

STUDIES IN BÁBÍ AND BAHÁ'Í HISTORY
VOLUME FOUR

MUSIC,
DEVOTIONS,
AND
MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

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KALIMÁT PRESS
LOS ANGELES

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First Edition

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
(Revised for vol. 4)

Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í history.

Includes bibliographies and indexes.

Contents: [1] [no title]—v. 2. From Iran east
and west / edited by Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen—
[etc.]—v. 4. Music, devotions, and Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár /
R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram.

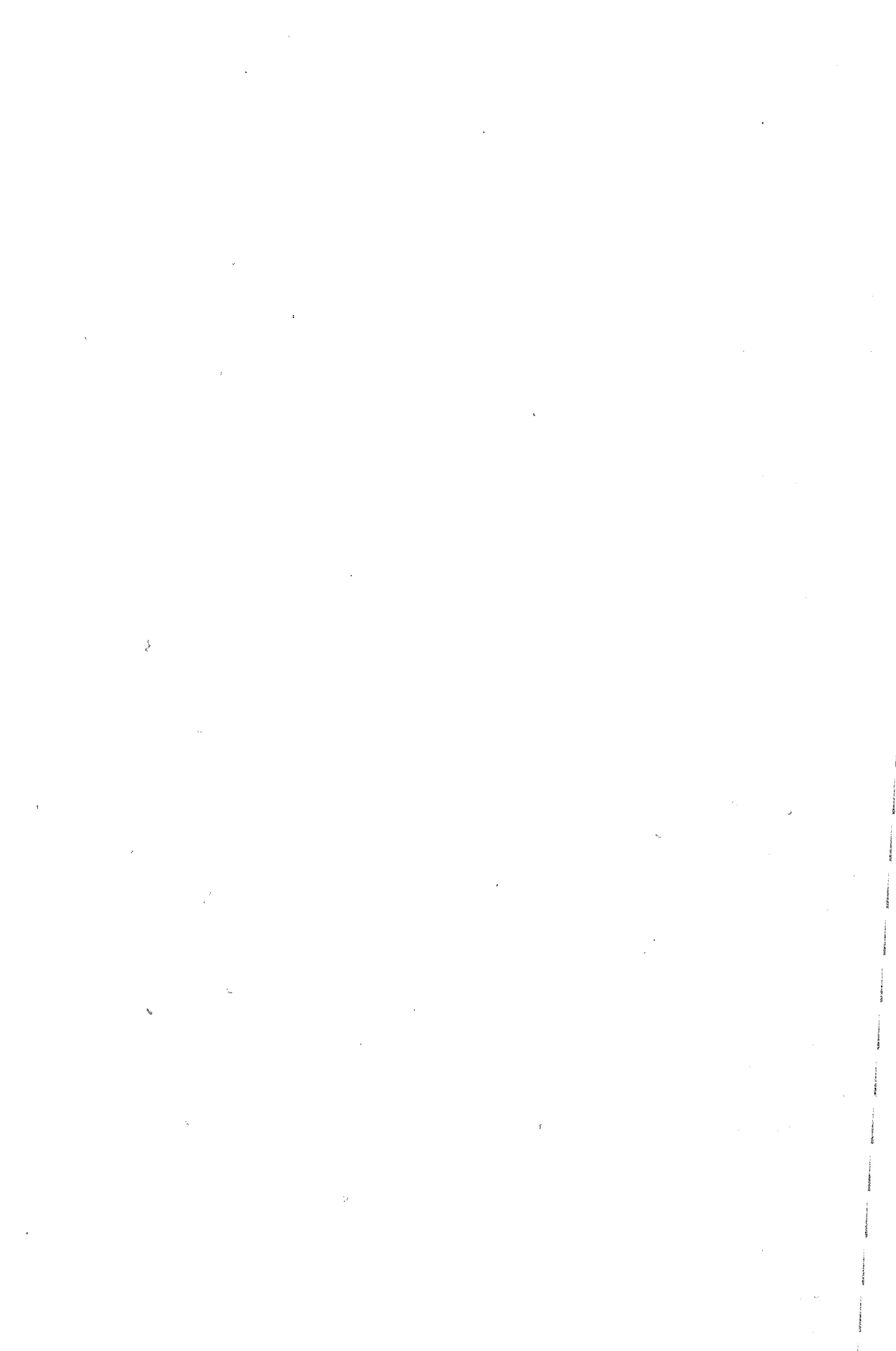
1. Baha'i Faith—History. 2. Babism—History.

I. Momen, Moojan. II. Armstrong-Ingram, R. Jackson.

BP330.S78 1982 297'.89 83-22

ISBN 0-933770-16-2 (v. 1)

To Karen



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PREFACE

This work draws on research done over the last several years, mostly since 1982. The use of that research here is highly selective, and much material of interest that space does not permit to be discussed here will be presented elsewhere.

As is the case with all who do extended research at the National Bahá'í Archives, I am indebted to the archivist, Roger Dahl, for his assistance in locating pertinent materials. I am also obliged to Richard Hollinger for supplying copies of some correspondence from the archives of the Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles.

I wish to thank all those Bahá'ís who shared their experiences of devotional activity with me. I owe especial thanks to Rick Hill and Shery McDonnell Rak for many stimulating discussions and for their participation in recitals of music by early North American Bahá'ís.

I am deeply indebted to the late Ghazzal Towfiq who assisted me with the identification of Arabic and Persian texts and in annotating their English translations. I will always remember the conscientious enthusiasm she brought to our search.

Naturally, these acknowledgements notwithstanding—as is the case with any scholarly work—the conclusions presented here are solely my own and should not be taken to represent the views of any other individual Bahá'í or Bahá'í institution.

The preparation of this work for publication was assisted by a grant-in-aid toward my ongoing research and writing from the Victory Foundation. Such support by independent foundations is vital to the development of any new field of scholarly endeavor and I am grateful for the Victory Foundation's assistance with my work as part of their encouragement of vigorous growth in Bahá'í studies.

As with all of my writing, mere mention cannot do justice to the extent to which the forbearance and support of my wife and family have contributed to this work.

For the record, I will note here the differences between my doctoral thesis and the present work. Both the introduction and first chapter have been shortened for the published version, with the omitted material mostly intended for use elsewhere. The remainder of both versions is substantially the same, except for largely trivial differences caused by the different requirements of the two modes of presentation.

Beyond the architectural illustrations used to support the arguments in Chapter Six, this published version includes a number of period photographs that I hope will add to the tangibility of my discussion of events over the last nine decades. Of the architectural illustrations, the one of the Bourgeois interior design of 1920, which is used in the thesis was not available for use here. A Bourgeois sketch of the interior from the later 1920s has been substituted. As with the development of the exterior design, this later interior sketch demonstrates even more forcibly the use of derivative material as discussed in the text than does the unavailable one from 1920.

R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram
August 1987

INTRODUCTION

Before its introduction to North America the Bahá'í Faith was, in a broad sense, a Middle Eastern religion. Its adherents extended from Egypt across the Ottoman and Persian Empires to India, and the host societies and cultures for most Bahá'í communities were Islamic. This was generally true at the level of daily interaction even in places such as Russian Turkestan and northern India, where the ultimate reigns of control were not in Muslim hands. The social and cultural environment to which the Bahá'í Faith was introduced in North America was, of course, considerably different from that of the Middle East.

Yinger suggests that:

A complete religion . . . is a social phenomenon: it is shared, and it takes on many of its most significant aspects only in the interaction of the group. Both the feelings from which it springs and the solutions it offers are social; they arise from the fact that man is a group-living animal.¹

And Jones observes:

. . . if alternation or conversion is to be manifested it becomes so as the articulated and ordered arrangement of major constituents or roles in an interactional setting. To change an identity is to

change the manner in which one sees oneself, one's reference group, and role-set. The 'facts' in the cultural milieu—mores, folkways, status-systems, sanction mechanisms—also change. . . . The belief systems to which individuals are converted do not exist in some disembodied state but are tangible in some organisation or group which are an integral part of the larger social system.²

Obviously, for those attracted to the Bahá'í Faith in North America, Middle Eastern Islamic societies were not "the larger social system" in which they lived, and the "mores, folkways, status-systems" and "sanction mechanisms" that had developed in Bahá'í communities within such social systems were not wholly transferable to the North American social context. Also, the immediate "reference group" and "role-set" for these early North American Bahá'ís were being created by themselves as they identified with the Bahá'í Faith. Through the processes of their interaction they created their own "social phenomenon" by initiating a North American Bahá'í community.

Yinger, in broadening his conception of a "complete religion," summarizes Joachim Wach as holding that:

. . . all religions, despite their wide variations, are characterized by three universal expressions: the theoretical, a system of belief; the practical, a system of worship; and the sociological, a system of social relationships. Until all of these are found, one may have religious tendencies, religious elements, but not a full religion.³

When the first four North Americans became Bahá'ís in 1894, they did so under the influence of a Syrian Bahá'í who had come to Chicago and who himself knew comparatively little of the Bahá'í Faith's theoretical, practical, or sociological systems. In the following years those who became Bahá'ís entered a community that may be characterized as being in a

liminal situation—bestriding a culturally Christian past and a prospective Bahá'í future—and:

In this interim of “liminality,” the possibility exists of standing aside not only from one’s own social position but from all social positions and of formulating a potentially unlimited series of alternative social arrangements.⁴

The North American Bahá'í community had to gradually negotiate this “potentially unlimited series” in relation to its growing exposure to and appreciation of the theoretical system of belief that it had potentially espoused in accepting a new faith, and from the process derive not only social but also practical and ideational alternative arrangements. Both the process of exposure and the process of negotiation operated through the activities of particular individuals and groups (whether official administrative or ad hoc) within the larger Bahá'í community. This led to the development of values and norms specifically associated with the Bahá'í community by its members and seen by them to differentiate it from other communalities within North American society.

Yet, as Cohen asserts:

Norms and values do not exist on their own but are everywhere couched in symbolic formations. They are developed and maintained within the psyche of the individual through continual symbolic activities. Often it is the objective symbols that generate the subjective experience of obligation and not the other way round.

As our subjective life is shifting, vague and chaotic, we are only too happy to be assisted by the objective symbolic formulations provided to us by “experts,” leaders, teachers or, generally, the culture under which we live. Symbols are essentially objective forms. They may be originally the spontaneous creation of individuals going through specific subjective experiences, but they attain an objective existence when they are accepted by others in

the course of social interaction . . . subjective and individual now becomes objective and collective. They develop a reality of their own, become obligatory and begin to exercise constraint on the individual.⁵

The aim of this study is to investigate some of the symbolic formations that arose in the process of the development of a North American Bahá'í community, and how those symbolic formations exercised constraint on the individuals and groups engaged in that process. The focus of the symbols to be discussed is the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* at Wilmette, Illinois.

The concept of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* (literally, the Dawning-Place of the Mention, or Remembrance, of God; "House of Worship" or "Temple" are used as English equivalents) in the Bahá'í Faith is fairly broad. It may refer to: (a) a building, fulfilling specific architectural requirements, that is reserved solely for devotions (unlike a church, for example, it may not be used for such rites as weddings, funerals, or naming children, nor may it be used for sermons or lectures); (b) a building, not fulfilling the architectural requirements, that is similarly reserved for devotions; (c) a room similarly reserved for devotions in a building used primarily for other purposes (for example, a home or administrative center); (d) a complex of buildings which includes either a, b, or c and a series of "dependencies," buildings or parts of buildings catering to social needs (such as a meeting hall, school, hospital, orphanage, etc.); (e) a devotional meeting; or (f) the "heart" of the sincere worshiper. Within the current North American Bahá'í community the term is usually perceived as applying to (a) and (d), and most specifically to the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* at Wilmette. (There are also *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* of class (a) in Uganda, Australia, Germany, Panama, Samoa, and India.)⁶

The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* at Wilmette is probably the most potent objective symbol of Bahá'í social and cultural identity

for North American Bahá'ís, and the process of its erection is seen as inextricably linked to the development of the administrative institutions of the Bahá'í Faith in this continent.

The centering of thought, devotion and financial offering upon the great ideal of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* has been the formative element . . . to bring the Bahá'ís to maturity throughout this continent. . . .

The building must be regarded as a symbol of the power of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.⁷

From 1903, when the idea of building a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in the Chicago area was first mooted, to 1953, when the building was substantially brought to its present form, the Bahá'í Faith in North America passed from being a loosely knit network of "cells" adhering to a "movement" to being a "religion" with its own distinctive developed institutions and parameters of belief and practice accepted as such by the institutions of its host society. The development of the physical structure of the Wilmette *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* is generally seen as having been a major motive force in this transition. Ironically, however, since the building began to be used regularly for devotional purposes in 1953, there has been dissatisfaction with that use and, indeed, many Bahá'ís now feel considerable alienation from the use made of the building and few attend devotions in it regularly.

How is it, then, that a building which is a positively viewed physical symbol of Bahá'í identity has developed a praxis that alienates many Bahá'ís, pleases few of those who do support its use, and may be said to function for many as a negative symbol of Bahá'í devotional practice, thus engendering considerable ambivalence toward the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* as a total building and praxis concept? This is the question that I will investigate in the following chapters by discussing selected

aspects of the development of the project and of Bahá'í devotions in North America generally.

Hodgen suggests that "change, since it takes place in time, can best be studied with an eye to the dated records of the cultural past,"⁸ and it is in this spirit that this study has been carried out. The view of its past held by the current North American Bahá'í community is generally highly formalized. Even the "recollections" of those who were participants in the early days of the community, are often formulaic and not borne out by the dated records. A frequently occurring example is that Bahá'ís whose memories supposedly go back to the community before, say, World War I state flatly, "Of course, we had no books in those days," and this is widely accepted. Actually, Bahá'í publishing flourished quite healthily from 1900.

Obviously, the development of such formulas in relation to the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* will be considered in this study, but, equally obviously, the formulas themselves do not form an adequate basis for a discussion of the actual processes of the development of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and its praxis. Therefore, much of the discussion is based on extensive analysis of materials, both personal papers and institutional records, in the National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois; some materials from other Bahá'í archives; and contemporary printed sources. As relevant, the discussion also includes material derived from interviews with selected individuals and my participation since February 1982 in the process of developing a devotional practice for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*.

All quotations are reproduced as in the original except that obvious typing errors have been corrected. Apart from in quotations, this study uses the system of transliteration from the Arabic to the Roman alphabets that has been standard Bahá'í usage since 1923. The only exceptions are in the cases of Eastern Bahá'ís who resided in the West, or who used Ro-

manized versions of their names. The spellings that they used for their own names are followed, rather than correct transliterations given.

In citing archival materials in this study, I have followed as closely as possible the same conventions as for citing printed sources: using name references to identify the collections and short descriptions to identify the document, e.g. (Robarts Papers: True to Robarts, 9 August 1922), or (Chicago Records: Minutes, 28 June 1908).⁹ In the case of the records of the National Spiritual Assembly, this extensive collection is divided into various subseries; thus, citations to these records sometimes include a modifier to the name reference if necessary for clarity, e.g. (NSA Records, Music Committee: NSA to Committee, 18 February 1931).¹⁰

References to correspondence from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice are usually solely by recipient and date, and letters so cited may be assumed to be in the general collections of letters from these successive heads of the Bahá’í Faith held in the National Bahá’í Archives. Where this is not the case, fuller references have been given.

Collections in the National Bahá’í Archives include many copies of letters and other documents, some direct carbons and others that post-date their original. Unless there has been a specific reason to do so, no attempt has been made in the citations to distinguish between originals and copies where there is no *prima facie* reason to doubt the general accuracy of the copy.

A final point that must be made about the use of sources in this study is that quotations from the Bahá’í writings are used as necessary for the purposes of elucidating the actions of those Bahá’ís who were exposed to these texts, not with a view to providing an adequate analysis of the actual purport of them. Thus, all quotes from letters of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are the

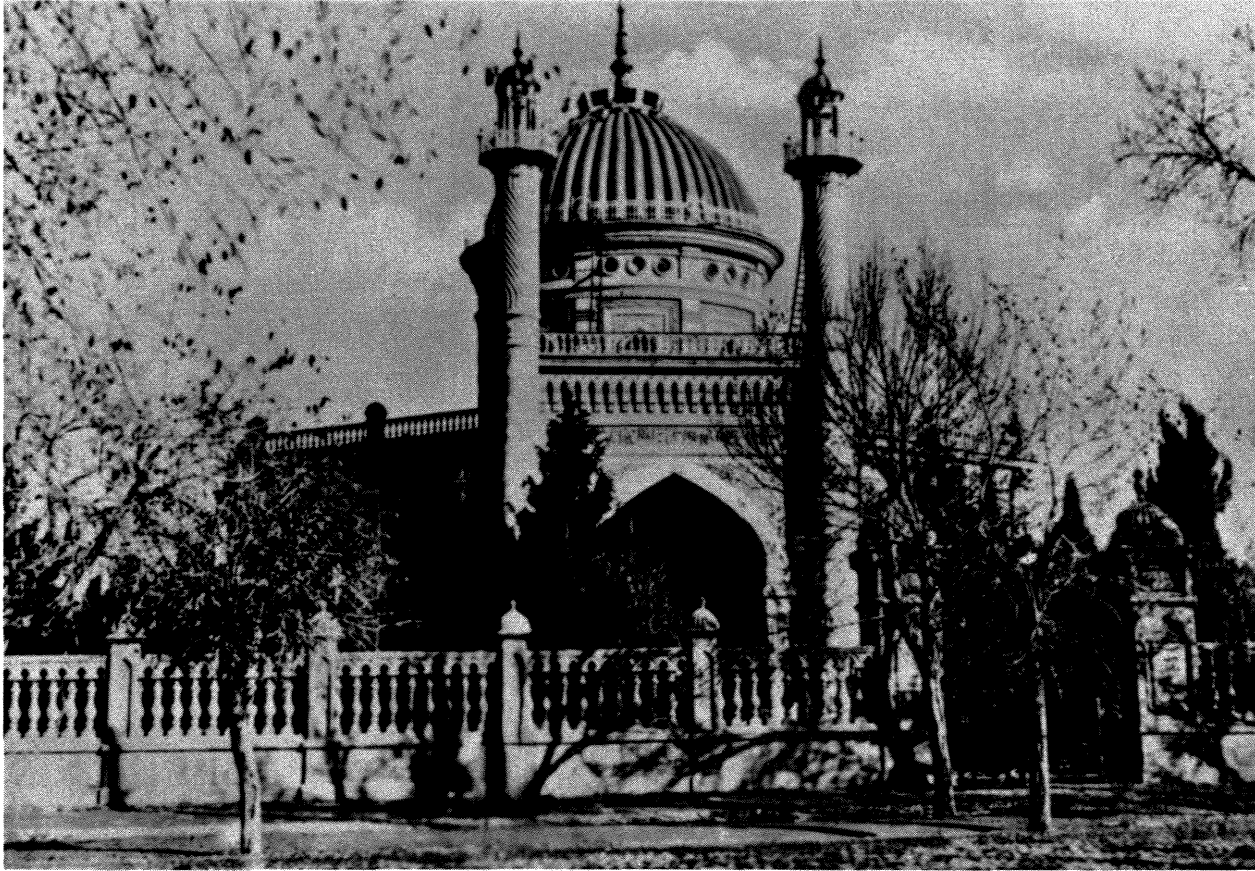
translations received by the original recipients, which may or may not be adequate translations for purposes of doctrinal analysis but are the relevant texts for a consideration of the subsequent acts of the recipients and their contemporaries. Similarly, letters from Shoghi Effendi are quoted to the extent relevant to the discussion of processes within the North American Bahá'í community, and not for the purpose of systematically considering his position on any particular issue.

This study does not attempt to present an abstract "Bahá'í" perspective on the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and its praxis. Rather, it discusses the particular experience of the North American Bahá'í community in creating its *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, with its praxis, in relation to that community's developing perceptions of the aspects of the Bahá'í Faith to which it was progressively exposed within its particular social and cultural context.

There has been little scholarly study of the Bahá'í community, and most of what has been published has usually concentrated on events of half a century and more ago. As a result, Bahá'ís are not used to reading serious analyses of their history, and especially not of their more recent history. I would ask that Bahá'ís who read this work bear in mind that, although the actions of Bahá'ís should be based on the teachings of the Faith, there is no necessary connection between those teachings and the activities of Bahá'ís. It is up to Bahá'ís as individuals and communities to decide to what extent they base their lives on the writings of the Faith. The degree to which they do so does not in any way reflect on the station of the writings or their Authors, but only on the understanding of the Bahá'ís.

PART ONE:

THE DEVOTIONAL HERITAGE



THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR IN 'ISHQÁBÁD, RUSSIA.
The first Bahá'í House of Worship to be constructed.

CHAPTER ONE:

FROM THE EAST

For the first North Americans to come upon the Bahá'í Faith, it was a new idea, but "Ideas are the genes of culture."¹ When that idea was accepted as part of their personal belief systems, they took the first step toward the development of a North American Bahá'í community, with its associated cultural practices. However, the introduction of the Bahá'í Faith to North America was not merely a one-way process. That introduction was also the first step in a process of change for the Bahá'í communities in the Middle East. It goes beyond my present purpose to discuss this comprehensively, but in the areas of devotional practice and the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* there is much of relevance to the developments in the North American community to be learned by giving some attention to the donor community of that germ idea. To date, there has been no comprehensive study of the Eastern Bahá'í community, but I have attempted to draw upon such materials as are available and, in particular, to consider the degree of exposure that Western Bahá'ís had to Eastern practice.

EASTERN BAHÁ'Í DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE

When the Bahá'í Faith was introduced into North America in the 1890s, the Eastern Bahá'í community had established forms of devotional song for use with the Persian and Arabic originals of its sacred text and an associated body of devotional poems and songs. These forms of devotional song are what Western Bahá'ís today refer to as "chanting." However, these musics were not new forms created for the Bahá'í Faith, but were adopted from traditional Islamic practices ranging from Quranic cantillation to Sufi songs.

That the early Bábí community followed the established practices of the culture surrounding it is evident from such references as Hájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alí's account of his interpolating verses written by the Báb into his reading of the Qur'an in morning devotional meetings of opponents of the Faith, in mid-nineteenth-century Iran, without this being detected.² Also from Ḥaydar-'Alí we have an account of Bahá'ís engaging in devotional song that is presumed by non-Bahá'í listeners to be Sufi. Once, while imprisoned because of his religion in an Egyptian jail in a closed, dark cell and in chains, Ḥaydar-'Alí and his companions:

... decided to chant the Tablet of Náqús, which had been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh for the celebration of the night on which the Báb had declared His mission. We were eight prisoners and our voices united in chanting the verses. When the soldiers heard this, they came in with a lamp for us. They thought that we were dervishes and that we were chanting something which contained the mention of God. This attracted their kindness toward us. Thereafter, the soldiers kept the door of our cell open during the day and unchained us.³

The continued use of Islamic forms of devotional song by Eastern Bahá'ís is not surprising. There was continuity in the

languages of devotional practice; there were continuities of literary form and style; and many prominent early Bábís and Bahá'ís were formerly Muslim clergy and theologians trained in these song styles. Another factor that was probably of some importance was the lack of physical security for the community itself. Devotional observance often had to be circumspect, as on an occasion in Rasht in 1908 described by Remey:

I recall one day when we had gathered, nineteen in number, in the upper part of a dwelling. The friend who chanted the prayers and holy verses used caution in modulating his voice, so that it might not carry to the street below, lest it might attract the attention of unfriendly ears.⁴

To attract attention to the fact that a Bahá'í meeting was taking place at all could be dangerous enough; to readily identify such meetings by a "Bahá'í" sound would have been foolish. The established forms of Islamic devotional song could be used in Bahá'í meetings without either theological or aesthetic objection, and, quite sensibly, they were. But these specific forms were not in themselves part of the faith they served, and serve, and had no essential connection with it; that is, they were not, and are not, a required part of its devotional practice.

As well as using sacred text, the Eastern community included poetry written by community members in their devotions. According to Browne, "it would be easy to compile a fair-sized anthology of Bábí [and Bahá'í] poems."⁵ The singing of devotional poetry, whether traditional poems or recent ones originating in the community itself, was of deep significance to Bábís, to the extent that there are recorded instances of Bábís in the throes of the most hideous martyrdoms expressing their willingness to die for their faith by singing.

This attachment to devotional poetry continued in the Bahá'í community. However, the most famous of the Bábí poets did not live through the transitional period between the Martyrdom of the Báb and the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. This poet was Ṭáhirih (1817–1852), a woman whose career was an important symbol to early Western Bahá'í women and whose example continues to be felt within the worldwide Bahá'í community.

The life and death of Ṭáhirih have not only been considered exemplary for Bahá'í women, but also made an impression beyond the confines of her country and faith. Her story became known among intellectual circles in nineteenth-century Europe and inspired much praise and wonderment among French and English writers on Persia.⁶ Her life so impressed Edward Granville Browne that he wrote of her:

The appearance of such a woman as Kurratu'l-'Ayn is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but in such a country as Persia it is a prodigy—nay, almost a miracle. Alike in virtue of her marvellous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion, and her glorious martyrdom, she stands forth incomparable and immortal amidst her countrywomen. Had the Babi religion no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—that it produced a heroine like Kurratu'l-'Ayn.⁷

In many respects Ṭáhirih is more important as a symbol than as a poet, but nonetheless her poetry was and is regarded as being “very fine.”⁸ The early North American Bahá'í community only had possible access to three of her poems in English, two ghazáls⁹ and a *mathnavi*,¹⁰ but her life was well known to them. Ṭáhirih's poetry itself obviously had more impact in the Eastern community. But even in Persian-speaking communities there was considerable difficulty in determining the exact authorship of poems attributed to her.

Browne remarks of his search in the 1880s for poems by Ṭáhirih:

Anxious as I was to obtain some of her poems, I only met with a very limited amount of success. None of the Babis at Shiraz whom I conversed with had any in their possession, and they said that Kazvin and Hamadan where Kurratu'l-'Ayn had preached, and Tihran, where she had suffered martyrdom, would be the most likely places to obtain them.¹¹

It was, in fact, in Yazd that Browne eventually saw and copied the two ghazáls that he later translated. The difficulty of attributing particular poems to Ṭáhirih has been exacerbated by two main factors. First, that the papers in her possession at the time of her death are said to have been burned, meaning that such works as reputedly survive are rarely identifiable by comparison with autograph copies. Second, the very quality of her work led to its use by Muslims. Thus Browne states:

... it must be borne in mind that the odium which attaches to the name of the Babi amongst Persian Muhammadans would render impossible the recitation by them of verses confessedly composed by her. If, therefore, she were actually the authoress of poems, the grace and beauty of which compelled an involuntary admiration even from her enemies, it would seem extremely probable that they should seek to justify their right to admire them by attributing them to some other writer, and this view is supported by an assertion which I have heard made by a learned Persian with whom I was acquainted in Teheran, and who, though not actually a Babi, did not lack a certain amount of sympathy for those who were such, to the effect that many poems written by Kurratu'l-'Ayn were amongst the favourite songs of the people, who were for the most part, unaware of their authorship. Open allusion to the Bab had, of course, been cut out or altered, so that no one could tell the source from whence they came.¹²

In 1930, Martha Root spent four months in Iran gathering material which she later used in her book about Ṭāhirih,¹³ interviewing relatives of the poet, visiting sites associated with her life, and collecting copies of some of the poems attributed to her. She found the poems to be so popular among the Bahá'ís that they were available sung on records which she “often heard . . . on the victrolas in Persian homes.”¹⁴ From Iran, Root went to India and Burma, where she found that “the cultured classes know about Qurratu'l-'Ayn and were deeply interested in her poems.” She was astonished at “how many of the educated classes in India know the Persian language, and they know the life and poems of Qurratu'l-'Ayn better than we in the West know them.” She also found that “many Indian scholars know Tahirih’s poems by heart.”¹⁵ Isfandiar Bakhtiari, a Bahá'í resident in Karachi, published an edition of 1,000 copies of the collection of poems that Root had acquired in Iran in 1930, and a further edition of 1,000 copies in 1933. These were distributed to “the literati of India.”¹⁶

There has never been an edition of Ṭāhirih’s poems in English, perhaps because the value of her life as a symbol to the Western Bahá'í community is unlikely to be greatly enhanced by increased exposure to her poetry, created, as it was, on the aesthetic premises of classical Persian literature.¹⁷

Slight as the exposure of early Western Bahá'ís was to Ṭāhirih’s poetry, it was more than they had to the works of other early Eastern Bábí/Bahá'í poets. Writing soon after his expedition to Iran to meet “Bábís,” Browne mentions “the poems of Nabil, Na’im, Rawha, Maryam, and other Babis who have drawn the inspiration of their verses from the doctrines of the new religion.”¹⁸ He states that he intends to discuss their work at a later date, but, unfortunately, with the exception of brief discussions of Nabil and Na’im in other works, this “future occasion” never arose.

Two other Eastern Bahá'í poets we might mention here are Varqá, who was well known to Western Bahá'ís as having been martyred with his twelve-year-old son Rúḥu'lláh in 1896,¹⁹ and 'Andalíb, "a poet of superb accomplishment,"²⁰ who had met Browne in 1888.

Although many editions of these poets' works have been published in Persian and they are well known among Eastern Bahá'ís, very little Persian Bahá'í poetry has been translated into English, and so the main import of these poets for the Western Bahá'í community has been as legitimatory examples for the role of poet in the Bahá'í community.²¹

In what contexts, then, were these poems sung, apart from individual or informal group use? A late nineteenth-century description of Bahá'í meetings in Iran (the source, of course, says Bábí) states that they consisted of a reading from the "Bajan akdas" (possibly the Kitáb-i Aqdas is meant here) and a "sermon," followed by questions and answers (these were presumably related to the reading and, if this was the case, it suggests such an arrangement as is implied by Alkany's lesson book, see below), the whole meeting taking one to three hours.²² The meeting was begun and ended with singing by one "who has a good voice." It is not clear whether this refers to chanting of prayers or singing of poems. Also, as the account later mentions the Nineteen-Day Feasts as the "main meetings," it is not clear exactly which kind of meeting this early account refers to. But as it states that there "are special meetings for women, which follow the same course as those for the men," it seems likely that what is being described is the program for a weekly community meeting such as took place in Eastern Bahá'í communities.

Various accounts of these weekly meetings by Western Bahá'ís who traveled in the East refer to poems being sung as well as prayers and sacred text, and that this was an accepted part of community meetings would explain the ease with

which translations of hymns by Western Bahá'ís could be incorporated into them (see Chapter 3).

THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR IN THE EASTERN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

Meetings in Eastern Bahá'í communities might simply be held in the home of a member, but many communities managed to establish some kind of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. This was rarely a purpose-built structure, but usually was an ordinary house that was discretely used by the community for devotional and other meetings. An Eastern Bahá'í writing around 1908 described the situation in Iran in order to encourage the American Bahá'ís to go ahead with building their Mashriqu'l-Adhkár:

God Willing, the Friends in America must show an effort in order to build . . . a Bahai Temple. . . . People in America are enjoying the freedom of conscience. But the Friends cannot do anything in Persia on account of the absence of freedom. In most of the cities in Persia, the Believers have bought houses in The Name of . . . Abdul-Baha, using them privately as the Bahai Temples. Many villages and towns have dedicated houses in The Name of The Master; such as one house for Mashregol-Azkar, one house for travelers, one house for Bahai School, and one house for meeting and teaching The Truth.²³

In a few places in Iran the Bahá'ís were able to construct their own buildings. Remey mentions a "Mashrak-el-Azcar" built in the garden of Táhírih's former home in Qazvín,²⁴ and there was the nine-sided mausoleum of Varqá and Rúhu'lláh.²⁵ A few years after Remey's visit in 1908, Moody saw an ambitious building project being undertaken by one community:

I had the pleasure of standing within the walls of an unfinished Mashrak El Azkar. . . . It is still unroofed, built after the plan of

Ishkabad, but small. It is in a Zoroastrian village eighteen miles out on the desert. There are fifteen families there and all Bahais. Last Rizwan three hundred believers gathered there and had a wonderful Feast.²⁶

The city of 'Ishqábád (Ashkabad) in Russian Turkestan provided not only the model for this village project but also the most complete model of a Bahá'í community available to the early North American Bahá'ís.²⁷ By the early years of this century, this community was functioning as a separate religious community within its city and was in the process of erecting the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the world to observe the architectural requirements of such a building and to be supplied with its requisite dependencies. Indeed, it was reports of the beginning of this structure in November 1902 that supplied much of the initial impetus for building a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in North America.

The land for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád had been bought in the late 1880s and approved as a site by Bahá'u'lláh. Although the meeting hall and several dependencies were built before 1900, it was not until 1902 that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave instructions to begin building the central place of worship. He provided a general idea of the plan and design, and the details were worked out in 'Ishqábád. The foundation stone was laid on 28 November 1902, with General Krupatkin, the governor-general of Turkestan, acting as the tsar's representative. The structure was substantially completed between 1902 and 1907 and, although the details of the ornamentation were not completed until more than a decade later, the building was usable from around that time.

The best-known and most frequently published description of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád is that by Charles Mason Remey, who visited the city in 1908. His description was originally written in a letter to the Chicago House of Spirituality in October 1908,²⁸ and was first published in *The*

Bahai Bulletin in early 1909.²⁹ Remey subsequently used the description in his book *Observations of a Bahai Traveller 1908*,³⁰ and in other works.³¹ It has also been used in many other places and may be considered the standard description. Here is a shortened form of it:

The Mashrak-El-Azkar stands in the center of the city, surrounded by a large garden, which is bounded by four streets. It rises high above the surrounding buildings and trees, its dome being visible for miles. . . . The building in plan is a regular polygon of nine sides. One large doorway and portico, flanked by turrets, facing the direction of the Holy Land, forms the principal motive of the facade, while the dome dominates the whole composition.

The walls of the temple are of brick covered with a firm and hard stucco, which in that climate resists quite well the action of the elements, while the floors are concrete supported by iron or steel beams.

In plan the building is composed of three sections: namely, the central rotunda, the aisle or ambulatory which surrounds it, and the loggia which surrounds the entire building.

The interior of the rotunda is five stories in height. The first . . . consists of nine arches, supported by piers, which separate the ambulatory from the rotunda proper. The second story consists of a similar treatment of arches and piers and balustrades, which separate the triforium gallery, which is directly above the ambulatory, from the wall of the rotunda. The third story is decorated with nine blank arcades, between which are shields, upon which is inscribed, in Persian characters, "Ya-Baha-el-Abha." The fourth story contains nine large windows, while the wall of the fifth story, which is not as high as the others, is pierced by eighteen bull's-eye windows.

Above, there is the dome, which is hemispherical in shape. The rotunda from the floor to the top of the dome is elaborately decorated with fretwork and other designs, all in relief. We were told that the ultimate aim was that color and gilding should be added to this interior decoration.

The inner dome is of iron or steel and concrete, while the outer

dome or roof is entirely of metal. The intention is that this shall be gilded.

The main portico of the temple is two stories in the clear, while the loggias, which surround the building, are on two floors, the lower being on the main floor level, while the upper one is on the level of the triforium gallery. This upper loggia is reached by two staircases, one to the right and one to the left of the main entrance, and the gallery is entered from the loggia.

On the main floor the principal entrance is through the large door-way, but there are also several minor doors, which connect the ambulatory with the loggia. An abundance of light is admitted through the windows in the upper part of the rotunda, as well as through the windows of the upper gallery and ambulatory, which open upon the loggias.

The Persian style of architecture has been used in treating the details and decorations of the building.

At present the stucco work is not quite completed. The interior of the rotunda is finished, but the decoration of the loggias and gallery and ambulatory is only done in part. . . .

The layout of the garden is not yet complete. Nine avenues of approach lead to the Mashrak-el-Azkar. The main avenue of the nine, leading to the entrance portico, will be entered from the street by a monumental gateway. Last July they were completing the plans for this principal gateway of the grounds.

Another early but, for the North American community at the time, much less accessible description of this Mashriq'ul-Adhkâr is that by Hippolyte Dreyfus contained in an article written for a volume of papers published in memory of Hartwig Derenbourg, late professor of the École Nationale des Langues Orientales in Paris. In this article Dreyfus warns his readers against taking the term "Machreqou'l-Azkâr," "le lieu d'où montent les zikrs" (the place from which *adhkâr* rise), too literally, as they cannot expect to see whirling white robes here.³² (*dhikr* is the term used for Sufi devotions; *adhkâr* is plural). He also distinguishes it from a mosque as it has no mihrab, pools for ablutions, or minbar and Friday sermon.

He then gives a plan of the building, describes it, and discusses its basis in passages from the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*.

After it was sufficiently completed to be used, a few of the 'Ishqábád community went to the *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* for daily morning prayers, but its principal community use was for prayer meetings on Fridays and the celebration of Bahá'í holy days. The Muslim context in which the community lived intruded into the *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* to the extent that men and women were seated separately, men on the main floor and women in the gallery. This separate seating was also the practice in the meeting hall. The Spiritual Assembly, too, consisted solely of men, although women did vote in its election, and the Bahá'í women continued to veil in public. These concessions to Muslim practice were, at the least, designed to avoid a possibly violent reaction to too public an expression of the equality of the sexes, whatever they may also suggest about feelings within the community itself.

Devotional practice at this *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* is further elucidated by two sources. First, Remy notes that the community used a cantor:

Sheikh Mohammed Ali upon whom devolves the chanting of the prayers and holy words in the *Mashrak-el-Azcar*, who has been given this service to perform on account of his vocal qualifications and devotion to the cause. From his brilliant face, smiles and good cheer, one could hardly believe that his back and shoulders were a mass of scars from wounds inflicted as torture for his faith at the hands of fanatical Moslems.³³

And second, a small book of lesson notes for teaching Bahá'í children about their faith, published in 'Ishqábád in 1913, gives some understanding of the ideological underpinning of devotional practice in the community.³⁴

Lesson 19 is specifically about the *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* and,

as is the general case with these lessons, it is recognizably related to study of a specific passage in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*:

The people of every nation and various religions have a special place to which they go at fixed times in worship. For example, the Mosque of the Mohammedans, the Church of the Christians, the Synagogue of the Jews, the Fire-Temple of the Zoroastrians and the Pagoda of the Brahmans and Buddhists.

The Bahai place of worship is the Meshrak ol Azkar, which we must enter at dawn, which is the best time of the day to be occupied in the mention of God. Also at noon and in the evening, repenting of our sins and supplicating God's pardon and forgiveness. When we enter the Meshrak ol Azkar we must sit in silence, in perfect humility and great reverence, turning our hearts towards God, and entirely absorbed in listening to the holy verses. As it is written: "Blessed is he who turns toward the Meshrak ol Azkar at dawn, praying and supplicating God's pardon, and who in silence listens to the divine verses."

Since the Meshrak ol Azkar is especially established for the mention of God, all else save this is forbidden. Only sacred verses should be chanted in the most beautiful fashion and lordly admonitions and exhortations sung in the sacred temple.³⁵

Lesson 20 discusses in mystical terms, analogous to Sufi concepts, the effect of chanting sacred text:

He who chants the verses of God in a melodious voice, and he who listens in deep earnestness with the ears of the soul, enter into such a condition of inward joy that they would not exchange it for a kingdom. Verily, through the effect of the holy utterances, pure hearts become attracted to the spiritual realms which surpass all description and definition.

The special nature of these realms can only be understood by the souls which are pure and it can be perceived and felt only by the illumined conscience, the spirit.

Ah! happy is that fortunate soul which ascends to these realms

on the wings of these holy utterances and through the power of the spirit of detachment soars into these holy and divine regions and mounts into this purified atmosphere of reality and spiritual significance.³⁶

And in Lesson 25 the author comments on the rationale, as he sees it, of the permission granted to Bahá'ís in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* to listen to music:

The holy religious laws permit listening to songs and melodies and when these are sung in such wise as not to exceed the limit of refinement and dignity which are as ornaments to the temple [body] of man they aid the soul to mount into the loftiest realms of exaltation. It is well known that this condition is produced when the Tablets and holy verses are sung, or the odes and enconiums composed in praise of BAHA'U'LLAH or Abdul Baha are chanted by a beautiful voice. But when music ceases to be refined and dignified, becoming frivolous and sensual, it is assuredly forbidden and is unlawful. For in so doing, that which made it lawful, that is, its power of attracting intelligences and liberating souls so as to enable them to mount unto divine horizons, is completely annulled and the contrary effect is produced: that is, the mind is veiled, the soul becomes turbid and man sinks into a condition which is not worthy of his station.³⁷

Among the “odes and enconiums” sung at devotional gatherings in ‘*Ishqábád* were translations of some of the hymns written by North American Bahá'ís.³⁸

In the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* at ‘*Ishqábád*, then, the North American Bahá'í community had a model for both the architecture and practice of their own proposed building. We shall see that the form of the building in ‘*Ishqábád* was of considerable consequence for the development of expectations for the form of the North American building, but that practice in ‘*Ishqábád* was of little importance as a model for practice in Wilmette, either in the early stages of formulating expecta-

tions or in the actual use of the building at its various stages of completion.

For the Bahá'í community in 'Ishqábád itself, circumstances changed with the Russian Revolution. At first, the community was permitted to carry on its affairs more or less as usual, but with the expropriation of religious foundations in the Soviet Union in 1928, ownership of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár passed from the community to the state. The building was leased back to the Bahá'ís at various times, but the community itself declined through emigration, and eventually the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár passed completely from the hands of the Bahá'ís and was turned over to secular purposes. The building was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1968 and subsequently demolished.

EASTERN CHANT AND WESTERN BAHÁ'ÍS

Early Western Bahá'ís were exposed to Eastern devotional practices by going on pilgrimage, visiting the Holy Land to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to visit the tombs of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Between 1898 and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America in 1912, approximately 101 North American adult Bahá'ís went on pilgrimage, some more than once.³⁹ In all, this figure represents somewhere between 5% and 10% of the North American Bahá'ís of those early years.

The usual route by which these early pilgrims traveled involved staying in Egypt until receiving notice that it was safe to proceed to Haifa, where they would wait until called to 'Akká. The length of time spent in the Holy Land varied greatly, depending on the current degree of restriction and surveillance imposed on 'Abdu'l-Bahá by the Ottoman authorities. Some pilgrims could remain only a few days, a few remained for considerable periods of time. While waiting in Egypt, or while in the Holy Land itself, it was not unusual

for interested pilgrims to learn to chant a prayer by rote. Those few Western believers who became fluent in Persian or Arabic or who traveled more extensively in the East obviously had the chance to become acquainted with the Eastern devotional repertoire, but there is little indication that many, even of those few, ever learned more than a few pieces.

The learning of a chant by Western pilgrims began with the first Western pilgrimage in the winter of 1898–1899. An anonymous account of that pilgrimage probably written by one of the three young ladies of the Hearst party, records:

The Greatest Holy Leaf had given us each a copy of the Tablet revealed by the Manifestation when they were all in Constantinople. It was written to revive their drooping spirits, and they used to chant it every morning while they were there. We learned part of it which is like a refrain.⁴⁰

May Maxwell's account of that same pilgrimage mentions hearing the Tablet of Visitation chanted at the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh.⁴¹

In 1905, Mary Lucas, a professional singing teacher, learned to chant a tablet in Egypt, which she then performed twice in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house in 'Akká.⁴² Lucas also mentions being moved by the chanting of the children of the household.⁴³ In 1907, Asseyeh Allen wrote to the Chicago community on her way back to the United States from the Middle East that she, Miss Sanderson, and Miss Moore had "chanted as best we could" for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She added that the "Master enjoyed my chants and asked me often to sing."⁴⁴

In her account of her pilgrimage in 1909, Louise Waite records that Dr. Susan Moody of Chicago, who was passing through the Holy Land on her way to Tehran, chanted on three occasions in Haifa and 'Akká. Waite also comments on her reaction to morning devotions in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home.

For example, on one occasion, when two of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughters chanted:

There was a wonderful sweetness to Zeah's voice, a tender pleading quality that went straight to my heart. After she had finished, Monever chanted a commune, her voice is also beautiful but of a deeper richer quality than Zeah's. I realized the great power of the Word while attending this service, for I could not understand a word yet the vibrations affected me most deeply.⁴⁵

The experience of Eastern devotions by early pilgrims and by the few Western Bahá'ís who traveled in Iran, India, Burma, and Russian Turkestan was shared with the rest of the North American Bahá'í community through books and pamphlets, letters written home to individuals that were then duplicated and widely circulated, and by formal and informal talks about their travels upon their return. Apart from pilgrimage and the accounts of travelers, however, the North American Bahá'í community was also exposed to Eastern devotional practice by those few Eastern Bahá'ís who lived in their midst.

Obviously, it was necessary for the North American Bahá'ís to have among them some people who could translate correspondence to and from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as do more general translating of Bahá'í texts.⁴⁶ The first one or two translators did not know Persian, only Arabic, but by 1902 there were translators in Chicago and Washington, D.C., who were capable, to varying degrees, of translating from either language. From this time there were always at least one or two Eastern Bahá'ís resident in each of these cities. Because of their important position as keys to correspondence with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, these translators became nationally prominent in the Bahá'í community and could have considerable influence. While they all would chant in devotions upon occasion,

one in particular seems to have wished to press Eastern practice upon the Western community, Dr. Ameen Ullah Fareed.

Fareed came to the United States in 1901, at the age of nineteen, to study medicine in Chicago. There he joined his father, Mirza Assad'Ullah, who was one of a small group of Eastern teachers sent to North America by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to increase that community's knowledge of the Faith. During his first few years in Chicago Fareed served the community as well as he could in translating, allowing for his inexperience and limited English. But after his return from a visit to the Holy Land in 1905, he seems to have attempted to create a position of greater influence for himself, in part at least by the charisma of his Eastern background. Thornton Chase, who had earlier been very much in favor of Fareed and had regarded his presence in Chicago as a great asset, wrote about this episode:

After his return last fall from Acca, he was invited (at his own request) to give a series of Sabbath evening talks to the assembly in the regular meetings in the hall. He did so at irregular periods. If many were present, he was ready and all right; if few were present, he had nothing prepared. He prefaced each talk with a chant or supplication in Arabic, and then used the Greatest Name for a public response. . . . There are always strangers at those meetings who have more or less interest, and it was apparent that this foreign chanting and use of the Name struck them unpleasantly, and in some cases created ridicule. Therefore a hint was given that it might be well not to use those things in the public meeting, but it was not regarded, until at a meeting of the H. of S. [House of Spirituality] when he was present, the matter was brought up, and unanimously agreed that it was not wise to use those forms in the public meeting. M. Ameen [Fareed] objected, and stated that he should continue to use them (thus defying the judgment of the H. of S.). He stated that he was commanded to use them, thus giving us to understand that the Master had so

commanded him. Then we said we would write to the Master concerning it, when he changed his statement to the effect that his father had commanded him to use them. Then we proposed to write to the Master about it anyway, when he replied that if we demanded it, he would translate the letter to the Master altho' he was very busy with study. One of those present then said, No, we will have it translated by another. Then he blushed, stammered, and said that it would not be necessary, as he would not use it (the foreign prayer and Greatest Name) in that way any more. This ended the matter, but immediately another meeting was started at his home (Mrs. Russells and Dr. Moodys), at 10.30 Sunday mornings, which were given forth as meetings after the way of the Orient. There he wore the robes, and chanted to his heart's content.⁴⁷

In this same letter Chase stated that Fareed's circle of support consisted of women, whom he later termed "devotees."⁴⁸

Two apparent relics of this period of Fareed's activities survive. One is a few pages of notes for a lecture by him on "Oriental Music," which was to be illustrated with his performance of Persian and Arabic "songs corresponding to your present day popular variety, to be followed by some classical selections & ending with chants comparing with your sacred songs & anthems."⁴⁹ The other is a slip of paper with a transcription of a chant with "Dr Ameen" written on the back.⁵⁰ The chant itself is the refrain from the *Lawḥ-i Nāqūs*. This was the tablet chanted by Ḥaydar-'Alí and his companions in Egypt; hearing this tablet was instrumental in converting Na'im to the Bahá'í Faith; and it was probably this same refrain that was learned by the young lady on the first Western pilgrimage.⁵¹ I sang this refrain as notated on the slip, for two Bahá'ís brought up in the Bahá'í community in Tehran in the 1930s and 1940s, and they said that it is exactly the melody used in Iran in their youth. The verses of the tablet would be sung by an individual and all present would join in the refrain.

It would seem probable that Fareed was teaching such a performance practice to his circle of followers.⁵²

One other chant known to early Western Bahá'ís survives in notation, a version of *The Remover of Difficulties* (a well-known prayer by the Báb) in the original Arabic.⁵³ This melody my two informants did not know, but they categorized it as an appropriate, typical Arabic chant. I have heard on one occasion an Eastern Bahá'í use a similar melody for this prayer. This chant was probably well known in North America; the prayer itself was and is extremely well known. A manuscript version of the chant appears in Louise Waite's papers, a printed version in a small booklet of prayers that was printed possibly around 1910,⁵⁴ and there is a recording of Harlan Ober made in 1951 that ends with his chanting of this melody several times. Ober and his wife chanted this prayer at the 1916 Bahá'í Temple Unity convention. As he visited the East in 1907, this particular melody may have been introduced into North America by him.

In both the Waite manuscript and the printed version, the chant has been provided with an accompaniment. It is possible that this was composed by Waite. The text of the manuscript is in her handwriting and evidently has not been copied from the printed version as the transliteration is much cruder, appearing to be an attempt to capture a heard text with the Western alphabet rather than a consistent transliteration from the written Arabic. However, the music is the same in both versions. Unfortunately, no account has yet come to light of the performance of this chant, or any other Eastern original, with accompaniment, so it is not possible to assess the position of such a piece as this in the community's devotional life. Nevertheless, the inclusion of it in the little booklet suggests that such a form was considered suitable for devotional usage by some.

Chants to both these texts were known in Washington,

D.C., as they were sung by a group of Bahá'ís at Alma Knobloch's graveside in 1910.⁵⁵ And a letter from Moody describing a Bahá'í women's meeting in Qazvin demonstrates that Fareed's pupils in North America, at least, were familiar with other chanted texts:

Tarazeah Khanum . . . chanted the "Shamay shabastanay hagh." The air is the same we use, but her chanting of it is inimitable by our Western throats. . . . They . . . wanted to know if I knew a Persian prayer. I told them I could not chant like they do, but they would recognise the words, and selected the "Allah-a-Mabooda" which they often chant.⁵⁶

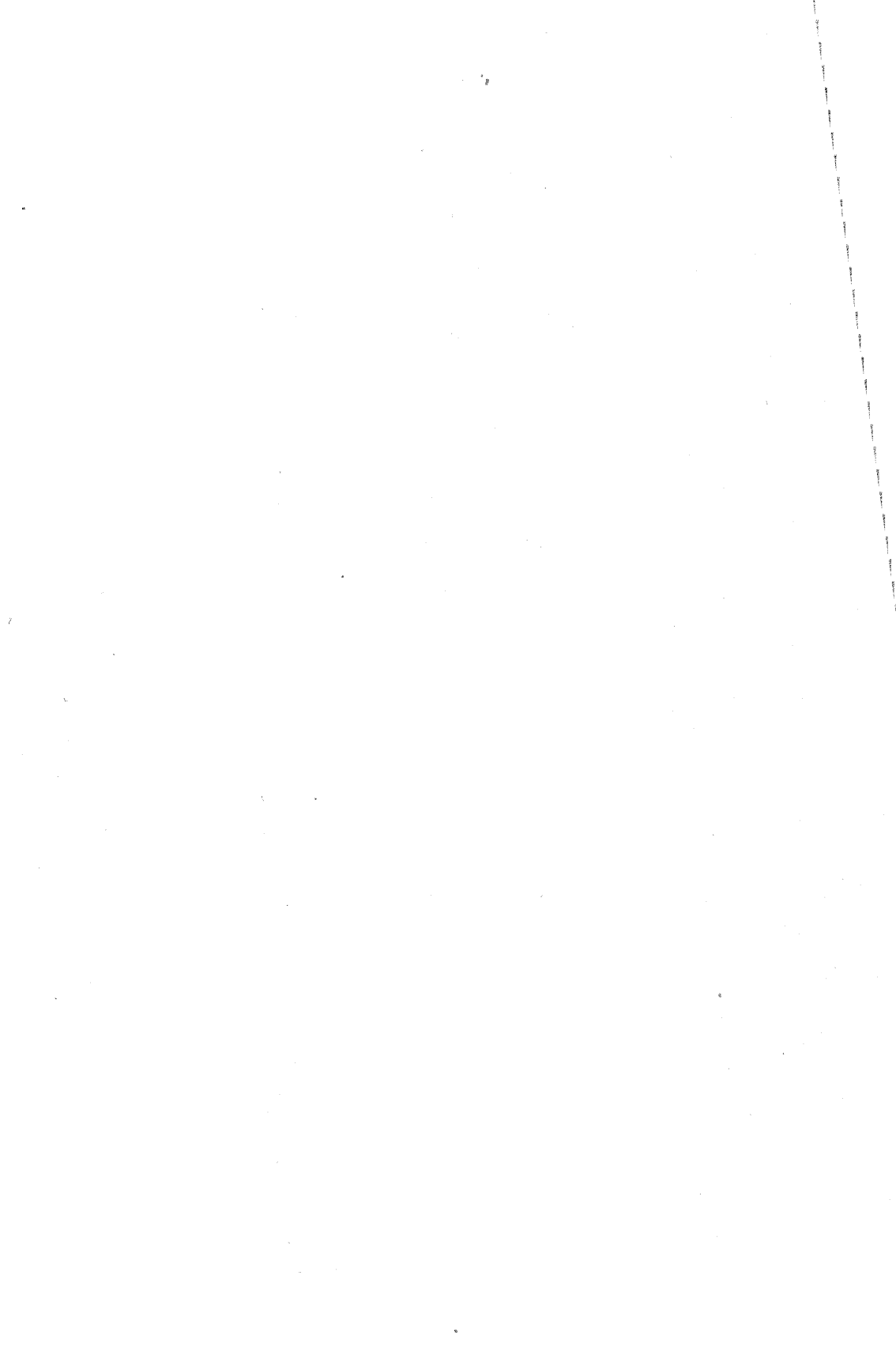
Interest in learning and adapting Oriental chants continued into the third decade of the century. Ella Robarts, editor of *Children of the Kingdom*, received at least two requests from readers to include such material in her magazine. Mrs. C. L. Jones wrote, "May I suggest later that you print a Persian Chant occasionally with music. I know I would appreciate the supplications."⁵⁷ And Ernest Harrison of Canada asked, "Can you not also persuade some one to put the Oriental chanting to modern piano arrangement. I long and yearn to hear it daily and thereby learn it."⁵⁸

One local development of chanting that seems to have disappeared without a trace was created by Edward Kinney. Various accounts of conventions and other occasions mention that Kinney chanted, and some of these give the text he used. However, as yet no music has come to light. It would seem improbable that Kinney, as a professional musician, did this for so many years without writing any of his chants down. But unless some written versions come to light, what he actually did will remain a mystery. It can be inferred from the description that he definitely "chanted" in English to his own piano accompaniment, and that the performance was highly appreciated in its day. It was Kinney's intention to include

“some simple and singable chants” in a projected Bahá’í hymn book,⁵⁹ which description may be a clue to the character of his performances. Unfortunately, he never followed through on the planned book.⁶⁰

By the 1930s, the term “chant” was being used to characterize any setting of the words of Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to music, as, for example, in Louise Rich’s “Bahá’í Chants.”⁶¹ More recently the term has been used mainly to describe the devotional song of Eastern Bahá’ís, although it occasionally is used to denote improvised singing of sacred text in English.

The Eastern practice is considered by most Bahá’ís, Western and Eastern, to be a Bahá’í practice, and thus something to be suffered on that account even if it is not liked. However, as these chants have come to be seen as “Bahá’í” in themselves, rather than as a particular culture’s vehicle for delivery of Bahá’í texts, this has occasionally been a source of tension for both individuals and communities, as disliking or not wishing to use them may be seen as an attempt to avoid something which is part of a Bahá’í identity.



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.



CHILDREN HOLDING COPIES OF *BAHAI HYMNS OF PEACE AND PRAISE*.
Detail of group photograph taken at the Naw-Rúz celebration at the first Bahá'í National
Convention, March 21, 1909.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY DEVOTIONS AND THE MUSIC OF LOUISE WAITE

The years before 1940 may be characterized as the era of Bahá'í hymnody, as during this period the North American Bahá'í community selectively adopted hymns from its Christian heritage for its own use and created a genre of Bahá'í hymns in the tradition of that heritage. This genre was incorporated into the community's life and the socialization of its children, and then disappeared from general use almost overnight. That it ever existed is largely unknown to later Bahá'ís. From the consideration of the creation, use, and disappearance of this genre, then, we can learn much of the ideological concerns of those endeavoring to develop a social and religious identity for the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world.

EARLY BAHÁ'Í DEVOTIONS IN CHICAGO

Little is known of the Bahá'í community's devotional activity before 1901. As a few prayers, some of the Hidden Words, and some tablets were available to the community, it is probable that these were used in some meetings. But it is

not until 1901 that we begin to get records of the conscious development of community devotional procedures.

At the meeting of the House of Justice in Chicago on 28 May 1901, it was “proposed that . . . a Tablet in English from the Manifestation or Master, be read before each meeting, in accordance with the desire of a number of believers.”¹ And at the meeting of 4 June, it was reported that Mirza Assad’Ullah was in favor of this. In early 1902, Assad’Ullah repeated this approval in a letter written from New York:

In the beginning of all your meetings and assemblies chant a prayer of the Blessed Perfection, so that your hearts may be severed from this world of dust and nature, and be turned toward the Kingdom of God, the Exalted One. So, also, close your meetings by reading a Tablet of the Master, so as to strengthen the hearts to be nurtured by the Heavenly Food.²

Assad’Ullah further enjoined them to continue “Meetings of Prayer” in Chicago, though whether this refers to the Friday meetings that had been held at Assad’Ullah’s lodgings or the Sunday community meetings is not specified. The Friday evening meetings had consisted of listening to Tablets chanted in the original, read in English, and discussed.³ The Sunday meetings were more complex.

On 17 November 1901, the House of Spirituality decided to have a member of the House chair each Sunday’s meeting, “on behalf of order,” and to accept the offer of Mary Lesch to lend an “organ.” At the following meeting a committee of two was appointed “to draft program to guide chairman of the regular Sunday afternoon meetings.” At the meeting after that, the “question of securing some songs in leaflet form was discussed.”⁴

The minutes of this last meeting also record the first celebration in North America of the “Feast of the Master” (The Day of the Covenant, 26 November):

The festivities began with the hymn "The tie which binds our hearts together," in which all took part with organ accompaniment. . . . [then a reading and talk by Assad'Ullah followed by refreshments] Another Tablet revealed by the Master was then read, followed by a hymn, after which all gradually left for home.

On 8 December, it was reported that some progress had been made in locating song leaflets, but more time was asked for. More importantly, a program for the conducting of Sunday meetings was presented and approved at this meeting:

Program for Chairman's Guidance

- 1st —Music, singing by believers
- 2nd—Translation in English of Tablet revealed by the
Manifestation
Reading from the Utterances of Jesus Christ
Translation in English of Tablet revealed by the Master
- 3rd —Solo, etc.
- 4th —Address by Teachers
Address by Visitors, if any present
- 5th —Singing by the believers
- 6th —Reading of announcements, reports of committees, etc.
—Tablet in Persian, or Arabic, by Mirza Assad'Ullah, to be followed by an interpretation in English⁵

Sunday meetings seem to have been held regularly well into 1902, as the 9 August 1902, minutes note that "the regular Sunday evening meetings" are being held "as usual." However, they ceased in that month.⁶ In early 1903, the House was "considering a weekly service of the Bahais in this City," which was further described as "a regular Sunday Bahai meeting of worship, under the auspices of the House of Spirituality, in a central location." The plans for this meeting were developed over the succeeding weeks, and the meetings

began on 22 February in Room 200 of the Athenaeum Building, with about sixty attending the first one.⁷

For this meeting of worship, the House had “expressly compiled” and printed the first Bahá’í hymn book, *Songs of Prayer and Praise*. This was a carefully chosen selection of nine Christian hymns and a doxology that adequately provided for “the immediate need,” as its preface stated was the intent. The hymns were:

From All That Dwell Below the Skies
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
 Sun of My Soul! Thou Saviour Dear
 Softly Now the Light of Day
 Come, Thou Almighty King
 Nearer, My God, to Thee! (known to be a favorite of
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)
 Abide With Me!
 Blest Be the Tie That Binds
 Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come

The doxology reflected in the rewriting of its last line the influence of a then well-known prayer thought to have been written by Bahá’u’lláh but actually composed by Kheiralla and taught to his students:

Praise, God, from whom all blessings flow,
 Praise Him, all creatures here below;
 Praise Him, ye heavenly hosts above;
 Praise Him, with knowledge, Faith and love.

These new Sunday evening meetings seem to have been popular, as in October 1904 the House could report that:

The general meetings in Chicago, held Sunday evenings, are well attended and much holy love and enthusiasm is manifested by the

believers. These meetings have been kept up all summer, even during the very hot weather, and have been like a central magnet holding together the people coming from different parts of the city.⁸

The Sunday evening meetings continued in Chicago, but it is evident from the surviving records that there was tension between those who saw the meeting as a Bahá'í community event and those who saw it as an event to attract non-Bahá'ís: the tension centering on the degree to which talks and discussion were to be a part of the meeting. Thus, on 20 April 1907, the House decided that at the direction of the chairman, "members of the Assembly, even if they do not appear on the Program" could make "remarks," but on 4 May "After due consideration, it was decided that no discussions be allowed at Sunday evening general meeting."⁹

On 11 January 1908, the "Greater portion" of the House's meeting was spent discussing a "suggestion on the part of Mrs. Russell and Miss Buikema that we make our Sunday meetings more valuable by reading more of the Words of Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha and eliminate talks and addresses on the part of friends."¹⁰ And later in 1908, Moritz Schmidt wrote to the House objecting to "teaching any personal ideas in any meetings which are for the purpose of worship and bringing into such talks . . . political or other matters concerning affairs not spiritual whatever."¹¹

In early 1909, the House stated that the Sunday meetings, now held in the morning, were "intended to interest visitors," and that the Unity Feasts (Nineteen-Day Feasts) were "special occasions of the coming together of the friends and the 'House', when information is given of such matters as would not be of interest to strangers." They also noted that the Sunday meeting previous to their writing had about one hundred people present, and that there were also in Chicago small meetings almost daily in homes, a Friday evening study

meeting, a Saturday afternoon “industrial class,” where children were taught sewing and other skills, a children’s “Sunday school,” and a Sunday evening teaching meeting at the Moody-Russell home led by Arthur Agnew.¹²

In October 1909, the House more explicitly outlined the distinction they saw between the Nineteen-Day Feast and the Sunday meeting:

Purpose of Sunday morning meeting, also the nineteen day Feast, was discussed and it was the opinion of those present that efforts should be made toward attracting seekers and visiting friends at the Sunday service; that the Feast gathering should be conducted in favor of those confirmed in the Faith and to matters of a private nature. That texts in both cases should be from the Utterances of Baha’u’llah and Abdul Baha. That the House of Spirituality should assume the responsibility of programs in both cases and that the material food feature of Feast be made as simple as possible.¹³

There was still a feeling among some, however, that the Sunday meeting was insufficiently devotional in character:

Realizing the marvelous effects of a truly spiritual meeting, such as I attended daily while in Acca, I felt upon my return that our Sunday meetings were not so worshipful as they should be. There was more the interpretation of the Words, which I feel should be confined to the morning class and to the group meetings. No matter if strangers do not realize what we are talking about, when they come under the power of the Sun of Truth, or Word of God, they will feel its warmth and be cheered and blessed. It may be an unknown tongue, but the vibration is universal—the one language understood by the heart alone. . . . Believe me, dear brothers, I do not want to dictate in the slightest degree. I only want to humbly suggest what I feel is lacking in our Sunday service—what I keenly felt having just come from that Holy Centre of worship. Abdul-Baha does not try to conform His teachings to the different

nations or strangers who come to Him. He gives forth the one great Light to all. . . . The Truth has been uttered, the seed sown, and God alone giveth the increase.¹⁴

This tension over whether even one regular community meeting should be primarily devotional in character would continue and have considerable impact on the eventual development of the use of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*.¹⁵ Throughout this period, however, hymns continued to be used at meetings whether they were primarily devotionally or didactically oriented. This is evident from the various mentions of Lillian James and Miss McCoy as "organist" or "pianist" for the meetings in House minutes, and in the development of the career of Louise Waite.

LOUISE WAITE

The most significant of the early Bahá'í hymnodists was Louise Waite. Not only was she the most prolific of them, but her work was of a generally high standard and was used in the community to a much greater extent than that of any other writer.¹⁶

Louise Waite was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1867. Her parents were originally from Baltimore, Maryland, and they returned to that area when Waite was a young child. She attended school in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Waite's parents were Episcopalian and her mother, especially, had a deep love for hymns and encouraged a devotional attitude in her daughter with morning and evening prayers. As a girl Waite would improvise around hymn tunes on the piano, but she did not have a systematic musical education and never learned to read or write music.

Waite married, while still "a girl," a Mr. Spencer of Baltimore. They had one daughter, Violet, who was to be Waite's

only child. In one year Waite lost her mother, brother, husband, and daughter, and as a result of this traumatic experience she left the Baltimore area. She may have lived in New York for a while, but by the early years of this century she was living in Chicago.

