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The Fast

# The Fast

*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 hath exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age, as a bounty from His Presence, and He is the Forgiving, the Generous. God hath granted you leave to prostrate yourselves on any surface that is clean, for We have removed in this regard the limitation that had been laid down in the Book; God, indeed, hath knowledge of that whereof ye know naught. Let him that findeth no water for ablution repeat five times the words "In the Name of God, the Most Pure, the Most Pure", and then proceed to his devotions. Such is the command of the Lord of all worlds. In regions where the days and nights grow long, let times of prayer be gauged by clocks and other instruments that mark the passage of the hours. He, verily, is the Expounder, the Wise.*

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp.22-23)

REGARDING THE vital character and importance of the Divine ordinances and laws, and the necessity of complete obedience to them by the believers, we thus read in the Gleanings, section LXXXVIII, p. 174 of UK edition:

*"Know verily that the essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinance prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation. Were His law to be such as to strike terror in the hearts of all that are in heaven and on earth, that law is naught but manifest justice. The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provoke in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive..."*

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.27-29)

**Times of sunrise and sunset during the period of the Fast**

MARCH	London	Bristol	Birmingham	Manchester	Newcastle	Glasgow	Belfast
2	6.43 17.42	6.53 17.52	6.52 17.49	6.54 17.49	6.54 17.44	7.06 17.53	7.11 18.02
3	6.41 17.44	6.51 17.50	6.50 17.50	6.52 17.51	6.51 17.47	7.03 17.56	7.08 17.04
4	6.39 17.46	6.49 17.47	6.47 17.52	6.50 17.52	6.49 17.49	7.01 17.58	7.06 17.06
5	6.37 17.48	6.47 17.58	6.45 17.54	6.47 17.54	6.46 17.51	6.58 18.00	7.03 18.08
6	6.35 17.50	6.45 17.59	6.43 17.56	6.45 17.56	6.44 17.53	6.56 18.02	7.01 18.10
7	6.33 17.51	6.42 18.01	6.41 17.58	6.43 17.58	6.41 17.55	6.53 18.04	6.58 18.12
8	6.30 17.53	6.40 18.03	6.38 17.59	6.40 18.00	6.39 17.57	6.50 18.06	6.56 18.14
9	6.28 17.55	6.38 18.05	6.36 18.01	6.38 18.02	6.36 17.59	6.48 18.08	6.54 18.16
10	6.26 17.57	6.36 18.06	6.34 18.03	6.36 18.04	6.34 18.00	6.45 18.10	6.51 18.18
11	6.24 17.58	6.33 18.08	6.31 18.05	6.33 18.06	6.31 18.02	6.43 18.12	6.49 18.20
12	6.21 18.00	6.31 18.10	6.26 18.07	6.31 18.07	6.29 18.04	6.40 18.14	6.46 18.22
13	6.19 18.02	6.29 18.12	6.27 18.08	6.28 18.09	6.26 18.06	6.38 18.16	6.44 18.24
14	6.17 18.03	6.27 18.13	6.24 18.10	6.26 18.11	6.24 18.08	6.35 18.18	6.41 18.26
15	6.15 18.05	6.24 18.15	6.22 18.12	6.24 18.13	6.21 18.10	6.32 18.20	6.39 18.28

16	6.12	18.07	6.22	18.17	6.20	18.14	6.21	18.15	6.19	18.12	6.30	18.23	6.36	18.30
17	6.10	18.08	6.20	18.18	6.17	18.16	6.19	18.17	6.16	18.14	6.27	18.25	6.34	18.31
18	6.08	18.10	6.18	18.20	6.15	18.17	6.16	18.19	6.14	18.16	6.24	18.27	6.31	18.33
19	6.06	18.12	6.15	18.22	6.13	18.19	6.14	18.20	6.11	18.18	6.22	18.29	6.29	18.35
20	6.03	18.14	6.13	18.23	6.10	18.21	6.11	18.22	6.09	18.20	6.19	18.31	6.26	18.37



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