

is generally the case with Bahá'í institutions, the

Notes

development of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as an

Other Sources and Related Reading

institution is both gradual and evolutionary.

In His book of laws, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Most Holy Book), Bahá'u'lláh describes the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as a building erected in a city or village for the worship of God.¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose ministry spanned the period 1892–1921, encouraged the Bahá'ís to establish Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in every "hamlet and city";² if this were not possible due to severe persecution, He advised, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár could even be "underground."³ Many Bahá'í communities in Iran and in the Transcaspian Territory in Russia designated ordinary houses in their localities as Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs (See: 'Alavíyyih Khánum, and 'Alí Ján, Mullá).

'Abdu'l-Bahá addressing the gathering on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the Wilmette Temple, 1 May 1912.

'Abdu'l-Bahá also referred to the dependencies to be

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established as part of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex, including a hospital, a drug dispensary for the poor, a travelers' hospice, a school for orphans, a home for the infirm and disabled, a university for advanced studies, and "other philanthropic buildings" open to people of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions.⁴ These dependencies were later described by Shoghi Effendi, in general terms, as "institutions of social service" that relieve suffering, sustain the poor, and provide shelter, solace, and education.⁵ At the beginning of the twentieth century, 'Abdu'l-Bahá oversaw the construction of the first such Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex, built in Ashgabat (Ashkhabad) in Russia's Transcaspian Territory (now Turkmenistan). He also approved the site and design for the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the West, near Chicago, and participated in laying its cornerstone.

The changing pace and character of Bahá'í administrative development after 1921 influenced the

development of the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. As Head of the Bahá'í Faith from 1921 to 1957,

Shoghi Effendi directed the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order (See: Administration, Bahá'í)

and the Faith's worldwide expansion. During much of this period, he maintained completing the first House of Worship of the West as the primary focus of Temple building. After the dedication of the Temple near Chicago in 1953, he gave priority to two aspects of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár development at the national and international levels: (1) erecting a few large, specially built Houses of Worship, one on each continent, as examples of the edifices that will eventually be built in every nation and locality; and (2) obtaining properties in each country for future Temples and dependencies. He also concentrated the efforts of Bahá'í communities around the world on acquiring national and local Hazíratu'l-Quds (a term meaning "Sacred Fold"), Bahá'í administrative centers that may also be used for a variety of community functions. An institution complementary to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Hazíratu'l-Quds is to be situated near the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, if possible. Both are under the jurisdiction of the national or local Bahá'í governing council, at present known as the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of that country or locality.

The Universal House of Justice, established in 1963, has continued to pursue the two priorities set by Shoghi Effendi for Mashriqu'l-Adhkár development. Nearing the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, seven continental Houses of Worship exist in various areas of the globe, administered by the National Spiritual Assemblies (See: Administration, Bahá'í. Institutions of Bahá'í Administration. National Spiritual Assemblies) of their respective countries, and an eighth is being built. As yet, none of the Houses of Worship include the range of subsidiary institutions that will eventually be part of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex.

The House of Worship in Ashgabat most closely resembled the ideal of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex. Although it functioned for a relatively short time, the model created in Ashgabat continues to set the standard for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs of the future (See Section: Houses of Worship around the World. Ashgabat).

Purpose

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is to be an integral part of Bahá'í community life. Its central building, the House of

Worship, is specifically dedicated to prayer, meditation, and praising God. Because the aim of this structure, as of all Bahá'í institutions, is to foster and encourage unity, the building is open to all, not just Bahá'ís. In an address on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, near Chicago, in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained: "the original purpose of temples and houses of worship is simply that of unity—places of meeting where various peoples, different races and souls of every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them . . .

Worshippers and choir members in prayer on the mezzanine that all religions, races and sects may come together level of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa. Date: 2004- 11- within its universal shelter." 6 30. © Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank

In keeping with the Bahá'í Faith's devotional practices and its emphasis on universality, the auditorium of the House of Worship and the activities within it are kept simple. Images and pictures are excluded from the auditorium. No altars, pulpits, or fixed speaker's platforms are erected. No talks or sermons are delivered, and no elaborate ceremonies practiced. Since the Bahá'í Faith has no clergy, no one person leads devotions in the auditorium of the House of Worship. During devotional programs, invited readers, who may be adherents of any religion, recite or chant the holy scriptures of the Bahá'í Faith and of other religions. Music, which is regarded as an important part of the worship and praise of God, may be included in the devotional services in the auditorium of the House of Worship. Only music based on words of holy scripture and sung a cappella by a choir or soloists is used in the auditorium; recorded and instrumental music are not permitted there.

Although no specific day of the week or time of day is set aside for worship, Bahá'u'lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, encourages the Bahá'ís to go to the House of Worship at dawn and sit in silence, listening to the scriptures being read.⁷ He also exhorts parents to teach their children to chant the verses of God so that they may recite them in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.⁸