In Chicago, in 1902, Waite heard about the Bahá'í Faith from a neighbor, Mrs. Nash, and accepted it almost immediately. On the day she did so, she invited some friends to her home to hear about it from Nash. Before Nash's talk she improvised on the piano. But when asked to repeat what she had played, she explained that she could not repeat her improvisations: "It comes, and then it is gone." The following morning the tune came back to her, with words which she wrote down, and on going to her piano she found that she could repeat the music. That afternoon she had a musician friend write the music for her, and she had the song, "If Ye Seek Me," printed and circulating within the week.

This first song of Waite's was only directly linked to the Bahá'í Faith by the dedication to 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the title page. To anyone who merely heard it, it would seem a normal religious concert song. (Indeed, it was reprinted by a California publisher of church music in 1931, without the dedication.) In November of 1902, Waite wrote the words to her second song, "The Greatest Name," which were unmistakably Bahá'í.

As a usual part of becoming a Bahá'í in those years, Waite had written to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and she received the first of more than forty tablets from him in early 1903. Shortly after this she received her second tablet, in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá praised the words of "The Greatest Name," which she had sent to him, saying that he had chanted it (indicating that it had been translated into Persian) and that it would be sung in meetings and the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* forever. After receiving this second tablet, Waite "received" (her usual word) the music for "The Greatest Name." Another tablet that arrived

soon after again praised the words of this song and stated that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had had it spread in the Eastern community.

In April 1903, Waite married Edgar Waite, a salesman with the Baldwin piano company. During this year she continued to write and to increase her involvement with the Chicago Bahá'í community.

In 1904, the Bahai Publishing Society brought out Waite's first book, *Bahai Hymns and Poems*, which contained only words. There was opposition to this book in some quarters, as some felt that the Publishing Society should print only sacred text and commentaries and discussions on the Faith. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was sufficiently pleased with this little book to praise it in three tablets. (For unknown reasons, two of these tablets were not sent when written, and only came to Waite after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death.) Waite countered the criticism by organizing the first large fund-raising event for the Temple fund in December 1904. She and Edgar arranged a concert by professional Chicago artists who were friendly to the Faith, which raised just over \$100. At Waite's suggestion, instead of being merely deposited in the Temple fund, this money was given to the Publishing Society as an interest-free loan to finance the printing of a translation of the Hidden Words that had been ready for some months, but for which there were no funds. This edition also included "Words of Wisdom" (excerpts from various Bahá'í writings) and a selection of prayers.

Between 1905 and 1908, Waite continued to write and to be active in the community. In 1905, she first published as a song-sheet "Great Day of God," which would become her most printed song, appearing in tens of thousands of copies in various publications over the next three decades. In late 1907, she wrote two of her best loved songs for the Chicago Bahá'í community children's classes, "Softly His Voice is Calling" and "Tell the Wondrous Story."

In 1908 Waite's influence on the devotional life of the Bahá'í community increased greatly with the publication of her first book of songs with music, *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, and her participation in the founding of the Vahid Choral Society.¹⁷ In March 1909, Waite wrote the most widely used of her songs, "Benediction," and while on holiday at Corinne True's house in Fruitport, Michigan, that summer, she received an unexpected invitation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to visit 'Akká.

Waite financed her trip to 'Akká by selling her piano, which had been Edgar's wedding gift to her. With her she carried a letter from the Chicago House of Spirituality asking for directions about music in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. On her journey through Europe she spoke at various places on the Bahá'í Faith. She eventually reached 'Akká via the usual route of Egypt and Haifa.

Waite stayed in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house in 'Akká for five days. During her stay she had a number of meetings with him, during which he told her of his approval of her work, gave her the name of Shahnaz (translated as "melody" for Waite by his daughter), and presented her with one of his own pens. Waite also had a number of meetings with the women of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household and with a number of distinguished Eastern Bahá'í scholars. She played some of her songs while in 'Akká, and was surprised to learn from the Eastern visitors how well-known her work was in their community. After Waite's return to Haifa en route to Egypt, she had some further unexpected meetings with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Waite returned to the United States via Naples, where she met Carrie and Edward Kinney, with whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had instructed her to travel home. The Kinneys had been in 'Akká shortly before Waite, and as a professional musician Kinney had discussed music with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. During this return journey Waite was able to read and copy Kinney's notes of those discussions. They also discussed her work, and she

found that he had set verses from her 1904 book to music, not knowing that there was music already written for any of them. (Unfortunately, none of these Kinney settings have come to light.) On the Atlantic crossing Kinney and Waite jointly wrote a "sentimental" song which became popular on the ship.

On her arrival in Chicago, Waite found two Tablets waiting for her. One was a personal letter approving her work with the Vahid Choral Society, and the other was to the Chicago House of Spirituality asking that the "Benediction" be used in Bahá'í meetings.

Shortly after her return to Chicago, Waite wrote "At Eventide," and for the Bahai Temple Unity convention in 1910 she wrote "Song of the Temple." By this time, her songs were being used by peace societies as well as by Bahá'ís, and in the summer of 1910, she published a booklet of five hymns, *Hymns of Peace and Praise*, for their use. In 1911, Waite attended the Races Congress held in London as an official Peace Societies' delegate, speaking at various meetings there.

During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States in 1912, he expressed frequent approval of Waite's work, both in public and in private talks with her. He also gave her a prayer for her personal use, asking for divine assistance in her work. At the 1912 convention, Waite's "The New Jerusalem" was premiered. Later in this year she wrote "Song of Thanksgiving," which was approved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on one of his visits to Chicago, and "The Song of the Covenant," on his specific instructions.

In 1914 Waite was co-opted onto Jane Addams' Women's Peace Committee by virtue of her peace hymns. And in late 1914 the Chicago Board of Education gave permission for the use of Waite's peace-oriented "Song of America" in the Chicago schools. In 1915 Waite had a letter from President Wilson approving of this song, and at a peace pageant in Chicago it was sung by a chorus of 5,000 children.

In March 1915, Waite and her husband moved to California. This move had been contemplated for some time, but although they appreciated the mild climate and the general way of life there, it was not a wise move financially and their income never recovered to the level it had been at in Chicago.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Waite worked with the Red Cross in California, writing a booklet, "The White Cross," to be sold as a fundraiser for them. After the war she was one of a few pioneers teaching the Bahá'í Faith in prisons, organizing by correspondence Bahá'í study classes in San Quentin. In 1919 Edgar Waite became a Bahá'í.

After the war Waite continued to write, but none of these songs had the widespread effect of her earlier compositions, which continued to be used. The financial difficulties of these years, exacerbated by periods of ill health, prevented her from having her music written for her and limited most of her new publication efforts to words only.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Waite was in some demand as a traveling Bahá'í teacher, both in California and further afield. She would spend a few weeks or months as the guest of a community, teaching classes on aspects of the Faith for Bahá'ís and interested non-Bahá'ís.

Waite died peacefully in her sleep on 27 May 1939, without preceding illness but, her executrix felt, yearning to go. Her period of involvement with the Bahá'í Faith had spanned the era of Bahá'í hymnody, her work had formed its most significant element, and it would not long survive her.

BAHAI HYMNS OF PEACE AND PRAISE

As the emphasis in this chapter is on the place of hymnody in the devotional life of the Bahá'í community, rather than on the career of an individual, I will not discuss Waite's work as a whole but concentrate on her *Bahai Hymns of Peace and*

Praise as this collection includes the most used of her compositions. It is difficult to determine exactly how many editions of this booklet there were, as the plates made for the first edition were used for subsequent editions and all editions simply say "Copyright MCMVIII" on the cover. Editions after the first one had some further songs added, and there were some changes made to the plates. From these clues and the documentary evidence, we can reconstruct a possible publishing history of the work. Fortunately, the dates of the first and last editions are known, and between them there seem to have been at least three other editions.

The first edition was issued in 1908. The cover reads: "BAHAI HYMNS OF PEACE *and* PRAISE/ 9/ Copyright MCMVIII by L. R. WAITE." Despite the last line, the booklet was not actually copyrighted. The first page presents a ruled box containing "Index" in bold type heading a list of the titles of the hymns in order:

Great Day of God.
Hymn of Praise.
The Greatest Name.
Awake ye Nations All.
His Glorious Sun has Risen.
The Day of Certainty.
Praise Thee Oh God.
Alleluia Song.
Tell The Wondrous Story.
Softly His Voice is Calling.

The hymns then follow on pages numbered 4 to 13. The reverse of page 13 also has a ruled box with this text:

Funds for the publication of this book having been provided, the proceeds from its sale will be devoted to the building of the Temple in America.

The form of the first edition is slightly confused by the existence of a copy inscribed in Brittingham's hand, "I.D. Brittingham/ Sept. 1908," which has the funds notice printed at the front and the index at the back.¹⁸ Otherwise, this copy is the same as described above. It would seem likely that the printer struck off a few sheets with the plates for "Index" and "Funds . . ." in the wrong places, rather than this representing an entirely separate edition.

The other edition for which the data is certain, the last, was issued in 1927. The cover of this edition has "By Louise R. Waite (Shahnaz)" added beneath the title and is the only edition to have this. The index box has the bottom rule removed and four more hymn titles added:

At Eventide.
Sweet Peace.
Benediction.
Anthem of all Nations.

These four hymns appear on pages 14 to 17. The funds notice appears after the additional hymns. This edition consisted of 1,038 copies (38 copies being the printer's overrun on an order of 1,000 copies).¹⁹

According to Waite, the edition that preceded the 1927 one was one which she had authorized Mary Lesch to bring out under the auspices of the Bahai Publishing Society, with any profits to go to their work. Thus, in the Lesch edition the funds notice is omitted. The other contents of this edition are the same as in the 1927 edition. Waite mentions that she gave this permission to Lesch after she moved from Chicago to California, which would mean after March 1915. Waite also says that "Mr. Talbott who had done all of my music printing held my plates."²⁰ The account book of the Publishing Society includes an entry that states that on 10 July 1917, the Society

“Paid Talbot & Co for 1000 Songsters & Bens [“Benediction” in sheet form] \$37.40.”²¹ Talbot[t] was not the Publishing Society’s regular printer, so this entry probably refers to the printing of Waite’s plates, and therefore the Lesch edition seems likely to have been issued in 1917.

We have seen that the Lesch and 1927 editions include four more hymns than the 1908 edition, but there is also an edition that contains only three more. In the Lesch and 1927 editions, “Anthem of all Nations” is listed last in the index, after “Benediction.” In fact, “Anthem” is on page 16 and “Benediction” follows on page 17. The reason for “Anthem” being out of order in the index becomes clear when we find that the index in the edition with only three added hymns stops at “Benediction,” which appears on page 16 of that edition. Obviously, once the three extra hymn titles had been added to the plate, they could not be rearranged to admit “Anthem” before “Benediction” in the index, even though that became the page order when “Anthem” was added. What, then, is the date of the edition with the three additional hymns?

Receipts for contributions made to the Temple Fund from sales of the hymn books show the following payments:

\$14 August 1908
\$8 July 1909
\$32.50 February 1910
\$3 December 1910
\$3.50 May 1911²²

Although these receipts present a far from complete record, they may be illuminating. The comparatively large amount of \$14 in August 1908 was contributed after the publication of the first edition. The large amount of \$32.50 in February 1910 may have resulted from the publication of the edition with the three added hymns. This new edition would have been especially attractive as it included the “Benediction,”

which was fast becoming Waite's most popular piece. Among the three hymns added to this edition was "At Eventide," which was written in December 1909. The omitted "Anthem," which would be added to later editions, was written by 1911. It seems unlikely that Waite would have added only the three hymns to the booklet after "Anthem" was written, so the songs included also suggest 1910 as a possible year for this edition.

However, 1910 may not be the date for the edition with the three added hymns. In March 1911, Chase wrote to a Bahá'í in Germany who had asked him to send some hymn books that "I sent to Chicago and requested that some of the Hymn Books should be sent to you, on my account. I have received answer that another edition of the hymns is being published and, as soon as it is out from the press, some will be sent you."²³ This must refer to Waite's booklets, as in July Chase wrote to her saying that he presumed she had sent the "Hymnals" to Germany and asking her to let him know how much a dozen would cost for Los Angeles.²⁴ If these references are indeed to the edition with three added hymns, then the date of it is evidently early 1911. Chase's March reference seems to be too early for his remark to refer to an edition including "Anthem of All Nations." However, there is always the possibility that there was more than one printing of the edition with the three added hymns. At any rate, there seems to have been an edition of this description sometime in 1910-1911.

If the date is early 1911, and there was only one printing, then the large contribution to the fund in February 1910 might simply be from accrued sales of the first edition of 1908. That first edition initially sold for 20¢. That the February 1910 contribution from hymn book receipts is not evenly divisible by 20 but is by 10 may then reflect a reduced price to clear the first edition to make way for the expanded reprint.

There was at least one further edition of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, as there are copies that include both "An-

them” and the funds notice, and so are not the Lesch edition, but do not have “By Louise R. Waite (Shahnaz)” on the cover, and so are not the 1927 edition either. In February 1915, Waite wrote to Miriam Haney, “Will you also announce to the friends that a new edition of the hymns is out with the Benediction included[.] Mrs. Lesch has them now for sale and will continue to handle them in the future.”²⁵ At first glance this seems to refer to the Lesch edition, putting the date of that at 1915. However, this was written before Waite moved from Chicago, and Lesch had been distributing the hymn books since at least 1912. The Publishing Society records make it clear that Lesch was buying the books from Waite in batches as she needed them and simply acting as distributor.

Lesch’s accounts show that she received 100 hymn books from Waite on 7 May 1914; and on 11 February 1915, she seems to have received a similar number. She had not previously received such large numbers, although she had bought some hymn books from Waite in September 1913 and April 1914. Waite described the books to Haney as a new edition in February 1915. However, the edition may have come out before Lesch’s receipt of 100 copies in May 1914.

As Waite specifically mentions the “Benediction” in her remarks to Haney, it might be thought that her comments refer to the edition with the three added hymns, as this was the first with that song. However, Waite is quite specific in her 1927 letters to Windust that the edition immediately preceding the one of that year was the Lesch edition, which I have dated as probably 1917. That the Lesch edition is later than April 1916, is confirmed by a postcard of that date from Waite to Joseph Hannen on which she states that Lesch “handles” the hymn books for her in return for half the proceeds going to the Publishing Society (the other half going to the Temple Fund), but that Waite had paid the cost of publication.²⁶ As there is definitely an edition that includes “Anthem” apart from the Lesch and 1927 editions, it must thus predate

the Lesch edition. If the edition with only three added songs had come out as late as 1914 or 1915, there is insufficient time to compass this further edition between it and the Lesch one in 1917. So the new edition mentioned by Waite in 1915 is most likely the first edition including "Anthem."

The date of the first edition with all four hymns added cannot be estimated as precisely as that of the other undated editions. As it contains "Anthem" it must be 1911 or after. If it had been issued shortly before or during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America in 1912, however, it would seem likely that it would have been associated with him in some way, as are Waite's other productions of that time. Thus, I will assign 1913–1915 as the probable date range for this edition.

This attempted reconstruction of the publishing history of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* suggests that there were at least five editions: in 1908, 1910–1911, 1913–1915, 1917, and 1927. Probably, each edition was around 1,000 copies, totaling around 5,000 copies in all. The price of the booklet varied over the years. The first edition sold for 20¢ a copy in 1908. From at least 1912 the booklet was being offered by the Publishing Society for 10¢.²⁷ The 1927 edition sold for 30¢ a copy. By the early 1930s, this last edition was sold out. That so many copies of this work could have been sold when the total adult Bahá'í community of North America was probably short of 1,500 at any time during the period amply testifies to its popularity.

During the period that *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* was in print, other compositions of Waite's (as well as a few from the booklet) were available in sheet form and were sometimes used. However, the most used single source of music for Bahá'í meetings was this booklet. Indeed, it is generally referred to in records of community meetings as simply "the Bahai Hymns."

Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise includes examples of

Waite's various types of devotional songs, with the exception of the elaborated solo concert type, of which she wrote a few. Five of the hymns are explicitly Bahá'í in their text ("The Greatest Name," "Tell the Wondrous Story," "Softly His Voice is Calling," "At Eventide," and "Benediction"), and the remaining nine are of a type referred to at the time as "universal." This latter type were so called as their texts have no specific Bahá'í references but are nonetheless saturated with Bahá'í meaning. To non-Bahá'ís they would seem like ordinary hymns.

Five of the universal hymns ("Great Day of God," "Awake Ye Nations All," "The Day of Certainty," "Praise Thee Oh God," and "Sweet Peace") comprised *Hymns of Peace and Praise*, which Waite published in 1910 for the use of peace groups. In a review of this booklet, the Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones (a prominent Chicago clergyman) stated that they "set forth the great longing of the human heart for universal brotherhood, unity and peace which is seeking for utterance in a thousand ways in these days." He also invited "more attention to the fundamental strain" in them. In closing, he described the last stanza of "Great Day of God" as "the prayer of the Twentieth century" and quoted it in full.²⁸

Such universal hymns were an important element in contact between Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, as their use could put a Bahá'í stamp on an occasion without alienating other participants. Thus, at the Race Unity Convention organized by Bahá'ís in Washington, D.C., in 1921, with the participation of non-Bahá'í speakers (the first of a number of such conventions), stanzas from "Great Day of God" were used to open and close each session. The words of the hymn were included on the printed convention program and 19,000 copies of this program were distributed to publicize the aims of the convention. The program was also reproduced in facsimile in various Bahá'í publications at the time and subsequently. The spread

and use of Waite's specifically Bahá'í work in that community will be discussed in the following chapter.

As we have seen, Waite's career as a composer began with her discovery of the Bahá'í Faith. Her first song, "If Ye Seek Me," is a concert style solo of much charm. The words had come to her after the music. In the case of her next song, "The Greatest Name," the words came first and she "received" the music some months later. For those of her later songs for which we have details of the composition process, she "received" words and music simultaneously. Waite looked upon her compositional ability as a gift of faith rather than a personal accomplishment. After the dedication to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Bahai Hymns and Poems* (1904), she included the following verses:

No praise be mine for songs here written,
 Thou my inspiration art;
 Thine the thought, I do but catch it,
 But reflect it from my heart.

Thine the songs, I do but sing them,
 Though imperfect be my tone;
 Aught they may contain of merit,
 Help or comfort, Thine alone.

Waite seems to have made a distinction between her songs and her poetry. She could write poetry (and she wrote some quite good blank verse and other poems) of herself, as it were; but songs were given to her. Sometimes she did receive poetry, but this was usually the mode through which her songs came into being. That songs were poetry with music put them in a distinct category for Waite. To her:

In the final analysis of all things, physically, mentally and spiritually, we are brought face to face with the great truth that Life is Love, and Love is Life, and its audible Voice is MUSIC.

Music to the realm of Spirit, to the realm of Love belongs,
And the heart becomes enraptured thru sweet melodies and
songs.
Music cheers and music strengthens, music lifts our souls
above;
Music is the heart's own language;
Music is the Voice of Love.

(This is from a paper on Music which I gave before I went to Acca. It is very significant that Abdul Baha said to me when there, some months after: "Music is the heart's own language; its vibrations uplift the spirit; it is very beautiful and a great art.")
L.R.W.²⁹

As she could not read or write music, Waite regarded her musical compositions as wholes rather than the sum of parts. The way they came to her was the way she played them; and the way she played them was the way she wanted them recorded in notation. This could be difficult when she did not have a sufficiently sympathetic scribe to work with. She complained at various times of individuals who "corrected" her work in their copying rather than writing what she played. This was especially so after she moved to California. During the period she wrote the hymns included in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, she had professional musical friends in Chicago who would take the time to play over for her what they had written so that she could ensure it was what she had intended.

Waite had been exposed to Christian hymnody on a daily basis in her childhood, and for her it was a completely familiar realm of discourse. Indeed, it was a familiar realm for most early Western Bahá'ís; it is not uncommon to come across phrases from hymns incorporated in their correspondence and other writings as figures of speech. Waite's own compositions draw on this familiarity, her acquaintance with Bahá'í writings and the views held by Bahá'ís in her day, and her

own growing body of work. Thus, in the received entities of her compositions we find echoes of Christian hymns, quotes and paraphrases from Bahá'í writings, and phrases and images from her own earlier work.

As we might expect, Waite does not seem to have revised her received songs to any appreciable extent. Where early copies exist of the words of songs which would be given permanent printed form with their music, differences between the early text and the final form are trivial, usually consisting of matters of punctuation and capitalization. An exception to this is her first explicitly Bahá'í song, "The Greatest Name" (see Musical Example 3).

There are two early versions of the text of "The Greatest Name" extant. One was included in *Bahai Hymns and Poems* (1904: pp. 6-7), and there is a typewritten copy that evidently predates that published version.³⁰ The first noticeable distinction between the two earlier versions and the one included in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* is that they have nine stanzas, whereas the final version has eight. The last stanza of all three versions includes "Allaho Abha" in the first and last lines. At some stage it either occurred to Waite or was pointed out to her that, although the early versions had the pleasing number of nine stanzas, in the course of the text the Greatest Name was repeated ten times. As repeating the Greatest Name nine times is a specific Bahá'í devotional act in itself, by cutting the number of verses to eight for the final version Waite increased the devotional content, as one now repeated the Greatest Name nine times in the song. This must have been her intent, as there seems no other reason to have dropped the verse she did; and the fact that the Greatest Name is repeated nine times is mentioned by her and others as one of the song's merits.

The changes that were made in the text of "The Greatest Name," apart from the omitting of one verse, are probably related to its music. After the music was received, the previ-

ously received text must not have fit quite comfortably to it. In the first version the opening line was, "We as Bahais, do proclaim," which would fit the tune as published only if *Bahá'ís* was correctly pronounced as three syllables. This pronunciation was never really adopted by Western Bahá'ís, who have always preferred to pronounce the word in two syllables. In the version printed in 1904, the line is, "We, Bahais, do proclaim." This is too short, however *Bahá'ís* is pronounced. This 1904 version, though, is presumably the one first associated with the tune, as the music was received in 1903. There may have been two variants of the beginning of the tune, as the first lines of stanzas one to four of the 1904 version of the text are too short to fit the tune as published in 1908. The 1908 text lengthens each of these lines. The first lines of the other stanzas in the 1904 version were retained unaltered in 1908, as they fit the tune. In the final version the first line is altered to, "With joyful hearts we do proclaim." This is a degree of change in one line that is rarely met with elsewhere in an entire song. Other lines had their scansion improved or were made more euphonious: "That dispels darkness through its might" became "Dispelling darkness by its might."

When words and music were received together, the music must have helped to establish and maintain the poetic structure. Verses Waite wrote without any musical connection (apart from those in blank verse, which are usually well structured) show weaknesses and infelicities that do not usually occur in her song texts.

The only other song in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* that seems to have undergone considerable rewriting is "Alleluia Song" (Musical Example 4). In the earlier version of this song (1904: p. 28) the first stanza was:

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ our Lord has come again

To fulfill His Glorious promise
 Given through the Sacred Pen.
 Once again He comes to save us,
 Once again our sins He bears,
 Tho' the Lord of all Creation,
 Yet no diadem He wears.

The second stanza in the earlier version was the same as that published in 1908, except that the first word of lines four and five was "Wise," not "Glad." The first half of the third stanza was different:

Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Sing it forth from shore to shore;
 Spread the Message of Glad Tidings:
 Christ our Lord has come once more.

The second half of the stanza was the same, except that in the penultimate line it had "His Kingdom" rather than "God's kingdom." Obviously, the intent of the revision of this song was to decrease the Christological content and make the text more universal in character.

In other cases we can detect links between an early text and a later hymn, although the latter goes beyond being simply a revision of the former. The words of "Softly His Voice is Calling" (Musical Example 5), written in late 1907, are evidently related to "Sometimes," written on 16 July 1903:

Sometimes I almost hear His voice,
 Calling so sweet and low;
 Sometimes I almost see His face,
 With Love Divine aglow!

Sometimes I almost feel His hand,
 Laid gently on my head,
 And peace most sweet then comes to me;
 My hungry heart is fed.

O Master! let me closer come,
More like Thee grow each day;
So that these heavenly Sometimes
Become one grand Always.³¹

The relationship between earlier and later texts can be much more oblique, however. "The Morning Star," written on 19 February 1904, contains echoes of "His glorious Sun has Risen" and foretastes of "Great Day of God," "Awake ye Nations All," and "The Day of Certainty" (Musical Examples 6–9):

Awake! all ye that sleepeth
And from your slumbers cease.
The golden morn now breaketh,
Now comes the day of peace.
God's glorious Sun has risen,
Its rays shine forth afar,
And in the clear horizon,
Behold! the Morning Star,

Why spend your hours in sleeping
This precious time away?
The night of gloom hath yielded
Unto the "perfect Day."
The curtains that make dark your soul,
Arise and open far;
There in the clear horizon,
Behold! the Morning Star.

Awake, and hear the trumpet,
By God's own angels blown;
Spend no more time in sleeping,
The night of doubt hath flown;
The Sun of Truth hath risen;
Naught can its glory mar,
And in the clear horizon
Shines forth the Morning Star.

Awake with might and power;
 Awake and loudly sing;
 Proclaim to slumbering servants
 The coming of their King.
 Baha'u'llah, all glorious,
 We praise Thee near and far,
 And Abdul-Baha Abbas,
 Our radiant Morning Star!³²

Fairly early in her career, Waite established a repertoire of phrases and imagery which she continued to use throughout her life and in her best works presented in refined form. As a conscious poet might draft and redraft the same material, Waite received complete works that had a familial relationship to previously received pieces. It would seem that such derivation went on largely unconsciously. To Waite, each received work was a "thought" she had merely caught and reflected. This unconsciousness of derivation also applied to her use of Christian hymns as models. It would seem that Christian hymnody was so integral a part of her psyche that she could produce complete songs that are quite evidently related to specific Christian hymns without being conscious of the relationship. Occasionally, a song of Waite's will call to mind a Christian hymn, as "Tell the Wondrous Story" (Musical Example 10) brings to mind "I Love to Tell the Story," although there is little more than a thematic similarity between the two. But in some cases there is an evident organic relationship between the Christian hymn and Waite's song. A case in point would be "At Eventide" (Musical Example 11).

"At Eventide" is more like one of Waite's concert style songs in character than most of her hymns, but it is evidently intimately related to the well-known hymn "Abide With Me," which must have been a part of Waite's hymnic consciousness from childhood. Fortunately, the circumstances of the composition of "At Eventide" are known. There is a copy of a talk

given by Windust in Chicago on 19 December 1909, which has the details attached.³³ The latter part of Windust's talk was on the importance of "personal devotions" and the instruction by Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* to "Chant the Utterances of God every morn and eve." Windust concluded his talk with the following paragraphs:

How blessed it will be when not only one member of every household obeys this Command, but the whole household together will fulfill this Covenant of God. It is an old saying, and a good one, that, "They who daily pray in their homes, do well; they who not only pray, but read the Word, do better; but they do best of all who not only pray and read the Word, but sing the praises of God." Surely, the Bahais have an abundance of material where-with they may fulfill every phrase, i.e., prayer, the reading of the Word, and singing. Although we are commanded to read the Word of BAHÁ'O'LLAH every morning and evening, yet we believe the Tablets of Abdul-Baha will also be read daily. His Words seem especially appropriate in the evening. This is just a personal opinion. The former is like the seed, the latter is like the fruit; the former is like the sowing time, the latter is like the harvest; the former is like the dawn, the latter is like the eventide.

As for the songs, we are blessed in having our Bahai hymns. During the past cycle—it is generally conceded—when a people attained to where they had their songs, it was co-incident with the dawn of national life for them. Already, the Bahais in the Occident have attained to that position—thanks to our good Mrs. Waite—and I believe that remarkable composition of hers, the "Benediction," written at the time of the Convention this year, will in future, be sung in every home on occasions of rejoicing or sorrow. It is an ideal "good-night" song.

A note by Gertrude Buikema says that this meeting was the first that Waite attended after returning from pilgrimage, and so Windust "Took the opportunity to pay a tribute to the great service she has rendered in the field of music." The

copy of “At Eventide” with the talk has the note that the song was “called forth” by Windust’s remarks. After having discovered the thoughts that inspired “At Eventide,” it would be helpful at this point to quote “Abide With Me” for purposes of comparison with Waite’s song:

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not, abide with me!

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter’s power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Thro’ cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee!
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!³⁴

When this hymn was used by the Bahá’í community in Chicago, the word “Light” was substituted for “cross” in the last stanza.³⁵

Although “At Eventide” is not simply a contrafact or version of “Abide With Me,” it is intimately related to it. There is the general thematic resemblance. There are closely related phrases: “The darkness deepens”/“when darkness falls around us”; “ebbs out life’s little day”/“life’s short day is ended”; “Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away”/“Earth’s sorrows dim and burdens fall away” (the difference

in attitude between these two related lines is striking); “I need thy presence every passing hour”/“Love’s holy presence doth all fear allay.” And through Waite’s more expansive melody we hear echoes of the other tune. “Abide With Me” is evidently the seed for “At Eventide.” Equally evident, “At Eventide” is much more than a merely derivative song. Waite’s song expresses quite explicitly Bahá’í feelings. It draws on the imagery of her own hymns as well as on “Abide With Me,” her recent experience of visiting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and her acquaintance with Bahá’í scripture. “And death’s glad tidings fall upon our ear” in the last stanza refers to Bahá’u’lláh’s Hidden Words from the Arabic No. 33 (No. 32 in the current numbering) in the translation published with the proceeds of the concert Waite organized in 1904: “I made death for thee as glad-tidings . . . ” (The currently used translation is, “I have made death a messenger of joy to thee.”) Thus, in this song Waite presents a remarkably successful synthesis of the heritage of her Christian upbringing and her new Bahá’í identity.

Before leaving this consideration of some aspects of the songs gathered in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* as compositions by Waite to turn to a discussion of how they were integrated into the life of the community, it is necessary to consider “that remarkable composition of hers,” as Windust termed it, her most important contribution to Bahá’í devotional life: “Benediction” (Musical Example 12). This piece was performed more than any other at Bahá’í meetings during the era of Bahá’í hymnody and was so absorbed into the fabric of Bahá’í life that its use even survived the end of that era to some extent. For many Bahá’ís, the “Benediction” was *the* musical expression of Bahá’í devotion and a deeply moving affirmation of their faith. This is Waite’s account of its composition, written a few days after the event:

On Tuesday March 23rd. [1909] the last session of the first Bahai Temple Unity Convention was held in Mrs. True's home, and she had engaged luncheon for all of the delegates at a little restaurant near by, kept by one of the believers. I went there at 10 A.M. to help her prepare for them. Five other of the dear sisters were there, and we all worked hard until 2:30. I came home very very tired, but O! so happy! On my way home—it was only about four blocks from my house—I heard in my innermost soul these words—

May God's Love now hover o'er us
 As a dove with outstretched wings,
 While His Peace that flows around us,
 To each heart sweet comfort brings;
 May we now receive His Spirit,
 And Its radiance shed afar;
 Now and here in Love abiding—
 In the realms of El-Abha.

The music—tender and beautiful—came with it. I hastened home and sat down to my piano *entranced*. O! if you dearly loved one could have *heard and felt* what I did then. I pray God that I have caught enough of that marvelous essence and held it fast in this Benediction, that I may share my joy with all mankind. I *felt and spiritually saw* that blessed white Dove actually hovering over me, pure, white, and glistening, and the Spirit of Peace that emanated from it fell in heavenly showers upon me. I lost Louise Waite forever. I was baptized with a New Name and I sailed out upon a great ocean of Peace, Love and Life, and exquisite Harmony and Melody and my White Dove was still with me and also Abdul Baha's tender words: "I pray God to make thee a sign of Love, a standard of agreement, a means of Harmony and a spreader of Peace amongst all peoples" [from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's first Tablet to Waite in 1902]. Surely those who hear or sing this Benediction *must* feel in a measure what I so blissfully felt, and feel the PRESENCE that seemed to be with me as I played it over and over. To me every note tells a wondrous story of LOVE and

PEACE and the ecstatic Joy of the intaking of the Holy Spirit with all Its “quickenings Powers”—which is LIFE.³⁶

By 1911, Waite had added a “Prélude” to the “Benediction” which was intended for solo performance, with all present then joining in on the “Benediction” itself. As well as being available in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, “Benediction” was available until the 1930s in sheet form (with or without the “Prelude” in the later years).

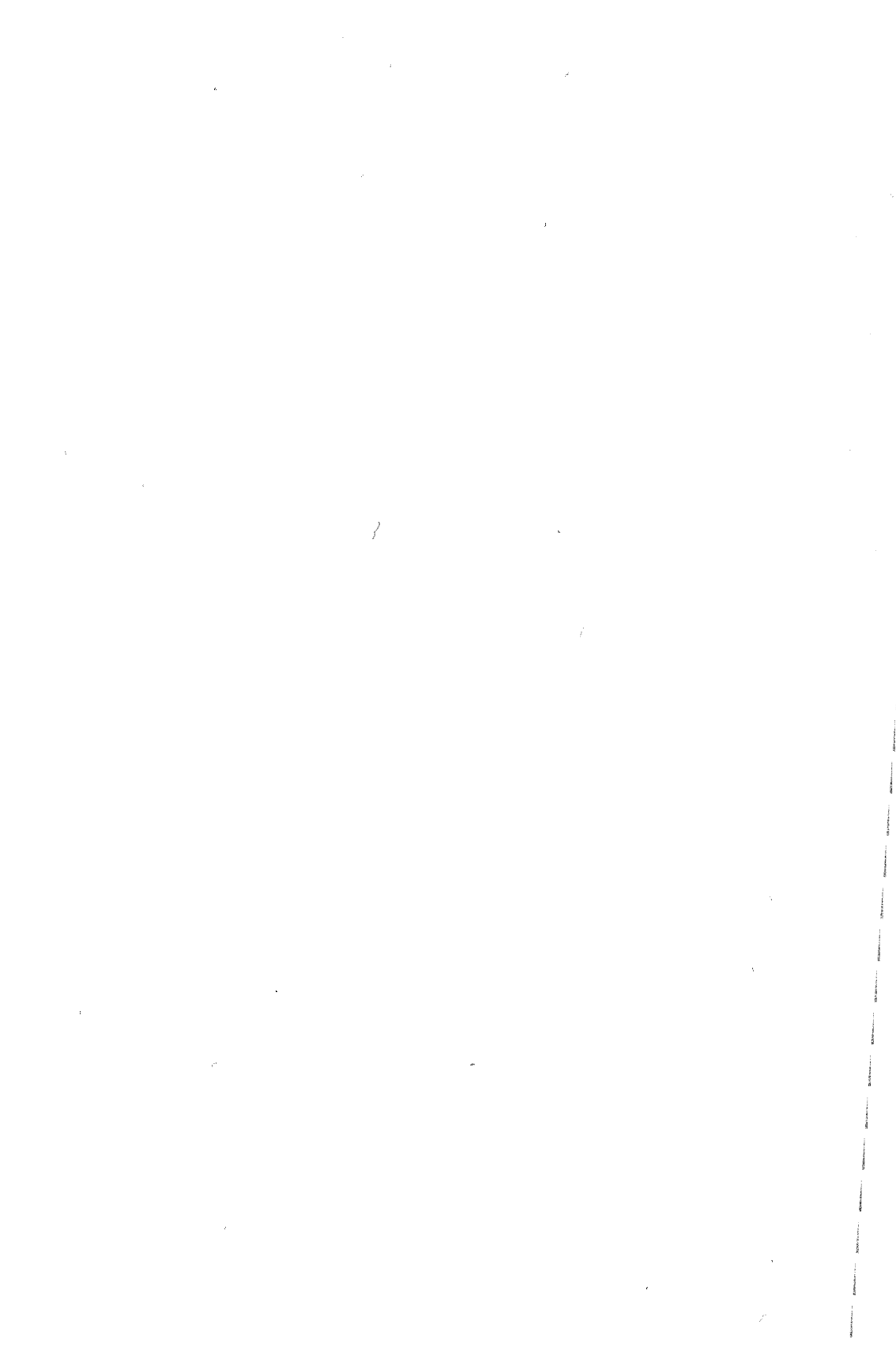
During the nineteenth century it had become accepted for women to compose hymns and sentimental ballads. However, they were more likely to compose texts than music. Ammer notes that for a collection of hymns by women published in 1885, 2,500 hymn texts were gathered representing more than 820 authors. At the last moment, it was decided to include music, and tunes by 52 women were gathered. The compiler stated that, given more time, she could probably have found more music by women.³⁷ The implication from the background to this volume, that to find music by women you had to search but to find texts was easy, is evident.

Waite grew up at a time when it was not exceptional for a middle-class American woman to write verse, but for her to write music was much more so. It was taken for granted that the young Waite should play the piano and sing, but regarded as unnecessary for her to be musically literate. The inadequacy of her musical education undoubtedly limited the productiveness of Waite’s career, particularly after 1915, when she was increasingly unable to have her work transcribed. Indeed, that much of her later work is in blank verse and other nonmusical forms cannot be unrelated to the frustration she must have felt at not being able to have her songs properly recorded.

Waite’s financial difficulties also circumscribed the development of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*. Although she

was able to issue a few of her other songs as sheet music (e.g., “Song of the Covenant” and “Song of Thanksgiving,” which were both written in 1912, the former at the express request of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá), she was not able to issue a further expanded edition of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* that would include songs written after “Anthem of All Nations” as she wished to do.

Waite continued to write songs into the 1930s. Sometimes she compensated for her inability to have new music written by writing new texts to her published tunes or to other hymn tunes. She also was able to have the words of some new songs printed. However, as none of these newer songs made it into the covers of “the Bahai hymns,” their penetration of the life of the community was relatively slight. Of the hymns that were in *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, some of them became so well known that they could be sung, with or without books, by Bahá’ís who spoke English anywhere in the world. Numbers of Bahá’ís were familiar with them in other languages, too. The best known of these songs assumed almost a folk quality from their ubiquity, as to many they seemed simply a part of Bahá’í life. They were an important element in producing a feeling of Bahá’í cultural identity in North America and of affinity between North American Bahá’ís and those they visited in other Bahá’í communities overseas.





THE NAW-RÚZ CELEBRATION IN 1909
held at the first Bahai Temple Unity Convention. Standing at the back are the members of the
Vahid Choral Society.

CHAPTER THREE

BAHÁ'Í HYMNODY IN COMMUNITY LIFE

THE ABSORPTION OF WAITE'S HYMNS INTO BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY LIFE

The Chicago House of Spirituality had published its *Songs of Prayer and Praise* in 1903 just as Waite was beginning to write hymns. The House's selection remained in use, but it was gradually supplemented by copies of Waite's hymns which were being circulated in duplicated form (by the same distribution network as copies of tablets and other items of interest) with words only. Although Waite's music was not included with the first circulated copies of her hymns, assistance was given occasionally for using them by mentioning well-known tunes that would fit. Thus, on a sheet that must date from early 1903, the words of "His glorious Sun has Risen" are given with a note that the tunes of "Jerusalem the Golden" or "Greenland's Icy Mountains" may be used. The first of Waite's hymns to be available with its music was probably "Great Day of God," which appeared as sheet music in 1905.

The selection of nine hymns and a doxology in *Songs of Prayer and Praise* must have soon seemed rather limited, and other Christian hymns were used as well as the new hymns by Waite. An example of how songs from these three sources were used is the program for the Bahá'í funeral of Mrs. Goodale in 1905. The singing consisted of two hymns from *Songs of Prayer and Praise* ("Sun of My Soul" and "Nearer My God to Thee"), another Christian hymn ("Lead Kindly Light"), and a "Requiem" hymn especially written by Waite for the occasion to the tune of "All Through the Night."¹ The music sung at meetings could also be varied by the inclusion of solo pieces, usually in the middle of the program.

The desire for a wider selection of hymns was presumably behind the adoption of *Brewer's Edition of Sacred Songs and Hymns* (1905) by the Chicago community in 1907 as a replacement for the 1903 selection. A copy of Brewer survives which has been imprinted with "The Bahai Assembly" on the front and back covers and which has emendations in Chase's hand to some of the hymn texts.² There also survive a few scraps of paper on which Chase scribbled the programs of three Sunday community meetings he chaired in 1906 and 1907.³ On 23 September 1906, *Songs of Prayer and Praise* was still being used, as Chase uses numbers from it to identify the hymns being sung (as he had done on the program for Goodale's funeral). In the notes of the programs for 26 October and 3 November 1907, the hymns are listed by title and page number, and these correspond to the contents of Brewer.

That Brewer had been adopted by late 1907 as the Chicago community hymn book is confirmed by entries in the minutes of the Spokane, Washington, Assembly. These record that on 13 December 1907, "The Bahai Hymnals which brother Lehman brought from Chicago to the Assembly were used for the first time." In a number of subsequent entries over the next few months, the titles of the hymns sung at meeting are

given. All the titles mentioned are hymns included in Brewer, not all are in *Songs of Prayer and Praise*, so the former must be the book brought from Chicago by Lehman as a "Bahai Hymnal."⁴

The Brewer selection, however, was shortly to be displaced in both Chicago and Spokane by Waite's *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*. After its publication, which was probably in mid-June 1908, this booklet spread quickly around the country. The Spokane community began using it on 10 July 1908, and seems to have used it exclusively thereafter, as the hymns used at meetings in subsequent months are all from Waite's booklet.⁵ The Kenosha, Wisconsin, community took delivery of five dozen of the booklets for their use by the end of July 1908.⁶

As little research has been done on the life of most Bahá'í communities in the early years of this century, I have had to rely on the uneven availability of early minute books and accounts of meetings in correspondence to attempt an assessment of how quickly *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* penetrated general community life on a national scale. Another difficulty is that in some cases those aspects of meetings that were considered so normal as to be taken for granted were not necessarily recorded in the minutes. Some community secretaries scrupulously recorded the details of meetings; others used general terms like "singing," "a hymn," "scripture"; and others simply noted that "the usual service" was held. Thus, although mention of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* or hymn titles from it confirms its use, lack of mention does not confirm that it was not used. For example, the minutes of the Portland, Oregon, community do not give much detail of their meetings and do not mention hymns or singing more than five times between November 1906 and May 1910. However, on 19 May 1910, it was noted that "There is left only 2 Hymn books—40¢." So, although there is no record in

their minutes of the books arriving or being used, the members of the Portland community had been buying them and presumably were using them.⁷

The amount of material currently available on the various early communities is too incomplete to draw firm conclusions about how quickly *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* was absorbed into community life nationally. That the booklet went through so many editions proves its general appeal and subsequent availability to have been considerable. The question is how to distinguish between individual ownership of it in particular places and its integration into community practice in those same places. It seems that the booklet was almost immediately integrated into community life in the Midwest and probably to some extent in the Northwest (information on the latter area is much less complete). By 1910, it was being used as far west as Honolulu.⁸

The widespread acceptance and use of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* by communities on the East Coast seems to have been delayed. There were individuals in New York, for example, who corresponded with Waite and praised her work; but when the Bahai Temple Unity Convention was held there in 1913, the song sheet printed for use at its meetings had the words of three Christian hymns: "Joy to the World," "Nearer My God to Thee," and "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." The first was under the rubric, "INCARNATION AND ADVENT," and the second and third were each headed "THE CHRISTIAN LIFE." Significantly, the words of the third hymn begin in the standard way, "Blest be the tie that binds/ Our hearts in Christian love." In Chicago, from the time of the 1903 hymn book this had been altered to "in holy love." Waite's "Great Day of God" was also sung at this convention,⁹ but this is one of her universal songs rather than a specifically Bahá'í one. The New York community had been accustomed to use Christian hymns at its public meetings. It is possible that with their ties to churches in the city some of

the New York community were not entirely comfortable with Waite's explicitly Bahá'í hymns.¹⁰

In Jersey City, New Jersey, meetings opened and closed with devotional exercises, including singing, from 1908 to 1910, but what they sang is not recorded.¹¹ Accounts of meetings in Washington, D.C., do not often mention hymn singing of any kind, but by 1910 Waite's hymns were being used.¹² The "Form of Meeting" adopted in 1909 by the Baltimore community, which had close links with the Washington community, does not mention singing at all.¹³

In Chicago, *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* had completely displaced the use of Christian hymns by 1910. Waite, however, tried to encourage the continued use of suitable Christian hymns along with her own:

Friday night [11 March 1910], Mr. Windust, in a most beautiful spirit, brought up the subject of singing the old hymns with the Bahai hymns. It was discussed but no definite resolution made. I sat silently and heard it all, not a vibration was there in my heart save the thought of "THY WILL BE DONE." I felt two hymn books did not express unity, but other than this, there was no feeling, or desire save HIS WILL in my heart. If, as the mother of those hymns, I loved my child, I had, like Abraham, laid it on the altar of GOD'S WILL. All must be sacrificed in His Cause, even the spirit of man.

Saturday morning, while working out a thought for my lesson [for the following day's community meeting], I was directed by the Spirit to the Tablet on page 90, beginning—"O maid servant of God! know thou that in the sight of God the conduct of women is the same as the men—The nearer we draw to God, the nearer He comes to us."

. . . . as I wrote the words—"the nearer we draw to God, the nearer He comes to us"—I said aloud—this is the real "Nearer My God to Thee." Then I realized that it was Abdul Baha's favorite hymn, and by His request, Mr. Kinney had sung it in the Holy Tomb, at the Holy Threshold of Oneness.

I dropped all and ran to my piano and I played an arrangement of my own, which my dear Mother had so many times had me play for her; one I have not thought of for over 9 years. A love for our old hymns swept over me; I took my precious hymn book [given to her in 1880 by her mother] and ran it through. Sing the old hymns? Yea, indeed sing the old hymns as never before! Sing with hearts overflowing with the joy of certainty! Sing the old and new! Let them join hands and stand before the altar of Oneness, in Unity and Love, and so resurrect them, for this is the great day of resurrection of all things. So I came down to the hall [on Sunday] with our purple covered hymn book [Brewer, 1905] in my hands and I opened the Service with playing “Nearer My God to Thee” and I was back again in the Holy Tomb and then the Service was closed by all singing one verse of this glorious hymn. . . .

Now, I also ask with all my heart, soul and spirit that our old hymns be sung again; Sung with our spiritual eyes and ears and mouths opened, and singing forth His Glorious Praises from whatever book we open, having the single eye, which giveth light to the whole body.¹⁴

There was a further attempt to encourage the use of suitable Christian hymns along with Waite’s songs with the re-issue of *Songs of Prayer and Praise* in 1912. This edition included the previous nine hymns and doxology and added to them five popular pieces by Waite:

His glorious Sun has Risen
 Tell the Wondrous Story
 Great Day of God
 Temple Song
 Benediction

These added songs were not printed directly from Waite’s plates, as this booklet had a smaller page size than *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, and so the music had to be reduced. The only song by Waite that was added that did not

come from her booklet was "Temple Song," which she had written for the Bahai Temple Unity Convention of 1910.

This expanded reprint of *Songs of Prayer and Praise* does not seem to have been a great success. The edition size is not known, but it would seem probable that it was 1,000 copies, as the editions of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* seem to have been. At any rate, by 1923 there were still 800 copies unsold.¹⁵

The Christian hymns retained in the 1912 revision of *Songs of Prayer and Praise* probably appealed to many individual Bahá'ís and communities, but they were all readily available elsewhere and the selection was still as small as in 1903. We have already seen that the 1903 selection had been replaced by Brewer to give the Chicago community more choice. As to the Bahá'í hymns included, they were also too few, and such general favorites as "Softly His Voice is Calling" were omitted. The collection, therefore, addressed an issue rather than a market. In respect of the issue, communities continued to sing Christian hymns, Bahá'í hymns, or any mixture of the two they pleased. The new edition of *Songs of Prayer and Praise* was neither necessary nor adequate to assist them.

By the early 1920s, the use of Waite's hymns had become a feature of the socialization of Bahá'í children. Waite had written "Softly His Voice is Calling" and "Tell the Wondrous Story" for the Bahá'í children's classes of Chicago in late 1907. Most communities with children organized special activities for them from fairly early on. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited North America in 1912, he met with children's groups in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Oakland, California. On each occasion the children sang "Softly His Voice is Calling."

From 1919, Bahá'í children's activities became more nationally coordinated through the efforts of Victoria Bedikian and Ella Robarts. Bedikian organized a loosely affiliated national and international network of children's "Gardens."

These were mostly operated by Bahá'ís, but some were run by others and they all were open to Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í children. Bedikian herself was particularly concerned with the needs of children from deprived backgrounds. She organized these Gardens through her mammoth correspondences and was generally known to their participants, and to most Bahá'ís, as Auntie Victoria. She also produced a considerable quantity of printed matter: poems, illustrations with and without text, of various sizes, and a number of magazines under various names in the 1920s.

Robarts began organizing her "Bahai Juniors" activities in 1919. In the same year she began publication of *The Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom*, which she continued until 1924. A large part of each issue consisted of accounts of Bahá'í children's activities, often written by the children themselves. Waite wrote for both Robarts' and Bedikian's magazines, contributing stories, poems, and even an occasional song. The main influence Waite had on children's activities, though, was through *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, whose integration into the socialization of Bahá'í children is recorded in Robarts' correspondence, from which she drew the items for her magazine.

In May 1920, Robarts received a typical request from a young woman who was beginning a children's class: "I also would like to be able to get some children's songs, I mean Bahai hymns. I think singing is very essential in working with the little ones."¹⁶ It seems to have been through the answering of such requests that *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* entered fully into the life of those communities, especially those more recently founded, which had not yet adopted it.

Another woman wrote to Robarts about her community's plans for children's classes: ". . . we of course will lay out different plans to amuse them and keep their interest, beside teaching them some of the beautiful hymns. . . . We are now teaching them, 'Softly His Voice is Calling.'"¹⁷ Indeed, teach-

ing the children the Bahá'í hymns was often the first suitable activity that came to mind.

"Softly His Voice is Calling" continued to be the favorite piece for children, but other songs were also taught. In November 1921, Frances Olds (age 13) of Omaha, Nebraska, wrote to Robarts that her community had celebrated the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh, and "Softly His Voice is Calling" had been included in the program. In the Kenosha, Wisconsin, community what the children had learned in their classes was featured at the community's holy day celebrations. At Naw-Rúz 1921:

The evening was mostly devoted to the children with speaking, music & reading. At the end of the program Parveen Bagdadi [a child] of Chicago chanted for us. There were Bahais from Chicago & Racine. In all about 74 were present. The meeting was closed with the Benediction. After which refreshments were served.¹⁸

Later that year, the children had a program for "Abdul Baha's Day" (Day of the Covenant). This program included Waite's first song, "If Ye Seek Me," sung by the "Bahai Juniors," and later "Softly His Voice is Calling," sung by the "Little Juniors." At Naw-Rúz 1922, the Kenosha Juniors also sang two songs. The "big Juniors" sang "Sweet Peace," and the "small Juniors" sang "Softly His Voice is Calling" again.¹⁹

In Geyserville, California, the community met on 7 January 1922, for the memorial meeting held in each community forty days after the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Lawrence Tomlinson (a child) played "Softly His Voice is Calling" on the violin. His mother noted that he was then learning the "Benediction."²⁰ Lawrence's endeavors must have been successful, as he played the "Benediction" at the Geyserville Naw-Rúz celebration that March. Mildred Meyer "played the Bahai songs on the piano," and, Mrs. Tomlinson noted, "It makes one

happy to see the Juniors active in the Cause.”²¹ At the “Rainbow Sunday School” held for the Geyserville children, Mrs. Tomlinson also noted, “Lawrence plays the Bahai hymns on his violin and the children sing them.”²²

Amelia Collins of Pasadena, California, taught “three beautiful little girls in the morning—to see them hold the sheet and sing from it ‘Softly His voice’ and two of them cannot read is heavenly.” She also remarked that before she left for pilgrimage in early 1923, “Little Jane McGee of 4 as a present to me learned the first verse of the Softly His voice is calling and the older sister of 7 taught it to her—that being her gift to me.”²³

By the mid-1920s, the place of Waite’s hymns in the life of the community had been considerably reinforced by this inclusion in the national effort to socialize Bahá’í children to a common standard. Here is one last quote from “Charlotte,” who wrote to Bedikian, “I am a little girl nine years old and belong to the Garden of Favor. I have been learning Baha’i prayers, the Benediction, and ‘Softly His Voice is Calling Me.’”²⁴

The influence of both Bedikian and Robarts spread beyond North America. Bedikian’s Gardens were organized in many countries and Robarts’ magazine circulated among Bahá’ís in Europe, the Middle East, and as far away as Australia. A girl reporting on “the Bahai Children’s Festival” at Esslingen, Germany, held in March 1921, noted that Fraulein Stabler sang “this is the day of fulfilment” (Waite’s “Song of the Covenant”), showing that at least this one of Waite’s post-*Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* compositions became known in Germany.²⁵ There is an account of a later meeting at Esslingen in April 1930 at which a “litte girl recited the ‘Benediction.’” Her recitation is retranslated from the German in the report with charming naivety: “May God’s Spirit be upon us, as a white dove, His Peace gladden our hearts, and our faith be strong. How great is His Love, His aid so near. We feel ourselves in God’s Lap in the Kingdom of El-Abha.”²⁶

The degree to which Waite’s hymns had entered the con-

sciousness of the North American Bahá'í community by the mid-1920s may be demonstrated by an incident that occurred during the 1926 national convention. On the afternoon of 30 April discussion became a little heated and the convention chariman, Roy Wilhelm, made the following remarks:

I am going to ask Mrs. Waite to play one of the Baha'i songs so we can all sing. We have some energy here that is pushing pretty strong and I think we had better run off a little static. (Laughter)
(At this point the delegates and friends joined in singing "Softly His Voice is Calling" accompanied by Mrs. Waite on the piano.)²⁷

Waite's songs acted as a unifying force and a reminder of their ultimate concerns to those attending Bahá'í meetings.

As with the children, adults around the world used Waite's compositions. One of the first Bahá'í communities outside North America to adopt her work was that in Iran. The words of Waite's first explicitly Bahá'í song, "The Greatest Name," which she had sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, were translated into Persian on His instructions and were circulating in the Eastern Bahá'í community by early 1903. 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to have Waite's hymns (and those of the few other Western Bahá'ís who wrote them) translated and circulated, using distinguished Persian Bahá'í poets to recast the rough translations from English. The circulation and use of such translations meant a great deal to the Eastern community, as it was tangible proof to them that the Faith had taken root in the West. The general reaction may be represented by a letter from the Bahá'í community of Benah in Azerbaijan to Chicago in 1906:

... the pamphlets and the books written by the American believers ought to be sent to Persia and the works and writings of Persian believers be forwarded to America. To carry out this noble plan will be conducive to great attraction of hearts and the enkindlement of souls. Therefore, in these days, the verses which were written by the maid-servant of God, Louise Spencer [Waite],

(Upon her be Beha-Ullah-El-Abha) were sent to Teheran, and our beloved Lord Abdul-Beha (May our lives be a sacrifice to Him!) has commanded the believers to translate them and forward them to all the assemblies. After its translation their honors, Niar and Sina (two Persian teachers who are eminent poets [translators note]) have rendered it into Persian poetry, and forwarded a copy of it to Benah (Azerbaijan [translator's note]) all read it in the Assembly of Benah, with great joy and happiness and invoke confirmation and assistance from the Center of Oneness for the maid-servant of God, Louise Spencer. Through this Bounty the believers became more attracted, more ignited, and they have found a new life and they thanked God that the Sun of the True Knowledge has dawned from the West and the shining Luminary appeared from the Horizon of the East and has burned the dark veils of the people of the Occident.²⁸

The translation of Waite's "The Greatest Name" remained in use in the Eastern community for some years. In 1916, Moody noted that as part of the program at the first annual examinations of the religious classes for the girls of the Bahá'í community in Tehran it was chanted by the teachers and assistant teachers, with the girls joining in the refrain.²⁹ Moody's correspondence during her many years in Iran often mentions the use of Waite's hymns.

One of the areas in which a culturally Persian Bahá'í community existed outside Iran was India, and there, too, Waite's hymns became familiar. In 1920, Martha Root wrote to Waite, "Did I tell you about the Irani children in Poona, India, singing your beautiful Baha'i hymns? It was so sweet to hear them singing in English your songs in that far-away land."³⁰ On 26 February 1939, the devotional program to end a Bahá'í Youth Symposium meeting in Poona included "Benediction."³¹

Waite's hymns were used in the Eastern community in three different ways: in English with the original tunes; in Persian translation with the original tune; and in Persian translation chanted in traditional style. The most versatile use

of them seems to have been by the Bahá'í students at the college (now American University) in Beirut. They used them in all three ways, and there are a number of references in various individuals' correspondence to their "glee club". These students were in Egypt in the autumn of 1913:

At six o'clock we went to the house of Hadji Khorassani, where a large room was filled with turbaned brothers. Mrs. Stannard, myself and Miss Hiscock, an American believer who is now living in Egypt, were their guests. The boys from the College at Beirut formed a glee club and they sang the Bahai songs with a dash and earnestness which I have never heard before, with the possible exception of the way our American children sometimes sing "Onward Christian soldiers." They are the songs of Mrs. Waite of Chicago, translated into Persian by two of the best poets of Teheran and sung to the American music. It was beautiful.³²

In 1915, the students spent their summer in Haifa, despite the occasional bombardment of parts of the town by naval vessels:

Not a day passes that your hymns are not sung by the Persian students and myself. Every night the sacred quiet atmosphere of Mt. Carmel brings back the clear, distinct echo of your songs, and you, as the creator and composer of these immortal songs, are living in our hearts and spirits. . . . How wonderful it is that God has given you this Divine Gift, and through your musical genius you have united the hearts of the Eastern and Western friends. I have learned the Persian setting of several of these hymns and when I am in America I will sing them to you and you will be glad, because the hymns are translated into Persian by two of the most celebrated poets of Teheran—Nayai and Sina—and they are beautiful and thrilling. Some of them have become most popular and every little child sings them, or as he walks along whistles them. Especially are they very beautiful when they are sung in chorus. They move the hearts of all the listeners.³³

Among that group of students in Haifa in 1915 was Shoghi Effendi. Not only the students but the children living in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household were well acquainted with Waite's songs:

We were three weeks in Haifa. The little children of the Holy Family and of the believers have learned Mrs. Waite's songs, translated into Persian, and in the evening when the believers gather, these little ones sit down on the divan, all anxious to be called upon in turn to sing these songs.³⁴

Lua Getsinger wrote to Waite, "You are lovingly remembered and spoken of in the Land of Desire [the Holy Land]. The little children here sing your heartfelt songs in the Presence of the Glorious Beloved ['Abdu'l-Bahá]—what more can you desire?"³⁵

Waite's reputation among the Eastern community was considerable. Fuad Rouhani of Tehran (who was the grandson of Tayere Khanum, a leader of the Bahá'í women in Tehran and a poet who had corresponded with Waite before her death in 1911) wrote to Waite in 1925:

Of course I had heard of you so very often before (there is no Bahai who has not). . . . My mother tells me a great deal about you —of the letters you used to write to my grandmother (when I was only a little boy), and of the Bahai literature you used to send her. To my utmost happiness, a few typed copies of your Bahai hymns and songs, as well as some letters were found among my grandmother's papers, and I have kept them as a valuable treasure. How proud we all are of such precious souls as you, to whom all the friends owe so much!³⁶

Jenabe Fazel, an eminent Bahá'í teacher of international repute, wrote of his expectation of meeting Waite on a visit to North America: "We have heard your melody when we were

in the East, and we were anxious to see the nightingale of Abdul-Baha, who is enchanted and enraptured in His love.”³⁷

In Europe, Waite's hymns were sung in English, German, and Esperanto in Germany. In England and Scotland they were sung in English and occasionally in Esperanto. In 1913, Lady Blomfield wrote to Waite (after apologizing for her previous letters to Waite being lost with the Titanic!): “One was to thank you for the delightful Bahá'i Music, which we so greatly appreciate. . . We often sing your hymns and Benediction at the gatherings.”³⁸

In 1924, an Australian Bahá'í, Amy Florence Wilkins, visited London to attend the Conference of Some Living Religions Within the British Empire. This conference was organized by the School of Oriental Studies and the Sociological Society in conjunction with the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley and lasted from 22 September to 3 October. The conference itself was held at the Imperial Institute in South Kensington. Two Bahá'í papers were presented at the conference on 25 September. The London Bahá'ís also organized various other associated events. One of these was a meeting at the home of Mrs. George on 28 September. This meeting began with tea, and there was a devotional program before a number of talks. The devotional program was described by Wilkins: “After a short time of silence we had several prayers, and then a little girl repeated with great reverence the wonderful prayer for healing the sick. Hymns were sung from the Bahai selection.”³⁹

In Australia itself Waite's hymns were also known. In 1931, Keith Ranson-Kehler (an American Bahá'í who was touring the world visiting Bahá'í communities) wrote from Sydney: “Shahnaz, it would warm your sweet and sensitive heart to hear the Friends here singing your hymns: they make a great feature of them, and there is not only congregational singing but always a good soloist to sing one at each meeting.”⁴⁰

In the early 1920s, Waite's hymns were becoming known to the small Bahá'í community in Japan. In 1920, Ida Finch wrote from Tokyo, "Mr Kubotu will be very happy to have your permission to translate your beautiful hymns." She then noted that Waite's hymns were being used by Japanese student friends of hers, and "I thank you on their behalf for the privilege of having them translated into the language which is most familiar to them."⁴¹ In the same year, Agnes Alexander wrote to Waite from Tokyo, "I have sung the Esperanto Benediction hymn and think it wonderful."⁴² In 1921, a Japanese friend wrote to Finch, "I have with thousand thanks received a Bahai Hymn Book along with your letter."⁴³

To conclude this discussion of the absorption of Waite's songs into Bahá'í community life, I will consider once more her "Benediction." Waite's description of receiving this song which was quoted above was written to Isabella Brittingham. Brittingham replied, "The Benediction is very beautiful and will go down through time as the Experience of His Presence when His Convention was ended (outwardly) in Chicago."⁴⁴ Shortly after receiving the song, Waite sent a copy of the words to Mary MacNutt in Brooklyn. MacNutt commented, "The Benediction you wrote is beautiful. I copied it and will give it to the dear ones here."⁴⁵

Within a short time, it was no longer necessary to copy the "Benediction," as it was available in sheet form with its music. This first sheet edition is immediately identifiable, as it is the only one that does not have 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comment, "Sing this melody in all gatherings of Love and Harmony of the beloved of God," printed beneath the title. He wrote this comment on a copy of the first edition which Waite showed him in Haifa in October 1909. The translation was made at Waite's request immediately after that interview by his daughter Monéver Khanum. When Waite returned from her pilgrimage, she found that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had written about the "Benediction" to the Chicago House of Spirituality:

The song and anthem that Louise R. Waite raised in the Assembly of the Unity of Bahais reached to the ears of the people of the Kingdom. It bestowed joy and fragrance upon the spiritual ones.

I ask God that this song may be sung eternally and this melody and anthem become everlasting.

The immediate and continued response of the Bahá'í community to the "Benediction" was extraordinary. It evidently struck exactly the right devotional note for most Bahá'ís of the time. It is out of the question to list here any significant number of the thousands of occasions on which the "Benediction" was sung. I will but recount a few of the reactions to it, beginning with two middle-class Scottish women. Possibly in early 1913, Isabella Mears of Edinburgh was in London for only one day, a day that a Nineteen-Day Feast was being held:

In the beginning and at the end they sang the "Benediction." During the meeting one could feel the Presence of the Benediction, which filled the hearts of the congregation. It penetrated the whole assembly; it went out from the words of the speaker; it entered the thoughts of the listeners and bound us into one strong brotherhood. Afterwards when my friend and I were waiting for the leaving time at the great animated depot, we were still fully conscious of the Presence of the Benediction. The Benediction came home with me—it remains with me even now.⁴⁶

Mears was president of the Edinburgh Esperanto Society, and she translated the "Benediction" into Esperanto. The story is taken up by Mears' friend, Agnes Sitkin, who wrote to Waite:

I procured your address from my friend Miss Marion Jack of London that I might write and *try* to give you some idea of what your *most beautiful* Benediction has been and still shall be to us in Edinburgh. . . . We have used it *every* Sunday at our Bahai meetings and I have just finished a most refreshing time in Retreat at

Rhodes-Wallace School near Edinburgh where all the members of groups were so fond of it. Mrs. Wallace asked me to play it daily and at *all times of worship*. Personally it is to me *much more* than I *can express*. Mrs. Wallace also feels as I do that it is the charming obligato that *sings all day in our hearts*.

Then my friend Mrs. Mears at whose house the Bahai meetings are held has put it into esperanto, of which I am sending you a copy. Mrs. Mears has greatly enjoyed doing it and she would like to have some printed copies, perhaps double sheets, on one side music and English words, and on the other side the Esperanto.

Our Edinburgh Esperanto Soc. wish copies. Now how is this to be accomplished do you think. Of course it is for the spread of the good Cause alone and to supply the *demand* for copies. We have written copies of the words for meetings but people wish the music too. Will you kindly let me know your mind on the subject; and of any question of copyright.

With much love and joyous gratitude to the happy composer of such *pure and soul refreshing* music.⁴⁷

In order to make the “Benediction” even more readily usable by the community, Waite had a phonograph recording made of it in late 1923. One side of the record had the “Prelude” and “Benediction” sung by Ragna Linne with Waite at the piano. There was also a violin obligato by Carl Hatch, but this is so faint on the recording (at least on the copy I have heard) as to be practically inaudible. The other side of the record had Waite playing the music (with the subliminal violin) in order “that the friends can use her record to accompany themselves in singing.” The record was available for \$1.00 a copy and half of the proceeds were to go to the Temple Fund.⁴⁸

In 1929, E.A. Rogers wrote to Waite of his reaction to hearing “Benediction.” Rogers was president of the Montezuma Mountain School for Boys in Los Gatos, California, which was a somewhat “advanced” boarding school. He was one of those who in the 1920s associated with Bahá’ís and would

even call themselves Bahá'ís, but who were more Bahá'ís by some ethical or social sympathy with the principles of the Faith than Bahá'ís by faith. By the definitions of later decades, most of these people would be considered friendly to the Faith rather than Bahá'ís as such. Rogers disassociated himself from Bahá'í identification with some ascerbity in the early 1930s, after Shoghi Effendi insisted that Bahá'ís abstain from involvement with party politics. Rogers reaction to the “Benediction” is of interest because his was a largely social and political conception of the relevance of the Bahá'í Faith:

I want to tell you of my personal impressions of “Benediction.” When you first played it for us, I was moved to tears. I felt my mother very near. She seemed to be able to get nearer because of the vibrations of the music.

