

# THE HOME FRONT

A NEWS BULLETIN

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The ordinances of God have been sent down from the heaven of His most august Revelation. All must diligently observe them. Man's supreme distinction, his real advancement, his final victory, have always depended, and will continue to depend, upon them. Whoso keepeth the commandments of God shall attain everlasting felicity.

A two fold obligation resteth upon him who hath recognized the Day Spring of the Unity of God, and acknowledged the truth of Him Who is the Manifestation of His oneness. The first is steadfastness in His love, such steadfastness that neither the clamor of the enemy nor the claims of the idle pretender can deter him from cleaving unto Him Who is the Eternal Truth, a steadfastness that taketh no account of them whatever. The second is strict observance of the laws He hath prescribed - laws which He hath always ordained, and will continue to ordain, unto men, and through which the truth may be distinguished and separated from falsehood.

Baha'u'llah

## B A H A ' I   A D M I N I S T R A T I O N

### SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS

#### Daily Obligatory Prayer

The daily obligatory prayers are three in number. The shortest one consists of a single verse which has to be recited once in every twenty-four hours at midday. The medium (prayer) has to be recited three times a day, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. The long prayer which is the most elaborate of the three has to be recited once in every twenty-four hours, and at any time one feels inclined to do so.

The believer is entirely free to choose any one of those three prayers, but is under the obligation of reciting either one of them, and in accordance with any specific directions with which they may be accompanied.

These daily obligatory prayers, together with a few other specific ones, such as the Healing Prayer, the Tablet of Ahmad, have been invested by Baha'u'llah with a special potency and significance, and should therefore be accepted as such and be recited by the believers with unquestioned faith and confidence, that through them they may enter into a much closer communion with God, and identify themselves more fully with His laws and precepts.

#### Congregational Prayer

Regarding the practice of congregational prayer, the Guardian wishes you to know that this form of prayer has been enjoined by Baha'u'llah only for the dead. In all other circumstances there is no obligation whatever imposed upon the believers.

#### Prayers to be Read as Revealed

Also concerning your question about the prayers and changing the pronoun: this cannot be done, even in the long obligatory Prayer or the healing prayers. Either



we must square this mere detail or say a prayer that applies to our sex or number.

### Child's Prayers

The Guardian feels that it would be better for either the mothers of Baha'i children - or some Committee your Assembly might delegate the task to - to choose excerpts from the Sacred Words to be used by the child rather than just something made up. Of course, prayer can be purely spontaneous but many of the sentences and thoughts combined in Baha'i writings of a devotional nature are easy to grasp, and the revealed word is endowed with a power of its own.

### The Ordinance of Fasting

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.

The ordinance of fasting is, as is the case with these three prayers, a spiritual and vital obligation enjoined by Baha'u'llah upon every believer who has attained the age of fifteen. In the Aqdas He thus writes: "We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. He has exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age, as a bounty from His Presence, and He is the Forgiving, the Generous". And in another passage He says: "We have enjoined upon you fasting during a brief period, and at its close have designated for you Naw-Ruz as a feast..... The traveller, the ailing, those who are with child or giving suck, are not bound by the fast..... Abstain from food and drink, from sunrise to sundown, and beware lest desire deprive you of this grace that is appointed in the Book".

Also in the "Questions and Answers" that form an appendix to the Aqdas, Baha'u'llah reveals the following: "Verily, I say that God has appointed a great station for

fasting and prayer. But during good health its benefit is evident, and when one is ill, it is not permissible to fulfil them." Concerning the age of maturity, He reveals in the appendix of that same book: "The age of maturity is in the fifteenth year; women and men are alike in this respect."

The fasting period, which lasts nineteen days, starting as a rule from the second of March every year, and ending on the twentieth of the same month, involves complete abstention from food and drink from sunrise till sunset. It 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 purposes are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires.

Regarding your question concerning the Fast: travellers are exempt from fasting, but if they want to fast while they are travelling, they are free to do so. You are exempt the whole period of your travel, not just the hours you are in a train or car, etc. If one eats unconsciously during the fasting hours, this is not breaking the Fast as it is an accident. The age limit is seventy years, but if one desires to fast after the age limit is passed, and is strong enough to, one is free to do so. If during the Fast period a person falls ill and is unable to fast, but recovers before the Fast period is over, he can start to fast again and continue until the end. Of course, the Fast, as you know, can only be kept during the month set aside for that purpose.

