

Quotations for the 12 Days of Ridvan

1. Bahá'u'lláh had been in Baghdad for ten years. Fearing that His growing acclaim would re-ignite popular enthusiasm in Iran for the new religion, the regime of the Shah successfully pressed the Ottoman authorities to send Him farther away. In April 1863, before leaving Baghdad for Constantinople (Istanbul), Bahá'u'lláh and His companions camped in a garden on the banks of the Tigris River for twelve days. Bahá'u'lláh told these few friends that He was the Promised One foretold by the Báb — foretold, indeed, in all the world's scriptures. The most joyous of Bahá'í holy days is the Ridván Festival, which celebrates the anniversary of those twelve days. ([source](#))

“Verily, all created things were immersed in the sea of purification when, on that first day of Ridván, We shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of Our most excellent Names and Our most exalted Attributes. This, verily, is a token of My loving providence, which hath encompassed all the worlds. Consort ye then with the followers of all religions, and proclaim ye the Cause of your Lord, the Most Compassionate; this is the very crown of deeds, if ye be of them who understand.”

(Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Page: 47)

2. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has described how, upon His arrival in the garden, Bahá'u'lláh declared His station to those of His companions who were present, and announced with great joy the inauguration of the Festival of Ridván. Sadness and grief vanished and the believers were filled with delight at this announcement. Although Bahá'u'lláh was being exiled to far-off lands and knew the sufferings and tribulations which were in store for Him and His followers, yet through this historic Declaration He changed all sorrow into blissful joy and spent the most delightful time of His ministry in the Garden of Ridván. Indeed, in one of His Tablets, He has referred to the first day of Ridván as the 'Day of supreme felicity', and has called on His followers to 'rejoice, with exceeding gladness' in remembrance of that day. (Taherzadeh)

3. The manner of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission is not clear, neither is the identity of all who heard Him. One thing, however, is clear. During His ten-years' sojourn in Iraq, although Bahá'u'lláh had alluded to his station, and identified Himself with the utterances of God revealed in His tablets, He had never designated Himself as 'Him Whom God shall make manifest.' It was in the Garden of Ridván that, in the course of His Declaration, He unequivocally did so, announcing Himself as the one Whose advent the Báb had proclaimed, for Whose sake He had sacrificed Himself and for Whom He had established a covenant with His followers. That day was one of the most eventful in the life of Bahá'u'lláh. The whole day He was occupied with important affairs, which culminated in the Declaration of His Mission – the most momentous event of His ministry. (Taherzadeh)

4. Of the exact circumstances attending that epoch-making Declaration we, alas, are but scantily informed. The words Bahá'u'lláh actually uttered on that occasion, the manner of His Declaration, the reaction it produced, its impact on Mírzá Yaḥyá, the identity of those who were privileged to hear Him, are shrouded in an obscurity which future historians will find it difficult to penetrate. The fragmentary description left to posterity by His chronicler Nabíl is one of the very few authentic records we possess of the memorable days He spent in that garden. “Every day,” Nabíl has related, “ere the hour of dawn, the gardeners would pick the roses which lined the four avenues of the garden, and would pile them in the center of the floor of His blessed tent. So great would be the heap that when His companions gathered to drink their morning tea in His presence, they would be unable to see each other across it. All these roses Bahá'u'lláh would, with His own hands, entrust to those whom He dismissed from His presence every morning to be delivered, on His behalf, to His Arab and Persian friends in the city.” (God Passes By)



5. "One night," he (Nabil) continues, "the ninth night of the waxing moon, I happened to be one of those who watched beside His blessed tent. As the hour of midnight approached, I saw Him issue from His tent, pass by the places where some of His companions were sleeping, and begin to pace up and down the moonlit, flower-bordered avenues of the garden. So loud was the singing of the nightingales on every side that only those who were near Him could hear distinctly His voice. He continued to walk until, pausing in the midst of one of these avenues, He observed: 'Consider these nightingales. So great is their love for these roses, that sleepless from dusk till dawn, they warble their melodies and commune with burning passion with the object of their adoration. How then can those who claim to be afire with the rose-like beauty of the Beloved choose to sleep?' For three successive nights I watched and circled round His blessed tent. Every time I passed by the couch whereon He lay, I would find Him wakeful, and every day, from morn till eventide, I would see Him ceaselessly engaged in conversing with the stream of visitors who kept flowing in from Baghdád. Not once could I discover in the words He spoke any trace of dissimulation." (God Passes By)

