

# bridges

O concourse of kings! Deliver with truth and in all haste the verses sent down by Us to the peoples of Turkey and of India, and beyond them, with power and with truth, to lands in both the East and the West.... And know that if ye aid God, He will, on the Day of Resurrection, graciously aid you, upon the **Bridge**, through Him Who is His Most Great Remembrance...

O people of the earth! Whoso obeyeth the Remembrance of God and His Book hath in truth obeyed God and His chosen ones and he will, in the life to come, be reckoned in the presence of God among the inmates of the Paradise of His good-pleasure.

-- The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of The Báb*, p. 43

O concourse of divines! Fear God from this day onwards in the views ye advance, for He Who is Our Remembrance in your midst, and Who cometh from Us, is, in very truth, the Judge and Witness. Turn away from that which ye lay hold of, and which the Book of God, the True One, hath not sanctioned, for on the Day of Resurrection ye shall, upon the **Bridge**, be, in very truth, held answerable for the position ye occupied.... And unto you We have sent down this Book which truly none can mistake...

-- The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of The Báb*, p. 43

Take thou good heed that ye may all, under the leadership of Him Who is the Source of Divine Guidance, be enabled to direct thy steps aright upon the **Bridge**, which is sharper than the sword and finer than a hair, so that perchance the things which from the beginning of thy life till the end thou hast performed for the love of God, may not, all at once and unrealized by thyself, be turned to acts not acceptable in the sight of God. Verily God guideth whom He will into the path of absolute certitude. VII, 2.

-- The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of The Báb*, p. 96

When asked how this new civilization was to be brought about, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"Through solidarity. In some animals mutual co-operation is frequently seen; when in time of danger, each will try to surpass the others in help. One day as I was standing near the border of a little stream on Mt. Carmel, I noticed a number of locusts that had not yet developed full wings.

"These insects wishing to pass from my side of the stream to the other in order to procure some food, threw themselves forward, each one trying to emulate the other in flinging itself into the water, so that a **bridge** was formed in order that the others might pass over and this was accomplished; yet those who gave themselves as a **bridge** finally perished. Consider how much solidarity makes for life as compared to the fighting for self interest which destroys it."

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 187

Although to acquire the sciences and arts is the greatest glory of mankind, this is so only on condition that man's river flow into the mighty sea, and draw from God's ancient source His inspiration. When this cometh to pass, then every teacher is as a shoreless ocean, every pupil a prodigal fountain of knowledge. If, then, the pursuit of knowledge lead to the beauty of Him Who is the Object of all Knowledge, how excellent that goal; but if not, a mere drop will perhaps shut a man off from flooding grace, for with learning cometh arrogance and pride, and it bringeth on error and indifference to God.

The sciences of today are **bridges** to reality; if then they lead not to reality, naught remains but fruitless illusion. By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss.

It is incumbent upon thee to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to turn thy face toward the beauty of the Manifest Beauty, that thou mayest be a sign of saving guidance amongst the peoples of the world, and a focal centre of understanding in this sphere from which the wise and their wisdom are

shut out, except for those who set foot in the Kingdom of lights and become informed of the veiled and hidden mystery, the well-guarded secret.

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 110

Thine is favor for this gift which hath cheered the souls of the pure ones! Thine is generosity for Thou hast enabled every righteous and devoted one to adore Thee by causing the Sun of Truth to shine upon all the regions of existence! Thine is glory and excellence! Thine is power and beauty! Thine is sovereignty and authority! Thine is dominion and kingdom! Thine is exaltation and omnipresence! Thine is divinity and lordship! For thou hast manifested Thy bounty from the horizon of emanation, rent asunder the veil and raised the covering from Thy illumined countenance in the promised day and shone forth upon the world of being with the rays gleaming from the dawn of revelation!

Then the "Resurrection" appeared, the "Day of Judgment" became manifest, the "earth" heaved and shook, the "mountains" were levelled, the "seas" boiled, the "sun" was eclipsed, the "luminaries" were darkened, the "stars" scattered, the "signs" became known, the "**bridge**" expanded, the "conditions" were fulfilled, the "balance" was set up, the "fire" burned fiercely and the "paradise" became begemmed! -- wherefore the devoted ones entered into delectable gardens with beatitude and the veiled ones were left to amuse themselves with their own imaginations; the possessors of perception beheld the lights and those whose eyes were weak vanished in gloomy darkness before the appearance of the mid-day Sun!

