

gatherings. For these Western Bahá'ís, 'Abd-al-Bahá linked the Nineteen Day Feast with the Lord's Supper ('Abd-al-Bahá, p. 149; II, p. 421), interpreting the Qur'anic reference to a banquet (ma'eda) descending from heaven (Qur'an 5:112-14) as indicating that this should be both a physical and spiritual repast. He emphasized in particular the creation of an atmosphere of unity and spirituality, calling it a "confluence of holy souls" (The Universal House of Justice, I, p. 429). However, in Iran, there were still dangers for the Bahá'ís from gathering in large numbers, at least in the early part of 'Abd-al-Bahá's ministry, and so 'Abd-al-Bahá continued Bahá'-Allah's instructions that the meetings of the Bahá'ís for prayers be in small groups only, and that they be on personal initiative, but he also indicated that they would eventually become formal community gatherings (Fazel Yazdi, I, pp. 353-54).

The next major development of the Nineteen Day Feast came with Shoghi Effendi's instructions in the early 1930s that, in addition to the devotional (prayers and readings from scripture) and social (food and conversation) sections of the feast, there should be an administrative section, where there would be consultation about the affairs of the community. Shoghi Effendi gave many other instructions about the feast, including: that it should be held, if possible, on the first day of the Bahá'í month; that in order to facilitate freedom of discussion during the administrative portion of the feast, only enrolled Bahá'ís may attend; that only scripture (mainly Bahá'í but also from the Qur'an and the Bible if desired) should be read in the devotional part, but messages from the Bahá'í institutions and other material may be read in the administrative section; and that music may form part of the devotional section. The local spiritual assembly (mahfel-e ruhani) is to be responsible for organizing the feasts, although it may delegate this task to individuals or committees. In areas where there is no spiritual assembly, the Bahá'ís may nevertheless hold feasts.

...

Read the rest of this article online at iranicaonline.org/articles/bahaism-xiv-nineteen-day-feast.

Bayt-al-'adl-e a'zam), the present world leadership of the Bahá'í faith, sees the Nineteen Day Feast as a continuation of human activities throughout the ages, which have brought people together in acts of devotion and festivity. It sees its significance in its combining all of the important processes of human life, the spiritual, the administrative, and the social; its being an activity in which all Bahá'ís can participate; and its role as the main way in which the local Bahá'í administrative institutions (local spiritual assemblies, mahfel-e ruhani) can keep close contact with their communities. Indeed, the feast should form a "dynamic link" between the individual Bahá'ís and the administrative structure of the Bahá'í community. It gives the administrative institutions an opportunity to communicate their plans to the community and, in the process of consultation, for the individual Bahá'ís to present their innovative ideas and constructive criticism. All of this is seen

by the Universal House of Justice as an important part of the process of building a unified community and progressing towards a global civilization. In addition, it has emphasized that great care should be given to the preparation of the locality for the feast, the choosing of the readings for it and the hospitality offered (The Universal House of Justice, I, pp. 419-22). While confirming Shoghi Effendi's ruling that the Nineteen Day Feast is primarily for enrolled Bahais, it has stated that, should individuals who are not Bahais attend, the feast can continue with the administrative portion modified to take account of this.

At present in the Bahai world, the Nineteen Day Feast is held within the above framework but with a wide variety of local cultural features. In some parts of the world, music and singing form a major part of the program; in other parts they do not feature at all. In smaller communities, the Bahais gather in each other's homes, and in larger communities, they gather at the local Bahai center. As communities grow even larger, there can be several Nineteen Day Feasts held in different parts of a locality.

Bibliography:

Sources.

?Abd-al-Baha?, Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas (letters tr. from Persian), 3 vols., Chicago, 1909-16.

Baha?-Allah, Ketab-e aqdas, tr., as The Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book, Haifa, 1992.

Idem, Questions and Answers, tr. in idem, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book, Haifa, 1992, pp. 105-41.

Entešarat-e lajna-ye melli-e mahfuza-ye atar-e amr, Photocopied collection of the manuscripts in the National Bahai Archives of Iran.

?Abd-al-Hamid Ešraq Kavari, comp., Ganjina-ye hodud wa ahkam: estekraj as alwah wa atar-e mobaraka dar bara-ye ahkam-e dianat-e Baha?i, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 156-58.

Asad-Allah Fazel Mazandarani, Amr wa kalq, 4 vols. in 2, Langenhain, Germany, 1986, III, pp. 138-40.

The Universal House of Justice, The Compilation of Compilations, 2 vols, Mona Vale NSW, Australia, 1991; "Nineteen Day Feast," I, pp. 417-58.

Fazel Yazdi (?Ali Momtazi), Manahij al-ahkam, 2 vols., privately distributed as vol. 4-5 of a photocopied collection of the Bahai National Archives of Iran, 132 B.E./1975.

Studies.

Christopher Buck, "Nineteen-Day Feast (Bahá'í)," in J Gordon Melton, James A Beverley, Christopher Buck, and Constance A Jones, eds., Religious Celebrations: An Encyclopedia of Holidays, Festivals, Solemn Observances, and

Spiritual Commemorations, 2 vols., Santa Barbara, CA, II, pp. 641-45.

Hari Docherty, "The Nineteen Day Feast: Organic Change through A Confluence of Holy Souls," unpub. paper presented at the Baha'i Studies Seminar, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, United Kingdom, December 1989.

Moojan Momen, "Early Relations between Christian Missionaries and the Bahá'í Faith," in idem, ed., Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History I, Los Angeles, 1982, pp. 49-82.

Robert Stockman, The Baha'i Faith in America, 2 vols., Oxford, 1995.

John Walbridge, "Nineteen Day Feast," in idem, Sacred Acts, Sacred Space, Sacred Time, Oxford, 1996, pp. 206-12.

(Moojan Momen)

Originally Published: September 3, 2014

Last Updated: September 3, 2014

Cite this entry:

Moojan Momen, "BAHAISM xiv. Nineteen Day Feast," Encyclopædia Iranica, online edition, 2014, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bahaism-xiv-nineteen-day-feast> (accessed on 03 September 2014).

-->

METADATA

Views6271 views since posted 2016-02-14; last edit 2016-02-15 10:35 UTC;

previous at archive.org.../momen_nineteen_day_feast

Language

English

Permission

fair use

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/4673

Citation: ris/4673

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA
Compilations-personal
Documents
East-asia
Encyclopedia
Essays
Etc
Excerpts
Fiction
Glossaries
Guardian
Histories
Introductory
Letters
Maps
Music
Newspapers
NSA-documents
NSA-letters
Personal
Pilgrims
Poetry
Presentations
Resources
Reviews
Scripts
Software
Statistics
Study
Talks
Theses
Transcripts
Translations
UHJ-documents
UHJ-letters
Video
Visual
Writings

home

sitemap

series

chronology

search:
author

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Nineteen Day Feast (Used by permission of the curator)