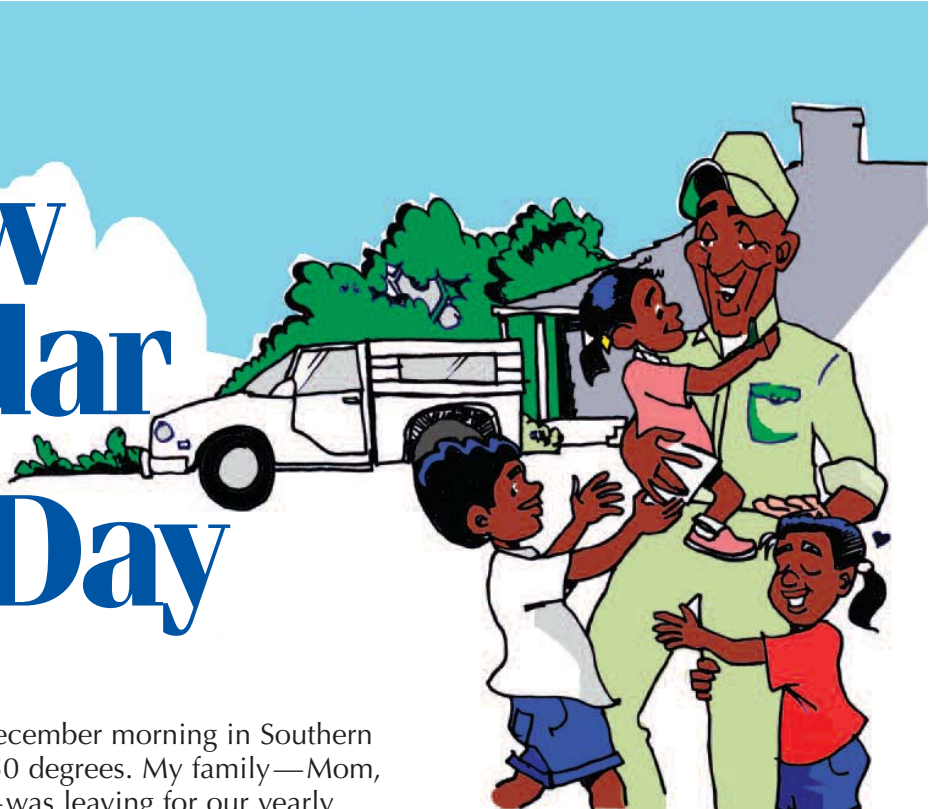


The number of months in a year, appointed in the Book of God, is nineteen. Of these the first hath been adorned with this Name [Bahá] which overshadoweth the whole of creation.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 127, p. 64

Illustrated by Ed Phillips

A New Calendar for a New Day



It was a beautiful December morning in Southern California, blue skies and 50 degrees. My family—Mom, Dad, Lua, Justin, and me—was leaving for our yearly vacation to Lake Arrowhead. Our family loves the mountains, and this year I knew it was going to snow.

We still needed to pick up Grandfather. He always goes to Lake Arrowhead with us. When we got to Grandfather's house, he was standing beside his small white pick-up truck. It had a camper shell on the back, and we loved riding in it. Grandfather had decided that he wanted to drive up to Lake Arrowhead this year. My mother tried to talk him out of it, but he wasn't listening. He was driving! We thought how much fun it would be if we rode in the truck all the way up the mountain. Grandfather loved to tell stories, and we loved to just talk to him. So all three of us kids got out of our van and into the back of Grandfather's truck.

*Written by Joannie Yuille
Illustrated by Cam Herth*

As we started our trip, I wondered why my mom didn't want Grandfather to drive. It seemed weird. We sat in the back of the truck talking with each other and not paying much attention to anything else until we got to the bottom of the mountain and started our climb up to Lake Arrowhead. It was a 20-minute ride on a one-lane winding road. Going up the mountain, you drive on the "cliff" side. I always thought it was a little scary but never told anyone.

My little sister, Lua, started talking about her birthday. It was just a few days away. Then she started talking about Grandfather's birthday. It was five days after hers on December 25. Grandfather took his eyes from the road and turned to look at Lua. She said, "Grandfather, the year is almost over, huh?"