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v2*, p. 396

And all this, when the Day of Resurrection hath been ushered in, and the Trumpet hath been sounded, and all the denizens of earth and heaven have been gathered together, and the Balance hath been appointed, and the **Bridge** hath been laid, and the Verses have been sent down, and the Sun hath shone forth, and the stars have been blotted out, and the souls have been raised to life, and the breath of the Spirit hath blown, and the angels have been arrayed in ranks, and Paradise hath been brought nigh, and Hell made to blaze! These things have all come to pass, and yet to this day not a single one of these people hath recognized them! They all lie as dead within their own shrouds, save those who have believed and repaired unto God, who rejoice in this day in His celestial paradise, and who tread the path of His good-pleasure.

-- Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 19

The sciences of today are **bridges** to reality; if then they lead not to reality, naught remains but fruitless illusion. By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss.

"*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*", section 72 [44]

And every branch of learning, conjoined with the love of God, is approved and worthy of praise; but bereft of His love, learning is barren -- indeed, it bringeth on madness. Every kind of knowledge, every science, is as a tree: if the fruit of it be the love of God, then is it a blessed tree, but if not, that tree is but dried-up wood, and shall only feed the fire.

"*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*", section 154 [45]

Scientific knowledge is the highest attainment upon the human plane, for science is the discoverer of realities. It is of two kinds: material and spiritual. Material science is the investigation of natural phenomena; divine science is the discovery and realization of spiritual verities. The world of humanity must acquire both. A bird has two wings; it cannot fly with one. Material and spiritual science are the two wings of human uplift and attainment. Both are necessary -- one the natural, the other supernatural; one material, the other divine. By the divine we mean the discovery of the mysteries of God, the comprehension of spiritual realities, the wisdom of God, inner significances of the heavenly religions and foundation of the law.

"*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*", p. 138 [46], -- *Compilations, Scholarship*, p. 15

358. ...as the Faith becomes known, we can expect opposition and persecution. Nevertheless, in our presentations and relationships we should always try to build **bridges** so that our beautiful Teachings

can be understood and accepted, and the power which they have to establish unity amongst men will be exemplified.

*18 December 1985 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Tuvalu*  
-- *Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 185*

These false, these cruel and cowardly Shi'ih clericals, who, as Bahá'u'lláh declared, had they not intervened, Persia would have been subdued by the power of God in hardly more than two years, have been thus addressed in the Qayyum-i-Asma: "O concourse of divines! Fear God from this day onwards in the views ye advance, for He Who is Our Remembrance in your midst, and Who cometh from Us, is, in very truth, the Judge and Witness. Turn away from that which ye lay hold of, and which the Book of God, the True One, hath not sanctioned, for on the Day of Resurrection ye shall, upon the **Bridge**, be, in very truth, held answerable for the position ye occupied."  
-- Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 85

The true destiny of the national state is to build the **bridge** from local autonomy to world unity. It can preserve its moral heritage and function only as it contributes to the establishment of a sovereign world. Both state and people are needed to serve as the strong pillar supporting the new institutions reflecting the full and final expression of human relationships in an ordered society. In delaying to fulfill the historic mandate given the peoples and nations of our age to unite, we give opportunity and encouragement to subversive forces whose weapon is confusion and whose aim is chaos.  
-- Baha'i International Community, *1947 Feb, A Baha'i Declaration of Human Obligations and Rights*

We carry with us a sacred and enduring memory of the twentieth century that stirs our energies even as it sets our path: It is of that seminal moment in the history of humankind when the Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, during an unparalleled ministry, designed the architecture of a new World Order and when, subsequently during some of the most devastating years, the Guardian of the Faith devoted his utmost energies to raising up the structures of an Administrative System that, at the end of the century, stands before the gaze of the world in the wholeness of its essential form. We come thus to a **bridge** between times. The capacities developed through a century of struggle and sacrifice by a handful of intoxicated lovers of Bahá'u'lláh must now be applied to the inescapable tasks remaining to the Formative Age, whose many epochs of unremitting labour will lead to that Golden Age of our Faith when the Most Great Peace will envelop the earth.  
-- The Universal House of Justice, *Ridvan 157, 2000*, p. 7

He [Munib] accompanied Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdad and at nights used to carry a lantern in front of Bahá'u'lláh's howdah. He went in His company as far as Constantinople. From there as instructed [by Bahá'u'lláh] he came to Persia. He used to teach the Faith very discreetly, until in Tihnan he received the Suriy-i-Ashab which was revealed in his name. By Bahá'u'lláh's permission he gradually removed the veil from the glorious countenance of the Cause. As a result, the trumpet was sounded and a new fervour and enthusiasm were created among the friends. Through earnest striving and by careful investigation each one was enable to cross this delicate Sirat.[1]  
[1 Literally 'road'. It is believed in Islam that on the Day of Judgement a very long **bridge** will be established and only those who are able to cross it will be saved. This **bridge**, according to tradition, is sharper than a sword, hotter than fire and thinner than a hair. All this signifies that when the Supreme Manifestation of God appears men will be severely tested and only those who pass the tests will attain to His glory. A.T.]  
-- Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh v 2*, p. 74

Once a dream came to me, of which, even now, I retain the impression.

