

# Elucidations

## 1. Bahá'í Fast

a compilation<sup>1</sup>

### Part I: Descriptive

*Were the mouth of Thy will to address them saying: "Observe, for My Beauty's sake, the fast, O people, and set no limit to its duration," I swear by the majesty of Thy glory, that every one of them will faithfully observe it, will abstain from whatsoever will violate Thy law, and will continue to do so until they yield up their souls unto Thee, for they have tasted the sweetness of Thy call, and become inebriated with Thy remembrance and praise and with the words proceeding from the lips of Thy command. — Bahá'u'lláh*

Brief excerpts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh wherein He is speaking explicitly of the Fast.

(The headings and numbering below are arbitrary, and have been added for reference.)

### Descriptive of the Fast

1. "We have commanded you to pray and fast..."

2. "...this is ordained by God..."
3. "We have enjoined upon you fasting..."
4. "...during a brief period..."
5. "...the season of restraint..."
6. "...this grace that is appointed in the Book."
7. "In truth, I say that obligatory prayer and fasting occupy an exalted station in the sight of God."
8. "It is, however, in a state of health that their virtue can be realized."
9. "...a service due to God..." [Bahá'u'lláh expands a statement of Muhammad to include fasting.]
10. "Fasting is illumination, prayer is light." [Bahá'u'lláh corroborates a saying or tradition.]
11. "...We are the Fast..." [Bahá'u'lláh quotes Imam Ja'far Sadiq, the sixth Shi'ih Imam. (83-148 A.H.)]
12. "...the ornament of the fast prescribed by Thee..."
13. "...Thou didst enjoin Thy servants to observe the fast."
14. "With it Thou didst adorn the preamble of the Book of Thy Laws revealed unto Thy creatures..."
15. "...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."
16. "Thou hast endowed every hour of these days with a special virtue, inscrutable to all except Thee..."
17. "Thou hast, also, assigned unto every soul a portion of this virtue..."
18. "Fasting and obligatory prayer are as two wings to man's life."
19. "Verily, the religion of God is like unto heaven; fasting is its sun, and obligatory prayer is its moon. In truth, they are the

pillars of religion whereby the righteous are distinguished from those who transgress His commandments.”

20. “...that which He hath revealed in His Ancient Book.”
21. “Know thou that religion is as heaven; and fasting and obligatory prayer are its sun and its moon.”
22. “...that which they have been commanded in this Day.”
23. “...in accordance with His good-pleasure.”
24. “Fasting hath been decreed for you in the month of Ala.”
25. “Thus doth the Beloved of mankind instruct you as bidden by God, the All-Powerful, the Unconstrained.”
26. “We, verily, have commanded all to observe the Fast in these days as a bounty on Our part...”
27. “Say: By God! His Law is a fortress unto you, could ye but understand.”
28. “Even though outwardly the Fast is difficult and toilsome, yet inwardly it is bounty and tranquillity.”
29. “Whatsoever God hath revealed is beloved of the soul.”
30. “...that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him.”
31. “The law of the Fast is ordained for those who are sound and healthy...”
32. “The days of fasting have arrived wherein those servants who circle round Thy throne and have attained Thy presence have fasted.”
33. “These are the days whereon Thou hast enjoined Thy chosen ones, Thy loved ones and Thy servants to observe the Fast, which Thou hast made a light unto the people of Thy Kingdom...”
34. “Since they are turning to the court of Thy good-pleasure, all their days are days of fasting.”

***Brief excerpts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh wherein  
He is speaking explicitly of the Fast***

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and have been added for reference.)

**Part II: Purposes of the Fast**

1. "...that the fire of Thy love and the heat produced by the fast enjoined by Thee may inflame them in Thy Cause..."
2. "...and make them to be occupied with Thy praise and with remembrance of Thee."
3. "...the ornament of Thine acceptance..."
4. "...that through it they may purify their souls..."
5. "...and rid themselves of all attachment to any one but Thee..."
6. "...and that out of their hearts may ascend that which will be worthy of the court of Thy majesty and may well beseem the seat of the revelation of Thy oneness."
7. "Cleanse Thou by its means the hearts of Thy servants..."
8. "...attaining unto that which Thou didst ordain..."
9. "...cleanse us from the noisome savors of our transgressions."
10. [We get to ask God such as this:] "Do Thou accept all that we have done for love of Thee, and for the sake of Thy pleasure, and all that we have left undone as a result of our subjection to our evil and corrupt desires."
11. "...We have ordained obligatory prayer and fasting so that all may by these means draw nigh unto God, the Most Powerful, the Well-Beloved."
12. "...observe that which will draw them nearer unto Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Loving."
13. "All praise be unto God, Who hath... enjoined on them the Fast that those possessed of means may become apprised of the woes and sufferings of the destitute."