I thought, "We're on this winding mountain road—what is Grandfather doing?" And then I remembered he always looks around when he talks, and he tells stories with his hands.

"Well," Grandfather said in his deep voice, "The Bahá'í year won't be over until March."

He didn't seem to look back at the road until Lua replied, "Oh yeah, Bahá'u'lláh gave us a new calendar." But he turned back around as Lua asked a question, "Grandfather, why did Bahá'u'lláh give the world a new calendar?"

Grandfather looked back at us as he answered, "It was really the Báb Who gave it to us. It is called the Badí' calendar."

I thought I'd better say something so that Grandfather wouldn't continue to talk to us. I added that revealing a new calendar was a way for the world to know the importance of the Báb's Revelation. I looked over at Justin for help—his eyes were wide and he was clutching the side of the truck. I think he was recovering from Lua's first question.

Justin knew what I needed, so he said, "Yeah, yeah, uh, the Báb explained that this new calendar would be accepted by 'Him Whom God shall make manifest.'" He then glanced at me for approval.



Then Lua shouted, “That’s Bahá’u’lláh!”

Grandfather took his hands off the steering wheel for what seemed like forever, clapped them, and laughingly said, “You are right, Lua!”

I closed my eyes—couldn’t look anymore. As much as I loved talking with my grandfather, he needed to drive and tell stories later when we got to the cabin.

But no, Grandfather kept talking. “Remember the story of Nabíl?” Grandfather asked as we made our way up the zigzagging road. Lua looked at me and then to Justin.

“I do, Grandfather.” I came to Lua’s rescue with the hope that I could answer the question instead of Grandfather. “Nabíl wrote the book, *The Dawn-Breakers*.”

Again Grandfather turned to look at me and said, “That’s right, Ruhyyih.”

Lua proudly responded, “I know about *The Dawn-Breakers*.”

Of course, Grandfather looked back at Lua. His eyes seemed to be off the road again. I began to wonder—since we hadn’t crashed, maybe he *did* have eyes in the back of his head.

Well, when my grandfather began his story, there was no stopping him. He looked at the road occasionally and then at us in the back of the truck. “In November 1870, soon after Bahá’u’lláh had left the fortress of ‘Akká, He asked Nabíl to copy the actual printed words of the Badí’ calendar and tell the Bahá’ís all about the exact details. The believers were confused about when the calendar began.”

I could see an approaching curve in the road so I added, “I remember what happened next, Grandfather. Nabíl ended up asking Bahá’u’lláh’s secretary, Mírzá Áqá Ján, to ask Bahá’u’lláh. The year of the Declaration of the Báb, 1844, had to be the beginning of the Badí’ calendar, Bahá’u’lláh told him. We now call it the Bahá’í calendar.”





This time while I was talking, Grandfather looked at the road and just kept nodding his head. My plan had worked.

Poor Justin—he just sat quietly with a worried look on his face. I could tell he couldn't wait to get to the cabin. I looked at Lua; she was just enjoying Grandfather. She had paid no attention to the narrow zigzagging road with the mountainside to our left and a steep cliff to the right.

“Grandfather, here is what I know about our calendar. It has 19 months of 19 days. Our New Year is March 21, and we give gifts during Ayyám-i-Há,” Lua proudly shared.

“Good job, Lua,” Grandfather turned to say. “It was Bahá’u’lláh Who told us to celebrate Ayyám-i-Há, which is before the month of ‘Alá’ and after the month of Mulk. The Bahá’í calendar is perfect for this age—an age of unity, spirituality, and peace.”

Justin had been listening but not commenting. He had an idea about how to keep Grandfather’s eyes on the road. He remembered the Bahá’í calendar song we had all learned in children’s classes. Justin said, “We learned a song about the Bahá’í calendar. Want to learn it, Grandfather?”

Grandfather turned and said, “Sure!”

All three of us began to sing the song slowly “Bahá—Jalál—Jamál . . .” As we repeated the song for the third time, Grandfather joined in. For the next 10–15 minutes we all sang together. Grandfather swayed to the song but kept his eyes on the road.

Justin’s plan had worked. We soon arrived safely at the cabin. We learned a lot that morning about the Bahá’í calendar. But we also learned why my mother preferred to have Grandfather ride up to Lake Arrowhead with *us*. ★

