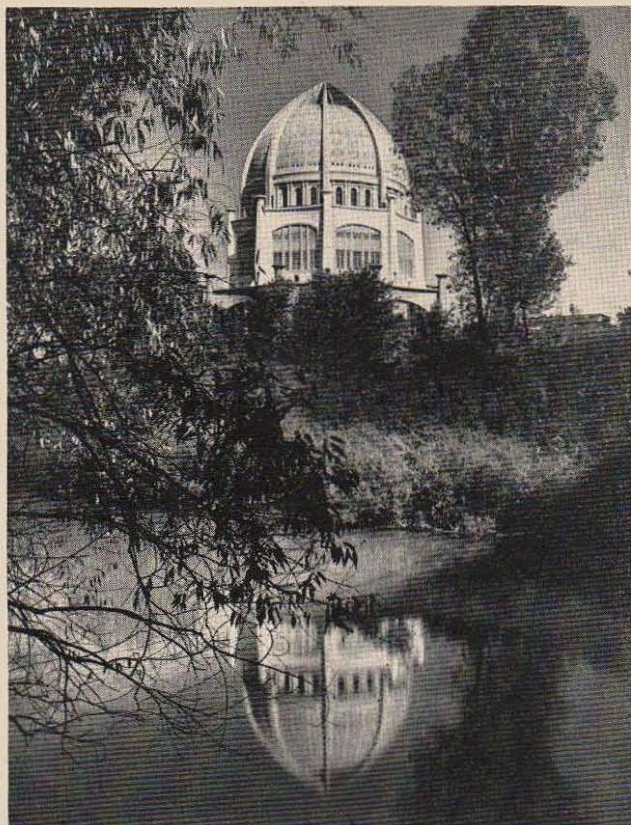


THE BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE

House of Worship of a World Faith



COMMEMORATING
COMPLETION OF EXTERIOR ORNAMENTATION
1942

ISSUED BY
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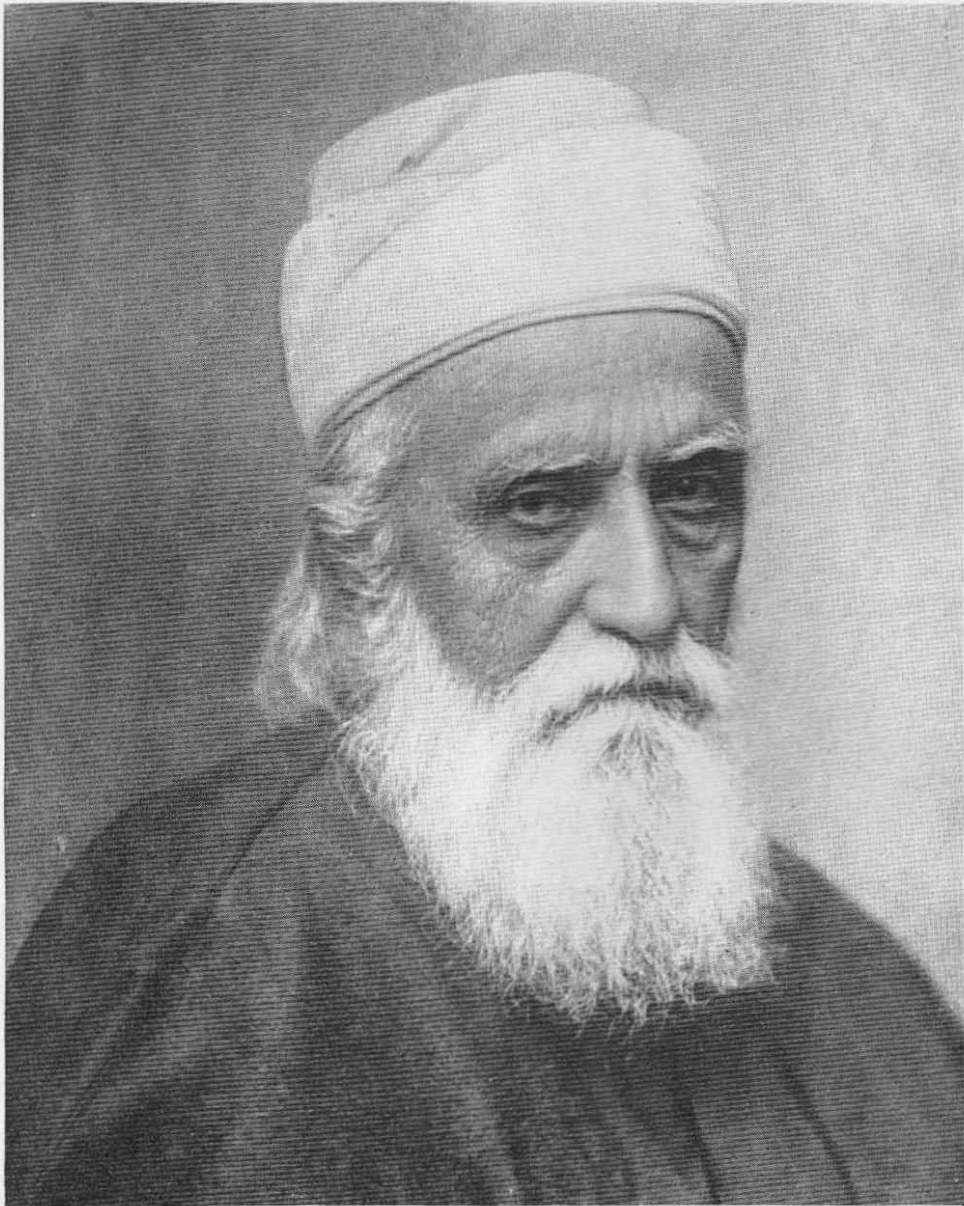
THE CORNER-STONE OF RELIGION

'Abdu'l-Bahá

○ ARMY OF LIFE! East and West have joined to worship stars of faded splendor and have turned in prayer unto darkened horizons. Both have utterly neglected the broad foundation of God's sacred laws, and have grown unmindful of the merits and virtues of His religion. They have regarded certain customs and conventions as the immutable basis of the Divine Faith, and have firmly established themselves therein. They have imagined themselves as having attained the glorious pinnacle of achievement and prosperity when in reality they have touched the innermost depths of heedlessness and deprived themselves wholly of God's bountiful gifts.

The corner-stone of the Religion of God is the acquisition of the Divine perfections and the sharing in His manifold bestowals. The essential purpose of Faith and Belief is to ennoble the inner being of man with the outpourings of grace from on high. If this be not attained, it is indeed deprivation itself. It is the torment of infernal fire.

Wherefore it is incumbent upon all Bahá'ís to ponder this very delicate and vital matter in their hearts, that, unlike other religions, they may not content themselves with the noise, the clamor, the hollowness of religious doctrine. Nay, rather they should exemplify in every aspect of their lives those attributes and virtues that are born of God and should arise to distinguish themselves by their goodly behavior. They should justify their claim to be Bahá'ís by deeds and not by name. He is a true Bahá'í who strives by day and by night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavor, whose most cherished desire is so to live and act as to enrich and illuminate the world, whose source of inspiration is the essence of Divine virtue, whose aim in life is so to conduct himself as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a true Bahá'í. For in this holy Dispensation, the crowning glory of bygone ages and cycles, true Faith is no mere acknowledgment of the Unity of God, but rather the living of a life that will manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such belief.



‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

In the Temple of the Lord, in the House of God, man must be submissive to God. He must enter into a Covenant with his Lord in order that he shall obey the Divine commands and become unified with his fellow-man. He must not consider divergence of races nor difference of nationalities; he must not view variation in denomination and creed nor should he take into account the differing degrees of thought; nay, rather he should look upon all mankind and realize that all must become united and agreed.—‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ.

THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP OF A WORLD FAITH

THE completion of the exterior ornamentation of the Bahá'í House of Worship discloses a physical edifice impressive in size, striking in architecture, and superb in its clear white surface carved to the pattern of symbolic design.

In appearance the structure suggests to the western mind an oriental influence. To the easterner it conveys the effect of occidental tradition. The Bahá'í Temple blends and harmonizes, without artificial effort, many of the creative elements which characterize the historical cultures of mankind. What is familiar acquires new significance by association with what has been remote and strange. The essential spirit of this edifice is too universal to be confined within the form and mold of any race or creed.

Here the utilitarian function of structure has become esthetically fulfilled in the achievement of a means suitable for unified worship of the one true God. A sense of the living cosmos attaches to the building, as if the architect had striven, with physical material, to encompass a holy place, and had learned measure and proportion, height and depth, stillness and motion, by observation of the flight of suns and stars through the heavenly world. Outwardly the House of Worship reflects a passionate, yet reverent spiritual reality, embodying a fullness of welcome, a certitude of truth, and an integrity of peace which the soul of religion contains before faith is darkened by doctrine and narrowed by creed.

Features of Its Design

Certain important elements of design in harmonious relationship compose the dynamic nature of the unity which this kingly jewel of temples exemplifies.

