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 94

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**March 15<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Importance of Unity* Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. | Sunset: 6:36 p.m.

It is my hope that the friends and the maid-servants of America become united on all subjects and not disagree at all. If they agree upon a subject, even though it be wrong, it is better than to disagree and be in the right, for this difference will produce the demolition of the divine foundation. Though one of the parties may be in the right and they disagree that will be the cause of a thousand wrongs, but if they agree and both parties are in the wrong, as it is in unity the truth will be revealed and the wrong made right.

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 411

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**March 16<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Bring Thyself to Account*

Sunrise: 6:37 a.m. | Sunset: 6:37 p.m.

O SON OF BEING! Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.

~ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words* #31

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**March 17<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Live the Life*

Sunrise: 6:36 a.m. | Sunset: 6:38 p.m.

The great thing is to 'Live the Life' – to have our lives so saturated with the Divine teaching and the Bahá'í Spirit that people cannot fail to see a joy, a power, a love, a purity, a radiance, an efficiency in our character and work that will distinguish us from worldly-minded people and make people wonder what is the secret of this new life in us. We must become entirely selfless and devoted to God so that every day and every moment we seek to do only what God would have us do and in the way He would have us do it. If we do this sincerely then we shall have perfect unity & harmony with each other. Where there is want of harmony there is lack of the true Bahá'í Spirit. ~ Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Life*, p. 2

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**March 18<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Effects of Our Actions*

Sunrise: 6:34 a.m. | Sunset: 6:39 p.m.

How often the beloved Master was heard to say. Should each one of the friends take upon himself to carry out, in all its integrity and implications, only one of the teachings of the Faith, with devotion, detachment, constancy and perseverance and exemplify it in all his deeds and pursuits of life, the world would become another world and the face of the earth would mirror forth the splendours of the Abhá Paradise. Consider what marvellous changes would be effected if the beloved of the Merciful conducted themselves, both in their individual and collective capacities, in accordance with the counsels and exhortations which have streamed from the Pen of Glory. ~ Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Life*, p. 1

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**March 19<sup>th</sup>** *Theme: Opening the Doors of True Knowledge*

Sunrise: 6:33 a.m. | Sunset: 6:39 p.m.

Gather ye together with the utmost joy and fellowship and recite the verses revealed by the merciful Lord. By so doing the doors to true knowledge will be opened to your inner beings, and ye will then feel your souls endowed with steadfastness and your hearts filled with radiant joy.

~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Importance of Deepening*, p. 2

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## **Naw-Rúz**

Naw-Rúz, March 20<sup>th</sup>, is the Bahá'í New Year (for 174 B.E.) and one of the nine Holy Days in which Bahá'ís are enjoined to abstain from work. It coincides with the vernal equinox – the first day of spring.

This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the "Resurrection Day" and now is the great "Day of Judgment." Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 351

O ye loved ones of God! The wine-cup of Heaven overfloweth, the banquet of God's Covenant is bright with festive lights, the dawn of all bestowals is breaking, the gentle winds of grace are blowing, and out of the invisible world come good tidings of bounties and gifts. In flower-spangled meadows hath the divine springtime pitched its tents, and the spiritual are inhaling sweet scents from the Sheba of the spirit, carried their way by the east wind. Now doth the mystic nightingale carol its odes, and buds of inner meaning are bursting into blossoms delicate and fair. The field larks are become the festival's musicians, and lifting

wondrous voices they cry and sing to the melodies of the Company on high, 'Blessed are ye! Glad Tidings! Glad Tidings!' And they urge on the revellers of the Abhá Paradise to drink their fill, and they eloquently hold forth upon the celestial tree, and utter their sacred cries. All this, that withered souls who tread the desert of the heedless, and faded ones lost in the sands of unconcern, may come to throbbing life again, and present themselves at the feasts and revels of the Lord God.

~' Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 255

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