Shoghi Effendi

Extract from 'Principles of Baha'i Administration'

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"POSSESS A PURE, KINDLY AND RADIANT HEART"

As these urgent last days of the great Crusade go hurrying by we must all be awake to every opportunity to teach the Cause of God. Much was said at Teaching Conference about the need for audacity, and certainly boldness and daring are ingredients in the teaching technique, but so are knowledge and wisdom. "Aid ye your Lord with the sword of wisdom and of utterance." wrote Baha'u'llah.

For the most part our teaching brings us into contact with Christians, and we are supremely blest in being able to share with them a reverence for Christ and His Word. This reverence is a spiritual bond which should inspire mutual respect and lead to a sharing of viewpoints. The Baha'i teacher, however, has the inestimable privilege of being able to shew his Christian friend a path into a wider, more universal fellowship of faith without destroying his Christian foundations. Wisdom dictates a gradual unfoldment, however, and the Christian may very well resist the Faith for lack of knowledge, or for fear, or other reasons. If he does, we should surely understand his fear. We who possess so precious a Faith will know from inside knowledge why a man clings to his own Faith. The spirit of Christianity did not easily burst the wine-skins of the Jewish Faith.

In our approach to the Christian Minister of Religion, the need for respect and understanding is even more important. It is true that 'Abdu'l-Baha looked forward eagerly to the day when a number of ministers would attack the Cause of God, for thereby defenders of the Faith would arise and the truth of the Cause would be blazened abroad. This does not mean that we

should provoke such an attack. Rather, in all purity of motive we should share with the minister the precious truths bequeathed to us. Speaking as an erstwhile minister, I would suggest that more than usual kindness and patience are needed here; for when a man has been constantly thinking and writing certain doctrines and formulating these doctrines an hundred times a year in sermons, his thoughts and beliefs bite deep into his mind and any change of thinking may indeed cause deep psychological turmoil. Many do fine work for little reward and, along with their families, live sacrificial lives.

"Respect ye the divines amongst you", writes Baha'u'llah, "they whose acts conform to the knowledge they possess". Shoghi Effendi underlines this thought when he tells us that no follower of Baha'u'llah should seek to belittle the rank of the world's religious leaders should their conduct conform to their professions; and as we rarely know the inner motives of another we are surely right to credit Christian laymen or ministers with sincerity. Finally the logic of our Faith demands from the minister that he give up his chosen profession and embark upon another way of life; this can be a hazardous course for both him and his family.

There need be no lack of audacity in our pure-hearted and kindly approach to the Christian, for the gradual unfoldment of the universal principles of our Faith and the Words of Baha'u'llah are a divine audacity that challenge his dearest traditions. To the Christian layman, this is a challenge to step outside the relatively narrow bounds of Christianity into a broader unity that comprehends all world faiths. For the minister, the challenge is to his very way of life and livelihood. There is surely then the greatest need for understanding and patience and love. "They who are the people of God have no ambition except to revive the world, to ennoble its life and regenerate its peoples."



It is surely true, as the Master prophesied, that attacks are inevitable, and then the time to defend the Cause will come and will spread abroad the truth. Baha'u'llah speaks of those who assail the Cause with their inflammatory writings, and commands every believer, according to his ability, to take up his pen and refute the arguments of the attackers: "For whosoever standeth firm and steadfast in this holy, this glorious and exalted Revelation, such power shall be given him as to enable him to face and withstand all that is in heaven and on earth."

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We are most grateful to Bill Hellaby for giving us his thoughts on the all-important subject of our attitude to Christians. We would ask all Baha'i speakers and teachers to bear these thoughts in mind on all teaching occasions.

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The beloved Guardian's Crusade

OUR PRIME TASKS - the maintenance and consolidation of our  
Local Spiritual Assemblies.

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Since the issue of the Bulletin last month, pioneers have come forward for Inverness, Glasgow, Chester and Portsmouth; a pioneer offer has come from Shiraz and there is the possibility of one from Portugal.