The subsidiary buildings and the grounds around the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár may be used for a variety of purposes. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote on one occasion of His wish that a great

feast be held on the site of the Wilmette Mashriqu'l-Adhkár during the Ridvan festival (the annual period from 21 April to 2 May commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission to His companions in Baghdad in 1863) and that on this occasion the melodies of the violin and the mandolin might be heard. 9 Events similar to the one 'Abdu'l-Bahá described have been held at various Houses of Worship. For example, from 28 March to 6 April 1986, during the United Nations International Year of Peace, the grounds of the House of Worship near Sydney, Australia, were the site of a Peace Exposition that included an eight-hour concert and a variety of musical presentations. On 22 November 2000 the opening ceremony for an international "Colloquium on Science, Religion and Development," which took place on the grounds of the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, featured a concert of classical Indian music performed on traditional instruments. An annual daylong Sommerfest with music, dance, devotions, and international foods is held on the grounds of the House of Worship near Frankfurt, Germany, attracting thousands of participants from all parts of Europe.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains, is a "material structure" that has "a spiritual effect" and, indeed, "a powerful influence on every phase of life." 10 Its purpose is not fulfilled by worship alone; it must inspire the direct actions of those working to regenerate the life of humanity. The dependencies surrounding the Temple link worship to service to humanity; the prayers and praise of God expressed within the Temple are translated into deeds of compassion, care, and education in the world outside.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi refer to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as a witness to and an embodiment of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh—a "silent teacher"—and as a stimulus to the spreading of those teachings. "When the foundation of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is laid in America," 'Abdu'l-Bahá predicted, "and that Divine Edifice is completed, a most wonderful and thrilling motion will appear in the world of existence . . . From that point of light the spirit of teaching, spreading the Cause of God and promoting the teachings of God, will permeate to all parts of the world." 11

The Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany.

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Form

Bahá'u'lláh urges that Houses of Worship be made "as perfect as is possible in the world of being" and that they be befittingly adorned. 12 The House of Worship has three prerequisites: it is to be circular shape, to have nine sides, and to be surrounded by nine gardens with walkways. The emphasis on the number nine comes from the understanding that this number, the largest single digit, symbolizes perfection, comprehensiveness, and unity. Nine is also the numerical value of the Arabic word bahá (light, glory) according to the ancient abjad system, in which each letter of the alphabet is accorded numerical significance.

Certain features, although not compulsory, have come to be accepted in building a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

The laying of a cornerstone containing tokens associated with the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá is customary. A dome is not one of the essential features specified by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but Shoghi Effendi advised in 1955 that "at this time all Bahá'í temples should have a dome."

13 While the structures must be nine-sided, they do not necessarily need nine doorways. The seats in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár usually face the qiblah or point toward which Bahá'ís should turn in prayer—the burial place of Bahá'u'lláh near Acre, located in what is now Israel (See: Bahá'í World Center. Early Development), but Shoghi Effendi specifically instructed that the House of Worship not have a special window "oriented toward the East [i.e., the qiblah]." 14

Aside from a few specific instructions, no strict guidelines for a House of Worship's architectural style and no formal expectations for its design have been set. "The essentials of the design, as stipulated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá are that the building should be nine-sided, and circular in shape," Shoghi Effendi explains.

"Aside from this, the architect is not restricted in any way in choosing his style of design." 15 Moreover, the architect need not be a Bahá'í. To date, architects who were not affiliated with the Bahá'í Faith have designed two Houses of Worship—in Frankfurt and Panama—and in other cases, as in Ashgabat and Sydney, have played a collaborative role in realizing the design.

Shoghi Effendi urges that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár be built in an enduring style, rather than one that may

be popular only for a time, and describes the ideal design as being "dignified," with a "delicate architectural beauty" and a "graceful" outline. 16 Future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complexes will undoubtedly continue to reflect a strong diversity in their style and inspiration, often including the incorporation of indigenous architectural influences in the design.

Symbolism

The House of Worship is replete with symbolic meanings beyond those associated with its physical form and structure. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes such buildings as "symbols of the reality and divinity of God."17 At the dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár site in Wilmette in 1912, He expressed the hope that the Temple to be built there might become like the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat, which He described as "a beautiful bouquet" with the potential to become "a paradise" when completed. 18 Such imagery has found realistic form in the inclusion of gardens and in some cases pools of water in the design of the various Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complexes.

Shoghi Effendi referred to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette as "the Harbinger" of Bahá'u'lláh's world order and, in a 1939 cablegram, as an "ARK" that would survive a "TIDAL WAVE" of "WORLD-ENCIRCLING CALAMITIES ."19 Shoghi Effendi applied the term "Mother Temple" to the first House of Worship of the West and to the first to be built in various regions and countries, intimating that these first Temples would be the progenitors and models for many others to come. In 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words, "Out of this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, without doubt, thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs will be born." 20

The House of Worship in Wilmette was likened by its architect, Louis Bourgeois, to a "Great Bell, calling to America."21 The Temple in New Delhi, India, resembles the lotus flower, which, as it arises from the swamp with the utmost purity and perfection, symbolizes the Messenger of God in the world. 22 Indeed, each of the Houses of Worship may be understood to be a symbol for Bahá'u'lláh as the Messenger, or Manifestation, of God for this age. "The real Collective Centers are the Manifestations of God, of Whom the church or temple is a The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India. 29 symbol and expression," 'Abdu'l-Bahá states. "That is to say, the September 1989. © Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank

Manifestation of God is the real divine temple and Collective Center of which the outer church is but a symbol." 23

HOUSES OF WORSHIP AROUND THE WORLD

Ashgabat (Ashkhabad, 'Ishqábád)

The first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex was built in Transcaspia, a Russian administrative subdivision east of the Caspian Sea and north of Iran. Only forty kilometers (just under twenty-five miles) north of the Iranian border, the new and prosperous city of Ashgabat, Transcaspia's administrative center, attracted residents from both Russia and Iran. Among the Iranians were a number of Bahá'ís, who began settling in the city around 1884, shortly after its founding. Because of the prevalent hostility of their Shiite compatriots, many of the new Bahá'í residents avoided identifying themselves openly as Bahá'ís and endeavored to blend into the Iranian populace. In 1889, however, a crisis challenged their efforts. One of the most prominent Bahá'ís, Hájí Muhammad Ridá Isfáhání, was stabbed to death in the bazaar, the victim of a plot by local Iranian merchants, abetted by clerics who had come to the city from Khurasan expressly to assist. The Russian authorities, unlike their counterparts in Iran, took seriously the commission of a crime against a Bahá'í, investigated it, and eventually tried and convicted the murderers, who had proudly admitted to the killing. During the trial, when the judge asked the Bahá'í onlookers to sit in a separate section of the courtroom, many individuals identified themselves as Bahá'ís for the first time.