14. "...be acceptable in the sight of God."
15. "...that which hath been and will be of profit to them."
16. "Well is it with the one who fulfilleth My decrees..."
17. "Verily, He hath no purpose therein save to benefit the souls of His servants..."
18. "Blessed is the one who through the heat generated by the Fast increaseth his love..."
19. "...and who, with joy and radiance, ariseth to perform worthy deeds."
20. "Purification and training are conditioned and dependent only on such rigorous exercises as are in accord with the Book of God and sanctioned by Divine law, not those which the deluded have inflicted upon the people."
21. "Verily, I say, fasting is the supreme remedy and the most great healing for the disease of self and passion."
22. "...to fulfill that which hath been decreed in the Book."
23. "...serveth solely to benefit His friends and loved ones."
24. "...Thou hast bidden to observe the Fast for the sake of Thy love and good pleasure..."
25. "There are various stages and stations for the Fast and innumerable effects and benefits are concealed therein. Well is it with those who have attained unto them."
26. "I beg of Thee, O my God, by those who have fasted for love of Thee and have quaffed the living waters of submission from the hands of Thy bounty, to ordain for Thy loved ones, who under the blaze of the orb of Thy trials have clung to the cord of patience, all the good Thou hast reckoned in Thy Books and Thy Tablets."
27. "I beg of Thee, O my God, by these mighty pillars, [fasting and obligatory prayer] to keep Thy religion safe from the mischief of the ungodly and the plotting of every wicked doer."

28. "All glory be to Thee, O my God, for Thou hast graciously enabled me to fast during this month which Thou hast related to Thy Name, the Most Exalted, and called Ala (Loftiness). Thou hast commanded that Thy servants and Thy people should fast therein and seek thereby to draw nearer unto Thee."
29. "The days and the months of the year have culminated with the Fast, even as the first month began with Thy Name, Bahá, that all might testify that Thou art the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden..."
30. "...and be well assured that the glory of all names is conferred only through the glory of Thy Cause and the word expounded only by Thy will and revealed through Thy purpose."
31. "Thou hast ordained that this month be a remembrance and honor from Thee..."
32. "...and a sign of Thy presence among them..."
33. "...that they may not forget Thy grandeur and Thy majesty, Thy sovereignty and Thy glory..."
34. "...and may be well assured that from time immemorial Thou hast ever been and wilt ever be Ruler over the entire creation."

### Part III: How To

*Since Thou hast adorned them, O my Lord, with the ornament of the fast prescribed by Thee, do Thou adorn them also with the ornament of Thine acceptance, through Thy grace and bountiful favor. For the doings of men are all dependent upon Thy good-pleasure, and are conditioned by Thy behest. Shouldst Thou regard him who hath broken the fast as one who hath observed it, such a man would be reckoned among them who from eternity had been keeping the fast. And shouldst Thou decree that he who hath observed the fast hath broken it, that person would be numbered with such as have caused the Robe of Thy Revelation to be stained with dust, and been far removed from the crystal waters of this living Fountain. — Bahá'u'lláh*

## Brief excerpts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh wherein He is speaking explicitly of the Fast

(The headings and numbering below are arbitrary,  
and have been added for reference.)

### *How To Fast*

1. "...those who have observed the fast for love of Thee..."
2. "I have fasted for love of Thee..."
3. "...and in pursuance of Thine injunction..."
4. "...Thy servants who have turned towards the precincts of Thy court and the sanctuary of Thy presence, and have observed the fast for love of Thee."
5. "For Thine ardent lovers Thou hast, according to Thy decree, reserved, at each daybreak, the cup of Thy remembrance..."
6. "...they forsake their couches in their longing to celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy virtues..."
7. "...and flee from sleep in their eagerness to approach Thy presence and partake of Thy bounty."
8. "Abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sundown..."
9. "...beware lest desire deprive you of this grace..."
10. "...have broken my fast with Thy praise on my tongue and in conformity with Thy pleasure."
11. "...give me to drink of the wine of Thy mercy..."
12. "...and of the pure beverage of Thy favor..."
13. "...that I may so fix my gaze upon Thee and be so detached from all else but Thee, that the world and all that hath been created therein may appear before me as a fleeting day which Thou hast not deigned to create."
14. "...Cause me to taste, O my Lord, the divine sweetness of Thy remembrance and praise."

