

Intercalary Days

Introduction by the MC

Ayyám-i-Há

Or Intercalary Days fall on;

25-28 February, should be days of

- preparation for the Fast
- hospitality
- charity
- giving of presents

Ayyám-i-Há, or Intercalary Days, are the four days (five in a leap year) between the Bahá'í month of Mulk (Dominion) (February 7 – February 25) and the last month of the Bahá'í year, 'Alá'(Loftiness) (March 1 – March 19), which is the month of fasting. As the Bahá'í calendar consists of the 19 months with 19 days each, the Intercalary Days provide an extra four days (or five in leap years) to complete the solar cycle.

During Ayyám-i-Há, Bahá'ís strive to show extra love, fellowship, and charity. Ayyám-i-Há is also a time when Bahá'ís give and receive gifts, particularly to children.

Readings 1

“O Pen of the Most High! Say: O people of the world! We have enjoined upon you fasting during a brief period, and at its close have designated for you Naw-Rúz as a feast. Thus hath the Day-Star of Utterance shone forth above the horizon of the Book as decreed by Him Who is the Lord of the beginning and the end. Let the days in excess of the months be placed before the month of fasting. We have ordained that these, amid all nights and days, shall be the manifestations of the letter Há, and thus they have not been bounded by the limits of the year and its months. It behoveth the people of Bahá, throughout these days, to provide good cheer for themselves, their kindred and, beyond them, the poor and needy, and with joy and exultation to hail and glorify their Lord, to sing His praise and magnify His Name...”

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 25)

Readings 2

The Báb introduced a new calendar, known now as the Badi' or Bahá'í calendar. According to this calendar, a day is the period from sunset to sunset. In the Bayán, the Báb ordained the month of 'Ala' to be the month of fasting, decreed that the day of Naw-Rúz should mark the termination of that period, and designated Naw-Rúz as the Day of God. Bahá'u'lláh confirms the Badi' calendar wherein Naw-Rúz is designated as a feast.

Naw-Rúz is the first day of the new year. It coincides with the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere, which usually occurs on 21 March. Bahá'u'lláh explains that this feast day is to be celebrated on whatever day the sun passes into the constellation of Aries (i.e. the vernal equinox), even should this occur one minute before sunset. Hence Naw-Rúz could fall on 20, 21, or 22 March, depending on the time of the equinox.

The Badi' calendar is based on the solar year of 365 days, 5 hours, and 50 odd minutes. The year consists of 19 months of 19 days each (i.e. 361 days), with the addition of four extra days (five in a leap year). The Báb did not specifically define the place for the intercalary days in the new calendar. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas resolves this question by assigning the "excess" days a fixed position in the calendar immediately preceding the month of 'Ala', the period of fasting.

Known as the Ayyám-i-Há (the Days of Há), the Intercalary Days have the distinction of being associated with "the letter Há". The abjad numerical value of this Arabic letter is five, which corresponds to the potential number of intercalary days.

The letter "Há" has been given several spiritual meanings in the Holy Writings, among which is as a symbol of the Essence of God.

Bahá'u'lláh enjoined upon His followers to devote these days to feasting, rejoicing and charity. In a letter written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf it is explained that "the intercalary days are specially set aside for hospitality, the giving of gifts, etc."

(Bahá'u'lláh : The Kitáb-i-Aqdas – Notes)

Prayer

My God, my Fire and my Light! The days which Thou hast named the Ayyám-i-Há (the Days of Há, Intercalary days) in Thy Book have begun, O Thou Who art the King of names, and the fast which Thy most exalted Pen hath enjoined unto all who are in the kingdom of Thy creation to observe is approaching.

I entreat Thee, O my Lord, by these days and by all such as have during that period clung to the cord of Thy commandments, and laid hold on the handle of Thy precepts, to grant that unto every soul may be assigned a place within the precincts of Thy court, and a seat at the revelation of the splendours of the light of Thy countenance.

These, O my Lord, are Thy servants whom no corrupt inclination hath kept back from what Thou didst send down in Thy Book. They have bowed themselves before Thy Cause, and received Thy Book with such resolve as is born of Thee, and observed what Thou hadst prescribed unto them, and chosen to follow that which had been sent down by Thee. Thou seest, O my Lord, how they have recognized and confessed whatsoever Thou hast revealed in Thy Scriptures. Give them to drink, O my Lord, from the hands of Thy graciousness the waters of Thine eternity. Write down, then, for them the recompense ordained for him that hath immersed himself in the ocean of Thy presence, and attained unto the choice wine of Thy meeting.

I implore Thee, O Thou the King of kings and the Pitier of the downtrodden, to ordain for them the good of this world and of the world to come. Write down for them, moreover, what none of Thy creatures hath discovered, and number them with those who have circled round Thee, and who move about Thy throne in every world of Thy worlds. Thou, truly, art the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

~Bahá'u'lláh

Readings 3

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.

(Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh –p.285)

Readings 4

The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man—so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adornings of the reality of man. The purpose is that earthlings should turn into the people of Heaven, and those who walk in darkness should come into the light, and those who are excluded should join the inner circle of the Kingdom, and those who are as nothing should become intimates of the everlasting Glory. It is that the portionless should gain their share of the boundless sea, and the ignorant drink their fill from the living fount of knowledge; that those who thirst for blood should forsake their savagery, and those who are barbed of claw should turn gentle and forbearing, and those who love war should seek instead for true conciliation; it is that the brutal, their talons razor-sharp, should enjoy the benefits of lasting peace; that the foul should learn that there is a realm of purity, and the tainted find their way to the rivers of holiness. Unless these divine bestowals be revealed from the inner self of humankind, the bounty of the Manifestation will prove barren, and the dazzling rays of the Sun of Truth will have no effect whatever. Wherefore, O beloved of the Lord, strive ye with heart and soul to receive a share of His holy attributes and take your portion of the bounties of His sanctity—that ye may become the tokens of unity, the standards of singleness, and seek out the meaning of oneness; that ye may, in this garden of God, lift up your voices and sing the blissful anthems of the spirit. Become ye as the birds who offer Him their thanks, and in the blossoming bowers of life chant ye such melodies as will dazzle the minds of those who know. Raise ye a banner on the highest peaks of the world, a flag of God's favour to ripple and wave in the winds of His grace; plant ye a tree in the field of life, amid the roses of this visible world, that will yield a fruitage fresh and sweet.

~Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Bahá Pages 11-12

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