Since then my secretary has played it twice for me. It carried me out into the great spaces, nearer to God.

It is not written for time or space. It is the everlasting dance music for the eternal electrons themselves, and helps them find their way.

Thank you so much for sending all this beautiful music to us. I so enjoyed the poem too. Come when you can to visit us. I remember you with joy.⁴⁹

The “Benediction” did not appeal only to Bahá'ís and those who sympathized with the Faith. As with the friends of Mears and Sitkin in Edinburgh, it would seem that it resonated with general devotional taste. This appears to be true even for the music alone. Waite recounted this experience of her husband's:

Just last week Edgar went to tune a piano for an old lady, he had not been there for a *year*. After he had finished the tuning, he played a bit, just improvised. The old lady said, won't you play that beautiful piece you played for me when you were last here,

you said Mrs. Waite composed it. I forget the name, but it was heavenly. Edgar said, was it the Benediction? and he began playing it. Oh yes, she exclaimed, that is it, I think it is the most beautiful thing I ever heard, it brings such a wonderful peace into my heart.⁵⁰

In both their words and music, Waite's songs provided exactly what most of the Bahá'í community in North America and overseas wanted for their community devotions. Both the number of copies of her works bought and the myriad of written references to their use testify to the approval and acceptance of her songs by the majority of the Bahá'í community.

OTHER BAHÁ'Í HYMNODISTS

Although Waite's work was the most influential in the development of early North American Bahá'í devotions, there were others within the community producing songs. A number of early Bahá'ís wrote songs, and those who sent them to 'Abdu'l-Bahá were encouraged to make them available to the community and to write more. Despite this encouragement, few, apart from Waite, did produce any extended body of work; and most of those Bahá'ís who were professional, or at least accomplished, musical performers tended to concentrate on the performance of materials from their general repertoire at Bahá'í events rather than participate in the development of a specifically Bahá'í repertoire. It is worth discussing, however, such information as is available about some of those who did produce new material and the occasions of its use.

Given her educational and professional background, one of the most potentially interesting people for the development of Bahá'í devotional music was Charlotte Gillen. That her work did not have more influence was probably due to the relative geographical isolation of the Seattle Bahá'í community for which she produced it.

Gillen was born on 10 July 1869, in Springfield, Ohio, and as a child attended the United Lutheran church. She studied music from the age of eight, and began to teach professionally at the age of twelve. She studied at Boston Conservatory, and then headed the music department at Stetson University in Deland, Florida. At this time she also directed the choirs and played organ for the local Baptist and Presbyterian churches. In 1894, she married Richard Gillen, M.D. They had a daughter Evelyn June, and in 1901 moved to Seattle, Washington, where Gillen opened the Seattle School of Music. Gillen became a Bahá'í in 1907, hearing of the Faith through Ida Finch, who had been taught by Isabella Brittingham. In 1912, Gillen and her daughter went to Chicago to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá and were present at the dedication by him of the site for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Shortly after the death of her husband in 1916, Gillen moved to the village of Chelan, Washington, where she lived until 1944, there running an apple orchard and playing the organ in the local Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches each Sunday. Gillen visited Chicago and the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 1942, and in 1944 she sold her orchard, attended the Bahá'í Centenary celebrations and the dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, and then embarked on a five-year tour of the United States teaching the Faith. In 1950, she moved to Laramie, Wyoming, where, at the age of 81, she enrolled at the University of Wyoming to assist in establishing a Bahá'í club there. She was present at the 1953 dedication in Wilmette, and in 1959 she moved to Alaska to help teach the Faith there. After somewhat more than a year there, Gillen returned to Washington, where she died in Seattle on 25 May 1962.⁵¹

As to Gillen's musical contributions to the Bahá'í Faith, she recorded on her historical record card in the mid-1930s that she "Invented first chants to Bahai prayers and Greatest Name for Seattle believers." Unfortunately, there is little information currently available about the early Seattle Bahá'í

community and its devotional practices, and it is unknown how many pieces Gillen may have written for it or to what extent they were used. There is no indication of their having been used outside Seattle.

The only music of Gillen's which is available is an undated setting of the Greatest Name.⁵² This piece consists of a simple, single voice setting of "Allah-O-Abha" (Alláh-u-Abhá) repeated nine times, with a keyboard accompaniment. The setting is notable in putting the musical accent correctly on the second and fifth syllables rather than on the first and third, which is a common error.

There is a surviving account of one early meeting conducted by Gillen. It was held in the statehouse in Boise, Idaho, where Gillen was visiting to teach the Faith. The meeting occurred on New Year's Eve of 1916–1917, and Gillen arranged it as one of a number of meetings dedicated to peace planned by various Bahá'ís across the United States for that evening. This is her description of it:

[A] judge, a Christian Scientist gave a good address for fifteen mins. Then I gave a fifteen minute talk on BahaOllah's peace message explaining from "Universal Principle" [*Universal Principles of the Bahai Movement Social, Economic, Governmental*, 1912] about the international police and arbitral court. All paid close attention and I had to speak strongly as the rotunda is very wide and people were all around the circle and the upper floor. I opened with the prayer Pg. 1 in little book then sang Come Thou Almighty King with audience. After that the judge spoke. After I spoke we sang America. At the stroke of midnight I read the midnight prayer and "Unite the hearts etc." and all listened with profound silence. I closed with the words Glory be to the people of Glory as I thot [sic] the crowds would not understand Ya Baha El Abha.⁵³

According to Gillen, this was the first religious meeting of any kind held in the Idaho statehouse, as, when it had been

completed, the governor had been so concerned with getting the furniture in place and the building in use they had forgotten to hold a dedication! The combination on this occasion of a Bahá'í prayer and a Christian hymn to start, talks, singing again (even if here a patriotic hymn due to the nature of the occasion), more Bahá'í prayers, and then closing with the Greatest Name (a very Isabella Brittingham touch, if here paraphrased in English) suggests that Bahá'í meetings as Gillen had known them in Seattle were similar to those in communities for which we have more information. Perhaps in community meetings in Seattle, Gillen's setting of Bahá'í prayers substituted for read prayers or the Christian hymns, and, as Ida Finch of Seattle was one of those who introduced Waite's hymns into Japan, it is probable that Waite's hymns were used, too.

The only other musician in the early North American Bahá'í community who was active in producing Bahá'í devotional materials and had a background comparable to Gillen's was Edward Kinney. I have already discussed his chanting, and some of his hymns will be discussed below.

Two other writers who produced a moderate-sized body of work were Margaret Duncan Green of Washington, D.C., and Mattie Watson of Chicago. Around 1912, Green wrote twelve sets of verses which she sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Six of these are available and five of them are singable as hymns, three of these being explicitly Bahá'í. There is no record of any of Green's songs being used in North America, but there is a reference to them being sung by the Bahá'í students at the University of Beirut.⁵⁴

Mattie Watson wrote a number of song texts and verses over the years, but there is no record of any having been sung. The words of her "The First Bahai Temple Song," which, as is noted on the printed copy, may be sung to "Robin Adair," were read at a meeting on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár site in Wilmette on 23 May 1908. Watson also wrote a number of

acrostics on the names of early Chicago Bahá'ís, several gospel-type song texts, and some contrafacts. As with other minor songwriters in the Bahá'í community, it seems possible that her work was used occasionally by small groups of her friends but that it was not used frequently enough to be mentioned in the record. It is also possible that the crudity of structure in verses such as hers, which makes them not as readily singable as more accomplished efforts, militated against their being used, however worthy and acceptable their sentiment.

There are a few writers contemporary with Waite for whom only one song is known.

Mrs. Emily Olsen lived mainly in Chicago, but may have been related to a number of Bahá'ís named Olsen in Wisconsin. In the early years of this century, she was responsible for the translation of a number of Bahá'í books into Danish. In 1905, she published her hymn, "Praise be to Thee, O Lord of all Creation," set to her arrangement of a Danish melody.⁵⁵ This may be considered a Bahá'í hymn, as it uses the Greatest Name in two of its three verses. The charming syncopated tune and Olsen's words fit well together. The Chicago House of Spirituality, meeting on 15 July 1905, approved a letter of thanks to Olsen which acknowledged receipt of one hundred copies of the song sheet of this hymn which she had donated to the community.⁵⁶ Although quite deserving of continued use, this hymn does not seem to have survived alongside those of Waite which were being adopted by the community at this time. Olsen was herself a friend of Waite, and in 1907 sent a copy she had made of the words of Waite's newly written songs, "Softly His Voice is Calling" and "Tell the Wondrous Story," to the Racine community, noting that the music was not yet written down.⁵⁷

Emma Holmes' song, "The Comforter Has Come," was sung for the first time at the morning session of the Bahai

Temple Unity convention on 30 April 1911, by Mountfort Mills. It was sufficiently well received to be repeated, by request, at a later session of the convention.⁵⁸ At the 1912 convention, Mills sang this song again at the opening Feast on 27 April.⁵⁹

Henry Grasmuk wrote a contrafact to "Nearer, My God, to Thee," which appears on an undated song sheet.⁶⁰ The first verse runs thus:

O Thou, my Light and Guide,
Draw me to Thee,
Cleanse Thou this heart of mine
And make me free;
O Thou, our Glorious King!
Spread Thy Eternal wing,
Till each poor aching heart
Finds shelter there.

The song sheet is only recognizable as having Bahá'í connections by its having a 9 on the front. I have found no information on the use of this song or of further compositions by Grasmuk. As he seems to have lived in the New York area, it is possible that it was used there.

Howard MacNutt's "Easter Hymn" appears on a song sheet dated 1913.⁶¹ This is an Easter resurrection hymn written in four parts with organ accompaniment. That it was formally printed with music suggests that it may have been used, and its writing may have been connected with the New York Bahá'ís' involvement with St. Mark's (see Chapter Seven). As this is the only known musical work of MacNutt's, it seems possible that his friend Edward Kinney assisted with the setting, at least.

Marian C. Hotchkiss' song "Mashrak-El-Azcar" opened the first session of the Bahai Temple Unity convention on 29 April 1912.⁶² This is the only known song by Hotchkiss, and

the song sheet shows it to be a well-conceived song with a pleasantly syncopated tune, keyboard accompaniment, and explicitly Bahá'í text. A copy of the song sheet held in the National Bahá'í Archives has a note stating that the song was "received" as compensation for forgoing a trip to 'Akká and giving the money to the Temple Fund.

Others of Waite's contemporaries wrote verses that may be described as "hymnoid" in form,⁶³ rather than actual hymns (Thornton Chase, Louis Gregory, Marie Watson, among others), and there is no indication that these were sung, or intended to be sung, although many could be fitted easily to a suitable hymn tune. Chase did write one text with the aim of assisting Bahá'ís to learn the correct pronunciation of Bahá'u'lláh's name, as singing the name to a suitably rhythmic tune "gives the proper accents."⁶⁴

It is readily apparent from this consideration of Waite's contemporaries that none of them came near to equalling her output or popularity, as expressed by the degree to which the songs were used in the community. Her work, then, stands as the preeminent expression of the era of Bahá'í hymnody.

CHAPTER FOUR

OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF HYMNS

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the era of Bahá'í hymnody is that it ended. The use of hymns, whether Waite's, Christian, or the occasional compositions by other Bahá'ís that were used, was such a ubiquitous and seemingly essential part of Bahá'í community life that for it to end almost overnight was revolutionary. This was especially so as it happened without anything else taking the place of hymns. Hymnody was simply removed from the gamut of Bahá'í community devotional experience.

EARLY OBJECTIONS

There were basically two types of objectors to the use of hymns: those who objected to the use of specifically Bahá'í hymns but found universal hymns by Bahá'ís and selected Christian hymns acceptable; and those who objected to any hymns at all. As the provision of hymns for the community was so largely the work of Waite, there was room for a considerable personal element in objection to their use. For

some, the objection may have been to Waite rather than to the hymns.

Although there are various strands of objection discernable throughout the era of Bahá'í hymnody, we must not lose sight of the fact that confirmed objectors were only a small part of the total community. That their objections eventually triumphed is related to the influence of personal position and status rather than the force of numbers.

There was some objection to Waite's work from the beginning. The publication of *Bahai Hymns and Poems* in 1904 was objected to by some, as they felt that the Publishing Society should concentrate on the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the occasional exception of a book like Dealy's (1902), which explained the teachings.¹ However, this objection was to the mode of publishing rather than to the content. Waite met this objection both by the fund-raising concert she organized in December 1904 which financed the *Hidden Words* (1905) and by having the publication of her future work privately financed. All the editions of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, apart from the one which she allowed to be printed for the benefit of the Publishing Society, were funded by her or her friends and provided a return to the Temple Fund. Her sheet music publication operated on the same basis.

There was also objection to the content of Waite's work at this time. Around the beginning of January 1905, Waite resigned from the post of Corresponding Secretary for the Woman's Assembly of Teaching. Apparently, a committee of two had been appointed (it is not clear by whom, but possibly by the Woman's Assembly) to visit the various group meetings held in homes in Chicago to report on "the nature of the teachings that were being given." The report on the meetings in Waite's home was unfavorable. Waite said that she seemed to "have been classified as one who is not a true Bahai whose

verses are like 'morphine pills,' and whose teachings are 'too wide and broad to be in keeping with Bahá'ism.'" She therefore wished to resign, lest she lead anyone astray through correspondence. She later explained the objections more explicitly:

I have been told that I do wrong to point people to nature, yet does not our Master do so constantly? To the orange, to the egg, the diamond, the sun, moon and stars, the trees, the seasons, all these to illustrate His Teachings; and yet, if I see God's reflection in these things, and express it in verse, I am not a true Bahai. If I say there are many roads to the One Goal, I do not say there are many goals, but many roads leading to the one, and, when there, each will see that God is but One, and that He has manifested Himself in all His Splendor and Glory through Baha'u'llah. But still in a lesser degree through all of His Prophets and Messengers. They too were the way. Never do I for one moment by thought, or word, or deed, intend to lessen the great and glorious Truth of our Religion.²

Whatever the feelings of the committee of two, it would seem that the matter was patched up. The exact details of what happened are not available, but by February the House of Spirituality recorded without comment that Waite's home "would be open to all for the study of the utterances of Baha'u'llah every Wednesday afternoon" beginning 24 February.³

This objection to Waite's work seems to have been relatively trivial although evidently hurtful to her. Indeed, it may have been limited to the committee of two itself. However, a more fundamental objection to some of her songs was to be raised later. Some felt that the use of Waite's specifically Bahá'í songs labeled the community as distinct, and that this was likely to put off non-Bahá'ís who might otherwise be sympathetic to Bahá'í principles. In early 1910, Sohrab wrote

to Waite from Washington, D.C., sympathizing with her over the objection of a new believer in Chicago to the singing of Bahá'í hymns:

I am indeed very sorry that some people object to the singing of the beautiful and inspiring songs of "Tell the Wondrous Story" and "Softly His Voice is Calling". I always loved dearly these two hymns, better than all the rest, and our Baha'is here sing them every Sunday at our meetings. Oh! the children love them very much and sing them so gloriously. To me it is hair-splitting and inconsequential when we try to persuade ourselves and others that people object to these heavenly songs. Last summer I did a little traveling when I left Chicago, and wherever I went I heard these songs on the lips of the Baha'is. I am heart and soul in favor of their singing in our meetings, *public and private*. . . . If in this day we are *afraid* to declare His Name in our congregations and gatherings, in song and praise, in anthems and melodies, then it is better not to call ourselves by His Wonderful Name; the old name and the old garments will answer just as well the purpose.⁴

This same new Bahá'í (probably Harry Thompson) also objected to the singing of any other songs. He maintained that the day for hymn singing was over and cited the objectionable nature of music to "Orientals." Although Waite did not agree with him, she wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá to get an authoritative answer to the points rather than argue. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied to her query in early 1912:

This wonderful age has rent asunder the veils of superstition and has condemned the prejudice of the people of the East.

Among some of the nations of the Orient, music and harmony was not approved of, but the Manifested Light, Baha'u'llah, in this glorious period has revealed in Holy Tablets that singing and music are the spiritual food of the hearts and souls. In this dispensation, music is one of the arts that is highly approved and is con-

sidered to be the cause of the exaltation of sad and despondent hearts.

Therefore, O Shahnaz, set to music the verses and the divine words so that they may be sung with soul-stirring melody in the Assemblies and gatherings, and that the hearts of the listeners may become free from the bond of sorrow and sadness, the soul and the spirit may become tumultuous and rise towards the Kingdom of Abha in supplication and prayer.

The new Chicago Bahá'í was not the only one to have a particular objection to the Bahá'í hymns. Another who pressed Waite on this issue was Alice Buckton, although she had no objection to hymn singing as such. Buckton was an English Bahá'í who also spent time in the East Coast cities of the United States. She was a fairly well-connected, middle-class woman of sufficient means who was associated with settlement work in London. She also wrote Christian religious dramas that were performed on both sides of the Atlantic. Buckton disassociated herself from the Faith in 1914.

Waite later recounted her experience with Buckton:

When I was in London in 1911 at the Races Congress, Miss B— was very anxious for me to make changes in our hymns, that they might be “universally used” and also sell generally and bring in more money for the Temple. She took one of the hymn books and some of her blue pencil changes were: “Songs of Peace and Praise”, *not* “Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise”. The hymn of the “Greatest Name” was left out entirely (after such a wonderful Tablet about it). Then, “Tell the Wondrous story, tell it far and near of the loving Father, holy Name so dear” *not* “of Baha'u'llah”. Also, in “Softly His Voice Is Calling” *not* “Abdul Baha we turn to Thee”, etc., but “Love is the power which giveth life, Love is the perfect way.” There were many other changes written in, but these were the most important. I told her I would pray over it. I returned to America and prayed and thought deeply

over it, but it seemed as if my heart would be hurt to change those hymns, written to the Beloved Himself. Yet I wanted to cooperate in every way possible with Miss B—.⁵

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Chicago, Waite had an interview with him on 5 May 1912. She showed him the copy of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* that Buckton had marked and asked him what she should do. He asked who had requested such changes. When Waite replied that it was Buckton, he explained that she was very "young" in the Faith and that Waite should only make changes if he told her to do so. (Indeed, during that visit to Chicago 'Abdu'l-Bahá did make a change in one of Waite's songs. In "The New Jerusalem", he altered "Wherein God's sun shall ever shine" to "Baha's sun," thus making the song explicitly Bahá'í.) He further explained that Buckton's work was in the churches, but Waite's work was "to sing of the New Kingdom and to declare the Names to the people."⁶

It was difficult for Waite to champion the singing of Bahá'í hymns, however, as she was the sole author of such songs whose work was widely adopted by the community. She explained her position thus:

In objecting to our Bahai Hymns in any way, one is objecting to His expressed will. I personally cannot say so, for at once the opposers say, "She wants them sung because she wrote them." This is so absolutely false, for if I could have had my own way, I never would have given out anything I wrote, for I only wrote to Him, my Beloved, and after I sent Him a copy, as I always did, I should have preferred to lay it aside in the casket of my heart, but he would not have it so, as His Tablets prove.⁷

A much more public show of opposition to Waite's work, and to singing in general, occurred at the 1915 National Con-

vention. That year the convention was held in San Francisco. Waite had moved to Los Angeles less than two months before, and she traveled from there to San Francisco to attend the convention. Afterwards, she wrote of her experience there to Agnes Parsons, a wealthy and prominent Washington, D.C., Bahá'í:

I felt very sad all the while I was there. I had written on several weeks before that I had a new song which Abdul Baha had wished me to "send out" and I had had it published especially for this convention and hoped it might be sung. When I arrived I was informed that there would be *no music*, and there was none. Once or twice they sang to close a long session, but without a piano and all did not know the words as there were no books. My new song went unsung and unnoticed, in a way, how heartily I wished I had not brought it. It seems so strange that in spite of all Abdul Baha has said of the importance of music & written with his own pen on the Benediction "Sing this melody in all gatherings of love & harmony of the beloved of God" that they should, because of personal prejudice held for this poor instrument, refuse to obey. I grieve over it deeply, and wish I could remove my personality from their minds & hearts.⁸

The documentation available for the 1915 convention is more fragmentary than for most of the other early Bahai Temple Unity conventions. This increases the difficulty of determining what happened. The ban on music was such a departure from previous practice that it would seem it must have been sanctioned by at least some of the Bahai Temple Unity Board. If the local arrangements committee had imposed it on its own initiative, there would surely have been some protest. Waite suggests that the ban originated in a personal prejudice against her, and later events show that there was some influence at work against Waite at the level of the Bahai Temple Unity Board.

At the Board's meeting on 17 August 1916, "It was unanimously agreed that the Executive Board convey to the Publishing Society the request that it issue no compilation of hymns, songs, chants, or append its name as publisher of such, except after submission to Mr. Kinney, and others who may be selected, for approval."⁹ This may be related to Waite's permission to Lesch to bring out an edition of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* for the benefit of the Publishing Society. There is no indication that the society had any other compilation in mind. That the Publishing Society did issue an edition of Waite's booklet does not necessarily mean that it went through this approval procedure. The Board requested that it do so, but at this time the Board had no direct control over the society, and it (which for practical purposes meant Mary Lesch) might not choose to comply.

At the National Conventions in 1916, 1917, and 1918, there was music again. It seems that, in each of these years, a song by Kinney was strongly featured—the only years in which this happened. None of these songs was specifically Bahá'í. The conventions of 1916 and 1918 featured his "International Anthem" and that of 1917 his "National Anthem" (Musical Examples 13–14). The differences between these two songs are significant. "International Anthem" was a plea for peace and unity; "National Anthem" was a jingoistic call to arms. The gulf between the sentiments of these two songs typifies the split in Bahá'í opinion over the war at that time. Some felt that Bahá'ís should stand firmly behind the United States to defeat the enemy. Others felt that, while obeying their government, as was their religious duty, Bahá'ís should continue to declare the evils of war and the need to work for peace.

The reports of the 1916 to 1918 conventions in *Star of the West* are somewhat sparse in mentions of music, but there seems to have been more music used than they suggest.

Waite stated that Linné had written to her that “there was music at each meeting” of the 1916 convention.¹⁰ Also, a printed sheet of the words of “hymns for use” at the 1917 convention survives. The sheet has the words of eight songs:

Joy to the World
Tho’ We Have Wandered Far (Kinney)
National Anthem (Kinney)
Great Day of God (Waite)
The Greatest Name (Waite)
International Anthem (Kinney)
Awake Ye Nations All (Waite)
Benediction (Waite)

This is quite a catholic selection with something to suit every shade of controversy over the war, or hymn singing, at Bahá’í meetings. That both Kinney’s “National Anthem” and “International Anthem” were included (to say nothing of “Awake Ye Nations All”) suggests that those planning for the convention were not sure what attitude toward the war those attending would wish to express in song. The third Kinney song on this sheet, “Tho’ We Have Wandered Far” (Musical Example 15), was published in sheet form in 1918. It is a charming song whose title and words suggest an ironic stance toward Kinney’s “National Anthem” which was published the previous year. However, the text addresses itself to the individual “wounded, broken heart” and there is no explicit social message as in his “International Anthem” of 1916.

Waite’s work was not totally excluded from the conventions of these three years. Apart from the inclusion of her songs in the 1917 song sheet, at the 1916 convention Linné sang the “Benediction” to open and close the convention and the 1918 convention also opened with this song.

It would seem that there was a determined attempt between 1916 and 1918 to push Kinney forward as a replacement for Waite. I say “push” as it seems highly unlikely that Kinney took the initiative to attempt to oust Waite himself. Kinney had known and admired Waite’s work since *Bahai Hymns and Poems* (1904), some texts from which he had set. He had known Waite personally since 1909, and there is no indication that their relationship was ever other than cordial. Kinney seems to have had regard for Waite’s ability as a composer, even though she did not produce the kind of work he would have. In 1920–1921, when ideas were being gathered for possible fund-raising activities to assist in providing for building the newly chosen design for the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, Kinney suggested holding concerts, and he offered to make arrangements of “Mrs. Waite’s lovely melodies.”¹¹ In 1921, Waite wrote that she was confident that Kinney “could bring out my idea unchanged, as he is a Bahai and in the same vibration,” if he was available to write down music for her. However, as they were “many miles apart,” she would trust him to revise and “put in good form” the music for her song “The New Liberty Bell” which had not been well transcribed by the assistance she could obtain in Los Angeles.¹² Neither Kinney’s various comments on Waite nor Waite’s on Kinney suggest that there was bad feeling between them at any time.

Kinney seems to have been a very amenable person and to have been drawn into disputes on other occasions by the principal parties involved. It would seem that he was being used by one or more members of the Bahai Temple Unity Board in an attempt to supplant Waite and her work. While (or possibly because) Kinney was a well-educated and proficient musician, he did not have Waite’s affinity for a popular tune that was readily singable. He also seems to have felt uncertain about his ability to write verse. There are some printed copies

of his three songs on which he has written changes to the words which are largely for the worse.

Whoever was behind Kinney was disappointed, as Kinney's songs seem to have had relatively limited use in the community, and the conventions of the 1920s returned to using Waite's songs. The maneuvering of the years from 1915 to 1918 seems to have resulted from opposition to Waite (and possibly to Bahá'í hymns) rather than from opposition to hymn singing as such. Perhaps the dearth in 1915 reflects the lack of perceived alternatives to Waite at that time and led to the encouragement of Kinney to provide such for the following year. This would seem particularly likely as, to judge by the practice of the preceding and following years and the comments of those who then attended conventions, the lack of singing in 1915 was probably quite unpopular.

Apart from the three songs composed by Kinney, there was another effort to broaden the scope of Bahá'í hymnody (or, more specifically, the hymns used by Bahá'ís) around this time. In 1920, Howard MacNutt wrote to Corinne True:

I am instructed by the Spiritual Board of Consultation of Greater New York to write to the Bahai Assemblies of Boston, Washington and Chicago, looking to the purpose of compiling from existing hymnals a collection of hymns and hymn tunes suitable for use at Bahai Meetings. The sanction of Abdul Baha, by his own statement, already rests upon any unified work by the Assemblies above named. The need of suitable hymns and tunes is apparent. The material from which selection can be made is most abundant; much of it is of superior excellence, universal in its theme, and adapted to the Cause we represent.¹³

MacNutt suggested that a committee of two be appointed to correspond with New York on the matter. Carl Scheffler replied to MacNutt's letter, and MacNutt sent him further sug-

gestions as to the way in which they intended to carry out their plan:

We wish to proceed with this important and needful work without delay. Will you call your sub-committee together and decide upon the best hymnals which in your opinion should be used in our process of selection? We will then be able to reduce and systemize the work in the four centers and make our examination and search from the same sources. This will insure unity and agreement in the compilation.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that MacNutt does not mention Waite or other Bahá'í hymnodists in these letters, and that the need for a hymnal is described as urgent, as if Bahá'ís were just waiting for something to sing. This suggested hymnal may represent a continued strand of feeling against Bahá'í hymns in New York as well as a final effort in the anti-Waite campaign launched in 1915. However, the compilation never did appear.

At the 1929 convention, Kinney brought up the question of MacNutt's hymnal:

I would like to make one request for the National Assembly to consider; also, I'd like to state it before the delegates, because it has to do with the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá years ago, made to Howard MacNutt, and through him to me, that we compile a Bahai Hymn Book. I left it to Mr. Howard MacNutt, and as time went on, just after the storm at Palm Beach and just before his death I spoke to him seriously about the matter.

He said, "Well, I am afraid you will have to take that up yourself." I did not realize what that would mean then, but as you know, shortly after that, before the half year had passed out Howard had passed on, and I feel that it is important. I neglected it simply because I relied upon Mr. MacNutt to take the initiative, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's word, but now that leaves me the only one to carry out his own particular request. If material can

be sent to me and if the National Spiritual Assembly agree, I will undertake this matter at any moment.¹⁵

There was no immediate response to Kinney's statement, and a little later Mrs. Ford (an East Coast Bahá'í) remarked to the Chairman: "I don't believe you heard Mr. Kinney's remarks about the hymn book. That was very important." The Chairman, Allen McDaniel, then asked Kinney if he had put his suggestion as a motion, and Kinney replied:

No, but I want to call the attention of the delegates to a very important thing. We have not any hymns that we recognize except just a few, and I feel that we are constantly needing them, and we ought to begin at once to do something about it. I made those remarks because of a special request made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which was important. It was not made to me, so I am not responsible for anything more than informing you that 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifically requested Mr. Howard MacNutt to do this, and Mr. MacNutt neglected to do it, and has passed on, and it leaves me in the position that if I should die perhaps I will have to tell him why some day.¹⁶

On further prompting by the chair, Kinney made his suggestion a motion and it was seconded by Windust. On McDaniel asking if there was further discussion, Mr. Duckett of Los Angeles said, "Mrs. Waite has compiled a hymn book and 'Abdu'l-Bahá has approved this hymn book. I think it is a very wonderful hymn book." To this Ford replied:

It does not mean we will give up Mrs. Waite's hymn book, but that now the Baha'i Cause needs a larger variety of hymns. That is what Mr. Kinney has in mind. There are other hymns besides those of Mrs. Waite's, and there are great hymns in existence which very well express Baha'i, and I think Mr. Kinney's idea should be a compilation and publication of the new hymns.¹⁷

After the suggestion was made by Mrs. Finch that the book should include some chants, to which Kinney replied that he intended it would, the question was put and the motion carried.

This is the last mention of the MacNutt hymnbook I have found. At what time 'Abdu'l-Bahá had asked MacNutt to work on a hymn book is not clear. Certainly, as early as 1905 he had written to MacNutt of his approval of Kinney working on chants. It would seem that the attempt at a MacNutt compilation in 1920–1921 might have been a further effort against Waite after the failure of the attempt to use Kinney to supplant her work. Certainly, the implication of MacNutt's letters is that the need was for a compilation from generally accepted Christian hymnals. Kinney's revival of the idea in 1929 probably reflects his conscientiousness rather than total sympathy with an anti-Waite position. He may also have reasonably felt that a wider choice of hymns would be useful. Why this could not be met by simply using a good Christian hymnal and selecting from it (as was done earlier with Brewer) is unclear. It is also unclear why there was not to be encouragement for other Bahá'ís, including Kinney, to write hymns for the community's use. The comments made on Kinney's suggestion by Duckett and Ford suggest a distinction between those who were quite satisfied with Waite's work and those who wished "a larger variety," which would be drawn from Christian sources. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged any Bahá'í who had sent verses to him to write songs for the community. Waite was the only one to consistently do so. It is interesting that those who were dissatisfied, for whatever reason, with Waite's work sought to supplement or replace it with Christian hymns rather than encourage a general flourishing of hymnody within the community. This may indicate a tacit recognition that Waite was unbeatable on her own ground as well as a disinclination toward specifically Bahá'í hymns.

In the mid-1920s, the Chicago community faced some opposition to the form of their meetings which included an objection to hymn singing. A few people led by Moseley agitated for changes:

The situation here is becoming more difficult every day instead of seeming to clear up. I attended a consultation meeting last evening. The Assembly, that is, a few members of the Assembly [community] met with the Spiritual Assembly and, led by our friend Mr. Moseley, they expressed the idea that all meetings or any meeting where hymns are sung or where there was an attempt at a public address was contrary to the spirit of the Cause and was an attempt on the part of the Board [Spiritual Assembly] to foist ritualism on the Cause. They are not satisfied with any attempt that is made to give a public presentation in the Bahai Hall and vote to have such meetings abolished.¹⁸

The objectors further described those who ran the current meetings as “ex-church members who conducted the meetings like a Methodist church affair.”¹⁹ The dispute blew over, possibly because Moseley left town. (He later turned up in California to cause other trouble there.) The issue of music at meetings in Chicago was discussed again in the mid-1930s, as was noted in the local Bahá’í newsletter:

The Assembly appointed a committee composed of Mr. Harry Walrath and Mr. Allah K. Kalantar to report on a survey made to determine the desire of the community with regard to Music at Feasts and public meetings. The Assembly has voted that music at Feasts is optional with the hosts, but no decision has yet been reached concerning music at public meetings.²⁰

There may not have been too strong a diversion of views on the subject, as no further mention of the survey was published.

THE END OF THE ERA OF BAHÁ'Í HYMNODY

In 1935, Waite was personally involved in a dispute over her hymns, particularly the “Benediction,” in Los Angeles. Waite was told by members of the community that the Spiritual Assembly had “ruled that in the future the Baha’i Benediction be eliminated from all programs, save the Feasts, and that at these it be optional as to whether it be called for by the chairman of the program or not.” Waite commented:

I was not at the last Feast so do not know whether that “new ruling” was read in the report of your Assembly meeting and actions taken, but personally no word has been officially sent to me.

This is an old smouldering fire, which I hoped the water of Love had quenched, but it is evident that it has burst forth into flame once more. Some years ago, when the Baha’i hymns and Benediction were sung at every meeting—the desire by some to stamp them out was set aflame and I was made most unhappy—not because they were mine in the sense that I was the channel through whom—as Abdul Baha said, many times and to many of the friends both in America and Europe—that “Baha’u’llah gave them to the Baha’i world through me”—but in this personal opposition of some of the Baha’is it seemed that the Words of Abdu’l-Baha were ignored.

This fire in time partially died out, but now I know the smouldering embers are still there and have been fanned into a flame again by some new breeze of opposition—the result being your “new ruling.”²¹

Waite continued that she felt it best if the “Benediction” was omitted in all meetings from then on rather than let the issue of whether or not to use it be a source of conflict. She stated that she had realized when she returned from a trip in January 1935 and heard that a young visiting English Bahá’í had objected to the Bahá’í hymns that the problem was going to arise again. She personally was upset when people asked

her after the most recent meeting she had attended why the "Benediction" was not played, or apologized to her for it being left out: "All of these questions and apologies are to me most unpleasant, and I most heartily dislike the personal aspect of it all." The Spiritual Assembly replied that Waite had been incorrectly informed of their attitude toward the use of the "Benediction":

It was suggested by the Spiritual Assembly that it be "optional" at the public meetings, subject to the chairman calling for it, *if no musical program had been arranged by the music committee, and not that it be "ruled out" anywhere.*

Since this was merely to eliminate confusion of programs and had nothing to do with personality, the secretary was not instructed to notify any one, and the reason the suggestion was not read at the Feast was probably due to the illness of the recording secretary, and when another recording secretary was elected it was overlooked.²²

The Assembly also enclosed a "resolution" which they had sent to the National Spiritual Assembly and which had been approved by them. This resolution superseded their previous ruling, and the Assembly hoped that Waite would "cooperate with it in the attempt to eliminate the personal angle from all endeavors to establish the World Order of Baha'u'llah on the basis of a harmonious whole, and that you will continue to discourage any discussion of the matter so disturbing to you, hoping that the friends will soon be able to appreciate the Baha'i Benediction and hymns, not only because Abdul-Baha loved them but for their intrinsic value also." The resolution referred to was published in the Los Angeles community newsletter with an excerpt from the National Spiritual Assembly letter supporting it. The resolution referred to both the "Benediction" and the use of the so-called "prayer for Shoghi Effendi" (in reality an excerpt from a letter):

“As regards the chanting of Tablets in the Temple, Shoghi Effendi wishes in this connection to urge the friends to avoid all forms of rigidity and uniformity in matters of worship.”—*Baha’i News*, July 1935

The Spiritual Assembly has been conscious for some time that in this Community there has been a tendency for rigidity to creep into our meetings, specifically with regard to the playing of the Benediction and the saying of what is erroneously termed the prayer for Shoghi Effendi.

With regard to the Benediction, it has become so much a matter of form to play it at every meeting that on occasions when it has not been called for by the chairman, a request has been made for it. The Spiritual Assembly is of the opinion that the conduct of meetings is, subject to the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, entirely a matter for the appropriate committee or feast chairman to decide. In addition a music committee has been appointed for the purpose of collaborating with other committees in making the programmes of meetings and feasts. Whether any one item is included in the programme or not is a matter for those who arrange the meeting to decide. In any case the Spiritual Assembly is not in favor of making any particular song or prayer an essential part of every meeting. The friends are earnestly requested to cooperate with the Spiritual Assembly in their efforts to ensure that nothing be allowed to become a form or ritual, both of which are opposed to the spirit of our beloved Faith.²³

In this dispute over the use of the “Benediction” we can again see that those opposed to it were in the minority and that the general assumption was that it should be used.

In 1938, the Spiritual Assembly of San Francisco wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly that on a recent visit to that city Lorol Schopflocher had told the Bahá’ís there that they were disobeying the Guardian by using the “Benediction.” The Assembly referred to the statement by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá printed on the “Benediction” and remarked that they were

“not aware of any instructions from the Guardian abrogating those words.” They asked the National Spiritual Assembly to advise them if any instruction had been received from Shoghi Effendi that the “Benediction” should not be used.²⁴ The NSA replied:

... as far as our records go, there has never been any ruling one way or the other about the use of Baha’i Benediction. No Assembly has ever been ordered to use it nor ordered not to use it.

In fact, the National Assembly has recently written the Guardian to ask him to explain the relation of Mrs. Waite’s music to the Cause at the present time in view of the well-known words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, about them.

When his reply is received we trust that the matter will be clarified once and for all for the entire American Baha’i community.²⁵

Before turning to the National Spiritual Assembly’s own attitude and that of Shoghi Effendi, it seems appropriate to look at the background of Schopflocher’s statement. Schopflocher was a woman with considerable financial resources at her disposal who spent much of her time traveling about the world visiting Bahá’í communities. She was immensely egocentric, and whatever she wished was, as far as she was concerned, the way that things should be. She seems to have had the ability to impose this view upon others so that they cooperated with her in creating her reality. (On one occasion, when crossing the Atlantic in the Hindenburg, she had the captain “buzz” her home in Montreal.)

Schopflocher’s mother was (according to Schopflocher) as morbidly obsessed with religion as Waite’s was constructively religious. Schopflocher’s elder sister had died in infancy, and after this her mother was transformed from a bon vivant into “a person obsessed with a single idea—to obtain a seat in Heaven beside her beautiful child.” She did not find

any church that came up to her own fervor and so “Her own home became her church—and ours.” As a child, Schopflocher seems to have been as self-willed as she was as an adult, and her temperament led her to clash with her mother, who she believed regarded her as an inadequate substitute for the lost baby. Schopflocher related of her childhood: “There was little time for play or ‘recreation’ other than the singing of hymns and listening to long discourses on the Bible and other dull subjects in the programme laid down for me. . . . When I was permitted to take piano lessons, they were for religious music only.”²⁶ Significantly, Schopflocher titled the chapter on her childhood in her autobiography “The Cage.”²⁷

Schopflocher’s own religious activities as a supposed teacher of the Bahá’í Faith inclined more to dances, cocktail parties, and afternoon teas with Eastern rulers. She records that a fellow passenger on a ship remarked that she was the first “missionary” he had ever seen with such good legs. That Schopflocher might have had a personal antipathy to hymnody is not surprising; neither is it that she attempted to impose this view on others. Her considerable wealth, prestige, and evident social position placed her in a powerful position to do so, especially when she was telling people that Shoghi Effendi agreed with her view of the matter.

By the mid-1930s, the 1927 edition of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* had been sold out for some time. There was still a demand for copies, however, and Waite wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly in early 1936 to inform them that she was willing to allow the Publishing Committee (which was in New York, not Chicago, at this time) to use her plates to bring out a new edition. Holley remarked, in a letter written as National Spiritual Assembly secretary to the committee, that “This offer raises a number of questions which it might be well for the Publishing Committee to refer to the National Spiritual Assembly.”²⁸

By the end of 1936, the committee had obtained the plates from Windust in Chicago and was awaiting further instructions from the Assembly. In January 1937, the National Spiritual Assembly asked the committee to simply hold the plates. In November 1937, the Assembly asked the committee to supply estimates for the cost of 1,000 and 2,000 copies of the booklet. The committee reported that 1,000 copies would cost \$93.08 and 2,000 copies would cost \$120.06. On the letter reporting this estimate, the words "Baha'i" and "Hymns" have been circled in pencil and a "?" put beside them in the margin. In January 1938, the Assembly informed the committee that it had "voted to request the Guardian to advise the National Assembly in the matter of reprinting the songs composed by Shahnaz Waite." In March 1938, the Assembly informed the committee that Shoghi Effendi had written to Waite "explaining to her that in view of the increasing national expenses of the Cause in America it would hardly be possible for the National Fund to provide for the publication of her hymns." They suggested that the committee simply retain the plates, unless Waite wanted them returned.²⁹

It is evident from the prolonged nature of this correspondence that there was little enthusiasm about providing for the demand for copies of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* on the part of either the Assembly or the Publishing Committee. Also, that by the end of the correspondence it is implied that Waite was looking for a subsidy from the National Fund to issue her work, rather than that she was again offering her work as a proved seller and fund raiser (at the price set in 1927, 1,000 copies could have realized up to \$300 and 2,000 copies up to \$600, a good profit potential on the outlay) is somewhat mendacious and suggests that an acceptable excuse was being sought for the decision not to reprint.

We might note here that the Reviewing Committee (another East Coast committee) in the mid-1930s decided that the

words of a song by Waite were not appropriate for their attention: "We do not approve or disapprove the words of songs or poems as these are works of aesthetic value alone and time alone will prove their merit."³⁰ The National Assembly agreed with the committee's decision "that material of this kind is not suitable for review by a Baha'i committee."³¹

At the time this decision was made, North American Bahá'ís had become attuned to the idea that material related to the Faith was to be considered available for general circulation and use only if it had been approved by the Reviewing Committee. To decline to give approval to "the words of songs or poems" and to suggest that they were of "aesthetic value alone" was to impugn both their legitimacy and their validity in terms of teaching the Faith or expressing Bahá'í identity. The secretary of the Reviewing Committee when it made this decision was Doris Holley, the wife of National Spiritual Assembly Secretary Horace Holley.

We should turn now to the letter the Assembly wrote to Shoghi Effendi in 1938, which included their inquiry about Waite's songs:

The final enclosure consists of a copy of a Tablet revealed by the Master to Shahnaz Waite. The National Assembly would like your advice and instruction on how to deal with the general question of publishing music for Baha'is' use, and, specifically, in relation to the significance of this Tablet to the songs composed by Mrs. Waite.

Mrs. Waite's book of songs was originally published during the period of more or less uncontrolled individual initiative in the American Baha'i community. Many of the believers love these songs and like them to be used both at public and non-public Baha'i meetings. Many others feel that they are in the spirit of the traditional Christian hymn and that the Baha'i Faith should not maintain practices developed during the history of the Christian church. The National Assembly itself some years ago recorded

the view that the Reviewing Committee cannot be expected to pass upon music, poetry and other art forms, but only such manuscripts whose accuracy can be referred to the Teachings.

This matter of music is so important that we hope very much that some instruction can be given as a guide to future policies and practice.³²

The objection to Waite's hymns had now come full circle. Twenty-five years before, her Bahá'í hymns were objected to as too obviously non-Christian in text; now they were being objected to as too Christian in form. We should note also in this letter the distrust of "uncontrolled individual initiative" (although this is hardly an accurate description of the antecedents of Waite's work with its frequent review by 'Abdu'l-Bahá) and the ritual statement on the importance of music that is characteristic of National Spiritual Assembly pronouncements on the subject.

Shoghi Effendi replied to this enquiry:

As to the question of Mrs. Waite's Baha'i Hymns; the Guardian feels it inadvisable to issue any general instruction at present regarding the matter of publishing music for use by the believers in their meetings. He thinks that the situation arising out of Mrs. Waite's request for the re-publication of her songs is not such as to call for any general ruling. He has, however, written Mrs. Waite explaining to her that in view of the increasing national expenses of the Cause in America, specially in connection with the teaching work, it would hardly be possible for the National Fund to provide for the publication of her hymns. All those believers who are talented in music and desire to make some contribution along this line should be encouraged and advised to send their musical compositions to the editorial Committee of the "Baha'i World" for reproduction in that book.³³

As we have seen, the National Assembly took this opportunity to shelve the issue of reprinting *Bahai Hymns of Peace*

and Praise. Neither did they make any vigorous attempt to counter the opinion of such as Schopflocher that using these songs contravened Shoghi Effendi's wishes.

Although the concern of this work is sociological, and so the concentration is on what Bahá'ís thought and did—not on what the Bahá'í Faith teaches—in the area of devotional activity, it seems appropriate at this point to consider what Shoghi Effendi's expressed attitude on hymnody was during the 1930s, as his instructions were claimed as the basis of all positions in the dispute over the use of hymns. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had written more than fifty tablets to North American Bahá'ís encouraging the use of singing and music at Bahá'í meetings. These Tablets included a number specifically and generally approving songs by Waite and others. Shoghi Effendi continued this approval, both generally and in relation to Waite.

In 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Waite in his own hand, "Your poems are indeed most interesting and helpful to the believers and your name will ever live in the annals of the Cause as the first to extol and celebrate in the western world the glory and virtues of the Cause of God."³⁴ In 1931, he included in another personal note, "Your past services are graven upon the Tablet of my heart and have earned you the esteem and gratitude of the believers."³⁵ In 1931, Waite was informed, "Shoghi Effendi is almost determined to start a new section in the coming issue of the Baha'i World devoted to music composed by the friends. In it he will surely include your "Benediction" which has brought joy & inspiration to many hearts."³⁶ In February of 1932, *Bahá'í News* informed the community that Shoghi Effendi "expects to create two new sections in Volume IV of *The Bahá'í World*, one devoted to Bahá'í poems, and another to Bahá'í music."³⁷ The music in the first few volumes of *Bahá'í World* was personally selected by Shoghi Effendi, not by the *Bahá'í World* editorial committee. Among the nine pieces in Volume IV (1932) were

six by Waite; Volume V (1934) had the same nine pieces with four more added, one by Waite; and Volume VI (1936) had sixteen pieces, eight of which were by Waite. In these three volumes Shoghi Effendi included the following songs by Waite (those marked with an asterisk were included in both Volumes IV and V):

- *Prelude
- *Temple Song
- *Great Day of God
- *His glorious Sun has Risen
- *Tell the Wondrous Story
- *Benediction
- I Will Follow Thee
- Praise Thee O God
- The Day of Certainty
- The Temple Beautiful
- Anthem of All Nations
- Awake Ye Nations All
- Song of the Covenant
- Sweet Peace
- Song of Thanksgiving

Toward the end of 1932, Waite was told:

The Guardian values the hymns that you are so beautifully composing. They certainly contain the realities of the Faith, and will indeed help you to give the Message to the young ones. It is the music which assists us to affect the human spirit; it is an important means which helps us to communicate with the soul. The Guardian hopes that through this assistance you will give the Message to the people, and will attract their hearts.³⁸

In 1935, Shoghi Effendi specifically addressed the issue of hymns at Bahá'í meetings:

In regard to the main question you have raised in connection with the singing of hymns at Bahá'í meetings. He wishes me to answer you that he sees no objection to it whatsoever. The element of music is, no doubt, an important feature of all Bahá'í gatherings. The Master Himself has emphasized its importance. But the friends should in this, as well as in all other things, not pass beyond the limits of moderation, and should take great care to maintain the strict spiritual character of all their gatherings. Music should lead to spirituality, and provided it creates such an atmosphere there can be no objection against it.³⁹

In the same year, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Gesene Koch:

With regard to your question concerning the use of music in the Nineteen Day Feasts, he wishes to assure all the friends that not only he approves of such a practice, but thinks it even advisable that the believers should make use, in their meetings, of hymns composed by Bahá'ís themselves, and also of such hymns, poems and chants as are based on the Holy Words.⁴⁰

As one might expect from the above, when Waite was informed by Shoghi Effendi in 1938 that it would not be possible to then reprint *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, it was not in terms to suggest that her work was no longer of value or to be used:

In connection with the republication of your hymn book; he has read with profound interest what the Master has written regarding the hymns you have composed, but feels that in view of the increasing expenses which the National Fund is incurring in connection with the Seven Year Plan, & particularly with regard to the teaching work, it would be preferable to postpone the publication of the above book until such time as the necessary means for the printing will be available.

In the meantime, the Guardian wishes you to remain assured that your hymns, as promised by our beloved Master, will be sung by the believers, & will be increasingly appreciated by them.⁴¹

It is obvious that Schopflocher was at best mistaken in asserting that the San Francisco Bahá'ís were disobeying Shoghi Effendi in using the "Benediction." It is equally evident that Shoghi Effendi had an interest in the issue of devotional music for the community that was not actively shared by the National Spiritual Assembly.

Many Bahá'ís who were part of the community during the era of Bahá'í hymnody now express a sense of puzzlement as to why it ended. They recall how much they had loved the singing and how good the songs were for creating a feeling of group unity. They cannot give a specific reason why the use of hymns stopped, but many remember receiving an impression that they should not be used. One woman told me that she thought people were informed that the hymns were "too Christian, or something." Some older Bahá'ís who attended lecture recitals of Bahá'í hymnody in 1983–1985 expressed their pleasure at hearing the songs again and remarked that they did not understand why the community ever stopped using them. The general memory seems to be that the end came around 1940. One Bahá'í said that she had learned the songs as a child in the 1920s but did not think of teaching them to her children in the 1940s and 1950s; she did not know why, and felt some regret that she had not.

One community that lost its Bahá'í hymns in a very literal sense was that of Topeka, Kansas. In the late 1930s, the secretary of the Assembly left the Faith, and town, taking with her the community's early records and their hymn books.⁴² The community did still sing the "Benediction" at least. May Brown, a long-term member of the community, commented in 1982:

I'm not sure just why we gave up singing the Benediction. Maybe it was when some of the younger ones didn't like our squeaky voices and the record player had too many worn out records for us to continue. At any rate, some of us older ones sure enjoyed it

and I find that my voice is such that I can't stand to try to sing that Benediction even when I'm all alone. I wish I could. If there is anyone around who could sing it, I'd like to have it sung at my funeral if it were possible. (Or at least read.)⁴³

Waite died in 1939. While she was alive she may have had some effect in keeping the anti-hymn forces at bay. Certainly she was not shy about sending copies of her Tablets and her letters from the Guardian to whoever wished them or to those she felt needed to be informed of them. A number of her friends also circulated them. The written evidence of approval of hymn singing and music generally in the Bahá'í writings was incontrovertible, but clearly, the forces of rumor and suggestion employed by those opposed to hymns won. The National Assembly did not actually support such rumors, but neither did it take any pains to refute them. Indeed, its own evidently cool attitude toward both hymns and the issue of music generally may have seemed tacit approval and confirmation of the opinions of those campaigning against their use.

This chapter may have given the impression that there was considerable opposition to the use of hymns (whether Christian, universal, or Bahá'í) and that the number of Bahá'ís who objected, was on a comparable scale with the number who approved. This was not so. The section discussing the absorption of Waite's hymns into the life of the community only cites a tiny fraction of the documentation of the approval and use of her work. This section has discussed virtually all of the documentation on opposition of which I am aware. In most of the cases discussed, only a relative handful of individuals were active objectors. In the late 1930s, the final effort against hymnody must have represented the opinion of a small minority of the national community. However, the majority of those who were not actively in favor of hymns (and especially of Bahá'í hymns) seems to have been drawn

from the middle and upper-middle class, mainly East Coast Bahá'ís who formed the national power structure of the Faith.

The extent to which many local communities supported hymnody may be gauged from the continued use of the "Benediction" after 1940. In the privacy of their Nineteen-Day Feasts, many older communities continued to consider the "Benediction" the usual way to end Feasts until the 1960s. That the "Benediction" then faded away in even these communities is probably the result of the aging and death of the members who had lived through the heyday of Bahá'í hymn singing and the fact that those born into or joining the community after the 1930s had not been socialized into singing as had the Bahá'í children of the 1920s and before.

When communities brought the issue of hymn singing to the attention of the National Assembly, the general tone of their response was off-putting. As late as 1955, an American Bahá'í who was secretary of a Local Assembly in Africa wrote to the Africa Teaching Committee asking for "the Bahá'í song book," remarking that they had asked about this before and not had a reply. She was informed, "There is really no Bahá'í song book—there was years ago but this is out of print and will not be printed again as they did not seem to be really Bahá'í songs."⁴⁴ This is a good example of the institutionalization of the anti-hymn feeling. The person who wrote that reply recently told me that she did not understand why the community stopped using hymns, that they were a good way of bringing people together and encouraging community unity, and that she was delighted that my publishing imprint was issuing a facsimile of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*.

At the national convention in 1957, one of the delegates brought up:

... the tremendous need we have for music. The Bahá'í Faith is a joyous, happy religion. It is a religion of song, there is much

poetry in the Writings, and yet Fireside after Fireside and Feast after Feast we have no one raising voices in song.

I think this is because we do not have a song book, one that collects the songs from the musical traditions of the past, some of the present that our Faith needs such as the United Nations Hymn or "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and other music in the process of creation. Perhaps it needs to be simplified for the youth.

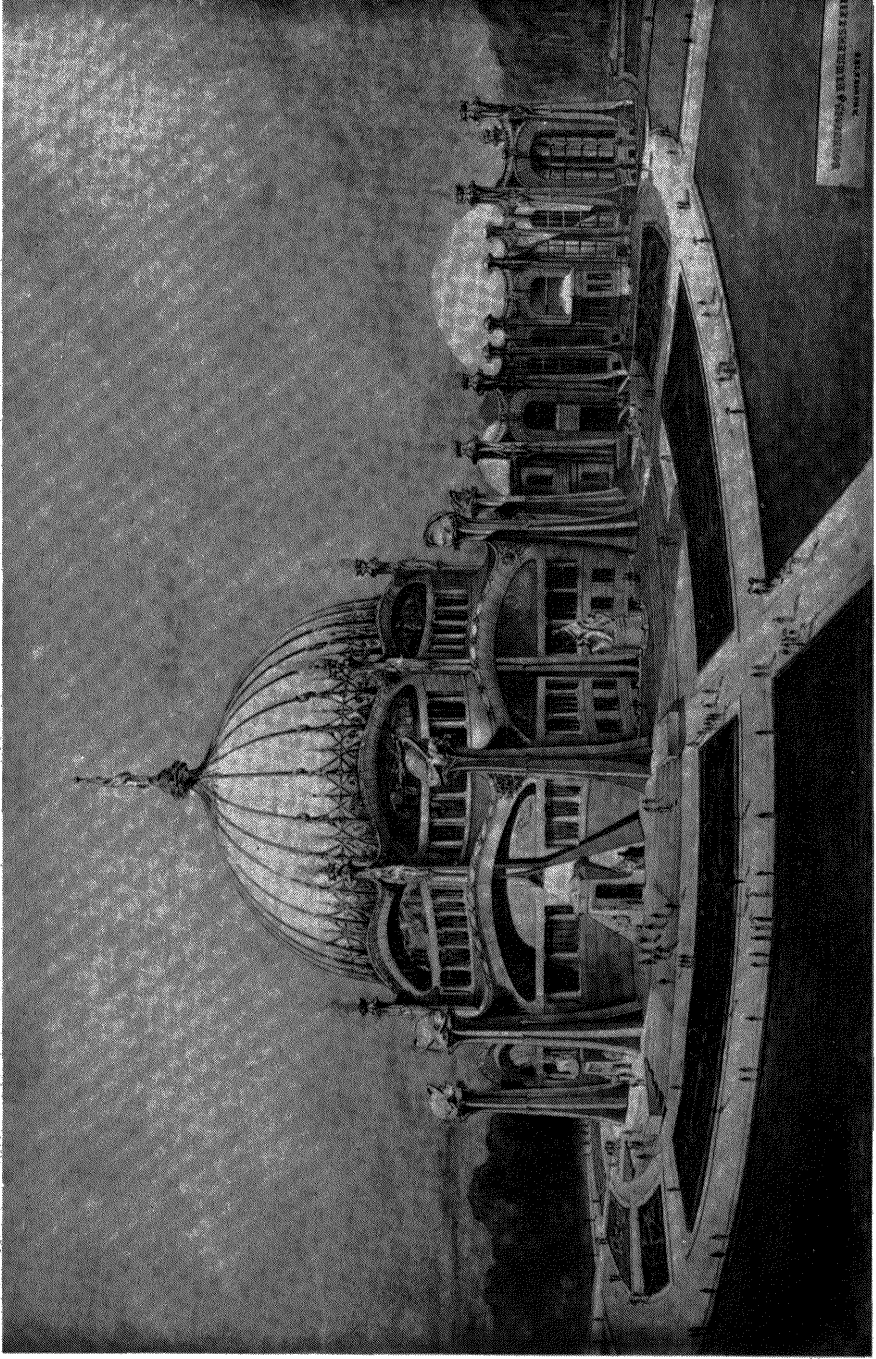
I feel very strongly we ought to have a song book brought together perhaps cheaply in the beginning by some simple reproduction process and ultimately lifted into more permanent being. Let's lift our Bahá'í voices in song.⁴⁵

Another delegate then remarked that she had been asked by a state convention to request that Waite's booklet be reprinted.⁴⁶ A number of delegates spoke in favor of the idea of providing a song book. A recommendation that a children's song book be produced was carried, although it is obvious from the consultation that most of the delegates who spoke had something for the community generally in mind. After the convention, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to Shoghi Effendi to inform him that "great interest was shown in the adoption by the National Spiritual Assembly of plans to make available music suitable for use by believers, the purpose apparently being to reproduce a book of Baha'i songs." The Assembly expressed itself unsure of the propriety of such an endeavor, stating "with respect to a Baha'i book of songs the Assembly is in need of the Guardian's approval."⁴⁷ Shoghi Effendi replied:

As regards producing a book of Bahá'í songs, your understanding that there is no cultural expression which could be called Bahá'í at this time (distinctive music, literature, art, architecture, etc., being the flower of the civilisation and not coming at the beginning of a new Revelation), is correct. However, that does not mean that we haven't Bahá'í songs, in other words, songs written by Bahá'ís on Bahá'í subjects.⁴⁸

The songs of Waite and her contemporaries were undoubtedly “songs written by Bahá’ís on Bahá’í subjects.” At one time that had been exactly the ground on which they were criticized. But by 1957, a generation of Bahá’ís had grown up in, or come into, the Faith without being acquainted with them. Apart from in those communities which stuck to the “Benediction” at Feasts (and even there it seems to have been regarded as a fad of the older people by this time), Bahá’ís had been socialized to expect and accept a devotional life largely devoid of musical content. They had also been socialized to regard anything that seemed overtly Christian with suspicion and were thus cut off from the popular devotional music roots of their own culture. All this left was an occasional Eastern Bahá’í chant, which was regarded as a “Bahá’í” sound and not as the continuation of Islamic cultural practice that it is.

During the 1960s, the last vestiges of the “Benediction” were dying away. That same decade saw the growth of a new crop of Bahá’í songs, but this time the models were secular. Thirty years after that last National Spiritual Assembly letter on songs to Shoghi Effendi, and over fifty years after Waite’s last attempt to have *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise* reissued, Bahá’í devotional life is almost totally barren of communal song.



PEACE PALACE AND LIBRARY
Court of Arbitration, The Hague, by Bourgeois and Blumenstein.

PART TWO

THE BUILDING

National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.



THE SITE OF THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR
in Wilmette, Illinois, as it looked when selected.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHOICE OF A SITE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Before the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár could be built, two questions had to be settled: where was it to be built and under what organizational auspices? Both of these questions were answered in a brief period at the end of the first decade of the century, but the mode of their answering delayed the actual building for a further decade.¹

THE CHOICE OF A SITE

On 26 November 1907, a small group of Bahá'ís from various communities met in Chicago to look at possible sites for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. In the morning they visited the south side of the city and in the afternoon the north. That evening they met to discuss the sites they had seen. According to Corinne True, they suggested the current site of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette as the best location. True said this from at least 1915, in an account of the early days of the project that was written for the 1915 National Convention

and which has been much reproduced since;² she stated it in a public talk at the Bahá'í Congress associated with the National Convention in 1920;³ and this has been accepted as the standard account of the origin of the present site. However, this version of events is not accurate. True herself found the present site in 1908 and, with the support of a few Bahá'ís, imposed her choice on a reluctant Chicago community. Whatever True's motives may have been in the actions she took, the account she gave of the origin of the site in later years was not true. To understand how this imposition of the site came about, it is necessary to discuss the progress of the project from its beginning.

News of the building of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in 'Ishqábád, reached Chicago in late 1902. In a talk given at the meeting held in Chicago to celebrate the "Feast of the Master" (Day of the Covenant) on 26 November 1902, a brief description of the 'Ishqábád venture was given to the community.⁴ Such details as were available were also relayed to other North American Bahá'í communities in correspondence.⁵

Probably around the turn of the year, a member of the House of Spirituality, Albert Windust, wrote to Mirza Assad'Ullah (who was then living in the Holy Land) to ask for further details about Bahá'í places of worship. Whether this was purely a personal query on Windust's part or one he made on behalf of the House is not clear, but Assad'Ullah's reply was evidently circulated to some extent:

Regarding your question as to how the place of worship should be, and that some are of the opinion that it should be a house especially dedicated for the purpose and so situated that it may be free from all noise and outside interruptions, or what should be done if such a room is not possible, the answer is that all that is revealed in *Kitab-el-Akdas* is as follows: Three times in a day and night, one should pray, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. No such particulars, as you ask, are given. Yes, it is evident

that one must be free from all thoughts at the time of communion, and while praying he must do so entirely unconscious of his surroundings. Sincerity of the heart is the important thing. When man is in this state it matters not whether he is in private or in public.⁶

At its meeting on 21 February 1903, the House read a letter dated 29 November 1902, from the 'Ishqábád community in which their "attention was called to the laying of the foundation of the first Bahai House of Worship, which information caused joy to enter the hearts of all." It was the day after this meeting that the first of the Sunday community devotional meetings for which the House had had *Songs of Prayer and Praise* published was held.

On 7 March 1903, the meeting of the House was concerned mainly with the topic of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. They read a letter from Ahmed Yazdi, who had enclosed a photograph of the architect's design for the 'Ishqábád building and another photograph of the ceremony in which the Russian governor had laid the foundation stone. They read a letter written by a Bahá'í who had been present at the ceremony. And they read a letter from Assad'Ullah in which he urged the Chicago Bahá'ís to build a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in their city. The meeting unanimously decided to send a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking permission to do so. They also selected a committee of five members to look for a suitable site and asked another member to inform the local community. Another member was asked to investigate the possibility of obtaining the house at 475 W. Monroe St., as some felt this location was sacred to the Cause as the House of Spirituality had first met there. Other members thought that site would probably be too small.

The House sent a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking that he "Permit us to begin the blessed undertaking of the erection of the Mashrak el Azkar in Chicago!"⁷ At their meeting on 30 May the House read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reply in which he gave

permission and encouraged them to proceed. They also received another encouraging letter from Assad'Ullah, in which he quoted from the tablet and pointed out to the House the importance of their undertaking:

. . . ever since I met you, I wished for you great spiritual development and good progress, both in the world and in things pertaining to the Kingdom. . . . Praise be to God, the first House of Justice was organized there first, and in its establishment you took precedence of all, and in following the Commandments of the Most Holy Book, such as praying, fasting, etc. Now, through the Mercy of God, I hope you will be the first to establish the Mashrek-el-Azcar. The Master says distinctly: "Indeed ye are the first to arise for this glorious cause, in that great region." Observe the lofty station of this Verse and the intrinsic value of these words. Then know that hereafter all the Temples of Worship that shall be built in America will revolve around the first.⁸

On 27 June, the House decided to hold a special meeting "on Thursday evening July 2nd, to be devoted entirely to the subject of Mashrek-el-Azcar." At that meeting, they discussed the need for definite procedures and decided to write to 'Ishqábád for a copy of the plans that had been used there to help them determine how much land would be needed. The committee that had been appointed to look for a site was requested to wait until further details had been received, and the general feeling was that the House did not yet have enough information to make definite plans. In the autumn of 1903, 'Ishqábád wrote that they had received the request for plans and hoped to send them shortly. I have found no indication that plans were ever received.

Little seems to have happened in relation to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project for over a year. In December 1904, Louise Waite organized a concert for the benefit of the Temple Fund, the proceeds of which were temporarily loaned to the

Bahai Publishing Society. This was the first large fund-raising event held.

In January 1905, the House wrote in a circular letter to the Eastern Bahá'í communities, "we hopefully look forward to the time when . . . we shall have a Mashrek-el-Azcar built in His Name, wherein the sincere Bahais may gather to worship."⁹ However, no immediate steps were taken. Undoubtedly, the major factor holding back the House was financial. They were having considerable difficulty in even meeting the rent on the hall that was used for the weekly community meeting and were in no position to initiate a building project.

In October 1905, Waite presented the House with a certificate for \$100 discount on a piano, suggesting that it be used toward purchasing one for the community. It was decided to return the certificate to Waite with a letter of appreciation. This letter explained, "in view of the fact that we do not know at present just when we shall be able to have the 'home' of which you speak, it was deemed advisable to bend all efforts to raising the hall rent every month and then for translating and publishing the Holy Utterances."