15. "I beseech Thee to grant that I may be assisted to observe the fast wholly for Thy sake, O Thou Who art full of majesty and glory!"
16. "Empower me, then, O my God, to be reckoned among them that have clung to Thy laws and precepts for the sake of Thee alone, their eyes fixed on Thy face."
17. "...whose wine is all that hath proceeded out of the mouth of Thy primal will, whose pure beverage is Thine enthralling call..."
18. "Observe ye the commandments of God for love of His beauty..."
19. "...and be not of those who follow in the ways of the abject and foolish."
20. "Cling firmly to obligatory prayer and fasting."
21. "Blessed be the one who soareth with their aid in the heaven of the love of God, the Lord of all worlds."
22. "Be not neglectful of obligatory prayer and fasting."
23. "...observe the most great and exalted Fast, which is to protect one's eye from beholding whatever is forbidden..."
24. "...and to withhold one's self from food, drink..."
25. "...and whatever is not of Him."
26. "Fast ye for the sake of your Lord, the Mighty, the Most High."
27. "...for the love of My Beauty..."
28. "Restrain yourselves from sunrise to sunset."
29. "Cling ye to the cord of God's laws..."
30. "...him who hath fasted out of love for Thee and for Thy good-pleasure – and not out of self and desire, nor out of fear of Thy wrath..."
31. "I beg of Thee by Thy Name, the All-Glorious, to accept the fast of those who have fasted for love of Thee and for the sake of



Thy good-pleasure and have carried out what Thou hast bidden them in Thy Books and Tablets.”

32. “We have observed the Fast in conformity with Thy bidding and break it now through Thy love and Thy good-pleasure.”
33. “We have fasted this day, O my Lord, by Thy command and Thy bidding in accordance with what Thou hast revealed in Thy perspicuous Book. We have withheld our souls from passion and from whatsoever Thou abhorrest until the day drew to an end and the time arrived to break the fast.”
34. [How not to fast:] “How many those who keep the fast in the daytime, only to protest against the One by Whose very command the ordinance of the fast was first established!”

“Do not bring our fasts to an end with this fast, O my Lord, nor the covenants Thou hast made with this covenant.”

## The Bahá'í Fast, Additional Insight, Part IV

(The headings and numbering below are arbitrary, and have been added for reference.)

### *From the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the Fast*

1. “Ye had written of the fasting month. Fortunate are ye to have obeyed the commandment of God, and kept this fast during the holy season. For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God.”
2. “The laws of God, such as fasting, obligatory prayer and the like, as well as His counsels regarding virtues, good deeds and proper conduct, must be carried out everywhere to the extent possible, unless some insurmountable obstacle or some great danger presents itself or it runneth counter to the dictates of wisdom. For indolence and laxity hinder the outpourings of love from the clouds of divine mercy, and people will thus remain deprived.”

3. "Thou hast written about the Fast. This is a most weighty matter and thou shouldst exert thine utmost in its observance. It is a fundamental of the Divine Law, and one of the pillars of the religion of God."
4. "Well is it with you, as you have followed the Law of God and arisen to observe the Fast during these blessed days, for this physical fast is a symbol of the spiritual fast. This Fast leadeth to the cleansing of the soul from all selfish desires, the acquisition of spiritual attributes, attraction to the breezes of the All-Merciful, and enkindlement with the fire of divine love."
5. "Fasting is the cause of the elevation of one's spiritual station."

***From Shoghi Effendi, regarding the Fast***

1. "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."
2. "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."
3. "Those unwarranted practices, in connection with the sacrament of baptism, of communion, of confession of sins, of asceticism, of priestly domination, of elaborate ceremonials, of holy war and of polygamy, have one and all been rigidly suppressed by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh; whilst the rigidity and rigor of certain observances, such as fasting, which are necessary to the devotional life of the individual, have been considerably abated."

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [bahaimosaic.blogspot.com/2009\\_02\\_26\\_archive.html](http://bahaimosaic.blogspot.com/2009_02_26_archive.html).