The events associated with the murder proved to be a milestone for the Bahá'ís of Ashgabat, who numbered about four hundred at the time. After 1890 Ashgabat provided them an environment in which they were a recognized religious community with a degree of freedom unknown in Iran or elsewhere in the East, living under a government that allowed them to seek converts among the Muslims (Russian law prohibited conversion by Christians to a non-Christian faith) and also assured that attacks against them would be punished. Increasing numbers of Bahá'ís came from Iran, including the families of men who had settled in the city earlier. Bahá'í women in Ashgabat, emancipated from the strictures that

prevailed in predominantly Muslim countries, were free to participate in all community activities. The growing Bahá'í community had an incentive to develop social institutions of its own that would reflect its values, such as the equality of women and men and the necessity for moral and academic education for all.

As early as 1887, the Bahá'ís of Ashgabat began constructing their first communal buildings on a property, located near the center of the city, that had been envisioned as the site of a future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and approved as such by Bahá'u'lláh. They also obtained a cemetery on a different site. In September 1902, at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's request, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad Taqí Afnán, a cousin of the Báb, moved to Ashgabat to assume overall responsibility for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project. 24 As one of the leading merchants of Yazd, with business connections that stretched as far as Hong Kong, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad Taqí Afnán had become a commercial agent of the Russian government for southern Iran. He is widely known in historical accounts by the title Vakílu'd-Dawlih, meaning "Agent (or Representative) of the Government," as well as by the title he received from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Vakílu'l-Haqq, "Agent (Representative) of God." Hájí Mírzá Muhammad Taqí Afnán became the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár's primary benefactor and remained in Ashgabat until the essential work on the building had been completed.

The general design for the Temple was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's. Ustád 'Alí-Akbar Banná of Yazd, a builder, developed the plans under 'Abdu'l-Bahá's supervision. Work began in October 1902, with the foundation stone being laid in the presence of the governor-general of the province. The following year Ustád 'Alí-Akbar Banná, on a visit to Yazd, was killed during an anti-Bahá'í pogrom. Subsequently, a Russian engineer named Volkov was hired to oversee the construction. The structure was essentially completed by the end of 1906, although the building's external ornamentation was not finished until 1919.

An American Bahá'í architect, Charles Mason Remey, visited the Temple in 1909 and described it in detail.²⁵ Located in the center of the city and visible from a great distance,

the Temple had three sections: a central rotunda; an ambulatory surrounding it; and two series of exterior loggia, upper and lower, surrounding the entire building and opening onto the gardens. The rotunda was five stories high and topped by a hemispherical steel dome. A gallery was located directly above the ambulatory. Light from windows on the upper levels filled the interior. The exterior loggia on the first level could be reached both from the interior and exterior of the building. A pair of staircases on either side of the main entrance—a two-story portico surrounded by minarets, reminiscent of the Taj Mahal—provided access to the upper loggia. The interior of the dome was elaborately decorated with fretwork designs in relief. The third story contained plaques inscribed with a calligraphic representation of the invocation "O Glory of the All-Glorious" (referred to by Bahá'ís as "the Greatest Name").

Dependencies built before the Temple itself were soon augmented by new ones. In its most developed state, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár included a travelers' hospice; a school for boys (completed in 1897); a school for girls (completed in 1907); two kindergartens (founded in 1917–18); a medical dispensary; a library; and a public reading room. The dependencies served a thriving Bahá'í community of approximately three thousand adults and a thousand children. Ashgabat flourished as a center of Bahá'í learning and publishing. At its height the Bahá'í community of Ashgabat reached a degree of community development that remains unsurpassed to this day.

For a decade after the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár complex functioned fully, and the Ashgabat Bahá'í community continued to grow. No longer prohibited by law from teaching their religion to Christians, the Bahá'ís began attracting the interest of residents of Russian origin. Restrictions on various activities, both communal and individual, were imposed gradually in 1927, however, and escalated in 1928. At that time, in line with its policy toward all religious buildings, the government expropriated the Temple. Closed for three months, it reopened after the community signed a five-year rental contract with the government. The state also took over the Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, Russian Turkistan, before its destruction by an earthquake. © running of the schools and kindergartens—even though, by law, Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank

their curricula had not included religion—and gradually the Bahá'í teachers were dismissed. A number of community members were either arrested or deported.

For the next several years, the Bahá'ís attempted to continue functioning as a community, operating within the confines of the legal guidelines. They were able to renew the rental contract for the House of Worship in 1933. Between 1934 and 1936 the restrictions were relaxed, and after complying with requirements to make extensive but unnecessary repairs to the Temple, the community regained its full use under a lease for an indefinite period. The respite from repression was brief, however. Beginning in late 1936, with terror gripping the entire country in a period that would see the loss of millions of lives, Bahá'ís were subjected to renewed attacks and arrests. In 1938 the community was forcibly dismantled. About five hundred Bahá'ís—all the adult men and a few particularly active women—were arrested and either deported, imprisoned, or exiled, many to the Pavlodar area of northern Kazakhstan. Women and children who were Iranian citizens were deported to Iran. The Temple was closed to use by Bahá'ís and turned into a museum. In 1948 a major earthquake that devastated large sections of the city severely damaged the building. After it was further damaged by heavy rains in the early 1960s, it was demolished. The site was later turned into a public park in which stands a statue of the eighteenth-century Turkmen poet Mahtum Quli (Magtim Guli).