In addition to the House of Spirituality in Chicago, there was another body called the Woman's Assembly of Teaching. The membership of the House was limited to men, although both men and women elected it. The Woman's Assembly was composed solely of women and elected by the women of the community. The Woman's Assembly had been founded at the same time as the House with the intention that it serve as a women's auxiliary to that body. It had quickly become a largely independent women's institution that functioned in many ways parallel to the House in the community.¹⁰

The House and the Woman's Assembly had occasional joint meetings, and it was at one of these, on 21 October 1905, that it was decided to refuse Waite's offer of the piano certificate. It was at the suggestion of Corinne True that this was done

and that the reasons of the demands of the hall rent and publishing were given. At this joint meeting, it was also unanimously decided to amalgamate the treasuries of the House and the Woman's Assembly under:

... one Treasurer, whose disbursements of monies shall be under the auspices of the H. of S. [House of Spirituality]. Also a finance Committee of two, one chosen by the ladies (probably Mrs. Phillips), and one by the H. of S. but all collections and contributions made in a general way by the whole Assembly will go into the hands of one Treasurer, Mr. Scheffler, and be used—first for paying necessary hall rentals, then for needed translations and publishing of Holy Utterances.¹¹

Thus, it is evident that the Woman's Assembly, and Mrs. True herself, understood the financial stringency under which the House operated and that the resources of the community were barely meeting its current needs let alone providing a surplus from which to initiate a building project.

Despite this decision to amalgamate the treasuries of the House and the Woman's Assembly, it would seem that the Woman's Assembly continued to keep most of the funds it received under its own control. In the autumn of 1906, a house was bought in Muskegon, Michigan, by the Chicago Bahá'ís. The Muskegon Bahá'ís, who had been taught the Faith by True, who had a summer home in nearby Fruitport, met at the home of a widow who had three orphaned grandchildren to care for. Considerable aid was being given to this woman by the Chicago Bahá'ís, as she was without resources. Rather than continue to assist her to pay rent on her house, True suggested that the house should be bought and the family permitted to live in it rent-free. The house was purchased for \$225, and at the time it was bought all funds then held by Mrs. Phillips for the Woman's Assembly were turned over to Charles Ioas, who was conducting the purchase on behalf of the House.

As the Woman's Assembly was then short of funds, they asked for the return of the money raised by Waite's concert that had been loaned to the Publishing Society. Although the \$101.50 that had been raised by the concert was supposedly loaned interest-free, the Woman's Assembly received a small bonus, as \$103 was returned to True on their behalf in December 1906. The difference is hardly large enough to constitute interest and may have been simply an accounting error or a lapse of memory as to how much had been loaned. This sum formed the basis of a new Temple Fund.

In early November 1906, at a "19 day Tea" hosted by the Woman's Assembly, the women present proposed that a petition to 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirming the desire of the Bahá'ís to build a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár be circulated throughout North America and signed by as many as possible. In late November, a Sunday community meeting was devoted mainly to the subject of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Fareed, Assad'Ullah's son, gave a talk on how the 'Ishqábád community had gone about building their Mashriqu'l-Adhkár:

He drew comparisons between the Oriental and Occidental methods of procedure and the ways of doing things. He said the Ashkhabad Assembly did not wait (as we do) until they had a sufficient sum of money in the bank to complete the edifice before they commenced its erection—which the average Occidental feels is the practical way—but they purchased a piece of ground, made it a beautiful garden, held open air meetings in the summer time; and when they could, erected a frame structure, which was used as a school for the Bahai children during week days; until finally—nine years after the ground was purchased, and when all the Bahai world knew of their intention—they commenced the edifice; at which time money poured in from all parts of the Orient—Persia, India, Egypt, Syria, Arabia—and enough and to spare was received to complete the work.

By way of illustrating the particular point I referred to, he said

that the friends in Rangoon, India [Burma], did not say, “We will not send money, but keep what we have for our own Temple when we can erect one; for a Temple in Russia will not benefit us thousands of miles away!”—but they said, “This is the first Temple of God in this Glorious Age, and we are happy to do what we can to see it arise!” He said, they were true Bahais for glory is not for him who loves his country or his city; but for him who loves the whole world.¹²

This talk contributed to a growing opinion that although it was proposed to build a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Chicago, this was not to be considered merely a Chicago project but, rather, it was to be a national endeavor. True felt that the earlier view, that the project was mainly a Chicago concern, had held it back: “It was this limitation which rendered us powerless & now that its fetters are broken let those of us who can, arise to offer our incompetent services today, as the widow’s mite; blunt instruments will make a beginning.”¹³ However, it must be noted that although contributions to assist with the ‘*Ishqábád*’ building did come from many Bahá’í communities, the bulk of the cost was born by one Bahá’í, who put his personal resources at the disposal of the project. The widows’ mites helped, but they could not have done it alone.

During 1906, it became generally known throughout the country that Chicago was intending to build a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and enquiries began to be received from various Bahá’í communities asking for details of what was being done. Around this time also a number of communities wrote to ‘*Abdu'l-Bahá*’ asking if they could build a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* of their own. They were informed that they should assist with the one in Chicago. However, it is clear that ‘*Abdu'l-Bahá*’ intended that the one in Chicago would be for the Chicago community to use, but that it was necessary for all the communities to assist, as the Chicago community did not have

sufficient resources of its own. After the completion of the Chicago building, then the united efforts of the national community would be focused on another city, and so a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* could be successfully provided for each community one by one. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá even wrote to one community that they could start their *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* immediately if they could also contribute to the Chicago project.

Another idea about the Chicago *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* that was widely discussed in late 1906 was that the building did not need to be an expensive and monumental structure, but that a fairly simple and inexpensive building would do. This idea was communicated to the House of Spirituality "through various sources" and originated with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The important thing was to erect as soon as possible a structure that would function as a "central meeting place, no matter how humble as a beginning, that could be increased in size and grandeur as fast as circumstances and conditions would warrant."¹⁴ This idea did not enter the consciousness of the community to the extent that the "national" concept did. Indeed, the national concept probably militated against the idea of a modest structure for immediate local use.

Arthur Agnew, a member of the House, was planning to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in early 1907, and the House decided to send a letter with him putting the various questions they had in relation to the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* project. The petition suggested by the Woman's Assembly was being circulated by True, and it was planned that Agnew should also take this to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Agnews were delayed by the illness of a child and True herself took the petition. When Agnew and his family went they were accompanied by two other members of the House: Chase and Scheffler. The Agnew party met True in Naples on their way to the Holy Land and as she was returning from there. In its letter sent with Agnew the House asked:

Is it well that the people in America shall at this time bend all their efforts to the erection of a material temple (Mashrek-el-Azcar) and that this matter shall precede all other work in the Cause? Or shall we first provide for the necessary expenses of a meeting-place where all the friends may gather from the different parts of this great city of nearly two million inhabitants, and also provide for the care of the sick and needy among us. We greatly desire the erection of a glorious temple as a standard of the Great Cause of God before the eyes of all the people, and at all times we are making effort to assist in that work; but as far as we can now see with our short vision, the first requirement is to unite the hearts and purposes of the people into one, and win to the Cause many more strong believers than we have now. As yet we are but a few souls scattered among the great multitude, and we need to come together weekly in meeting to know each other, to learn of each other, to assist each other. These things require material means, and we have felt that they, together with the publishing of books to carry the Word to seekers, and the provision of money for our Brothers Harris and Ober [who were traveling for the Faith in India] were necessary before the actual buying of land and building of a material temple. We feel that we must strive to feed the hungry and seekers with the Word of God, and attract them by entire unity of a body of earnest friends, before we can erect a great and costly edifice befitting the dignity, loftiness and beauty of the Cause of God. This city has many great and fine churches standing amid multitudes of the poor and needy, to whom they seem a mockery. Must we not build a great and strong temple in the hearts of men, before we can wisely erect such an edifice? Our service is that of God and of men, not the honoring of Gold which seals the hearts; to feed the souls of men, rather than to pander to pride. O our Lord and Master, guide us to wisdom in this matter.

This is a country of wealth, but there are a few rich and many poor people. The cost of living is very high. The mass of the believers are very poor in worldly goods, though rich in faith and love. The writer [Scheffler], who has for years handled the funds

of the Chicago Assembly knows well that the members have much difficulty to bear their current expenses which the maintenance and progress of the Cause require. The rent of our hall, which is our meeting place and Mashrek-el-Azcar, must be paid. The sick and needy must be helped. Books of the Word must be printed. Our friends in India must be aided on their journey. These are the things in which we are trying to unite all the friends, and with our present number and their means, it is the utmost for which they can provide.¹⁵

After the pilgrims returned from the Holy Land, they informed the community that 'Abdu'l-Bahá did indeed wish them to proceed with a building as soon as possible; that he considered it to be a matter of the utmost importance and priority; that other communities should assist Chicago and that Chicago should keep them informed of developments in the hope that they would contribute financially; that it was not necessary to build in one of the more expensive areas of the city, but it was preferable to acquire a site near the lakeshore; and that a modest structure should be built now rather than wait until a large edifice was feasible. The organizational developments that took place after these two pilgrimages will be discussed in detail in the next section; in this section, I will concentrate on the process of selecting and confirming a site.

During the summer of 1907, a number of Bahá'ís were actively looking for a suitable site. Initially, attention was concentrated on the North Shore area, but in August the House was informed of a large area of land that included many sites for sale just south of Jackson Park on the southern side of the city. Several members of the House visited this area and they recommended one particular block as a possible location. However, when the owners were contacted, it was discovered that the asking price was \$85,000 for the block and that they would not consider dividing it into smaller lots. As a result,

this site was not seriously considered, but a member of the House, Sutherland, was asked to make enquiries about other property near it.

In September, Sutherland reported on a nearby site that was only a quarter of a block (300ft. × 180ft.). At their meeting on 14 September, the House asked Sutherland to find out terms for this site. On 21 September, he reported that the asking price was \$15,500 and that the sellers would accept \$1,000 down with \$4,000 at the end of a year and the balance to be paid on terms to be agreed. The House was in favor of this site but asked Sutherland to see if he could get better terms.

Just after the House reached this decision, Windust went to Washington, D.C., to represent them at a reception for the Turkish minister which was to be held at the home of Miss Grosvenor on 24 September 1907. Representatives of all Bahá'í communities had been invited to attend. At the reception, the news was quietly spread that Windust had photographs of the site selected by the House and that there would be a meeting the following afternoon for all who were interested in seeing them.

Nineteen Bahá'ís, including members of the Utica, Rochester, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington communities, came to the meeting. Windust explained that the movement to build a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Chicago dated back to 1903 and had been approved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He stated that the House felt that they were acting as agents of all the Bahá'í communities in the matter and that they had sought to locate a site that would be generally pleasing to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'ís throughout the country. He showed a sketch of the layout of Chicago to show how the proposed site was contiguous to the area being developed as part of the "Beautiful Chicago" scheme that created the lakeshore

parks; the site, indeed, was on the park line, and a *Mashriq'ul-Adhkár* on this site would be visible for miles. The area had a sentimental attraction, as it was at Jackson Park that the World's Columbian Exposition had been held in 1893. In conjunction with that event there had been the World's Parliament of Religions during which the Faith had been publicly mentioned for the first time in Chicago. The site was also highly practical as it was readily accessible by public transport and equally accessible to the working districts of the Calumet area and the wealthier residential districts of southern Chicago. Furthermore, it was not unduly expensive for land so well situated close to the lake and the parks.

Windust reported that those at the meeting "seemingly endorsed the action of the House of Spirituality in their endeavor to serve the Cause in this important matter." After his return to Chicago, Windust attended a meeting in Kenosha on 3 October and explained the site choice there.¹⁶

On 5 October, the House heard from Sutherland that the situation in regard to the terms remained unchanged and it was up to the House to make a definite proposal to the agent. The House decided to notify the community at the general Sunday meeting on the following day that the question of the site would be presented to them for final decision on the next Sunday, 13 October. However, at its meeting on 12 October, the House "agreed that no action for decision on Temple question be had before Assembly tomorrow evening as was the intention one week previous, but that instead informal gatherings be held in the homes for further consultation by all concerned and that Assembly be notified to that effect." There is no further mention of the House's chosen site in its minutes.

We have seen that initial efforts to locate a site were concentrated on the North Shore area. It would seem that those who had decided on that area as the most appropriate in

which to search held to their opinion and did not wish to consider a site on the southern side of the city. Rather than encourage a community dispute, the House let the matter rest.

True, in particular, pressed for the adoption of a North Shore site. In October 1907, she was negotiating for a site in Evanston. The asking price on this site was \$28,000, and she wished the House to offer \$25,000. She informed them that "we could not find a better location."¹⁷ True also had an interest in other sites in Evanston.

Obviously, if the House was hoping to negotiate a lower price on the site they had selected and which was offered at \$15,500, they were not going to consider a site at \$25,000. At the time, the resources they could call upon to begin purchase of any site were between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

On 26 November 1907, the famous gathering of Bahá'ís to consider the matter of a site took place in Chicago. In later years, True referred to this meeting as "the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár convention" and she called the 1909 convention at which the Bahai Temple Unity was formed the "second Mashriqu'l-Adhkár convention." She was unique in this; to everyone else the "first" convention was the one in 1909. Despite this attempt to link the 1907 meeting with later institutional developments and to give it a national status, the meeting was arranged by True herself, possibly with the cooperation of the Woman's Assembly. The House discussed the coming meeting on 23 November, and Windust annotated the minutes to specifically exclude any official status for the 26 November gathering. He wrote that it "was not a convention, but the gathering of a few friends from the west coast and others adjacent to Chicago."

If we consider those who attended on 26 November, we find that it was hardly a national event. With the exception of one man from Kenosha, there were no representatives from the communities which had been informed of the rationale behind

the House's choice of site and had endorsed their actions. Apart from the few Chicago Bahá'ís who attended there was a Bahá'í from Racine and another from Milwaukee in Wisconsin; one from Muskegon and one from Bangor, Michigan; one from Spokane, Washington; and one from Oakland, California. The evening discussion to consider the sites they had viewed during the day was actually held in True's home. Most of the House did not attend the discussion, and it is unlikely that those Chicago Bahá'ís who were opposed to a North Shore site considered going to her home to discuss a matter on which her opinion was known and settled.¹⁸ At any rate, the meeting voted to recommend a site on the north of the city.

True later claimed, and it became generally accepted, that this was the site on which the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* now stands, but it was actually another site in North Evanston.¹⁹ On 30 November 1907, the House decided to look into a site on "S.W. cor. Sheridan Rd. and Hill St., North Evanston, approved of by delegates at meeting held on Tuesday evening, Nov. 26th, at the home of Mrs. True; also ascertain price and terms and make report to Assembly [community]." Agnew and Lesch were appointed as an investigating committee to make enquiries. There is no further mention of this site, and we may assume that it was too expensive to consider.²⁰

While the House continued to discuss the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* regularly, they seem to have laid aside the matter of a site and concentrated on other aspects of the project. As they had selected a feasible site at reasonable cost and had it rejected through the efforts of those pressing for a North Shore site, there was really nothing they could do. Each North Shore site that was proposed was much more expensive than the one they had felt the community was barely able to afford.

In early March 1908, True located another North Shore site. She had set out one day with Cecilia Harrison and

Enayat Ullah Esphahani to find a location, and they had discovered a site for sale just north of North Evanston on Sheridan Road and Linden Avenue in Wilmette. This is the site on which the *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* was built. True contacted an agent about the land and was informed that the asking price for the sixteen lots that comprised the site was \$42,078, but the agent recommended an offer of \$36,315.²¹

True took her correspondence with the agent to the House meeting on 21 March, taking Mrs. Foster and Susan Moody (members of the Ways and Means Committee) with her for support. She proposed that a small part of the site be bought at the best terms possible and an option be secured on the rest. The House decided to postpone action for a week. The three women attended the following week's meeting on 28 March. It was reported that a six-month option could be had for \$1,000, and this could be extended for a second six months for a further \$1,500. The House decided that an option was inadvisable, as land prices were falling, but that to secure a small part of the site, "say 100 feet at lowest cash price," would be feasible. It was decided that this conclusion should be reported to the community at the weekly meeting on the following day and their approval asked for. Approval was received, and two lots on Linden Avenue were purchased for \$2,000 in cash. (This was accurately represented by True and her supporters as a good price for these lots; the going rate would have been between \$2,500 and \$3,000.)

The purchase of these two lots was not considered to be a final choice of site by the House, however, but a means to decrease the pressure that was being brought to bear by the True lobby and a safe investment. In December 1908, the House published an official statement in *The Bahai Bulletin* on "the history and the details of the purchase of the ground" as "there seems to be a general desire to know" what occurred. Despite the carefully conciliatory tone of this statement and its repeated insistence that everything happened in

a “friendly” way, it reported that “a number of the maidser-vants” came to the meetings of the House and “insisted on action, arguing against delay.” The House had then taken the idea of buying the two lots to the community. The statement explains that they “felt it wise to recommend to the friends the purchase of this land for various reasons,” but the only reason mentioned is that it was a “safe investment” that “could be readily converted into cash” if it should not prove to be the best site.

The pressuring of the House into making the initial purchase of part of the Wilmette site took place when its most stalwart member, Thornton Chase, was out of town. After seeing a plat of the site, he wrote to Windust that he thought it unwise to try “to procure all that \$34,000 plot.” However, he did think “it would be fine to be able to get another 100 ft. front [on Linden Avenue], so as to have a practical square 200 × 196 ft. This would be enough, not only for the Temple, but to take care of.”²² Later in the year, after he was apprised of the details and had seen the site, Chase wrote that he would not personally have assented to the purchase if he had been in town.²³

Apart from their published statement, the House sent a private explanation of the land purchase to the New York Board of Consultation in late 1908:

When the land was bought it was because of several reasons. Abdul-Baha had urged that a start be made, and as there was \$2,000 on hand, the friends showed extreme anxiety that something should be done. They were agitated and calling earnestly for some tangible evidence of action. A few of them had ascertained that the piece of land, two lots, could be bought for cash at a low price, and brought the strongest pressure, week after week, upon the members of the House of Spirituality to buy that piece of land. Finally, although it was not desired by all the friends, the majority of them acceded, and the land was bought as a possible beginning of the Temple site, and with the feeling that it was a

safe investment anyhow, as the land could doubtless be sold for as much or more at any time, if another site should be found more desirable. It was also felt that by buying some land and thus showing readiness to "do something" a greater degree of unity might ensue and funds for further progress come in more quickly and abundantly.²⁴

It is evident that the House did not consider that having bought the two lots they were committed to the site, nor did they feel committed to buying the entire expensive site if it was decided to build there. For True and her supporters, this was not an acceptable attitude. They considered the land in its entirety to be *the* site; no other could be considered, and all the land must be secured. The House continued to work on the project, developing their plans for a system of national organization to help build the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár and encouraging Bahá'ís locally and nationally to lend their support. In particular, they tried to increase the funds available, as they considered it advisable to avoid debts and that the money for each stage of the project should be collected before they entered into financial commitments. What they would not do was obtain an option on the entire site or agree to ascribe to it the ordained quality that was being insisted upon by True's group.

In September, True wrote to the House suggesting that they obtain an option on the rest of the site in case the price should rise. At their meeting on 29 September the House decided such an action was not feasible. Chase was not at this meeting, but a few days after it he wrote:

The ground paid for is by no means certain to be the building ground. Mrs. T. and some others think, because Abdul-Baha has approved it, that it only can be the building spot, but all do not think so, and letters we have from Him show that it is not neces-

sarily the place, as we are advised to get more land by adding to that or elsewhere. But the purchase of any considerable amount of land there, or anywhere, is out of the question until we have the money to pay for it. We do not propose to go into debt in this matter, nor to waste the trust funds committed to our care. The money comes but slowly. We have about \$1,600 cash and \$2,000 in the land, and we could "call" on about \$700 more in case of need, which is being held by two assemblies, Kenosha and New York, to accumulate until it shall be needed.²⁵

In November 1908, Chase wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Dear Master: The House of Spirituality with the aid of many others is striving to gather sufficient money to add more land to that already bought, or to secure a larger plot elsewhere and to begin on the foundation of the building. The money comes but slowly as it is earned by toil and labor of the poor, but it does come and the amount is steadily increasing. It does not seem fitting that this great work shall be only begun as a small hut, nor that debt shall be incurred in its building, but we long to make it a dignified building that shall command at least the respect of men. We long to fulfil Thy desire and are all endeavoring to forward the work as rapidly as possible.²⁶

From at least the time of the purchase of the two lots, True and her supporters sought to sanctify the site she had chosen. They assumed the right to use all the land, even though the Bahá'ís only owned two lots in one corner. Indeed, they pointedly did not use these two lots, but met at the highest point of the ground toward the middle of the site. They went to the site in small groups to pray, but there were also larger-scale efforts to link the site to the Faith.

On 18 May 1908, the House received a circular from True that she was sending out inviting Bahá'ís to celebrate the Declaration of the Báb on the Site:

O thou who art firm in the Covenant!

9

Praise be unto GOD, the Clement, the Merciful! We are thankful that we are again allowed to celebrate the day of the Declaration of His Holiness, the Bab.

Dear Bahai Friends:—

This year it is requested that all the assemblies in this part of the country celebrate the day of the Declaration of His Holiness, the Bab, on the grounds selected for the first Mashrek-el-Azkar (Bahai Temple), in America, at the North-west corner of Sheridan Road and Linden Ave., Saturday, May 23, 1908.

The friends from Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Chicago will unite in this celebration, also those in nearby towns, serving a basket dinner at one o'clock.

Take the Evanston Electric Car to Ridge Ave. and Central St. (North Evanston), and walk North on Ridge to Linden Ave.

In case of inclement weather, the friends will hold the celebration in the home of Mr. & Mrs. True. . . .

At the celebration, the words of Mattie Watson's "The First Temple Song" were read, as were letters from communities around the country pledging to assist with the Mashriq'l-Adhkár.

The experience of visiting the site on this and other occasions produced mixed reactions, as some Bahá'ís discovered how relatively inaccessible it was. In July 1908, Emma Carmichael wrote to the House:

I hope you will receive this communication in the kind spirit it is offered. You speak of erecting a Mashrak-el-Azkar in America, when the beloved One, Abdul-Baha is calling from that Bright Spot in tones of thunder in every Tablet, "Build in Chicago" and to other towns in America when they ask for a Mashrek-el-Azkar, "No, build in Chicago first" etc. Now I have been to the land selected and we find it takes us all of ½ day to get there and back to Chicago, not remaining for any service, besides walking a mile

to the grounds from any car lines, which in the most beautiful day is not a very pleasant thing for many of our people and I find we are building or expect to build on those lots putting our own dear Temple three towns beyond Chicago, and how can we attend service there every day, it is an utter impossibility for many of our people, as we are not millionaires, and our dear little band seems to grow smaller every day and I have heard several say:— “I have been there once but I never can go away out there to worship.” Dear brothers can’t we trade those lots off for lots in CHICAGO? Regarding the matter of being on the lake, those lots are not on the lake. We are very anxious to co-operate and help all we can in the matter of erecting the Mashraek-el-Azkar, and desire nothing so much as the promotion of the Cause of Abha.²⁷

The House received an even more pointed expression of opinion from Mattie Watson, the author of “The First Baháí Temple Song,” in response to one of their appeals. “I have given \$6.00 toward the Temple, and \$5.00 toward the rent of hall . . . I do not now enclose a dollar, as I otherwise should if I was pleased with the location of the Mashrek-el-azkar.”²⁸

Chase commented on the site: “it does seem to me rather lacking in wisdom to place the Temple away out in the country, where it not only requires from one and a half hours to two hours with the very best transportation to reach it, to say nothing of a long walk at the further end, rather [than] within at least ‘reaching’ distance of the city center.”²⁹

As well as using the site for gatherings, a more overtly symbolic attempt to establish the unpurchased land as the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár location was made when True and some others made a circle of nine stones on the ground and said prayers while anointing the stones with perfume and olive oil. As with most of her actions in regard to the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, True wrote of this occasion to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. When she received his response, she used it to reinforce her claim as to the site’s “consecration.”

In August 1908, the House distributed a printed leaflet

which included a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a long letter from Assad'Ullah. In the letter, Assad'Ullah commented, "Now is the time for expending energy and power in the erection of the edifice, be it a mere stone, laid in the name of the Bahai Mashrak-el-Azkar. For the glory and honor of the first stone is equivalent to all the stones and implements which will later be used there." However, that the implications of this statement were largely metaphoric can be seen from the sentences that followed: "If the first stone is not firmly laid upon a solid foundation, no stone will stand upon another. Reflect a little upon the name Peter and the building of the Christian Church, so that the subject becomes fully elucidated." Certainly Assad'Ullah was encouraging the Bahá'ís to proceed with building, but his imagery seems to have inspired a very literal enactment.

True's seamstress, Nettie Tobin, obtained an unwanted stone from a Chicago construction site and took it home. Shortly thereafter, she enlisted the aid of an older Persian Bahá'í to assist her to take the stone to the site where they were to meet True and Cecilia Harrison. After a difficult journey by public transport to the end of the commuter train line, they tried to drag the stone to the site. As they were so long in coming, True and Harrison walked toward the station and met them. They were unable to bring the stone to the site, and it was left overnight. The next day, Tobin returned and, with the aid of a newsboy, managed to get the stone to the site. This stone became a focal point for prayer gatherings and was later used as the dedication stone when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the site. It has been generally known as the "cornerstone," although it has never served any structural function. The extraordinary effort that Tobin put into this gesture no doubt increased its symbolic effect, which was probably the intent, as True could easily have provided some rational means of transport to get the stone to Wilmette.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1908, True was also making use of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to support her position. She maintained that they indubitably confirmed the choice of site. The House, which took a broader range of Tablets into consideration, felt that it was more accurate to consider that 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not object to the site but would be happy either if more land were bought there or if a larger plot than the two lots in Wilmette were purchased elsewhere. They felt that the important thing was to obtain a site and build on it in a practical and timely fashion, and that this was what 'Abdu'l-Bahá urged rather than an unswerving attachment to a particular piece of land. True found this view unacceptable.

The situation was exacerbated when Annie Boylan of New York returned from pilgrimage in the autumn of 1908. She claimed that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had told her that the site must not be changed and that he had said that he had written to that effect. This report was widely circulated and True distributed copies of it. The problem for the House was that the report did not square with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's written statements. They suggested that perhaps Boylan or her interpreter had been influenced by their own wishes in the construction they had placed on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words. They were also well aware that Boylan was a leader of the group opposing the New York Board of Counsel (which would succeed in ousting the Board and electing their own slate in 1910) and was not well disposed toward the Chicago House either.

On 17 November 1908, there was a joint meeting of the House and the Ways and Means Committee of the Chicago Bahá'í community to discuss the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. According to Chase, after this meeting True:

... wrote a letter to me accusing the members of the House of Spirituality of "denying Abdul-Baha," etc. . . .

The cause of such action was simply that when a joint meeting of the House and the ladies of the local "Ways and Means Committee" was held, and Mrs. True was speaking of the consecration of the land, the members all stated calmly and quietly that as yet they were not aware of such a consecration, nor was it certain that that location would be the one to be finally used. Furthermore it was clearly stated that there was no shadow of antagonism to that location, no feeling either for or against, but there was a question of doubt as to whether it was as good a location, as fitting and appropriate as some other that might yet be found. That was all, and at the time it seemed to create no feeling but kindness. Afterward, however, the letter named was sent to me. It was referred to the House, and the reply was made brief and simple, to the effect that (without naming it) if such a condition as was mentioned in her letter existed, the H. of S. prayed that it might soon cease, and that all should work together for the carrying out of Abdul-Baha's desires. That ended the matter as far as any of the members know.³⁰

The matter was certainly not closed for True. In late December 1908, she sent the House copies of Tablets and correspondence (including a copy of a letter to her from Boylan detailing the conversation with 'Abdu'l-Bahá; this version differs in wording from another version circulating at the same time) and her covering letter included this pointed comment:

God grant that every Bahai surrender his will, his reason, his judgment, to the One Supreme Will of Baha'Ullah which today is made flesh & dwelling among us in the person of Abdul Baha. Through Tablets Abdul Baha has given us perfect instructions how to organize this Great Temple Work and where to build the Mashrak el Azkar. May we become as the "little Children" Jesus taught & without a trace of desire go to the Holy Tablets for our guidance and obey them.³¹

For True and her supporters, the site was chosen; for the House, a site was needed and it might be the site in Wilmette

or it might not; it was still an open question. The House felt the decision was up to the new national organization that was being developed to help erect the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. In the case of the national organization also, the True party was to win—as we shall see—and the site was to be confirmed. Its ultimate legitimation had to wait a few years though, until lapse of memory allowed it to be identified with the November 1907 meeting, True's "first convention."

As the Wilmette site was only two blocks north of the site recommended by the meeting at True's home in 1907, it might seem that some of those who attended that meeting could have been confused as to whether they saw the Wilmette site then or not. Actually, the Wilmette site stands in a completely different relationship to Sheridan Road, the lake, and the Sanitary District Canal than the 1907 site, and it would be hard to confuse the sites without the passage of a number of years and an expectation that the Wilmette site was the one seen in 1907. Obviously, there is no way True could have believed the two sites to be the same when she first asserted that the Wilmette site had been chosen in 1907, although she may have come to believe her own story in later years.

At the national convention in New York in 1913, Albert Hall chaired an afternoon meeting. In his remarks he spoke of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and described the land as being picked by "a few simple hearted good women of large faith."³² At least from the time of True's 1915 written account of the beginnings of the project, these few women had lost precedence to the 26 November 1907, gathering. As the Faith became more institutionalized, for the site to have been recommended by a supposed "Mashriqu'l-Adhkár convention" rather than a few individuals greatly enhanced its legitimacy, something that True seems to have felt it needed despite her strenuous efforts at consecration.

THE BAHAI TEMPLE UNITY

In the last few months of 1906, the news that there was a plan to build a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Chicago reached various Bahá'í communities throughout the country. It would seem that this was the first time most had heard of it. Even a community in as close contact with Chicago as Kenosha was not aware of the details of what had happened previously, and the Kenosha Board wrote to the Chicago House asking for details in December 1906. In particular, they wished to know exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had asked to be done. The House replied:

In your letter you ask questions, regarding the proposed building of a *Mashrek-el-Azkar* (Bahai Temple) in America. . . .

We, the members of the House of Spirituality, as well as others, have received Tablets bearing upon this subject, a printed copy of a few of them is herewith enclosed. It will become evident, through a perusal of enclosed Tablets, that no particular city or place has been designated, in which this Temple is to be erected.

That no person, or persons in particular have been appointed to take charge of the preparatory work, such as gathering of funds, etc. Our Master has simply invoked the blessing and confirmations of the True One (God) to descend upon any and all who will arise for this service. Permit me to say, however, in this connection, that our Master (Abdul-Baha), as well as the Father (Baha'u'llah), have ordained it to be the function of the Counsel Boards in the various centers to attend to and negotiate the business affairs of their respective localities and that the General Assemblies [communities] should conduct themselves in harmony with the deliberations of their chosen representatives. There is, no doubt, great wisdom in this.

From the information we have on hand there is nothing which would lead us to believe that this work has been specialized to any particular locality, and the conditions existing at present seem to strengthen us in the conviction that it is a general work for the good of the whole body of American believers. And we

might add, in this connection, that there is a movement on foot to give impetus to this very idea.

There is no time limit as regards the completion of this work, but there appears to be a great deal of virtue and strength in the suggestion that it be done while the Master is still with us.

Our Beloved Master does not designate any particular method of procedure; this He has no doubt left entirely to our good judgment and consideration.

As regards what has been done in Chicago, in relation to this work, permit me to say that as far as we know about Fifteen Hundred Dollars (1500.00) has been subscribed to the Temple Fund, which I feel reasonably sure will be forthcoming at the opportune moment.³³

It would seem that the "impetus" toward making the Mashriq'l-Adhkár project "a general work" expressed itself at this time in letting other communities know of the project's existence. In part, this was accomplished through the circulation by True of the petition to be sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The sheets for signatures were accompanied by a printed leaflet of three Tablets: the first 1903 Tablet to the House approving the idea of the project; a second Tablet from 1903 in which building the Mashriq'l-Adhkár is described as "the greatest affair and the most important matter today"; and a recently received Tablet to True which again stressed the importance of the project. Both True and the House also corresponded with communities and individuals around the country about the project.

As the House had decided in December 1906 to submit various questions concerning the project to 'Abdu'l-Bahá through Agnew when he went on pilgrimage, they probably did not wish to take further steps until these questions were answered. Indeed, they expressed to the Kenosha Board their expectation of having "more light upon the subject as soon as . . . Agnew returns," which would then bring them "into a

clear understanding of the situation.” After the return of Agnew’s party, the House began to take definite steps to organize the project.

In June 1907, the House consulted with William Young (a Chicago Bahá’í who was professionally involved with real estate) as to the legal requirements to be met for the community to be able to purchase land and build. As a result, after the regular Sunday evening community meeting on 30 June there was a business meeting “for the express purpose of bringing this matter before the Assembly.” First, the meeting had to “decide upon an incorporate name, whereby the Assembly shall be known.” It was proposed and accepted “that the corporate name of this Assembly shall be the ‘Bahai Assembly.’” Second, it was proposed that the “members of the House of Spirituality, be and are hereby elected and declared trustees of the ‘Bahai Assembly’ and shall have the care, custody and control of the real and personal property of the ‘Bahai Assembly,’ subject to the direction of the ‘Bahai Assembly,’ and may, when directed by the ‘Bahai Assembly,’ erect houses or buildings, and improve and repair and alter the same, and may when so directed, mortgage, incumber, sell and convey, any real or personal estate of the ‘Bahai Assembly’ and enter into all lawful contracts in the name of and in behalf of the ‘Bahai Assembly.’” This motion was also passed and the meeting adjourned.

The phrase “subject to the direction of the ‘Bahai Assembly’” in the resolution declaring the House members trustees for the community points up the difference between the general conception of the House’s status and that now held by Spiritual Assemblies. The early administrative bodies of the Bahá’í Faith in North America were generally viewed as planning and executive bodies, whose actions were subject to the direction and approval of their constituency, rather than as authoritative institutions who arrived at and implemented de-

cisions on their own best judgment. The need to seek approval from the general community for any steps it took in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project contributed to preventing the House from carrying out its plans, as this laid the plans and actions of the House open to being blocked by pressure brought from within the community. We have seen how this operated in relation to the site.

After filing an affidavit of the 30 June proceedings in the county recorder's office, the House felt that they had a legal basis upon which to act. We have seen how the House then initiated a search for a suitable site and what happened when they found one. After the matter of a site came to an effective halt in late 1907, the House concentrated on establishing a broader organizational base to support the project.

At their meetings on 7 and 14 December 1907, the House "considered, approved, ordered printed and circulated as soon as possible" a circular letter on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár which was to be sent "throughout America." The circular was dated 19 December 1907, and after briefly outlining the project from 1903, it noted the current state of affairs:

. . . in the spring of 1907, upon the return of pilgrims from Acca, we were informed that the building of the Mashrak-el-Azcar was the most important matter in America today.

This word has gone forth and reports are being received from different parts that many Assemblies are each establishing a local fund to assist in erecting this Monument to the Cause in this Western World.

It is the purpose of this communication therefore, to announce to the Friends everywhere that we are ready to serve the Cause of God in this most important matter; having already made investigation, and found that it is possible to procure a suitable site as soon as we are ready to make the purchase. In pursuance of this purpose the present members of the House of Spirituality have been duly made Trustees for the holding of any properties and

buildings under their jurisdiction, according to the legal steps necessary in the State of Illinois.

Kindly favor us with an acknowledgment of this communication at the earliest possible moment, that we may be assured of its safe arrival.

It is significant that the House made no mention of the 27 November meeting or that meeting's recommendation of a specific site. The House was also following the policy suggested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá of simply informing other communities of what was happening and leaving it to them to offer assistance. With the circular was sent a printed copy of a prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the Chicago community, which included the hope that they would arise "to build the Mashrak-el-Azcar."

In November 1907, Charles Mason Remey had written from Washington, D.C., that the "Working Committee" of the Bahá'ís of that city supported the House in its endeavors for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. (Washington had a history of resistance to institutional development in the Faith. The Working Committee of this date was the most that had been tolerated.) On 28 December, Remey met with the House to discuss how both he and the Washington Bahá'ís (in effect, the few direct supporters of the Working Committee) might best cooperate with the Chicago House and community in the project. Fareed was also present as a guest at this meeting, and he spoke of the need for unified action by all the communities. There was also a Bahá'í from Kenosha present. As a result of the meeting, steps were to be taken to establish a national organizational base for the project, and Washington was to act as an intermediary through which to present the plan:

After due consideration, it was decided that effort be made toward establishing an association of oneness among the different assemblies throughout this country and that committees be ap-

pointed in various cities to co-operate with the House of Spirituality in Chicago, in order that the Temple project be brought to a successful termination.

The aforesaid met with the approval of all present and it was agreed that this matter be presented to other assemblies through Mr. Remy and the friends in Washington.

Throughout January 1908, the House received replies to their December circular from various communities which expressed willingness to cooperate. They also corresponded with Remy about the plan of national organization to be introduced by Washington. In late February and late March, circular letters were sent out from Washington addressed to "the Bahais of America." These letters had been approved by the House.

The first letter from Washington gave the usual brief summary of the project from 1903 and then alluded to the House's 19 December 1908, letter and the response to it. It continued on the need for united effort to erect the building and the importance of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* as an institution of the Faith. In the final paragraph it promised a further communication "which, in addition to the abstract aspect of this work of erecting a Temple in America, will touch also upon a plan whereby all may unite in actual tangible service and be able to manifest to all the world their purpose and desire to serve in this most important of works."

The second Washington letter, sent in late March, set out the scheme planned by agreement with the House in detail:

After consultation with those friends in Chicago, the House of Spirituality of Bahais, through whose efforts this Temple Movement was inaugurated, we propose the following plan by which all interested will be enabled to unite and serve together in the erection of this the first *Mashrak-El-Azcar* (Temple) in the Western World.

It is suggested:

1. That the Bahais in this country unite in forming "The Bahai Temple Association of America", the object of which will be to unite the Believers in this great work, to receive voluntary offerings and therewith purchase suitable land, and to erect thereon the Temple.

2. That The Bahai Temple Association of America have no individual membership. That it be composed of local branches throughout the country.

3. That in every city or town where there are three or more interested souls, that they form one branch. . . . That all of these branch associations keep in touch with the general association, each through the working of a committee which shall be chosen by the friends in that place . . .

4. That the Chicago House of Spirituality of Bahais be the legal trustee of the Bahai Temple Association of America for the transaction of all legal business in connection with the receiving and holding of funds (offerings) and the dispensing of the same for lands upon which to build The Temple, for the building of The Temple itself together with any incidental expenditures in connection with the said service of building a Mashrak-El-Azcar in America.

5. That for the present until it seems wise to make a change, The Washington Branch . . . serve the General Association by sending out and receiving communications. . . .

The Washington Friends therefore urge that in each place where there are three or more Bahais banded together, they unite in this work as soon as possible, forming themselves into a Branch Association and placing themselves in communication with the Washington Assembly . . .

The object of organizing the work as above laid out is to distribute equally among the Friends the opportunity to serve in this great work of Unity which will be to the foundation of the Cause in America as cement will be to the foundation of the material Temple . . .

Despite resistance in a few communities (such as Washington) to local organization, the subject of national organization

was in the air in the Bahá'í community in 1907–1908. In June 1907, Louise Codwise of Washington, D.C., sent out a printed circular proposing a national system of nine member “links” in an “endless chain.” In each town one of these circles of nine members was to act as the “center for all the links” in that town; in each state there was to be a state center; and the “Central Circle of the District of Columbia” was to act as the national center and the channel for communication with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

In July, the New York Board brought this scheme to the attention of the Chicago House. Howard MacNutt was unofficially in touch with Codwise on the Board’s behalf, and he sent a copy of a letter that he wrote to her to the House. MacNutt reminded her that Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had instituted a plan whereby “the various Bahai communities throughout the world are at present under the advice and guidance of an appointed Body known as the Board of Counsel or House of Spirituality, regularly elected, organized and operative.” He could not see how Codwise’s plan would “harmonize” with this, but remarked that if the working out of her scheme was to be “Bahai in its character,” it must do so.³⁴ MacNutt noted in his covering letter to the House that Codwise had informed him that her plan had generated “considerable enthusiasm.”³⁵ It does not seem to have really had much effect, but it may have helped prepare the ground for the Bahai Temple Association plan proposed a few months later.

In April 1908, the House was informed of a more comprehensive plan of national organization by Edward Getsinger. Getsinger had developed an elaborate proposed system of national Bahá'í administration. Like Codwise’s, his scheme had local, state, and national levels with a Board at each level. He also suggested that national administration be concentrated in Washington, D.C., with the members of the “National Executive Board” resident there and receiving maintenance from the National Treasury. Publishing was also to be centered in

Washington, and two or three “Persian translators” were to reside there in the Board’s employ.³⁶

The Bahai Temple Association plan being circulated by Washington seems to have met with a ready response. By May 1908, there were local Branches in numerous communities including Morgan Park, Illinois; Fruitport, Michigan; Ithaca, Johnstown, and New York, New York; Cincinnati and Sandusky, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Clarkston, Seattle, and Spokane, Washington; Kenosha and Racine, Wisconsin; Washington, D.C.; and Montreal, Canada. The first aim of each of these Branches was to begin to collect a local Temple Fund to be held until required in Chicago. For its part, the House as a body and its members as individuals corresponded regularly with communities throughout the country to keep them in touch with the project. The Washington committee did so, too.

It is necessary at this point to go back to late 1906 to fill in the background to True’s position in May 1908. We have seen that in December 1906 a new Temple Fund was established in True’s keeping on the basis of the \$103 returned by the Publishing Society. The exact status of this fund is unclear. It seems that it was begun under the auspices of the Woman’s Assembly, to some extent at least. However, it soon became a general “Assembly” Temple Fund maintained individually by True, separate from the funds held by the House.

At their meeting on 8 June 1907, the House decided to ask True to “act in the capacity of Treasurer for Temple Fund . . . for the entire Assembly,” which seems to have been a recognition of the actual state of affairs. A few weeks after the meeting on 30 June 1907, at which the “Bahai Assembly” was organized, with the House appointed to act as trustees in the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* project, True wrote that she was ready to “turn over to the Official treasurer the sums held by

me for the Temple Fund” now that the members of the House “have been duly appointed Trustees for the Assembly.”³⁷ The House accepted her offer and asked her to act as Corresponding Secretary for the Temple Fund, on the understanding that “in future all moneys collected for the Cause be forwarded” to their treasurer.³⁸ The House later explained to the New York Board that they had asked True to serve in this capacity, “In order that there might be the utmost effort for harmony” and to endeavor “to prevent any foolish or unwise statements being sent broadcast” by having some oversight of her activities.³⁹

Of course, by May 1908, two lots of True’s chosen site had been purchased and she was endeavoring to have the entire site confirmed. Apparently, as well as writing to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the site, she had included some remarks about organization in a letter written probably around the middle of May 1908. It would seem likely from his reply that she had described the meeting she had organized on 26 November 1907, and suggested another similar meeting to make arrangements for building the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár*. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá approved of the idea of a national meeting, suggesting that each community send a delegate to “establish a new meeting for the provision of the needs of the Temple.” He stated that in this “new meeting . . . ladies also are to be members.” However, he also explicitly stated that True should consult with the House about the matter, and that it was necessary for any plans to be carried out in a spirit of harmony. After receiving this tablet, True wrote to the House about it, after first commenting on the site issue:

Since reading Our Lord’s last Tablet in which He speaks of the Map of the Temple Site & confirms it, I have been puzzling my brain as to our future mode of procedure. This morning’s mail brought the answer direct from God, through the Pen of Abdul

Baha “The King of the Day of the Covenant” as Baha’o’llah calls Him. Evidently the first step necessary is to call a gathering of the representatives of all the Assemblies and form a permanent Building Association to take the place of the Trustees appointed for temporary purposes.⁴⁰

In her remarks, True seems to discount the House’s steps toward national organization and to assume that their being appointed trustees was merely temporary, which was hardly the understanding of the House or the meeting that had appointed them.⁴¹ The House, however, took ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statements as confirming that what they had been doing was the best course.

On 1 September 1908, the House decided to write to the “Bahai Temple Committees throughout the country” to ask what would be the most suitable time and place to hold a meeting to form a national association in conformity with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wishes. On 15 September, it was agreed to send out a circular calling for the election of delegates. The letter was approved on 22 September. It recounted the scheme proposed through Washington and quoted from their March circular. The letter then noted that there had been a general response to the plan and suggested “that it is approved by Abdul-Baha is shown by His statement in a recent Tablet to Mrs. Corinne True.” The entire Tablet was quoted and, on the basis of “these instructions,” each community that had not already done so was requested to appoint a Temple Committee, “each Temple Committee to be a member of The Bahai Temple Association of America—which shall consist of all these Temple Committees and be a Society of Unity for all.” As well as fund raising for the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár*, keeping in touch with developments in the Faith, and encouraging unity and harmony in their community, each committee should also prepare:

... for the sending of one or more representatives to a Temple Convention to be held in Chicago at the earliest practical time. This parliament of delegates, representing as far as possible all the American Believers, will constitute the "New meeting for the provisions of the needs of the Temple" as instructed by Abdul-Baha.

The House was not able to make plans to hold the national meeting as soon as they wished, as they received only a few replies to this circular. In November 1908, they wrote to the New York Board asking how they felt about having the meeting in "the week between Christmas and New Year" or, "If that is too soon or impractical, how would the five days preceding the Fast do?"; or, should it be put off until Ridván?⁴²

On 1 December, Chase wrote to Assad'Ullah:

... in strict accord with the expressed desire of Abdul-Baha, the House of Spirituality has made, and is making every possible endeavor to gather a Convention of delegates from all parts of the country as soon as it can be accomplished. In this work the House of Spirituality is working in thorough harmony with the Counsel Boards of New York and Kenosha and with the Committee in Washington. . . . It is the earnest desire that the coming Convention shall represent every body of believers in this country, because this Temple is not a Chicago Temple only, but an American Temple, and we hope that every believer in this land will feel his personal interest in it, and be a contributor according to his means for its building, and also have a voice in the matter of its establishment. Two letters have been sent, and a third will soon follow, from the House of Spirituality to every known body of friends, urging upon them to make preparation as rapidly as possible for the Convention, which will be held just as soon as the time can meet the opportunity of the greatest number.

It is understood that when this Convention of delegates shall meet, all the matters, of every kind, pertaining to the building of the Temple, the land, etc., will be decided by that Convention. It is hoped that the Convention will also appoint a permanent

Temple Committee from its members to represent the Temple Committee of each assembly (which are being formed), such permanent Committee to have the whole Temple matter in its hands. Until such time—that is until this Convention meets and assumes the care of matters—the House of Spirituality is doing all that it can to hasten that time of meeting, and to incite the fires of generosity and loving service in the hearts of the friends every where. This is done through the local Temple Committees in each locality.⁴³

That the process of developing a national organization was conceived in New York in the same terms as by the Chicago House may be seen from a comment by Harris, who was chairman of the New York Board at the time. He remarked in a letter to Chase that he took the instruction to True in the *Tablet* about a “new meeting” to consult with the House to mean that that body was “to take the initiative and direct affairs until the control shall pass from your hands into those of the Association.”⁴⁴

One factor that may have delayed the calling of the national meeting was disagreement (indeed, puzzlement) over how to select the delegates from each community and whether large communities could send more than one delegate. The *Tablet* to True had mentioned one representative from each community, but few seem to have taken this literally. Indeed, True herself was sending out cards asking communities to send several delegates. The problem was that when it came to actually voting and making decisions there was uncertainty as to how voting power should be distributed among the communities in an equitable fashion. This problem seems to have been worked out on an ad hoc basis in each community. In the event, some communities sent more than one delegate and some delegates represented more than one community.

Around the turn of the year, the House selected 20 February 1909, as the date for the national meeting. Soon after this

they heard that this would not be a good date for those planning to come from New York. So on 5 January 1909, they decided to begin the "Bahai Convention" on Saturday, 20 March. The House then sent a circular letter dated 12 January 1909, to approximately seventy different places giving the starting date for the convention and asking that names of delegates be sent within three weeks. This prior notification of names was also to serve as credentials for the delegates. The number of delegates was not specified, but left up to each community.

On 26 January 1909, the House met with the Chicago Temple Committee to begin planning for the convention. At this meeting it was agreed that 20 March would be a reception day for visiting delegates, with the Nineteen-Day Feast held in the evening at Mrs. Foster's home, and that the delegates would be invited to attend the community's weekly Sunday service on the following morning. At this meeting True was named as chairman of the Reception Committee. At another joint meeting on 23 February, it was decided to rent a hall for a business session of the convention on Monday, 22 March and a program committee was appointed consisting of Chase, Windust, and Louise Waite. However, at an open meeting at True's house on 17 March to complete plans for the convention, True recounted the details of the arranged program. In her outline she stated that "visiting delegates [would be] escorted to site of Mashrak-el-Azkar the afternoon of the 21st." In the official printed program for the meeting, it was also stated that on the Sunday afternoon "Visiting delegates escorted to Site of Mashrak-el-Azkar." Of course, for the House and those who had participated with them in developing the Temple Association, one of the issues to be decided by the delegates to the convention was the choice of a site.

The House had deferred the Chicago community's election of delegates until returns came in from other communities

and they had an idea of how many delegates were being sent from each. On Sunday March 7, the Chicago community elected three delegates: True, Susan Moody, and Arthur Agnew. It would appear from the total voting figures that about sixty people voted (possibly a quarter to a third of the Chicago Bahá'í community). True received 37 votes; Agnew received 21 votes; and Moody received 20. Chase also received 20 votes, but there is no explanation of why Moody was elected rather than him; there is no record of a tie-breaking vote.

The present discussion is concerned only with the business sessions of the convention on 22 and 23 March.⁴⁵ Thirty-nine delegates representing thirty-six communities attended the convention. The representation varied from four delegates representing New York to one delegate representing five communities (San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Pasadena, California, and Honolulu, Hawaii). That events did not go quite as planned by the House may be judged from a later comment written by Chase to Remey:

Abdul-Baha has repeatedly told Mrs. True that in the Temple matters, the House of Spirituality must be consulted. Yet . . . the House of Spirituality was *intentionally* and *steadily ignored* in the Temple Convention, and has been almost entirely so since, except in so far as you and Bro. Agnew have asked its attention. This was of purpose aforethought, not accidental. It was "arranged" by the women, and Mr. Mills and Mr. Hall were made the instruments of its carrying out, all unconsciously to themselves.⁴⁶

Remey replied:

Although I never mentioned it to you, I was a party to your own personal suffering those days of the convention, and I felt strongly upon the matter. In the convention meeting I remember arising and suggesting to the people that some cognizance should be taken of "The Bahai Temple Association of America" for

which the H. of S. was trustee, and of the work of the latter (H. of S.) but there was no response whatever, so I quietly sat down.⁴⁷

The business sessions of the convention are documented in a published record of its proceedings. This is a summary document and does not record the details of the discussions. There is no mention in this official record of the Bahai Temple Association plan that had actually brought the delegates together; nor in the numerous votes of thanks at the end of the meeting was there any mention of the House or its work toward national organization. These omissions can hardly be accidental.

On the morning of 22 March, the delegates were welcomed on behalf of the Chicago community and the House by Chase. They then heard True read the tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent to the convention, in which he restated the importance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project. Chase then read an early Tablet addressed to the "House of Justice" (as the House of Spirituality was first known), the main purport of which was the need for unity and harmony. After appointing a temporary chairman and secretary, the convention heard a report that the gathered delegates were duly accredited by their communities. The tablet to True approving the calling of a new meeting was read, and the report on credentials was accepted. The appointment of convention officers was then ratified and another prayer read. Then the delegates came to the first substantial business to be brought before them—the site.

It might have been thought that the first order of business should logically have been to finalize the details of the national organization and appoint a national committee for the Bahai Temple Association, as this was the primary purpose for which the meeting had been called by the House. However, the matter of the site was introduced before any discussion of the proposed national organization. It was first resolved

that “the City of Chicago, or its suburbs be selected as the place to build.” Then:

Upon request, Mr. Agnew, of the House of Spirituality of Chicago, informed the Convention regarding sites and other local features, and Mr. Hall, of Minneapolis, gave detailed information regarding the locality proposed for the Temple site and in which some ground has already been purchased.

Each delegation was called upon to express its opinion regarding the location of the Temple site in Chicago. The roll call brought forth the unanimous decision of all the delegates that the plot in which a piece of ground has been acquired should be chosen as the site for the Temple, as already approved by Abdul-Baha.

The wording in which the previous day’s visit to the Wilmette site had been described on the program for the convention, the use of the words “as already approved by Abdul-Baha” in the report, and the fact that the question of the site was brought up before the formal establishing of a national organization all suggest an active continuation of the campaign by True and her supporters in favor of her chosen site.

It would seem that the issue of the location of the site was really only of much consequence to those in Chicago who wished to see the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* built where it could be used and those who supported True as to her choice. For the rest of the country it did not really matter. The construction of the building was assuming symbolic status for them; whether it would or could be used was a lesser question. Thus in November 1908, Harlan Ober had informed Chase:

Outside of Chicago I find but little feeling that the site is too far from the city, on the contrary the newness of the land, the newness of the associations, the fact that out there, there is a new start has seemed to some to be of considerable significance more

advantageous than otherwise. There seems also to be the feeling that considerations regarding the adaptability of the Mashrak el Azcar, for the holding of meetings for teaching and for worship or for any peculiarly local purpose, are not wholly pertinent since the real object is more comprehensive than that. There are thousands who will never be able to visit the Mashrak el Azcar and wander around its courts, yet it is for them also.⁴⁸

This feeling worked to the advantage of the True party in getting their site confirmed, but it was disadvantageous as regards True's goal of actually seeing a building built. The same symbolic orientation that made practical considerations of accessibility and cost irrelevant in the choice of a site did not encourage the timely erection of a building. If it did not matter whether the building was useful, the really important thing about it was the idea. The idea was perfectly serviceable without a stone ever being laid.

After the confirmation of the site, the convention heard a financial report that \$3,525 was being held by the treasurer of the Chicago House for the Temple Fund. Various delegates also reported that a total of \$2,306 was being held in local community funds.

On the afternoon of 22 March, the delegates turned to the matter of "permanent organization to effect the objects of this Convention." On motion by Hall, it was resolved "that this organization to be formed of all of the Assemblies represented or hereafter associating with us, shall have full power and authority in Temple matters and to provide ways and means therefore; that final authority therein shall rest with the members of the Bahai several Assemblies and that the majority thereof, through their representatives, control." Again, matters seem to be somewhat backwards, as the convention was voting to give total control of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* project to a body whose nature was still undetermined.

A committee was appointed "to propose a plan for an organization in accord with the preceding motions." This committee's report was to be elaborated on the following day in the new organizational constitution, but here we may note that it nominated "delegates to represent the several Assemblies, subject to the confirmation or election of a substitute by each Assembly." The committee named thirty individuals, and these were confirmed by the convention as representatives of the communities for which they were named (in which they did not necessarily live) subject to subsequent confirmation or substitution by the named communities. For present purposes, however, these thirty were to form the basis of the national organization. A committee was then appointed to draft a constitution in accord with the organization committee's report.

The sessions on 23 March were held in True's home. In the morning, after prayers and tablets, the convention heard the proposed constitution of the national organization, in which it was called the "Bahai Temple Unity." By an ironic slip, the constitution as presented and approved stated that the object of the organization was to acquire a site and erect a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* "at Chicago, Ill., in accordance with the declared wish of Abdul-Baha"; there was no reference to "or its suburbs." The constitution stated that "the powers of this Unity shall abide in the several Bahai Assemblies" and should be expressed through one representative chosen by each Assembly, with the exception of Chicago, New York (Borough of Manhattan), and Washington, D.C., which should each select two representatives. The "affairs of this Unity" were to be managed by an Executive Board of nine members elected annually in convention or by mail and the Board was to have the authority to incorporate the Unity at its discretion.

The constitution was accepted, and the delegates from

Chicago, New York, and Washington were requested to name an additional representative from each of their cities. It was resolved to ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá "to be the Honored Head" of the Bahai Temple Unity (he declined), and that the minutes of the convention should be edited and corrected and a copy submitted to him with that request. On a motion by Hall, the Board was authorized to complete the purchase of the Wilmette site and to acquire "the adjacent lots commanding the lake front, as rapidly as means therefor become available." Again this seems somewhat beforehand, as the Board was yet to be selected. The convention adjourned to reconvene as the Bahai Temple Unity and then appointed a committee to recommend nine members to form the Executive Board. >

The Bahai Temple Unity reconvened in the afternoon and approved the nine members suggested for the Board. The meeting then adjourned as the Bahai Temple Unity and reconvened as the Bahai Temple Convention again. The reconvened convention then approved the action of the Bahai Temple Unity in approving the committee's selection of a Board. Pledges were made of financial support for the Temple Fund, and the business of the convention concluded with a series of votes of thanks. Despite the rather baroque proceedings of this convention, it had brought into being a national organization that was now going to have to take responsibility for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project.

In view of Chase's later comment on the convention quoted above, it is worthwhile to consider the roles of Hall and Mills during the convention. Apparently, previous to the convention, Hall had taken an option on additional lots of the Wilmette site for \$500. After this site was confirmed, he was offered a vote of thanks "for his great kindness" by the convention. Hall, who as a lawyer was familiar with procedural matters, offered and had accepted seven motions and two

suggestions during the convention. No other delegate is recorded as offering more than a total of three. (In a number of cases, the name of the person making the motion is not recorded, so either of these figures may be an understatement.) Of the six temporary committees appointed during the convention, Hall served on three. When he was not appointed to the largest committee selected (the one to devise a plan of "permanent organization" which had ten members), that committee asked that he act as an adviser. Hall was one of the three-member committee which drew up the Bahai Temple Unity constitution. Mills (another lawyer) was also on this committee, and the third member was Mrs. Hahn from New York. Mills also served on the committee to recommend a Board, as did True. True was on three more of the six committees. There was no committee that did not have at least one of these three individuals on it. Three of the committees had two of them, four if we count the committee for which Hall was an adviser. Hall, Mills, and True were selected for the Board.

Mills was a New York delegate to the convention, but he was not named as a representative to the Bahai Temple Unity by the "permanent organization" committee. After the acceptance of the constitution, when the Chicago, New York, and Washington delegations were asked to name a second representative, New York selected Roy Wilhelm, who was not present. After the reconvening of the meeting as the Bahai Temple Unity, Mills was appointed proxy to act in Wilhelm's place on a motion by True. It was immediately after this that he was appointed to the committee to recommend the members of the Board.

It is not clear from the constitution whether Board members were to be selected only from community representatives, but it would seem from the fact that the "Convention"

adjourned to reconvene as the “Bahai Temple Unity” to consider the matter of the Board that certainly only Bahai Temple Unity representatives were to vote for the Board. Indeed, immediately after voting in the Board the Bahai Temple Unity adjourned and reconvened as the Bahai Temple Convention again. The only action specifically taken by the Bahai Temple Unity as such (apart from accepting Mills as a proxy) was to appoint the committee to recommend a Board and to accept their recommended list. Despite the supposed intent to create a national association to take control of the project, it was the general convention that passed all other resolutions and left a body of instructions for the Board. The backwards nature of the proceedings had dealt with almost all business before the national organization was in place. The national organization did not confirm any of the previous resolutions of the general convention; on the contrary, the convention confirmed the Bahai Temple Unity’s choice of a Board. The procedural chaos of this first national convention was to be characteristic of those in future years.

True’s motion to substitute Mills for the unavailable Wilhelm was made just after the reconvening as the Bahai Temple Unity. It seems evident that if he had not been elected as a proxy at this stage, he would not have been eligible for the committee to recommend a Board, to assist in electing a Board, and possibly to be elected to the Board, as he would have been merely a convention delegate and not a member of the Unity.⁴⁹

Obviously, the New York delegation was aware of Wilhelm’s absence and Mills’ presence when they made their choice of a second representative. That the substitution of Mills as proxy was made after the reconvening of the meeting as the Bahai Temple Unity and confirmed by the Unity representatives (which only included one other of the New York delegation),

rather than the New York delegation being asked to select a proxy before the status of the gathering was changed, is suggestive.

At their meeting on 28 March 1909, the House authorized their treasurer to “turn over all Temple Fund in his possession to newly appointed Treasurer of Bahai Temple Unity.” By 6 April, the contract was closed for the rest of the Wilmette site.

After the close of the convention on 23 March, the Board had met for the first time. The composition of the Board was rather mixed, ranging from True to the House’s ally in the Bahai Temple Association plan, Remy. At that first Board meeting Remy was “requested to confer with architects and have them submit designs and plans for the Temple.” Remy and Hall were then appointed as “a standing Building Committee” and directed to do basically the same.⁵⁰

In late spring, Hall and Remy issued a circular letter to “all architects, designers, draughtsmen and engineers who desire to contribute designs for the Bahai Temple (Mashrak-el-Azcar) to be built in Chicago.” The circular gave some specifications of the site and the expectations for the building. These expectations did not include that the building would be reasonably modest in scale and able to be built soon with fairly limited resources. It was specifically stated that the hope of the Bahai Temple Unity was to begin construction soon, but that they only expected to complete “the foundation and basement story or crypt, which latter will serve as a place of worship until the main part of the building be completed.” Later it was stated that in formulating designs “it should be borne in mind that this Temple is an edifice for future as well as for present needs, and that it should be monumental in design and in construction.” It was requested that design ideas be submitted by 10 July 1909, and stated that

“the object of this matter here presented is to have an offering of as many ideas and designs as possible, from the sum total of which a design for the actual building of The Temple will be forthcoming.”

Both the time allowed and the description of the object of the circular show the call for designs to have been a less than serious search for a qualified architect. In fact, before the establishment of the Bahai Temple Unity, a number of Bahá'í architects (and one non-Bahá'í) had already done several designs, and a number of them had champions pressing for their selection. When the Board viewed designs at their meetings in August and October 1909, virtually all of them had been done earlier, before the circular was issued, and there had been no further interest shown by non-Bahá'ís. These designs were mostly impractical in scale and cost.

True became Financial Secretary for the Board, and with her encouragement fund raising to pay for the land was about the only practical result that distinguished the first years of the Bahai Temple Unity. The extra land on the lakeshore that the 1909 convention had directed the Board to look into was contracted for during 1911–1912 at a further cost of \$17,000. By early 1914, the land had all been paid for at a cost of \$51,500, not including interest payments (in 1909–1910 alone these amounted to \$1,425). The total received by the Temple Fund between 1907 and April 1915 was over \$72,000, an amount that would have bought and built on the site proposed by the House in 1907. In October 1908, Remey estimated for the House that a large building on the scale of the one in 'Ish-qábád would cost at least \$150,000. A more modest structure would have cost proportionately less. A reasonably impressive religious structure could have been built at that time for \$35,000 to \$45,000.

During the rest of 1909, the House continued to discuss the

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project. They arranged for a Riḍván celebration to be held in a large tent on the site on 2 May in association with the Woman's Assembly, and they consulted with the Women's Temple Committee about stimulating interest in the project in Chicago. However, the House increasingly felt that now that the Bahai Temple Unity had been formed, some Bahá'ís considered them to be redundant, and they declined to push themselves forward into what were now seen as Temple Unity Board affairs unless they were invited by the Board. Remey, in particular, and Agnew felt that the Board should work closely with the House, as the new body needed the House's practical experience to assist them. Their feeling was not shared by the rest of the Board.

By the end of 1909, the House was in serious difficulties. The members were generally discouraged and felt that their efforts were unwanted, and several of them had serious financial and business problems. By early 1910, Chase had been transferred by his employers to California. On 1 March 1910, the last meeting with recorded minutes of the Chicago House was held, and a considerable hiatus in its functioning ensued.

The Board had done little at its meetings in 1909 other than admire plans of enormous and impractical buildings and was to do even less in the following years. Around the middle of the second decade of the century, the Board would be reinvigorated by a number of East Coast Bahá'ís, and the focus of national organization would shift from Chicago to Boston and New York until the late 1930s. Apart from True's fund raising to pay for the land in Wilmette and the holding of its annual conventions, the early Bahai Temple Unity did not do much. It certainly did not speed the erection of any building.

There can be no doubt that True was devoted to the idea of having a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár built. It is equally the case that she was the prime mover in both of the factors that undermined the plans of the Chicago House to build one: the

insistence on a North Shore site, as opposed to the one recommended by the House, and the substitution of the Bahai Temple Unity for the proposed Bahai Temple Association. Some of True's contemporaries felt that her actions were inspired by the gender conflict that existed within the Chicago and New York Bahá'í communities. It is true that there is considerable evidence that True resented the exclusion of women from membership on the Chicago House and that in pressing for her ideas about the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project she allied herself with leaders of the opposition to the all-men Board in New York. However, it is too simple an analysis to put her activities down to gender conflict alone.⁵¹

True's relationship with the Woman's Assembly of Teaching in Chicago (an institution that had its own uneven relationship with the House) was often as ambivalent as her relationship with the House. Indeed, she seems to have been at odds with most of the leading women in that organization at one time or another. During the period leading up to the founding of the Bahai Temple Unity, the "work of the Woman's Assembly as a body had become desultory, ineffective."⁵² In early May 1909, the Woman's Assembly reorganized with an elected board of nine members after "the mode of procedure of the Bahai Temple Unity." True was conspicuously absent from this board.

True was not an institutionally oriented person (indeed, in the mid-1920s she declined to accept election to institutions at Shoghi Effendi's suggestion) and does not seem to have been able to work well in institutional contexts. A Chicago House was elected again in 1912 and, on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions, women as well as men were considered eligible for election to the body. True was among those elected, but the new mixed body was not much more active than the lapsed all-men one and would not be for several years. When there was a revival of local institutionalization of the Faith in Chicago, it

was in the context of a battle royal between True and another prominent woman in the community with the function of local institutions being mainly to support one or the other.