The edifice rests upon a great platform, circular in shape, surrounded by eighteen ascending steps. From this foundation rises a nine-sided architectural unit, the main story, each side constituting an entrance arch buttressed by pylons or towers. The nine symmetrical sides form a series of concave arcs intersecting the line of the circle marked by the towers. This main story becomes, in its turn, a platform supporting the gallery, the clerestory and the dome. The gallery unit, likewise nine-sided, sets back from the circumference of the main story. It repeats the effect of the entrance arches below in its series of nine window arches, but the nine smaller towers of this level do not coincide vertically with the nine pylons below. They rise at points midway between the lower pylons, and their coincidence is with the perpendicular lines formed by the nine ribs which spring from the base of the clerestory to meet above the top of the dome.

Clerestory and dome, set back from the outer line of the gallery, form circles and not nonagons, their circumference being divided into nine convex arcs by the ribs. The dome itself is a hemisphere, but the great ribs meeting above it transform the effect of finality and resignation emanating from domed structures into the upward thrust of aspiration fulfilled in answered prayer.

In the solution of the unique problem set for him in designing this house of worship of a world faith, the architect has been less the conventional draftsman than the sculptor. One feels that his material has not been arranged by thought but subdued by will. He has wrestled with titans of atheism and anarchy; he has struggled through jungles of materialism. It is in the essence of spiritual victory that he achieved this structure of massive weight, immovable power, patterned motion and soaring altitude, to provide a shrine for the mention of God.



Details of ornamentation,
main story and gallery

Having designed the structure, the architect then proceeded to treat each wall as if it were a facet for the transmission of radiant light from the sun to the interior, and from illumination inside the temple to the world at night. The outer surface is, in reality, a series of patterned windows, for the physical function of wall has been transferred to pylon, tower, rib and column. These elements carry the weight. The surface between these elements can therefore become a medium for light and not its interference. This intention has been realized through the development of architectural concrete, a

process by which in plastic condition a mixture of white quartz and cement has been poured into molds made from hand-carved models, emerging as units of a surface hard and enduring as granite, clear in texture, and bearing a design delicate as lace.

Symbol of a New Era

The Bahá'í Temple at Wilmette, Illinois, has not arisen as the meeting place of a local congregation. It is the central shrine and house of worship of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in North America. In the western world, this edifice is the first public expression made by the believers of the creative energy and spiritual aims of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Its construction, however, has been made possible by the contributions given by Bahá'ís of

Europe, Asia and Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as of the United States, Canada, and South America. The undertaking has been a world project when one realizes that the Bahá'í community of East and West is representative, in the racial and religious background of its members, of the diverse families of mankind. The period of time covered by the undertaking, from the original intention to the completion of the structure and its exterior decoration, has been about forty years.

During this period of time the nature of man's collective life has been transformed. The authority and control of ancient religion over human destiny has failed. Royal and imperial thrones have toppled to the dust. Aggressive social philosophies, nurtured in class conflict intensified by the industrial revolution, have become the creed and hope of millions of men. National sovereignty, the particular spiritual achievement of the old era, the most potent instrument for internal order yet created, has encountered the world spirit of the new cycle, refusing so far to subdue itself to the higher sovereignty of truth. Under the impact of two international wars, a major depression and many domestic upheavals, the claim to self-sufficient power and independent policy has jeopardized the very life of mankind. The Bahá'í House of Worship, built by those who knew the destiny of these years as clearly foretold in the Bahá'í sacred writings, has reflected the spirit of the new era arising amidst the agony of the old.

For the Healing of All the World

The nine selected utterances of Bahá'u'lláh carved above the entrances of the Temple reveal its fundamental meaning in the life of our age:-

"The earth is but one country; and mankind its citizens."

"The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me."

"My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure."

"Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner."

"Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent."

"I have made death a messenger of joy to thee; wherefore dost thou grieve?"

"Make mention of Me on My earth that in My heaven I may remember thee."

"O rich ones on earth! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust."

"The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His glory."

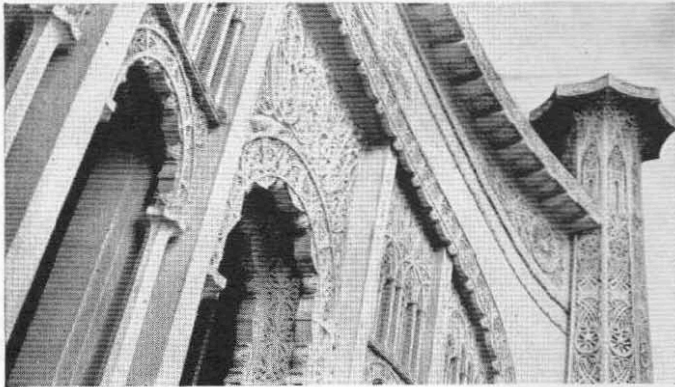
The Bahá'í Temple expresses the renewal of religion. It realizes a faith which relates the soul to a universal, a revealed and a divine truth wherein all human beings, of whatever race, class or creed, can meet and share the true equality emanating from their common dependence upon

God. It serves a teaching which goes beyond all the social philosophies to make possible a world order capable not only of coordinating and guiding economic effort but also of safeguarding and fostering the highest qualities of man. Bahá'u'lláh declared the oneness of mankind, a spiritual creation inaugurating the universal era of knowledge, justice and peace which ancient Prophets foretold and promised the people would come.

"There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world," He has written, "of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source and are the subjects of one God." The theme unfolds in these clear, majestic truths:—"The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another in the utmost love and harmony. . . . So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth!" "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded." It sweeps to its fulfilment in this passage taken from Bahá'u'lláh's message written to Queen Victoria of England from His prison in 'Akká, Palestine, more than seventy years ago: "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith."

The Real Temple Is the Word

'Abdu'l-Bahá, eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, and Center of His Covenant, traveled in America during 1912, proclaiming the Bahá'í teachings and promulgating the principles of universal peace. On one occasion He



One of the most beautiful designs has been developed for the doorway in each of the nine sides of the main story

addressed a national gathering of Bahá'ís held at Chicago in the interests of this Temple. "Among the institutes of the Holy Books," 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might

find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn and it is the center of unity for all mankind. It is the collective center, the cause of accord and communion of hearts, the

sign of the solidarity of the human race, the source of life eternal. Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force, so that when the people gather there in the House of God they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. They will realize that just as this temple was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating it came forth in the manifest Word. . . . That is why His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions, races and sects may come together within its universal shelter; that the proclamation of the oneness of mankind shall go forth from its open courts of holiness; the announcement that humanity is the servant of God and that all are submerged in the ocean of His mercy. It is the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.¹

“The world of existence may be likened to this Temple and place of worship; for just as the external world is a place where the people of all races and colors, varying faiths, denominations and conditions come together,—just as they are submerged in the same sea of divine favors, so likewise all may meet under the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and adore the one God in the same spirit of truth; for the ages of darkness have passed away and the century of light has come.”

For many persons universality in religion has been difficult to grasp. Its essential simplicity has proved elusive. They consider that elaborate complication is required, as if universality were obtained by adding together all things that are not universal. Thus the view arose at one time that the Bahá'í House of Worship when completed would house the shrines and invite the ceremonies and worship of diverse sects and creeds, arguing that tolerance of differences represents the final and utmost victory of divine truth on earth. The Bahá'í Faith, having no professional clergy, no ritualistic service, but maintaining that one's life itself is one's practice of faith, preserves the universality which came into being by divine creation in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh unadulterated by sectarian influence. The Bahá'í recognizes the sublime truth that revealed religions are fulfilled, not by the perpetuation of creeds and sects, but by transformation into the later and larger Revelation.

Universality of Worship

The Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, has plainly set forth the nature of the Bahá'í House of Worship in this passage of a letter addressed to the American Bahá'ís in 1929:—

“It should be borne in mind that the central edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, round which in the fullness of time shall cluster such institutions of social service as shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant, should be regarded, apart from these Dependencies, as a House

¹Persian word meaning “Source of the mention of God.”

solely designed and entirely dedicated to the worship of God in accordance with the few yet definitely prescribed principles established by Bahá'u'lláh. . . . It should not be inferred, however, from this general statement that the interior of the central Edifice itself will be converted into a conglomeration of religious services conducted along lines associated with the traditional procedure obtaining in churches, mosques, synagogues, and other temples of worship. Its various avenues of approach, all converging towards the central Hall beneath its dome, will not serve as admittance to those sectarian adherents of rigid formulae and man-made creeds, each bent, according to his way, to observe his rites, recite his prayers, perform his ablutions, and display the particular symbols of his faith, within separately defined sections of Bahá'u'lláh's Universal House of Worship. . . . The central House of Bahá'í worship, enshrined within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, will gather within its chastened walls, in a serenely spiritual atmosphere, only those who, discarding forever the trappings of elaborate and ostentatious ceremony, are willing worshipers of the one true God, as manifested in this age in the Person of Bahá'u'lláh.

