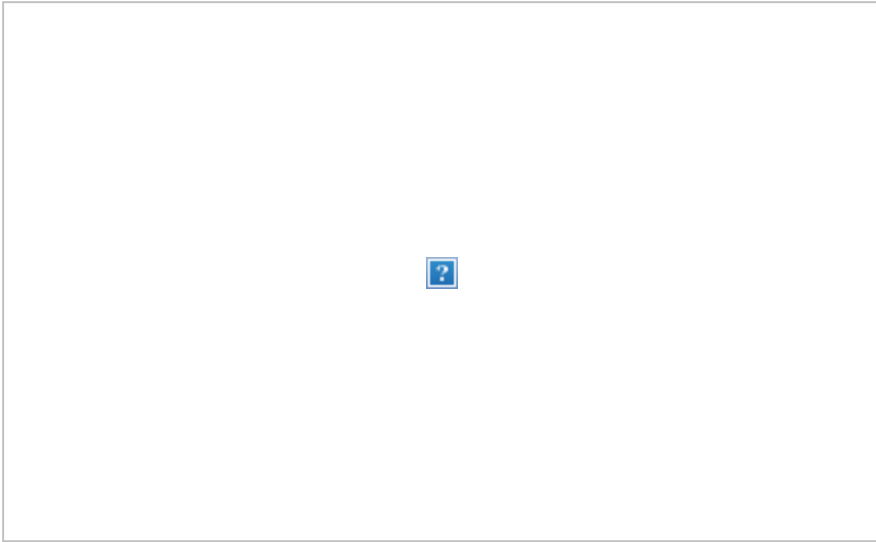


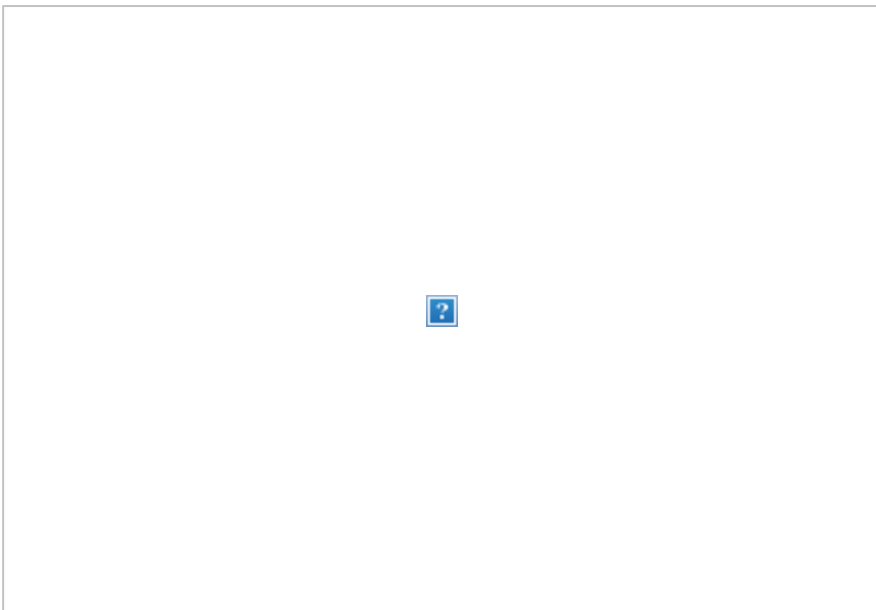
BAHA' WORLD CENTRE

Mount Carmel Projects



Bridge beautified by finishing touches

Lamps and other ornamental details have been added to the gardens on the bridge which the Bahá'ís built over Hatzionut Avenue in Haifa to connect the terraces above and below the Shrine of the Báb. This photograph was taken on 14th August.



Looking up the mountain

This photograph, also taken on 14th August, shows the view from the bridge over Hatzionut Avenue looking south, up the mountain, towards the terraces above the Shrine of the Báb.

Institution of Huqúqu'lláh

Right of God

All for the love of Thee

"...God hath made the achievement of everything conditional upon material means, therefore the injunction prescribing payment of the Huqúq hath been revealed from the heaven of His Will, and the blessings flowing from this deed shall fall to the donors themselves. In this day it is incumbent upon everyone to serve the Cause of God, while He Who is the Eternal Truth exalted be His glory - hath made the fulfilment of every undertaking on earth dependent on material means. Hence it is enjoined upon every individual to offer that which is the Right of God." (1)

Careful study of the spirit of the law of Huqúqu'lláh, the "Right of God," provides clear guidelines for the voluntary and joyful sharing of one's excess wealth. The Bahá'í writings tell us that we must combine our spiritual life with our material one, as we cannot live without both. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, for example, "if material happiness and spiritual felicity be conjoined, it will be delight upon delight". (2)

Many people believe that avoidance of materialism means they should not enjoy any material things or comforts whatsoever. Bahá'u'lláh, however, provides a more balanced perspective. He has written, "God hath made the fulfilment of every undertaking on earth dependent on material means". (3) From His Writings it is clear that poverty and wretchedness are social evils, and prosperity is intended to be enjoyed by everyone. Bahá'u'lláh has abolished the extremes of wealth and poverty and made the sharing of one's wealth voluntary, dependent on the spirit of generosity. In Gleanings He says clearly, "Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful." (4)

To show our thankfulness and praise to God, we should never become so immersed in our material concerns that we forget to be aware of our spiritual obligations and practices, or to obey God's laws and ordinances, or to find time every day to praise and commune with Him or to appreciate His wonderful handiwork in creation.

It has been observed that when we give thanks to God the most common things we thank Him for are the food we eat, the water we drink, and countless blessings such as health and strength. Let us not forget, too, to appreciate the beautiful things God created which give enjoyment to us - the starry heavens on a moonless night, the golden sunset at the end of the day, the majestic mountain peaks, the tall stately trees, the rain and sunshine that nourish the plants we grow. May we never become too busy to appreciate the ordinary things in life and to offer gratitude to God! As the Book of Psalms says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits." (5) After all, if we look around this beautiful world at the material things God gave us, we see that all of these are for our benefit.

The writer of Ecclesiastes knew this. He saw God at every turn in the enjoyment of material things when he wrote, "Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them ... this is the gift of God." (6) Thus, from this perspective, the power to eat the fruit of our labours and even the strength to receive and rejoice in them is from Him.

Adapted from a presentation by Leonicia L Maddela More to follow in the next issue

1. Huqúqu'lláh Compilation, no 33-34
2. Promulgation of Universal Peace, p166
3. Gleanings CXXVIII

4. Ibid
5. Psalm 103:2 (New English Bible)
6. Ecclesiastes 5:19