6. As to the significance of that Declaration let Bahá'u'lláh Himself reveal to us its import. Acclaiming that historic occasion as the "Most Great Festival," the "King of Festivals," the "Festival of God," He has, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, characterized it as the Day whereon "all created things were immersed in the sea of purification," whilst in one of His specific Tablets, He has referred to it as the Day whereon "the breezes of forgiveness were wafted over the entire creation." (God Passes By)

7. "Rejoice, with exceeding gladness, O people of Bahá!", He, in another Tablet, has written, "as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendors of His Name, the All-Merciful... Were We to reveal the hidden secrets of that Day, all that dwell on earth and in the heavens would swoon away and die, except such as will be preserved by God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Such is the inebriating effect of the words of God upon the Revealer of His undoubted proofs that His pen can move no longer." And again: "The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching....(God Passes By)

8. The Day-Star of Blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our Name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the Kingdom of the Name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the Name of Thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens.... Take heed lest anything deter Thee from extolling the greatness of this Day—the Day whereon the Finger of Majesty and Power hath opened the seal of the Wine of Reunion, and called all who are in the heavens and all who are on earth.... This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: 'Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the footstool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne' ...Say ... He it is Who hath laid bare before you the hidden and treasured Gem, were ye to seek it. He it is who is the One Beloved of all things, whether of the past or of the future." (God Passes By)

9. And yet again: "Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridván and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the Garden of Delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise... Within this Paradise, and from the heights of its loftiest chambers, the Maids of Heaven have cried out and shouted: 'Rejoice, ye dwellers of the realms above, for the fingers of Him Who is the Ancient of Days are ringing, in the name of the All-Glorious, the Most Great Bell, in the midmost heart of the heavens. The hands of bounty have borne round the cups of everlasting life. Approach, and quaff your fill.'" (God Passes By)



10. The Festival of Ridván is come and the splendour of the light of God is shining from the invisible horizon of His mercy. The overflowing grace of the Lord of oneness is pouring down copiously from the unseen world and the glad-tidings of the Kingdom are coming in from all countries. The resplendent morn that betokens the advancement of the Cause of God and heralds the exaltation of His Word is dawning in every region. Praise be to God that the fame of the Ancient Beauty - may my life be offered up for His loved ones - has been noised abroad in the world and the glory of His Cause is spread far and wide throughout the East and the West. These joyous developments will indeed gladden the hearts of His loved ones.

(Compilations, Bahiyyih Khanum, p112)

11. And finally: "Forget the world of creation, O Pen, and turn Thou towards the face of Thy Lord, the Lord of all names. Adorn, then, the world with the ornament of the favors of Thy Lord, the King of everlasting days. For We perceive the fragrance of the Day whereon He Who is the Desire of all nations hath shed upon the kingdoms of the unseen and of the seen the splendors of the light of His most excellent names, and enveloped them with the radiance of the luminaries of His most gracious favors, favors which none can reckon except Him Who is the Omnipotent Protector of the entire creation."

(God Passes By)

12. The departure of Bahá'u'lláh from the Garden of Ridván, at noon, on the 14th of Dhi'l-Qádir 1279 A.H. (May 3, 1863), witnessed scenes of tumultuous enthusiasm no less spectacular, and even more touching, than those which greeted Him when leaving His Most Great House in Baghdád. "The great tumult," wrote an eyewitness, "associated in our minds with the Day of Gathering, the Day of Judgment, we beheld on that occasion. Believers and unbelievers alike sobbed and lamented. The chiefs and notables who had congregated were struck with wonder. Emotions were stirred to such depths as no tongue can describe, nor could any observer escape their contagion." Mounted on His steed, a red roan stallion of the finest breed, the best His lovers could purchase for Him, and leaving behind Him a bowing multitude of fervent admirers, He rode forth on the first stage of a journey that was to carry Him to the city of Constantinople. "Numerous were the heads," Nabíl himself a witness of that memorable scene, recounts, "which, on every side, bowed to the dust at the feet of His horse, and kissed its hoofs, and countless were those who pressed forward to embrace His stirrups." "How great the number of those embodiments of fidelity," testifies a fellow-traveler, "who, casting themselves before that charger, preferred death to separation from their Beloved! Methinks, that blessed steed trod upon the bodies of those pure-hearted souls." "He (God) it was," Bahá'u'lláh Himself declares, "Who enabled Me to depart out of the city (Baghdád), clothed with such majesty as none, except the denier and the malicious, can fail to acknowledge." These marks of homage and devotion continued to surround Him until He was installed in Constantinople. (God Passes By)