“To them will the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár symbolize the fundamental verity underlying the Bahá'í Faith, that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is not final but progressive. Theirs will be the conviction that an all-loving and ever-watchful Father Who, in the past, and at various stages in the evolution of mankind, has sent forth His Prophets as the Bearers of His Message and the Manifestations of His Light to mankind, can not at this critical period of their civilization withhold from His children the Guidance which they sorely need amid the darkness which has beset them, and which neither the light of science nor that of human intellect and wisdom can succeed in dissipating. And thus having recognized in Bahá'u'lláh the source whence this celestial light proceeds, they will irresistibly feel attracted to seek the shelter of His House, and congregate therein, unhampered by ceremonials and unfettered by creeds, to render homage to the one true God, the Essence and Orb of eternal Truth, and to exalt and magnify the name of His Messengers and Prophets Who, from time immemorial even unto our day, have, under divers circumstances and in varying measure, mirrored forth to a dark and wayward world the light of heavenly Guidance.”



The symbol meaning *God the Most Glorious* appears in the center of arch over entrance door

Facilities for Social Service

In the foregoing explanation the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith refers to a number of institutions of social service which will be associated with the completed House of Worship. In the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* the modern world has been given an embodiment of spiritual truth in its maturity and power. The Bahá'í House of Worship is to have a direct relation to a number of other buildings which are to be constructed in accordance with the directions clearly set forth by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:—

“The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* must have nine sides, doors, fountains, paths, gateways, columns and gardens, with the ground floor, galleries and domes, and in design and construction it must be beautiful. The mystery of the edifice is great and can not be unveiled yet, but its erection is the most important undertaking of this Day.

“The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* has important accessories, which are accounted of the basic foundations. These are, school for orphan children, hospital and dispensary for the poor, home for the incapacitated, college for higher scientific education, and hospice. . . . When these institutions . . . are built, the doors will be opened to all the nations and religions. There will be absolutely no line of demarcation drawn. Its charities will be dispensed irrespective of color and race. Its gates will be flung wide open to mankind; prejudice towards none, love for all. The central building will be devoted to the purpose of prayer and worship. Thus . . . religion will become harmonized with science, and science will be the handmaid of religion, both showering their material and spiritual gifts on all humanity.”

This is the new, the universal concept of religion which Bahá'u'lláh has revealed today: the source of faith is the Prophet, the Manifestation of God, not the man-made creed, doctrine, rite, ceremony or church, for the will and the love of God are conveyed to humanity in each age by His chosen and inspired Messenger; and the expression of faith is in direct service to human needs, sacrifice for the sake of world peace, and consecration to the cause of the oneness of mankind. Belief in a sectarian creed, and spiritual acceptance of only the fellow members of one's own sect, with indifference for the needs and rights of the souls of all others, no longer meet the needs of a world perishing for lack of unity, and are not accepted as real faith by Bahá'u'lláh.

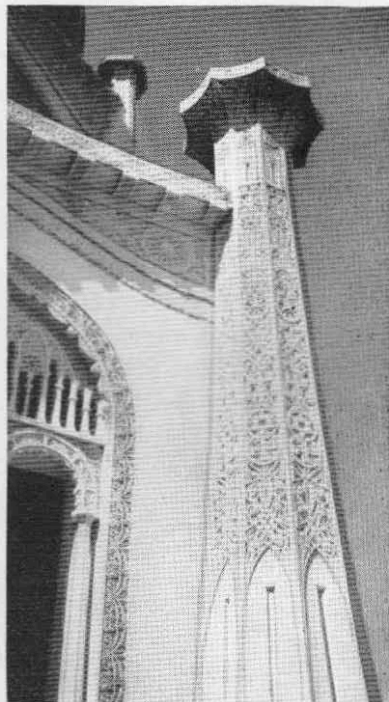
The Bahá'í House of Worship, in this larger ultimate meaning, discloses the coming of the universal truth able to connect, and unify, the world's agencies for religion and its agencies for humanitarian service, now dissociated and incapable of healing human ills. It joins them as one spirit permeating one body. Without the body, the spirit of religion has no power to act; without the spirit, the body is lifeless. The Bahá'í teachings condemn passive worship on the one hand, and action without spiritual guidance on the other.

The Door of Hope

The Bahá'í teachings create a religious society in which all human relations are transformed from social to spiritual problems.

The social problems of the age are predominantly political and economic. They are problems because human society is divided into nations each of which claims to be an end and a law unto itself, and into classes each of which has raised an economic theory to the level of a sovereign and exclusive principle. Nationality has become a condition which overrides the fundamental humanity of all the peoples concerned, asserting the superiority of political considerations over ethical and moral needs. Similarly, economic groups uphold and promote social systems without regard to the quality of human relationships experienced in relation to religion. But when human relationships are held to be political or social problems they are removed from the realm in which rational will can operate under the guidance of divine law. Only spiritual problems can be solved, for only those issues submitted to revealed truth are brought into the arena of unity. In essence, the fatal disruption of international relations arising from war and revolution is the visible sign that the instigator of strife seized a political instrument to express an action contravening spiritual truth and law. Outside that truth and law there is no solution. The result of violent onslaught is eventual ruin.

That is why, when faith weakens and conscience grows blind, the world falls into strife and confusion; for the instigator of violence does not bear the entire responsibility of the war. He could not hope to precipitate overturn for power and profit unless the moral force of the rest of the world was indifferent or divided. At such times, when the way is darkened, the Prophet returns to mankind, renewing the law and extending the dominion of truth. Those who still believe that the world can endure the present war, and attain lasting world order, security and peace, without the unity of conscience produced by mutual faith, fall behind the march of destiny together with those who protest that no social form greater than the nation is needed to safeguard vital interests of the race throughout future time. Spiritual and social evolution have characterized the whole course of human history to this hour. Whoever denies the



Pylon embellished with design incorporating many religious symbols

possibility of one organic religion and one organic social order for humanity, denies the movement of life itself and places his own limitations upon the will of God. For the man of true faith, however, it is enough to recall the ancient prayer which invoked the victory of the divine will on earth as in heaven.

No one can close the door of hope which 'Abdu'l-Bahá flung open in these words addressed to a public audience in America during 1912:—

“Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore it must be living, vitalized, moving and progressive. If it be without motion and non-progressive it is without the divine life; it is dead. The divine institutes are continuously active and evolutionary; therefore the revelation of them must be progressive and continuous. All things are subject to re-formation. This is a century of life and renewal. Sciences and arts, industry and invention have been reformed. Law and ethics have been reconstituted, reorganized. The world of thought has been regenerated.

“Will the despotism of former governments answer the call for freedom which has risen from the heart of humanity in this cycle of illumination? It is evident that no vital results are now forthcoming from the customs, institutions and standpoints of the past. In view of this, shall blind imitations of ancestral forms and theological interpretations continue to guide and control the religious life and spiritual development of humanity today? Shall man, gifted with the power of reason, unthinkingly follow and adhere to dogma, creeds and hereditary beliefs which will not bear the analysis of reason in this century of effulgent reality?

“From the seed of reality, religion has grown into a tree which has put forth leaves and branches, blossoms and fruit. After a time this tree has fallen into a condition of decay. The leaves and blossoms have withered and perished; the tree has become stricken and fruitless. It is not reasonable that man should hold to the old tree, claiming that its life forces are undiminished, its fruit unequalled, its existence eternal. The seed of reality must be sown again in human hearts in order that a new tree may grow therefrom and new divine fruits refresh the world. By this means the nations and peoples now divergent in religion will be brought into unity, imitations will be forsaken and a universal brotherhood in the reality itself will be established. Warfare and strife will cease among mankind; all will be reconciled as servants of God.”

The Mission of Peace

The final meaning associated with the Bahá'í Temple bears upon the means of attaining world order and universal peace. The location of the House of Worship in the central heart of North America is not less important than its architectural design.

The coming of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to America in 1912 represented the working out of His clear vision of the events and conditions which were to culminate in the establishment of peace on earth. In the process of attain-

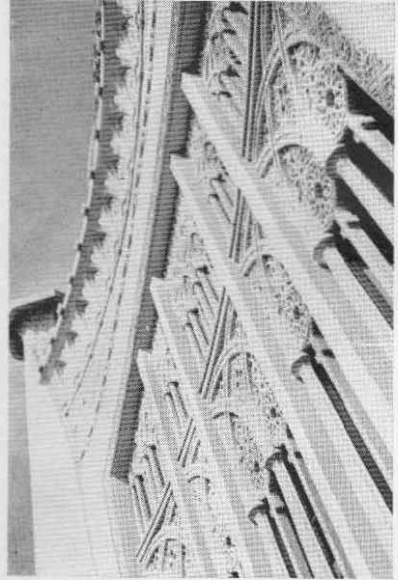
ment, North America has been endowed by destiny with the sublime mission of leadership among the nations. On many occasions, and in weighty words, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained this mission to the American people. The present world outlook, and the constructive social vision, of America proceeds, directly and indirectly, from the truths which He expounded in daily meetings and interviews held for nine months in 1912. He addressed large audiences in churches of many denominations, in synagogues, universities, liberal clubs and peace societies. In these talks He created the program and policy which leading individuals and institutions have taken over and are now promoting without full realization of its spiritual source.