Chicago

The second Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Mother Temple of the West, was built in the heart of the North American continent. Inspired by the example of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat, the Bahá'ís of Chicago put the idea of the project forward in 1903 and received strong support from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In 1906–07, after several years during which other concerns took precedence, the Chicago Bahá'ís gained a renewed commitment to the project, particularly through the efforts of Corinne True and through directions 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave to pilgrims who visited Him in early 1907.

The widening of the Chicago Bahá'ís' efforts to include all the North American Bahá'ís in the project led to the beginnings of a national administrative organization. The planners chose a site

for the Temple on the shores of Lake Michigan in Wilmette, just north of Chicago, and in 1908 began acquiring it in several increments. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laid the cornerstone on 1 May 1912 during His visit to North America. In 1920 the delegates to the annual convention of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada chose a design submitted by French Canadian architect Louis Bourgeois. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá subsequently approved the selection. For the next ten years, Bourgeois continued to work on the project, living in a studio on the property until his death in August 1930. The studio, located on Sheridan Road between the Temple and Lake Michigan, later became the National Hazíratu’l-Quds.

Construction of the Wilmette House of Worship took place in stages, each of which was attended by unexpected problems and delays as well as shortages of funds. After the project overcame early public opposition in the village of Wilmette, ground was broken on 21 March 1921. The initial work on the site continued Louis Bourgeois, architect of the Bahá’í House of Worship, Wilmette. National Bahá’í Archives, United for several years. Construction of the foundation involved sinking States.

Construction of the foundation involved sinking nine caissons to a depth of approximately 36.5 meters (120 feet), nearly 27.5 meters (90 feet) below the water level of the lake and a canal adjoining the property.

A large Foundation Hall was built, enabling the Bahá’ís to hold a variety of events there, and modest improvements were made to the grounds. In January 1926 the North American Bahá’ís began a three-year plan to raise the funds needed to begin the superstructure. By early 1929 they had obtained only half of the four hundred thousand dollars needed. The remaining funds were raised by 31 March 1930—a remarkable achievement in a period remembered for the October 1929 stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression.

Shoghi Effendi included completion of the building’s exterior ornamentation among the major goals of his Seven Year Plan, 1937–44, the first of a series of campaigns for regional and worldwide expansion of the Bahá’í Faith. Although lingering economic depression, followed by wartime disruptions, slowed the progress of the work, donations continued to flow to Wilmette from Bahá’ís around the world.

Completing the interior ornamentation and the landscaping were goals of a second Seven Year Plan, 1946–53, in which the American Bahá’í community was also responsible for

expansion in Central and South America and in Europe. Confronting a budget shortfall that threatened the achievement of the goals, in 1949 Shoghi Effendi called for a period of austerity that required suspending certain national activities. In 1951 the interior ornamentation was finished ahead of schedule, and work on the landscaping began. The completed structure was dedicated in several ceremonies on 1 and 2 May 1953.

The building's main-floor plan is that of a nine-pointed star set on a circular apron of eighteen steps leading upward to nine entryways flanked by tall columns. The structure—topped by a graceful dome, its nine decorative ribs meeting at the summit—is 58.2 meters (191 feet) high from the floor of the basement to the culmination of the dome ribs. The inner rotunda is surrounded by an ambulatory with steps leading up to a gallery.

The decoration of the Wilmette House of Worship is its most characteristic feature. Both the interior and exterior of the building are faced with finely decorated panels cast from a mixture of crushed white quartz, white quartz sand, and white cement. After a committee investigated cast stone, terra cotta, or aluminum alloy as materials for the exterior decoration of the Temple and rejected them as impractical, John J. Earley, an architectural sculptor from Washington DC proposed using a new type of concrete that could be molded into intricate shapes, thereby translating Bourgeois's diaphanous plans into reality.

In a process devised by the Earley Studio, clay models were carved and used to make plaster of paris molds. From these, the concrete sections were individually cast around a framework of high-carbon steel rods. The resulting panels, produced at a plant in Rosslyn, Virginia, were taken out of their molds less than a day later. Workers then exposed the unique quartz aggregate by removing the top thin layer of cement paste. The panels are resistant to extremes of weather. They refract light, creating a visually dazzling effect particularly in the dome, with its inner and outer skin of decoration surrounding a curved glass armature. The configuration allows daylight to filter into the interior of auditorium, creating the effect of a floating web of light and concrete.

The exterior decoration of the building weaves together several themes: a celestial motif on the dome; leaves, tendrils, and flower forms; and symbols of several of the world's great religions, including the Bahá'í nine-pointed star. Short texts from Bahá'u'lláh's writings are carved over the nine doorways.

The interior ornamentation of the auditorium, designed by Alfred P. Shaw and produced by the Earley Studio, carries out the spirit of Bourgeois's design, echoing the structure's exterior ornamentation. Nine texts, different from those on the exterior, appear over the interior doorways. An inset design of the Greatest Name, which is lit at night, adorns the apex of the dome, over forty-one meters (135 feet) above the dark-red terrazzo floor. The auditorium seats nearly 1,200 people. Foundation Hall, located within the basement area, accommodates approximately 350 people for meetings and programs.

The gardens surrounding the Wilmette Temple are an integral part of the edifice. Landscape architect Hilbert E. Dahl began work on a plan as early as 1928. His design, one of three considered in 1951, was chosen after Shoghi Effendi recommended its implementation. Nine circular gardens surround the base of the building, serving as both transition spaces and areas for prayer and meditation. Each garden has its own unique character. Pools with fountains, flower beds, hedges, shrubs, and trees create a simple and dignified setting for the Temple. The properties surrounding the Temple comprise nearly three hectares (seven acres).