On the other hand, Portsmouth have need of more pioneer help, and Peterborough is below numbers.

This, then, is now the position:-

- CHESTER - have two pioneers in sight, Jimmy Habibi and Azar Majidi.
- GLASGOW - will be assured when Alan and Gholly move in about the middle of March, and Tom Shaw moves in from just outside the civic limits.
- INVERNESS - has been strengthened by the pioneer offer of Badieh Changizi who hopes to move in by the beginning of April. One more gap remains to be filled here.
- NORTHAMPTON - needs a pioneer who can make contacts.
- PORTSMOUTH - Jack Crook will move in as soon as his job is secure or before the 21st April whichever is the sooner, and Doris Drew as soon as she can find a caravan. Two more pioneers are urgently needed here.
- SHEFFIELD )  
MOTHERWELL ) - need your prayers for the confirmation of  
PONTYPRIDD ) very close contacts.
- PETERBOROUGH- needs one pioneer.



WINCHESTER - needs pioneer help.

YORK - although she has returned to Liverpool for the moment, Terry Dunne is standing by to move in if necessary. This Assembly then needs one more.

Now: 11 Assemblies with a total of  
20 Gaps.

11 Pioneers are already available,  
leaving: 9 more believers to be found.

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#### THE CONSOLIDATION OF EIRE

Two more believers of Irish background are needed in Dublin to meet the minimum requirements of consolidation; and believers to form the second nucleus in Dun Laoghaire.

Have we no Irish believers free and willing to make the sacrifice necessary to assure this Goal ??????

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"Centre your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it."

Baha'u'llah

The Secondary Tasks  
Additional Local Spiritual Assemblies

A declaration in NELSON, now a group of 7, encourages us to hope for yet another bonus Assembly - the 50th in the British Isles. We would like to share with you an extract from a letter which we have received from this Group which explains the secret of their success:-

"Well, we have achieved success so far by personal teaching to contacts and arranging firesides as early as possible, even the next night if necessary.

"The great thing is to kindle in the breasts of the seekers the light of search and not to let them be deprived of our great bounty. It seems that, perhaps, when one day of the week is designated as 'fireside day' it may sometimes happen that a contact be told of this day and not be able to attend until the following week, thereby dampening the spirit of a possible Baha'i. Whereas if a fireside is arranged 'on the spot' our concern and love is manifest.

"An example of this has only last week occurred in Burnley at the wonderful Baha'i wedding ceremony of Peter and Carol from Barrowford. So many of the people declared that they had enjoyed the Baha'i ceremony better than the previous Christian one, and all were touched by it. At the fireside which followed that night, two girls declared, and a boy said he agreed with everything that Abbas had said.

"I personally have found that to put our faith in God, is sure success, whether by prayer or action.

"I wonder, do we listen to Baha'u'llah's guidance when He says: "O Son of Being! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant."

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FAREWELL FROM AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS

Edgar and Pearl Boyett have asked us to convey to all the friends their loving greetings on their departure to Australia, and their regret that time did not permit them the opportunity of making personal farewells to many of their friends.

Our prayers go with them and their family for the success of their pioneering move, and happiness in their new life.

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FOR SALE

The Edinburgh friends have a supply of the booklet:  
"'Abdu'l-Baha in Edinburgh" - price 1/6d. (inc. postage.)

They are obtainable from:-

Mr. Donald Cooper,  
14, Steel's Place,  
Edinburgh.

## CALENDAR

### Nineteen Day Feasts

Loftiness - 2nd March  
Splendor - 21st March  
Glory - 9th April

### Fast

2nd to 21st March

### Naw Ruz

21st March

### Feast of Ridvan

21st April to May 2nd.

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### Weekend and One Day Schools

10th March - BIRMINGHAM (at Digbeth Civic Hall)  
23/24 March - LIVERPOOL  
30/31 March - BANGOR  
30th March - SOUTHPORT (public meeting)  
6th April - SUTTON COLDFIELD  
7/9th June - LYME PARK, Cheshire.  
16/17th Nov. - AVON TYRELL, near Bournemouth.

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