The Bahá'í House of Worship preserves the vital truth which 'Abdu'l-Bahá conveyed as the most important element of His message, but which has been neglected by a generation which came to believe that public policy, if good and helpful, will prevail by its own impetus. What 'Abdu'l-Bahá pointed out as the essential condition is the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through the Manifestation. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is the monument raised by the Bahá'ís to Bahá'u'lláh, and not merely a public testimonial to a system of liberal truths.

"The body of the human world," 'Abdu'l-Bahá declared, "is sick. Its remedy and healing will be the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Its life is the Most Great Peace. Its illumination and quickening is love. Its happiness the attainment of spiritual perfections. It is

My wish and hope that in the bounties and favors of the Blessed Perfection (i.e., Bahá'u'lláh) we may find a new life, acquire a new power and attain to a wonderful and supreme source of energy so that the Most Great Peace of divine intention shall be established upon the foundations of the unity of the world of men with God. May the love of God be spread from this city, from this meeting, to all the surrounding countries. Nay, may America become the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment and all the world receive this heavenly blessing. For America has developed powers and capabilities greater and more wonderful than other nations."

A Temple which is not only the symbol but also a proof of so many spiritual truths is more than an architectural landmark. The Bahá'ís hope that it will lead a host of seekers to investigate the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.



The great window arch of the gallery level

THE BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAITH IN AMERICA

STEP BY STEP with the process of raising this universal House of Worship there has gone forward also the development of the Bahá'í community of North America. The period of about forty years during which the material structure has been raised witnessed a corresponding increase in the number of believers and in their unification within a new spiritual order. The first group of American Bahá'ís centered in Chicago, and in their activity and devotion the idea of constructing a great Temple was born. Similar groups began to form in New York, Washington, Kenosha and other cities, and the Temple project formed a powerful bond between them. From those early and primitive conditions of faith, when the followers of Bahá'u'lláh had little Bahá'í literature and no experience of the working of the new spirit through a community of believers for universal ends, to the present time, when the Bahá'í community of North America has representation in hundreds of cities and has sent its teachers out to all parts of the world, a tremendous spiritual evolution has taken place. The centering of thought, devotion and financial offering upon the great ideal of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár has been the formative element, the means chosen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself to bring the Bahá'ís to maturity throughout this continent.

The great significance, at this time of world chaos, of the establishment of a World Religion which in the last century has had its impact on oriental countries and now has gained a following strong enough to accomplish the task of erecting so beautiful and costly a structure to symbolize its Faith, cannot be overestimated.

The building must be regarded as a symbol of the power of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. It stands for the universal teachings which He proclaimed to the world and it represents, so his followers firmly believe, the renewal of true religion in the Western hemisphere.

In the Book of Laws written by Bahá'u'lláh there appears the following exhortation: "O concourse of creation! O people! Construct edifices in the most beautiful fashion possible, in every city, in every land, in the name of the Lord of Religion. Adorn them with that which beseemeth them. Then commemorate the Lord, the Merciful, the Clement, in spirit and in fragrance."

The Bahá'ís, because of this exhortation, envision the erection of similar structures everywhere. The first one was built in 'Ishqábád, Russia,

and it was a letter from the Bahá'ís of that city to the followers of the Faith in Chicago that moved those pioneers of the religion to arise in a similar enterprise for their city.

History and Development of the Project

No fair estimate of the progress of this work, which in itself was fraught with exceedingly great difficulties, can be made without relating its unfoldment to the establishment and progress in this country, of the Faith itself.

The Cause was first mentioned here in 1893 at the Congress of Religions held in connection with the Columbian Exposition. There Dr. Jessup, President of the American College at Beirut, Syria, spoke at length about the remarkable life and teachings of the two great personages who were held by the Turkish Government as political exiles from Persia in the fortress of 'Akká. This address, describing the universal aspect of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, cannot properly be linked to the actual establishment of the Faith in America, except in so far as it awakened interest and awareness to prompt the search that finally made contact with more direct sources of knowledge.

In 1897 a party led by Mrs. Phoebe Hearst made a visit to the prison city and gradually an intimate contact with 'Abdu'l-Bahá was established and a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the teachings had been carried over the country by correspondence and through pilgrims who traveled from this country, as well as teachers who came from the Orient at the behest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

It was, then, in 1902 that we received the letter from the Persian Bahá'ís who resided in 'Ishqábád.

The number of Bahá'ís in America at that time was exceedingly small, and they were spread over a wide area, yet they had established an embryo organization patterned as closely as possible after the plan outlined in the Writings of the Faith. The governing board of the Bahá'ís of Chicago, then known as the "House of Spirituality," appealed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for permission to erect a House of Worship in Chicago. His reply, written in 'Akká, June 7, 1903, gave permission for the undertaking in the following words: "O ye who are attracted! O ye who are firm! O ye who are zealous in the service of the Cause of God and are sacrificers of possessions and lives for the promotion of the Word of God! I perused your recent letter . . . and my heart was filled with joy through its beautiful meanings and its eloquent contents. Truly they were suggested by the breaths of confirmation from the Glorious Lord.

"O friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His co-sharers and partners in the servitude of the Lord of Hosts! Verily the greatest affair and the most important matter today is to establish a Mashriqu'l-Adhikár and to found a Temple from which the voice of praise may rise to the Kingdom of the majestic Lord. Blessings be upon you for having thought to do so and

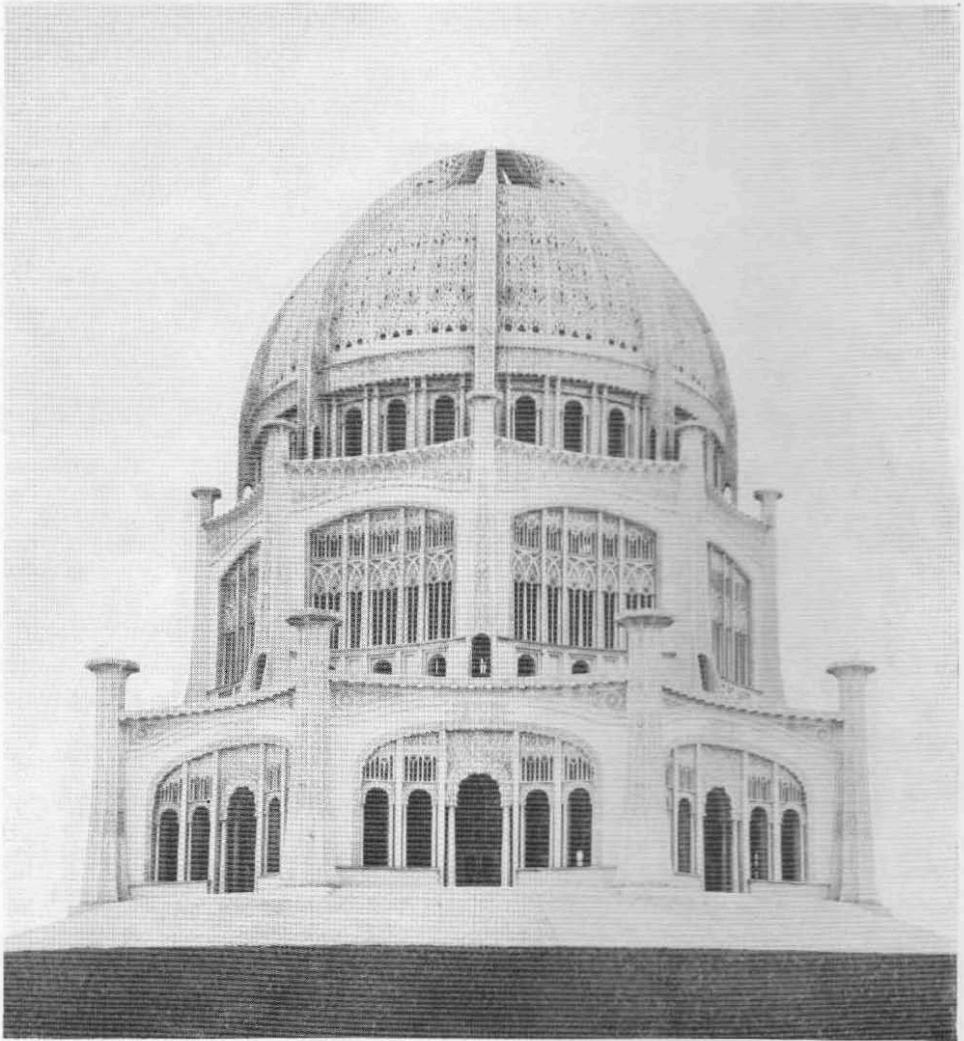


'Abdu'l-Bahá, freed after forty years of exile and imprisonment, traveled through Europe and America in 1911, 1912 and 1913, warning the people of the failure of material civilization and summoning them to serve the Most Great Peace established by Bahá'u'lláh. On May 1, 1912 He laid a cornerstone on the Temple grounds and blessed the efforts of those engaged in the construction of the universal House of Worship.

intending to erect such an edifice, advancing all in devoting your wealth in this great purpose and in this splendid work. You will soon see the angels of confirmation following after you and the hosts of reinforcement crowding before you.