Another factor that probably played some part in True's actions, but that was not so overtly alluded to by her contemporaries as that of gender, was class. True was of a higher social standing than any member of the House, although there were some women in the Chicago community of at least equal standing. One of the factors in creating gender tension in the Chicago Bahá'í community was that there were women from more elevated social levels than any of the men. The presence of such women among them gave the Chicago Bahá'í women as a group access to more resources than the men. In particular, women were able to be more generally active than men, meeting more frequently and dominating efforts to increase community membership.⁵³

It was a not uncommon pattern in the early North American Bahá'í community nationally for women of some social standing to resist any attempt by bodies within the Faith whose members were their social inferiors to exert control over them. Indeed, in one local community the most socially prominent woman refused to permit the development of any local institutional organization of the Faith for several years. The actions of True fit this pattern.

Just as in Chicago the women of highest social position were above any of the men, so in the national community there were no men in positions equivalent to those of the most socially elevated women. One of the factors in the early lack of results from the Bahai Temple Unity may have been that it did not have the active support of any of these prominent women. It had True, of course, but she was more outclassed by other women on the national level than she outclassed the Chicago men.

It is probably not accurate to see True as a feminist, as some of her contemporaries portrayed her. As a woman, her

activities were enmeshed in gender rhetoric, but this was mostly coincidental. She does not seem to have had a basic commitment to women's issues in the early Bahá'í community. She had an *idée fixe*—the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár—and if gender rhetoric and the channeling of gender tensions would assist her to that end, they were as useful as any other means. True's commitment to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was deeply emotional rather than rational. For some reason she felt it must be located on the North Shore and her efforts were largely directed to that end. That she had no real concept of how a building was to be built there or what it would be used for (for a while she adopted the idea that it would be 'Abdu'l-Bahá's tomb and that the remains of Bahá'u'lláh would be transported there, too!) was beside the point. She believed she knew what needed to be done, and bent her considerable energy toward it.⁵⁴

Although it was largely through True's actions that the House's 1907 plans came to nothing, it should also be noted that the lack of action by others was significant. The amount raised to pay for the Wilmette site would have paid for a building on the site the House wanted to buy. If True had been prepared to submit her fund-raising abilities to the House's direction in support of their plans, she might have seen a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in use forty years earlier than she did. However, if some others had been prepared to support the House's plans financially, True's objections would have been much less significant.

It is correct, as the House frequently pointed out, that most of the North American Bahá'í community earned their living by daily work and did not have much surplus resources; but there were some Bahá'ís who had considerable resources. There were even a few who could have built the whole project virtually out of their loose change. In 1907, some Bahá'ís were in a position to spend vast sums on mansions, travel, art collections, private theatricals, and charitable contributions;

none of them made any significant contribution to the Temple Fund. Even in 1912, three years after the founding of the Bahai Temple Unity and after five years of continuously publicizing the project within the Bahá'í community, they were not doing so. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in the United States in that year and (according to the translator on the occasion who later recorded the event) he was walking in New York with a wealthy Bahá'í one day when she asked him what she could do to please him. He simply gave her a generalized answer about being a good person. The translator (who was from Chicago) asked why he didn't ask her to build the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, and he replied that she should know that without being asked.

The enthusiasm for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* project was largely at the level of those for whom the "widow's mite" was all they could contribute. Just as Bahá'ís from this level of the community participated most thoroughly in the development of community devotional practice by enthusiastically adopting Bahá'í hymnody, so they wished there to be a Bahá'í building in which to worship. Not only in Chicago but throughout the country, Bahá'ís of ordinary circumstances eagerly looked forward to the construction of the building. Decades later, when the project was transformed from a place of worship to a largely symbolic structure, a number of wealthy Bahá'ís would add considerably to the "mites" contributed by the generality of the community to enable the building to be constructed. But in the first decade or so of this century, no one came forward to fill that role.

True helped to frustrate the plans of the Chicago House and the developing Bahai Temple Association, but the main reason the House's plans were not realized was lack of money. The equation had been simply stated by the House over and over again: no money, no building.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BOURGEOIS DESIGN

Since it was chosen in 1920 to be built on the Wilmette site, the design for a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár produced by Louis Bourgeois has served as a symbol of the Bahá'í Faith in North America, and to it has been attributed exceptional aesthetic and symbolic status. Indeed, the design has become so imbued with an apparently essential attachment to the Bahá'í Faith that neither it nor its execution have been analyzed in an intellectually or historically cogent manner to date. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the development of the Bourgeois design in order to shed some light on its actual "essence," and to consider how its choice, the reactions to that choice, and the use of the design as a basis for the constructed building relate to various strands in the ideological development of the North American Bahá'í community.

THE CHOICE OF THE DESIGN

When the delegates to the Bahai Temple Unity annual convention met in New York in 1920, the options for a design for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette had been effectively narrowed from the various submissions of 1909 and later to either

a design by Charles Mason Remy or the one by Bourgeois. The only other architect to speak on his design at the convention was William Sutherland Maxwell, and it seems likely that he was induced to increase the visibility of his candidature not long before the convention, as he stated that his drawings were only finished just before he caught his train from Montreal.¹ If there was an attempt to introduce a vote-splitting dark horse in Maxwell it failed, as his design received only one vote and the main trend of the convention discussion indicates a fairly general assumption of the choice being between a Remy design and the one by Bourgeois.

Despite there being much to be said for some of the 1909 collection of designs, and for Maxwell's new effort, this limitation of the perceived choice is not surprising, as both Remy and Bourgeois had been energetically publicizing their designs for some time. Remy had been touring an exhibition of his work, which drew reasonably good press notices, for several years, and had published two books of his designs.² Bourgeois had been exhibiting his design in his home since 1918, and had produced a circle of admirers. Another factor that probably helped to concentrate the choice in the convention itself, apart from which architects were there to speak and answer questions, was that the Bourgeois design and one of Remy's were represented by models, and these designs were therefore more visually present than the others.

Remy had chosen his Indian design to have modeled on the basis of two factors: (1) cost, in that the estimated building cost of this design seemed realizable by the community in a reasonable time; and (2) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's expressed stylistic preferences. Neither of these grounds helped this design's chances much in the convention. There was much support for the idea that possible cost should not be considered a relevant factor in choosing a design, as either the building of the Ma-shriqu'l-Adhkár would be the work of generations to come, or

God, or non-Bahá'í sympathizers with the presumed symbolic purpose of the building, would provide funds as necessary. There was also a reluctance to consider in full 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions regarding the building. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá had given the choice of a design to the convention, some felt that this overruled all preceding instructions from him and that the convention should follow its own inspiration. Remey had provided the delegates with an illustrated booklet on his Indian design which included a discussion of its adherence to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's stylistic preferences, but in the convention discussion such expressions were not included in those references to the *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that were read; and when Remey attempted to get them read, the Chairman ruled that this was unnecessary.³

Two other factors, beyond the previously established partisanship and the lack of certainty as to the criteria to be considered, that complicated the design choice were the conducting of the convention itself and the introduction of outside expert advice.

The convention was poorly chaired, on the whole: motions were made and seconded and not further acted upon; the chair sometimes summarized with utter inaccuracy information that had been given to the delegates; and discussions of factual points were left uncompleted before moving on. There was also some confusion over the voting. The 1920 convention marks a transitional point in the conduct of Bahai Temple Unity conventions in that previously one delegate could represent several areas and have a vote for each, but at subsequent conventions a delegate could represent only one area and have one vote. In 1920, there was multiple representation but considerable feeling against multiple voting in the design choice, and the convention decided to limit delegates to one vote even if they represented more than one area. There was also some confusion over substituting alternates for delegates

who left before the vote on the design. It is not necessary here to attempt to unravel this procedural tangle; indeed, the convention itself did not manage to do so.

After the initial vote on the designs, which gave 28 of the 49 votes cast to the Bourgeois model, Remy suggested that the convention pass a unanimous vote for that design; after some discussion as to how to do so, this was done. Considering Remy's preceding and subsequent attitudes, it may seem strange that he did this. As it is evident that his arguments carried little weight on the convention floor, he may have thought he stood a better chance by getting the whole matter back to the Board. It must be realized that up to the choice of the Bourgeois design the general assumption was that any design chosen would be the basis for the eventually constructed design, not a final design choice binding in all its details.

The outside architect brought in, over the objections of some who felt that a non-Bahá'í could not approach the issue of design choice in the right spirit, was H. Van Buren Magonigle. His opinions were definitely to the detriment of Remy's chances. He disliked Remy's model, but he did like aspects of another of Remy's designs: his Persian. As this was a larger and more expensive design, the attention paid to it helped to further blur the basic issue of financial practicability in the choice of a design. The influence of Magonigle's preference and its distracting from Remy's rationale in proposing his Indian model can be seen in the voting, as the Indian model received only 7 votes and the Persian design received 13 votes. Magonigle's comments on the Bourgeois design were mixed, as he found it to exhibit considerable imagination but felt that some aspects of it were not practically executable.

On the whole, Magonigle's remarks served to close in the focus of the choice, but at the same time to blur what was the Remy option. Indeed, Magonigle's participation points up Remy's basic miscalculation in how he exhibited. The pres-

ence of eight designs by him in the form of drawings, in addition to the main and subsidiary models of the Indian design, while it may have impressed by evidencing his long-term consideration of *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* design, occasioned considerable distraction from the design which he actually wished to propose for use.

The choice of the Bourgeois design in 1920, then, was made in an atmosphere of some confusion as to goals and procedures, both in regard to the making of the choice itself and in regard to implementing whatever was chosen. After the choice, however, it quickly became clear that Bourgeois had a different idea of what had happened than most Bahá'ís would have presumed possible before the choice. The general assumption had been that any design chosen would form a more or less specific basis from which a final design would be developed, and that the honor of providing this basis would be all the designer would expect. Bourgeois and his more ardent supporters expected that his design would be implemented exactly (barring certain changes of scale to fit the site) under his supervision, and that he would be paid a fee for the design and hired at the usual rate as architect. What is more, he indicated that he was prepared to sell the design elsewhere if his terms were not met. The construction of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette had thus unwittingly become established upon an entirely new basis.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN

Pemberton records that in the spring of 1901 in California Bourgeois had told him, "at some length that his mission in life was to build a large temple to be dedicated to Truth, which was to be surrounded by other buildings devoted to Art and Science and the welfare of humanity."⁴ The first fruit of this mission was a proposed design for the Peace Palace to be

built at the Hague submitted by Bourgeois and Paul Blumenstein in 1906. Bourgeois described this design as “the new art that will flourish in the home of the workers.”⁵ This design was published in *Architecture*,⁶ and may be characterized as a rather naive juxtaposition of elements of art nouveau and a symbolism that derives in part from late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Utopian “ideal” architecture and in part from turn-of-the-century occultism. (See p. 118.)

In 1909, Bourgeois submitted a design for a *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* to the Bahai Temple Unity which is obviously related to the Peace Palace design. Bourgeois states that he produced this design after being invited to submit a design, “about in April 1909.”⁷ It is possible that Bourgeois was one of those sent the circular calling for designs in 1909, but it seems likely that the design he did submit was made earlier. In 1920, Bourgeois stated that he made the design “some twelve years or more ago, I do not know now just how long,”⁸ and in February 1908 the Chicago House of Spirituality viewed a “beautiful set of plans” for the “Temple project” which were in the possession of Percy Woodcock.⁹ In the published list of those who submitted designs in 1909 there is no mention of Bourgeois by name, but there is a reference to “a beautiful and elaborate design under a nom de plume by an eminent architect of New York City.”¹⁰ As all the others who submitted designs are named in the list and so accounted for, this must refer to the Bourgeois submission. Also, photographs of Bourgeois’ 1909 submission which belonged to Helen Goodall have “Woodcock” written on the back. It seems possible, then, that Woodcock was representing Bourgeois and that the design was produced before early 1908. That Bourgeois may have been interested in designing a *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* in 1907 is suggested by a note of Roy Wilhelm’s stating that Bourgeois had given him the plan of the Peace Palace to show to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when Wilhelm visited him that year. Wilhelm

states that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's only comment on it was, "The Bahai Temple will have nine sides."¹¹ Thus, it seems possible that Bourgeois produced the design submitted in 1909 in the latter part of 1907 under the impetus of Wilhelm reporting the "nine sides" remark, the increased general interest in the project itself at that time, and as a salve to the previous rejection of the Peace Palace design.¹²

The design which Bourgeois submitted in 1920 can be dated with more certainty, it was begun in mid-1917 and completed by mid-1918. There exist two principal accounts by Bourgeois of the development of this design: (1) the transcript of the talk about his design that he gave at the Bahai Temple Unity Convention in 1920; and (2) an undated manuscript in his papers which on close examination would seem to have been written in the early 1920s.

In his talk at the 1920 convention Bourgeois described the creation of the design thus:

On this design that I have made you will see that I have not tried to follow the past. From the reading of the "Hidden Words" I found out that a New Art was to come with this Revelation, a new Science, and everything was to be renewed.

Therefore I have undertaken to avoid all the style of the past. In one sense still the teaching says that Baha'Ollah was here to unify all the religious thought of the past into one and the religious thoughts of the past have expressed themselves in the plastic by different style of architecture. All the creations of architecture really are shown in the temple. So if Baha'Ollah's purpose is to unify all the religious thought of the world, I thought that those religious thoughts that were represented by architectural creations ought to be unified and made composite like the past architecture: That is to say, the essence but not the detail—the details I thought would come after.

My first impression which was the symbolizing of the Hidden Words, most of it—at the same time I used the symbolism of all

the religious thoughts, the Swatiska [sic] cross, the seal of Solomon, the cross and the crescent, and I put that into the decorative motif and I used the form that gives the idea of the classic, the Romanesque type, the Moorish, the Gothic and the Renaissance, and blended that into one whole, and I tried to harmonize that, and it was a great problem, and I tried many times and for many years, but nothing comes to me. I could not find how to harmonize that very well, until I went to the Boston Convention some years ago, and I had a design there made some twelve years or more ago—I do not know now just how long—and Mr. Lunt called my attention to a symbolical building they had made there, and just before my departure he says, “I like the symbolism of this, but couldn’t you make that a little more Oriental?”

Well, I told him, I had only three months to make that study in, and I didn’t think that this was the thing anyhow, it was just suggestion of the symbolical form.

When I returned home the thought came very strongly to me that that was the time to start, and while I had struggled for eight years, the first floor came to me in about an hour, and I sat down as soon as I got in the house—returning from that trip—And I got that first floor, and as it was a new form, I realized it was impossible to make anyone understand that. Now, the shape of the building was a nine pointed star, made out of inverted circles upon circles.

Afterwards, I decided that the only way to express that was to make a model, and I started to draw the second floor, but I could not get anything; I could not get anything to harmonize with the first floor, it was very elaborate and very rich, and I did not know that it was going to come, and I made up my mind, maybe I have to carve that floor first, and finish that, and so I did spend about six months probably making the first floor, and then I started to see what I was going to get for the second floor, and immediately, in about an hour or so, I got the second floor; it came to me all by piecemeal like that. . . . I never got a floor above until the floor below was finished, and when I got to the dome that came the last, and I couldn’t get anything, but after I got that dome, then I didn’t know how it is going to work, which was very unusual.

The architect plans his things in the ensemble, but this thing came so strongly that I felt completely what came to me, and I decided I would take a year to work, maybe a year, or two, and then maybe I would know what the result would be, and I would put it together; I carved out one section at a time, and I would adopt that, and after I had gotten the different sections, I put them together to see what the results would be, and you can see the result now. . . .

But, so far as the size is concerned, I had no information from anybody that I could find, what the size of the Mashrekol-Azkar that you wanted to build would be, and when I questioned those that seemed to be at the head of it, they said, "Well, do anything you want." You know, that is very liberal. I couldn't do anything I wanted to do, but I did what I was dictated to do, and I did it that way.¹³ [This comment on a lack of information strongly suggests that the detailed architects' circular issued in 1909 was of little moment in occasioning Bourgeois' interest or fueling the development of his ideas.]

And in the manuscript account Bourgeois describes the process thus:

About in April 1909 I was invited by the Committee on Designs for the Mashrack-el-Azcar to submit a design giving me to August for the task, about 3 month's time. As three months were comparatively short for such an undertaking, I could but submit preliminary sketches [they were actually an elaborated set of presentation drawings], which I did, but they were not satisfactory to me. I could get only the general outline, the Inverted circle I had choose for the form of a 9 pointed star were my Ideal in symbol, as an open circle is a magnet but the feeling of the space for windows and doors were not satisfactory. From 1909 till 1917 I often try to sketch a more fitting architectural arrangement for those spaces but met with failure every time, nothing seems to fit . . . [second page of manuscript is missing] . . . among his designs that were brought to the Convention mine that was submitted in 1909 was brought there from Chicago I expect[,] to compare with

the finished designs of Bro Remey. I was no more satisfied with my design of a three months work than I was when I delivered them in 1909, but the Basic principle of the symbolism I could not find anything to alter. Only the details were not my Ideal. When the Convention was over, I was approached by Mr Lunt of Boston and was asked by him If I could not give a more oriental feeling to my design. I agreed that I could and told him that this was not my final design only a sketch. I left Boston with a new fire in my heart and the desire to do something worthy of the cause if I could but do it. . . . Then the experience started. I sat at my drawing table as soon as I return from Boston and start the first floor of the Temple, as soon as I started I felt a powerful influence with me full of thrilling sensations that give me courage and this wonderful space I had try for 8 years without success to design come to me without interruption. I was very happy and I realized that I was leaded and that the thoughts this time was not of mine but from the source of Inspiration. I show it to Artists for there critic, all were very enthusiasm about it considering it a wonderful inspiration. Then I realized that this wonderful original thought could not be understood by any on a simple drawing as the world is not accustomed to new form, but that the only way to present it should be a model. . . . I work at this first floor of the temple a long time. In classic training we are thought to design first the floor plan then the mass for the Elevation then work up the details, but I try this persistently without success. I got that first floor that all and could not see anything above, so I decided that if it was the work of Inspiration I could trust that power and would work according to the leadings. Therefore I start to carve the first floor. It was a great deal of work but I start early in the morning and kept at it till dark till it was accomplished. Then I start to draw the second floor, and to my surprise, it come to me at once. I try to draw the third but could not get anything then I proceed on that unusual way—and when finish I got the third. I could not get the dome design before the third was carved, then finely [finally?] got it as soon as I had completed the third. Now I had all those separated pieces and was very anxious to see How the[y] all put together what the result would be. It was all trust

and hoped for the best now to my surprise It is harmonious and show a thoughted ensemble better than I could myself do. . . .¹⁴

McDaniel gives a version of this account by Bourgeois within quotation marks, as if it were Bourgeois' own words.¹⁵ However, McDaniel edited it far beyond correcting Bourgeois' imperfect English, making major changes in the sense and even introducing a remark suggesting that Bourgeois had studied at the Beaux Arts.¹⁶

As a supplement to these two main accounts, we may note that Pemberton, writing in 1921 after having traveled from the United States to the Holy Land and back with Bourgeois and his wife, describes the process thus:

The first thing he did was the doors and windows of the first story, a wonderful piece of architectural design, symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit. After finishing this he got the entire form of the lower story and sketched it out in an hour's time, but he realized when the sketch was finished that the idea could not be properly expressed in a drawing on a flat surface. So he proceeded to make a plaster model. Then the second story dawned on him and he modeled that, but being deeply perplexed all the time as to whether it would be possible to design a suitable dome, one rich enough to complete the vision that had already been given him. Then the quiet and restful third story appeared, which added still more to his perplexity and brought several days of grave doubt as to his ability to produce a feature worthy to complete the structure. One morning he was awakened suddenly at three o'clock and saw before him the dome, which he hastened to sketch out.¹⁷

Despite the inconsistencies between these accounts, they do seem to establish that until after attending the Bahai Temple Unity Convention in Boston in 1917, Bourgeois was unable to further develop to his satisfaction the design he had submitted in 1909, and that in particular he was unable to

achieve a satisfactory design for the doors and windows. What then occurred in Boston that demolished this longstanding block on Bourgeois' creative powers? It would seem that it was seeing the designs by Remy exhibited alongside his own. A detailed analysis of the changes in form that Bourgeois made in his revision of the earlier design after he returned from Boston suggests that they derive from a number of designs by Remy.

The Remy designs are only available now as printed in his books, so it is not always easy to see the details in these small reproductions. As they were originally exhibited, the elevations were 43 inches wide and 70 inches high,¹⁸ rendering the details easily readable and memorable to a trained eye. McDaniel states that at the 1917 convention Remy's Persian, Arabian and Moorish, Indian, Roman Classic, and Byzantine Romanesque designs were shown.¹⁹ However, it is probable that this exhibit actually occurred at the 1916 convention. The report of that convention is illustrated with plates of those five designs,²⁰ and in 1916 Remy issued a limited edition book of them. Also, the names McDaniel gives for these designs are as used by Remy in 1916 but differ from the names used subsequently. In 1917, Remy published a book containing nine designs with a preface dated July of that year. As Remy toured these nine designs as a collective exhibit during that year, and indeed until 1920, and as they had all been completed before the end of 1916, it seems unlikely that he would have shown less than the nine in Boston, and particularly unlikely that he would have omitted the newer designs which had not previously been shown at a convention. The principal Remy designs which will concern us in the following discussion are those named (as of 1917) Byzantine (which was Remy's 1909 submission and is the one called Byzantine Romanesque in the 1916 collection), Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance (see pp. 216, 217, 218, and 219).

We will begin, as Bourgeois is said to have done, with the doors and windows of the first story. In the Peace Palace design (see p. 220) the doorways cut through pyramidal structures that mark the ends of second-story ribs, which pierce the upper part of the first story. In the 1909 submission (see p. 222; this design survives only in poor-quality photographs, which is reflected in the illustration), Bourgeois retained these doorways with little change. The windows of the main facades of the first story of the Peace Palace consist of a ribbon of glass on either side of the pyramid, each being divided by columns. The 1909 submission retains these ribbon windows, simply increasing the number of columns and grouping them in pairs. The facade above the windows in the Peace Palace is curved through two planes and ornamented with carving. The 1909 submission reserves this double curvature for the extreme upper portion of the facade and fills in the now simply curved section above the ribbon windows with glazing.

In the 1920 submission Bourgeois instituted an entirely new treatment (see p. 223). The space beneath the archivolt of the facade is divided into nine bays, a larger central bay giving access to a recessed porch. Each of the smaller bays is occupied by a semicircular arch supported on two columns and filled with a rosette supported on a colonette. The central bay is similarly composed, except here the rosette is part of the decorative treatment of each of the three sides of the recessed porch. The upper part of the main bay is filled in with a type of elaborate ornament, which will be discussed below. The upper parts of the side bays contain an interlacing series of smaller semicircular arches which are a simplified version of the larger arches below them, the wider of the pointed arches produced by this interlacing are filled with rosettes on colonettes. The area between this arcading and the archivolt enclosing the entire fenestration is filled with an interlacing ornamental treatment, whose major lines grow out of the

curves of the arches themselves. In the watercolor version of the design prepared in the summer of 1920, and some of the detailed design sheets, as opposed to the plaster model, a short section at the bottom of each of these side bays has an arcading of interlacing arches related to the top section (see p. 224).

If we turn to the Remy designs, we find in his Romanesque that the main facade consists of a large central bay with a semicircular arch supported on columns enclosing a rose window, flanked by smaller bays of similar composition. In the Gothic design we find pointed arches filled with rosettes and divided by colonettes. And in the Byzantine design we find another three-bay entrance, consisting of semicircular arches on columns. In the Byzantine we also find arcaded porticoes around the apses on each of the other eight sides. The inverting of the curve of these porticoes, or indeed of the apses of the Romanesque design, would produce an effect not unlike that used in the lesser bays of the Bourgeois fenestration.

Going beyond the windows in the Bourgeois 1920 submission we find that the double curve featured in his earlier designs has been entirely eliminated. There is still ornament in the upper corners of the facade, but the now simply inward curving wall ends in a straight cornice supported by corbels. The first story facades of Remy's Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance designs are completed by a cornice on corbels.

The pylons, or towers, at the corners of the first story of the Peace Palace design are basically square in cross section, with ornamental sections applied to their faces, which produce at the base a cross section of two equal squares overlapping to form an eight-pointed star; the applied sections taper to ornamental nodes from which they splay out again to merge into the ornament of the tops of the pylons. For the 1909 submission, Bourgeois changed the pylons to a regular polygonal

cross section tapering inward from the base and then splaying toward the top. He also enlarged the ornamental nodes and capped the pylons with rather "busby" like finials. In the 1920 submission, Bourgeois retained the regular polygonal cross section and tapered form, but he eliminated the nodes and inserted three "slots" that were probably intended as windows in the plain lower part of each face, the upper part of each face being elaborately ornamented above an arch-like transition. The Remy Byzantine shows "slots" beneath an arch in the outer bays of the main entrance facade, and there are other formal congruities with Remy designs which will be discussed below in considering how Bourgeois continued to develop the pylons.

Turning to the second story, in the Peace Palace each of the second-story facades consists of a ribbon window, like the first story, topped by a mural and an arch curved through two planes. The 1909 submission is little altered, the ribbon window now having the columns grouped in pairs, the mural replaced by glazing, and the double-curved arch retained. The 1920 submission adds a row of subsidiary arched windows, filled by rosettes on colonettes, below the main windows. All four of the Remy designs we have been considering have a row of subsidiary arched windows below the main windows of the second story. The 1920 submission retains the horizontal division of the window space from the 1909 submission, but instead of a solid lintel, the division is made by a series of interlaced semicircular arches supported on columns, the pointed arches that result being occupied with rosettes on colonettes and the band of the arches themselves being made visually dense by embedding it in elaborately intertwining ornament. The upper part of these windows is occupied by another arcade on a smaller scale, the space above this being filled as on the first story. Instead of an arch curved through two planes completing the story, as in the earlier designs, the

1920 submission has a compoundly curved archivolt above the window, and the story is completed with ornamented spandrels leading to a straight frieze and cornice, the whole structurally curved through only one plane.

The second-story facades of Remey's Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance designs all have main windows that consist of a smaller series of arches below a taller series, which, inverted and overlapped, would produce an effect not dissimilar to Bourgeois' large arches topped by smaller ones. Also, the Gothic design has the rosette and colonette, and the Renaissance has an elliptical arch above the window topped by spandrels and a straight cornice supported by corbels.

In the Peace Palace the "ribs" or buttresses at the corners of the second story pierce through the double curve of the first story to entrance level. This feature is retained in the 1909 submission. In each of these cases the rib is square in section and tapered. The 1920 submission cuts off the ribs at the roof line of the first story, retains the square section for the main part of the rib, but adds a highly ornamented section to its front face that makes a sweeping curve from the edge of the first story to the upper part of the rib. Remey's Renaissance design shows such a curved buttress on its second story, although not, of course, oriented to the middle of the lower story.

In both the Peace Palace and the 1909 submission, the dome springs directly from the second story. In the 1920 submission there is an added drum with semicircular arches supported on columns framing windows filled with rosettes on colonettes with pairs of columns between the windows. Remey's Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance designs have drums with arch- and column-outlined windows below their domes. Remey's Roman Classic design (see p. 225) also has pairs of columns between these windows and a frieze between the tops of the windows and the cornice below the dome similar to the one Bourgeois uses.

In the 1920 submission the dome has lost the finial used in the earlier designs by Bourgeois and has gained ribs that meet in a point above the apex and extend down over the drum, curving outward to meet the upper part of the second-story buttress. This lower part of each rib is pierced with an arch. The dome of the Remey Renaissance design has a pointed silhouette, and the lower sections of its second-story buttresses are pierced with arches and curve out to meet the upper sections of the first-story towers.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it would not seem unreasonable to suggest that the sudden undamming of Bourgeois' inspiration after the Boston convention in 1917 was related to his seeing the Remey designs there, and that the design he submitted in 1920 derives both substantial formal aspects and specific details from Remey's designs. That this is unlikely to have been entirely unknown to Bourgeois is suggested by the fact that he had previously based a design of his on one by Remey.

At the Bahai Temple Unity Convention in New York in 1913, it was announced that a fund had been started to pay for a vase to be sent to the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh to commemorate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America in 1912. Sometime before early 1914, Remey made a design for this vase (see p. 226), and he circulated copies of this design in March 1914 to encourage contributions. The design shows little imagination, being a fairly stolid bottle shape with applied Bahá'í symbols. In June 1914, Bourgeois copyrighted a model of a vase (see p. 227) whose design obviously derives from the Remey one. However, Bourgeois' proportions are much better, the roundels in the middle section are fairly successfully integrated with their background, rather than being merely applied, and, most obviously, the handling of the neck is much more imaginative. In Bourgeois' design, Remey's heavy bottle neck is replaced by a flared shape ornamented with Gothic-like tracery that prefigures the more confidently

sweeping tracery of Bourgeois' 1920 submission and its revisions. By early 1915, the Bourgeois design had supplanted Remy's as that proposed to be sent. To date, no details of the supplanting have come to light except that it took place. Although the Bourgeois design is obviously better (if not altogether happy, the heavy base and the airy neck being rather ill-matched), it would seem unlikely that its displacing the announced Remy one can have been achieved without some acrimony. That the change of intent may not have been entirely harmonious is indeed suggested by the delay in sending the vase. It had been planned to send it in 1914, but it did not actually go until 1921. Whatever the details of the vase affair, the fact remains that the possibility of building upon a Remy foundation was not unknown to Bourgeois when he saw the Remy designs in Boston in 1917.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN

After his design was chosen in 1920, Bourgeois had to reduce it in scale to fit the site. This he did primarily by reducing the number of bays in each facade from nine to five. However, along with the necessary reduction in scale he also made other changes, particularly to the first- and second-story facades, and he continued revising until the late 1920s. (See p. 228 for a more or less final version of the exterior design.)

These revisions suggest continued reference, either in actuality or from memory, to the Remy designs. The pylons of the first story have only one slot in the revised design, as do the Remy Renaissance design corner towers; and the upper part of the pylon, the disposition of whose ornament is lowered relative to the first-story roof line in the revision, merits some attention. The Remy Renaissance design corner tow-

ers are topped by domes resting upon a cornice, below which is an arcade of blinded arches, each arch being enclosed in a rectangle. The Bourgeois pylon is capped with a shallow dome, and nestling in the ornament below the cornice can be seen an arcade of blinded arches enclosed in rectangles.

In the second-story facade, the compoundly curved archivolt above the main window in the 1920 submission was changed to a simple elliptical curve, similar to the curve in the upper part of the Remey Renaissance design second-story facade. The weakly designed frieze below the cornice in the 1920 submission was totally redrawn to suggest a row of small arches immediately below the cornice, as in the Remey Romanesque and Gothic designs. The large curved sections of ornament applied to the lower part of the second-story buttresses were redesigned as outsweepingly curved sections framing a door piercing the buttress itself. The ornament of the pylon was largely confined to its front face and consists of a band framed by a plain strip on each side which continues the line of the curved sections. The Remey Renaissance buttresses have plain sides, and the band of ornament on their front faces is similarly framed. In the Remey design the lower section of the buttresses curves out, the side frames continuing to border the plain stonework of the curve rather as Bourgeois' curved sections frame the space in front of his arched and rosette- and colonette-filled doorway.

If we look at Bourgeois' interior design, we can see further links with Remey. The Peace Palace interior (see p. 232) embodies in its central section an ornamented, probably glazed dome above a painted mural and gallery, the latter overlooking an upper hallway ringed with doors, arches, and a mural frieze. This hallway in turn overlooks the main entrance hall, with its large Egyptesque doorway flanked by staircases. This central section of the interior is surrounded by domed chambers and other rooms. The 1909 submission had a very

similar interior, except that a greater proportion of the space was given to the central hall on the main floor and less of the building devoted to subsidiary rooms. The interior of the 1920 submission is very different from the earlier designs (see p. 231). There is a certain similarity to the glazed dome, although its patterning is considerably more accomplished, but the lower sections all relate to the arch forms established in the exterior design. This revised interior, with its two main tiers of large arches divided by a band of small arches (which is actually a screen, or balustrade, for the gallery), the large arches being divided from each other by narrow sections outlined by plain verticals, is similar to Remey's interior for his Renaissance design (see p. 230), which is the only Remey interior to have such outlined sections between the large arches. As Bourgeois reworked the interior design during the 1920s, it became more and more lavishly ornamented, and during this process he continued to draw on the formal aspects of the exterior that I have suggested derive from Remey's designs and the ornamental influences to be discussed below.

As stated above, one of the principal influences on the Bourgeois and Blumenstein Peace Palace design was Art Nouveau. The use of curves through two planes, some aspects of the composition of the pylons, and the general extravagance of line are typical of such manifestations of the Art Nouveau movement as the "style Guimard". More specifically, in its total composition, both exterior and interior, the Peace Palace design suggests familiarity on the part of either Bourgeois or Blumenstein with D'Aronco's Central Rotunda at the Turin Exhibition of 1902. However, the influence that is felt in this design that is of most significance for the current discussion is that of Louis Sullivan, the earlier examples of whose work were being built in Chicago when Bourgeois lived there in the 1880s and early 1890s.

In 1907 Roy Wilhelm had been given not only the Peace Palace plan to show 'Abdu'l-Bahá but also a photograph which Wilhelm later understood to be a part of the house Bourgeois had built for Paul de Longpre in Hollywood (see p. 233). The photograph showed part of the arcade at the main entrance of the house. Gebhard describes this house as having a "rich frosting of Sullivan-esque ornament" and, indeed, the building amply demonstrates Bourgeois' acquaintance with Sullivan's work.²¹

The Peace Palace design uses various Sullivan elements, but the use of Sullivan style ornament in this design and in the 1909 submission is slight compared to the extensive use Bourgeois made of it in the 1920 submission and its revisions. It is worth recalling here that in his comments on the Bourgeois design at the 1920 convention Magonigle remarked, "it is very difficult for me to refer it to any known period of architecture except possibly the modern note that has grown up in Chicago under Louis Sullivan."²²

In 1921, Bourgeois had a section of his proposed window ornament modeled full-size. This model was made at the American Terra Cotta Company by Kristian Schneider, who had been Sullivan's chief modeler for over three decades. The model does not deviate significantly from Bourgeois' drawing, but the extent of Sullivan influence on the style may be gauged from the fact that a former plant superintendent of the company, who was interviewed in 1973, believed that "Sullivan and Schneider made several changes from the original architect's concept," and that "Sullivan . . . had a major influence on the design of the building."²³ The model (see p. 234) shows clearly how Bourgeois embedded his formal architectural elements, in this case the semicircular arch on columns, in a plethora of Sullivan-esque ornament.

As Bourgeois revised the design during the 1920s, he increased the extent to which the ornamentation of the building

was consistently Sullivanesque. For example, the ornament in the spandrels of the first- and second-story facades was a fairly typical, if weakly drawn, Art Nouveau “whiplash” in the 1920 submission. In the revised design they were redone in thoroughgoing Sullivan style. Another of the changes Bourgeois made in the 1920s was to replace the doors cast with the interlacing arches motif that he had used in the 1920 submission with doors related to those used in the Peace Palace design. This door design was modeled by Schneider (see p. 235), and it may be usefully compared with a Sullivan design of the mid 1890s for a door plate in the Guaranty Building (see p. 236).

These examples should serve to demonstrate the Sullivan influence on Bourgeois’ decorative style: the intertwining lines, the seaweedy efflorescences, in which Bourgeois embeds his religious symbols and his derivations from Remey. Indeed, even the way in which Bourgeois intertwines his arches can be associated with Sullivan’s principles of generating complex designs from a simple basic element by overlapping and superimposition as readily as with historical examples of intertwined arcading.

Having thus analyzed the design, and in particular noted how Bourgeois continued to draw on Remey and Sullivan as he revised, it is difficult to understand how he could have honestly presented his design as he did. There is no doubt that his design is a moderately successful synthesis of the materials on which he drew and is much superior to the Peace Palace design or his 1909 submission. Nevertheless it is primarily a synthesis, a “bricolage,” there being little in it that cannot be traced to Remey, Sullivan, or the Peace Palace.

It is possible that Bourgeois and Blumenstein considered the Peace Palace design to be from “The source of real knowledge” that Bourgeois believed he had contacted in California (notwithstanding its seeming similarities to the

D'Aronco Rotunda), and that, therefore, Bourgeois regarded the use of material from this design as not invalidating the inspirational nature he claimed for his 1920 submission. However, it seems unlikely that he could have been unaware of his derivations from Remey. It is undoubtedly the case that Bourgeois was familiar with the historical materials upon which Remey drew for his designs; Bourgeois' papers include numerous photographs of French late Gothic and Renaissance buildings. It is equally the case that Bourgeois did not utilize any of these design elements until after seeing Remey's use of them, and that those he did use are closer to elements in Remey's designs than to those in the actual period buildings in his collection of photographs. Nor does it seem likely that Bourgeois could have been unaware of his Sullivan derivations. Indeed, according to Carl Scheffler, "Very many people have accused Mr. Bourgeois of taking this style of design from Mr. Louis Sullivan, that this is his style—a modified Sullivan design."²⁴ But Scheffler also stated that Bourgeois had convinced him and the others investigating the charges of plagiarism that his style was different. Unfortunately, Scheffler says nothing of how Bourgeois convinced them, but that he did says more for Bourgeois' powers of persuasion than Scheffler's perspicacity as a professional artist.

Notwithstanding all of this, however, Bourgeois does seem to have believed in some special status for his design. In the draft of a letter he wrote to Shoghi Effendi in the later 1920s, he stated:

My insistance that there shall be no interference with this design is that first I am not the creator of this original design—It is an inspiration from the creator I was told from the world of spirit that this Temple is a copy of a Temple that exist in the spiritual world—thereafter I am only the instrument I claim no credit but as the instrument that did it, furthermore my experience has proven me

that the body does not create anything, that even thoughts are not of the body—but of the reality, this body being but a receiver—a mirror that reflect the thought image so we do not place much credit on the Physical performance since the early history of art in this planet the great monuments took more than the period of one mans life so the successors not knowing any better chooses to alter the original design of those monument the result was that all those monuments are distorted and are a mixture of different thoughts It is against this that I want to guard this Temple from desecration of its beauties . . . from the world of ignorance in Art We have no man at present in the cause in America that can appreciate this work and many of them would like to change it to save few penneys. . . . Mrs Moffett . . . told me of few things you would like me to add to the Temple—as I told you above my personality is not in this Monument we are [“I am” crossed out] but the instrument. May be you have seen in the other world this glorious monument and if my vision has not see it in all its completion—I am willing to be shown and you can do it in all liberty. I inclose one of the small color picture—you can with ink and a fine pen suggest in the Picture what you saw—certainly it will not be as satisfactory as if I was with you—to talk this over but El Baha will lead us to that which is to be for his glory.²⁵

It is difficult to reconcile such touchingly naive assertions of being a mere “instrument” with Bourgeois’ monetary demands on the Bahá’í community. But it is conceivable that he felt his use of other artists’ design materials without credit justifiable in that they, too, were seeing fragments of this “Temple . . . in the spiritual world” and were themselves only instruments to aid its appearance in this world through Bourgeois.

THE LEGITIMATION OF THE DESIGN

After the choice of the Bourgeois design in 1920 and the subsequent realization that the demands of Bourgeois and his

supporters had changed the expected nature of further proceedings it was necessary for the choice and the change to be legitimized. The main legitimizing arguments used were the supposedly unique status of the design as an inspired structure and the symbolic aptness of that structure to represent the Bahá'í Faith. That 'Abdu'l-Bahá had approved the choice and Shoghi Effendi confirmed that approval in 1925 were also used to some extent, but usually in such a way as to imply that approval had been given to the grounds on which the Bourgeois enthusiasts supported the design, which was hardly the case. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had given the choice of a design to the delegates at the 1920 Bahai Temple Unity convention as he felt that his choice would not be harmoniously accepted; therefore, to use his confirmation of that convention's choice (while sidestepping his suggested ceiling on cost) as uniquely legitimating any design chosen was somewhat specious. Indeed, Shoghi Effendi later described the situation bluntly: "The American Bahá'ís freely chose the Bourgeois model . . . They must bear the burden of their choice."²⁶

We have seen how Bourgeois presented his design as an "inspiration" and indeed possibly even believed it to be so, in spite of its dependence on the Peace Palace design, let alone any other of the derivations we have discussed. This is obviously not the type of assertion that is capable of being demonstrably proved, and therefore the supporters of this viewpoint could do little more than assert it. However, they did have the advantage of a widely accepted ideology of aesthetic creation within the Bahá'í community with which their assertion resonated. The body of Bahá'í hymnody that had developed within the community since the early years of the century, together with much other literary material, was believed by its authors to have been "received" as gifts of spiritual communion with the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith, with a generalized spiritual world, or with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to many

Bahá'ís the idea expressed in the claim for the Bourgeois design was an accepted fact of their view of aesthetic creation and, for a considerable number, part of their personal experience. This coherence between the nature of the claims made for the process by which Bourgeois unfolded his design and this widely accepted ideology seems to have provided a "hook" by which many Bahá'ís could grasp onto the rather abstract world of architecture.

However, the degree of importance claimed for the Bourgeois design on the grounds of its inspired status went far beyond anything ever claimed for, or granted to, the earlier products of receiving, and the design came to be regarded by some as having a degree of numinous endowment that rendered it an object of awe. By 1930, the year of Bourgeois' death, the design was widely accepted as being a direct revelation with Bourgeois as its prepared vehicle. Thus, at the 1930 National Convention Allen McDaniel, as convention chairman, could refer to "this revelation which has come to us through our dearly beloved brother, Mr. Louis Bourgeois,"²⁷ and could later introduce Bourgeois to the convention as the "one to whom this great creation has been revealed."²⁸ In her poem "In Memoriam," Waite apostrophized Bourgeois and his design thus:

O thou who caught the vision crystal clear
 And brought it forth to man in outer form,
 A thing so mystical, so wondrous fair,
 That those who stand before it, bow their head
 As if before a shrine and say, "Behold!
 This is the work of God, and not of man!
 A Temple whose design was drawn above,
 And given to humanity through thee."²⁹

And in the eulogy at Bourgeois' funeral, the choice of his design in 1920 was represented as a divinely guided triumph

over the “forces of materialism,” and the design itself characterized as the “symbolic manifestation of Divine Essence in all its purity.”³⁰

The second major theme in the legitimation of the design was the symbolic. The symbolism of the Peace Palace design was heavily imbued with the number eight as representing the eight states who had collectively established the international court of arbitration. The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* design was equally heavily imbued with the number nine as representing “the Nine Great World Manifestations.”³¹ Where there had been eight of an element in the Peace Palace design there were now nine. This symbolization of religious continuity was further emphasized by Bourgeois' use of symbols of succeeding religions in his ornamentation.

The other main symbolic strand in Bourgeois' design that we need to consider here is his use of light. A common early translation of “Bahá” in North America was “light,” and Bourgeois saturated his design with references to outpouring light. All his ornamentation was pierced through so that its ground was light itself, his representations of the Greatest Name were to be superimposed on outspreading gilded rays, and he had an elaborate scheme for using electric illumination to make the building a blaze of light outside and in.

Bourgeois' use of nine and the concept of light had obvious attractions for his Bahá'í contemporaries. They had been using the figure 9 on books, letter heads, and in various other ways to express their feelings of Bahá'í identity since the turn of the century, and among some there was considerable interest in the wider aspects of numerological speculation and symbolization. Equally, the idea of capturing light in the structure of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was appealing both symbolically and aesthetically. But most important for the design's resonance with a growing ideological trend within the Bahá'í community, and its subsequent reinforcing of that

trend, was that in its use of nine and light it symbolized not just the Bahá'í Faith but a succession of religions which were seen as leading to it, each of which was equally welcome in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. This idea was dramatized by the nine identical sides of the building, each approached by a path and entered by a great central doorway which led to a common center (such a pattern actually being embodied in Bourgeois' design for the floor). This physical arrangement, with its equal treatment of all sides, cohered strongly with a growing conception within the Bahá'í community of the Bahá'í Faith (many came to prefer the term "Bahá'í Movement") as a universalist and nonsectarian endeavor to bring together people from all religions in an ecumenical brotherhood without challenging fundamentally their previous religious identities, let alone supplanting them with an exclusively Bahá'í identity. The Bourgeois design expressed this concept admirably, and the basic linking of the design to the Bahá'í Faith through its "revealed" status in turn helped to spread and legitimate the nonexclusive ideology of the Bahá'í Movement.

Despite the ability of those supporting the Bourgeois design to press their claims for its inspired status and the undoubted resonance of much of its symbolic content with contemporary ideological developments within the Bahá'í community, there was one considerable legitimacy problem that was left untouched by these successes: the legitimation of the design as an architectural concept. As there was no Bahá'í architect or engineer who supported its being built, there was urgent need for "expert" opinion in support of the design on architectural grounds, and this need was filled primarily through press comment on the design. The importance of press approval as a legitimizing factor may be gauged from the fact that a booklet of press comment was published at Bourgeois' request in 1921, and in an introductory paragraph to a review of press notices the following statement is made:

The model created by Louis Bourgeois, and accepted by the Bahai Convention of April, 1920, as the design for the Temple to be built in Chicago, has attained a wide publicity, and has aroused such praise from the world of architects, that there can be no question as to the wisdom of its choice.³²

The evidence of such praise was its mention in the press. However, on reading the press notices we find very few names that are invoked as giving it, and only one of those was a significant American architect, the same Magonigle who had advised at the 1920 convention.

Two early extended articles on the Bourgeois design were those by Boswell and Reid.³³ A close reading of these articles suggests strongly that they were not written without some exterior assistance being provided to their authors, in that the extent of correlation between the two articles in structure and phrasing indicates a common base text. When we consider the range of articles published on the design, we find many similarities that further suggest the circulation of a publicity text on Bourgeois and the design. Many of these articles attribute to Magonigle this opinion on the design, "It is the first new idea in architecture since the thirteenth century. I want to see it erected." Boswell explicitly suggests that he delivered this comment as his "verdict" at the 1920 convention. Magonigle did not make this comment, or anything approaching it, according to the convention transcript, but it became extensively used in the press and elsewhere as legitimating the design's architectural standing. Magonigle later denied ever having made the remark and asked that it cease to be used,³⁴ but despite a notice in *Bahá'í News*³⁵ asking that the comment no longer be attributed to Magonigle, it has continued to be used occasionally.

This supposed comment by Magonigle, supported as it was by his considerable reputation, was undoubtedly of impor-

tance in counterbalancing the lack of approval of the Bourgeois design by Bahá'í architects and engineers. However, if Magonigle did not say it, where did the comment originate? First, we may note that Magonigle was one of the leading classicist architects in the United States and highly unlikely by temperament or aesthetic sensibility to leap to pre-Raphaelite comparisons, and, indeed, the comment itself is merely silly rather than judgmental and evidently the result of enthusiasm rather than consideration.

As it seems likely that a publicity document on the Bourgeois design lies behind many of the press articles, it is possible that the purported quote originated with it or its author. The most likely source for such a document is Mary Hanford Ford. Ford was a long-term Bahá'í and professional writer and lecturer on the arts. She was apparently part of the group that introduced Bourgeois to the Bahá'í Faith, and after the choice of the Bourgeois design she lectured extensively in its favor. Indeed, according to Roy Wilhelm:

Through Mrs. Ford, I believe, Mr. Bourgeois had heard that the Baha'is were contemplating the construction of a universal Temple [the context makes it clear that Wilhelm believes this to have been before early 1907], and with her encouragement he became active in association with the friends, particularly in its (Temple) promotion.³⁶

An article by Ford completed the pamphlet of press comments published in 1921, and she probably wrote the digest of press notices itself. Ford reported shortly after the choice of the Bourgeois design that the sculptor George Gray Barnard (whose work does, on occasion, show pre-Raphaelite sympathies) declared that "the Temple marks a new development in architecture, and the beginning of a great era in art."³⁷ In

some press articles Barnard is quoted as having declared on unidentified occasions variations of this opinion: “the greatest creation since the Gothic period,”³⁸ “the first new conception in architecture since the Gothic.”³⁹ We should note also that Ford herself began an article on the concept of the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* published in 1915 with the extraordinary comment that, “Since the 13th century men have not been much given to building cathedrals or temples.”⁴⁰

It seems possible, then, that the comment attributed to Magonigle derives from the enthusiasm of Ford, perhaps fueled by the comments of Barnard. However the comment may have originated, Magonigle himself seeming the least likely source, such an apparently authoritative “approval” of the design’s architectural soundness supplied the missing ingredient in the mix that enabled the supporters of the Bourgeois design to bring about an almost total conflation between the concept of the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* as such and this particular design.

OPPOSITION TO THE DESIGN

Opposition to the choice of the Bourgeois design has always been most closely linked with the name of Remey. Indeed, those who opposed it were sometimes called “Remeyites.” However, although Remey undoubtedly committed more to paper on the subject than any other objector, it would be inaccurate to see him as leading *the* party of objectors or as representing the only strand of opposition.

Remey stated his objections to the Bourgeois design in a series of letters written mainly to the Bahai Temple Unity Board (subsequently the National Spiritual Assembly) from 1920 to 1929, and those objections may be summarized as follows: (1) the design departs from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s expressed

wishes on style and cost, and its production and implementation ignore his desire for the design to be the work of a group and not one individual; (2) the design is excessively individualistic and not rooted in any established and approved tradition, and the surrounding aura of inspiration associated with it is un-Bahá'í in character; and (3) the design has basic problems of structure and material.

In regard to the deviation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wishes, we have seen the lack of interest shown in considering his expressed preference for the Mogul style at the 1920 convention. This question of stylistic deviation was never seriously addressed except insofar as there was, and continues, a mendacious attempt to compare the Bourgeois design with the Taj Mahal. On cost, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked after the choice of the Bourgeois design that it be reduced in scale to bring its projected cost to around \$1 million. The actual reduction was to an estimate that was \$200,000 in excess of this, and that did not include the interior (which in itself was estimated by Bourgeois as likely to cost \$1 million). On the third ground of departure from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wishes, Remey's case was personally at its weakest. It had been known for many years that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had suggested that the design should not be the work of one hand but should represent a collaborative effort on the part of several designers. No one, including Remey, had ever attempted to do this. Now Remey suggested that a board or commission of qualified people be appointed to revise the Bourgeois design in order to bring it into line with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wishes and the practicalities of the situation. Remey excluded himself from consideration for this board, but suggested the names of various well-qualified Baha'is, some of whom were being consulted about the project but only as part of a process of implementing Bourgeois' wishes.

Remey's objection to the Bourgeois design as too individualistic draws strength from the group design preference of

'Abdu'l-Bahá, but he also substantiates this objection on two other grounds. That styles in art are the result of lengthy cultural processes and it is not possible to pull a full-blown new style for the Bahá'í Faith out of thin air. Such a style must develop over time and be securely based in cultural precedent. And second, that the "cult" of revelation surrounding the Bourgeois design was un-Bahá'í in that it suggested a channel of unerring communication between Bahá'u'lláh and his followers other than 'Abdu'l-Bahá and was thus aberrant from a Bahá'í perspective.

In his discussion of the design, Remey never suggests the possibility of Bourgeois deriving any of his inspiration from himself, or indeed from Sullivan, but insists on characterizing it as a slightly revised Peace Palace design. (The only hint Remey gives of other derivation on Bourgeois' part is in a letter of 1929 when he describes the design as "the purported work of one man.") To have accused Bourgeois of having taken from others would have been in effect to have retracted the main grounds of his argument that the design was too individualistic. Remey had also stated for years that he considered his own designs were done solely to provide a basis upon which the eventual design could draw. Thus, if he did regard Bourgeois as having used material from his designs, he could only have objected to the result and not the process. To be able to object to the design in essence as well as substance, he had to confine the process to Bourgeois.

Structurally Remey objected to the design on the grounds that the proposed method of building was "commercial" rather than "monumental" and involved materials of a quality that had a relatively short life expectancy. He also pointed out that the design had features ill-adapted to the situation and climate of the site.

Many of Remey's objections were well founded and supported by others who were less vocal about them. It seems

unlikely that Remey was without personal animus toward Bourgeois as he claimed; and that the choice of a design had been made on an either-Remey-or-Bourgeois basis gave a personal edge to his objections that made it more difficult for him to be seen as concerned principally with the success of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár project. That his objections were not seriously discussed and dealt with was, however, unfortunate, and that none of those who agreed with his position were prepared to take a stand, the same. As the 1920s progressed, Remey's objections tended to take on a certain tone of hysteria and his lack of success led him into involvement with grandiose schemes elsewhere, but the basic issues that he raised were valid, whatever the personal element involved in his argument.

As well as those who actively opposed the Bourgeois design there were those such as Carl Scheffler, "who were passively opposed to the Bourgeois Model, that is, I did not raise a hand to hinder, but I did nothing to help, because I felt that there was something about it that was not right."⁴¹

Apart from the objections made to the design as such, there were objections among both opposers and supporters of the design to Bourgeois himself. There was considerable discontent over Bourgeois' financial demands, which was greatly exacerbated when he built himself a studio on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár property without proper permission. The studio, although really rather shoddily built, looked quite palatial in contrast to the hideous basement structure which was all there was to show of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár itself in the middle and later 1920s, and Bourgeois' vastly inflated assertions as to what it had cost did not help matters. He asserted on various occasions that it had cost over \$30,000, but correspondence between various people at the time it was built suggests \$5,000 as a more realistic figure.

The objections to Bourgeois personally extended to how he would be involved in the construction of the building. Theo-

retically, he was the architect in charge, but in practice the Board/National Assembly came to prefer to distance him from the actual building operation as much as possible, and they reposed their main trust in their appointed engineer, Major Burt, until his death in 1928.⁴² This disinclination to let Bourgeois dabble too closely in the building process was well founded. The foundation of the structure as built consists of nine caissons, presumed sunk to bedrock, and a network of pilings. Bourgeois had insisted, largely for the symbolic reasons that thus the building would rest upon rock, on sinking these caissons, although experienced engineers recommended a foundation of only pilings at considerably less cost. Similarly, the height of the basement structure had been agreed by consultation between Bourgeois and an advisory panel of Bahá'í engineers, but Bourgeois unilaterally increased this height by ten feet, necessitating the redrawing of structural plans and considerable increased expense. (This increase in height was to accommodate the domed room known as Foundation Hall, which was not part of the original design.) It seems extraordinary that Bourgeois was permitted to do such things at the beginning of the construction process, but the lack of unity within the Board, and within the community itself, as to whether the building should actually be attempted at all, plus the fact that Bourgeois seems to have been regarded as an elemental force rather than a rational being, resulted in a lack of control over what was happening on the site.

Among those who worked closely with Bourgeois on the project and who cannot be supposed to have had any personal animus against him, there seems to have been a feeling as to his lack of practical competence as strong as among his opponents. Thus, Corinne True stated that he "is too much of a dreamer to be turned loose to have what he wants done without a good practical committee to put a check on him."⁴³ And Scheffler, after some years of working with him, described

Bourgeois as “above all an artist, a designer of exquisite decorative forms, rather than an architect, and even though he now has a license issued by the Illinois Board [of Architects], I do not think that he is a thoroughly trained architect.”⁴⁴ And an assessment of Bourgeois given by Miriam Haney on the floor of the convention in 1925, without recorded contradiction, suggests that even the most ardent supporters of his design regarded him in a light that was not entirely complimentary:

God has sent us a genius, one in whom has been born a beautiful idea. . . . That genius was handicapped by having added to the temperament of a genius the temperament and feelings of a Frenchman. God has given us a genius who is a temperamental genius, an artist. God means us to deal lovingly with him.⁴⁵

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DESIGN

It goes beyond the purposes of the present discussion to consider the building of the *Mashriq’l-Adhkár* in Wilmette in detail, but as there is an understandable tendency on the part of most commentators to conflate the building that was erected with that designed by Bourgeois, I wish to briefly note some aspects of the process by which the design was implemented.

During Bourgeois’ lifetime no more than the basement structure, which includes the meeting hall known as Foundation Hall, was completed. Foundation Hall, although structurally complete in 1922, was only made fully usable in 1928. At that time Bourgeois’ own elaborate decorative scheme for this room was ignored and a severely plain treatment which concurred more adequately with the aesthetic sensibilities of such as Remy was implemented. As the remainder of the building was constructed after Bourgeois’ death, the proce-

dures followed produced results that continued to depart from Bourgeois' aesthetic intentions.

In 1930, it was decided to abandon Bourgeois' plan of building a complete first story with a temporary roof as the next stage in construction, the upper stories to be added as possible, in favor of a scheme proposed by Research Services, Inc., of Washington, D.C., who were to take charge of building the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. The new plan was to build a complete superstructure in reinforced concrete that would give the silhouette, as it were, of the complete building apart from the ribs of the dome. This method of proceeding totally changed the nature of most of Bourgeois' exterior except for the ribs and dome themselves, in that most of his light-embedded ornament was now destined to be carried out as mere surface ornament upon an established form rather than the ornament itself defining the form. Equally, the material used to produce the exterior ornamentation between 1932 and 1942 (exposed aggregate concrete produced at the Earley studios in Virginia) led to a coarsening of the design. Bourgeois had pressed for the use of this material from the early 1920s; however, it would seem that his attraction to it was largely that it was supposed to be new and that he felt its newness made it appropriate for his supposedly new architecture. He cannot have seriously considered the practicality of using this material for what he had intended, though considering practicality is not something one associates with Bourgeois in any sphere. Bourgeois had originally conceived his ornament for the plasticity of terra cotta and cast bronze, and the much cruder definition possible in concrete, together with the fact that Earley's modelers were no Christian Schneiders, necessitated a simplification of Bourgeois' designs that tends toward the naive and compares sadly with the richness of the original drawings.

The ornamentation of the exterior was stopped in 1942, and its completion has been indefinitely postponed. Indeed, it is

generally supposed to have been completed. However, the result of omitting Bourgeois' elaborate window grilles, and also the rustication on the now plain areas of the facade, is to produce a contrast between pattern and void that is not part of Bourgeois' aesthetic. Further, the creation of an entirely white building was never his intention.

In 1946, Shoghi Effendi instructed that the interior should be completed. He stipulated that the Bourgeois design should be adhered to as closely as possible, with modifications being made in materials to keep the complete cost within reasonable bounds (which he set at \$650,000). Bourgeois' interior design included marble skirtings and door frames, elaborately patterned walls, mosaic floors, cast glass arches, stained glass windows, cast bronze grilles, and a soaring stained glass dome. The cost of actually realizing Bourgeois' design would have been enormous, but much of the effect could have been preserved, as is demonstrated in the first design adaptations sent to Shoghi Effendi. Both McDaniel and Reed, a Chicago architect, had prepared versions of the interior, and Shoghi Effendi instructed that the McDaniel version, with some elements added from the Reed one, should be built. A modified McDaniel design was prepared and widely publicized in 1947 as the design to be built. Shoghi Effendi had also instructed that further architectural advice should not be sought.

The National Spiritual Assembly engaged Alfred Shaw, another Chicago architect, to produce the working drawings and to supervise the building of the accepted McDaniel design, specifying in his contract that this was all he was to do. Nevertheless, Shaw completely redesigned the interior, and in 1948 the Assembly exhibited this design at the National Convention and widely publicized it as the one to be built. Shoghi Effendi gave this design his approval and instructed that building should begin immediately. However, with the encouragement of a handful of prominent Bahá'ís, Shaw con-

tinued to revise the design until in December 1948, Shoghi Effendi insisted that no further revision take place and that building begin. Due to the continued delay, the interior could no longer be built for the budgeted figure. Even with a considerable increase, it was only possible to finish the main part of the auditorium, and the rest remains uncompleted to date.

The constructed Shaw interior shows the utter lack of sympathy both he and those Bahá'ís who wished him to continue revising had with the Bourgeois design. All the richness of contrasting colors and textures is gone, a loss which is compounded by the fact that the painted walls were left white and never painted rose and blue as intended in the earlier interior revisions. Shaw's interior ornamentation is carried out in the same concrete as the exterior, but it omits religious symbols and vegetative elements. It consists solely of rather weakly drawn interlacing tracery, the patterning of the lower areas of the central space being developed from the patterning of the inner pierced dome, rather than relating to the exterior story.

Indeed, the inner dome aptly demonstrates the lack of understanding of Bourgeois' intentions on the part of Shaw and his supporters. Bourgeois' scintillating colored glass dome, patterned with religious symbols and sacred text, has become a white concrete doily the patterning of which is but a skeletal reduction from Bourgeois' design. That the inner dome was conceived by Shaw and his advisors as a pierced structure probably derives from their mistaking a drawing of part of Bourgeois' scheme for Foundation Hall for a drawing of the Auditorium dome. The design of the ornament of the Foundation Hall dome is significantly different from that of the Auditorium dome but there is a note ("36 PERFORATED ORN. PANELS IN THE CEILING") on the drawing that refers to the high relief stucco work of the ornamentation. No Auditorium dome design drawing, or textual reference, suggests that

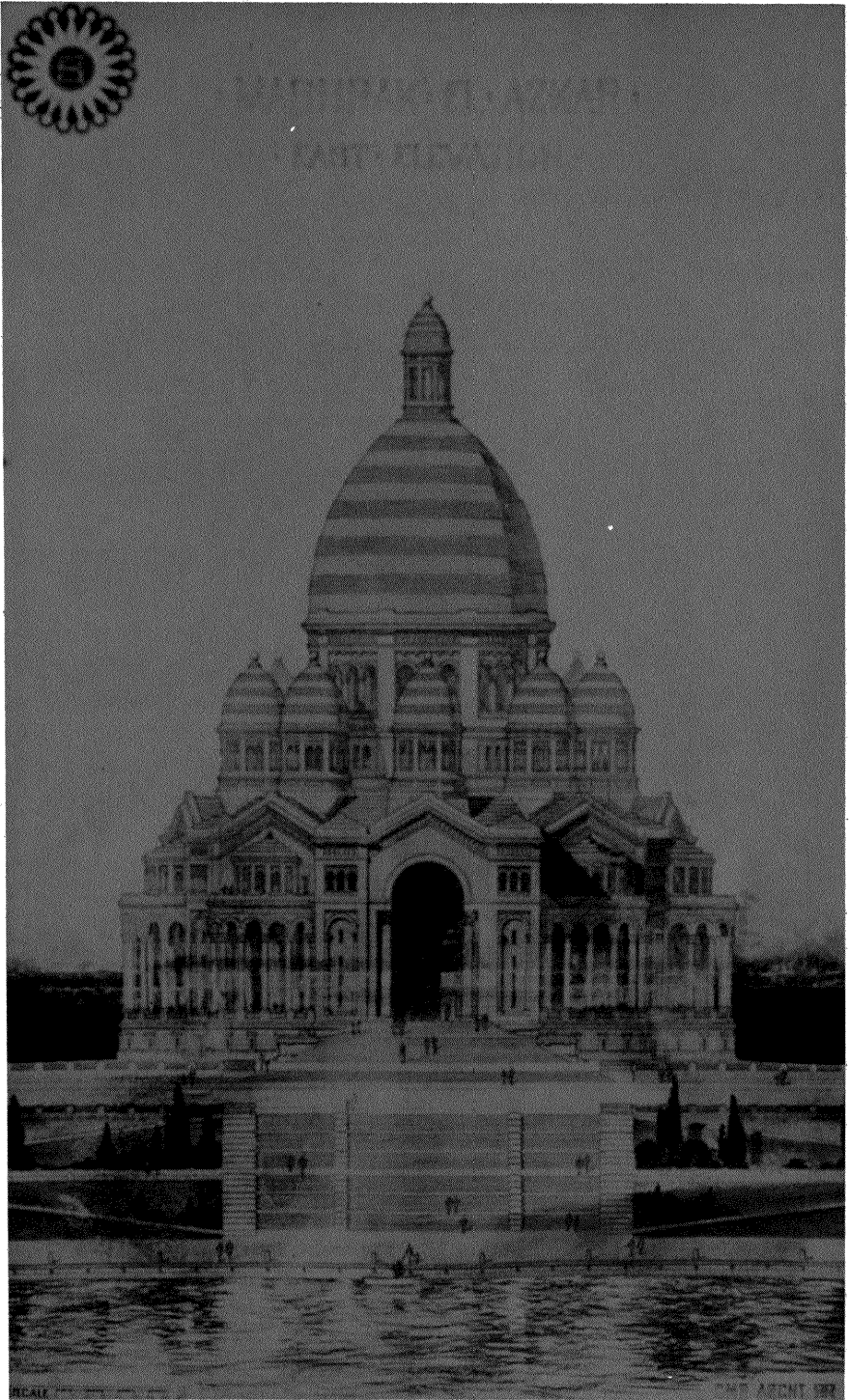
Bourgeois ever intended anything other than a stained glass dome in the Auditorium. That Shaw, and others, thought a perforated one was intended can only derive from their misunderstanding the Foundation Hall drawing.

That the Bourgeois design was never in a real sense "architecture," as it was made without considered reference to site, climate, materials, or construction methods, and that it was impossible to realize in a satisfactory way, given the realities of the twentieth century rather than the state treasury of a determined autocrat, may be fairly readily understood. It was principally an exercise in the "ideal," but since it was believed by many to represent the incursion into this world of a reality from "beyond," the design acquired and retains a numinous authority that was hardly justifiable. Much of its symbolism and most of its associated ideology represent passing developments in Bahá'í belief in North America; the decision to adopt the design embodied the temporary triumph of those ideologies, rather than a reasoned choice on practical or aesthetic grounds.

