

The Baha'i Calendar

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The Baha'i Calendar, also called the Badi calendar was established by the Bab in the Kitab-i-Asma and approved by Baha'u'llah, who stated that it should start in 1844 AD (AH1260).

Holy Days

The Year

It is based on the solar year of 365 days, five hours and some fifty minutes. Each year is divided into nineteen months of nineteen days each with four Intercalary Days (five in a leap year), called Ayyam-i-Ha which Baha'u'llah specified should precede the nineteenth month. New Year's Day (Naw Ruz) falls on the Spring Equinox. This usually occurs on 21 March but if the Equinox falls after sunset on 21 March, Naw Ruz is to be celebrated on 22 March because the Baha'i day begins at sunset.

The Months

The names of the months in the Baha'i (Badi) calendar were given by the Bab, who drew them from the nineteen names of God invoked in a prayer said during the month of fasting in Shi'ih Islam. They are:

1. Baha - Splendour - 21 March - 8 April
2. Jalal - Glory - 9 April - 27 April
3. Jamal - Beauty - 28 April - 16 May
4. 'Azamat - Grandeur - 17 May - 4 June
5. Nur - Light - 5 June - 23 June
6. Rahmat - Mercy - 24 June - 12 July
7. Kalimat - Words - 13 July - 31 July
8. Kamal - Perfection - 1 August - 19 August
9. Asma' - Names - 20 August - 7 September
10. 'Izzat - Might - 8 September - 26 September
11. Mashiyat - Will - 27 September - 15 October
12. 'Ilm - Knowledge - 16 October - 3 November
13. Quadrat - Power - 4 November - 22 November
14. Qawl - Speech - 23 November - 11 December
15. Masa'il - Questions - 12 December - 30 December
16. Sharaf - Honour - 31 December 18 January
17. Sultan - Sovereignty - 19 January - 6 February
18. Mulk - Dominion - 7 February - 25 February
19. 'Ala - Loftiness - 2 March - 20 March

The Days

The days of the Baha'i week are;

1. Jalal - Glory (Saturday)
2. Jamal - Beauty (Sunday)
3. Kamal - Perfection (Monday)
4. Fidal - Grace (Tuesday)
5. 'Idal - Justice (Wednesday)
6. Istijlal - Majesty (Thursday)
7. Istiqlal - Independence (Friday)

The Baha'i day of rest is Istiqlal (Friday) and the Baha'i day begins and ends at sunset.

Each of the days of the month is also given the name of one of the attributes of God. the names are the same as those of the nineteen months; thus Naw-Ruz, the first day of the first month, would be considered the 'day of Baha of the month Baha'. If it fell on a Saturday, the first day of the Baha'i week, it would also be the 'day of jalal'.

The Cycles (Vahid)

In His Writings, revealed in Arabic, the Bab divided the years following the date of His Revelation into cycles of nineteen years each.

Each cycle of nineteen years is called a Vahid; nineteen cycles constitute a period called Kull-i-Shay

The names of the years in each cycle are:

1. Alif - The Letter "A"
2. Ba - The letter "B"
3. Ab - Father
4. Dal - The letter "D"
5. Bab - Gate
6. Vav - The letter "V"
7. Abad - Eternity
8. Jad - Generosity
9. Baha - Splendour
10. Hubb - Love
11. Bahhaj - Delightful
12. Javab - Answer
13. Ahad - Single
14. Vahhab - Bountiful
15. Vidad - Affection
16. Badi - Beginning
17. Bahi - Luminous
18. Abha - Most Luminous
19. Vahid - Unity

Ayyam-i-Ha

Literally, Days of Ha (i.e. the letter Ha, which in the abjad system has the numerical value of 5). Intercalary Days. The four days (five in a leap year)

before the last month of the Baha'i year, 'Ala', which is the month of fasting. Baha'u'llah designated the Intercalary days as Ayyam-i-Ha in the Kitab-i-Aqdas and specified when they should be observed; the Bab left this undefined. The Ayyam-i-Ha are devoted to spiritual preparation for the fast, hospitality, feasting, charity and gift giving.

The Holy Days

Naw Ruz

Literally, New Day. The Baha'i New Year. Like the ancient Persian New Year, it occurs on the spring equinox, which generally falls on 21 March. If the equinox falls after sunset on 21 March, Naw Ruz is celebrated on 22 March, since the Baha'i day begins at sunset. For the present, however, the celebration of Naw Ruz is fixed on 21 March. In the Baha'i calendar, Naw Ruz falls on the day of Baha of the month of Baha.

The Festival of Naw Ruz marks the end of the month of fasting and is a joyous time of celebration. It is a Baha'i Holy Day on which work is to be suspended.

Why a new Calendar?

Every new religion has its own calendar and the Baha'i Faith is no different.

The Gregorian calendar currently in use in the west is quite unscientific, as the "months" are a throwback to the days when people used the phases of the moon to mark the passage of time (the moon goes through its phases in 29 days). "Month" may be considered short for "moonth". The names of our months were assigned to show respect to various Roman deities and emperors, ie., June for the goddess Juno, July for Julius Caesar, August for Augustus Caesar. September, October, November, and December mean "7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th" as they were the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th months originally. So why are we still showing our respect for Roman Emperors? Isn't it time to adopt a calendar based on the Sun, rather than the moon? And instead of honoring ancient deities, the Baha'i months are named for attributes of God.

Similarly, our days of the week are named for attributes of the one true God, instead of honoring the sun god, moon god and mythological gods such as Woden, Thor, and Saturn. Judge objectively for yourself which calendar is more appropriate for today.