

Honoring The 19-Day FAST
with Barbara Talley



"FASTING IS MORE THAN
JUST NOT EATING!"

1

Shoghi Effendi indicates
that the fasting period,
which involves...

Complete (1) abstinence from food and drink from sunrise till sunset, is ...essentially a period of

(2) Meditation and

(3) Prayer, of

(4) Spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to (5) make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to

(6) 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 (7) reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires.

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'Alá' March 2021 Loftiness

Wk	Beauty	Perfection	Grace	Justice	Majesty	Independence	Glory
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9	Feb 28th ★	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11	14	15	16	17 <small>St. Patrick's Day</small>	18	19★	20
12	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
13	28	29	30	31			

"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 (Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, Pages: 28-29)"


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Fasting Is More than Just Not Eating

WHY SHOULD WE FAST?

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- ◆ Ye are even as the bird which soareth, with the full force of its mighty wings and with complete and joyous confidence, through the immensity of the heavens, until, impelled to satisfy its hunger, it turneth longingly to the water and clay of the earth below it, and, having been entrapped in the mesh of its desire, findeth itself impotent to resume its flight to the realms whence it came.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 326)
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5



(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 326)

- Powerless to shake off the burden weighing on its sullied wings, that bird, hitherto an inmate of the heavens, is now forced to seek a dwelling-place upon the dust.



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(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 326)



- Wherefore, O My servants, defile not your wings with the clay of waywardness and vain desires, and suffer them not to be stained with the **dust of envy and hate**, that ye may not be hindered from soaring in the heavens of My divine knowledge.



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Baha'u'llah's Requests on Our Behalf

- "**Purify thy servants** from the love of aught except Thee"
- "**Draw them nigh** unto the Dawning Place of lights of Thy Countenance and the Seat of the Throne of Thy Oneness"
- "**Illumine their hearts**, O My God, with the light of Thy knowledge"
- "**Brighten their faces** with the rays of the Daystar that shineth from the horizon of Thy Will."

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Baha'u'llah's Requests on Our Behalf

- **"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
- **"Make them** to be revealers of thy religion and Thy signs amongst mankind."

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I beseech Thee to:

- **"Cast me not away** from the gate of the city of Thy Presence, and **Disappoint not the hopes I** have set on the manifestations of Thy grace amidst Thy creatures/"
- **"Draw me ever nearer** to the threshold of Thy door."
- **"Suffer me not to be far removed** from the shadow of the mercy and the canopy of Thy bounty."
- **"Attract me by the fragrance** of Thy raiment."
- **"Make me drink of the choice wine** of Thine utterance."
- **"Raise me up to serve Thy Cause** that I shall not fall back nor be hindered by the suggestions of them who have caviled at thy signs and turned away from Thy face.."

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Fasting Prayer Requests

- **"Enable me** to gaze on the Daystar of Thy Beauty."
- **"Supply me** with the wine of Thine Utterance."
- "Graciously **aid me** to do what Thy will hath desired and Thy purpose hath manifested."
- **"Grant that I** may die to all that I possess and live to whatsoever belongeth to Thee."
- **"Aid me** to remember Thee amongst Thy creatures."
- Extol Thee amidst Thy people."
- **"Remove me** far from whatsoever Thy will abhorreth."
- **"Draw me** nigh unto the station wherein He Who is the Dayspring of Thy signs hath shone forth."

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Fasting Prayer Requests

- **"Make known unto me** what lay hid in the treasuries of Thy knowledge and concealed within the repositories of Thy Wisdom."
- **"Number me** with such as have attained unto that which Thou hast sent down in Thy Book and manifested through Thy will."
- **"Write down for me** with Thy most exalted pen what Thou has written down for Thy trusted ones and Thy chosen ones."

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Fasting Requests and Promises

- "To **write down for everyone who**
 - *hath turned unto Thee* and
 - *observed the fast prescribed* by Thee, **the recompense decreed** for such as
 - *speak not except by Thy leave*, and who
 - *forsook all that they possessed* in thy path and for love of Thee."
- **"To cancel the trespasses of those who**
 - *have held fast to Thy laws*, and
 - *Have observed what Thou hast prescribed unto them* in Thy Book."

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Fasting Requests

- **"Send down upon me** and upon **them** who are in my company that which
 - *will enable us to soar* into the heavens of Thy transcendent glory, and
 - *will wash from us the stain of such doubts* as have hindered the suspicious from entering into the tabernacle of Thy unity."
- **"Do thou ordain for me and for my loved ones** the good of this world and the world to come."
- **"Supply them,** then **with the Hidden Gift** Thou didst ordain for the choicest among Thy Creatures."

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Conditions for Accepting Our Fast

“Accept the fast of those who have

1. have fasted
 - *for love of Thee and*
 - *for the sake of Thy good-pleasure and*
2. have carried out what Thou hast bidden them in Thy Books and Tablets.
3. **Blessed** is he that observed the fast
 - *wholly for Thy sake, and*
 - *With absolute detachment from all things except Thee”*

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PROMISES for Every HOUR of the FAST

- “Thou has **endowed every hour** of these days **with a special virtue**, inscrutable to all except Thee, Whose knowledge embraceth all created things.”



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PROMISES to Every Soul Who FASTS



“Thou hast, also, *assigned unto every soul a portion of this virtue* in accordance with the Tablet of Thy decree and the Scripture of Thine irrevocable judgement.”

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PROMISES TO ALL THE PEOPLES AND KINDREDS OF THE EARTH



“Every leaf of these Books and Scriptures Thou hast, moreover, allotted to each one of the peoples and kindreds of the earth.”

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PROMISES for ARDENT LOVERS



“For thine ardent lovers Thou hast, according to Thy decree, *reserved, at each daybreak, the cup of Thy remembrance.*”

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What is Reserved at each day break for the “ARDENT” Lovers?



■ *“Opened wide the portals of Thy tender mercy unto all the dwellers of Thine earth.”*

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Who are "Ardent Lovers?" Reserved at each day break (Enthusiastic or Passionate)

"These are they who :

- Have been so *inebriated* with the wine of Thy manifold wisdom that they *forsake their couches* in their *longing to celebrate Thy praise* and *extol Thy virtues*, and
- *Flee from sleep* in their *eagerness* to approach Thy presence and partake of Thy Bounty
- Their *eyes have, at all times, been bent* upon the Dayspring of Thy loving-kindness, and *their faces set towards the Fountainhead* of Thine inspiration."

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These are Thy Servants ...

- "Who have *entered with Thee in this, the Most Great Prison*
- Who have *kept the fast within its walls* according to what Thou hast commanded them in the Tablets of Thy decree and the Books of Thy behest."



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What is Reserved at each day break for the Ardent Lovers?



- **"Rain down, then, upon us and upon them** from the clouds of Thy *mercy* what beseemeth the heaven of the *bounteousness* and *grace*.

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REQUESTS: SEND DOWN...



- **"Send down, therefore, upon them** what will *thoroughly purge them of all that Thou abhorrest*, that they may be wholly devoted to Thee, and *may detach themselves entirely from all except Thyself*."

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FASTING REQUESTS

- *"Enable us to live* in remembrance of Thee
- To die in love of Thee
- *Supply us with the gift of Thy presence* in Thy presence in Thy worlds hereafter – worlds inscrutable to all except Thee.