In my dream, I carried many things in my arms; wearily I walked, dragging my feet across the endless desolation of desert sand. My strength seemed to be ebbing away, and my burden too heavy to hold. I was, oh! so tired, almost unable to walk one more step, when suddenly, to my surprise, I came to two rivers. A **bridge** connected these two rivers. Leaning against the wall of this **bridge**, I saw in my dream one of the disciples, an old Siyyid. He came forward to me and asked:

"What dost thou want? Where dost thou wish to go?"

I replied earnestly:

"I desire greatly to go to the blessed cities of Jerusalem -- Love -- and Baha."

The Siyyid said solemnly:

"Carrying those things that burden thee, thou canst not journey to those cities, neither canst thou enter therein. First cast away thy burden, then shalt thou have strength and power to attain thy desire."

Instantly I let fall all the things of my burden.

The old Siyyid thereupon, looking approvingly, took me by the arm and plunged me into the rivers, first into the one, then into the other. When I emerged I suddenly found myself flying without effort, as if were floating, over amazingly beautiful country. I was awe-struck at its sacred loveliness, as of Paradise. During my flight, my joy was so overwhelming as to seem a celestial gladness.

I arrived at a radiant city of shining glory. On its walls were written in Arabic in letters of brilliant light:

"LOVE. BAHA. JERUSALEM.  
JERUSALEM. LOVE. BAHA.  
BAHA. JERUSALEM. LOVE."

In the great temple of this city were all the Holy Ones, the Prophets of God, in Whose presence I had so ardently longed to stand -- His Holiness the Lord Christ, Moses, Isaiah, and every other Prophet of Whom I knew.

At one altar was Muhammad; He gave to me a radiant necklace of diamonds. This I handed to my mother, and, trying again to fly, I awoke!

It seemed that this golden dream had come in answer to my eager wishes and prayers.

-- Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 84

At Medina, Muhammad built a mosque of brick and earth, and He preached in it, leaning against a tree. One day they asked, 'What is the greatest vice of man?' He answered, 'You must not ask Me about vice, but about virtue;' and He repeated this three times, after which He said, 'Know ye! The worst of men is a bad learned man, and a good learned man is the best.' Again He said, 'If the unbeliever knew of the extent of the Lord's mercy, even He would not despair of Paradise.' And at other times: 'Death is a **bridge** that uniteth friend with friend...

-- Marzieh Gail, *Dawn Over Mount Hira*, p. 6

Our intelligentsia assure us that prayer is an aberration, something on the order of talking to oneself; and our fashionables remember that they did not get their little slam when they prayed for it at **bridge**; and if sorrow forces men to pray, they pray in doubt, and desperately, and they take Providence with a grain of salt.

To Bahá'ís, however, prayer is 'indispensable and obligatory', and no one is excused therefrom 'unless he be mentally unsound, or an insurmountable obstacle prevent him'.<sup>[1]</sup> This law is great glad tidings -- it is one of the most fruitful blessings ever conferred on humanity; and an investigation of even a handful of the wisdoms of prayer can only increase our amazement.

[1. *Bahá'í World Faith, Selected Writings of Baha'ullah and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1956, p. 368]*

The secret of life is detachment from everything except God. This is because there is a quality in human nature which imperiously demands something permanent to love and work for, and only God is permanent.

-- Marzieh Gail, *Dawn Over Mount Hira*, p. 29

Death is a **bridge** that uniteth friend with friend."

-- Marzieh Gail, *Six Lessons on Islam*, p. 21

Everything Shoghi Effendi did had but one purpose, which was the result of his far-sighted vision directed always to the future. He was aware of man's limited opportunities during the normal span of human life, but for him the establishment of a granitic foundation for the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh was most vital and impelling. One can perceive, by studying his writings, that this glorious goal was ever present to his mind, as the sun would be to a celestial navigator. Shoghi Effendi laid this foundation by erecting, step by step, the Administrative Order of the Faith. It was like raising the steel framework of a mighty sky scraper almost single-handed; he encouraged, praised, welded, reinforced, consolidated, with the endurance of an untiring construction engineer. To him the body of the Faith was the mass of believers from every land, climate, culture, language heritage and background. The Administrative Order was the gigantic structure which bridged differences, bringing unity in diversity, harmonizing habits and alien cultures, cementing unbreakable links of amity, forging unprecedented, inconceivable and durable spiritual alliances.

-- Ugo Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi - Recollections*, p. 29