“When the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár is accomplished, when the lights are emanating therefrom, the righteous ones are presenting themselves therein, the prayers are performed with supplication towards the mysterious Kingdom (of heaven), the voice of glorification is raised to the Lord, the Supreme, then the believers shall rejoice, the hearts shall be dilated and overflow with the love of the All-living and Self-existent (God). The people shall hasten to worship in that heavenly Temple, the fragrances of God will be elevated, the divine teachings will be established in the hearts like the establishment of the Spirit in mankind; the people will then stand firm in the Cause of your Lord, the Merciful. Praise and greetings be upon you.”

The smallness of the numbers of the followers of the Faith in this country at that time made the undertaking a stupendous one. They had then no real understanding of the actual size or character of the structure they were finally destined to erect. The specification that it must be a nine-sided structure was understood but no other significant detail regarding it was known. The development of the architectural form, the final discovery of means and materials that made possible the erection of the building, the selection of the site, all are part of a gradual unfoldment



THE BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP

that was constantly guided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose Tablets addressed to the Bahá'ís in America and in other lands inspired the believers to constant renewals of effort in its behalf.

In the years immediately following the receipt of the letter authorizing the undertaking, the followers of the Faith, in spite of difficulties imposed by the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a prisoner in 'Akká, were able on occasion to make pilgrimage to visit Him, and these visits by the American Bahá'ís were also important in the development of the work in America.

In 1907, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, speaking to a group of such pilgrims, said that concerning the temple, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is a very important matter, the most important thing then in America is the building of the temple. They and their friends must endeavor in this matter. This building will be the cause of the confirmation of the believers. It has a great effect because it is the beginning of the foundation. After centuries it is not so important as it is now, but now it is very important. At first they build the temple and worship in it and grow. In past times they could not build it so outwardly. This building will be the cause of unity and prosperity of the Cause. The unity comes; from every part the believers will assist. This is a heavenly society and also it will be the cause of strength. The believers will get blessings and bounties. It cannot be compared with the church of former times. They have only to begin, everything will be all right.

When this message was brought back to America a new activity in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár resulted throughout the country and contributions from various Assemblies and individuals were received.

The House of Spirituality of Chicago addressed an invitation to the Bahá'ís in all parts of the country to meet in convention to consider ways and means of furthering the project. Accordingly, representatives from various cities gathered together on November 26, 1907. A committee of nine was appointed to represent the convention in the work of the Temple. This action was the first step toward making the Temple project a national Bahá'í undertaking. Various proposed sites for the building were visited and the committee unanimously agreed that the north shore tract (the present site of the building) was the most desirable.

Actual purchase of the site was begun by the Spiritual Assembly of Chicago. Two out of the fourteen building lots were purchased in the name of the treasurer of the Assembly. The payment, \$2,000.00, was made on April 9, 1908.

On June 19 of that year 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a message to the Chicago Bahá'ís directing them to call another convention in the following words: "Ask every spiritual meeting in the other cities to select one and send him, and from these selected ones and from those who are selected from the Chicago meeting, establish a new meeting for the provision of the needs of the Temple. If this be established with perfect fragrance and joy, it will produce great results. In this new meeting, especially for the establishment of the Temple, women are also to be members."

In compliance with this instruction the second Convention was called. It assembled on March 22 and 23, 1909, in the assembly hall of Northwestern University Building, Lake and Dearborn Streets, Chicago. Mr. Thornton Chase, the chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, welcomed the delegates and the following message written for that assemblage by 'Abdu'l-Bahá was read:

“HE IS GOD!

“O ye Holy Souls; Sons of the Kingdom!

“The century is great and the age belongeth to His Majesty, the Merciful, the Clement. The power of confirmation hath moved all beings and the potency of (Divine) help hath made the world of existence active. The Sun of Reality hath dawned from the temperate point and the Star of equatorial line hath shed radiance upon the East and the West.

“Although human souls are mostly heedless and negligent, and the sects, tribes and nations are submerged in the slumber of inadvertence, yet the Divine summons will ere long awaken (them) and the glad-tidings of the Kingdom will soon make the souls attentive.

“In the cycle of His Holiness Christ, a long time elapsed before the fame of praise and sanctification became world-wide; nevertheless, consider how at length it encircled the globe. But the glorious radiance, like shining twilight, of this Sun of the horizons, in the very inception of its dawn, was wide-spread; therefore, consider what great results will be soon forthcoming and what wondrous signs shall appear. Now is the commencement of organization, hence every affair concerning the Kingdom of God is of paramount importance.

“Among the most important affairs is the founding of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, although weak minds may not grasp its importance; nay, perchance, they imagine this (Mashriqu'l-Adhkár) to be a temple like other temples. They may say to themselves: ‘Every nation has a hundred thousand gigantic temples; what result have they yielded that now this one Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (is said) to cause the manifestation of signs and prove a source of lights?’ But they are ignorant of the fact that the founding of this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is to be in the inception of the organization of the Kingdom. Therefore it is important and is an expression of the upraising of the Evident Standard, which is waving in the center of that continent, and the results and effects of which will become manifest in the hearts and spirits. No soul will be aware of this mature wisdom save after trial.

“When the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was founded in 'Ishqábád, its clamor affected all of the cities of the Orient and caused souls to awaken (to the call). Most of the souls who investigated and heard the explanation were attracted to the Kingdom of God.

“Moreover, the accessories of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár are numerous. Among them are the School for Orphans, the great College for the Higher Arts, Hospital, Home for the Crippled and Hospice. The doors of these

places are to be opened to all sects—no differentiations. When these accessories are completed, and by God's help and aid the departments fully systematized, it will be proved that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is to human society a great bounty and a great blessing.

"In brief: through the unlimited bounty of God, I am hopeful that the beloved ones of God in America may be aided and confirmed in founding this mighty and solid foundation, and gradually annex thereto its accessories.

"Now you who have convened in that center, (coming) from other cities of America with sincere intentions and lofty endeavor, have you proposed to undertake this mighty affair? Know you for certainty that ye will be confirmed by the aids of the Holy Spirit, and that you will render the Kingdom of God a distinguished service, whereby you will become dear in both realms and will shine forth as morning stars from the horizon of the love of God.

"This organization of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be a model for the coming centuries and will hold the station of the mother, and thus later in other cities many Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs will be its offspring.

"O Lord! Make these holy souls dawning points of lights and the manifestations of (Thy) signs. Make every one a leading corner-stone in this great edifice; a pillar of its pillars.

"O God! Although the friends are needy, yet Thou art the Helper, the Supporter, the Rewarder!

"These souls have arisen to serve Thee well and have begun servitude. Confirm them and aid them. Encourage each by promises of Thy Divine favors and make them of the elect.

"Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, the Able, the Giver, the Shining, the Hearer, the Seer!"

(Signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.

Thirty-nine delegates representing thirty-six cities were present. They appointed committees to arrange for the formation of a permanent national organization of the Temple project. This organization, known as the Bahá'í Temple Unity, formed an Illinois Corporation which carried forward the work of the building and other Bahá'í activities of national import until the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, directing the course of Bahá'í evolution after His death in 1921, gave rise to the present administrative order, for which the believers in East and West had been prepared. By 1927 the National Spiritual Assembly had become able to adopt a constitution and by-laws defining, under the Guardian's advice and instruction, the qualifications of Bahá'í belief and the functions and duties of the elective Bahá'í institutions. This body was given control of all national activities of the American Bahá'í community, and superseded Bahá'í Temple

Unity in the exercise of authority. The Temple property, soon afterward, was transferred to Trustees for the benefit of the National Spiritual Assembly, and these Trustees have proceeded with the construction and maintenance of the edifice since that time.

It is interesting to note that the grand total of monies on hand in 1909, including what had been paid for the lots purchased, was \$8,331.00. This then represented the small beginning of the actual building enterprise as well as the administration of the Bahá'í Faith on a national scale in this country.

On July 1, 1909, a contract for the purchase of the remainder of the main tract of land was entered into. The purchase price of the twelve remaining lots was set at \$32,500.00. It was stipulated that \$5,000.00 was to be paid every six months.

At the third Convention, which met April 25 and 26, 1910, the total contributions reported reached \$20,379.95. The money had been received from all parts of the world, from Bahá'ís in India, Persia, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Russia, Egypt, Germany, France, England, Canada, Mexico, Hawaii, as well as from the tiny isle of Mauretius. Sixty American cities also had representatives enrolled in the enterprise. The following year added \$10,401.59 to the fund.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in America

In 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited America. Through the Young Turk rebellion in 1908, the long period of imprisonment was ended and on May 1, 1912, He blessed the site of the building with His presence.

That momentous event will forever distinguish this edifice. It stands not only as the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the western hemisphere; it is the only Bahá'í House of Worship in the world dedicated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Not only did He walk upon the grounds but He personally laid a cornerstone as a symbol of His participation in the construction. (This stone now stands embedded in the foundation of the building in the approximate location in which it was placed by the Master.)

These events will therefore make this edifice the greatest shrine in the western Bahá'í world. It already has become a center of attraction to thousands who have traveled from all parts of the world, to see its wondrous beauty and to pray. What the future promises can easily be imagined, for with the unfoldment of its inevitable destiny as the greatest shrine of a World Religion in the western hemisphere it is obvious that its present development, lovely as it may be, is only the promise of what is to come. Its inner ornamentation, the environs, the accessory buildings will be built and rebuilt in ever increasing splendor as will be befitting the homage given to it by a grateful humanity.

The fifth annual Convention was blessed by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In the course of the year (1912) arrangements were made to purchase the tract of land on the lake shore. This consisted of 293 front feet,

running to the water's edge. This tract is now partially occupied by the administrative office of the National Spiritual Assembly. The purchase price of this land was \$17,000.00. The total amount contributed that year was \$7,292.45.

The following year the annual Convention took place in the city of New York. At the end of the year substantial payment was made on the lake shore tract, reducing that indebtedness to \$9,000.00. The contributions for the year 1912-1913 amounted to \$14,206.42.

The Seventh convention (1914), in which the Bahá'ís celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, was made memorable by the report of the completion of the purchase of the land. In seven years the small band of Bahá'ís in American and Canada, with the help of Bahá'ís in other lands, had collected \$72,399.85. \$51,500.00 of this had been used in purchasing the site, the remainder was to start the building fund.

In this total, the amount received from Bahá'ís of other countries was \$11,159.75; and in the report made by Mrs. Corinne True, Financial Secretary, we find the following record of countries and cities:-

England: St. Ives, Cornwall; Springfield, Broadway; Manchester; London; Sussex, Brighton; Warwicke; Clifton, Bristol.

Ireland: Warrington, County Down.

France: Paris; Dinan, Brittany.

Germany: Berlin; Stuttgart; Esslingen; Zuffenhausen.

Italy: Siena; Ravenna; Erba.

European Turkey: Constantinople.

Palestine: 'Akká; Haifa.

Russia: Baku; 'Ishqábád.

Persia: Tíhrán; Isfáhán; Gangelie; Shíráz; Yahrómi; Resht; Kermanshah; Sanstan; Mashhad; Tiflis; Yazd; Arabelli.

India: Rangoon; Bombay; Mandalay.

Egypt: Cairo; Port Said; Alexandria.

South Africa: East Rand; Transvaal; Capetown.

New Zealand: Davenport; Auckland.

Brazil: Sao Paulo.

Canada: Montreal; Brockville; St. John's, N. B.

Islands of the Sea: Isle of Pines; Isle of Mauretius; Hawaiian Islands.

The architectural design of the building was decided upon at the Convention held in New York in 1920. The design prepared by Louis J. Bourgeois of West Englewood, New Jersey, was presented to the Convention in the form of a large plaster model. Other architects submitted plans in the form of both plaster models and drawings. The Bourgeois design which, because of its unique character and exquisite beauty, captured the enthusiastic endorsement of the assembled Bahá'ís, was, nevertheless,

selected only after it had been endorsed by a group of prominent architects and engineers who were invited to view it in the Convention hall. It was at their suggestion that the Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity instructed Mr. Bourgeois to prepare drawings showing the building so that the upper part of the structure was realigned in its relation to the lower part. The drawings of the revised building served, however, to convince the group of experts that no change should be made in the architect's original design.

The Executive Board also felt it necessary to submit the design to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and since it was obviously impossible to send the model to Haifa they directed Mr. Bourgeois to prepare drawings showing a front elevation and a cross section of the building, arranging for the architect himself to take these to Haifa and there receive 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions regarding the building. About the middle of January, 1921, Mr. Bourgeois sailed to the Holy Land. The drawings were left with the Master, and they now hang in the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In a Tablet addressed to Mrs. Corinne True, 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicated that the Bourgeois design as submitted was too large and too costly, and therefore, Mr. Bourgeois prepared his plans to reduce the size of the structure somewhat. It is interesting to note that 'Abdu'l-Bahá set the cost of the building at one million dollars. "If possible, Mr. Bourgeois may reproduce the same model on a smaller scale, so that one million dollars may suffice for its construction."

In its smaller form the estimates placed the cost of the entire structure at \$1,200,000. This figure did not include any interior finish beyond a rough plaster surface.

Construction began with a contract let to Mr. Avery Brundage on the 17th day of December, 1920. This contract was for caisson foundations, the plans for which had been approved by Mr. Allen B. McDaniel of Washington, D. C. The Wilmette Village Board issued a building permit on the 19th of March, 1921.

It was in that same year, November 28, 1921, that the revered 'Abdu'l-Bahá left this world. The grief of that loss exalted the believers with a profound sense of sacrifice, and enabled them to realize the import of the Will and Testament which the Architect of the Bahá'í World Community had prepared.

Turning to the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, for advice on the next phase of Temple construction, the American believers were, in 1925, directed to accumulate a fund of \$400,000 before placing any new contract. The superstructure was completed and turned over by the Fuller Company at the opening of the Convention in 1931, nineteen years after the day on which the Master had blessed the undertaking.

In 1937, Shoghi Effendi called upon the American Bahá'ís to complete the exterior of the House of Worship before the end of the first Bahá'í century, 1944. This privilege has been consummated well within the seven year period allowed.

THE REALIZATION OF THE ARCHITECT'S DESIGN

ALLEN B. McDANIEL, *Supervising Engineer*

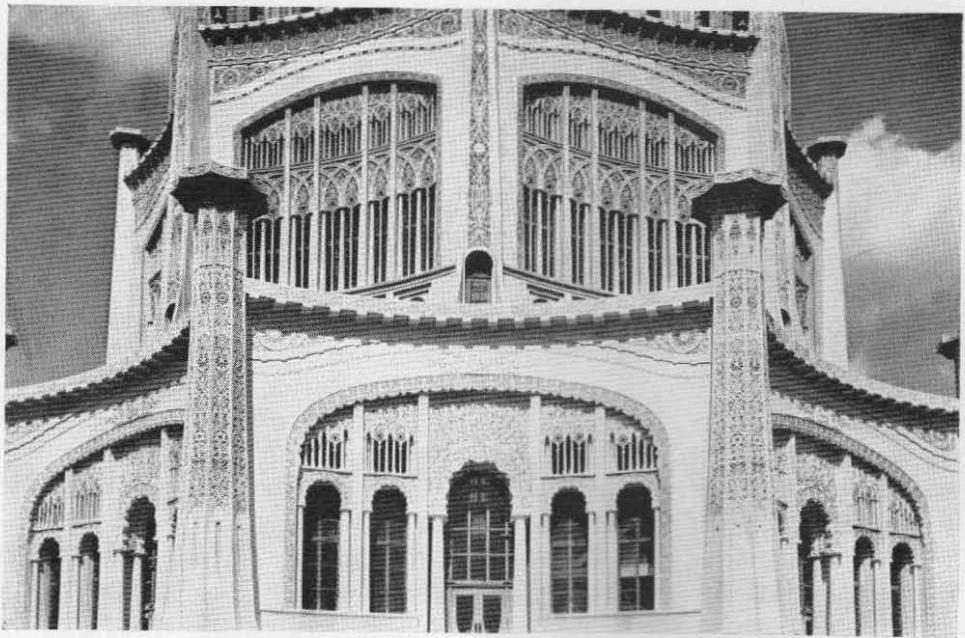
IN SELECTING the design by Louis J. Bourgeois, the American Bahá'ís arranged for his services as architect during the construction of the House of Worship. Mr. Bourgeois, however, died before work on the superstructure began. This loss added greatly to the responsibility of the Temple Trustees called upon to execute the decision of the Bahá'í Convention. Moreover, this design embodies certain features and elements which raise entirely new technical problems for the engineer and builder. The preparation of structural designs, the selection of materials and the supervision of the construction work, has made the building of this edifice a technical as well as an architectural achievement. The following remarks are by way of a notation on the engineering aspect of the task.

Louis J. Bourgeois explained his design to the Bahá'ís as presenting "in symbolic form, the great Bahá'í teaching of unity—the unity of all religions and of all mankind. There are combinations of mathematical lines, symbolizing those of the universe, and in their intricate merging of circle into circle, of circle within circle, we visualize the merging of all the religions into one.

"On the first floor of the Bahá'í Temple there will be the great auditorium of the building, above which will rise the stately dome, 161 feet high. A corridor encircles the dome on the outside, and inside the building is a circle of rooms, or alcoves, all opening upon the main auditorium. A circle of steps eighteen in all will surround the structure on the outside and lead to the auditorium floor. The eighteen steps represent the eighteen first disciples of the Báb, and the door to which they lead stands for the Báb himself.

"In the rear of the building will be steps leading to the first and second balconies which, tier above tier, follow the circular dome. In the second balcony, choirs of children will sing their songs of praise to God, the All-glorious."

Observing the model at the Convention meeting, a noted architect, H. Van Buren Magonigle, exclaimed, "The architect has conceived a Temple of Light in which structure, as usually understood, is to be concealed, visible support eliminated as far as possible, and the whole fabric to take on the airy substance of a dream; it is a lacy envelope enshrining an idea, the idea of Light, a shelter of cobweb interposed between earth and sky, struck through and through with light—light which shall partly consume the forms and make of it a thing of faery."



The fluid lines of cornice and window arch are resolved in the reposeful power of the pylons. Horizontal and vertical elements in vivid contrast prepare the structure for its fulfilment in a great ribbed dome.

This building is nine-sided, and all the sides are alike, with a central doorway flanked on either side by two ornamental windows and enclosed with a flat arch. At the intersection of the sides, is a pylon or minaret. The faces of the main and gallery stories are concave and with the pylons are symbolic of extended arms. The first story is 36 feet high, on a circular foundation with 18 steps leading to the main floor; the second story is 45 feet high and offset with relation to the first story, so that the feet of the second story buttresses impinge against the tops of the curved main story faces. Above is a great dome with nine ribs which extend from the bottom of the 19 foot clerestory to a point 19 feet above the top of the hemispherical dome.

In the summer of 1921, nine concrete caissons were built to support the Temple foundation structure. These concrete piers extended from the original ground surface to bedrock; about 120 feet, 90 feet below the water level of adjacent Lake Michigan. Upon these piers and surrounding concrete and wood piles, the basement structure was erected the following year. This structure consisted of a circular wall of reinforced concrete, 202 feet in diameter and about 20 feet high, supporting the main floor and the sloping deck upon which the eighteen circular steps were built. Within the central portion of this basement a circular hall with a domed ceiling was constructed and has been temporarily used for public meetings, sessions of the Annual Bahá'í Convention and other gatherings of the Faith.

The Structure

The late Major Henry J. Burt, Supervising Engineer at the time the foundation structure was built, presented a brief and clear picture of the Temple structure in his address before the Wilmette Chapter of the American Association of Engineers in 1922:

"The superstructure, for convenience of description, can be divided into three sections. The first section extends from the main floor to the first gallery, the second section from the first gallery to the second gallery and the third section from the second gallery to the top of the dome.

"At each of the balcony levels there are large windows, partially screened by tracery, which would give ample light in daytime and which will stand out in great brilliance when the structure is lighted at night.

"The extreme height of the structure from the first floor to the pinnacle of the dome is 161 feet.

"The height of the first gallery above the main floor is 36 feet and the distance from the first gallery to the second gallery is 45 feet.

"The distance from the second gallery to the base of the dome is 19 feet.

"The height of the dome proper, leaving out of account the projecting ribs, is 49 feet.

"The minarets guarding the first story of the structure rise to a height of 45 feet above the first floor.

"The extreme diameter of the basement is 202 feet.

"The diameter at the top of the steps is 152 feet.

"The central portion of the building is a single space extending from the main floor up to the inner shell of the dome."

Foundation Structure

Major Burt made the following report after the completion of the work on the caissons and the foundation structure:

"Two contracts of considerable amount have been carried out from my plans and under my supervision, namely, with Avery Brundage for nine caissons, amounting to \$76,350.00, and with McCarty Brothers for the general basement section, amounting to \$108,500.00. In addition to these, there have been several miscellaneous items which are shown on your records and which, with the above aggregate a total of \$187,876.35. Payments made to me amount to \$8,000.00, which includes payments to apply on account of the extra work of preparing plans for permit and for caissons.

"The Brundage contract for caissons was completed early in the summer of 1921, having been quite seriously delayed because of the large amount of water encountered in digging the wells for these foundations.

These wells were approximately 120 feet deep and extended about 90 feet below the level of the water in the lake and the drainage canal near by.

"Soon after the completion of the caisson contract, plans were submitted to contractors for the basement structure. This covered the foundations other than nine caissons, which were required for the outer portions of the building and the complete enclosure of the basement structure up to and including the first floor. It did not include the basement floor, the subdivision of basement space, the finishing of basement nor the installation of any of the mechanical appliances.

"A contract was made with McCarty Brothers of Chicago for this work on August 24, 1921. The starting of the work was somewhat delayed by the time required to get the necessary signatures to the contract. Also the work occupied considerable more time than was anticipated but was finally completed in the fall of 1922.

"Since the completion of the basement contract, no work of importance has been done on the structure. As it now stands, the structure comprises the entire basement enclosure, which consists of the main enclosing wall of concrete, about 200 feet in diameter and 20 feet high; the sloping concrete deck, which is to support the steps encircling the main structure; and the reinforced concrete deck which will be the first floor of the main structure. Within this enclosure are all of the supporting columns required for superstructure and beneath it are all of the foundations required for the entire structure.

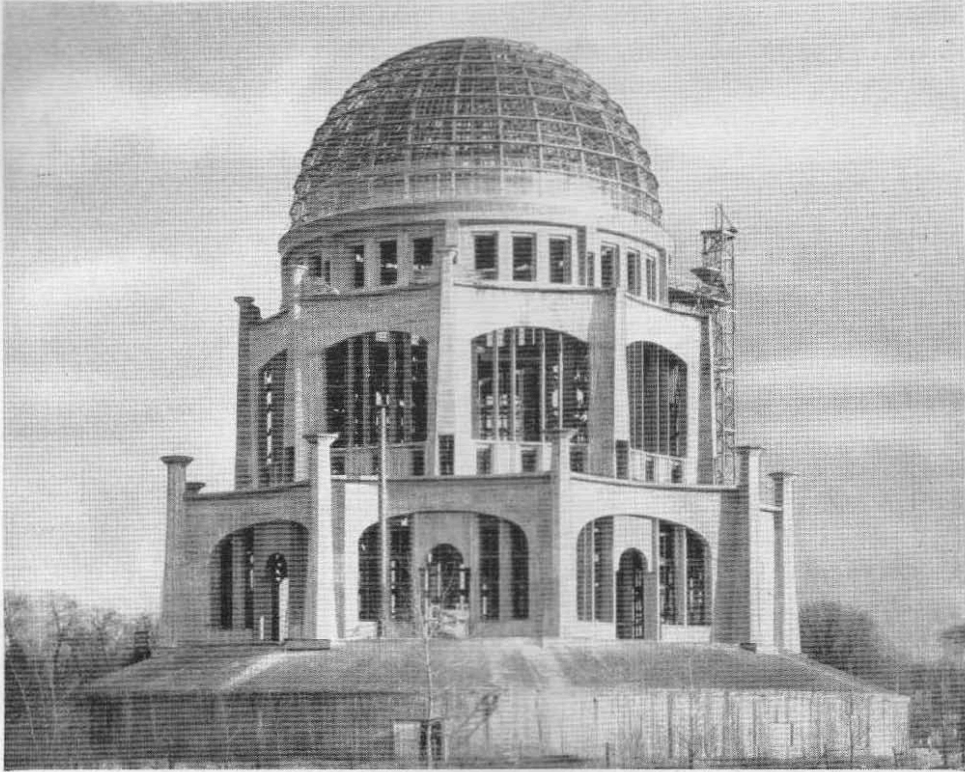
"The Board authorized Mr. Bourgeois, Architect of the Bahá'í Temple, to proceed with his plans in 1921. He did so and carried them to completion in 1922 to such extent as they could be completed without having the structural plans to coordinate with the architectural plans. Inasmuch as I was not authorized to proceed with the structural plans, I did only such work on them as was absolutely necessary to permit carrying on the architectural plans. This consisted principally in determining some of the governing dimensions and in some instances the relation of the structural members to the architectural members. The plans which were made for permit purposes were very useful for the architect in this connection.

"The architectural plans show all of the exterior treatment of the building and in large measure the interior arrangement. There are some details that could not be completed on account of the absence of the structural plans, as mentioned, and also because the exterior material had not yet been determined.

"No specifications have been written."

Investigation of Materials

Early in 1921, the Executive Board appointed a materials committee, consisting of the late Major H. J. Burt, the structural engineer, as chairman, Louis Bourgeois, the architect, W. S. Maxwell, architect, E. R. Boyle, builder, and Allen B. McDaniel, engineer, to study the problems



The Temple superstructure, completed May 1, 1931, a concrete building with dome constructed of steel, glass and aluminum. The sloping deck of the foundation is now covered by the circular steps, and the land has been graded to the top of the vertical foundation wall.

of materials to be used in the building of the Temple, with special relation to the exterior material. The unique and elaborate design of this nine-sided building had evoked considerable comment at the time of its selection and during subsequent years when the model was exhibited in museums, art centers, libraries and other public places in the larger cities of the United States and Canada. Over a period of nine years, and with a personnel changed through the death of Major Burt and other causes, this committee made three reports based on a world-wide study and investigation of building materials and their use in monumental structures. Samples of cast stone, terra cotta, aluminum alloy and architectural concrete were prepared by various concerns and placed on the property adjacent to the basement to test their durability, weathering, and discoloration. Conferences were held with leading representatives of the stone, cast stone, terra cotta, metals and concrete industries. After months of studies, investigations and conferences the committee was able to get only one definite estimate for the exterior ornamentation. The Earley Studio, Washington, D. C., submitted a full-size sample of the dome ornamentation and a preliminary estimate for the entire project. Soon after the acceptance of his design, the architect, in search of a suitable, practicable material of

which his unique design could be executed, had met and interested John J. Earley, an architectural sculptor, who had developed a new type (exposed aggregate) of architectural concrete. The nature of the design with its intricate ornamentation and repetition of forms and details was especially adapted to a material such as concrete, plastic when placed in molds or on the building, and becoming as hard and durable as stone upon setting.