This is the hour, O my Lord, which Thou hast caused to excel every other hours, and hast related to the choicest among Thy creatures."

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FASTING REQUESTS

- "I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy Self and by them, to *ordain in the course of this year what shall exalt Thy loved ones.*
- Do Thou, moreover, *decree within this year what will enable the Daystar of Thy power to shine brightly* above the horizon of Thy glory, and
- To *illuminate by Thy sovereign might, the whole world.*
- *Render Thy Cause victorious.*
- *Abase Thou Thine enemies*
- *Write down, then, for us the good of this life and the life to come."*

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19 FASTING PROMISES

"This is the hour, O my Lord, which Thou hast caused to excel every other hour, and hast related to the choicest among Thy creatures. I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy Self and by them, to ordain in the course of this year what shall exalt Thy loved ones. Do Thou, moreover, decree within this year what will enable the Daystar of Thy power to shine brightly above the horizon of Thy glory, and to illuminate by Thy sovereign might the whole world."

- 1 EVERY HOUR SPECIAL VIRTUE
- 2 EACH PERSON ASSIGNED PORTION
- 3 BLESSED WITH REMEMBRANCE OF GOD
- 4 BOUNTY AND GRACE
- 5 PORTALS OF MERCY OPENED
- 6 FELLOWSHIP & COMMUNION
- 7 PURGING OF ALL ABHORENT
- 8 PROMISE OF EXALTATION

Prayer

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- 9 FORGIVENESS
- 10 GENEROSITY
- 11 CANCELLING OF ALL TRESPASS
- 12 SPIRITUAL FLIGHT (SOAR)
- 13 CERTITUDE
- 14 ETERNAL MERCY & FAVORS
- 15 HIDDEN GIFTS
- 16 GENEROSITY
- 17 ACCESS TO HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM
- 18 FULFILLED WISHES
- 19 JOY, SOLACE, EXHILARATION: REWARDS FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER IN GOD'S PATH

A SPECIAL TIME FOR SPIRITUAL RECUPERATION

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Conditions for Accepting Our Fast

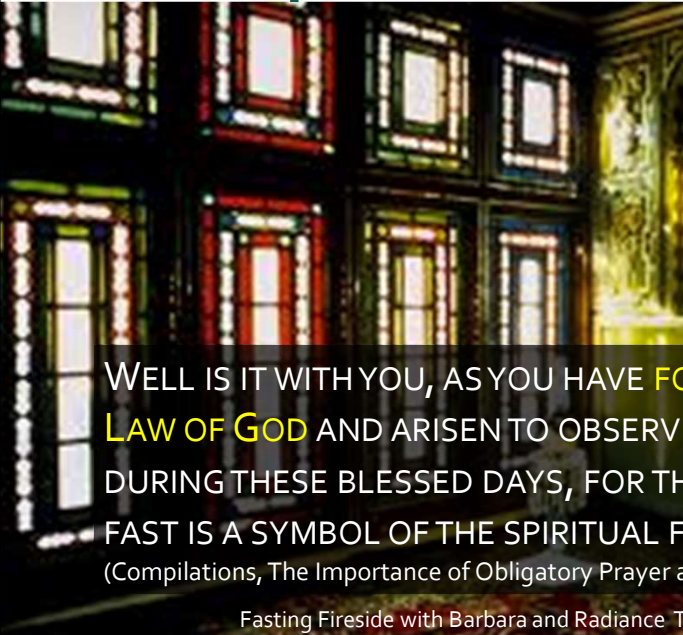
<p>FASTED OUT OF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "love for Thee" ■ "Thy good pleasure" 	<p>NOT OUT OF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Self ■ Passion ■ Fear of Thy Wrath
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The Spiritual Fast



THE
KITÁB-I-AQDAS

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

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.
 (Compilations, The Importance of Obligatory Prayer and Fasting)

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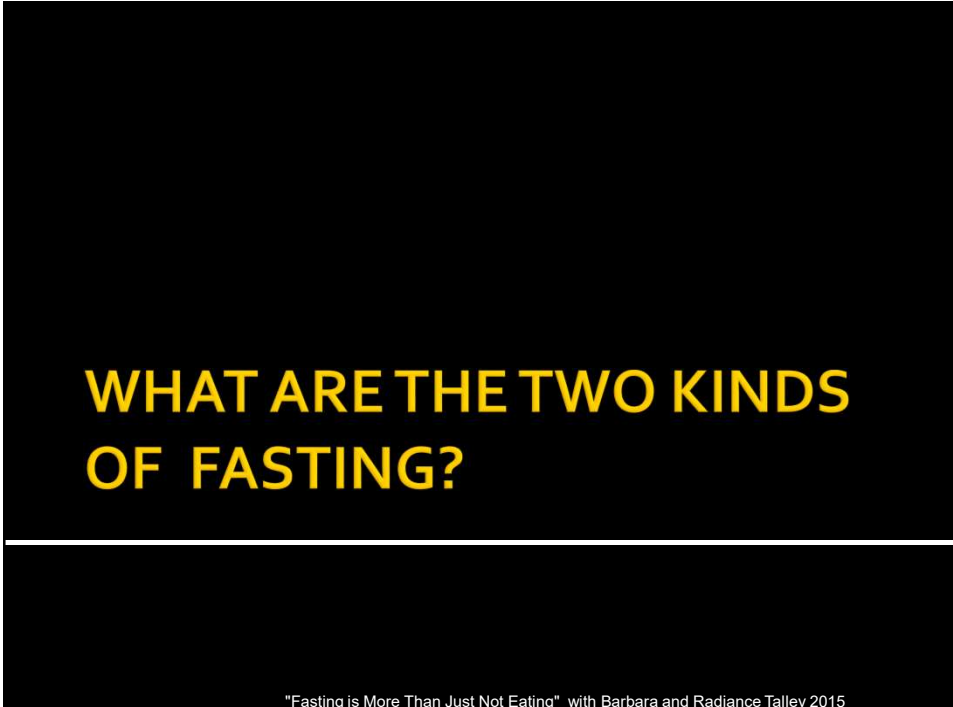


**THIS FAST LEADETH
TO:**

1. THE CLEANSING OF THE SOUL FROM ALL SELFISH DESIRES,
2. THE ACQUISITION OF SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES,
3. ATTRACTION TO THE BREEZES OF THE ALL-MERCIFUL, AND
4. ENKINDLEMENT WITH THE FIRE OF DIVINE LOVE.

(COMPILATIONS, THE IMPORTANCE OF OBLIGATORY PRAYER AND FASTING)

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**WHAT ARE THE TWO KINDS
OF FASTING?**

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THE SPIRITUAL FASTING COMES FIRST, AND IS THE SOUL'S REFUSAL OR **DENIAL OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL ACTIONS AND HABITS** -- THIS IS THE IMPORTANT FASTING. THE **BODILY FASTING** OR ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD, IS A SIGN OR WITNESS TO THE INWARD FASTING, AND **IS OF NO VALUE BY ITSELF**. BUT WHEN **BOTH KINDS OF FASTING GO TOGETHER**, THEN THE EFFECT UPON THE SOUL IS AS "LIGHT UPON LIGHT." COMPILATIONS, BAHÁ'Í PRAYERS 9, P. 48)



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FASTING IS THE SOUL'S REFUSAL OR DENIAL OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL ACTIONS AND HABITS

What is Evil?