The problems faced in translating the design into an actual structure clearly demonstrated its shortcomings as architecture. But its authority prevented any conscious and systematic revising of it. The forced revision of the exterior that occurred due to the financial and technical inability of those executing it to carry out the design itself, exacerbated by their lack of understanding of it, added to the aesthetic problem of the building and failed to adequately conquer the structural problems. By the time of the ornamentation of the interior, it had become possible to more consciously subvert the authority of the design. But at the same time the design was even less understood, making its revision even more of a happenstance.

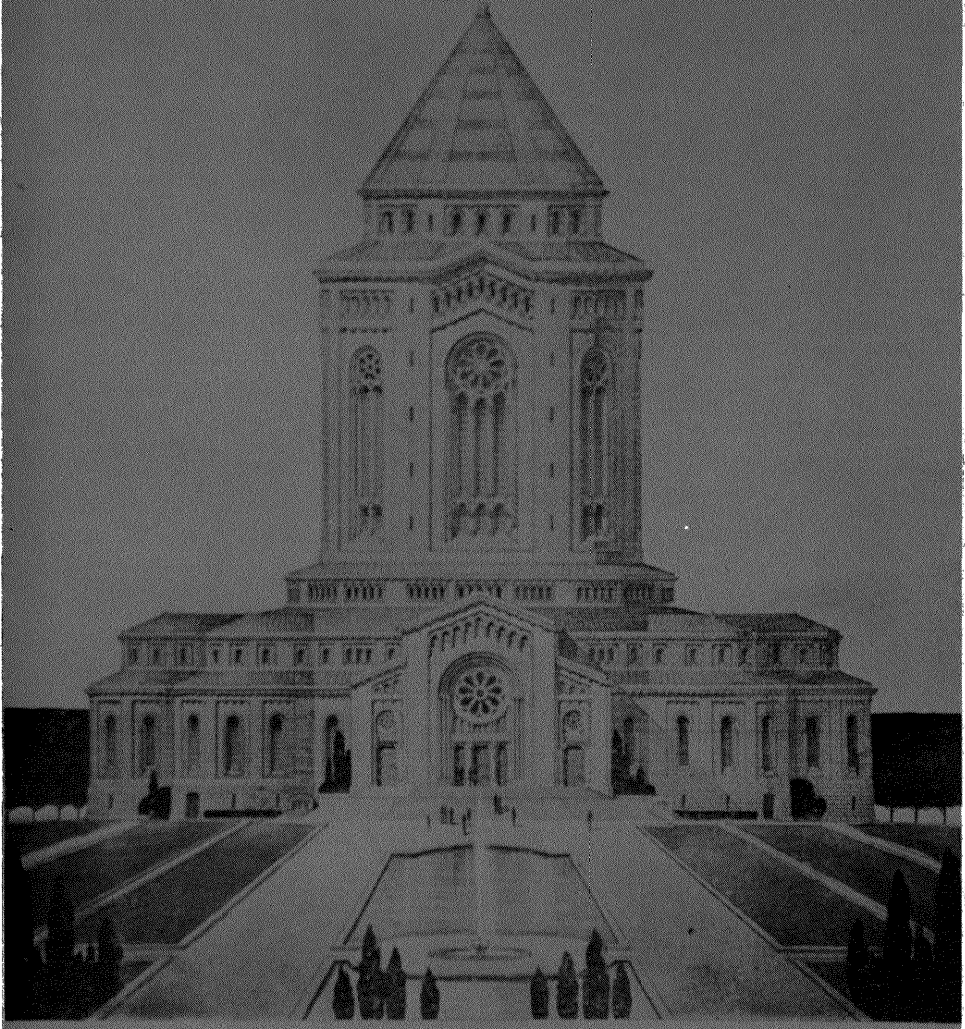
Whatever the fate of Bourgeois' aesthetic at the hands of those who produced the interior, the ideological concepts of

the Mashriq'l-Adhkár that he had embodied in his work by that time had become not only ubiquitous but elaborated. Though Bourgeois' various religious symbols were omitted from the interior, concern for the other religions they signified was now paramount. The Mashriq'l-Adhkár was not to be considered a place for Bahá'ís, indeed they were discouraged from using it for themselves. The Mashriq'l-Adhkár was a "universal" building, a "teacher" of non-Bahá'ís, in some unidentified way ideologically residual to its "inspired" status. The building in itself had come to be perceived in an almost talismanic way, and the functions it had originally been planned to shelter had been largely forgotten.





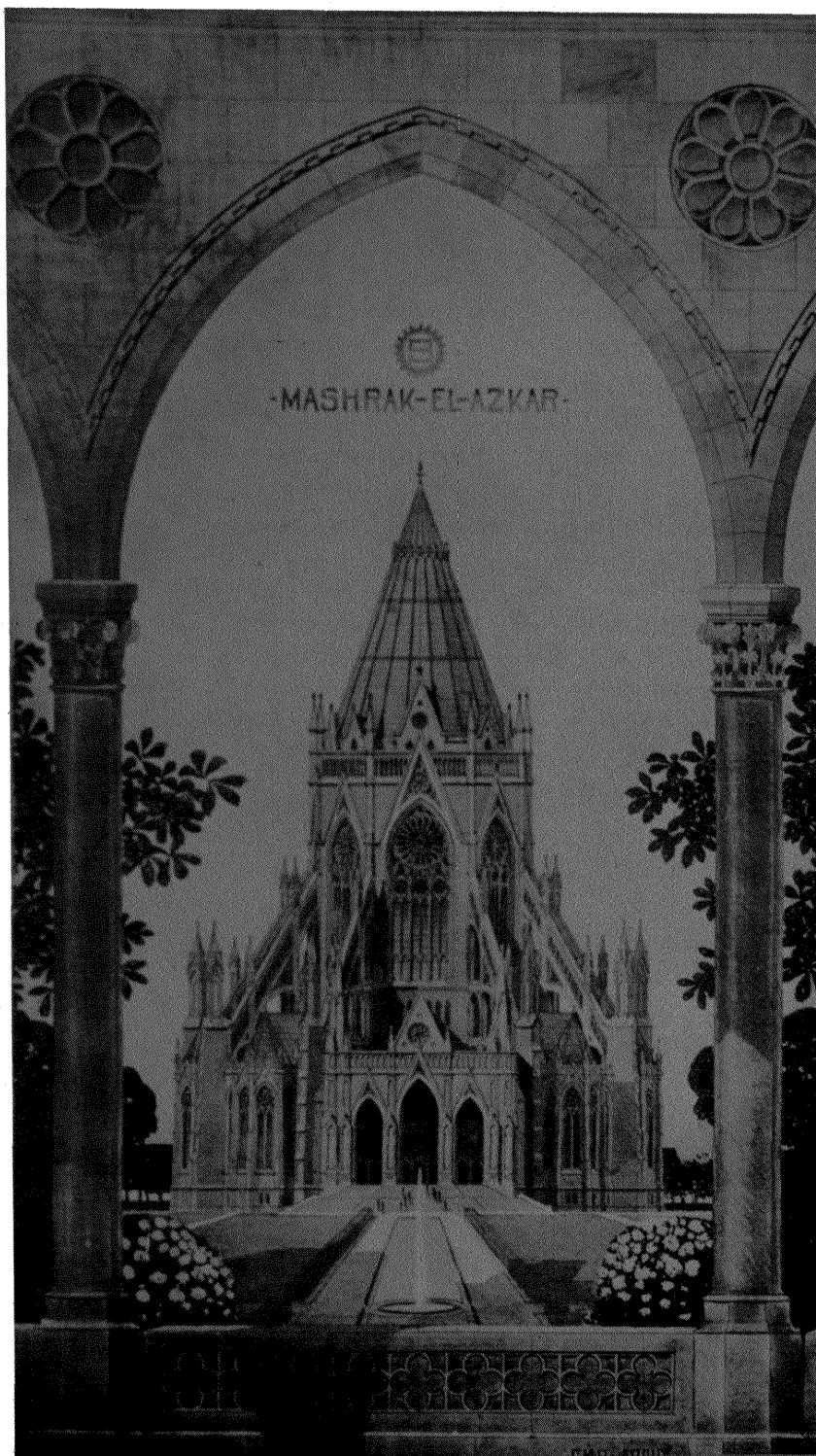
MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR



- EAST ELEVATION -

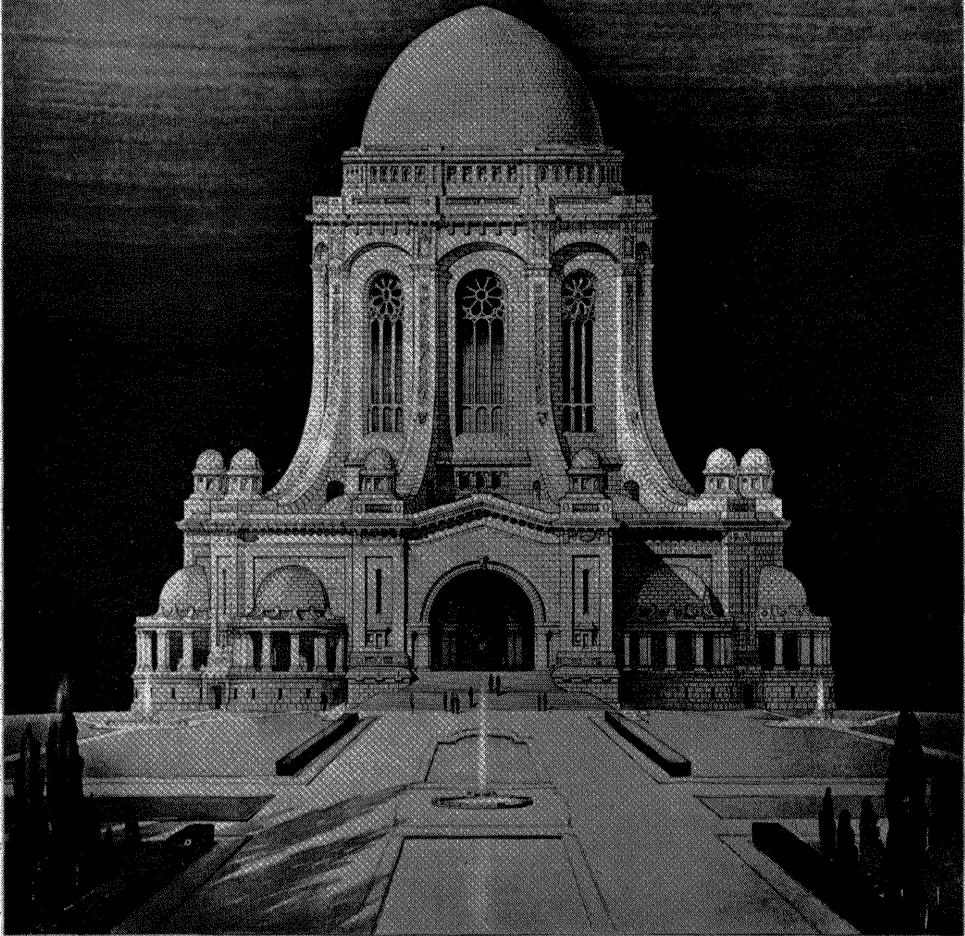
- CMR-ARCHT -

REMEY'S "ROMANESQUE" DESIGN.





- MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR -

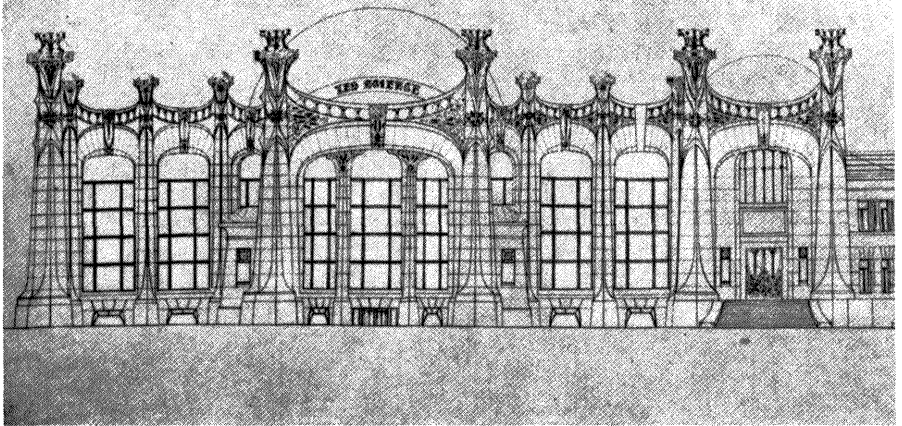


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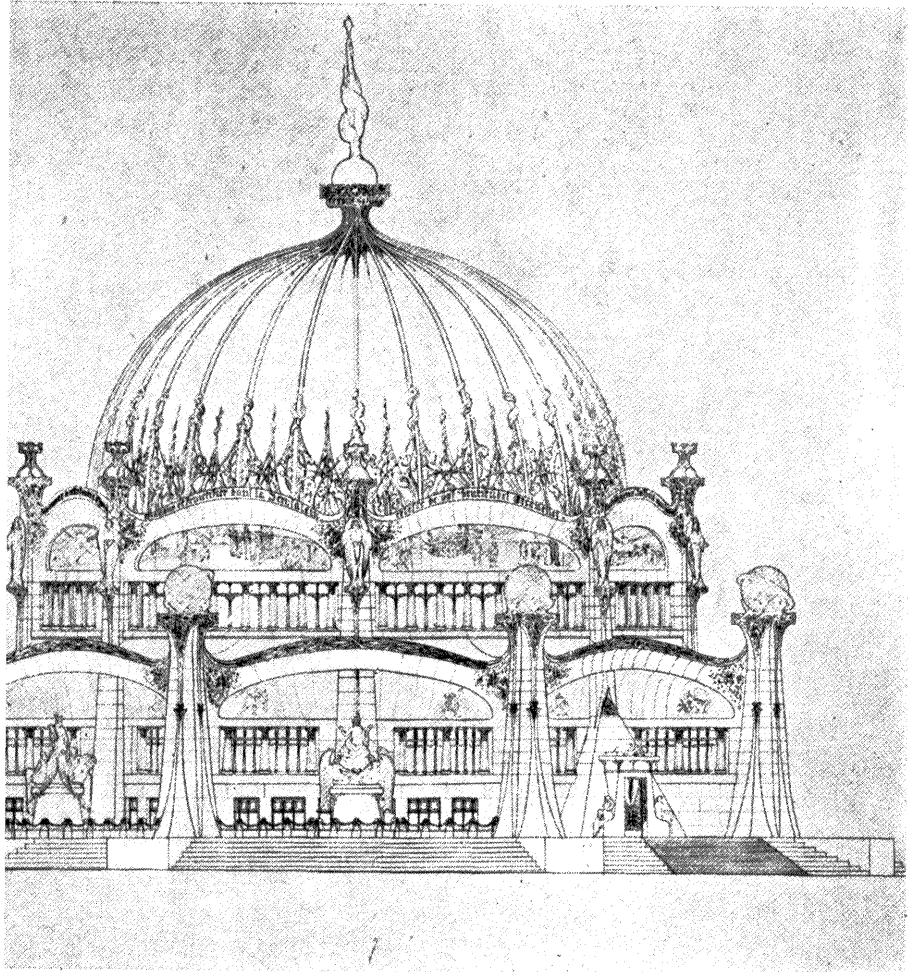


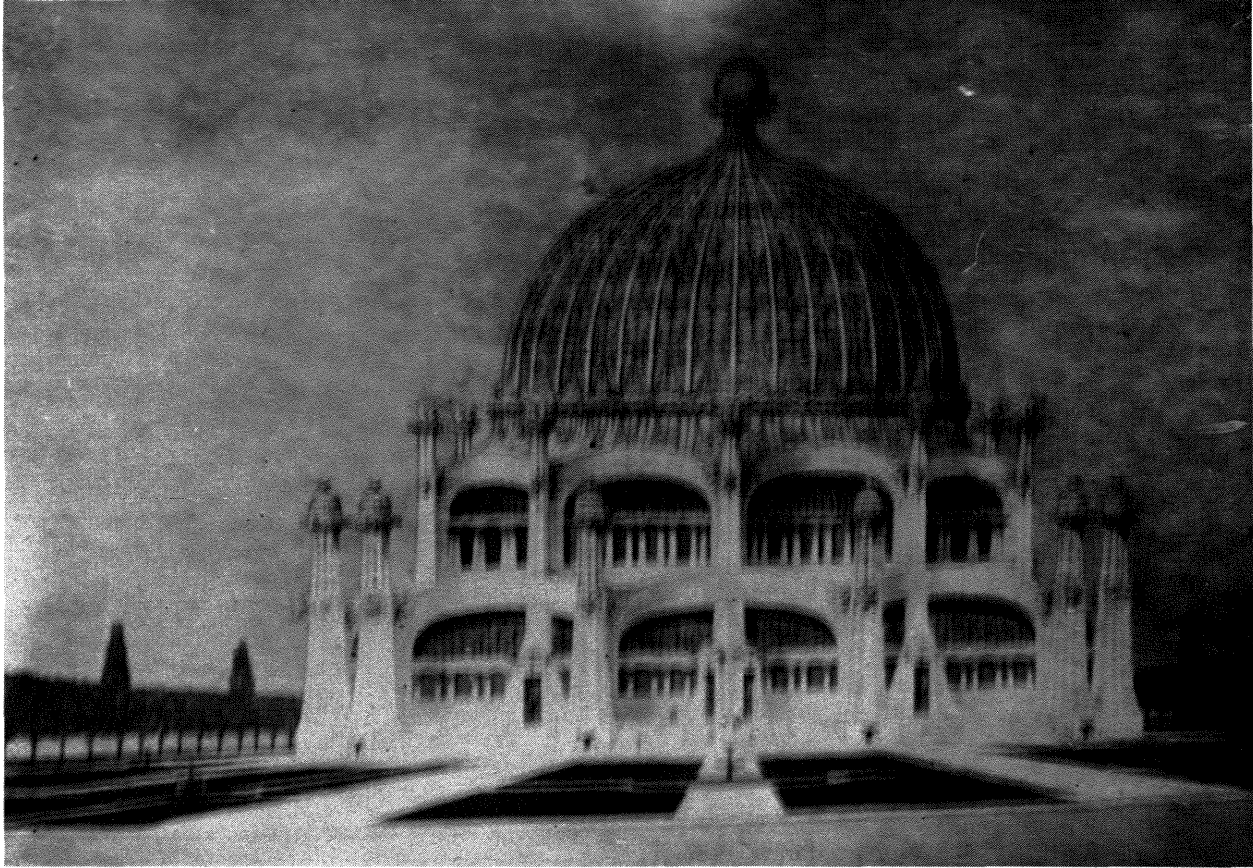
REMEY'S "RENAISSANCE" DESIGN.

PROJECT
POUR
CONCOURS DU PALAIS DE LA PAIX
+ AU DEQUE +
EGHELLE 1100

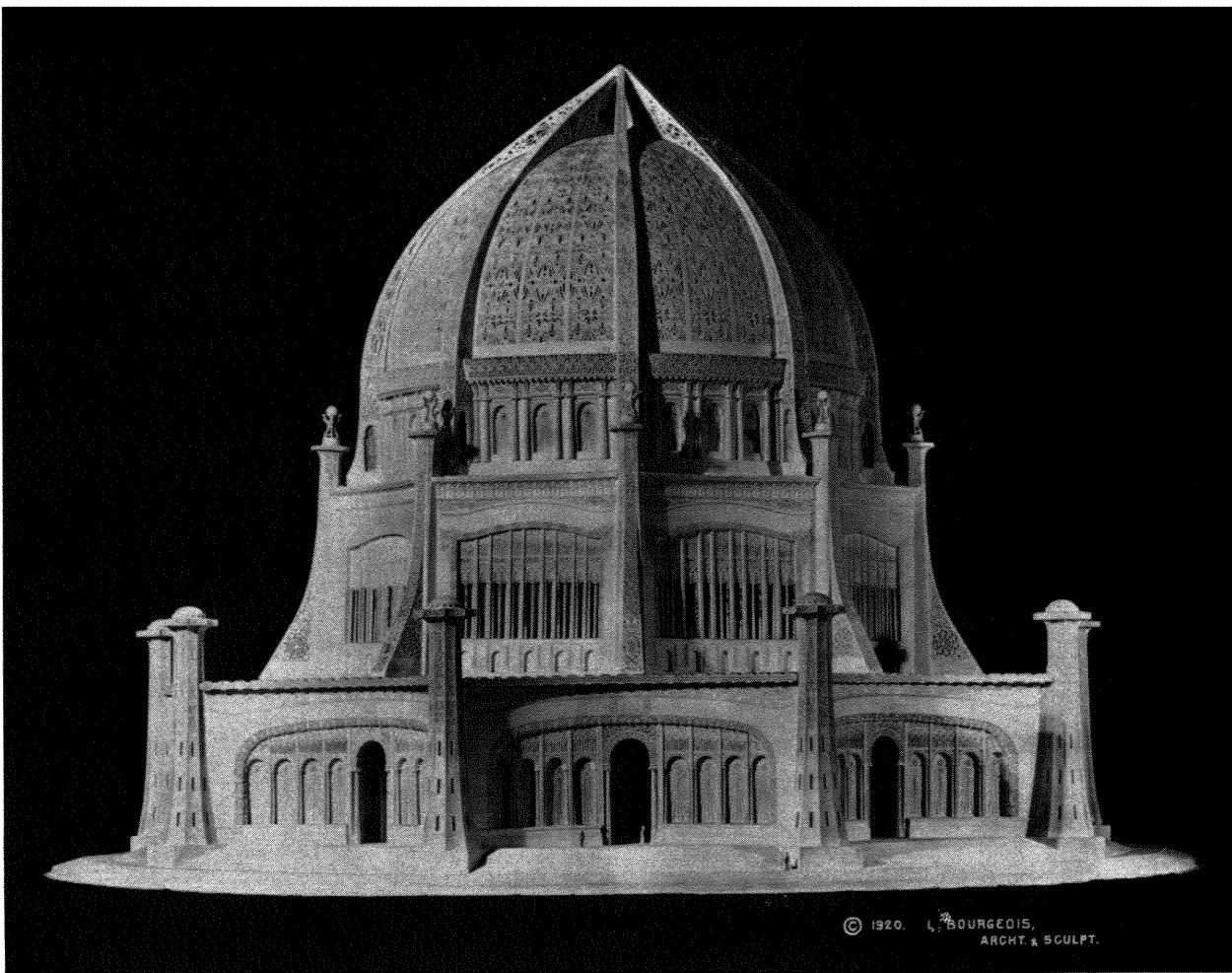


ELEVATION FOR PEACE PALACE AND LIBRARY.
Court of Arbitration, The Hague,
by Bourgeois and Blumenstein

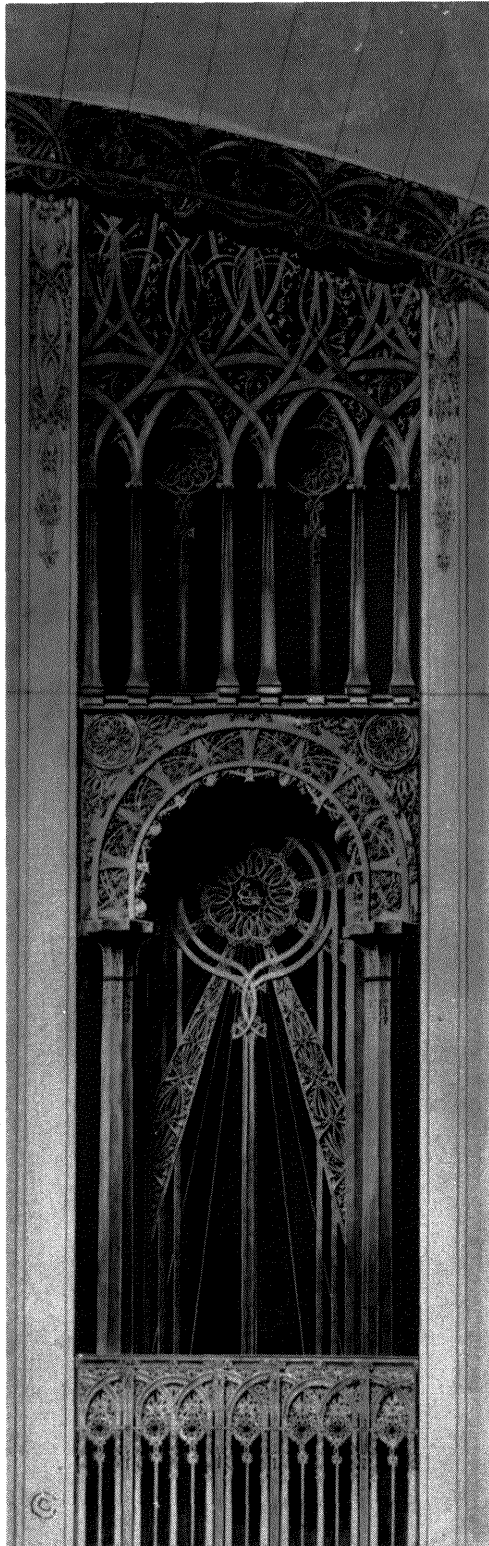




BOURGEOIS DESIGN SUBMITTED TO THE BAHAI TEMPLE UNITY IN 1909.



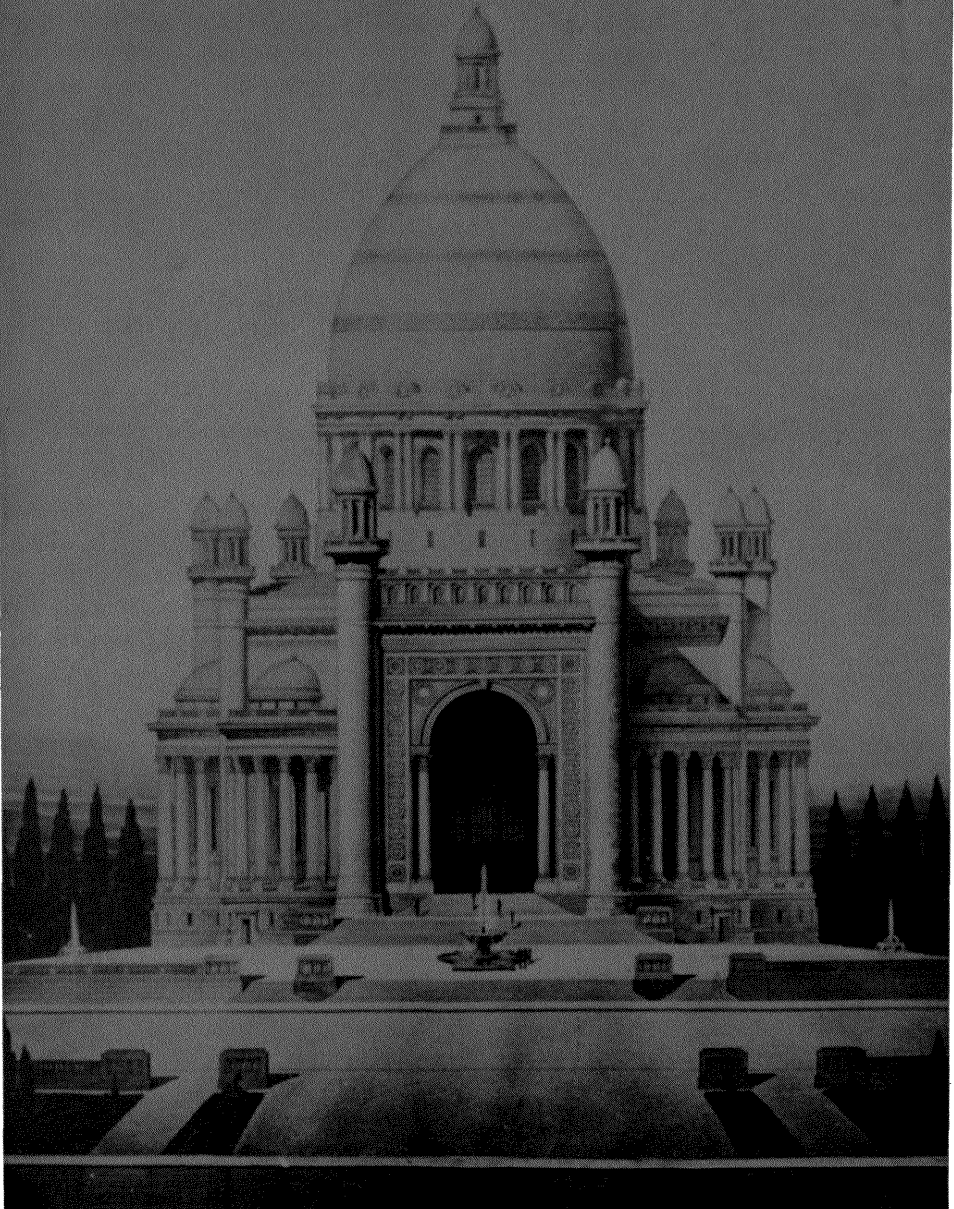
PLASTER MODEL OF THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR DESIGN
exhibited by Bourgeois at the Bahá'í National Convention in 1920.



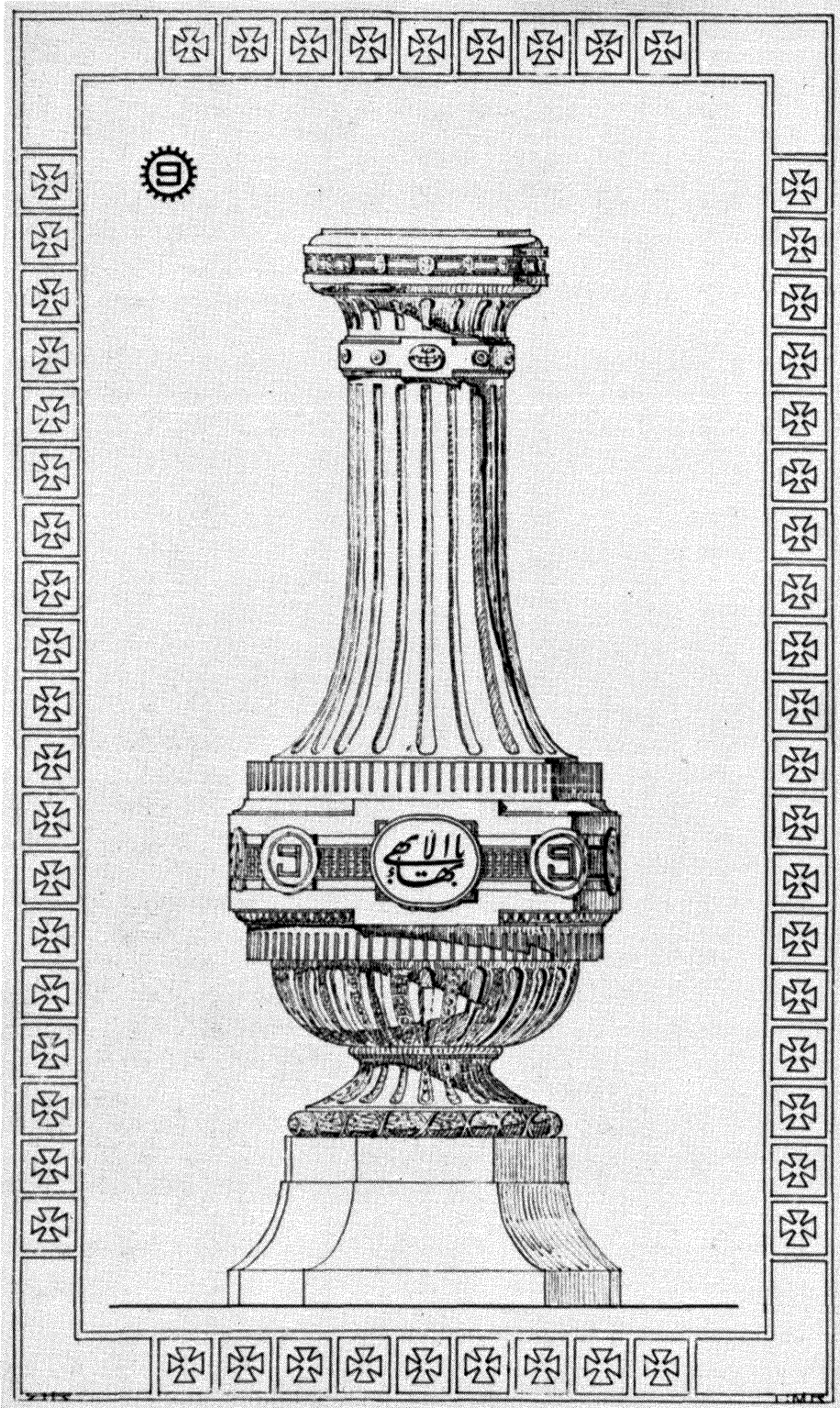
DETAIL DRAWING
OF BOURGEOIS
for proposed orna-
ment for first story
facade of the Mash-
riqu'l-Adhkár.



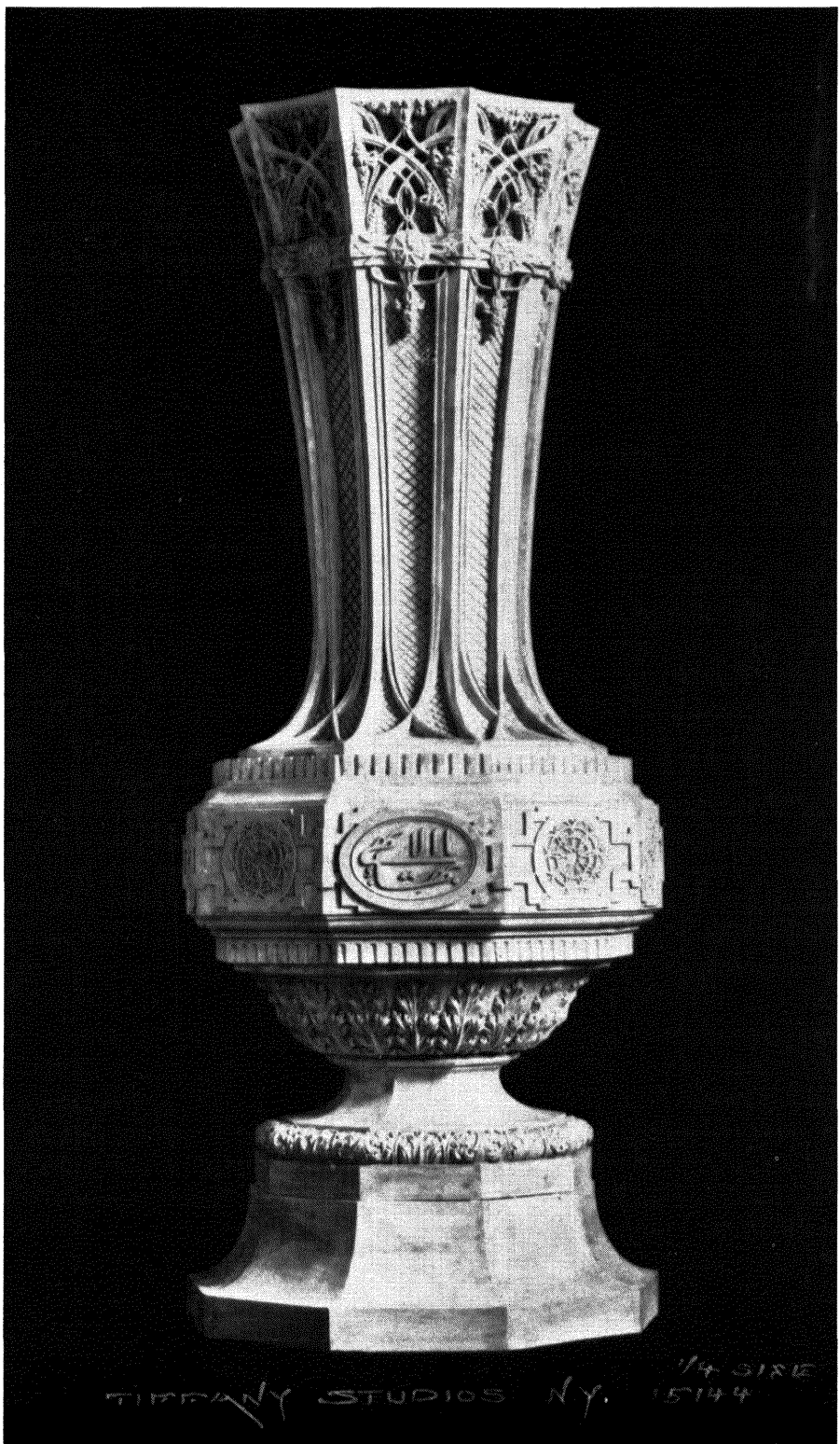
MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR



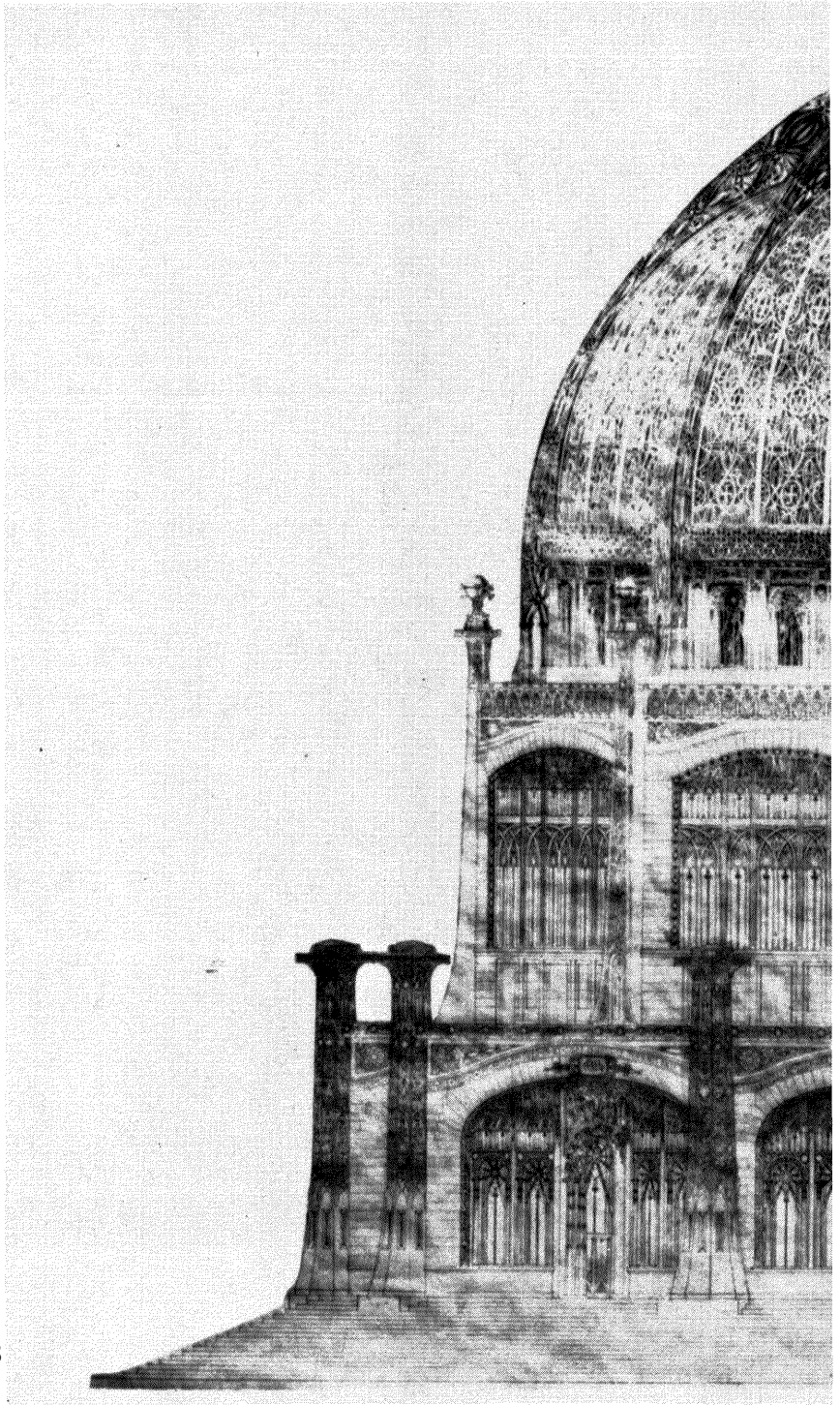
REMEY'S "ROMAN CLASSIC" DESIGN.



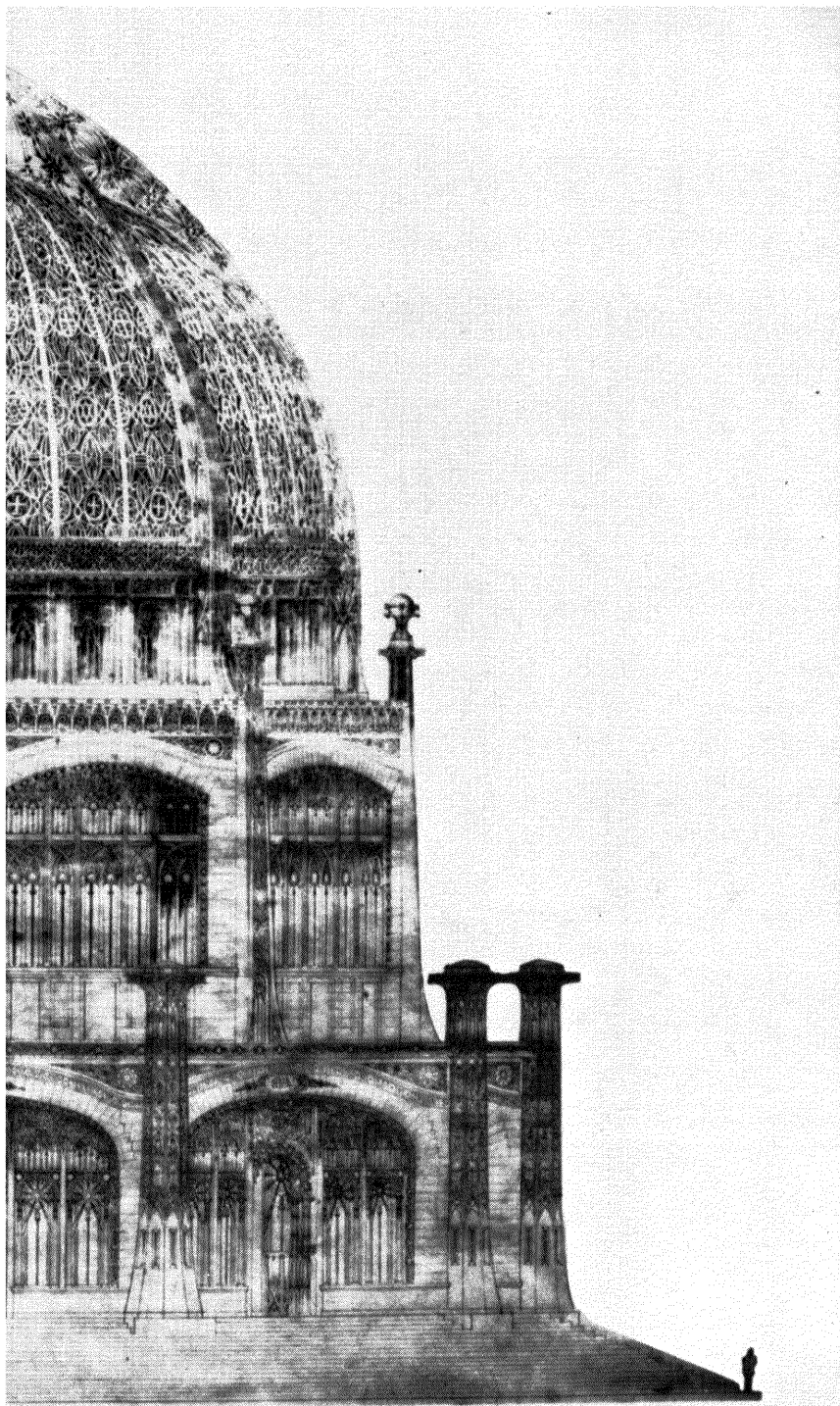
REMEY VASE DESIGN, 1914.



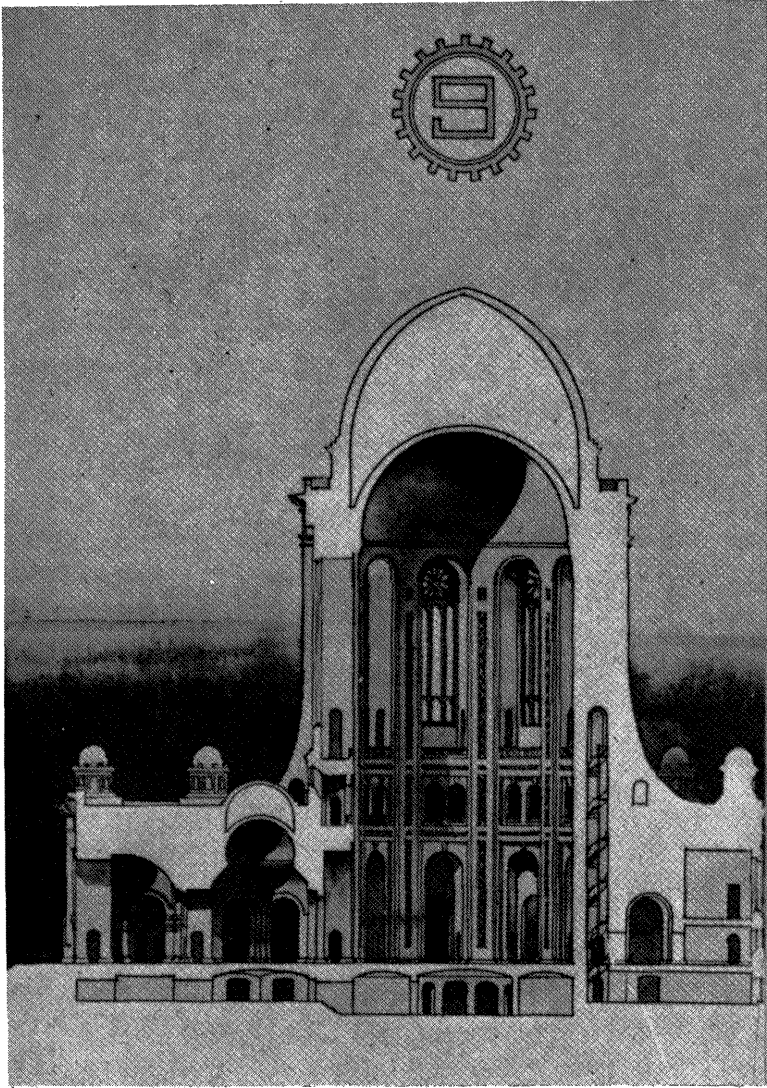
BOURGEOIS VASE DESIGN, 1914.



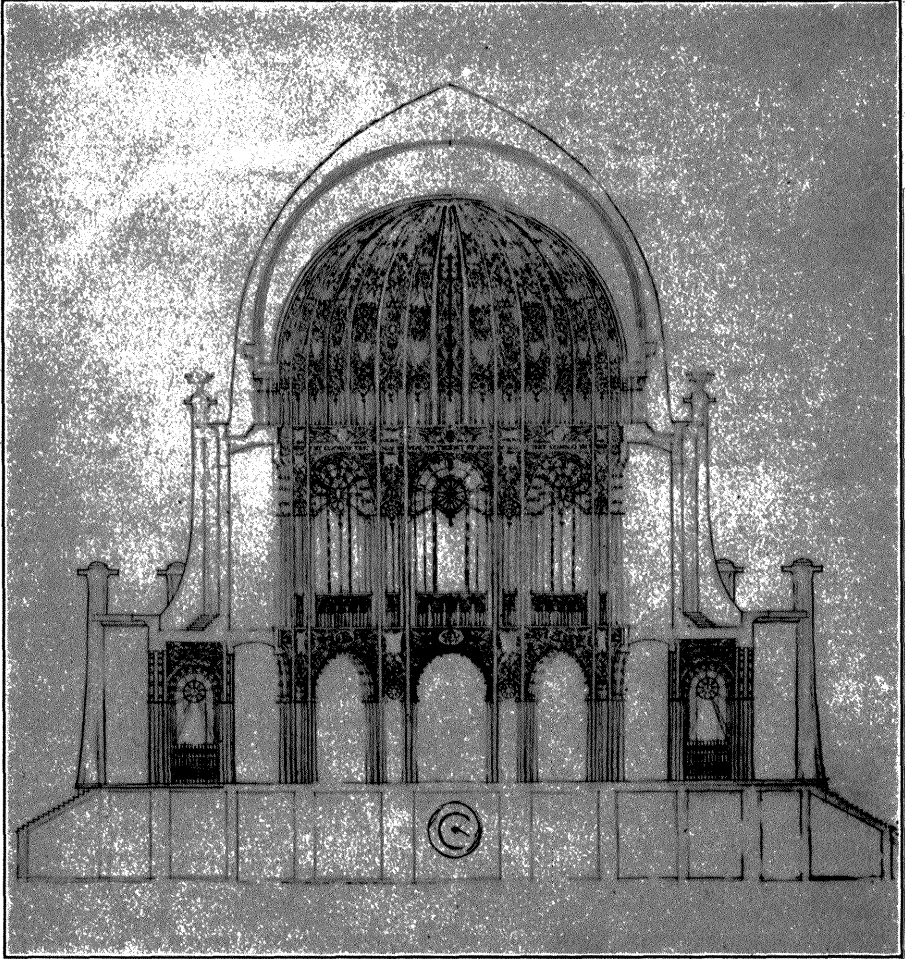
BOURGEOIS'S FINAL REVISED DESIGN
for the Mashriq'ul-Adhkár.



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

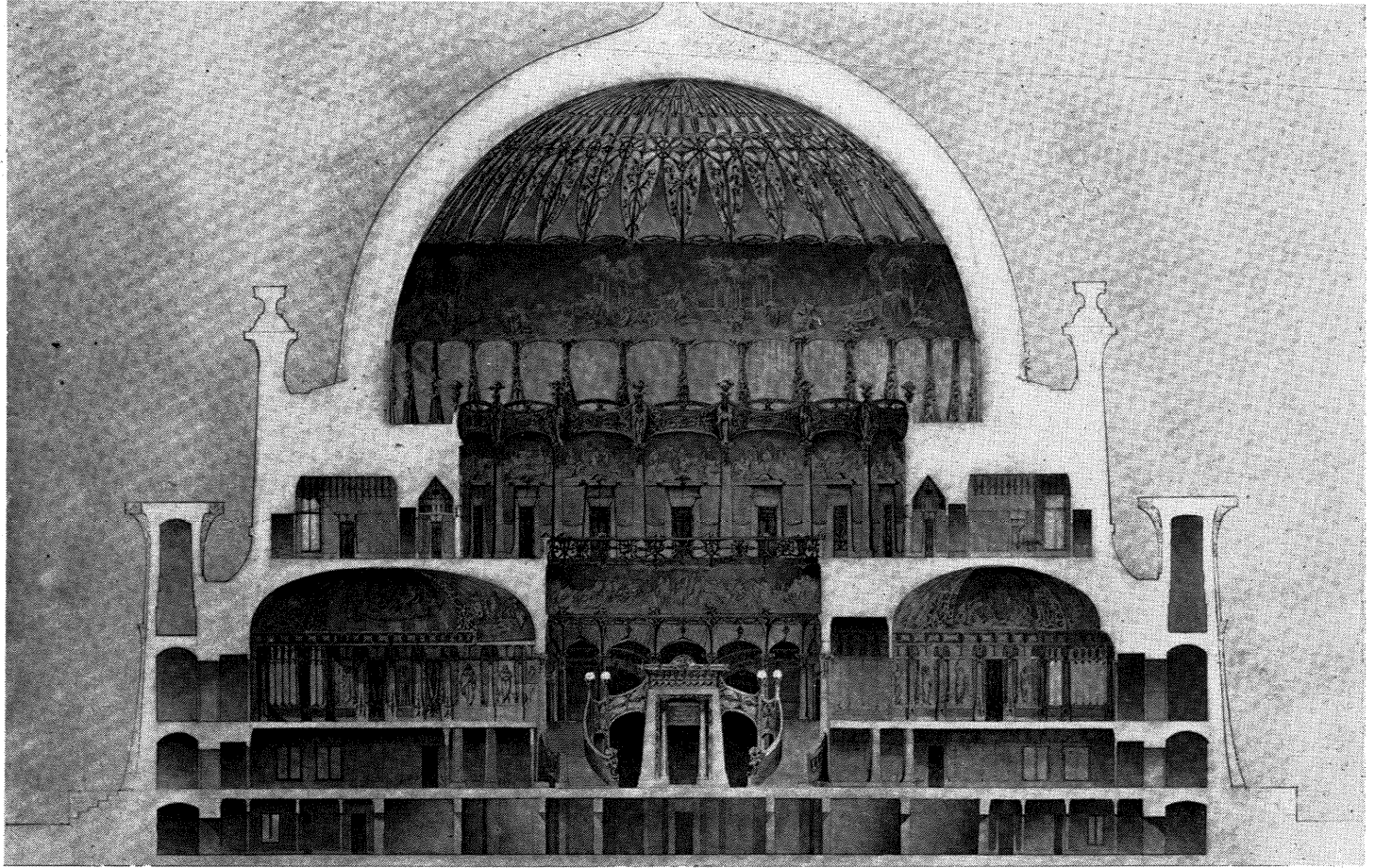


SECTION, REMEY'S "RENAISSANCE" DESIGN.

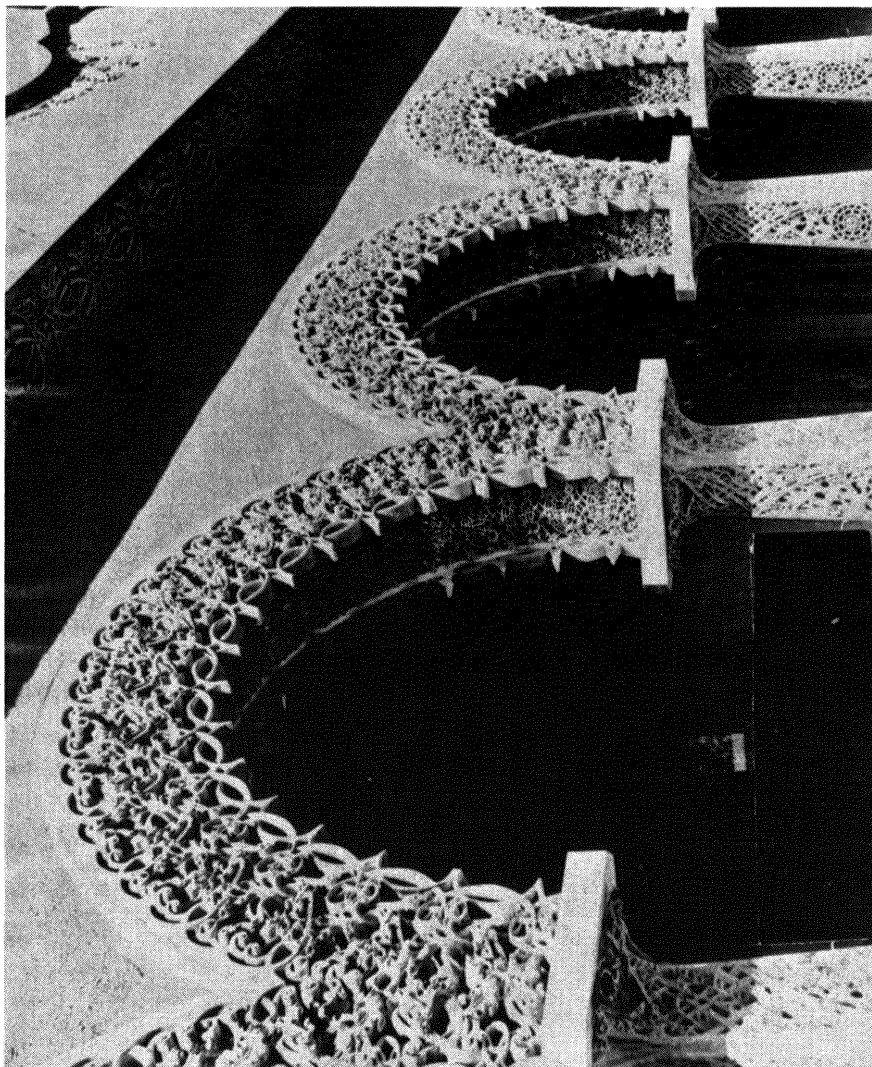


Bahá'í World, vol. 4.

SECTION, BOURGEOIS MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR DESIGN.



SECTION, BOURGEOIS AND BLUMENSTEIN PEACE PALACE AND LIBRARY.
Court of Arbitration, The Hague

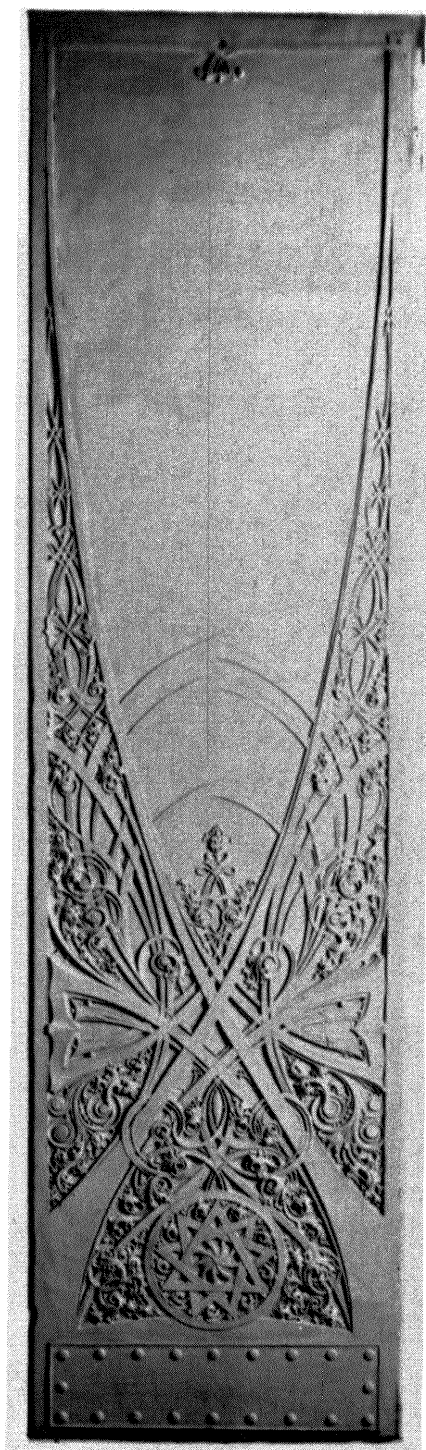


DETAIL OF DE LONGPRE HOUSE
by Bourgeois (and de Longpre?)

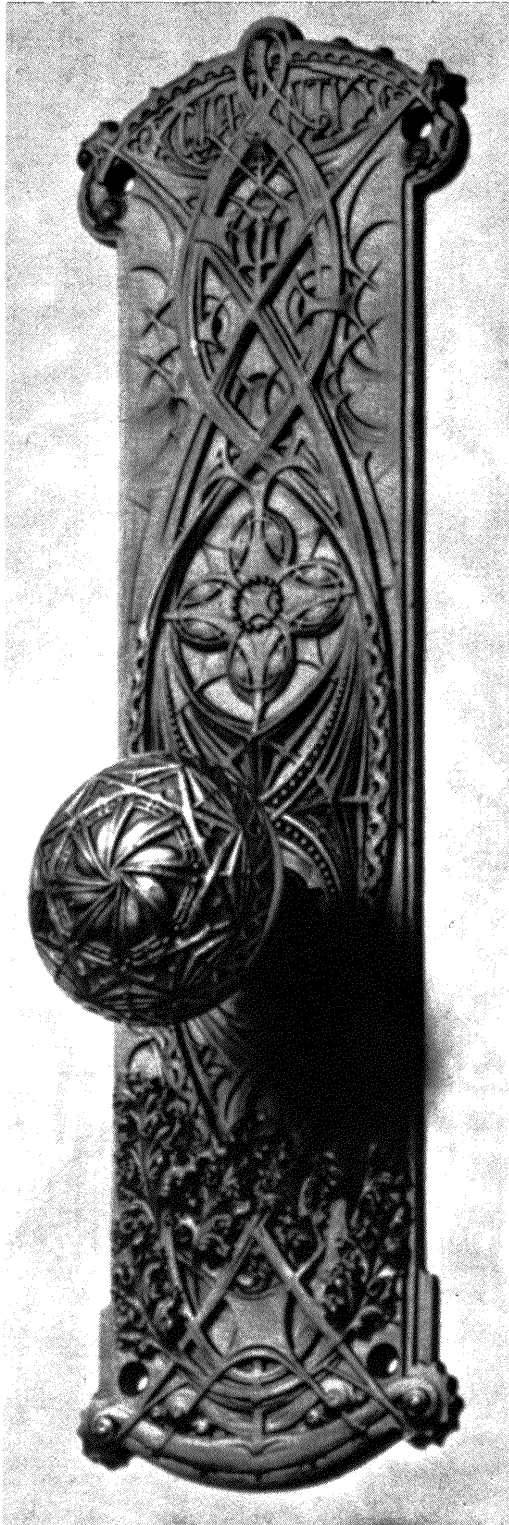
National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.



MODEL OF BOURGEOIS DESIGN FOR WINDOW ORNAMENT
for the third story of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.



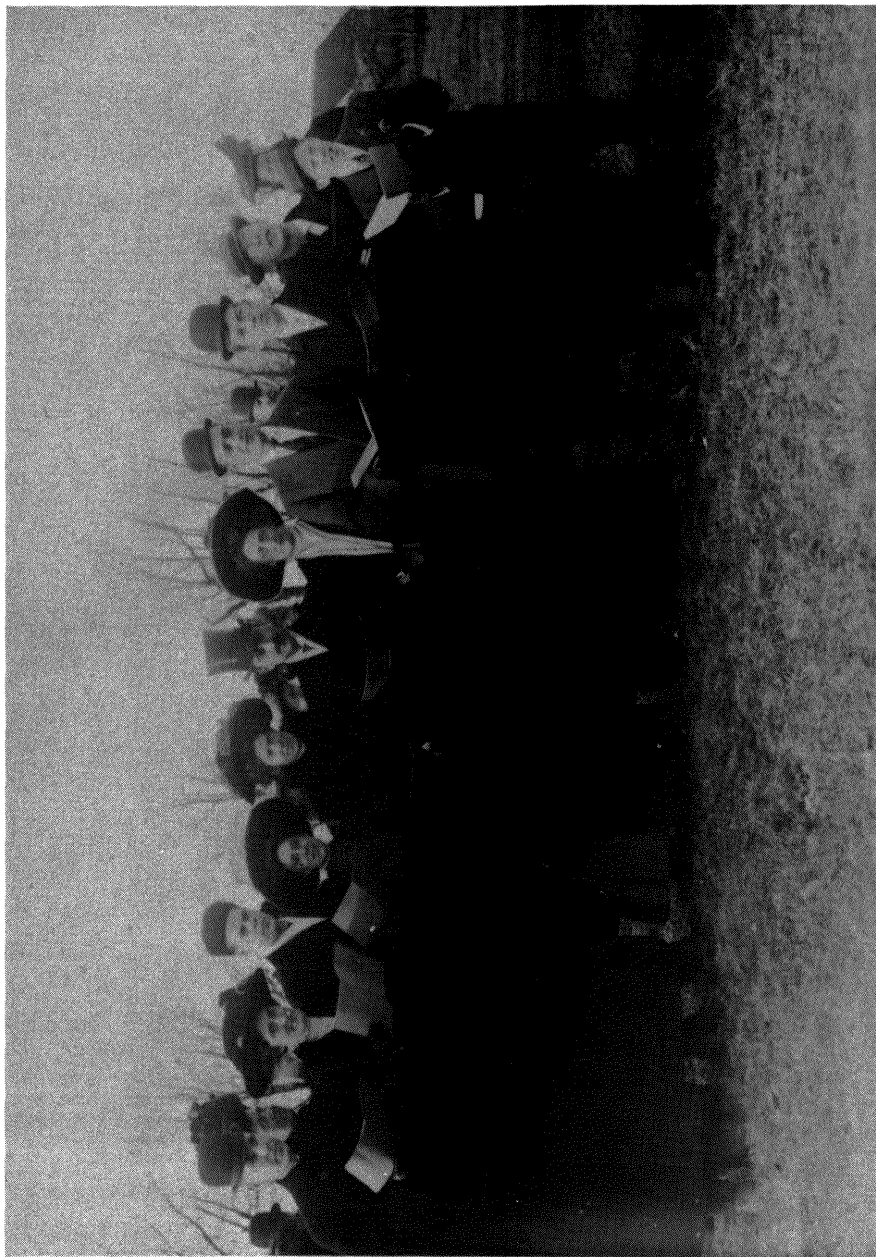
MODEL OF BOUR-
GEOIS DESIGN FOR
CAST BRONZE DOORS
for the first story of
the Mashriqu'l-
Adhkár.



SULLIVAN
DOOR PLATE
for the Guaranty
Building.

PART THREE

THE PRACTICE



THE VAHID CHORAL SOCIETY
on the grounds of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, 1909.

National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHORAL SONG AND SERMONIZING IN WILMETTE

During the years in which a design for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was being sought, and when selected built, a parallel process of developing a devotional practice for the building was occurring. The song aspect of this process was primarily concerned with choral music: from the Vahid Choral Society of over seventy years ago to the dissolution, and subsequent attempted reformation, of the Bahá'í House of Worship Choir in 1983.