Superstructure Raised

By 1929 the Trustees had received cash donations amounting to \$400,000, sufficient to proceed with the building of the superstructure. The materials committee recommended to the Trustees the construction of the entire superstructure framework enclosed with a metal-glass dome and metal frame windows and temporary doors. A careful cost analysis had disclosed the practicability of constructing the skeleton structure for the estimated cost of building the first story complete with a temporary roof, as originally contemplated by the architect and the Trustees, who realized that the Temple work must proceed in stages, as funds from time to time became available.

This plan was adopted and in August, 1930, a contract was awarded to the George A. Fuller Company of New York to build this framework superstructure on the foundation. Due to the financial depression at that time, the contractor was enabled to do the work with expedition and such economy that the plumbing and part of the heating and lighting systems were installed with available funds—thus providing a completely enclosed and usable building. The structural design was prepared by Benjamin B. Shapiro, Consulting Engineer, Chicago, and the building was erected under his immediate supervision.

As this project started, the architect died in his studio home on the Temple property. He had completed his design, including full-sized drawings of all of the exterior ornamentation, great drawings of remarkable beauty and accuracy, some of them reaching a length of 109 feet.

The Exterior Ornamentation

The John J. Earley Studio had available a plant at Rosslyn, Va., especially adapted to the construction of the dome ornamentation. This plant was assigned to the project and early in July, 1932, the preliminary work was started. This involved the layout and construction of a full-sized wooden model of one panel of the structural outer framework of the existing dome structure that would finally support the concrete ornamentation. An analysis quickly indicated that it would be more efficient and economical in the end to make the dome ornamentation at this plant rather than on the Temple property, as originally contemplated by the architect.

The principal purpose of this model of the dome panel was to serve as a standard of measurement from which the dimensions of the various

sections of the field and the ribs of the dome could be taken off later and used. Also this model was used for the purpose of studying the plaster of Paris casts of the dome ornamentation.

It was necessary to study the dome ornamentation, which is unique in having about one-third of its area perforated. If these perforations were too large they would destroy the architectural continuity. Were they too small they would not be apparent. All of the exterior surfaces of the ornamentation were carefully modeled and this modeling studied so as to secure the proper lights and shades and thus give character to the surface, especially when seen from a distance. It was necessary to study every ornamentation detail over a period of several months, so that it would fit into the design, as the brush strokes of the painter fit into and form a part of his masterpiece.

The first step in the preparation of the ornamentation was the modeling and carving of the original clay model for each and every section. The sculptor made a tracing of the architect's original full-sized drawing for each surface and then transferred this design on to the clay surface. From this outline he modeled and carved out the full-sized clay model. Plaster of Paris impressions were taken of the clay surfaces and from these the plaster of Paris model was prepared. These models were well reinforced with hemp and jute and rods. The rough plaster of Paris model was carefully carved to give the final surface texture and modeling. From each plaster cast or model a plaster of Paris mold was made and this represented the negative of the final cast section.

The unique feature in the casting of the concrete sections is the use of a mat or framework of high carbon steel rods which forms the reinforcement, supplying high early strength to the casting for handling and subsequently making of each section a structure which is designed to resist the highest possible pressures produced from wind, snow, ice and other factors.

After the concrete casts are taken out of the molds a group of skilled laborers scrape the mortar from the outer surfaces and thoroughly clean these surfaces down to the exposed aggregate. This leaves the entire outer surface of a white radiant quality.



Units of exterior ornamentation applied to the superstructure form a permanent outer surface or shell.

An interesting feature of the dome ornamentation is its division into the two hundred and seventy sections of the field and the one hundred and seventeen sections of the great ribs. These sections are separated by a space of a half inch to allow for deflection and temperature changes in both the steel structure and concrete material of the ornamentation.

Following the placing of the dome ornamentation, a second contract was awarded to Mr. Earley in March, 1934, for the ornamentation of the clerestory—the 19-foot drum below the dome. This project was consummated in July, 1935.

The exterior ornamentation of the Temple was resumed in October, 1937, with casting of the window grilles and other sections. Upon the completion of the second or gallery story faces, the nine pylons at the intersection of the faces were poured in place.

Before the second story work was finished, the models and molds for the first story castings were begun at the Rosslyn plant. Contrary to expectations at the beginning of the work in 1932, increasingly difficult problems arose as the work progressed from dome to steps. In the first or main story, the placing of the great spandrel sections over the main arches and the setting of the pieces composing the cornice required more labor and time than the making of the models and castings.

In July, 1942, the nine faces of the main story and their adjacent pylons—great columns rising to a height of 45 feet above the main floor—were given their final cleaning and stood forth in radiant beauty.

Meanwhile, in the latter half of 1941 the preliminary work for the building of the eighteen circular steps at the base of the structure had started at the Studio. When work was resumed in May, 1942, at the Temple the molds were prepared, the carriages concreted on the sloping ramp, and the casting of the 918 sections of the steps begun. During the latter half of 1942 the step sections were cast and placed on the carriages.

Thus the beautiful vision of Louis J. Bourgeois has been materialized in concrete form. What many technical men had deemed impracticable when they viewed the model in 1920, and laymen considered impossible from lack of material resources, has become a reality.

THE CENTER OF ILLUMINATION

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

IN OUR solar system, the center of illumination is the sun itself. Through the will of God this central luminary is the one source of the existence and development of all phenomenal things. When we observe the organisms of the material kingdoms we find that their growth and training are dependent upon the heat and light of the sun. Without this quickening impulse there would be no growth of tree or vegetation, neither would the existence of animal or human being be possible; in fact no forms of created life would be manifest upon the earth. But if we reflect deeply we will perceive that the great bestower and giver of life is God; the sun is the intermediary of His will and plan. Without the bounty of the sun, therefore, the world would be in darkness. All illumination of our planetary system proceeds or emanates from the solar center.

Likewise in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the ever-lasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals, conferring the bounties of the divine world upon man. These lights are the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts, sending forth in effulgent radiance the message of the glad-tidings of the Kingdom of God. In brief, the moral and ethical world and the world of spiritual regeneration are dependent for their progressive being upon that heavenly Center of illumination. It gives forth the light of religion and bestows the life of the spirit, imbues humanity with archetypal virtues and confers eternal splendors. This Sun of Reality, this Center of effulgences, is the Prophet or Manifestation of God. Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing life and growth, likewise the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence, and unless it rose upon the horizon of human existence the kingdom of man would become dark and extinguished. . . .

Consider the time of His Holiness Christ. Peoples, races and governments were many; religions, sects and denominations were various but when His Holiness appeared, the Messianic reality proved to be the collective center which unified them beneath the same tabernacle of agreement. Reflect upon this. Could His Holiness Jesus Christ have united these divergent factors or brought about such results through political power? Was this unity and agreement possible through material forces? It is evident that it was not; nay, rather, these various peoples were brought together through a divine power, through the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

They were blended and quickened by the infusion of a new life. The spirituality of Christ overcame their difficulties so that their disagreements passed away completely. In this way these divergent peoples were unified and became welded in a bond of love which alone can unite hearts. Therefore it is shown that the divine Manifestations, the holy mouth-pieces of God, are the collective Centers of God. These heavenly Messengers are the real shepherds of humanity, for whenever they appear in the world they unite the scattered sheep. The collective Center has always appeared in the Orient. His Holiness Abraham, His Holiness Moses, His Holiness Jesus Christ, His Holiness Muḥammad, were collective Centers of their day and time, and all arose in the East. Today His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is the collective Center of unity for all mankind and the splendor of His light has likewise dawned from the East. He founded the oneness of humanity in Írán. He established harmony and agreement among the various peoples of religious beliefs, denominations, sects and cults by freeing them from the fetters of past imitations and superstitions; leading them to the very foundation of the divine religions. From this foundation shines forth the radiance of spirituality which is unity, the love of God, the knowledge of God, praiseworthy morals and the virtues of the human world. Bahá'u'lláh renewed these principles, just as the coming of spring refreshes the earth and confers new life upon all phenomenal beings. . . .

This is the time for man to strive and put forth his greatest efforts in spiritual directions. Material civilization has reached an advanced plane but now there is need of spiritual civilization. Material civilization alone will not satisfy; it cannot meet the conditions and requirements of the present age. Its benefits are limited to the world of matter. There is no limitation to the spirit of man, for the spirit in itself is progressive, and if the divine civilization be established the spirit of man will advance. Every developed susceptibility will increase the effectiveness of man. Discoveries of the real will become more and more possible, and the influence of divine guidance will be increasingly recognized.

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