◆Abdu'l-Bahá. -- "Evil is imperfection. Sin is the state of man in the world of the baser nature, for in nature exist defects such as injustice, tyranny, hatred, hostility, strife: these are characteristics of the lower plane of nature. These are the sins of the world...." (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 177)

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What is the Evil One?

◆ Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self. The Evil One is he that hindereth the rise and obstructeth the spiritual progress of the children of men.

◆ (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 94)

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FASTING IS A PERIOD OF

PRAYER AND FASTING

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Fasting Prayer

"O God! as I am ***fasting from the appetites of the body*** and ***not occupied with eating and drinking***, even so ***purify and make holy my heart and my life*** from aught else save Thy Love, and ***protect and preserve my soul from self-passions and animal traits***. Thus may the ***spirit associate*** with the Fragrances of Holiness and ***fast from everything else save Thy mention.***"

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. IV, No.18, p. 305) 236 (print and frame)

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○ THOU SPIRITUAL FRIEND! THOU HAST ASKED THE
WISDOM OF PRAYER.

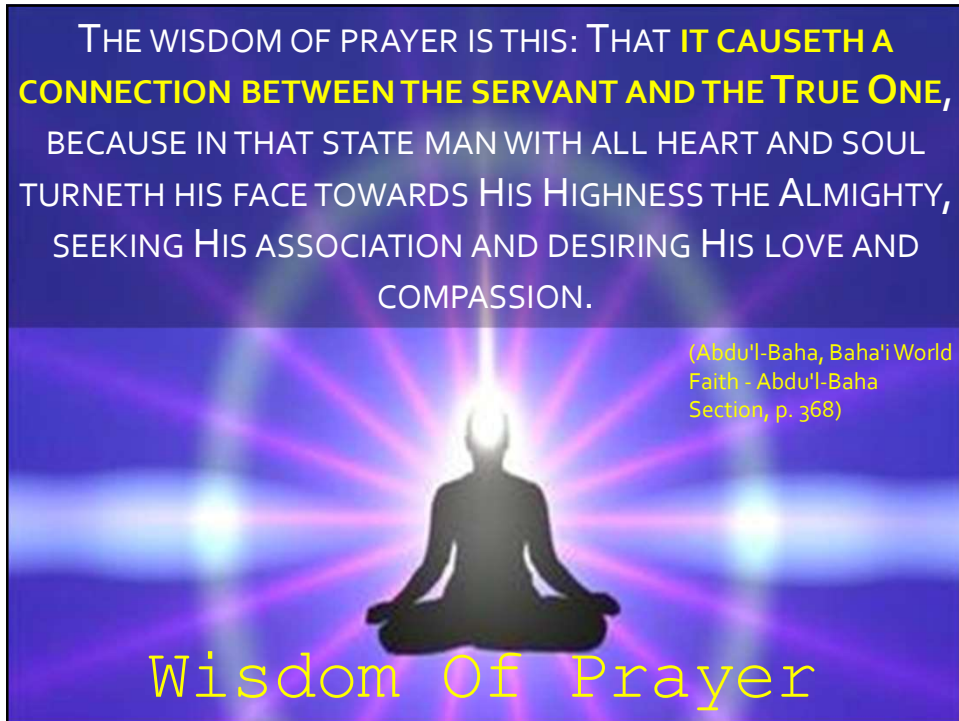
KNOW THOU THAT PRAYER IS **INDISPENSABLE** AND
OBLIGATORY, AND MAN UNDER NO PRETEXT
WHATSOEVER IS EXCUSED FROM PERFORMING THE
PRAYER UNLESS HE BE MENTALLY UNSOUND, OR AN
INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE PREVENT HIM.



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THE WISDOM OF PRAYER IS THIS: THAT **IT CAUSETH A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SERVANT AND THE TRUE ONE,** BECAUSE IN THAT STATE MAN WITH ALL HEART AND SOUL TURNETH HIS FACE TOWARDS HIS HIGHNESS THE ALMIGHTY, SEEKING HIS ASSOCIATION AND DESIRING HIS LOVE AND COMPASSION.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 368)

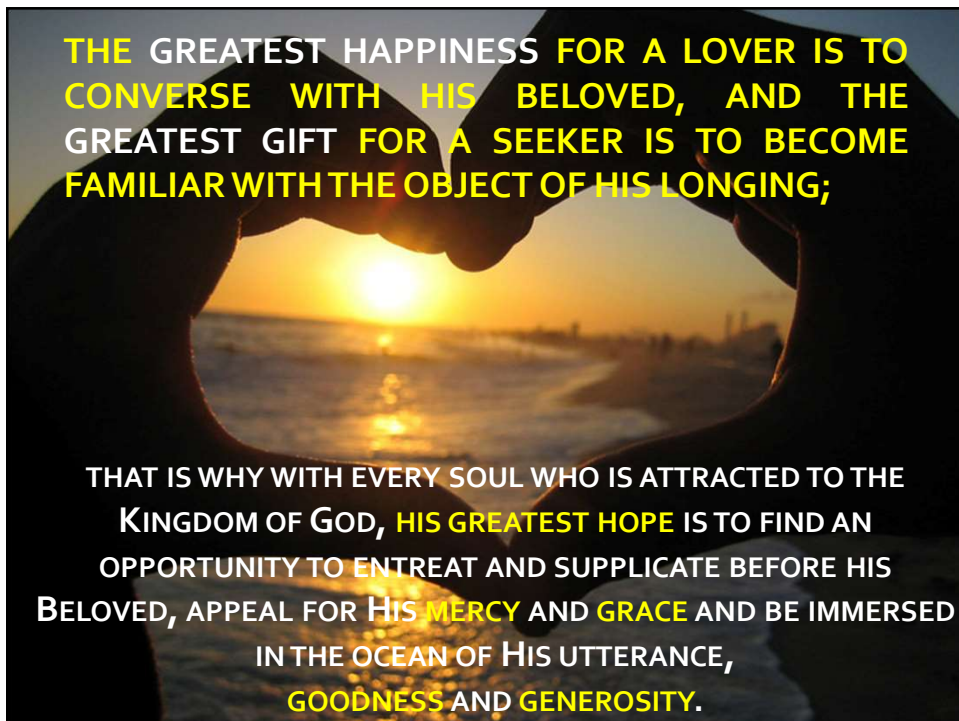


Wisdom Of Prayer

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THE GREATEST HAPPINESS FOR A LOVER IS TO CONVERSE WITH HIS BELOVED, AND THE GREATEST GIFT FOR A SEEKER IS TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE OBJECT OF HIS LONGING;

THAT IS WHY WITH EVERY SOUL WHO IS ATTRACTED TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, **HIS GREATEST HOPE** IS TO FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENTREAT AND SUPPLICATE BEFORE HIS BELOVED, APPEAL FOR HIS **MERCY** AND **GRACE** AND BE IMMERSSED IN THE OCEAN OF HIS UTTERANCE, **GOODNESS AND GENEROSITY.**

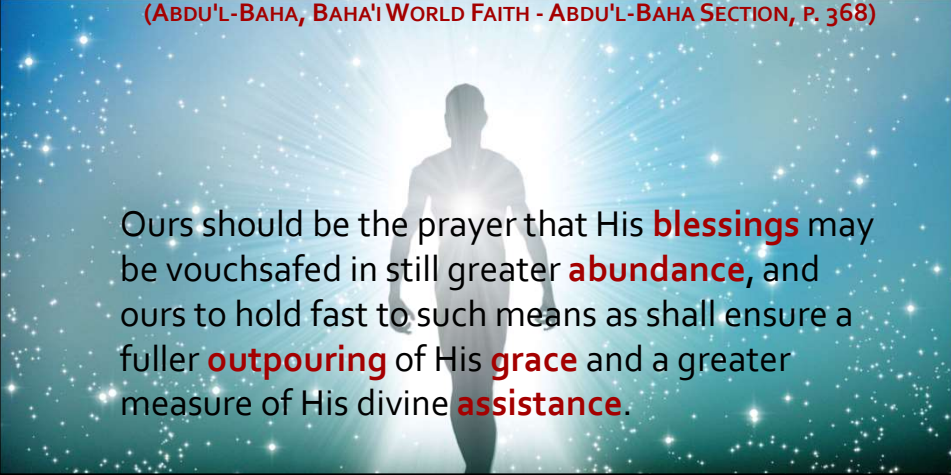


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Power Of Prayer

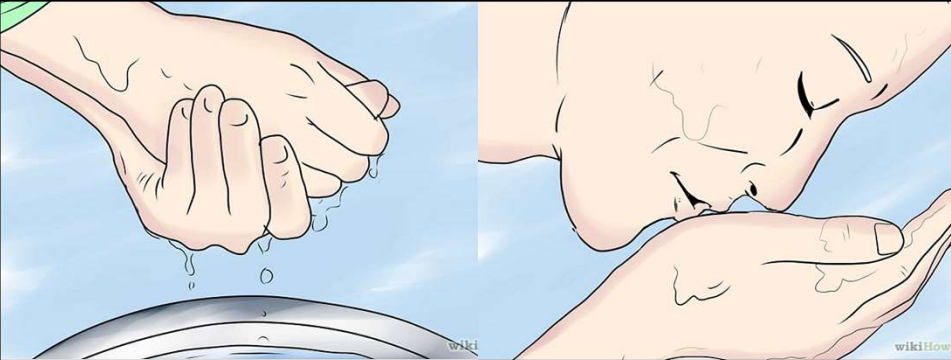
BESIDES ALL THIS, PRAYER AND FASTING IS THE CAUSE OF AWAKENING AND MINDFULNESS AND CONDUCTIVE TO PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION FROM TESTS....

(ABDU'L-BAHA, BAHAI WORLD FAITH - ABDU'L-BAHA SECTION, P. 368)



Ours should be the prayer that His **blessings** may be vouchsafed in still greater **abundance** , and ours to hold fast to such means as shall ensure a fuller **outpouring** of His **grace** and a greater measure of His divine **assistance** .

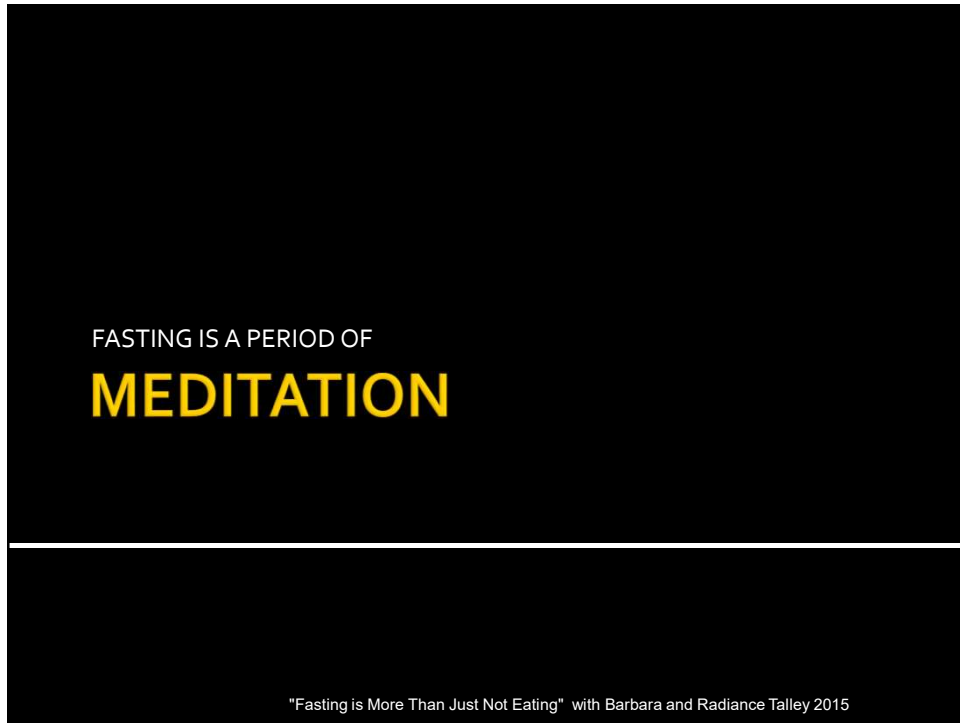
43



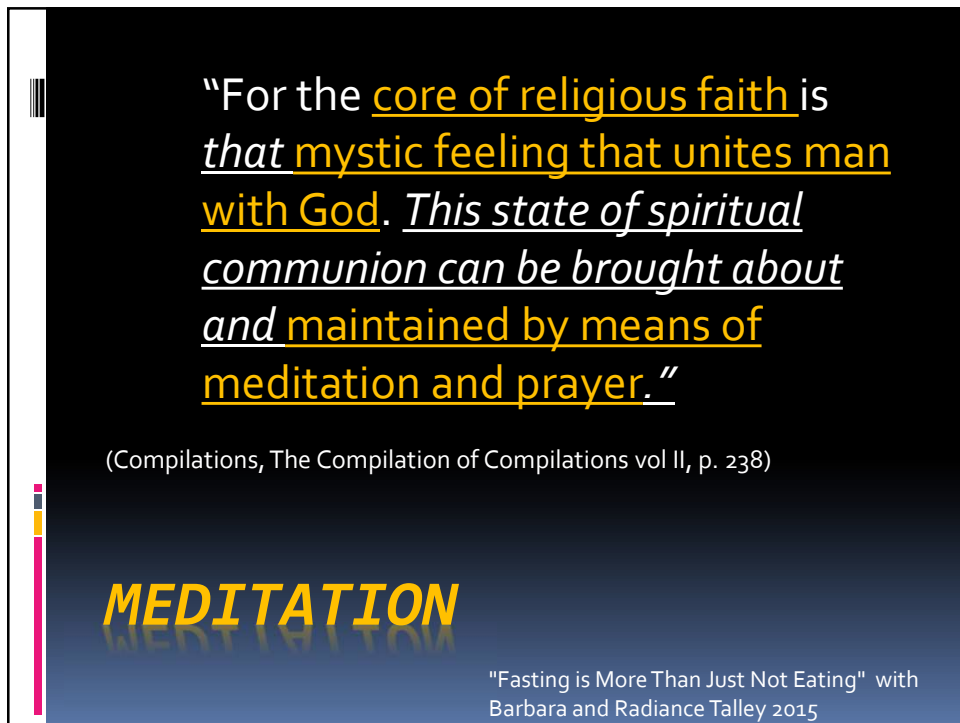
It hath been ordained that every believer in God, the Lord of Judgment, shall, each day, having washed his hands and then his face, seat himself and, turning unto God, repeat "Allah-u-Abha" ninety-five times. ... Such was the decree of the Maker of the Heavens... Perform ye, likewise, ablutions for the Obligatory Prayer; this is the command of God, the Incomparable, the Unrestrained.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 25)


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"You cannot apply the name 'man' to any being void of this faculty of meditation; without it he would be a mere animal, lower than the beasts."

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 174-175)

MEDITATION MAKES THE MAN

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One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship" must needs be observed.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 238)

MEDITATION

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**“THROUGH IT (MEDITATION) HE RECEIVES
THE BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”**

1. Likewise the Holy Spirit is the very cause of the life of man;
2. without the Holy Spirit he would have no intellect,
3. he would be unable to acquire his scientific knowledge by which his great influence over the rest of creation is gained.
4. The illumination of the Holy Spirit gives to man the power of thought, and enables him to make discoveries by which he bends the laws of nature to his will.”

(‘Abdu’l-Baha: *Paris Talks**, Pages: 174-175), (Abdu’l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 59)

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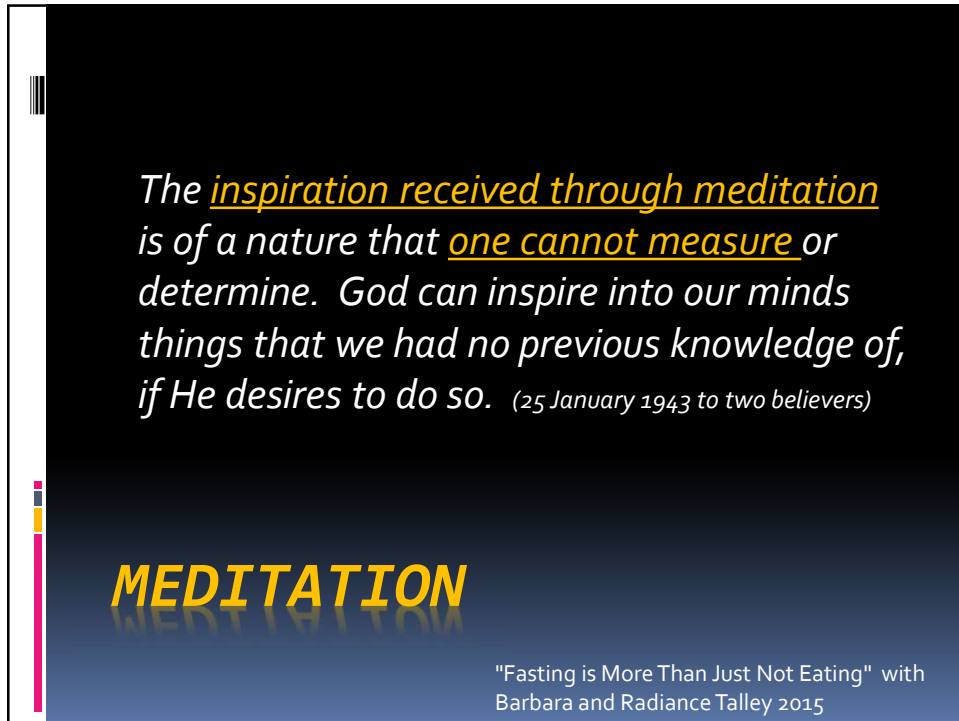
During Meditation

- This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature,
- [Meditation] discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God.
- Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

("Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912", pp. 174-76)

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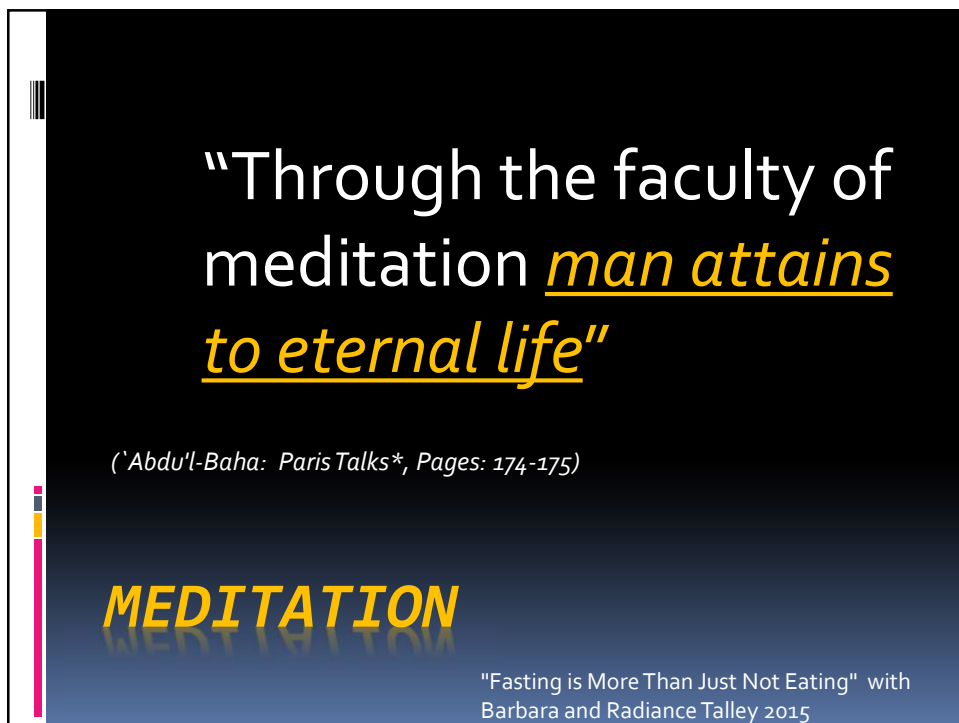


The inspiration received through meditation is of a nature that one cannot measure or determine. God can inspire into our minds things that we had no previous knowledge of, if He desires to do so. (25 January 1943 to two believers)

MEDITATION

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"Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life"

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 174-175)

MEDITATION

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"Through it (*meditation*)
he *receives* Divine
inspiration"

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Paris Talks**, Pages: 174-175)

MEDITATION

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The Faculty of Meditation

*O people of Baha! The faculty of meditation
is the depository of crafts, arts and sciences.
Exert yourselves, so that the gems of
knowledge and wisdom may proceed from
this ideal mine, and conduce to the
tranquility and union of the different nations
of the world.*

(*Compilations, Baha'i Scriptures, p. 151*)

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*The meditative faculty is **akin to the mirror**; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them.*

MEDITATIVE FACULTY

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"The reality of man is his thought, not his material body. The thought force and the animal force are partners. Although man is part of the animal creation, he possesses a power of thought superior to all other created beings.

POWER OF THOUGHT

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How Do You Meditate?

There are no set forms of meditation prescribed in the teachings, no plan, as such, for inner development. *The friends are urged - - nay enjoined -- to pray, and they also should meditate, but the manner of doing the latter is left entirely to the individual.*

(25 January 1943 to the believers)

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"Man has also spiritual powers: imagination, which conceives things; thought, which reflects upon realities; comprehension, which comprehends realities, memory, which retains whatever man imagines, thinks, and comprehends."

Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 298)
(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 317)

SPIRITUAL POWERS OF MAN

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1. Silence

- The sign of the intellect is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at once -- he cannot both speak and meditate."
- The essence of true safety is to observe silence, to look at the end of things and to renounce the world. (Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 156)
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 174-175)

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2. Privacy

- "It is striking how private and personal the most fundamental spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation are in the Faith.
- Bahá'ís do, of course, have meetings for devotions, as in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar or at Nineteen Day Feasts, but the daily obligatory prayers are ordained to be said in the privacy of one's chamber, and meditation on the Teachings is, likewise, a private individual activity, not a form of group therapy.
- (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 540)

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3. Focus Inward

- *"Through meditation doors of deeper knowledge and inspiration may be opened. Naturally, if one meditates as a Baha'i he is connected with the Source;... Meditation is very important, and the Guardian sees no reason why the friends should not be taught to meditate, **but they should guard against superstitions or foolish ideas creeping into it.**"*
- ***All the outside influences that surround the individual seem to have an intensely distracting effect, and it is a hard job to get the average person to do any deep thinking or even a little meditation on the problems facing him and the world at large***
- (Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, Page: 47)

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4. LOVE

Love Supplies the
Impulse to Meditate

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5. PURIFY THE MIND

In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects;

I now assure thee, O servant of God, *that if*

- thy mind become empty and pure from every mention and thought,
- and thy heart attracted wholly to the Kingdom of God,
- forgetting all else beside God and
- coming in communion with the Spirit of God,

then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with a power which will enable thee to penetrate all things, and

a dazzling spark which enlightens all sides,

a brilliant flame in the zenith of the heavens, will teach thee that which thou dost not know of the facts of the universe and of the divine doctrine.

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("Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá
in Paris in 1911-1912", pp. 174-76)

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6. Allah-u-Abha 95 Times

- It would seem that there are ... many believers who draw particular benefit from meditation. *The House of Justice suggests that for their private meditations they may wish to use the repetition of the Greatest Name, Allah-u-Abha, ninety-five times a day...* (Multiple Authors: Lights of Guidance, Page: 542)
 - *...repeat 'Allah-u-Abha' ninety-five times. ."* *Let all experience the spiritual enrichment brought to their souls by this simple act of worshipful meditation.*

▪ (The Universal House of Justice, 1999 Dec 28, Further Application of Devotional Laws)

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7. ASK QUESTIONS

It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed.

('Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 174-175)

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8. Our Outer Vision Does Not See

▪ ...in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight; when the power of insight is being used the outward power of vision does not see.

▪ *O MAN OF TWO VISIONS! Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the Beloved.*
(Baha'u'llah, *The Persian Hidden Words*)

▪ ("Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912", pp. 174-76)

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9. Characterized With Divine Attributes

- *Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man; they are like waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the inner light and characterized with divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.*

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10. Use the Words of God

- *He thinks it would be wiser for the Bahá'ís to use the Meditations given by Bahá'u'lláh, and not any set form of meditation recommended by someone else; but the believers must be left free in these details and allowed to have personal latitude in finding their own level of communion with God.*
- *With regard to your spiritual experiences, the Guardian has been very interested to share them. He would, however, urge you to always use and read, during your hours of meditation and prayer, the words revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.*

▪ (Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 237) (Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 243)

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Revealed Word Has Own Power

- *Do thou meditate on that* which We have revealed unto thee, that thou mayest discover the purpose of God, thy Lord, and the Lord of all worlds. *In these words the mysteries of Divine Wisdom have been treasured.*
- Of course prayer can be purely spontaneous, but many of the sentences and thoughts combined in Bahá'í writings of a devotional nature are easy to grasp, *and the revealed Word is endowed with a power of its own.*

(Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, p. 152)

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Power of the Word

- *Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instil new life into every human frame*
- *Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation*
- *Nothing short of the power of the Word of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit can ever succeed.*
- *The Word of God is the storehouse of all good, all power and all wisdom.*

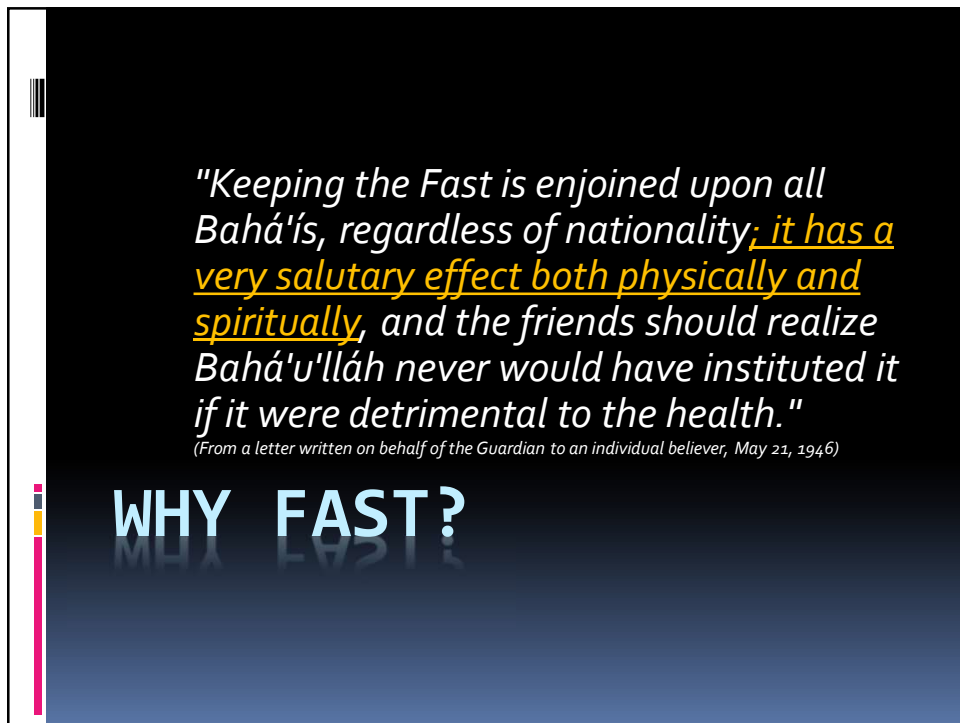
(Compilations, *The Compilation of Compilations* vol II, p. 265)