THE VAHID CHORAL SOCIETY

Following the provisional selection, in the spring of 1908, of a site on which to build, there was a sense of expectancy that a completed building in which to worship would soon be available and a determination to be prepared. In the early summer of 1908, Albert Windust drafted a letter at the request of Louise Waite to be sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which stated that:

... we, the Friends of Chicago and vicinity, looking forward to the crowning event—the dedicatory exercises held in the completed Building—believing that music and singing will be a prominent feature of that event, as well as all large gatherings in that Sanctuary thereafter, inquire of Thee regarding Its Musical Department of Service. . . .

The letter further stated that its purpose was to inform ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that it was intended to:

... encourage the gathering together in regular rehearsals [of] those blessed with singing voices—whether children or adults or both—and others who are desirous of learning the grand, the sublime, or the restful choruses from the great Oratorios, together with humbler compositions, forming the nucleus of a “Dedicatory Chorus,” to sing at the dedication of the Mashrak-el-Azcar—baptizing It, as it were, with an outburst of melody and harmony befitting such a great event in the Kingdom of God . . .

After asking whether an organ or other musical instruments could be used in the building, the letter stated that it was believed that beginning these rehearsals would serve as “an added stimulus to the accomplishment of the erection of the Building—especially among the young.”

Seventy-two signatures were gathered for this letter from people in Chicago, Fruitport in Michigan, Kenosha and Racine in Wisconsin, and one woman in Bellingham, Washington. The letter was considered at a meeting of the Chicago House of Spirituality on 28 June 1908, but they decided to defer sending it.¹

Interest in the matter did not disappear, however. Later that summer the Kenosha community decided to buy a new piano, as they wished “to learn some of the songs preparatory to the Dedication of the first Mash-rek-el-Askar erected . . . in these regions.”² And in Chicago itself the first Western Bahá’í choir was founded: the Vahid Choral Society.

The exact date of the founding of the choir is not known, but regular rehearsals probably started sometime during the summer or fall of 1908. As it was originally planned to hold the first national Bahá'í convention in November 1908, it is likely that this occasion would have been a target for the new choir's efforts. The choir was jointly founded by Louise Waite and Albert Windust and drew its members from the young people of the Chicago Bahá'í community.

In early 1909, at a joint meeting of the House of Spirituality and the Chicago Temple Committee to make arrangements for the postponed convention, now planned for March, Louise Waite, as chairman of the Music Committee, and Miss Tyckson, of the Young People's Society, were asked to coordinate the music for a special program planned for the Naw-Rúz feast to be held as part of the convention on Sunday, 21 March.³ This substantial program included the first public appearance of the Vahid Choral Society and set a pattern for such celebrations at early conventions.

At 10 o'clock the delegates and friends began to assemble in Corinthian Hall, Masonic Temple, but it was nearly 11 o'clock before the blaze of electric lights announced the commencing of the meeting. The platform was decorated with palms and flowers, and to the left of the hall were banked the singers of the Chicago Assembly, who had prepared special music for the occasion. The opening chords of the piano prelude silenced the assemblage and the limpid tones of a beautiful violin solo, rendered by Miss Lena Moneak, quieted the soul.⁴

All then sang Waite's hymn "His glorious Sun has Risen"; Thornton Chase read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "New Year's Tablet";⁵ the Chicago Assembly Sunday School children recited the "Bahai Alphabet"; and Charles Currier read the twenty-fourth psalm. At this point came the choir's debut, as they sang the anthem "King of Kings" (Simper), with Bessie Diggett as soloist.

After the reading of “the glorious Festival Commune, revealed by Baha’o’llah, and a few moments of silence, the singers, quietly, while seated, rendered ‘Lovely Appear’ (Gounod) as a greeting to the delegates and speakers.”⁶ Then followed four brief talks by visitors, after which all sang Waite’s “Great Day of God,” and Mirza Raffie chanted. There were two more talks, then all sang Waite’s “Tell the Wondrous Story,” and after another three talks the meeting was closed by the choir singing “The Prophetic Song” (Parker).

The choir also participated in a public meeting held in conjunction with the convention on the evening of Monday, March 22. The meeting was chaired by Thornton Chase, there were eight speakers, and, in addition to the choir’s performance, Lena Moneak again played and Bessie Diggett and Albert Windust sang solos.⁷

After the convention the choir remained active. On Sunday, 13 June 1909, they went to Kenosha, Wisconsin, to join with the Kenosha Bahá’í community in their regular Sunday meeting. The Kenosha minutes record that:

A very beautiful and interesting meeting was held and the Choral Society favored us with some fine singing, which was followed by selections from the Redeem orchestra. After the morning meeting, the visitors enjoyed a short walk about the city and upon returning to the hall they were served with dinner. About 2:30 in the afternoon another meeting was held in the hall and the Choral Society rendered several more beautiful selections, the Redeem orchestra played a few pieces and Brother Windust sang a beautiful solo.⁸

Those at the afternoon meeting also heard talks by Thornton Chase, Albert Windust, and Bernard Jacobsen and enjoyed light refreshments.

During the summer of 1909, Louise Waite received an unexpected Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inviting her to come to

'Akká. The night before she left in early September, she met with the Choral Society to hear them once more. Windust was not able to be present, but he telephoned a message that he had a letter to send with Waite asking for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions about music in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, and that he also wished her to take his conductor's baton to ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá to bless it. Louise Waite had originally given him this baton, and on her way to 'Akká she had it set with a heavy silver tip in London. 'Abdu'l-Bahá did bless the baton, and he explained to her that in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* itself there would be only voices heard, but that in an adjoining assembly hall singing accompanied by instruments would be permissible.⁹

On 24 January 1910, Waite, as president of the Vahid Choral Society, sent a circular letter to its members which described to them 'Abdu'l-Bahá's attitude to their work and encouraged them to participate in rehearsals in preparation for that year's convention:

Dear singers to the King:

On Friday evening, January 28th, at the Baldwin Piano Rooms, 262 Wabash Avenue, a continuance of the weekly rehearsals of the Vahid Choral Society will be begun and the music for the Unity Temple Convention . . . will be taken up. It is my sincere hope that all will enter into the spirit of this work, for the cause is great. Last year your singing at the Convention was spoken of all over the country by returning delegates. You did wonderfully well. This year you will, I know, do wonderfully better, for your incentive is greater. Last year's work was done in an experimental way with no thought of permanent organization. This year our Society stands with the stamp and seal of recognition and approval of Abdul-Baha. Let me quote again to you His words said to me while in Acca. I asked Him if He approved of our Choral Society and their past work. There was real joy in His face as He replied: "Yes. Music has a great place; it is one of the highest

forms of expression of spiritual ideas; it is a great art and should be cultivated. All who have talent should study and develop it, and the work of the Choral Society was most acceptable; it was very good." I said: "I wish you could have heard them sing at the Convention on the 21st of March; they sang as if inspired." He replied: "Abdul-Baha did hear them and saw them too, and He will always hear them." And in the Tablet received by me, upon my return to Chicago, from Abdul-Baha, He wrote: "I ask that the Choral Society may become assisted to the guidance of the people, the love of the human kind and the attraction of the hearts." Surely no greater inspiration could be needed than these words of assurance and His prayers. To the end that we may add to His joy, let us work most earnestly, for there remain but a few weeks in which to prepare for the great occasion before us.

Hoping all will be present on Friday evening, January 28th . . .¹⁰

On 16 February 1910, a "Musical" was held under the Vahid Choral Society's auspices to raise money for the Temple Fund. The choir itself did not perform, but an "excellent performance given by artists of note," including violin, piano, and vocal items and reading of verse by Louise Waite, raised "a goodly sum."¹¹

The second convention, in 1910, was the first to be held during the Riḍván period. Those attending gathered for a Festival Service on Sunday morning, 24 April. As in the preceding year, the "meeting was called for 10, but it was near 11 o'clock when it convened, the intervening time being spent busily in getting acquainted, delivering greetings, etc."

The program began with a piano rendition of "Contemplation" from Gaul's oratorio "The Holy City," followed by all singing "His glorious Sun has Risen." The Tablet of Visitation of Bahá'u'lláh was read, and then the choir sang "Prophetic Song" (Parker). Mountfort Mills, as chairman, welcomed the delegates; Corinne True read a tablet; Miss Waller sang "Song of Thanksgiving" (Allitsen); Zia Bagdadi

chanted; and a prayer was read followed by silent contemplation.

At this point there was a substantial musical interlude, with the pianist playing "Adoration" and the choir singing an arrangement of "A New Heaven and a New Earth," both from Gaul's "Holy City." This was followed by Bessie Diggett singing Waite's "Prelude," with the choir then performing her "Benediction." This latter song of Waite's had been composed under the influence of her experience of the preceding year's convention and was rapidly becoming accepted as the most popular Western Bahá'í devotional song.

After three brief talks, all sang "Great Day of God," and after three further talks, Madame Ragne Linné sang "Come Unto Me." The final six talks were divided by all singing Waite's "Temple Song," which she had composed especially for this convention. The program then ended with the choir singing "The Heavens Resound" (Beethoven).¹²

During the 1910 convention the Vahid Choral Society also participated in the public meeting held on the evening of Tuesday, 26 April. The choir, assisted by Miss Ellerman, added "sweet strains of music" to a meeting which lasted until nearly midnight.¹³

Some time after this convention the Vahid Choral Society declined. Albert Windust entered a period of business difficulties, and he may have been unable to give enough time to directing them. Also, the organizational difficulties in the Chicago Bahá'í community itself may have played a part in the choir's eclipse (see Chapter Five). Whatever the reason, in 1911 Windust had to announce "that upon this occasion the audience was to be the choir."¹⁴

However, the lack of a choir did not prevent the 1911 convention from being richly musical. There were vocal contributions to its programs by Miss Ellerman and Windust. At the Unity Feast given on Saturday evening, 29 April Louise

Waite's husband, Edgar, sang the "Prelude" and all joined in the familiar "Benediction." In the Sunday morning program Mountfort Mills gave the first performance of Emma Holmes' "The Comforter," which he repeated by request at the closing of the convention on 2 May. And throughout the convention there was singing of hymns by Waite.¹⁵

For the convention of 1912, with its expected "special guest," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the choir was revived. That year they numbered about forty-five, and according to Ella Robarts, who as a trained musician and piano teacher should have been able to judge, they were good.¹⁶

In 1912, the Ridván Feast was held on Saturday evening, April 27, and was attended by around 350 people. The tables at which they sat were decorated with roses, hyacinths, violets, anemones, and the occasional sunflower. Mills again sang "The Comforter," the audience heard a message from 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he would soon arrive in Chicago, and there were several brief talks. Then Ragne Linné gave the first performance of Louise Waite's most ambitious composition, "The New Jerusalem," which she would sing again a few days later for 'Abdu'l-Bahá himself.

After further talks, a Miss Lee sang, and after more talks Mr. Paton sang. Then after a final group of talks, the meeting closed with all singing Waite's "Softly His Voice is Calling," which she had written originally for the children of the Chicago Bahá'í community in 1907.

At the meeting on Sunday morning, 28 April the "hall was filled to overflowing." After an opening period of silence, the program began with selections by the choir, assisted by Emma Holmes at the organ, Lillian James at the piano, a violinist, a harpist, and a flautist. The program continued with alternating groups of short talks and songs by the choir, and this "meeting of wonderful spiritual fragrance, power and unity" closed with Linné singing the "Prelude" and the

choir the "Benediction."¹⁷ On the evening of 30 April 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to speak at the closing public meeting of the convention. The meeting opened as the "chorus vocalized the songs of praise which filled every heart," and then 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke on the importance of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. After he spoke all sang the "Temple Song," Linné sang the "Benediction," and to close the meeting the choir sang "The Prophetic Song." At last the singers had sung for their "King."¹⁸

The programs the Vahid Choral Society participated in at these early conventions are obviously expansions of the community meeting model drawn up by the House of Spirituality in 1903 (see Chapter Two), but they were also considered paradigmatic for future *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* practice by those who took part in them. The original impetus for the formation of the Vahid Choral Society had been the expectation of "baptizing" such a building with song, and their work was known to have the approval of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Similarly, the use of Waite's hymns, which feature so largely in these convention programs, was known to be encouraged by him, and such compositions generally had been approved in Tablets for *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* use. Dropping the brief talks, which were mostly personal comments from delegates on their feelings at attending the convention, and the instrumental elements would have made these programs fit for community devotions in a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* by the criteria then known.

As was demonstrated in 1911, this type of program was not dependent on the existence of a choir, however. The absence of a choir that year did not substantially alter the type of program used. The "grand" and "sublime" could still be offered by talented individuals, and the audience could essay the "humbler compositions." When the choir did participate, its repertoire and that of the soloists and congregation overlapped to some extent: a piece such as the "Benediction"

could be passed from one to the other from occasion to occasion. The participation of a choir no doubt heightened the experience of attending one of these programs, but its absence would not fundamentally alter it.

Indeed, with the exception of the hiatus in 1915 (see Chapter Four), devotional programs at conventions after the demise of the Vahid Choral Society continued in much the same form as before, although their scale was more on the lines of the reduced programs of 1912, than the marathons of 1909 or 1910. The singing of Waite's hymns also occurred during the business sessions of these later conventions, as they were used on occasion in conjunction with or to substitute for a prayer at the beginning of a session. Thus, with the example given at national Bahá'í events, as well as in the accustomed practice of most local communities, the average Bahá'í who thought about the issue in 1920 would most probably have expected *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* devotions to consist of the reading of Bahá'í writings and other scriptures, with song elements ranging from the singing of hymns by all, a choir, or a soloist to solo and part singing of more elaborate compositions.

THE EARLY USES OF FOUNDATION HALL

On the 9th July 1922, the Martyrdom of the Báb was commemorated in the uncompleted basement structure of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. The account of this occasion published in the *National Teaching Committee Bulletin* described this as "the first service" held there,¹⁹ and True also described this meeting as a "Service".²⁰ The program was rather different, however, from what might have been expected. The lumber being used on the site had been arranged into temporary seating and "a speakers stand and platform,"²¹ and there were talks by Vail, Bagdadi, and True, followed by Mrs. Bagdadi chanting and Vail reading prayers. There were no hymns and no other music.

Later in 1922, the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh was celebrated in Foundation Hall on the afternoon of November 12. Considering the time of year, the condition of the structure, and that it was pouring rain, that around 150 people attended argues for a reasonable degree of enthusiasm about using the building among the adjacent Bahá'í communities. At this meeting True chaired, Vail and Bagdadi spoke, Mrs. Bagdadi chanted, "and after a check of \$1000.00 was presented for the Temple —was sung: 'Nearer My God to Thee'" which was exceedingly impressive."²²

The form of these two meetings was obviously similar, as was the personnel conducting them. That the former lacked any ingredient of song might be accounted for by the solemnity of the occasion commemorated, but the latter was also conspicuously lacking in any of the several well-known Bahá'í songs that would have been appropriate to the occasion. Yet however these two meetings may have differed from what we might have expected based on past events, they began to define a pattern for the use of Foundation Hall that would last for many years to come. National Conventions held there continued to include hymns through the rest of the period of Bahá'í hymnody, but the meetings organized specifically for Foundation Hall concentrated on the verbal presentation of certain aspects of the Faith and directed that presentation, in particular, to non-Bahá'ís.

A central figure in this development was Albert Vail. Until 1918, Vail had been a Unitarian minister in Urbana, Illinois, but in that year he was forced to resign because of his Bahá'í teaching. He moved to Chicago and proposed to establish there an "independant, undenominational church . . . dedicated to the universal principles of Baha'o'llah."²³ He further explained:

This church would belong to the old religious order and be conducted by a Bahai minister. But of course it could not be a Bahai

church for in our new revelation this is impossible. It would be simply a bridge between the old order and the new. At its services I would plan to present the great principles of the Bahai Revelation, the pure Christianity of the Christ. . . . Step by step would I and any other of the friends who spoke from this pulpit endeavor to lead the seekers who are attracted by these universal principles out of the old to the Threshold of the Abha Revelation. We would then announce to them that classes for the study of the Bahai principles were being held here and there throughout the city on weekday evenings and afternoons, and there we could give them the full Revelation. Thus would this church, we feel become an open door to the Bahai Cause, and who knows how through the assistance of the Covenant it may bring many souls into our glorious Cause and strengthen the Chicago Assembly and raise up those who are to worship in the Mashrak-el-Azkar. Whenever the service of this institution was ended it could dissolve into the universal glory of the Mashrak-el-Azkar.

And all the time between Sundays the minister of this "Church of the Kingdom" would be free to herald in Chicago and the untitled West the divine Glad Tidings. And thus he could . . . be both a travelling Bahai teacher and the minister of the "Church of the Kingdom."²⁴

Among Vail's supporters for this plan were May Maxwell and W. H. Randall from outside Chicago, and a Professor Rugg, True, and Bagdadi in the city.²⁵ However, not all were in favor. After two hours of discussion, the House of Spirituality "unanimously voted against the establishment of a church outside of the assembly."²⁶ They wrote to Vail, asking that he discuss the matter with them before going any further, and stated that they hoped that he would decide "in favor of traveling and teaching as a Bahai teacher rather than the establishment of the church you mention."²⁷ Vail did so decide and began a career as a financially supported Bahá'í teacher that was to last until 1932.

The subject of Vail conducting independent Bahá'í-related

events came up again in 1920, however, when he proposed to hold meetings at his home at the same time as the Chicago Bahá'í community's regular Sunday meetings. The House of Spirituality sent a delegation to attempt to dissuade him, empowering it to ask Vail to take charge of the community Sunday meetings.²⁸ The minutes of the House of Spirituality over the following year have various references to Vail being requested to take charge of specific Sunday meetings, or series of meetings, until he was asked to "take charge . . . for an extended time" in October 1921. The arrangement then made was that Vail would conduct all Sunday meetings in Chicago, except for once a month, when he visited the Urbana Bahá'í community.²⁹ Thus, by the time of the "first service" in the basement structure, Vail was well established as a quasi-minister to the Chicago Bahá'í community, and thereafter his talks dominated the presentation of the Faith in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* for the following decade.

Not surprisingly given his background, Vail was a universalist Bahá'í, seeing the "supreme concept" of "the teaching of . . . the Bahai Movement" as being "the inherent unity of the universe."³⁰ He was disinclined to press matters that might seem exclusivist or dogmatic on non-Bahá'ís, to the extent that he on occasion accepted people as "Bahá'ís" who only later found out, to their horror in some cases, that the Bahá'í Faith taught racial equality and even approved "mixed" marriages. There was even a time in 1928 when Vail had the Arabic Greatest Name removed from Foundation Hall because it appeared foreign. It is not surprising, then, that during his time as "pastor" of Foundation Hall the Bahá'í hymns were not used at public events. That "universal" ones were not much in evidence either may be related to the general hymn controversy in Chicago (see Chapter Four) or may be because the ethos of the meetings was so oriented toward the direct presentation of selected aspects of the Faith

in speech. It is highly unlikely that Vail or True, his close associate in these activities, were of the anti-hymn party in Chicago. Indeed, the meeting in the Perron home to hear True's report of her 1925 pilgrimage began with prayer by Vail, the singing of Waite's "Softly His Voice is Calling," and Vail reading a tablet.³¹ It would seem, however, that their general attitude toward most uses of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was to deemphasize anything that made it seem "Bahá'í" in an exclusivist, denominational sense.

Although the main use of Foundation Hall during the 1920s was public presentations, there were some attempts at community devotional use. During the summer of 1923, it was planned to hold meetings on Friday evenings, as well as the Sunday meetings, and these were probably for community devotions.³² And after the substantial completion of the basement interior in 1928, there was another attempt. The general letters of the Chicago Spiritual Assembly to community members for August to October 1928 mention a devotional or prayer meeting at 8 P.M. on Fridays,³³ It would seem probable from this latter designation that this was a program of readings, and from the lack of further mention that the series of meetings died out from a combination of transport difficulties and the onslaught of winter.

During the 1920s also, the use of Foundation Hall came to be conceptualized as a national, rather than a Chicago, affair. In its report to the National Convention in 1925, the National Spiritual Assembly noted that in "Chicago the Assembly is most fortunate at having at its disposal the Foundation Hall of the Temple at Wilmette."³⁴ But in its 1926 report the Assembly stated:

We desire also to make it clear that the meetings held in the Foundation Hall of the Temple should not be regarded as a func-

tion of any local Assembly, but as national in scope, and, because it is necessary to regard the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* as a national Bahá'í institution, the National Spiritual Assembly during the present year requested the Temple Committee to supervise all meetings in the Foundation Hall and grounds.³⁵

This changed conceptualization has been expressed through the years in the organization of events in Foundation Hall, and later in the auditorium, being under the jurisdiction of variously named Temple Program, Worship, Devotions, and Activities committees appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly.

It is evident from a letter from the Chicago Assembly to community members of 6 March 1929, that by the later 1920s Foundation Hall meetings were not satisfying the needs of local Bahá'ís (be these devotional, informational, or social).³⁶ This letter notes that during the previous autumn the number of people attending the Sunday afternoon meetings averaged around 90 to 100, and that even during the winter it had averaged around 40 to fifty, but "the percentage of Baha'i friends as compared with the strangers has been very small." The letter goes on to describe the teaching work of Vail, to say how many of the people he had interested attend the Sunday meetings, and to urge the Bahá'ís to attend to give support to his work.

Thus, by the time the superstructure of the building began to be erected, the last vestiges of the conceptualization of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár's* use as a Chicago Bahá'í community devotional center had disappeared, and it was seen increasingly as oriented toward non-Bahá'ís. The Chicago community rented its own center in the city and arranged its own community events there. The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was now to serve a "national" constituency.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1930S

With the resumed construction of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* during the 1930s there were moves to explore the possibilities for its future use.

In February 1931, the National Spiritual Assembly appointed a five-member music committee to “give consideration to the subject of music and its relationship to Bahai meetings and gatherings.”³⁷ A copy of a chant by Kinney was enclosed with the letter appointing the committee for it to “report upon,” and the letter concluded with a confession:

We realize the rather vague nature of the commission we are turning over to you, and that it may not be feasible to work out any extended recommendations, except gradually, but if your Committee should be successful in defining, even to a small extent, that type of music most ideally adapted to the universal and mystic spirit of the Bahai Cause, or to state to what extent music should become a practical part of regular Bahai meetings and how best adapted to the program of a meeting, much gain would be realized. Later, other developments will appear.³⁸

The members of this committee had not been active previously in Bahá'í music. However, they produced a general report (although there is, unfortunately, no surviving report on the Kinney chant) that suggests a serious consideration of their topic:

The shortness of the time available to the present Music Committee has made it difficult for it to do more than make a recommendation on the general subject of Baha'i music, and to request some basic information for the use of the incoming Committee.

Although in the past several compositions have received the approval of the Master and are now being used at meetings and feasts, your Committee feels that no exact pattern can now be laid down for all future Baha'i music, and that the present func-

tion of a Music Committee must be to recommend such music as it considers suitable for Baha'i use, without the creation of any official standard or definite type of Baha'i music.

The most important need at the present time would seem to be to determine the general character of the musical accompaniment to the Temple services, when inaugurated. While it is undoubtedly necessary to make all possible use of the services of those qualified and willing to contribute to the Temple music, it is also highly desirable to safeguard the Temple from any musical efforts, however well meant, which might not be commensurate with the unique standard of the edifice.

It is necessary, also, to determine whether existing religious musical motives may be adapted for Baha'i use, or whether, in this wonderful building, it will be found best to create a new and universal type of music truly Baha'i in character, animated by the spirit of the Teachings and in keeping with the aims and nature of the Temple itself.

Any Music Committee would undoubtedly hesitate to take upon itself the responsibility of recommending any particular type of music for Temple use until some general principles shall have been laid down by the Guardian. The attached list of questions is submitted, therefore, with the hope that this information will make it possible for future Music Committees to function with entire assurance that their work will be in accord with the wishes of the Guardian and the National Spiritual Assembly.³⁹

The questions, which were not sent at that time but which were all previously or subsequently answered, were:

Since architectural motives from all religions have been used in the Temple, may we assume that religious musical themes may be likewise adapted to Baha'i use in that edifice? Or should the characteristic themes of the music associated with the various world religions be used only in the nine chapels, and a new and universal type of purely Baha'i music be evolved for use in the Temple proper?

Is the Temple music to be purely vocal, or is instrumental music also permitted? Can Baha'i chanting be "inspirational" or must it follow a definite score, as a protection against the unskilled? Must any particular language be used? Should all requests to chant in the Temple be approved, or should permission be extended only to those of proven ability, and a gradually rising standard of musical perfection be adhered to? Should the chanting be after the Persian or the Occidental manner, or both? Should chants follow the exact words of the Holy Utterances, or are any changes permitted for greater ease in singing?⁴⁰

The appointment of this first music committee was not officially announced, nor was its report included with the collected reports of national committees printed for consideration at that year's National Convention. It is possible that the report was not written until too late for inclusion. Indeed, the ensuing music committee was only sent a copy in the middle of June 1931, with a covering letter that suggests that the National Assembly might have only recently received it.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the lack of announcement of the committee's existence or any verbal report to the Convention suggests that the Assembly was as tentative about the venture as was the committee.

The letter written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf to be read at the May 1931 National Convention included the information that:

Shoghi Effendi would urge that choir singing by men, women and children be encouraged in the Auditorium and that rigidity in the Baha'i service be scrupulously avoided. The more universal and informal the character of Baha'i worship in the Temple the better Prayers revealed by Baha'u'llah and the Master as well as the sacred writings of the Prophets should be read or chanted as well as hymns based upon Baha'i or non-Baha'i sacred writings.⁴²

After the Convention the incoming National Assembly established a new, and announced, committee on music. This

committee included three members of the first committee and three new people, including Albert Windust. The members of the earlier committee, with one exception, had lived on the East Coast, but two of the new members lived in the Midwest. This geographical dispersion of its members prevented the committee from meeting more than once, a meeting which "resulted in discussion as to what would not be acceptable rather than forming decisions,"⁴³ and the bulk of their report to the 1932 Convention consisted of their Chairman's pilgrim notes.

Louise Drake Wright was Chairman of this second music committee, and in the spring of 1931 she had been in Haifa and had discussed the subject of music in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* with Shoghi Effendi. According to her account of their conversation, he said that he preferred a solo voice for the performance of sacred text. She then asked about choirs and, as she put it, "after considering the beauty, dignity and spiritual effect of the great Russian Choirs, he gave his consent to the use of such choruses when the Words of Baha'u'llah are set to music."⁴⁴ During this conversation also:

Shoghi Effendi was asked if he thought it advisable for the Western composers to pattern their music after the beautiful Eastern way of chanting. He did not approve of this, he said the West should use its own natural gifts of expression, that imitations were never spontaneous and therefore not acceptable.⁴⁵

The same Committee on Baha'i Music was reappointed in 1932,⁴⁶ but does not seem to have met again.

In 1930 the National Spiritual Assembly had written to Shoghi Effendi asking for a statement on the use of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*⁴⁷ so that when they received the awaited information in the letter read at the 1931 Convention (which seems to reflect the Drake Wright conversation as well as their request) one might have thought that some more sub-

stantive steps than the abortive music committee might have been taken. They were not. However, one Bahá'í in Chicago, Louise Rich, was attempting to develop a body of Bahá'í choral music.

During the 1930s Louise Rich wrote settings for a number of Bahá'í sacred texts. Sometimes her music was original and sometimes it was adapted from such composers as Mendelssohn and Liszt. Her settings were mostly intended for unaccompanied choral performance in six parts, and in 1933 she began to suggest their use at the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. In December 1933, the National Assembly wrote to the Temple Program Committee that:

Mrs Rich has written music for some Baha'i prayers . . . and . . . this music has been commended by the Guardian. The members felt that this singing should be tried out as an interesting experiment and the Temple Program Committee is requested to make a further report later on.

This matter of Baha'i music is extremely important, and only by gradual evolution can this phase of the Cause become thoroughly established on the proper and spiritual basis.⁴⁸

The committee wrote back to the Assembly suggesting the establishment of a music reviewing committee, "In order that compositions . . . may be passed on by people trained along these lines." The committee also informed the Assembly that they had had one of Rich's settings performed experimentally as a solo at a Sunday meeting, but they made no comment on the experiment.⁴⁹ At the end of this letter in the National Assembly's files is penciled the following extraordinary note by Carl Scheffler:

Horace—

isn't there a command somewhere which forbids setting of the Holy Utterances to music. I believe there is but am not sure.

Not only had Scheffler been a member of the Vahid Choral Society in its day, but it was he who had informed the National Assembly of Shoghi Effendi's approval of Rich's work!⁵⁰

Horace Holley informed the committee tersely that a music committee had been tried before, "without the slightest result."⁵¹ He went on to say:

The only general principle we have is a statement made by the Guardian that western believers should not imitate Persian chanting. . . . It would seem advisable to allow the question of Bahá'í music to develop normally, taking one step at a time, and will your committee consider this suggestion and express your views again before our meeting on January 27th?⁵²

Despite this direct request, neither the committee nor the Assembly brought the subject up again until May 1934, when the committee decided to audition another piece by the unfortunate Mrs. Rich, but with the reservation that the Assembly would have to make the final decision on whether it should be used.⁵³ The audition was scheduled for 13 May, but there is no record as to whether it took place.

The surviving programs for 1930s activities in Chicago do not suggest that Rich's music was being used at local Bahá'í events. Indeed, despite the number of pieces she produced, there is no record of any performance other than the unfruitful "experiment" under the auspices of the Temple Program Committee. Undoubtedly, her addiction to six-part settings without there being any trained Bahá'í choir in the country had much to do with her music not being used. However, it could have been performed with one or more voices and piano accompaniment, as for the "experiment," and it seems likely that it may have been so used in private homes, on occasion, and that some account of such use may yet come to light. Nevertheless, as Rich also wrote some undemanding Bahá'í hymns that do not seem to have been used by the community,

while a couple of inferior pieces by Nina Matthisen and Janet Bolton were sometimes featured in Chicago, there may have been personality factors involved in the exclusion of Rich's music.

In 1935, Louise Waite attempted to support the use of music by sending the Temple Program Committee a copy of a letter that she had received from Shoghi Effendi which encouraged singing at Bahá'í gatherings.⁵⁴ And in 1935 also, the issue of chanting in Persian came up once more and the committee asked the National Assembly to ask Shoghi Effendi about it. He replied that: "It should neither be required or prohibited."⁵⁵ This must have satisfied the last of the committee's curiosity on the subject of music in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, as notice of the receipt of a copy of this letter from Shoghi Effendi is the last mention of music in the surviving minutes, which continue up to October 1938.⁵⁶

It should be noted that during this period when the National Spiritual Assembly and the Temple Program Committee were so indefinite over the issue of music in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, and generally, Shoghi Effendi himself instituted a music section in *Bahá'í World*,⁵⁷ and chose the music for it, mainly by Louise Waite and Louise Rich, in the first three volumes to include music.⁵⁸ It would seem that in their concern over what was or was not correct to do, the Assembly and the committee felt safer doing nothing, despite Shoghi Effendi's instructions and encouragement. To understand how this position came about, it is necessary to consider certain aspects of the history of the East Coast Bahá'í community, and how these influenced the development of the ideology of Bahá'í devotions among those who made up the administrative elite of the national Bahá'í community.

“HIGH CHURCH” BAHÁ’Í PRACTICE

In 1911, Dr. William Norman Guthrie came to New York to take over the position of rector of the Episcopal Church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie.⁵⁹ This long-established church had been left substantially high and dry by population movements in the city, its former “old family” parishioners having moved out of the rapidly deteriorating area. The church, however, was very well endowed and had sufficient income to sustain itself even without much interest in it by the immediate neighborhood. Guthrie set about creating a new clientele for the church by trying to attract people from other parts of the city, encouraging the use of church facilities by various groups and instituting a program of liturgical experiment that incorporated drama, dance, and non-Christian elements into a basically Anglican “office” framework. This policy made the church both famous and infamous, the bishop of New York refusing to make pastoral visits to it for a number of years in the 1920s because of Guthrie’s “pagan” rites.

Guthrie had had an association with Sarah Farmer’s Green Acre summer lectures in their pre-Bahá’í days, lecturing there in 1896, 1897, and 1900,⁶⁰ and it was possibly on the basis of contacts preserved from this time that he came into contact with the New York Bahá’ís after he came to St. Mark’s. Around the end of 1913 or the beginning of 1914, Guthrie invited the Bahá’ís of New York, through Edward Kinney, to make use of:

... a free audience room in the Parish House of his church, in which to hold a weekly Bahai meeting on Sunday afternoons with an unfettered platform. Through this he also invites us to come into touch with the members of his church, and in cases wherever convenient, to become members of the church, sacrificing nothing of the glorious Cause, but bringing into it the Bahai Spirit.

While not, himself, a Bahai, he is an admirer of the principles and vitality of that Spirit.⁶¹

The invitation was accepted and the meetings of this “Congregation of the Spirit” were planned to consist of “Readings from the Word/Spiritual Conferences/Hymns and Voluntaries.”⁶²

During the following years Bahá’í association with St. Mark’s continued and developed. In 1919, Hooper Harris was “conducting a Bahai Forum Sunday evenings,”⁶³ and the church premises were being used for such events as a regional convention of Bahá’í communities.⁶⁴ A few detailed programs of special Bahá’í meetings at St. Mark’s in the early 1920s survive. On 7 January 1922 (a day on which meetings were held throughout the country to mark the fortieth day after the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá), and on November 28, 1922 (Commemoration of the Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá), there were programs of readings of prayers and Tablets, and on 28 November 1923, a program of similar readings was held but with the addition of music between the readings and to open and close the meeting.⁶⁵

In 1924, the Bahá’ís became more involved with Guthrie’s liturgical experimentation when, on the Sunday afternoon of May 25, there was held a “Symposium on the Bahai Movement,” preceded by “a ritual Office on the Glory of God,” the latter especially compiled for the occasion and both being held to celebrate the birthday of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (actually 23 May). The “Office” was “rephrased from translations” of Bahá’í writings and consisted of parts for “Minister” and “People” including an Invocation, Responsive Reading, Litany and Collects, and Congregational Benediction, with places provided for hymns, Sentences, Lection, Address, and Offertory. After the office, Guthrie was to “challenge with friendly criticism the so-called NEW “CAUSE” as to its social Programme, its world Message, and its alleged capacity for true

federation, or spiritual Unification of existing religious systems and institutions," to which Horace Holley, Mountford Mills, and Jenabe Fazel (a distinguished visiting Eastern Bahá'í described as a "Mohammedan Mullah (or Priest)" on the program) were to respond with speeches.

From 1925 to 1927, a similar event was held each year but moved to the afternoon of Easter Sunday, and in 1928 it was held on the Sunday after Easter. On each occasion the office was performed and followed by speeches. These meetings were arranged by the Bahá'ís but under the supervision of Guthrie, who stipulated that he wanted "no gush, slush or twaddle, but . . . a straight up and down question and answer business such as carries conviction to the Western mind."⁶⁶

Apart from Holley (1924, 1925, 1927), Mills (1924, 1927, 1928), and Jenabe Fazel (1924), the other Bahá'ís who spoke on these occasions were Ali Kuli Khan (1926), Howard Colby Ives (1926), Marie Moore (1926), Harry Randall (1925), Keith Ransom-Kehler (1928), and Roy Wilhelm (1925). Apart from Guthrie's regular contribution, the non-Bahá'ís who spoke were Jules Bois (1925), Kahlil Gibran (1925), and Alfred W. Martin (1928). In 1927, the proceedings were embellished beyond the usual organ solos by Kinney improvising "on oriental themes."⁶⁷

Apart from these special annual events, the New York Bahá'ís continued to use St. Mark's on a regular basis for a wide range of religious and social activities during the 1920s. A number of Bahá'ís were also actively involved in the running of St. Mark's as an Episcopal church during this time. Apart from those who were simply church members, Kinney was choirmaster for a few years, Bert Randall was church treasurer for a time, and, most importantly, Holley was Junior Warden of the vestry from 1928 to 1933. Holley wrote the church's publicity materials and public statements (of special importance as there was a fresh assault on Guthrie's experiments by the bishop in these years), was part-time manager of

the church's rental apartment buildings, and spearheaded the fund-raising effort that was necessitated by the loss of much of the church's investment income after 1929.

Although initially a firm supporter of Guthrie, Holley became the vestry's spokesman in a fight with the rector that broke out in the early 1930s. As Guthrie had expended considerable funds on his liturgical experiments prior to the decrease in value of the church's investments, the church had no reservoir of funds but only current income. The vestry wished Guthrie to come to terms with this radically changed situation, to curtail his more expensive activities, and to keep the church open solely by the performance of the minimum required services until its financial position had recovered. Guthrie largely refused to abide by the vestry's advice, and after a period of considerable acrimony and politicking, Guthrie had the vestry overturned at the 1933 parish meeting and replaced by a slate of his own nominees. The result of this election was challenged in the courts by the old vestry, but stood.

The association of New York Bahá'ís with St. Mark's from around 1913 to 1933 is of some significance, especially as many of the Bahá'ís involved were, or would become, influential in the national Bahá'í community. In particular, Holley's experiences as warden must have at least reinforced his growing tendency during the later 1920s and early 1930s to display a distrust of individual innovation in religious practice in his Bahá'í administrative work at both the New York and national levels.

Although the involvement with St. Mark's was by far the most intensive by a large number of Bahá'ís with a non-Bahá'í religious institution, it was not the only case. There were other examples of Bahá'ís being involved with and borrowing from the "higher" and more liberal circles of the American Protestant church.

The Bahá'ís of New York held occasional meetings at the Community Church of New York during the 1920s, and the minister of this church, John Herman Randall, became even more influential in the development of the public presentation of the Bahá'í Faith in North America than Guthrie. Bahá'ís also sometimes borrowed choirs from churches for their meetings, as in 1924 when, at a meeting at the Community Church, music was provided by the choir of the Russian St. Nicholas Cathedral.⁶⁸ And in 1927, at the "Evergreen cabin" meeting held annually to commemorate the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Roy Wilhelm's summer home in West Englewood, New Jersey, in 1912, the choir of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Teaneck sang four selections.⁶⁹

Another example of the adaptation of a relatively "high" service format to Bahá'í use is the graduation service at Henderson Business College in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1925. This small, Negro college was founded by George W. Henderson and proclaimed itself to be a Bahá'í college, though it did not require any recognition of the Bahá'í Faith from its students. The program for the service on Sunday, 14 June 1925, consisted of:

ORGAN PRELUDE

Graduates' Processional — Holy Holy Holy

Responsive Reading

Song — Choir

Scripture Reading

Decalogue

Announcements

Beside Still Waters — Rosetta Ammons

SERMON — REV. J. W. Hall, D.D.

Offertory

Bahai — Benediction

Dedicated to the Cause of BahaUllah

The printed program was also headed with a figure 9.

There had been a few signs of interest by Bahá'ís in high church practices before the 1920s. In the early years of this century, Lucy D. Hall Fake of Chicago produced an expanded responsive version of the twenty-third psalm which ended with six lines related to the then well-known "Knowledge, Faith and Love" prayer (thought to be by Bahá'u'lláh, but actually by Kheiralla).⁷⁰ This text, without the last six lines, also appears in a Bahá'í funeral service dated 30 May 1910.⁷¹ There is another printed office, "The Day of God," compiled for use at St. Mark's, which is more simply constructed than the "Office on the Glory of God." As this simpler office is not mentioned in any of the 1920s records, it may have been produced for use in the preceding, and less well-documented, decade's Bahá'í involvement with St. Mark's.

These instances, and the few others that exist, suggest that although some Bahá'ís were open to reconstituting some of the more elaborately liturgical forms of Christian worship for Bahá'í use, there was no broad movement devoted to this end comparable to the widespread support for Bahá'í hymnody (see Chapter Three). Indeed, the occasions on which there were Bahá'í-sponsored religious observances that could be roughly characterized as showing high church tendencies seem insignificant in proportion to the thousands of occasions on which Bahá'ís expressed their religious devotion in derivatives of more populist Christian forms. The importance of these numerically insignificant events lies, however, in the influence of those Bahá'ís who were involved with them and their deference to those Christian clergy who were also involved.

In a number of Bahá'í communities in the 1920s, Bahá'ís were actively involved with churches, or at least were frequent attendants at their services. This involvement was not

new; some Bahá'ís had been active in churches from the turn of the century. However, there does seem to have been a shift in the dominant conception of the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and the churches by the 1920s. This shift seems to have had its strongest roots on the East Coast and to have been greatly reinforced there by the prominence of clergy in public Bahá'í activities. This conceptual shift is not simply a factor of the passage of time, but is rather a concomitant of the power shift that saw the diminishing of the national importance of the Chicago Bahá'í community after 1909, and the growth of a new national power base on the East Coast, which became dominant from about 1915.

The Midwestern Bahá'ís who had taken the lead nationally in the community had had a clear conception of the Bahá'í Faith as an independent religion. When they associated with churches, it was usually with the intent that this should provide eventual openings to teach the Faith to church members. On the East Coast, the Bahá'í Faith seems to have been conceived more as a social force. Thus by the 1920s, the standard way of referring to it had become the "Bahai Movement" rather than the earlier common "Bahai Revelation."

These differing conceptions probably relate closely to the backgrounds of those who became Bahá'ís. The Bahá'ís of the Midwest at the turn of the century saw and taught the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and their Christian hope. They conceived of membership in the Bahá'í Faith as the natural next step for the sincere Christian. East Coast Bahá'ís seem to have come more frequently from transcendentalist and nondenominational backgrounds and to have viewed the Bahá'í Faith as potentially socially redemptive through the application of its principles. The first conception was based on a belief in the station of Bahá'u'lláh in cosmic history, the second on the principles he expounded.

Thus, when the power center of the Bahá'í Faith in North America shifted to the eastern United States, it was not surprising that its status as a distinct religion became blurred and that it was relatively easy for socially activist and ecumenically minded clergymen to link themselves to it and create for themselves positions of considerable influence. Just as in the nineteenth century some American missionaries in Iran had seen the Bahá'í Faith as a wedge driven into the solid body of Islam preparing it for conversion to Christianity, so in the 1920s a number of "advanced" United States clergy saw the "Bahá'í Movement" as a form of higher ecumenism that could bring together "advanced" members of all religions in nondenominational concurrence to better the world, but in no way was this to imply that anyone should change their previous religious identity. This conception is obviously one which is capable of being more widely accepted than that which saw becoming a Bahá'í as a change of identity, and it became very much the face that the East Coast dominated Bahá'í Administration determined should be presented to the public during the 1920s and early 1930s. And, indeed, this presentation was frequently made by clergy during these years, the prohibition on clergy in the Bahá'í Faith seemingly being seen more in terms of its lack of discrete religious identity than as a declaration of the redundancy of clerical authority for its purposes.

We have already discussed Guthrie's involvement with Bahá'í activities at St. Mark's, and in the New York area there were also some ministers of black churches who encouraged Bahá'í involvement with their congregations and who spoke at Bahá'í meetings. But the cleric who was most used by the Bahá'ís as their spokesman was John Herman Randall. As early as 1923 Randall traveled to Boston once a month to speak for the Bahá'ís at a public meeting,⁷² and as the 1920s progressed Randall became more and more a public presenter for the Bahá'ís. Indeed, his role was not limited to public pre-

sentation; he was even a featured speaker at Bahá'í National Convention sessions as in 1927, when in his talk he describes himself as a Bahá'í.⁷³ There was some discussion of Randall's status at this convention, the chairman, Mountford Mills, referring to him as a Bahá'í, "but he does not accept the manifestation [i.e., the station of Bahá'u'lláh],"⁷⁴ this being a typically acceptable way of looking at things from the Bahá'í Movement perspective. Objection was made to Randall having addressed the convention by Nellie French, who felt that only those who accepted Bahá'u'lláh should do so, although it was acceptable for Randall to address public meetings.

Randall's involvement with the Bahá'ís intensified the following year when he was made director of the World Unity Foundation, a body formed and financed by a small group of Bahá'ís specifically to promote generally ecumenical and social reform propaganda. The secretary of this foundation was Holley, who actually did most of the organization while Randall did most of the public speaking. In the financial difficulties of the end of the decade, the Bahá'ís who financed the foundation and its magazine found that they had to reduce the amount of money they put into it and a split grew between them and Randall as the money they paid him had to be reduced. Randall had actually resigned from his church and become a full-time paid lecturer for the foundation, but now he progressively lessened his commitment to it and eventually returned to a clerical post.

Also associated with the World Unity Foundation and a frequent speaker for the Bahá'ís was Alfred Martin, the quasi-ministerial head of the Society for Ethical Culture. Although not as influential as Randall, he had considerable prominence in the presentation of the Bahá'í Faith at that time. Among the Bahá'ís themselves we have noted that Albert Vail was a paid Bahá'í teacher during this period (the only other person in such a position was Louis Gregory, a black lawyer who did

not have the general influence of Vail), and the former Unitarian minister Howard Colby Ives was also prominent. The former church associations of these two were usually featured in publicity surrounding their activities.

Although there were a number of Bahá'ís who were traveling and teaching the Faith in the 1920s, there was a definite tendency to see the work of the Bahá'í clerics (whether accepting Bahá'u'lláh or not) as the most important for presenting the Bahá'í Movement to the public and expanding its membership, and the prominence given to them at National Conventions amply demonstrated their status.

It is evident that for those who wished to present the Bahá'í Faith in broad social and nonexclusive terms the idea of its developing its own distinctive devotional practice would be not only irrelevant but potentially dangerous. If adherence to the Bahá'í Faith was not to replace previous religious affiliation, there was no need to provide for devotional wants that were presumed to be met in the new adherent's previous community of faith. Conversely, the development of a distinctive devotional practice for the Bahá'í Faith would stand in the way of its serving as an ideological umbrella for those still adhering to various religious traditions, as such a distinctive practice would suggest that the Bahá'í Faith was simply another religion itself. Thus, attempting to develop a Bahá'í community devotional practice, locally or for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, was not encouraged by the national Bahá'í administration.

We can see how this indifference to the devotional quality of Bahá'í community life actually induced Bahá'ís in some areas to join churches for spiritual sustenance in the dispute that arose in New York in the late 1920s between the Local Spiritual Assembly (of which Holley was the Secretary, at the same time that he was Secretary of the National Assembly, and Junior Warden at St. Mark's) and a group of Bahá'ís who felt that Bahá'í community meetings in the city were not

providing them with spiritual support. A leading member of this group, Dr. Genevieve Coy, a well-known Bahá'í, described her rationale for joining a church to supplement her Bahá'í experience thus:

I find that if I am to make any progress in spiritual living, I must at least occasionally have some source of inspiration outside what I can get from my own prayers and meditation and reading. Naturally I had hoped to get that inspiration from the New York Bahai meetings. Actually I have never felt that, save in rare instances the meetings here have given me that. Rather, I have felt that I had to find outside the Bahai Cause, some inspiration to help me face the weight of discouragement that came to me when I attended most of the Bahai meetings. In searching for spiritual help, I eventually found a church where the pastor had a spiritual vision which gave me the thing I needed. After a great deal of hesitation, I joined this church. I do not mean that I gave up attending Bahai meetings. I continued going to them, from a sense of duty, but I had to look elsewhere for the inspiration I needed for daily living.⁷⁵

It would seem fair to suggest that this indifference to the devotional needs of many Bahá'ís by the administration was reinforced by the close ties that its most influential members already had with churches, and that as their personal needs were thus taken care of they did not feel any need for Bahá'í activities to address this area of their lives. Indeed, we may note that in the case of Louise Drake Wright, the chairman of the ineffectual Music Committee, her 1931 diary contains only two brief mentions of that committee but numerous references to her enjoyment of services at St. Paul's Church in Boston.⁷⁶

In the case of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhikár*, we have seen how the use of Foundation Hall came to be dominated by the former minister Vail, and how the concept of the building's purpose

became to present the Bahá'í Faith to non-Bahá'ís. With this local situation being reinforced by the nationally dominant anti-exclusive concept of the Faith, it is not surprising that the efforts of Louise Rich received as little encouragement as they did or that the committees responsible for the use of Foundation Hall were so apparently unconcerned with any need for devotional development. There was always the reading of prayers, of course, and occasional discrete use of chanting in Persian or Arabic, but no searching for new forms in worship comparable to the claims being presented as to the new possibilities for social reform and advancement provided by the Bahá'í Faith. The one development that had taken place in Bahá'í devotional life, its hymnody, was limited to the relative privacy of national convention sessions. The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* had become—and, despite developments in other areas of the Bahá'í Faith, would remain—conceptually a “Non-Sectarian Temple,” as it was described on the card labeling a model of it exhibited in Philadelphia in 1939.⁷⁷

When Shoghi Effendi informed the American Bahá'ís in the 1930s that active membership in, as opposed to friendly contact with, churches was incompatible with membership in the Bahá'í Faith, as in being a church member a Bahá'í was subscribing to beliefs incompatible with the teachings of the Faith, there was some consternation. This was not as great as it would have been just a few years earlier, however, because by this time the fight between the rector and vestry at St. Mark's and the estrangement of Randall from the Bahá'ís involved with the World Unity Foundation had lessened the involvement of the higher echelons of the national Bahá'í power structure with churches and clergy. This breaking of membership ties between Bahá'ís and churches, and the concomitant insistence on the status of the Bahá'í Faith as a distinct religion, did draw attacks from some of those clergy who had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Movement. They saw

Shoghi Effendi's, and the National Spiritual Assembly's, endeavors to strongly establish the Bahá'í Faith conceptually and actually as a separate religion as the betrayal of the aims they had had for the Bahá'í Movement, aims which they erroneously continued to attribute to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in particular on the basis of their relatively superficial acquaintance with Bahá'í writings. Among the Bahá'ís there were few cases in which separating from church membership was seen as a major problem. But one of the reasons Bahá'ís had continued to affiliate with churches, the wish for a communal devotional experience, remained mostly unaddressed within the now more clearly bounded Bahá'í community.

Since the mid-1930s, there has been no further confusion in North America as to whether belonging to the Bahá'í Faith constitutes a distinct religious identity. But the emphasis on the presentation of the social aspects of Bahá'í teachings that marked the 1920s has continued, supplemented by a concern with the development of internal administrative institutions. This certainty of a distinct religious identity has been accompanied, however, by a continued lack of support for any development of distinct community devotional observance. That individuals should observe the few aspects of individual Bahá'í devotional life that are known about and taught is recognized; but at the community level, "devotions" is synonymous with one person at a time simply reading aloud from the Bahá'í writings to a group in order to begin or close a meeting whose focus of concern is elsewhere. The problem, however, was and is that, despite this unconcern for Bahá'í community devotional life, the national Bahá'í community has had a large and expensive House of Worship that is in itself a major contact point between the Bahá'í Faith and non-Bahá'ís, and with which something has had to be done.

National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.



THE NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION OF 1944 gathered in Foundation Hall. In association with this convention, the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb was celebrated and a dedication held for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR IN USE

THE AUDITORIUM DEDICATIONS

In the course of the years it took to construct the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, a number of events were held that had some dedicatory character and intent; here I will concentrate on the two official dedications of the upper part of the building (known as the Auditorium, which is the House of Worship proper). However, before turning to the first of these dedications in 1944, it might be well to recount the first devotional meeting held in the stark concrete shell of the Auditorium on 1 May 1931, during that year's National Convention, to mark the construction of the shell and the nineteenth anniversary of the dedication of the site by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The report of the convention written by Louis Gregory includes this description of the occasion:

During the afternoon of the first day the delegates and friends went to the main auditorium where standing in a silent and reverent attitude, they listened to the prayers and Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh as read and chanted by a little band of angels who occupied the gallery above. An atmosphere of sanctity pervaded this meeting. . . . [He then quotes from the readings used.]

These brief quotations from Tablets may well suggest the solemnity and beauty of the service during which all stood. It is characteristic of a place which will be used for worship, meditation and prayer, where also beautiful music will pay homage to God, but where no speeches will be made. Even the foundation hall is being used only temporarily for other kinds of meetings, this by permission of the Guardian.¹

This account by such a long-established member of the community as Gregory exhibits a concern for the devotional intent of the building and suggests a knowledge of the writings of the Faith related to it that was becoming rare at the time it was written and would become rarer still.

In 1943, there was another of the occasional experiments with a devotional meeting in Foundation Hall:

As a variation in the type of program in the Temple, a Devotional Service was held there on January 24. It consisted of prayers and selected readings, which were given by a Chairman and three readers. From favorable comments received, the program appealed to those who heard it. We plan using this type of program again from time to time.²

However, the emphasis remained squarely on the use of Foundation Hall for talks. During 1942-1943 also, the Temple Program Committee noted:

The presentation of our Sunday services has been improved in spirit, reverence and respect, by the installation of a combination radio-phonograph which, with a selection of choice records, provides a preliminary musical program lasting ten minutes prior to each lecture. During the playing of the music, those attending are seated and remain quietly in their seats, thus being in a proper mood to hear the Creative Word. This has reduced to a very great extent the noise and confusion that formerly prevailed.³

We may note the use of the term “services” here as synonymous with lecture meetings.

As part of the National Convention in 1944, it was planned to celebrate the centenary of the Declaration of the Báb and to dedicate the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, whose exterior had now been ornamented. To accomodate these events, the convention was held later than usual and for a longer period, from May 19 to May 25. Shoghi Effendi had instructed that the programs for these two celebrations should include:

... appropriate selections from the revealed writings . . . whether prayers, meditations, Tablets, the addresses of the Master or selections from the Bible or the Quran. Passages from the writings of the Báb should be a special feature of the readings selected for this occasion. Singing, whether by soloists or choirs, should form part of the program. The utmost care should be taken to ensure that the standard of the vocal music should befit that solemn occasion. The Guardian approves the selection of some of the psalms of David as an evidence of the universality of the Faith which should be amply demonstrated on that occasion.⁴

In the event, the Auditorium was supplied with loudspeakers “to bring the voices up from Foundation Hall” and was used as overflow seating throughout the convention. In particular, those younger and more sprightly Bahá'ís who could easily negotiate all the steps were expected to sit there and resign Foundation Hall seating to older Bahá'ís and to non-Bahá'ís who attended the public meetings held as part of the convention. The programs thus relayed to the Auditorium included talks and recorded music from Foundation Hall's recently acquired radio-phonograph, including symphonies by Franck and Beethoven, oratorio, and Bach. (Bahá'ís in North America had been informed that instrumental music was not permitted in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár a number of times from

1909, and were also aware that speeches were not allowed in the House of Worship proper.)

The Dedication and the Centenary Commemoration were held one after the other on the evening of 22 May 1944. The evening began with a public meeting in Foundation Hall, with the Auditorium being used for overflow seating as usual. This meeting heard three talks on the general theme of the need for a religiously constituted world consciousness to bring about world unity and peace. After this meeting, those Bahá'ís who were in Foundation Hall joined those already upstairs in the Auditorium. Children under twelve years were supposed to be excluded, as the readings were to be recorded and silence was desired. The two programs ran into each other. The Dedication consisted of readings from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Centenary program also included readings from the writings of the Báb, a psalm, selections from the New Testament and the Qur'an, and "the John Charles Thomas recording of the Lord's Prayer." After the Centenary Commemoration, a copy of a portrait of the Báb which Shoghi Effendi had sent to be shown on this occasion was displayed together with a framed lock of his hair. As the Bahá'ís filed past to view these, "the strains of *Parsifal*" were heard!⁵

It is not necessary to question the sincerity of those who arranged and took part in this joint celebration and the events of the days surrounding it. Nevertheless, it can only be characterized as extraordinary. That the Auditorium functioned mainly as an annex of Foundation Hall during the convention and so was used for relayed talks and instrumental music; that Shoghi Effendi's instruction that vocal music should be a part of the Dedication and Commemoration program should be responded to only by a recording of the Lord's Prayer (Walter Olitzki of the Metropolitan Opera, and a Bahá'í, sang twice as part of a program broadcast from the banquet held in

the ballroom of the Hotel Stevens on 25 May to celebrate the coming of the Faith to Chicago in 1894); and that a recording of *Parsifal* (or any instrumental music at all) was chosen as a background to the viewing of the portrait of the Báb all testify to the lack of knowledge and consideration of the place of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Bahá'í life as expressed in the writings of the Founder of the Faith and his successors.

The background to this state of affairs may be seen in views such as were expressed in an article on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár by Horace Holley, which first appeared in *Bahá'í World* in 1928 and was subsequently reused (although in increasingly shorter form) in volume after volume of that work. Holley stated:

Moreover, since the Bahá'í Faith has no professional clergy, the worshipper entering the Temple hears no sermon and takes part in no ritual the psychic effect of which is to establish a separate group consciousness. Not even music—only the reading of the text of the Holy Books—will condition the experience of free worship and meditation in this edifice dedicated to the unity of mankind.

It is helpful to realize that Holley wrote this at a time when he was enthusiastically welcoming the 1928 reprint of *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, was still active at St. Mark's, on good terms with Guthrie, and some years before the abortive attempt at a music committee. Thus, although Holley can be shown to have had positive views about devotional music, when it came to considering the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the abstract he seemed to feel that this environment was above using it. No doubt such a feeling encouraged the tentativeness shown by the National Assembly in the 1930s on the issue of song for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Equally, although the building is "dedicated to the unity of mankind," Holley seemed to regard any attempt to create a

particular unity among the worshippers in it as suspect. His acknowledgment of a lack of sermons in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár may be seen as an almost ritual statement considering the emphasis that had already been established, by the time he was writing, on the use of Foundation Hall to deliver speeches and the general trend of development in Bahá'í group meetings. Indeed, Holley had written to Shoghi Effendi in December 1926:

It seems to me that we American believers have unconsciously produced in our Assembly [community] life a psychological imitation of the Protestant churches which represented the previous experience of by far the greatest part of our numbers, and that the tendency to make the life of a Bahá'í Assembly revolve exclusively around preaching has been responsible for a dullness and apathy which must have been more or less inevitable but no longer corresponds to the opportunities which now reach out to us from the public itself. We must find a way of severing our group consciousness from minor internal questions and creating such expressions of the Bahá'í ideal as correspond to the needs of the hour. As people of varied character and capacity enter into the life of the local Assemblies, the Bahá'í communities will undoubtedly reflect more richly and interestingly other aspects of the Cause which up to now have been held in suspense.⁶

However, Holley's example of another aspect that shows current promise is "the beginning of a conscious effort to put into application some of the economic principles," not any sign of a decline in preaching. By the time of the Auditorium dedication in 1944, "preaching" was still the major Bahá'í activity; it absorbed much of the energy of the most active members of the community and proficiency in it was the surest way to acquire status.

In 1942, Holley as National Assembly Secretary wrote to Shoghi Effendi that "we have but a feeble and inadequate

conception of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in full operation as a Bahá'í House of Worship, though of course there may be years before the American believers are called upon to conduct such a holy edifice."⁷ Most of the not inconsiderable material available from the Bahá'í writings on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár now was available when that statement was written. The lack of knowledge of it among the leading ranks of the Faith in North America, together with the frequent repetition of the same questions to Shoghi Effendi (especially as the same queries had often been answered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on more than one occasion), suggests an unconscious selective blindness to certain parts of the writings of the Faith and the letters of Shoghi Effendi where these did not cohere with feelings and views already held. Indeed, we might suppose that for an institution of the status of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár that banned the exercise of the principal means to recognition within the community, the ability to make speeches, and focused on producing spiritual cohesion through prayer in spoken and sung form to become operational could be seen as threatening. Perhaps it was more reassuring to "have but a feeble and inadequate conception" of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár's function and to suppose "there may be years before the American believers are called upon to conduct such a holy edifice."

It is difficult to distinguish between Holley's views and those of the National Assembly (as Secretary he wrote their correspondence and public statements), but it may be noted that in the case of the function of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár at least there is little indication of disagreement with his views by either the other members of the Assembly or the community as a whole. On the contrary, he seems to have been regarded as the principal elucidator of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár's function both to the community itself and to non-Bahá'ís.

In October 1948, Holley gave a talk at the Bahá'í Center in

Los Angeles which was highly appreciated. It was circulated in typescript and later published in *Bahá'í News*. In this talk he spoke of the necessity to finish the interior of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár "because the meetings conducted in that Temple will revolutionize religion on this continent."⁸ He continued:

When we asked the Guardian to give us a clearer picture than what we have of the meetings to be held in the Temple, he said: "Only readings from the Holy Books." Now he did not say read only the words of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We can read words of *all* the Manifestations of God, but we cannot read anything else.

This is the only purported instruction from Shoghi Effendi that he mentioned. He then turned to describing a future meeting in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, concentrating entirely on the supposed effect on non-Bahá'ís; he made no mention at all of how a Bahá'í might experience it. The whole point was to provide non-Bahá'ís with an experience that "is going to be infinitely more potent than our outer teaching word can ever be." The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was to ease the teaching process for Bahá'ís, and its services were to function as one more element in the teaching program that presents the Faith through preaching; they may be more potent, but their aim is the same. There was no suggestion that Bahá'ís have anything to gain from the services other than more easily increased numbers.

In the late 1940s, the United Nations asked for statements on worship from various religious groups with a view toward possibly adopting some interfaith form for its own use. The National Assembly wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations that "Congregational worship among the Bahá'ís consists of the reading of passages from all extant Holy

Books, with no ritualistic device, no racial, denominational or nationalistic discrimination." Later in the letter, the following is given as a quotation without attribution as to source:

The Bahá'í House of Worship is not one more religious edifice of denominational character. It has been built according to a new and higher pattern of worship, wherein persons of all races, nations and creeds may enter the unifying Spirit which emanates from the Word of God. Bahá'í worship includes no sermon, no physical drama, no man-conceived prayer, invocations or conventionalized response. The Manifestation of God, He alone, has utterance in this holy place.⁹

Although this passage was placed within quotation marks as if from an authoritative source, it is actually from an essay by Holley,¹⁰ who wrote the rest of the letter, and is more notable for its ponderousness than its accuracy. However, we again see in it the simultaneous assertion of the aim of unity with an underlying suspicion of anything that tries to draw the worshipper beyond a purely personal and individuated encounter with the word of God. In a strange inversion, a highly individuated experience in worship is supposed to fuel a highly unified social experience.

As further evidence of the paradoxical attitudes that surrounded the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* we may note that, despite the indifference shown to providing vocal music at the Dedication in 1944, the information about the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* compiled for the training and use of those who were to explain it to the public included the following statement: "There will be a new form of singing—not like church, popular, or classical music—but something that will evolve from the present forms of music."¹¹ Thus, the 1930s' claim to aspire to an eventual *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* musical style was not entirely forgotten in the 1940s.

To summarize the view of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* that imbued the dedication of 1944, then, the building was seen as directed largely toward non-Bahá'ís rather than Bahá'ís; there was abstract expression of the sacredness of the building combined with a casualness as to its actual use; there was an expressed concern for the eventual development of a music form for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* associated with a reluctance to encourage this or even a flat denial of the possibility of using music, all from the same sources; information coming from the highest sources in the national administration was often simply wrong when judged by the Bahá'í writings; and instructions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi regarding the building and its use were recollected in a very selective fashion. As we shall see, this confused conception of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and its functions continued.

After its dedication in 1944, the Auditorium was no more usable than before; the interior was still a concrete shell and the emphasis of use continued on Foundation Hall. As plans for the ornamentation of the interior of the Auditorium were being developed from 1946, Shoghi Effendi emphasized the importance of acoustical considerations and specifically mentioned that acoustics should be the main consideration in deciding where to place singers when the building was in use. Unfortunately, almost all of the highly competent acoustical advice that was obtained from the well-known acoustician Dr. Paul Sabine was ignored or misapplied as the plans for the interior were developed and carried out.

By 1952, the National Assembly realized that it was soon going to be in the position of actually operating a Bahá'í House of Worship, after all, and they sent a list of questions to Shoghi Effendi related to the use of the completed building. One thing they asked was whether they could begin to train a choir. The answer was, "By all means prepare a choir." As Shoghi Effendi had first urged the Assembly to do

exactly this twenty-one years previously, this answer is not surprising.

During the year 1952–1953, the Temple Program Committee wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly:

. . . suggesting that they appoint a National Music Committee to do a research job for appropriate musical selections for an a cappella chorus; that the Bahá'í music now available, as printed in the Bahá'í World Books, be given first consideration and Bahá'í talent be used to make the arrangements for use by choruses, that the various assemblies be alerted about this, especially in Chicago and its environs.¹²

Also, in February 1952, the National Assembly appointed a committee to make arrangements for the dedication to be held in 1953. In a letter to the members of that committee written in early March, Holley, as chairman, outlined some of the matters the committee would have to decide, and among these he included “*Music*: This is one of our most important features. One question is whether Bahá'í singers can be trained, and if not the choice of a suitable chorus of non-Bahá'ís.”¹³

Despite these signs of concern, no apparent effort was made to supply the need with Bahá'ís. In September 1952, the National Assembly gave permission to the committee to engage a choir. In October, they expanded this instruction to suggest that “an attempt is to be made to secure the services of such a choir without compensation” before engaging one that had to be paid.¹⁴ On 13 December the committee decided to engage the Northwestern University a cappella choir to perform “classical non-sectarian pieces,”¹⁵ and arrangements were finalized in that month. The choir was to perform “three groups of selections . . . of from 5 to 6 minutes each” in the dedication service and was to be paid \$150 per service.¹⁶ It would seem that the continued high church leaning toward

“classical non-sectarian pieces” of the kind performed by such a semi-professional choir as most suited to the *Mashriq’l-Adhkár* was a factor militating against the sung part of the program being actively sought from within the Bahá’í community itself. As to the music to be sung, the pieces later suggested by the choir director might be defined as nonsectarian Christian, although they were “classical” merely in the sense that this is used as the opposite of “popular,” as they were mostly twentieth century.