The House of Worship has become a well-known landmark and visitor attraction in the Chicago area, welcoming more than a quarter of a million visitors in 2007.²⁶ In 1978 it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which lists sites worthy of preservation. By the 1980s water and weather damage had caused deterioration that required painstaking restoration and preservation—a phased project that has won local and international awards. A conservation master plan to preserve the House of Worship for a thousand years has been in development since 1999. A restoration plan developed in 2000 includes both the building and the grounds of the House of Worship. The plan includes restoring the gardens, which had gradually changed over the

years, to the original design by Hilbert Dahl; replacing walkways and fountains; adding new lighting and irrigation systems; and replacing the monumental stairs, terraces, railings, and retaining walls around the building.

The first dependency of the Wilmette House of Worship, a Home for the Aged, was a goal of Shoghi Effendi's Ten Year Plan, 1953–63. A suitable property less than a kilometer (half a mile) from the House of Worship was obtained in 1955, and the Bahá'í Home was inaugurated on 1 February 1959. It functioned on the site until 2002, when the National Spiritual Assembly (See: Administration, Bahá'í. Institutions of Bahá'í Administration. National Spiritual Assemblies), finding the Home no longer economically viable and impossible to modernize under existing building codes, decided to close it, planning "to acquire a larger and more modern facility in the future." 27

Development plans for the Wilmette Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the national administrative complex as a whole include creation of a new visitors' center. In addition to the National Hazíratu'l-Quds on Sheridan Road, a large building in nearby Evanston houses most of the Bahá'í National Center offices, with various other offices also located in the vicinity of the Temple.

A springtime celebration for the Bahá'í House of

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette has a singular place in Bahá'í Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, USA. Date: 2003- 06- 03.

Photographer: Vladimir Shilov. © Bahá'í International history. Shoghi Effendi describes it as "the most hallowed Community.

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Temple ever to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and the crowning glory of the first Bahá'í century," unparalleled by the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat or by any House of Worship "to be raised in succeeding centuries." 28

Kampala

In 1953, with the Wilmette Temple finally completed, Shoghi Effendi began a new phase of Temple

building. He included acquisition of a number of Temple sites and construction of two continental

Temples—in Asia and Europe—among the goals of his Ten Year Plan, 1953–63.

Tehran was to be the

site of the Mother Temple of Asia; however, an outbreak of persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran in 1955

led Shoghi Effendi to replace construction of the Temple in Tehran with two new Temple projects, in

Africa and Australia.

The first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to be built during the Ten Year Plan is situated

on 8.5 hectares (21.5 acres) of land on Kikaya Hill on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda. The architect of the building, Charles Mason Remey, worked closely with Shoghi Effendi in developing the design. The architectural firm of Cobb, Powell, and Freeman—which designed the Bulange, the administrative center of the former kingdom of Buganda and one of Kampala's most important buildings—adapted the design to local conditions and oversaw construction. Work on the foundations began in October 1957, a month before Shoghi Effendi's death. The foundation stone was laid on 26 January 1958 as part of an intercontinental conference Shoghi Effendi had called. About one thousand Bahá'ís gathered for the ceremony in which Shoghi Effendi's widow, Hand of the Cause of God Rúhíyyih Rabbani, and Músá Banání, the first Hand of the Cause of God in Africa, participated. During the construction period, engineering problems affecting the foundations and the dome had to be overcome. Three years later, on 14 and 15 January 1961, the building was dedicated by Rúhíyyih Rabbani. The inaugural service on Sunday, 15 January, brought to the Temple about fifteen hundred people, approximately two-thirds of whom were not Bahá'ís.

The design of the Mother Temple of Africa harmonizes closely with the landscape. In its profile the Temple resembles the shape of a traditional African hut. Its flaring eaves create a circular porch on the lowest exterior level of the building, providing protection from the seasonal extremes of weather—chill winds, driving rains, dust, and high heat—common to the area. The original design had no doors or walls on the veranda level; without these barriers, the distinction between the inside and outside of the Temple would have been blurred, extending the area of sacred space. However, the local architects found it necessary to change the design to protect the interior from the elements. The exterior walls of the ground floor of the structure are pierced by doors and by windows patterned with hexagonal units of glass. A series of piers supports the steel-reinforced concrete, nine-sided, unribbed dome, which is capped by a graceful lantern. Deferring to the need for ventilation during the extreme heat of the African summer, the windows in the upper story are louvered rather than glazed.

A distinctive feature is the use of color in decorating the House of Worship. On the exterior, green mosaic tiles cover the dome and the eaves. On the interior, the dome is blue, and the walls, glass windows, and decorations are in shades of white, green, and amber—colors that "seem to melt into the hues of the sun-drenched fields, hills, clouds, and sky outside." 29

At the time of its construction, the building, at nearly thirty-eight meters (124.7 feet), was the highest structure in East Africa. It has a seating capacity of more than four hundred, with over 515 square meters (5,550 square feet) of floor space.

