

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD

Tel: +44-20-7584-2566 E-mail: nsa@bahai.org.uk

When replying please
refer to: GC-35490
17 February 2021
12 Mulk 177 B.E.

All believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly sends its warmest love to you all. Before we commence the Fast, that special 19-day period of prayer and spiritual rejuvenation, we first have the bounty of celebrating Ayyám-i-Há – a time for the practice of such spiritual qualities as generosity, friendship and hospitality, as well as for reaching out to those who are isolated, in ill health, or in need within our communities and beyond.

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; and when they end—these days of giving that precede the season of restraint—let them enter upon the Fast.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*

As we prepare for the month of the Fast, here are some resources that may be of assistance:

- Fasting article on Bahai.org: <https://www.bahai.org/beliefs/life-spirit/devotion/fasting>
- *The Importance of Obligatory Prayer and Fasting*. This compilation, released in 2000, contains newly authorised translations of Writings by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá: <https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/compilations/importance-obligatory-prayer-fasting/>
- Sunrise and sunset times for where you live can be found at: <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/>

During the days of the Fast, our thoughts will also turn to planning for the upcoming festival of Naw-Rúz, a wonderful opportunity to gather with friends, and loved ones to celebrate the New Year. Although this year we will not be able to join together in the usual way, it is hoped that safe arrangements will be made everywhere to allow as many individuals as possible, including friends of the Faith, to take part in a joyful Naw-Rúz celebration.

Praise be to Thee, O my God, that Thou hast ordained this day as a festival unto the favoured among Thy servants and the sincere among Thy loved ones. Thou hast called this day by that Name whereby all created things have been subdued and the breezes of Thy Revelation have been wafted between earth and heaven, a Name through which all that hath been recorded in Thy Holy Books and Sacred Scriptures hath been made manifest, and which Thy Messengers and Thy Chosen Ones have foretold, that all men might be made ready to behold Thee, to turn towards the ocean of Thy reunion, to stand before the seat of

Thy throne, and to hear Thy wondrous call from the Dayspring of Thine invisible Self and the Dawning-Place of Thine Essence.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Days of Remembrance*

With the global pandemic and lockdown still impacting upon our lives, it is hoped that these special days to come will provide the impetus to bring the community together, offer opportunities to strengthen and rekindle bonds of friendship, and contribute to the spiritual and material wellbeing of those most affected by the events of the past year.

Ayyám-i-Há runs from 25 February to 28 February 2021. The Fast begins at sunset on 28 February and ends at sunset on 19 March 2021, which will mark the start of Naw-Rúz 178 B.E. Naw-Rúz is a Holy Day where work is suspended, and all are encouraged to make arrangements to take this time off from work or school.

A very happy Ayyám-i-Há to you all.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick O'Mara', with a horizontal line underneath.

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

cc. All Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups