



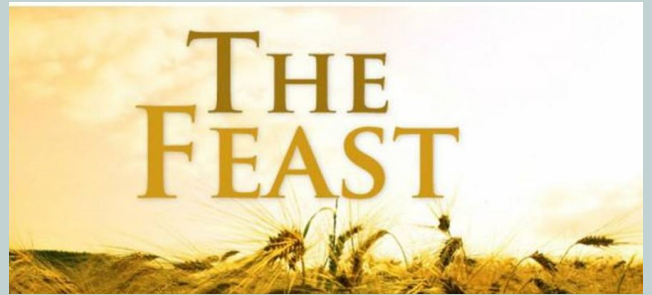
# one world

Newsletter of the Bahá'is of Marion County Florida

March 2019

## Nineteen Day Feast....why?

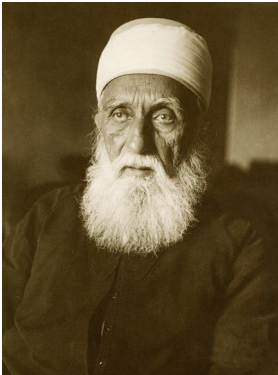
Once in every nineteen days, meetings are held in every locality by the Bahá'í community. Known as the "Nineteen Day Feast", these gatherings serve as the bedrock of Bahá'í community life. The Feast was ordained in the Kitab-i-Aqdas by Bahá'u'lláh; He counseled His followers to meet once every Bahá'í month, even if "only water be served". "This feast", states 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "is held to foster comradeship and love, to call God to mind and supplicate Him with contrite hearts, and to encourage benevolent pursuits." "It rejoiceth mind and heart", He writes in another passage. "If this feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endowed with a power that is not of this world."



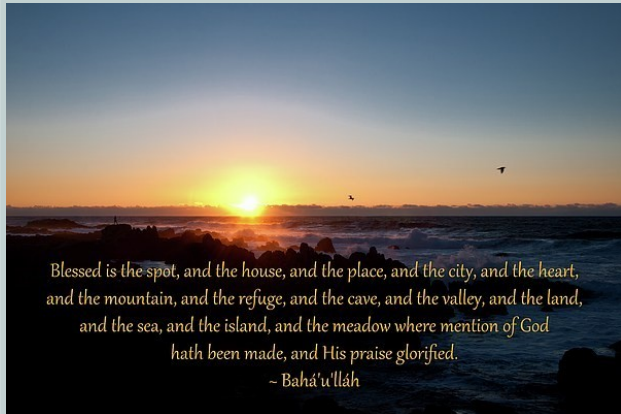
Feasts from around the world, clockwise from top: United Kingdom 1928; Mozambique; Western Samoa, 1996.

Although the Nineteen Day Feast may assume different outward forms in different parts of the world, reflecting the conditions and customs of the local community, its program always includes the reading of prayers, a portion devoted to sharing news and consulting on community affairs, and a portion for socializing and fellowship. The Nineteen Day Feast provides an opportunity for the community to gather and discuss its affairs, and for the Local Spiritual Assembly—the local governing council of the Bahá'í community—to keep abreast of the concerns of the community and strengthen its relationship with it. Consultation at these regular gatherings also creates a space for growing social consciousness to find constructive expression and often leads to the emergence of small groups engaged in action.

On a given day every month, then, in tens of thousands of localities in virtually every territory on the planet, groups of friends gather together in a spirit of love to pray, to think about their own spiritual growth, and to consult about their individual and collective efforts—modest though they may be—to improve the life of their communities. In each instance the consultations are guided by the same vision of a better world, and the participants—men and women, young and old alike—evinced a remarkable degree of unity, not only in their shared convictions about the fundamental principles that are to characterize this better world, but also in the methods and approaches that they adopt in their daily lives to contribute to its gradual realization.



# Why Cluster Reflection Meetings Are So Important



Cluster Reflection meetings are an important part of Baha'i community life now, but depending on the community you live in, attendance can sometimes be low and it's still something many communities are learning about, so I thought it would be interesting to look at the importance of these meetings and why we should make an effort to attend.

Plan. Act. Reflect. Repeat.

Farzam Arbab, in the foreword of 'Learning About Growth', states:

The sharing of experience is extremely valuable. Reflection on the dynamics of the efforts of others yields insights into the causes of crisis and victory in one's own endeavors.

The value of reflection is indisputable. As Baha'is and as a community however, its value requires more than mere acknowledgement: Reflection is one of the fundamental principles underlying the mode in which we operate.

In the document Farzam Abab prefaced with the abovementioned words, the story of the Colombian Baha'i community and their efforts to achieve large-scale expansion is told. It tells of their humble beginnings, their journey to bring about growth and the subsequent evolution of the Ruhi Institute.

Of their role as teachers and administrators of the Faith, it is described that, "the most they could expect from themselves was to engage wholeheartedly in an intensive plan of action and an accompanying process of reflection and consultation."<sup>2</sup>

Over time, the process of action accompanied by reflection and consultation became their method of learning and service, giving rise to the eventual development of course and educational materials that we now refer to as the [Ruhi Books](#). It is hard to imagine that something as comprehensive and powerful as the Ruhi Institute process could have been developed through anything less than a set of ideas put into practice, subjected to reflection and consultation, and then further modified.

Similarly, in our own efforts to reach out to the wider community, we operate in a cyclic – though not linear – modus. As the Universal House of Justice describes, a community ideally grows through three-month cycles of activity:

...the burst of expansion experienced as a result of intense action; the necessary period of consolidation during which increases in ranks are fortified; and the opportunities designated for all to reflect and plan.

Each stage of the cycle – expansion, consolidation, reflection and planning – is equally important, leading to the enhancement of the next and the effectiveness of the whole. The stage of reflection is to not only celebrate our accomplishments, but to analyze our challenges and learn from both to inform our plans for the next cycle.

Key to the progress of an intensive program of growth is the phase dedicated to reflection, in which the lessons learned in action are articulated and incorporated into plans for the next cycle of activity. Its principal feature is the reflection meeting — as much a time of joyous celebration as it is of serious consultation.



# Programs & Events

**Ayyám-i-Há** – Monday, February 25, sundown - March 1, sundown.

**Ayyam-i-Há Celebration** – Friday, March 1, 5PM, hosted by the Hutchens, 941-204-1406.

**Feast of 'Alá** – Friday, March 1, 7:00 PM, after the celebration. Hosted by the Hutchens. 941-204-1406  
Fast begins.

**Naw Ruz** – Wednesday, March 20, 2019, sunset, 7:30, Bahá'í New Year. Fast ends. To be celebrated with a social, separate from the Feast. Hosted by Josie Ramos, 352-653-0488.

**Feast of Bahá** – Thursday, March 21, 2019, before sunset, 7:00 PM, hosted by Alma Reece-aMBLINhHHHamblin, 860-256-7460.

**World Religion Fair** – Wednesday, March 27, Noon- 2:00PM, College of Central Florida, 3001 SW College Rd, Ocala, FL, 34474. For more information, call Josie Ramos, 3523-653-0488.

**Feast of Jalál** – Tues, April 9, 2019, 7:00PM (Daylight savings time started. All Feasts will be on the first day of the Bahá'í month before sunset.) Hosted by the Mejias, 352-875-5507

**Reflection Meeting** – Sunday, April 14, 2019, hosted by Kathy Morton, 1875 Chancey Way, The Villages, FL, 301-351-9507, Pot Luck, Noon – 1:00 PM (Pot Luck set up at 11:45 AM), Meeting, 1:15 – 3:00PM.

**First Day of Ridvan** – Elections, Sunday, April 21, 11:00 AM. Hosted by the Hutchens

**Feast of Jamál** - Monday, April 29, any time before sunset. Host needed.

**Ninth Day of Ridvan** - Tuesday, April 30, before sunset. Host needed.

Twelfth Day of Ridvan - Thursday, May 3, before sunset. Host needed.

## **Devotionals**

Josie Ramos and Marta – Call Josie for time and place. 352-653-0488

Joan Hutchens – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. 11:00AM to Noon.  
9920 SE 174 Pl Rd., Summerfield, FL, 941-204-1406 (cell)

Please let Joan know if you will be coming so she can inform the gate. Leave a voice mail message if no answer.

**Jr. Youth Classes** –Ocala, facilitated by Josie Ramos and Gisela Robles, please call Josie, 352-653-0488 for date and time.

**Institute Classes** –Book 1, Josie Ramos, Facilitator, please call her at 352-653-0488.



## Sumter County

**Baha'is Study Group** – second Thursday, Truman Rec Center. Villagers only.

**Firesides** – Third Saturdays of the month, 7:30pm. hosted by Toni and Ron Renna, 2399 Clearwater Run, The Villages, FL, 352-617-3560.

## Ocala

**Devotionals** – Gisela Robles. Please call for dates and time, 407-548-7226

## Nineteen Day Feasts for March 2019

### Feast of 'Alá ...Loftiness March 2 2019

Soon the month of “loftiness” begins. The word loftiness indicates elevation of character or spirit, extending high in the air, exalted in rank, dignity, and elevated in style, tone or sentiment. Perhaps we can discern different perspectives of loftiness in our reflections and meditations in this month. This blogpost gives a suggestion of readings for either the spiritual part of the Nineteen Day Feast or for personal reflection on the theme of loftiness during this month. In short, this compilation covers the Loftiness of God, His Word and His Cause, the loftiness of human beings and finally, a few quotations on the Fast as a means of attaining loftiness. Click [HERE](#) to read feast letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the US in English and [HERE](#) to read it in Spanish.

### Feast of Bahá...Splendor March 21 2019

First day of the month of Bahá (Splendour), the first month of the Badí' Calendar. The Badí' Calendar is a solar calendar consisting of 19 months of 19 days each (361 days), with the addition of “Intercalary Days” (four in ordinary years and five in leap years) to adjust the calendar to the solar year.

The Baha'i New Year, or Naw-Ruz, which means “new day” in Persian, is celebrated by Baha'is around the world each year on the date of the Spring Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere.



Naw-Ruz marks the end of the 19 day month of fasting, and it's a joyous time of celebration. It's also one of the Baha'i Holy Days on which work is to be suspended.

Naw-Ruz is also celebrated by Zoroastrians and often in parts of countries where branches of Shiite Islam can be found – though there's a difference between the Baha'i Holy Day of Naw-Ruz and the Persian holiday of Naw-Ruz, the theme of celebrating a new day remains the same. The Jewish festival of Purim is also said to have been adopted from the Persian New Year, and Naw-Ruz is celebrated a lot like the Christian Easter, with many symbols indicating spring and renewal.

The Bab called the first day of His new 19 day calendar “the Day of God”. The remaining eighteen days of the first month were associated with the eighteen Letters of the Living (the first 18 individuals who recognized the station of the Bab), hence the Bab's apostles imagined a celebra-

tion that would last nineteen days. Baha'u'llah adopted the new calendar proposed by the Bab, and the use of Naw-Ruz as a festival for those who observed the fast.

The most joyful time for a Naw-Ruz celebration is at sunset on the last day of the Fast. It seems almost directed by Baha'u'llah that it should be this way.

## Nah-Ruz video celebrating our NEW YEAR



This period of time is the Promised Age ... Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb ... The New Year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. – Abdu'l-Baha, Star of the West,

## Enjoy the movie:.... The Miller Prediction



**SAVE THE DATE**

# FLORIDA

Southern Flame  
*Bahá'í Summer School*

July 3-7

Life Enrichment Center  
4991 Picciola Rd.  
Fruitland Park, FL

Stay tuned for more information!

The wealth of the other world is nearness to God. Consequently it is certain that those who are near the Divine Court are allowed to intercede, and this intercession is approved by God. But intercession in the other world is not like intercession in this world: it is another thing, another reality, which cannot be expressed in words. If a wealthy man at the time of his death bequeaths a gift to the poor and miserable, and gives a part of his wealth to be spent for them, perhaps this action may be the cause of his pardon and forgiveness, and of his progress in the Divine Kingdom. Also a father and mother endure the greatest troubles and hardships for their children; and often when the children have reached the age of maturity, the parents pass on to the other world. Rarely does it happen that a father and mother in this world see the reward of the care and trouble they have undergone for their children. Therefore children, in return for this care and trouble, must show forth charity and beneficence, and must implore pardon and forgiveness for their parents. So you ought, in return for the love and kindness shown you by your father, to give to the poor for his sake, with greatest submission and humility implore pardon and remission of sins, and ask for the supreme mercy.

Abdu'l-Baha