The functioning of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was interrupted under the Idi Amin regime, which banned the Bahá'í Faith along with twenty-six other religious organizations. Activities ceased on 16 September 1977, but the building remained in Bahá'í hands, Bahá'í House of Worship, Kampala, Uganda. © Bahá'í enabling a few Bahá'ís to provide basic maintenance and International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank protection during a period of increasing unrest and warfare. On the night of 10 April 1979, "a fierce artillery battle raged around Kikaya Hill." The following day, Tanzanian troops, supported by Ugandan exiles, captured Kampala from the forces loyal to Idi Amin. That morning, Uganda's most distinguished native-born Bahá'í, Enoch Olinga, a Hand of the Cause, finding the House of Worship "unscathed," opened all nine doors for the first time in more than a year and a half.³⁰

Although political and social instability in Uganda, including renewed civil war, continued until the mid-1980s, the Bahá'ís regained the right to function administratively, and the National Spiritual Assembly was restored in April 1981. By that time the House of Worship was badly in need of renovation, particularly because rainwater had leaked into the walls and the dome. Work proceeded slowly, hindered by trying conditions in the country and at the Temple site itself. The entire building, including the interior of the dome, was finally repainted, and a transparent waterproof coating was applied to the exterior of the dome. However, the waterproofing, designed for European climates, was unable to withstand the African extremes of sun and violent rainstorms, and leaks soon reappeared. The ineffective coating also began to darken. In 1990–91 a crack injection method

of waterproofing, economical but largely unknown, was undertaken, resulting in partial improvement. With assistance from volunteers who had worked on renovations at the Wilmette Temple, another round of repairs—cleaning, applying fresh grout to the mosaic tiles, and waterproofing with a coating called "silokane"—led to lasting resolution of the leakage problems by the end of 1992. The Temple was also thoroughly repainted and resealed.

Further extensive renovations took place in 2001 in preparation for celebrations commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in Uganda. On 2 August 2001, an audience of two thousand people at the House of Worship heard the State Minister for Health read a statement from Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, that, according to a news account of the event, praised the Bahá'í Faith's record in the country for being years ahead of the government's in bringing "people together irrespective of their faith, race, color or ethnicity" and in its commitment to "the empowerment of women."³¹

Sydney

Shoghi Effendi refers to the second House of Worship built according to his instructions as "the Mother Temple of the whole Pacific area" and "the Mother Temple of the Antipodes." ³² The design is another collaborative effort between him and Charles Mason Remey. Its specifications were developed by John Brogan, a Sydney architect. The Temple site is located on property that comprises approximately nine hectares (some twenty-two acres) on a hill in Ingleside, twenty kilometers (12.4 miles) north of Sydney. Excavations began in December 1957. A foundation ceremony on 22 March 1958 included the participation of Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn, who with her husband, Hyde Dunn (posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause), had brought the Bahá'í Faith to Australia in 1920. Construction proceeded more slowly than anticipated because of labor problems and the unusual technical requirements of the design. The building was dedicated on 16 and 17 September 1961.

Like its counterpart in Wilmette, the Sydney House of Worship is

distinguished by the innovative mixture of crushed quartz and concrete used in the design. The structure, which has a seating capacity of six hundred, is topped by a ribbed dome that reaches 39.6 meters (130 feet) above the basement floor. The building has three stories: a ground level containing nine doorways flanked by capped piers; a clerestory level with Palladian-style windows; and a ribbed dome, topped by a lantern that was set in place by a helicopter, another innovation in The Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney, Australia. Australian construction. Pinnacles adorn the exterior buttressing

Date: 1980s. © Bahá'í International Community.

Bahá'í Media Bank of the second level and provide a counterpoint to the decoration surrounding the windows. The decorative pierced designs allow the sun to cast complex shadows into the interior of the Temple. The lace-like decoration is echoed in the balustrades of the gallery level of the interior.

The Temple is set in an area of natural bush, and its gardens feature an impressive variety of native plants. A number of buildings—including a visitor's center, bookshop, and administrative offices—and a picnic area are located on the grounds surrounding the Temple.

A landmark on Sydney's scenic northern coast, the Temple, again like its counterpart on the shores of Lake Michigan in Wilmette, is often used as a navigational point for ships and aircraft. The Sydney House of Worship attracts more than twenty thousand Australian and international visitors annually.

Frankfurt am Main

In April 1953 Shoghi Effendi called for the German Bahá'í community to build the Mother Temple of Europe in Frankfurt am Main during the Ten Year Plan. Before construction could begin, serious obstacles had to be overcome. Several potential sites were found, but permits to build were denied after lengthy administrative processes. In each case, church authorities had expressed opposition to the proposals. The opposition led to increased public awareness of the project and to calls for religious tolerance. Finally, in 1959, the Bahá'ís were able to obtain permission to build on a site in the village of Langenhain, now part of the town of Hofheim, in the Taunus region about twenty-five kilometers (15.5 miles) west of Frankfurt. Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins laid the cornerstone on 20 November 1960,

and the Temple was dedicated on 4 July 1964, with Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Rabbani representing the Universal House of Justice.

The design by Teuto Rocholl, a Frankfurt architect, was chosen through a competition and approved by Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria. The design reflects the postwar interest in buildings with simple post and lintel structures and walls of glass. Elevated above the flat plain by nine symmetrically arranged single flights of steps, the circular building is circumscribed by a walkway. Nine entrance doors open onto an ambulatory enclosed by floor-to-ceiling windows, which afford sweeping views of the Temple property of nearly three hectares (7.3 acres) and the surrounding countryside. Nine doors lead from the ambulatory into a central rotunda seating around five hundred persons. The rotunda is capped by a dome, which rests on twenty-seven pillars. The dome is pierced throughout its surface by 540 diamond-shaped glazed openings that allow multiple points of light into the interior. The lantern atop the dome is also open, its windows framing an inset design of the Greatest Name. The overall structure is twenty-eight meters (ninety-two feet) high.

The Universal House of Justice has called for the building of a home for the aged as the first dependency of the German House of Worship.

The Bahá'ís of Germany commemorated their centenary in 2005 by holding, among several major events, a reception on 22 April 2005 at the Bahá'í National Center on the grounds of the House of Worship. The participants included the architect, Teuto Rocholl, as well representatives of the federal and European parliaments, the state of Hesse, and the nearby cities of Hofheim and Wiesbaden. Speeches by the mayor of Hofheim and Langenhain, Germany. Date: 2005- 05- 31. © Bahá'í others indicated the extent to which public attitudes toward the International Community. Bahá'í Media bank

Bahá'ís and the House of Worship had shifted in a region where the Bahá'í Faith was once banned (1937–45, under the Nazi regime) and where its initial efforts to build a Temple were hindered by religious prejudice.

Panama City

Since 1963, the Universal House of Justice has continued to plan the building of continental Houses of Worship. The next series of Temples built reflects the expansion of the Bahá'í Faith in Central America, the Pacific Islands, and the Indian subcontinent in the second half of the twentieth century. The Universal House of Justice included the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Panama among the international goals of its Nine Year Plan, 1964–73, and the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in India and Samoa in its Five Year Plan, 1974–79.

The Mother Temple of Latin America sits high atop Cerro Sonsonate, at an altitude of 225 meters (738 feet), eleven kilometers (6.8 miles) north of Panama City, Panama. The site comprises 11.6 hectares (28.7 acres) and offers scenic views of the city of Panama and the sea. Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Rabbani laid the cornerstone on 8 October 1967. Construction began over two years later, on 1 December 1969, and the Temple dedication took place on 29 and 30 April 1972, with Rúhíyyih Rabbani representing the Universal House of Justice.

The Universal House of Justice selected the Temple's innovative design, the work of Peter Tillotson, a British architect, from about fifty international submissions. Robert W. McLaughlin, dean emeritus of the School of Architecture of Princeton University, served as the Universal House of Justice's architectural consultant for the project.

The Temple's parabolic dome, built on the principle of a shell, is an achievement that depended on technology that was new at the time of its construction. The structural design of the dome is the result of computer technology, and its extreme thinness, only about ten centimeters (four inches), relied on new materials and techniques. The concrete of the dome was applied through the "Guniting process," used in Panama for the first time, in which dry sand and cement are forced through a rubber hose and mixed with just enough water to create a barely moist concrete mixture. Once the concrete had set, the exterior of the dome was faced with white glazed tiles.

In consideration of Panama's steamy climate, the building's openings are unglazed, allowing the air to

cool the atmosphere inside and providing stunning vistas. Mahogany seats rest on a terrazzo floor.

Abstract designs in red marble chips adorn the dome's supporting walls, recalling the elaborate decorations on the buildings of the ancient Americas. Nine ornamental iron gates lead to the interior space, which seats 550 people.

On the second story, a balcony overlooks the central auditorium. The view into the interior of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is highlighted by the abstract mathematical patterning of the eighteen interconnecting ribs that create the decoration of the dome. The overall height of the structure is approximately twenty-eight meters (ninety-two feet).

Canadian architect Siamak Hariri, noting the influence of the Panama House of Worship on his creative team when they were developing the design for the House of Worship in Chile (See The Bahá'í House of Worship in Panama City, Panama.

© Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank Section: Houses of Worship around the World.Santiago), has provided this evocative description: "We also love the way the Panama Temple is so understated. It transcends its own sense of itself, sitting majestically, quietly yet confidently connected to the landscape." 33

Apia

The Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands in Samoa—like the Temples in Uganda, Panama, and Australia

—is situated at a high elevation near the country's largest population center. The grounds at Tiapapata on the island of Upolu overlook the town of Apia some 14.5 kilometers (nine miles) away on the coast.

The property comprises nearly nine hectares (twenty-two acres) at an altitude of approximately six hundred meters (1,900 feet).

The foundation stone of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was laid on 27 January 1979 by Hand of the Cause

Rúhíyyih Rabbani, representing the Universal House of Justice, and by His Highness Susuga Malietoa

Tanumafili II, Head of State of Samoa, the first ruling head of state in the world to become a Bahá'í.

Both also participated in the dedication of the House of Worship on 1 September 1984.

Architect Hossein Amanat—an Iranian-born Canadian who later designed many of the buildings at the

Bahá'í World Center in Haifa, Israel—utilized the form of the roof of the

traditional Samoan house, the fale, and the open plan of the fale itself in conceptualizing the design of the Temple. The white, mosaic-tiled dome rests atop nine pairs of buttresses clad in imported Australian granite in soft red tones. Through use of modern construction techniques, the dome's nine ribs of mirrored glass, the graceful arched windows, and the wide expanse of glazing over each portal seemingly draw light through the structure itself and provide an iridescent effect when the building is lit at night. The shell of the dome and the internal structure are of white reinforced concrete, bushhammered to a soft texture and accented with native ifilele wood joinery. The flooring is a warm-red quarry tile. The building rests on a raised base and measures thirty-one meters (102 feet) from the basement to the top of the dome.

The main hall seats five hundred people; a cantilevered mezzanine that rings the perimeter provides additional seating for two hundred, including a choir. At the apex of the dome, the ribs converge to create a pattern of light, in the center of which is set the symbol of the Greatest Name. Quotations from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh are carved over the doorways and on the decorative wood paneling inside the House of Worship.

Construction materials were imported from many parts of the Pacific: cement and steel from Japan and New Zealand; granite from Australia; white aggregate from the tiny island nation of Niue; and white sand from New Zealand.

The grounds of the Temple include extensive gardens with more than sixty species of indigenous plants and trees; an open-air visitors' center with a large meeting hall, a bookshop, and an office for Temple guides; a caretaker's residence; and the National Hazíratu'l-Quds. In addition to regular weekly devotional programs featuring a notable Samoan choir, special services are held at the House of Worship annually on such occasions as United Nations Day and International Women's Day.

