**The Baha’i Fast**

Month of Ala’ (Loftiness)

(March 2nd to 20th)

“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 purpose are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires.” - Shoghi Effendi, Directives of the Guardian, pp. 27-28.

“We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity [15 years]; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers….The traveler, 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.” - The Kitab-i-Aqdas

“This is, O my God, the first of the days on which Thou hast bidden Thy loved ones to observe the Fast. I ask of Thee by Thy Self and by 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 – and by Thy most excellent names and august attributes, to purify Thy servants from the love of aught except Thee and to draw them nigh unto the Dawning-Place of the lights of Thy countenance and the Seat of the throne of Thy countenance and the Seat of the throne of Thy oneness. Illumine their hearts, O my God, with the light of Thy knowledge and brighten their faces with the rays of the Daystar that shineth from the horizon of Thy Will. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. No God is there by Thee, the All-Glorious, Whose help is implored by all men.

Assist them, O my God, to render Thee victorious and to exalt Thy Word. Suffer them, then, to become as hands of Thy Cause amongst Thy servants, and make them to be revealers of Thy religion and Thy signs amongst mankind, in such wise that the whole world may be filled with Thy remembrance and praise and with Thy proofs and evidences. Thou art, verily, the All-Bounteous, the Most Exalted, the Powerful, the Mighty, and the Merciful.” – Baha’u’llah

March 2013 Sunrise and Sunset Times for the Fast

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|  |  |  |  |  | 1  Sunrise: 6:42am  Sunset: 6:03pm | 2  Sunrise: 6:40am  Sunset: 6:04pm |
| 3  Sunrise: 6:39am  Sunset: 6:05pm | 4  Sunrise: 6:37am  Sunset: 6:06pm | 5  Sunrise: 6:36am  Sunset: 6:07pm | 6  Sunrise: 6:34am  Sunset: 6:08pm | 7  Sunrise: 6:33am  Sunset: 6:09pm | 8  Sunrise: 6:32am  Sunset: 6:10pm | 9  Sunrise: 6:30am  Sunset: 6:10pm |
| 10  DST Begins  Sunrise: 7:29am  Sunset: 7:11pm | 11  Sunrise: 7:27am  Sunset: 7:12pm | 12  Sunrise: 7:26am  Sunset: 7:13pm | 13  Sunrise: 7:24am  Sunset: 7:14pm | 14  Sunrise: 7:23am  Sunset: 7:15pm | 15  Sunrise: 7:21am  Sunset: 7:16pm | 16  Sunrise: 7:20am  Sunset: 7:17pm |
| 17  Sunrise: 7:18am  Sunset: 7:18pm | 18  Sunrise: 7:17am  Sunset: 7:19pm | 19  Sunrise: 7:15am  Sunset: 7:20pm | 20  Sunrise: 7:14am  Sunset: 7:21pm |  |  |  |