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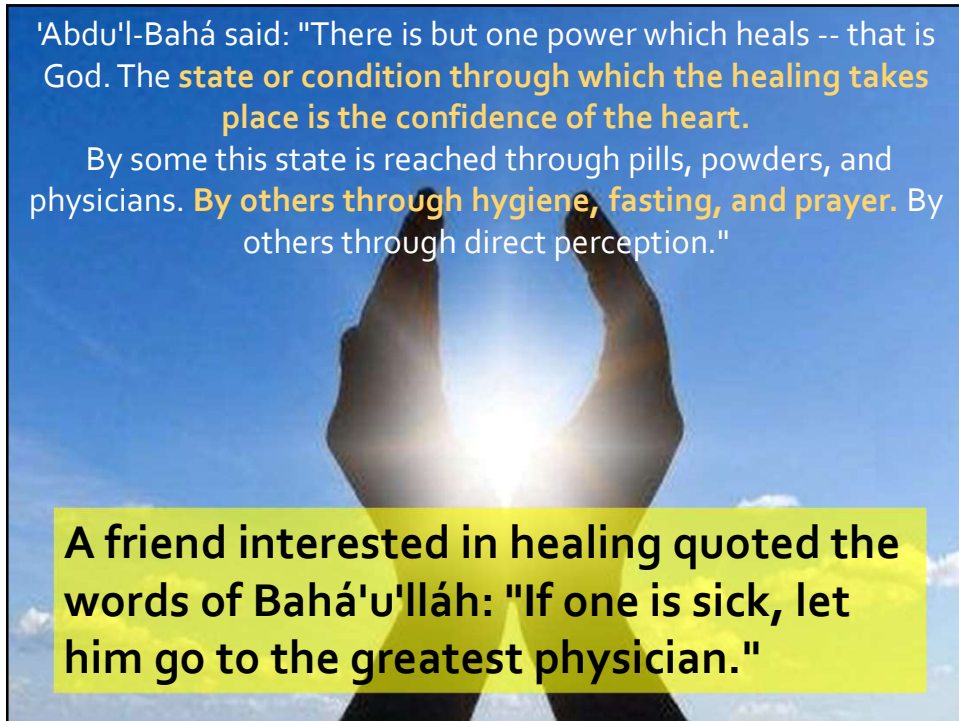


72

'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "There is but one power which heals -- that is God. The **state or condition through which the healing takes place is the confidence of the heart.**

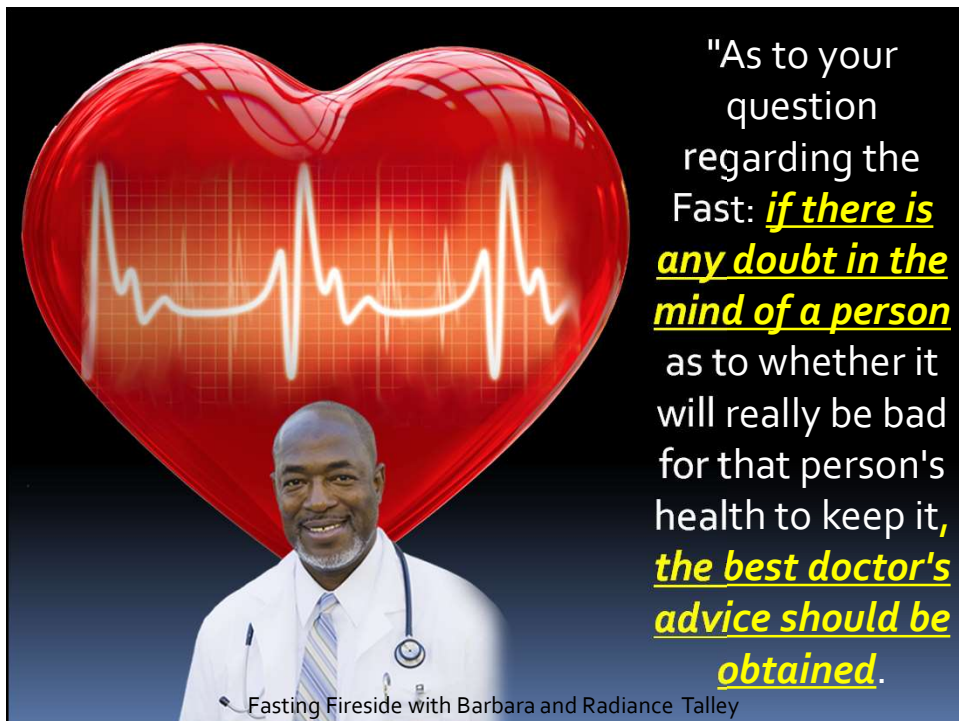
By some this state is reached through pills, powders, and physicians. **By others through hygiene, fasting, and prayer.** By others through direct perception."

A friend interested in healing quoted the words of Bahá'u'lláh: "If one is sick, let him go to the greatest physician."



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"As to your question regarding the Fast: **if there is any doubt in the mind of a person** as to whether it will really be bad for that person's health to keep it, **the best doctor's advice should be obtained.**



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- FAST AND "YOUR LIGHT WILL BREAK FORTH LIKE MORNING... [AND YOUR] HEALING SHALL SPRING FORTH SPEEDILY. AND THY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL GO BEFORE THEE; THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE THY REWARD. AND THE LORD SHALL GUIDE THEE CONTINUALLY, AND SATISFY THY SOUL IN DROUGHT..."

(KING JAMES BIBLE, ISAIAH 58:6:11)

**BEHOLD, IN THE DAY OF YOUR FAST YE FIND PLEASURE,
AND EXACT ALL YOUR LABOURS.**

75



Fasting
can change your life

- But generally speaking most people can keep it, anywhere in the world, with no detriment to their health. It is very good for the health and, once one forms the habit, each year it becomes easier to keep, unless one is rundown. No one is obliged to keep it if it really harms them.

"(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 14, 1947)

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On another occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá said with regard to the same subject, "**All that we see around us is the work of mind.** It is mind in the herb and in the mineral that acts on the human body, and changes its condition."(Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 95)

77

WHEN A PERSON BECOMES A BAHÁ'Í, ACTUALLY WHAT TAKES PLACE IS THAT THE SEED OF THE SPIRIT STARTS TO GROW IN THE HUMAN SOUL. THIS SEED MUST BE WATERED BY THE OUTPOURINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THESE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE RECEIVED THROUGH:

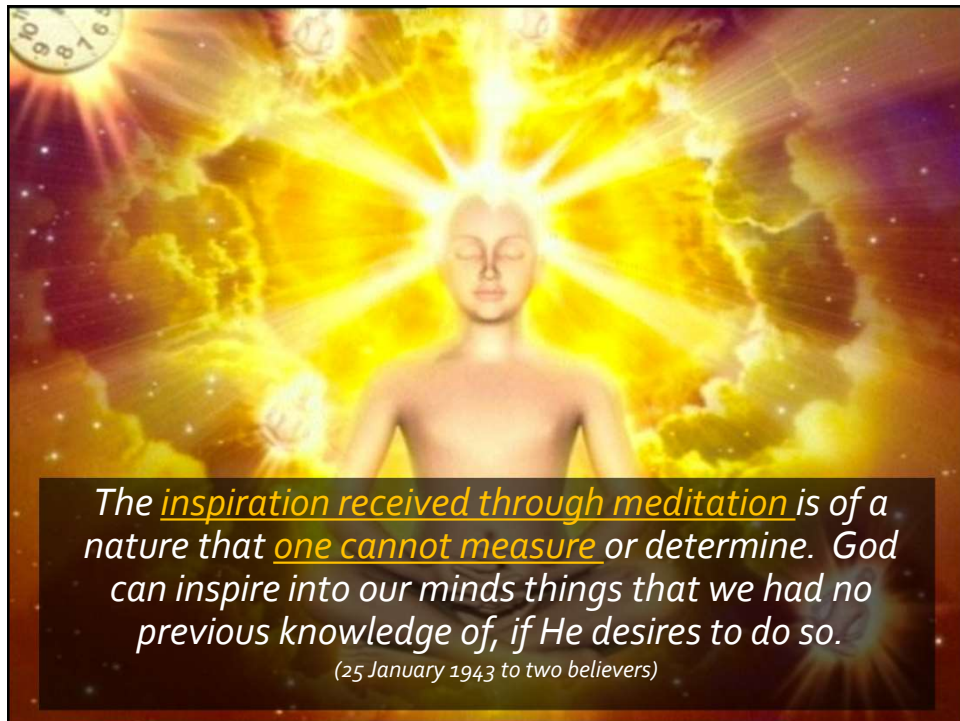
1. PRAYER,
2. MEDITATION
3. STUDY OF THE HOLY UTTERANCES AND
4. SERVICE TO THE CAUSE OF GOD....