New Delhi

Bahá'ís from the island of Savai'i singing on the grounds of the Bahá'í Bahapur, on the outskirts of New Delhi, India, is House of Worship in Samoa

during the jubilee celebrations of the Samoan Bahá'í community in 2004. Date: 2004- 11- 30. © Bahá'í International the site of the Mother Temple of the Indian Community. Bahá'í Media Bank subcontinent. Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Rabbani, representing the Universal House of Justice, laid the foundation stone on 17 October 1977, and construction began on 21 April 1980. The Temple's dedication on 24 December 1986 attracted eight thousand participants from 114 nations. Once again Rúhíyyih Rabbani represented the Universal House of Justice.

The building was conceived by its architect, Fariborz Sahba, a Canadian of Iranian birth, as a nine-petaled lotus that appears to float in a series of nine pools. The lotus form is a symbol of spirituality and beauty that appears in the mythology of all the religions of India. In using this form, the architect both acknowledges the basic beliefs of these religions and suggests that, with the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, a new "Flower hath begun to bloom."³⁴

The structure has five sets of "petals"—three external and two internal—made of thin, concrete shells. The first set forms the entrance leaf and opens outward to create the nine entrances leading into the building. The second set of petals points inward to cover the ambulatory, and a third set forms the central hall, which is covered by an interior dome shaped by the two remaining sets of internal petals. The sets of petals were built by a unique technique of climbing wooden shutters, which were filled with white concrete in one continuous operation, avoiding any joint. When the external petals were completed, each one The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India. © was faced with a double curvature of marble quarried in Greece Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank and cut in Italy.

Construction of the Temple did not depend on modern, highly sophisticated equipment and technology. Rather, it utilized one of India's most abundant resources: people. As many as eight hundred individuals, including entire families of workers, were involved as technicians, engineers, artisans, and laborers in meeting the exacting demands of a design that includes not even one straight line and that required a constant search for innovative solutions. Housing facilities, a daycare center, and a primary

school were established to meet the needs of the workers, whose hours were adjusted during the hot summer months to allow work to be done under floodlights in the relatively cool evening hours, rather than during the extreme heat of the day. The workers brought to their tasks traditional techniques, equipment, and pride in artisanship—low-tech approaches to a peculiarly high-tech project.

A central set of stairs brings the visitor to the building. Walkways suspended above the pools, which act as a natural cooling system for the entire edifice, provide access to the interior. The Prayer Hall, or auditorium, seats thirteen hundred, with additional seating that expands its capacity to twenty-five hundred. The structure is more than forty meters tall (131 feet) and sits on nearly eleven hectares (26.7 acres) of land.

By 1992 the Temple had become one of the most visited buildings in India, and by 2007, when it had 4.6 million visitors, one of the most visited buildings in the world. The architect and the building have won international recognition, including awards from the United States–based International Federation of Religious Art and Architecture (1987); from the Institute of Structural Engineers of the United Kingdom (1988), for its structural design; from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, for its exterior lighting (1988); and from the American Concrete Institute (1990). The New Delhi Temple has received extensive international media attention; has been featured in numerous television and video documentaries; and has been discussed at many international conferences, such as Yale University's symposium on sacred architecture in October 2007, at which Fariborz Sahba delivered a talk on "Faith and Form: Contemporary Space for Pilgrimage and Worship."

Santiago

In April 2001 the Universal House of Justice, as one of the international goals of its Five Year Plan, 2001–06, called for commencing construction of the Mother Temple of South America in Santiago, Chile. Shoghi Effendi had mentioned the location in a message to the annual convention of the Bahá'ís of South America in 1953. In July 2002 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Chile invited the submission of designs. The Universal House of Justice considered 185

submissions, narrowing the field to four before announcing the final selection on 12 June 2003. Tendered by Siamak Hariri of the Toronto firm Hariri Pontarini Architects, the design features a dome clad in translucent Spanish alabaster and forged glass that Light shines from within a model of the new Bahá'í Temple is intended, in Hariri's words, to be "a crystallizing of light-as- Temple chosen for Chile. © Bahá'í International Community. Bahá'í Media Bank expression": "This living Temple of Light, which will glow with a dreamlike serenity, will explore the entire range of the phenomena of light and shadow in continual interaction." 35 Likened by an architectural critic to a "hovering cloud, an architectural mist,"³⁶ the design immediately garnered praise in numerous architectural publications and in 2007 received a prestigious award from Architect magazine. The structure is to be 30.4 meters (approximately 100 feet) in both height and width, with an auditorium seating six hundred people.

The Temple site north of Santiago, in the foothills of the Andes, is 110 hectares (nearly 272 acres) in size. The Temple itself, projected to cost US\$27 million, will be built on a hilltop, surrounded by gardens and grounds. Work on structural components of the building began in Canada in 2007. Construction of the foundations is tentatively scheduled to begin in October 2008.

FUTURE PLANS

Shoghi Effendi approved architectural plans for two Temples that have yet to be built. Construction of the first, a Temple near Tehran, has been repeatedly deferred because of persecutions directed against the Bahá'ís of Iran. Shoghi Effendi also approved plans for a Temple in Haifa that were drawn by Charles Mason Remey, whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had chosen as the architect. The site, located on a promontory of Mount Carmel (See: Bahá'í World Center. Development under Shoghi Effendi), is currently landscaped and marked by an obelisk.

In the same April 2001 message in which it called for building the Chile Temple, the Universal House of Justice stated that, in accordance with a new epoch in the development of the Bahá'í Faith, the completion of the process of erecting continental Houses of Worship would prepare the way for the next stage of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár development: construction of national Houses of Worship, as circumstances

allow. Each National Spiritual Assembly, wherever possible, has purchased a site for the Mother Temple of its nation—in 2007 numbering 123 Temple sites around the world.

Authors: Julie Badiee and the Editors

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