■ (SHOGHI EFFENDI: THE IMPORTANCE OF DEEPENING, PAGES: 231-232)

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82


He should then meditate on the import of the Word, and finding its spiritual depths, pray for guidance and assistance. **But most important, after prayer is action. After one has prayed and meditated, he must arise**, relying fully on the guidance and confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh, to teach His Faith. Perseverance in action is essential...



(Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 18)

83

Some men and women glory in their exalted thoughts, but if these thoughts never reach the plane of action they remain useless: the power of thought is dependent on its manifestation in deeds.



I will say my Obligatory Prayers

I will meditate

I will Not Judge.

I will Not backbite

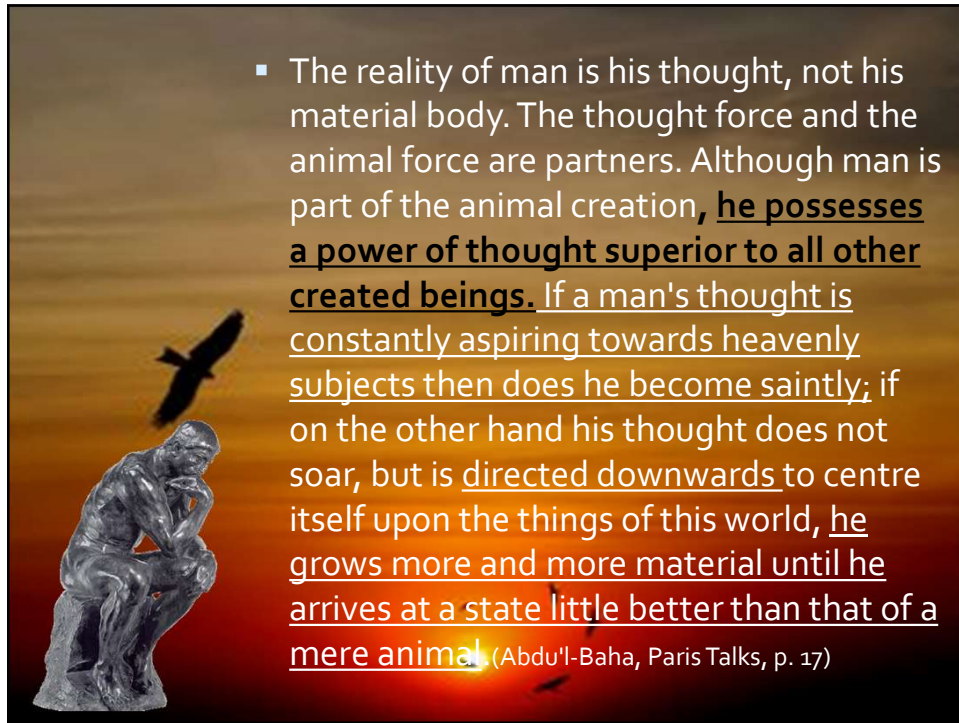
Dawn Prayers

I will Forgive.

I will Be truthful

I will Teach

84



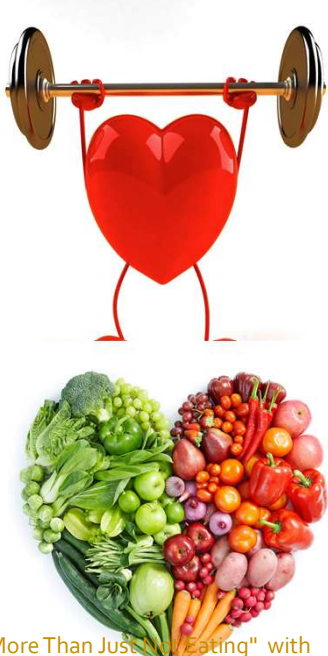
- The reality of man is his thought, not his material body. The thought force and the animal force are partners. Although man is part of the animal creation, he possesses a power of thought superior to all other created beings. If a man's thought is constantly aspiring towards heavenly subjects then does he become saintly; if on the other hand his thought does not soar, but is directed downwards to centre itself upon the things of this world, he grows more and more material until he arrives at a state little better than that of a mere animal. (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 17)

85

QUESTION: Concerning fasting and obligatory prayer by the sick.

ANSWER: In truth, I say that obligatory prayer and fasting occupy an exalted station in the sight of God. It is, however, in a state of health that their virtue can be realized. In time of ill-health it is not permissible to observe these obligations; such hath been the bidding of the Lord, exalted be His glory, at all times. Blessed be such men and women as pay heed, and observe His precepts. All praise be unto God, He who hath sent down the verses and is the Revealer of undoubted proofs!

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 134)



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EXEMPTION FROM FASTING

Travellers

- i. Provided the **journey exceeds 9 hours**.
- ii. Those **travelling on foot**, provided the journey exceeds 2 hours.
- iii. Those who **break their journey for less than 19 days**.
- iv. Those who break their journey during the Fast at a place where they are to stay 19 days are exempt from fasting only for the first three days from their arrival.

(Baha'u'llah, Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 38)

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EXEMPTION FROM FASTING

- (b) Those who are **ill**.
- (c) Those who are over **70**.
- (d) Women who are **with child**.
- (e) Women who are **nursing**.
- (f) Women in their courses, provided they perform their ablutions and repeat a specifically revealed verse 95 times a day between the noon of one day and the next. [**"Glorified be God, the Lord of Splendour and Beauty"**]
- (g) Those who are **engaged in heavy labour**, who are advised to show respect for the law by using discretion and restraint when availing themselves of the exemption.

(Baha'u'llah, Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 38)

88

OBLIGATORY PRAYER

(3) The Obligatory Prayers are binding on men and women on attaining the age of maturity, which is fixed at 15.

(4) Exemption from offering the Obligatory Prayers is granted to:

- (a) Those who are ill.
- (b) Those who are over 70.
- (c) Women in their courses provided they perform their ablutions^[4] and repeat a specifically revealed verse^[5] 95 times a day.

(Baha'u'llah, Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 35)

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OBLIGATORY PRAYER

1. The Obligatory Prayers should be offered individually.
2. It is preferable to offer the third (short) Obligatory Prayer while standing.
3. The choice of one of the three Obligatory Prayers is Permissible.

By "morning", "noon" and "evening", mentioned in connection with the Obligatory Prayers, is meant respectively the intervals

1. between sunrise and noon,
2. between noon and sunset, and
3. from sunset till two hours after sunset.

(Baha'u'llah, Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 36)

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