At their meeting on 13 December, the committee had also decided to have Holley write to Charles Wolcott, a Bahá’í of considerable professional musical standing, to ask for copies of his settings of Bahá’í texts. In January 1953, Eunice Braun wrote to the committee suggesting that they consider using Wolcott’s “From the Sweet-Scented Streams,” as “Many who have heard it think it is a very fine and acceptable piece of work and it would be wonderful to have some Bahá’í music appear on the dedication program, containing a Bahá’í prayer.”¹⁷ The choir director’s suggestions came to the committee in February 1953, and by early March they had made their final decisions on the music after having had further discussion with Northwestern’s music department. The dedication program was to open with “Who Can Comprehend Thee” (Peter C. Lutkin) and “God be in my Head” (Walford Davies); in the middle there would be “Have Ye Not Heard” and “Ye Shall Have a Song,” both from “The Peaceable Kingdom” (Randall Thompson); and the program would close with Wolcott’s “From the Sweet-Scented Streams.” It was also noted, “It is gratifying to note that the Music Department commend Wolcott’s Bahá’í song and are glad to use it.”¹⁸

The 1953 dedication was held as part of a series of events connected to the national convention of that year, which marked the Jubilee Year of 15 October 1952, to 15 October 1953. This year commemorated the centenary of Bahá’u’lláh’s period of imprisonment in the *Síyáh-Chál* in Tehran,

during which he received intimation of his station. The dedication was preceded by the National Convention and followed by an Inter-Continental Bahá'í Conference, one of a number held in various parts of the world during the Jubilee Year. As well as the public dedication of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, which was held on 2 May, there was also a private service, held for Bahá'ís on 1 May to observe the anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the site. It is interesting to note the rationale behind the scheduling of the two meetings:

This matter of two services has been thoroughly discussed by the National Spiritual Assembly, and an important distinction made between the meeting scheduled for Friday, May 1, and the public dedication on Saturday, May 2.

The original thought of the Temple Dedication Committee was to have the public dedication take place on May 1, the Anniversary of the Master's visit to the Temple grounds. The National Spiritual Assembly selected May 2 because Saturday is a much better day than Friday for a public event.

To observe the Anniversary, however, it was decided to hold a meeting in the Temple auditorium on May 1 for Bahá'ís only, in the nature of a commemoration of the Master's visit.¹⁹

If we turn to the programs for the two events, we see that the emphasis was placed on the public dedication. There seems to have been no consideration of using singing in the Bahá'ís-only meeting. The committee discussed the program for this meeting in December 1952, but it was left indefinite until clarification could be obtained from Shoghi Effendi as to whether the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá could be included.²⁰ In the end, the program for this meeting was supplied by Shoghi Effendi, and on his instructions it was considered to be a service of dedication as well as commemorative of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit.²¹

In respect to the public dedication, Shoghi Effendi added material from the writings of the Faith to be chanted in the

original.²² The planned program as published in April 1953 included one "Commune, Chanted in the Original Persian."²³ Shoghi Effendi added to this: passages from the writings of the Báb in the original language, with the suggestion that these be followed by others in English (there had been nothing from the Báb in the original program), and passages from Bahá'u'lláh in the original, to be followed by the same in translation.

The program used at the meeting on 1 May consisted of a passage from The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf by Bahá'u'lláh relating his experience in the Síyáh-Chál; the same in translation; the address by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at the dedication of the site on 1 May 1912; the Tablet of Visitation of Bahá'u'lláh in the original and the same in English.

The public dedication program on 2 May consisted of the first two choral selections; a message from Shoghi Effendi presented by Rúhíyyih Khánum as his representative; Psalms xix, xxiv, and cxxi; Matthew V, 3-17; John XVI, 12-13; Qur'an, sura II, 81, 130, 284-286; second two choral selections; from the Báb in the original and a prayer and excerpt from the Commentary on the Surih of Joseph in English; from Bahá'u'lláh in the original, excerpts from various works in English (*Kitab-i-Iqan*, pp. 153-154; *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 13-14; *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 94-95) and a prayer in the original; and Wolcott's "From the Sweet-Scented Streams." More than half of Rúhíyyih Khánum's address was actually the reading of a prayer by Bahá'u'lláh. The entire service, except for the introduction of Rúhíyyih Khánum and the words of her address other than the prayer, was repeated three times to accommodate the numbers who had come, some of the readers being different each time.²⁴

As at the 1944 dedication, the portrait of the Báb was exhibited in the Auditorium in 1953, this time together with a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh that Shoghi Effendi had sent for the oc-

casión. The viewing of the portraits was held separately from either of the dedication services, and this time there was no *Parsifal*. Shoghi Effendi had sent instructions that each viewing (there were several to accommodate the numbers of Bahá'ís there) should be accompanied by a brief devotional program consisting of an ode and a prayer by Bahá'u'lláh chanted in the original followed by a prayer read in English, the last to be chosen by the National Assembly. For this program, as for the other, Shoghi Effendi stressed that those chosen to chant should know how to do it well.²⁵

The dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 1953, then, had fewer peculiar characteristics than that of 1944, in great part because of the direct participation of Shoghi Effendi in the programming. However, the main emphasis was still placed on non-Bahá'ís, even to the changing of the date of the dedication from one of historic associations to one more likely to be convenient to non-Bahá'ís. Although Shoghi Effendi restored to the meeting planned for the original date a dedicatory character, the balance of concern and resources was heavily weighted toward the public occasion on 2 May. Shoghi Effendi's intervention may have made the 1953 dedication less odd than that of 1944, but the basic ideological conception of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and its function held by those Bahá'ís who were to operate the building afterwards had not substantially altered.

POST-1953 PRACTICE

Following the dedications on 1 and 2 May 1953, the principal use made of the Auditorium was for public devotional meetings on Sunday afternoons. From their beginning, these meetings were organized "following the pattern set in the service of public dedication,"²⁶ rather than being directly based on the accumulated instructions from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and

Shoghi Effendi on *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* worship. This may have been in part because the various dedication meetings associated with the building from the 1920s had obscured the essentially transformatory quality of dedicating a place of worship: such a dedication is not a model for future practice but, rather, marks a giving over of the building to that practice. That such a distinction applied in this case may be confirmed by noting that in his instructions for the 1953 dedication meetings Shoghi Effendi included material (such as the address given on his behalf by Rúḥíyyih *Khánum* at the public dedication and the reading of a talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at the Bahá'í dedication) which he elsewhere stated were impermissible in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. However, the pattern set in 1953 of a series of readings from various sources with choral music (usually around the beginning, the middle, and the end of the program) was considered the norm and continued for the next thirty years with little apparent change. I will discuss this thirty years of use by considering first the concept of devotional meetings in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* as primarily public events, and then the issue of providing choral music.²⁷

After the inception of Sunday afternoon devotional meetings in the Auditorium, Sunday afternoon public meetings with a speaker in Foundation Hall continued for many years with the hope that visitors would attend both. Nevertheless, despite the continuing Foundation Hall meetings, it was felt that the devotional meeting itself had to address some specific topic in order to be of interest; mere devotional intent was deemed insufficient. This point of view was expressed in June 1953, in a letter from the Bahá'í Centenary News Service (which had been set up to handle publicity for the centenary events) to the Worship Committee, apparently in reply to a request from the committee as to how to set about publicizing the devotional meetings:

As you know, publicity for Sunday services in Christian churches is usually built around the subject or the speaker. In the "old days" the subject was often a quotation from the Bible. We have no clergy, no sermonizing, no organ recitals, but one thing that can be publicized is the theme used in selecting the readings, the prayers and the singing.

These Sunday gatherings are for public worship and the themes chosen, no doubt, will be selected with an eye to the public's interest. In other words, these gatherings will be designed to uplift the soul and educate it through hearing the Creative Word as found in the various Sacred Scriptures on a particular theme which could be publicized because it is one that holds the public's interest. . . .

We believe that worship at the Temple which includes the reading of various sacred Scriptures, coincides with a growing interest in comparative religion, courses for which are being presented by schools and churches and that emphasis upon this aspect of our services may be utilized in publicity.

Both of these things, the use of a particular theme and an assumption that there was inherent interest in an event that drew on scriptures from various religious traditions, became and remained the principal points around which devotional meetings were programmed and publicized.

At the Worship Committee meeting of 12 September 1953, these "topics for future programs were listed: Unity of Mankind/ Eternal Life/ Man/ Forgiveness/ Justice/ Humility/ Prayer/ Joy, Gladness/ True Liberty (Reward & Punishment)/ Submission (to will of God)/ Trust in God/ Detachment." It was decided that the first four topics would be researched by the members for the next meeting, and at the current meeting they worked out a program on immortality and one on world peace.

Apart from the Sunday afternoon devotional meetings,

whose form had now been settled, another type of occasion with which the committee was concerned was Bahá'í holy days. Again, the rationale for selecting which holy days would be commemorated in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* (as opposed to the obvious assumption that they all should be) and how to commemorate them was based on public appeal. In July 1954, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the committee:

The National Spiritual Assembly wishes your Committee to assume responsibility for planning and conducting the following Anniversaries:

Declaration of the Báb, May 23
 Birthday of the Báb, October 20
 Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh, November 12
 Day of the Covenant, November 26
 Naw-Ruz [Bahá'í New Year], March 21

The cooperation of the neighboring Assemblies can be requested, for example in the providing and serving of material refreshment.

Because of their value in teaching, the Anniversaries are to be handled as public meetings. . . .

The National Assembly is anxious to bring up all Temple Activities to a higher degree of perfection in keeping with the dignity and significance of the dedicated House of Worship.

The personal part can be conducted in Temple Foundation Hall and the spiritual readings in the Auditorium.

Thus, holy day meetings were also fitted into the Sunday afternoon mold: talks in Foundation Hall and readings in the Auditorium. The extent to which these commemorations of Bahá'í holy days were seen as directed at the public, rather than at Bahá'ís, may be seen from the reluctance to disturb visitors with too much devotional use of the Auditorium or to suggest too strongly the distinctive nature of the Bahá'í Faith

as a separate religion by publicly commemorating those holy days that were harder for non-Bahá'ís to comprehend.

In 1960, it was decided to permit the Temple Children's Committee "to hold a half hour program of prayers and readings in the auditorium" to mark the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh on the afternoon of Saturday 12 November: "Even though visitors may be coming in, the program will go forward and the guides can explain that this is a Bahá'í Holy Day and the children are conducting a program of worship." There seems to be an underlying presumption that visitors might be surprised to find the building being used for such a purpose.

Also, in the mid-1960s there was some disagreement over whether to permit the use of the Auditorium to commemorate the Martyrdom of the Báb. In June 1964, the Assembly secretary wrote to the Worship Committee:

You have requested permission to hold a special public worship service on the occasion of the Martyrdom of the Báb, July 9, 1964. The Temple Activities Study Committee, comprising four NSA members, discussed the issue, recognizing the need for your having an immediate decision. Following full consultation, it was felt that, as a project, and an experiment in the public worship activities in the House of Worship, it did not promise well at this time.

The letter then listed several reasons for this decision, including the statement that this "is essentially a Bahá'í affair, requiring rather elaborate explanation in terms of the non-knowledgeability of the public"; that it would be difficult to find explanatory material that could be used in a devotional program; that if Foundation Hall were used "for presentation of the background . . . and further effort to make intelligible what otherwise would be a private Bahá'í celebration" in the Auditorium, this would involve the "usual clumsy time" in

transferring from one venue to the other; that “on a Thursday afternoon in mid-summer, in competition with a crowded auditorium of sight-seers, perhaps on tour, we wonder whether more than a handful of Bahá’ís could possibly plan to attend”; and that as communities in the Chicago area planned their own commemorative meetings “we wonder whether there is time to bring all the communities together in the early afternoon, since work schedules are what they are.” The letter concluded:

In short, we have thought seriously of the innovation which such a program would represent. While we applaud the thought behind the suggestion, and are entirely open to the possibility of such an event, we were reluctant to consider its occurrence this year.

Our warm Bahá’í regard in every sense notwithstanding.

It is evident that behind this letter are the assumptions that the first duty of the building is to present the Bahá’í Faith to the public and that this duty is not fulfilled by inviting their participation in a purely devotional experience of spiritual intent.

In 1965, a local Spiritual Assembly in the North Shore area wrote to the Department of Temple Activities (this title was then used for the umbrella committee generally responsible for the House of Worship; the Worship Committee was under the direction of this committee):

We are seeking permission to use the auditorium of The Mashriqu’l-Adhkár for a devotion service at noon on July 9, our Holy Day commemorating the Martyrdom of the Báb. In view of the fact that it is our understanding that the Temple Worship Committee is not now held responsible for conducting such a service, we would hope that permission could be granted. We would select readings from our Bahá’í Scriptures and would extend invitations to all Bahá’ís in this area to join us in this worship

service which we anticipate would be approximately one-half hour long.

In the event you are unable to grant our request, our community would like to simply use one of the small sections in the auditorium [usually known as the alcoves] to pray quietly among ourselves.

We are aware of the fact that the auditorium is open to the visiting public at that time of day, but our thinking is that since a guide is always on duty, they could inform any visitors that a worship service is in progress and if they wish to join us in prayer, they are certainly welcome to do so.

Our reason for making this request is twofold: we earnestly wish to see our House of Worship used to the fullest extent possible for the purposes for which it was intended and we especially feel that it is of the utmost importance that all of our Holy Days should be observed within its hallowed precincts. Also, we would hope that the friends, through such observances, may little by little become more aware of their duties and obligations in living the Bahá'í life.

Under the stimulus of this letter, the Department of Temple Activities instructed the Worship Committee to "arrange for a devotional service at the auditorium for noon, July 9, in commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Báb." This may have been, in part, because of the suggestion in the Assembly's letter that their local community intended to commemorate the holy day in the Auditorium by themselves if they could not sponsor a larger meeting. Since the shift from Chicago to national status for the use of the building in the mid-1920s, there had been a disinclination to have a local community sponsor any event. Their place was to assist the national committees in charge. We should also note that the Secretary of the local Assembly which requested permission was also a member of the Activities Department staff and the request may have been made with an insider's expectation of it causing the department to sponsor the event.

The 1965 commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Báb did not occur without objection, however, as it drew forth a lengthy letter from Charlotte Linfoot, a long-time member of the National Assembly and, as assistant secretary during the 1950s, sometimes the de facto Secretary due to Holley's declining health. She wrote:

This is a purely personal letter which is not to be interpreted as reflecting any view of the National Spiritual Assembly. It is written because of my own deep personal interest in the gradual improvement of the services of public worship which I feel are not as inspiring and meaningful as they should be to visitors who have no background or very little background about the Bahá'í Faith.

Beginning with the recent observance in the Bahá'í House of Worship of the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, I question whether that service was truly effective. Since I was one of the very few individuals who sat downstairs in Foundation Hall to hear the program [relayed from the Auditorium through a loud-speaker], I could not, of course, observe the reactions of visitors or even the believers. I tried to put myself in the position of a non-Bahá'í who may have dropped in because she saw people going into the Temple, or even one who had been invited by a Bahá'í to be present. The reading was beautifully done but there was nothing whatsoever in the program to indicate its purpose. While the Bahá'ís could appreciate the prayers and the readings they must have been almost completely meaningless to non-Bahá'ís. Had there been distributed at the door a very brief statement about the purpose of the service, who the Báb was and something about His martyrdom, it could have been understandable. Or, if there had been a brief meeting before the service of worship in Foundation Hall in which the story of the Martyrdom of the Báb could have been told, then the service upstairs would certainly have been meaningful. I personally question the wisdom of making this particular event one open to the public. It is comparable to the Commemoration of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-

Bahá and therefore very intimate and precious to the believers. I believe it is for this reason that the National Spiritual Assembly for many years has indicated to the Temple Worship Committee those particular Bahá'í Holy Days which are to be shared with the general public by services in the Bahá'í House of Worship. It is my understanding that this service was requested by one of the communities and the responsibility for planning it was referred to the Temple Worship Committee for carrying out.

I do not wish to seem unduly critical, but as an individual I do feel deeply about the services of worship and wish so much that they could be made more attractive and more meaningful to non-Bahá'ís. The Temple Worship Committee is a very hard-working group and some of their programs are excellent but there are still a number which are far beyond the comprehension of non-Bahá'ís.

Again, my comments are purely personal and made only because I have given them a great deal of thought during the past year.

That the event "was beautifully done" and that Bahá'ís "could appreciate the prayers and readings" is evidently beside the point; the focus is again on the non-Bahá'í. This letter is based on similar premises to those of Holley's 1948 talk in Los Angeles on the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and equally discounts the importance of how Bahá'ís might feel in the Bahá'í House of Worship. That "this service was requested by one of the communities" and so arranged in response to the expressed wishes of Bahá'ís for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* to contribute to their community devotional life, rather than arranged with an explicit orientation toward the general public, seems to be sufficient to cast suspicion upon the legitimacy of the exercise.

The other two holy days Linfoot mentions, the Ascensions of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are commemorated in the early hours of the morning. When they came to be commemorated in the Auditorium, they do not seem to have occasioned the misgivings as to their appropriateness as surrounded the

Martyrdom of the Báb. Of course, they were commemorated at a time when there would be no visitors.²⁸

In November 1965, a member of the Worship Committee suggested that at the top of the “Order of Devotions” given to visitors attending Sunday devotions there should be a statement to “tell what these devotions *really* are—that they are for the public & it is not a Bahá’í service.” That was undoubtedly largely the case, and still is, but the statement was not included.

One factor which has generally been considered essential in devotional meetings that are oriented to the public, but not so important when the targeted audience are Bahá’ís, is vocal music. After the public dedication in 1953, a professional choral director was contracted to provide a choir of eight singers to perform at the subsequent Sunday public devotions, and in 1954 the oversight of this choir was given to the Temple Worship Committee. The importance given to providing such music at the public devotions can be seen from the Committee’s 1954–1955 budget, in which \$5,900 was devoted to the choir and \$500 to all other expenses (printing programs, flowers, stationery, etc.). However, despite this disproportionate sum being appropriated for the choir, it was far from adequate to ensure the standard of vocal music the committee wanted, and the subject of financing a choir that fulfilled the committee’s expectations became a matter of increasing concern from 1958. Thus, on 22 March of that year the committee heard:

That [committee members] talked to [choir director] about the singing. [The director] was not satisfied with the singers, either, but it seems better to have a good choir some of the time than a mediocre one *all* the time. The difficulty is, of course, that the top singers can get \$65 for one night elsewhere & we are able to pay them only \$10 a Sunday, which is quite a difference. [The director] said he would do the best he could.

The amount paid to the choir director and members remained the same from 1953 to the mid-1960s. In 1963–1964, the director requested some increase and was told that this would be considered in the 1964–1965 budget. However, payment remained the same for that year and the following one.

In the budget allocated by the National Assembly for 1966–1967, not only was there no increase, but the total sum available for providing vocal music was cut to \$2,500. The Assembly secretary explained the rationale behind this decision to the Activities Department:

The purpose of the reduction in funds was to reduce what is to many a disproportionate expenditure in the total of those funds disbursed for the operations and functions of the House of Worship. Further, it is felt that, with the retention of Mr. . . . as choir director, and working with a selected small advisory group of the Temple Activities Department, a varied and unusual musical fare might be achieved, using the choir for perhaps one Sunday a month, invited choirs, such as the New Trier High School Choir, varied church choirs, etc, for other days of the month, and having chanting, single voices and varied voices for the remainder of the services. It would not be inappropriate to have occasional services without music.

This proposed “radical change,” as the Assembly itself termed it, appalled the Worship Committee. At a special meeting on 15 May 1966, the committee decided to write to the Activities Department, “explaining why we feel this sudden ruling regarding the choir to be impossible & asking that time be extended to Jan. 1968.” The contractual commitment to the current situation ran through June 1966, the following month, at which time the Assembly expected any new arrangement to take effect. The letter the committee wrote to the Activities Department (as a sub-committee, the Worship Committee was supposed to communicate with the Assembly

indirectly through the Activities Department) urged the reconsideration of the decision, as “we must maintain a quality and excellence that cannot be changed by substitution of the choir in a period of a month or two,” and therefore the commitment to the current choir “should continue through January 1, 1968.” The letter then commented on the limitations of the Bahá’í singers in the area and the unsuitability of borrowing choirs from churches and schools, as “by using them we are assuming [financial] support as well as a sympathy with the Cause on the part of the Church which does not always exist” and as it was difficult to ensure control of what they sang. The committee concluded their objections with, “We do not feel that by eliminating the present a cappella choir at this time that we are fulfilling our objectives in presenting to the public a program of such beauty and power that they will be aware of Bahá’u’lláh and the Bahá’í Faith.”

By means that are not entirely clear, as the Assembly did not reply to any of these objections to the planned change, the choir was granted a stay until the beginning of 1968. The Worship Committee does not seem to have seriously considered the groups of Bahá’í singers that were active in the area as possible substitutes for the choir, and in the end it came to an arrangement with the director that he would use the reduced funds to supply duets (in practice it was sometimes a soloist) during the winter and a quartet during the summer months when there were more visitors. The Activities Department report for 1967–1968 had this to say about the change: “This new format has allowed for pleasing innovation in musical selections and, of course, has helped the budget by greatly reducing expenditures for this purpose.”²⁹ However, the Worship Committee was not so sanguine. Before the department’s report was written, the committee wrote them on 8 March.

For two months we have had either a soloist or duet. The singers have been most capable, the selections have been excellent but we do not feel that the overall effect has been up to the standard of this "Most Holy House of Worship."

We have had several of the friends say that it just wasn't the same without the choir. That the mingling of voices raised in Praise of God, added much to the beauty of the devotions.

We realize that there is a deficit but isn't it possible to cut down somewhere else and continue with the a cappella choir? We feel it is most important for our Proclamation effort to the public, that an outstanding Devotional Program be presented every Sunday.

And the department itself was not quite so happy as its report seemed to indicate. On 27 April 1968, they wrote to the committee that they were in full agreement with the view of the committee that the previous choir "added much to the beauty of the devotions," and added that they hoped "to pursue this matter in the coming new year."

On 22 December 1968, the committee wrote to the Activities Department asking them to forward a letter to the National Assembly expressing the committee's views on the matter of the choir:

There is no question that the loss of the choir to solo voices has produced a noticeable change in the character and quality of our devotional programs. After many months this has become quite apparent to the members of the committee, and to many who have attended the Sunday programs. Oftentimes the voices cannot be understood and this destroys much of the intent of the music. Our musical director, Mr. . . . , has been most cooperative and done a fine job under such limitations. However, he shares our concern. He has told us that an a capella choir does not lend itself to two, three, or four voices and that it is very difficult to continue to find appropriate music.

We are aware of the many important and time consuming matters which the National Spiritual Assembly must consider, including the budget. At the same time we would imagine the activities taking place in the House of Worship would be of primary concern. With a national budget which has been so increased over this time, we fail to understand how the necessary allocation for a full choir could be excluded. This raises an important question of priorities which we feel must be re-evaluated.

We ask you to consult upon this. We continue to pray and hope that the Guardian's intentions for the House of Worship may always be fulfilled.

In February 1969, the committee acknowledged a letter from the Activities Department confirming that these comments had been forwarded to the Assembly along with the department's own recommendations. The committee averred that they "sincerely hope and pray that we will be able to have an eight-voice choir again soon and that a Bahá'í choir will be organized and functioning for the House of Worship."

The committee did get the choir back, although it was not quite the same as before. The new choir did sing in four parts, but it consisted mainly of Bahá'ís, with a sprinkling of non-Bahá'í voice students. However, the director did remain a hired non-Bahá'í professional. This situation lasted until 1983, when the choir broke up, in part because of disputes between the then director, with his principally musical goals and shallow acquaintance with the Bahá'í Faith, and the amateur Bahá'í members of the choir. Subsequently, there have been attempts to revive the choir under various expedients and, although these have met with indifferent success, there is still a feeling that a choir is needed for Sunday public devotions.

I am informed by a participant that between the two non-Bahá'ís who have directed the choir, there was an interregnum of about a year during which a Bahá'í choir director and choir provided the vocal music. According to my informant,

the Bahá'í director composed for the choir and took a generally experimental attitude that was not always appreciated by others involved with operating the House of Worship. The existence and career of this short-lived choir was not reflected in the records available to me, and I am unable to discuss it in detail here. It may be that this experience with a director and choir that had specifically Bahá'í motives and goals further inclined the institutional structure toward employing a "professional" with only musical goals.

Despite the changes in the arrangements for vocal music that took place over the three decades, the repertoire remained largely similar in character and even actual pieces from 1953 to 1983. It consisted mainly of suitably "universal" music, which might be more accurately characterized as high church Christian music whose texts lacked blatantly denominational implications. Probably as a result of the notes of Louise Drake Wright's discussion with the Guardian in 1931 being publicized and thus entering into the miasma of half-truth as to Shoghi Effendi's instructions regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, there was a vastly disproportionate use of Russian church music. Works by Palestrina and Orlando Gibbons and a reasonable number of twentieth-century church compositions were also used. The repertoire was mostly suggested by the director, although the committee had approval and did occasionally ask for pieces to be discontinued (usually on the grounds of loudness). Bahá'ís were encouraged to submit settings of Bahá'í sacred text to some extent, but always with the understanding that it be in the approved style. The one piece by a Bahá'í that was used with any frequency was Wolcott's "From the Sweet-Scented Streams." When this was sung, a printed sheet with the words was added to the program sheet. Indeed, this was used so often that it was referred to by the Worship Committee in conversation and in records as "SSS." There was and is a particular aversion to

anything, from whatever source, that could be characterized as “loud.” Assertiveness of vocal tone or compositional style does not fit the model of vocal music as meditative punctuation between readings. Although the change from a professional to a largely amateur choir had an obvious effect on the difficulty of music that could be used, there was no basic change in the character of the repertoire.

The above discussion has concentrated mainly on the 1960s, as this was a time when the way in which the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* functioned seemed most likely to change. The building had been in use long enough for the gilt to have worn off the gingerbread, for the realization to have dawned that it was not going to induce people to become Bahá'ís in some mystical, talismanic way, however doggedly its use was focused on the public. Indeed, it was seen that the area around it was apparently less fertile for the growth of the Faith than others in the country, which still holds true. Thus, a report written in 1962 noted:

On the basis of Bahá'í population considered as a “teaching force,” the Temple area . . . should have enrolled 160 believers last year, but, in fact, only enrolled 102. . . . This is all the more amazing when one considers the fact that the Temple makes between 35,000 and 40,000 contacts for us annually in this area. . . .

New York has not pulled her load so far as enrollments are concerned, but she has done better than the Temple area and she has no *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* to help her.

California has been largely responsible for the increase in enrollments. She alone has handled 22% of the total enrollments in the Continental United States during the past 5 years. The Temple area was responsible for 6%.³⁰

Nevertheless, there was no general impetus to reorient the use of the building toward Bahá'ís; better ways to directly reach the public was the usual goal. The fundamental ideolog-

ical assumption remained unchanged. Currently, the House of Worship is visited annually by many more people than in 1962 (203,089 in 1982–1983), but even fewer residents of the area enroll in the Faith.

The National Assembly of the 1960s was in many ways an institution attempting to be in flux. Between 1960, when Holley moved to the Holy Land where he died shortly thereafter, and 1968 there were three different Assembly Secretaries, and considerable changes in Assembly membership from the 1950s. The emphasis throughout the period, and particularly in the mid-1960s, tended toward openness to innovation. There was a desire on the part of the Assembly, however naively expressed, for the Faith to develop and grow not only in numbers but in understanding and action; and there was considerable tension between this desire and the wish of some other participants in the national administration to leave well enough alone and continue the patterns firmly established in the preceding decades. In the case of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, at least, the latter won; the drag of the past was sufficient to slow the impetus toward change until the push for change was over.

Although the National Assembly was not in disagreement with the Worship Committee over the primary clientele for the building being the general public, their approach toward how the Sunday devotions directed at that public should develop was quite dissimilar. We have seen how on the issue of the choir the committee fought for the status quo, and generally they saw no need for much change in format. The Assembly, on the other hand, wrote to the committee in 1964, “we hope that the music will begin to assume an experimental approach, seeking innovations of various kinds, until ultimately there is evolved a steadily more unique and distinctive Bahá'í presentation of music with the readings of the Word of God.” And during the period of controversy over discontinuing the

professional choir, the Assembly expressed itself in stronger terms on 3 May 1967:

As we enter a new Bahá'í year, we hope that the Committee will experiment with more variety in the programs of devotion. We feel that they have become almost ritualistic in manner, and we would like to see much more variety in the selection of passages and prayers to be read and also in the manner in which they are presented. For example, consideration might be given to having only one reader occasionally, in which case the reader should be particularly good. Thought may be given also to having an occasional program of Bahá'í selections only. Finding new and interesting programs for these services presents a real challenge, which we are sure you will welcome.

In both of these quotes and in the comments of the Assembly regarding the discontinuing of the professional choir given earlier, it is evident that there was a dissatisfaction with current practice and a desire for change. It is equally evident that the concept of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* held by the Worship Committee pervaded these comments, although there was discomfort with it. The difficulty, however, was that the normativeness acquired by that conception was considerable, and there was no countervailing concept based on the Bahá'í writings (or anything else, for that matter) to give substance to the Assembly's discontent. The suggestions for change made by the Assembly were trivial and tentative; the committee, on the other hand, knew exactly what it wanted. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the established form weathered the squall.

On the Assembly, the bridge between the 1950s and the later 1960s was Linfoot. After 1968, she witnessed the older pattern regain its stable hold on the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. From the late 1960s to the demise of the choir in 1983, there was no further sustained push to change the expression of the

premises that had guided the Temple Worship Committee since 1953. There was certainly no significant pressure to change the premises themselves. Whatever dissatisfaction continued to be felt in the surrounding Bahá'í community, the operation of the administrative structures of the Faith stood behind the status quo. The ideology had held firm, and the form through which it was expressed survived its few years of questioning relatively intact. It still did not attract non-Bahá'ís to the Faith to any significant extent, and it did not attract Bahá'ís to attend, but it survived.

That the form still does survive is probably because it is so firmly attached to the ideology of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette as a public place. It is acceptable to criticize the details of the devotions, to suggest tinkering with them only in terms of that ideological assumption. To suggest that the principal aim of devotions in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, indeed the principal aim of its use, should be to attract Bahá'ís and to cater to their spiritual needs is to suggest the subversion of the ideology on which the entire conception and use of the building has been based for over half a century.

In April 1986, the Bahá'í House of Worship Activities Committee wrote to "Every Bahá'í Within 100 Miles of the House of Worship," urging them to attend events there, primarily held in Foundation Hall, stating:

During the past two years the quality and diversity of programs have been improved dramatically in an effort to attract more people to the House of Worship. When these programs are poorly attended by Bahá'ís, however, we run the risk of appearing uncaring and inactive as a group. Unfortunately, such a perception is enough to cause a visitor to abandon any interest they might have in learning more about the Faith.

This situation is also offensive to non-Bahá'ís participating in these programs. On Naw-Ruz we were privileged to present a concert by [two violinists]. . . . These outstanding professionals

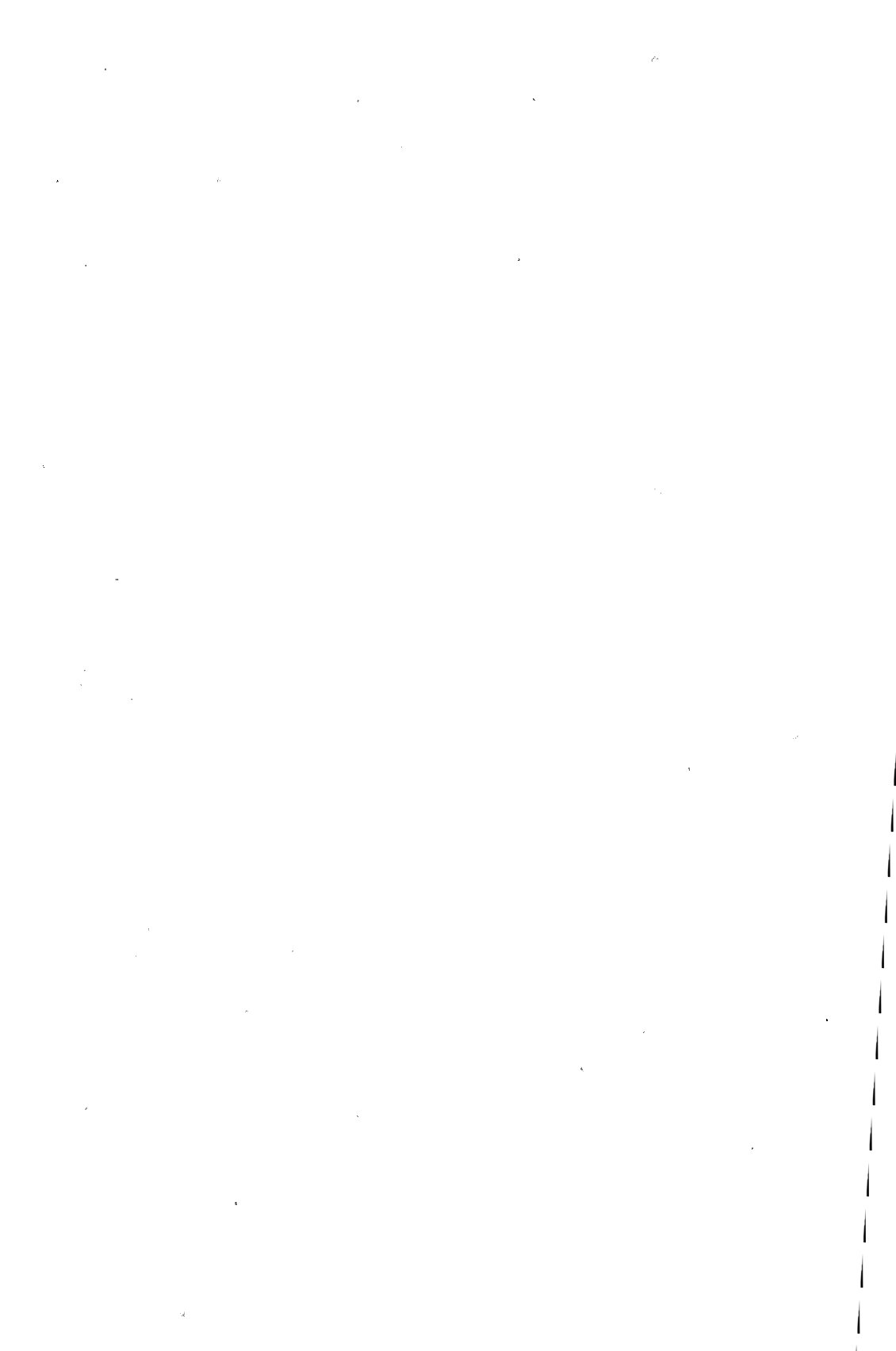
performed at no cost to us; yet, sadly, only some sixty people were in attendance.

The premise is the same as the appeals in the late 1920s for Bahá'ís to support Vail's talks. Bahá'ís should attend for the non-Bahá'ís; their function is to pack the house, to form part of the *mise-en-scène*, not to expect the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* to cater to them. As we might expect, the public ideology is still dominant in the use of Foundation Hall as it is for the Auditorium. The deciding factor is public appeal. Even when it has been explicitly pointed out that an activity was named by Shoghi Effendi as inappropriate for Foundation Hall, there is no hesitation about doing it if it is thought to be a possible attraction for the public. This despite the continued fact that, just as in the case of the use of the Auditorium, events in Foundation Hall do not attract large numbers and have not occasioned any considerable expansion of the membership of the Faith.

A pattern has been set that is supposed to lead to certain ends, and a great deal of energy and resources have been committed to that pattern. To admit that it does not work, to admit that the ends have been sought by inadequate means, is to admit that the administrative structure of the Faith in the United States has been mistaken in its leadership of the community. Therefore, more resources are called for to pursue the set patterns, Bahá'ís are exhorted to support them and chastised for not doing so, and the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette becomes more and more a beloved abstract symbol of their Faith for Bahá'ís and an irrelevance in their lives.

One day I overheard a visitor asking one of the Bahá'í guides what the building was built for. The Bahá'í replied that it was built for all those who would come to see it. Yes, replied the visitor, but what was it built *for*? The Bahá'í simply looked puzzled and had no reply, other than to repeat that

it was for those who would come to see it. Like any Gothick folly, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár has become a conspicuous consumer of assets with no actual function other than to look pretty. To imbue it with any other function would necessitate a revolution in North American, and probably world, Bahá'í thought about the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the place of devotions in Bahá'í community life.



CHAPTER NINE

SCRIPTURE AND CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN BAHÁ'Í DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE

Between 1903 and 1953, developments took place within the North American Bahá'í community that resulted in a building in Wilmette with an associated devotional praxis. Between 1953 and 1983, that praxis and the ideological basis for it remained largely unchanged, despite dissatisfaction with it and its results. The processes that led to this situation have been discussed in some detail in the preceding chapters. In this final chapter, I will deal with some general aspects of the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in North America as these have been expressed in the development of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár devotional praxis.

I began this work by stating that before the introduction of the Bahá'í Faith to North America it was, in a broad sense, a Middle Eastern religion. This had implications beyond the merely socio-historical. The scriptures of the Bahá'í Faith were written in Arabic and Persian and thus of necessity are imbued with the religious and cultural environments of those

languages. The religious and cultural environments of their English translations was, and is, considerably different.

The originals of Bahá'í scripture draw upon a technical Islamic vocabulary that often has no specific English equivalent. Moreover, the Islamic vocabulary is not always used in its usual sense, but words may be reoriented to specific Bahá'í referents so as to transform them into Bahá'í terms. There was a presumption on the part of early Western Bahá'ís that Eastern Bahá'ís could understand the Bahá'í writings by virtue of being literate in the appropriate languages. This was not necessarily so, as understanding required not only an acquaintance with each language's technical Islamic vocabulary but also with the re-referenced use of it in Bahá'í texts. It is evident from correspondence and accounts of conversations between Eastern and Western Bahá'ís that some Eastern Bahá'ís had as far to go in understanding aspects of Bahá'í scripture as Western Bahá'ís generally did.

Let me approach the subject of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* from an angle that would seem odd to most current Bahá'ís: daily obligatory prayers. Two distinctive features of Bahá'í religious practice are the requirement for daily obligatory prayers and the annual fast. The observance of these practices is between the individual and God, and there is no mechanism for determining whether or not they are observed. Berger remarked that, "Personal impression seems to indicate that they are widely observed in the community."¹ This is probably the case. From the 1890s, there has been considerable interest among Western Bahá'ís in these two aspects of Bahá'í religious life, and it would seem likely that a reasonable percentage of those who could be considered active Bahá'ís have always observed them with some degree of exactitude.

Currently, the individual responsibility for daily obligatory prayer is taken to mean not only that there is no mechanism

of oversight but that the practice itself should be carried out in private, indeed, almost secretly. This has not always been so. As recently as 1951, the agendas for the first annual conventions to elect the National Spiritual Assemblies of Central and South America (which were prepared by the Inter-America Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States) included that at noon each day:

The Chairman is requested to ask the friends to rise and face the east for a period sufficient for the use of the noon obligatory prayer in silence. The Chairman will indicate the close of this period.²

In the Bahá'í writings, the term *salát* (Arabic; *namáz* in Persian) is used for the obligatory prayers. This is the standard Islamic term for the "ritual prayer" or "worship" that is offered five times daily. In Islam, it is regarded as more meritorious to offer *salát* in congregation than individually, and attendance at noon congregational *salát* in a mosque on Fridays is highly regarded. The extent to which attendance at Friday congregational *salát* is seen as obligatory, rather than merely preferable, varies. In particular, Shí'ih Islam has not always stressed this practice as strongly as has Sunní Islam.³ In the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh requires *salát* to be offered three times daily and abolishes the offering of congregational *salát*, making it an individual duty.

In Islam, there are various *salát* other than the daily one. In the Bahá'í Faith the only other one is the funeral *salát*, which must be said in congregation. As funerals are not held in a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it goes beyond our current concern to discuss the Bahá'í funeral prayer here.⁴

The *salát* text to which Bahá'u'lláh refers in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* was later replaced by him with three other texts. Bahá'ís are free to choose any one of these three texts for their daily

salát, and each has its own ritual requirements. The three texts are differentiated simply by reference to their comparative lengths. All three are said facing the Bahá'í *qiblih* (the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí).

The short obligatory prayer is recited after ablutions (washing the hands and face) at "noon" (between midday and sunset), preferably while standing. The medium obligatory prayer is said three times, in the "morning" (sunrise to midday), at "noon", and in the "evening" (sunset until two hours after sunset). The medium prayer has verses to be said while performing ablutions and actions to be performed during the rest of the prayer. The long obligatory prayer is said once a day at any time during the twenty-four hours that the individual chooses. It is recited after ablutions and has prescribed actions.

While the Bahá'í *salát* has obvious structural parallels with that of Islam, fulfilling the required devotional practice is considerably simplified, as the apparatus of ritual stipulation surrounding the Islamic practice (and upon the observance of which depends the validity of the devotional act) is absent. Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh specifically abrogates the principle, of such importance in Islamic practice, of prayer being nullified by contact with any of a long list of ritually impure substances.

As the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* states that *salát* should be offered three times daily, the medium obligatory prayer seems to have been regarded as the preferred Bahá'í one by Eastern Bahá'ís around the turn of the century. At least, that is the impression they gave early Western Bahá'ís. The Western Bahá'ís had a translation of the medium prayer from 1899 and translations of all three prayers by 1902, at the latest. In the twenty-six pages of prayers included with the early 1905 edition of the *Hidden Words*, the medium prayer is headed simply "The Daily Prayer," and there are accurate directions as to the required actions. The short prayer is given after the

medium one, as it “may be used instead of the longer ‘Daily Prayer.’” The long prayer is not included in the selection.

The information available on Eastern Bahá’í devotional theory and practice is not sufficient to draw firm conclusions, but it seems that the medium prayer was conceptualized as the actual daily *salát*; the short prayer as a possible substitute at need; and the long prayer as a supererogatory prayer that could be added at will to daily devotional practice. At any rate, the circumstances under which most of the Eastern Bahá’í community lived required them to continue public observance of the Islamic *salát*. The Bahá’í *salát* was seemingly limited to their homes. Even in those cases in which Bahá’í communities did have a *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* (including ‘*Ishqábád*) they do not seem to have used it for *salát*. This would not seem strange to current Western Bahá’ís, as they regard the daily obligatory prayers as *required* to be said in such privacy as exists at home. But in the early days of the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* project, the Western Bahá’ís were differently informed.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed this question in a Tablet to Charles Mason Remey that was translated by Ali Kuli Khan in January 1905, and “for the sake of further elucidation” the translator added notes in parentheses:

As to the prayer (by which he means obligatory prayer, which is to be said three times a day): Each one must say his prayer alone by himself, and this is not conditional on a private place—that is, both at home and in the worshiping-place which is a gathering place, it is allowable for one to say his prayer, but each person must say his prayer by himself (i.e. not in company with others who might recite the same words and continue the same postures together at the same time).

The term which is translated as “prayer” is *salát*. The term which is translated as “worshiping-place” is *ma’abád*, which

is a generic term for a place of worship of any religion. In other Tablets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá used it as synonymous with Mashriq’l-Adhkár. This understanding of the Mashriq’l-Adhkár as an optional place for the performance of *salát* was embodied in the architect’s circular of 1909, in which the main floor requirements for the interior included that “Near the entrances provision should be made for fountains and basins, where worshippers may perform their ablutions.”⁵

Again, to most contemporary Bahá’ís this would seem like a quaint misunderstanding on the part of their predecessors. The architect’s circular also included the stipulation that there should be a pipe organ. This was later discovered to be impermissible, and many modern Bahá’ís would feel that the demand for facilities for ablutions was equally mistaken. That it was not is evident from information that the early Bahá’ís did not have: the actual content of three Tablets written in 1903.

One of the difficulties faced by those translating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets into English was that when he used precise Islamic terminology there was no English equivalent. Unfortunately, few translations included parenthetical glosses (as in the 1905 translation quoted above) to aid the understanding of the reader. It was more usual for translators to give a general sense of the original. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had actually been very specific, such generalized translation could do considerably less than justice to his intent.

In one of the Tablets written in 1903 to the Chicago House of Spirituality in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá approved of the building of a Mashriq’l-Adhkár, he exhorted the members of the House to, “Exert your energy in accomplishing what ye have undertaken so that this glorious temple may be built, that the beloved of God may assemble therein, and that they may pray and offer glory to God for guiding them to His Kingdom.” In this Tablet, the word translated as “pray” is *salát*. Another of

the 1903 Tablets approving the idea of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Chicago concluded with a passage that has since become famous, has been quoted in innumerable places to testify to the importance of the project, and has been used in virtually every fund-raising campaign for the building to date:

When the Mashrak-el-Azkar 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 overflowed 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.

Again, the “prayers” that are to imbue the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár with this power of attraction are *salát*. The prayers which are currently used in the Wilmette building are *du'á* (Arabic; *munáját* in Persian). *Du'á* is the Islamic term for personal prayers and for prayers that may be piously inserted into a mosque service, the heart of which is *salát*. In the Tablets specifically addressing the issue of the planned Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not mention *du'á*, but only *salát*. He also mentioned other devotional practices which we may simply gloss here as using the Greatest Name. The Islamic vocabulary he used, let alone its implications in a Bahá'í context, was even more beyond the ability of the translators to convey than the distinction between *salát* and *du'á*. As the significance of these further suggestions for Mashriqu'l-Adhkár practice was lost to the Western Bahá'ís, it is not relevant to my current purpose to discuss them here. The early translators did try to distinguish *du'á* to some extent by translating it

as “supplication.” However, they did not do so consistently or adequately explain the distinction between this form of prayer and *salát* to the Western Bahá’ís.

The 1905 Tablet quoted above continues after the discussion of *salát* to suggest that “if they chant supplications (communes) together and in company in a good and effective voice —this is very good.” Here “supplications” is *munáját*. The two types of prayer are brought together in another Tablet from 1903.

When the Chicago House of Spirituality decided to inaugurate Sunday community devotional meetings (for which they published *Songs of Prayer and Praise*) in early 1903, they sent their proposed program to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. His reply gave specific instructions for conducting a Bahá’í community devotional meeting, but the specificity was lost in the translation. The original terms are added here in brackets to the translation provided to the House in April 1903:

... in a meeting for worship, first, prayer [*munáját*] should be chanted and supplication made until all gather; then communion [*namáz*] should be made: after praying [*namáz*], sacred readings [*munáját*] with melodious voices should be read by all together. As this is the commencement of holding meetings, this is sufficient.

What seems to have been suggested by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is a simple program with general prayers being chanted while all gather; then those present perform *salát* individually; and the meeting is to finish with all joining in general prayers.

When Mountfort Mills was on pilgrimage in the spring of 1909, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke to him of the distinction between meetings to teach the Faith and general community devotional meetings. The current form of meeting, with its emphasis on teaching, was a temporary form, but the *Mashriqu’l-Adhkár* was a permanent form.⁶ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá evidently felt that the

matter discussed was of some importance since, in August 1909, he repeated his comments in a Tablet to Mills. He explained in the Tablet that, as the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was yet to be built, the current teaching meetings served a dual purpose, but that when a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was available, there would be a distinction between meetings "devoted especially to teaching" and the "place of worship."⁷

It would seem that just as 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the relative freedom of religious practice that surrounded the Bahá'í community in the West to encourage the development of Bahá'í administrative organization there, to an extent beyond that possible in the East, so he wished the Western community to develop community worship beyond what had been achieved in the Eastern community.

In both the East and the West, the dominant form of Bahá'í meeting was oriented toward teaching the Faith; whether this be teaching non-Bahá'í visitors or expanding the understanding of community members. Such meetings included devotional elements, but these were subsidiary to the main purpose. In his specific instructions about the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was evidently trying to direct the Western Bahá'ís toward purely devotional forms of meeting with an explicitly Bahá'í content. The practice of Bahá'í *salát* distinguishes a Bahá'í from a member of any other religion. If the performance of *salát* is restricted to absolute privacy, then its distinguishing character is limited to the interior life of the individual Bahá'í. The public performance of *salát* in Bahá'í devotional meetings and in a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* open to general public observation would be a powerful expression of distinction between Bahá'ís and the adherents of other faiths.

We have seen how 'Abdu'l-Bahá's intent was only imperfectly known to Western Bahá'ís, due to the limitations of communication through translation. However, it is the case that enough of that intent was known to have the requirement

of facilities for ablutions included in the original specifications for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette. Currently, there is no feeling of association between the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and obligatory prayers on the part of many Western Bahá'ís; quite the opposite.

One Bahá'í informs me that in recent years she had been asked to leave the Wilmette building when caught saying her obligatory prayer in the cornerstone room. Another Bahá'í, who had grown up in Tehran and had lived in the United States as an adult, stated that she had first come to Wilmette with the expectation of saying her obligatory prayer in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* there on the basis of her understanding of the original texts of the Bahá'í writings. She was startled to be told that it was not considered suitable to do so. When she read the originals of the 1903 Tablets discussed above, she wept to discover she had been right all along, and that her desire to perform *salát*, "worship," in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* was not a personal aberration or a life-long misunderstanding on her part. In contrast to the experience of these Bahá'ís, it is not unknown for Muslims to be courteously shown into a quiet room if they ask if there is somewhere they can perform their obligatory prayer at the prescribed time.

The *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* has thus been divorced from the most specifically Bahá'í devotional observance. Indeed, the distancing of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* from any specifically Bahá'í devotional content, in the minds of many Bahá'ís who would be supposed to be well informed about their faith, may be represented by Hatcher and Martin's comments on the institution:

At the present time, the houses of worship are not principally used for Bahá'í community services. Rather, they are opened as places where individuals of all religious backgrounds (or those professing no particular faith) meet in the worship of the one God.

Services are nondenominational and consist of readings and prayers from the scriptures of the world's faiths, with no sermons or other attempts to cast these teachings in a mold of specifically Bahá'í interpretation. Selections are often set to music and sung by trained a capella choirs.⁸

This description, while a fair representation of the actual experience, ignores the fact that the intent of those arranging the services is certainly not "nondenominational" or neutral in how they wish those attending to be affected in relation to the Bahá'í Faith.

We have seen that the categorical distinction between *salát* and *du'á* was not adequately expressed in translations of Bahá'í writings and that the Western Bahá'í community did not absorb the full implications of the distinction. Another complication was that the term "congregational" had different meanings in Islamic and Christian devotional contexts. In Islamic practice *salát* is congregational when led by an imam. Individuals "follow" the imam in a prescribed way, but their aim is not to be in unison with the imam or the other members of the congregation, each of whom is independently following the imam. The general popular concept of a congregational devotional act in the West is that it is performed in unison by a group of equal participants; if any leads, it is for the purpose of assisting the unison effect, to keep everyone together.

The abrogation of congregational *salát* (except for the funerary prayer) in the Kitáb-i Aqdas may be seen as one of the many directives in that work that is aimed at removing distinctions between clerical and lay roles in religious life. The imam need not be a cleric as such, but the position is one that confers religious merit beyond that acquired by the followers in performing the *salát* and which puts the imam in an intermediary position between the worshiper and God. The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy and views each individual as able to approach God without a human intermediary.

In the early years of the century, Western Bahá'ís had no qualms about congregational (unison) acts of devotion. Apart from the obvious case of hymn singing, they used the Greatest Name and the few prayers in the original that they knew in unison, and they read translated passages and prayers together. In 1906, the Chicago House of Spirituality experimented with unison prayer to open their meetings and decided to recommend the practice to others:

At a recent meeting of the House it was decided to open the meeting by all the members arising, facing the East, and remain standing during the reciting aloud or chanting in unison of the Opening Commune, revealed by our Lord—instead of the usual manner of having only one member read it aloud while the others remained silent with bowed heads.

Having found it a means of strength by so doing, we have had copies printed and send a number to you, believing you will be interested in knowing this and join with us in this means of strength—if you have not already adopted this manner of procedure. We have had dashes (—) inserted where commas (,) are placed in the original to better assist the reading aloud and taking of breath—which the pause suggests—thus keeping the voices in unison.⁹

During the 1930s, the National Assembly asked Shoghi Effendi for clarification regarding congregational prayer: “that is, the reading of Bahá'í prayers in unison by all believers present at a meeting.”¹⁰ Shoghi Effendi replied:

Regarding the practice of congregational prayer, the Guardian wishes you to know that this form of prayer has been enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh only for the dead. In all other circumstances there is no obligation whatever imposed upon the believers.¹¹

This reply was printed in *Bahá'í News*,¹² but it did not answer the question fully enough for the Chicago community, who wrote to the National Assembly:

Another question . . . is one on which there is considerable uncertainty in the minds of the members of the Chicago Community. It is on the subject of prayer in unison. The article appearing in a recent issue of "Bahá'í News" has not answered the question, and they have asked for a definitive answer on whether or not prayer in this form is permitted. Although there are statements by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which indicate that with the exception of the obligatory prayers the practice is commendable, Dr. Bagdadi informs us that in Kitáb-i-Aqdas prayer in unison, except for the dead, is forbidden.¹³

The National Spiritual Assembly replied:

Concerning the question about congregational prayers, or prayer in unison. The National Assembly understands from the recent statement written by the Guardian on this subject that congregational prayer is not a Bahá'í teaching except in the special case of prayers for the dead. Since congregational prayer is therefore in all other cases not a Bahá'í teaching, it would seem preferable for local Assemblies and the believers generally not to promote the practise of congregational prayer, since the Bahá'í community is committed to uphold what are the fundamental Bahá'í teachings and congregational prayer is surely usually brought about as the result of some individual believer's personal desire. It seems clear that increased knowledge shows us that we should not let our personal desires lead us to a practise which the Manifestation did not reveal for the new Day.¹⁴

Apart from the obvious ignoring of the question of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's endorsement of unison prayer and the inherent ignorance of the distinction between *salát* and *du'á* and the difference between the Islamic and Western concepts of "congregational", the most notable feature of this reply is its narrow interpretation of Bahá'í possibilities; if something is not *required*, it should not be done, as to do it was to give in to "personal desires." The stress is against individual initiative

in developing Bahá'í devotions but toward individuated experience of what is believed to be required. In a study course on the Bahá'í Faith that was probably prepared in the 1940s, one of the essay questions to be addressed was, "Show how the development of the individual has made congregational prayer unnecessary today."¹⁵

There was also a strand of resistance through the years to the concept of obligatory prayer as such. For many Westerners, especially Protestants, there was something not quite legitimate about Islamic daily prayers, and this view could be reinforced in early Western Bahá'ís by the opinions of their Eastern coreligionists. Thus, in a talk on Islam given on Sunday, 24 June 1906, an Eastern Bahá'í told an audience in Pontiac, Illinois:

The Muhammedan's conception of prayer is that it is the rendering of worship or the paying of a debt of service to the creator. It is a duty which the faithful are under obligation to perform. The idea of confession, petition and intercession are not present in their mind. The prescribed prayer is called the "namaz." There is also called the "dua," which is more in accordance with true prayer, it being an expression of their desire to God.¹⁶

Despite this view that there was a difference between prayer as an "obligation" and "true prayer," early Western Bahá'ís do not seem to have had much difficulty in accepting the idea of Bahá'í *salát*. However, by the mid-1930s there was evidently more resistance to the idea. Shoghi Effendi wrote to an active teacher of the Faith:

As to the attitude of resentment which the young believers are inclined to assume regarding certain precepts of the Cause such as obligatory prayers; there can & should be no compromise whatever in such matters that are specifically enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh. We should neither have any feeling of shame when observing

such laws & precepts, nor should we overestimate their value & significance. Just as the friends have no difficulty in recognizing the value of the specific prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, such as the Tablets of Fasting & Healing, so also they should recognize that the obligatory prayers are by their very nature of greater effectiveness & are endowed with a greater power than the non-obligatory ones, & as such are essential.¹⁷

The undertow of resistance to the idea of ritual prayer remained, however. The notes for a course given at Green Acre Bahá'í School in 1956 include the comment, "But there are two kinds of prayer (1) real, sincere and simple, which is conversation with God and (2) formal, merely ritualistic prayer which has no results."¹⁸ While this comment may be applied to the attitude of the worshiper, whatever the type of prayer, it is only too readily applicable to the distinction between "obligation" and "true prayer" made in 1906.

The lack of a clear conception of the import of the distinction between *salát* and *du'á* and the imposition of a Western, Christian concept of "congregational" on the prohibition of congregational *salát* led to suspicion about congregational (unison) devotional acts generally and to the idea that Bahá'í obligatory prayers must be performed in solitary privacy. This divorced the concept of obligatory prayers from that of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in the dominant strains of Western Bahá'í thought and discouraged the utilization of unison devotional forms in Bahá'í life generally.

As so frequently in this work, we encounter in the issue of obligatory prayer a considerable disjunction between the intent at the beginning of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* project in the first decade of this century and its result in the second half of the century. This particular disjunction is clearly rooted in a clash between the culture which imbued the writings of the Faith and the culture which surrounded the developing Western Bahá'í community. In the case of devotions, at least, we

may say that in the long run the Bahá'í Faith was substantially acculturated to the Western Bahá'í community rather than that Western Bahá'ís were acculturated to the Bahá'í Faith. Or, again at least, that this has been the position to date.

Another conceptual distinction that is inherent in the linguistic context of Bahá'í scripture, but that was not appreciated by Western Bahá'ís and had implications for the development of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár practice, was that between music and the singing of devotional texts (whether scriptural or not). Broadly speaking, Islamic cultures draw a sharp distinction between music (*músiqí*) and those devotional forms of expression that a Westerner would term "religious music." While the latter are laudable, music *per se* is morally objectionable. The Bahá'í scriptures acknowledge that music may be used in morally objectionable ways and contexts but assert that music is equally capable of producing spiritual upliftment. Music in itself is morally neutral; its use is reprehensible or laudable according to intent and result.

However, despite the fact that music (*músiqí*) is approved of and Bahá'ís are encouraged to study it and use it in acceptable ways, there is still a fundamental distinction drawn in the Bahá'í writings between music and those devotional song forms that are used in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. To be acceptable, music should have the same spiritual intent as the devotional forms, but it is still conceptually distinct from them. Music has been rehabilitated in its own sphere, but the separate conceptual sphere of devotional song remains. The Islamic dichotomy had opposed devotional song to secular music; the Bahá'í dichotomy sees them as parallel activities which should be directed to compatible ends. In Western culture, the important dichotomy was not between music and devotional song but between popular and elite forms of music, whether in a devotional or secular context.

The Eastern Bahá'ís drew upon Islamic forms of devotional song and used them for their own purposes. The Western Bahá'ís drew on Christian forms to fulfill the needs of their devotional life. The emphasis in relation to the Faith was different, in that the tradition drawn on by the Eastern Bahá'ís provided generally accepted ways of rendering sacred text in song so that for Eastern Bahá'ís it was a simple matter to provide for cantillation of their sacred text; all they needed was ready at hand. Devotional poetry among the Eastern Bahá'ís developed in a situation in which both it and sacred text had established forms of sung devotional usage provided by the general cultural background of those who became Bahá'ís.

In the West, few Bahá'ís came from church backgrounds that had an established tradition of sung sacred text (I am excepting metricized psalms, etc., as these forms are basically hymnic). Among these few, fewer had the specialized background to be actively participant in that tradition. One who was, as a church organist and choirmaster in Episcopal circles, Edward Kinney, did personally sing Bahá'í prose sacred text to his own piano accompaniment, and we may assume that his church experience influenced how he did so. However, Kinney's personal usage seems to have had almost no diffusion in the community. For Kinney to perform was appreciated, but others did not learn his technique (or even individual compositions of his) or make use of it to any appreciable extent.

The tradition more widely drawn on in Western Bahá'í devotional song was the popular one of hymnody. By the beginning of this century, the role of the lay (even woman) hymnodist was well validated in the Protestant churches, and this role was ready for adoption by those Western Bahá'ís who were drawn to express their religious devotion in song. Equally, the general adoption by a religious community of hymns produced by individuals was an established part of

Protestant church life. Thus, the model of devotional song use and innovation most available in their previous church experience to those who became Bahá'ís was naturally the one they followed in their Bahá'í devotional life.

This left an imbalance in Western Bahá'í devotional song. Sung devotional poetry, the communally accepted manifestation of individual religious response, was well taken care of, but there was a void in respect to sung sacred text. There were some attempts at metricized versions and expansions of Bahá'í sacred text, but there was no generally available way of rendering the unchanged prose text in song. When some slight steps toward this were taken in the 1930s (and subsequently), they were based on a full-fledged choral model that had no immediate general utility for individual Bahá'ís or the general community.

The balance between sung sacred text and devotional poetry in community devotional life that was so readily achieved and sustained by the Eastern Bahá'í community was not reached by the Western community. To have achieved it in the West would have required a conscious process of development and not simply the continuance of established cultural forms.

The Western community also had to deal with the ideological concepts regarding musical creation in their culture. In the Eastern community, Bahá'ís came from a background which assumed that anyone who had some degree of education would be able to use the song forms appropriate to both sacred text and devotional poetry. Not everyone could do it well, of course, but to be able to do it in a functionally adequate way was regarded as a normal accomplishment.

In the West, of course, music was a specialized profession whether it was applied to religious or secular use. As in any situation where professionalization has taken place, there were very definite status differences between the efforts of an

accredited specialist and those of someone not "qualified" in the field. Even in those Western churches that had a tradition of sung prose sacred text, the developed use of it and its creation were firmly in the hands of specialists. In the Eastern Bahá'í community, functionally adequate transfer of the cultural tradition of sung sacred text could take place through both nonspecialists and religious professionals. In the West, such an automatic transfer could only have taken place through such religious specialists as clergy, choirmasters, and trained singers. Even if many such individuals had become Bahá'ís, there would still have been the problem that in the West the practice itself was associated with the roles they had held in specific churches; they did not simply practice at the most developed level something widespread in the culture. That the Bahá'í Faith provided no parallel roles for such individuals to take up would have in itself been sufficient to severely limit their transferring their specialist ability to Bahá'í use. Kinney's "chant" was favorably received as the performance of an individual member of the Bahá'í community, but there was no role or channel that provided for the adoption and diffusion of it.

In the case of hymns, creation by those who were not religious or musical specialists was perfectly legitimate in Western culture, and diffusion required merely the circulation of copies. If a community so desired, it could use any hymn without further ado. The Western churches had designated hymn singing a nonspecialist activity; anyone could do it. Equally, anyone could write a hymn, and for that hymn to be used and reused required simply that it meet with a reasonable level of general approbation. This was both the strength and the weakness of Bahá'í hymnody. As the use of hymns rested upon general approbation, all that was required to limit that use was to limit the approbation. The use rested upon a feeling; cast doubt on the validity of the feeling and

the use could be made suspect. That is exactly what seems to have happened.

The events that transferred the national power center of the Bahá'í community from the Midwest to the Eastern Seaboard of the United States around the middle of the second decade of the century meant also a transfer of power from those whose background was rooted in the more populist religious tradition to those with "higher" religious roots; a transfer upward in the social scale; and a transfer to those imbued with the ethos of professionalism and specialism. In this changed context, suitability became a concern in a different way. Not general, but specialist approbation was the proper standard; and the specialist standards to be adopted were largely those of appropriately "qualified" members of the non-Bahá'í peer groups of those Bahá'ís participating in the power structures of the Bahá'í community. Bahá'í hymnody (like populist Christian hymnody) was *déclassé*; if there was to be Bahá'í devotional music (a big *if*), it should be "suitable," it should come up to the proper standards of metropolitan "high" churches in being choral and specialist; and until those standards could be met, it must be done without. It was never actually said quite so bluntly, but those individuals and institutions with influence acted upon such a basis, and Bahá'í hymnody disappeared.

The position of hymnody probably also suffered from the growth of the anti-congregational attitude. Although Western Bahá'ís never conflated hymn singing with prayer in such a fashion as to bring it directly under the ban on congregational prayer that was developing in the 1930s, its indubitably congregational nature probably made it suspect on those grounds also. As the model of Bahá'í worship became increasingly individuated, it would have been difficult to find a legitimate place for congregational hymn singing. In 1958, the Temple Worship Committee discussed:

Letter . . . dated May 8th, 1958, suggesting that the Sunday afternoon devotions be made a "two-way communication system." This to be done with "two or three prayers of responsive reading & a couple of hymns or psalms to be sung by the worshippers."

Recorded—That the secretary write Mr. . . . thanking him for his suggestions & explaining why this can not be done. That we don't make the rules but only carry out what 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said using actual quotes.¹⁹

Unfortunately, the committee's reply has not come to light. It would be fascinating to see how they explained the illegitimacy of hymn singing based on "actual quotes" from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, let alone in the face of the numerous approving statements by Shoghi Effendi. Indeed, the committee had been informed in 1955 of a letter the National Spiritual Assembly had received from Amelia Collins in which she recorded that Shoghi Effendi approved of the occasional use of Christian hymns in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*.²⁰ As to the responsive reading, Shoghi Effendi had commented on the effectiveness of this devotional practice to an American Bahá'í in 1927,²¹ and there is a body of devotional texts in responsive forms by Bahá'u'lláh. The committee did "make the rules," even though they believed they were only following instructions.

In 1962, as part of its "sharing of the reaction to the services which sometimes comes to us," the National Assembly sent to the Temple Worship Committee some comments from a letter a Chicago columnist had written to a Bahá'í. The columnist remarked:

I have been at the forty-minute service both on balmy Sundays and in the dead cold of November and had the feeling that this service, similar to the reading service in the Christian Science Church, would go on if the Temple was filled to the last seat or if

only three persons were sitting there. Speakers follow one another in reading excerpts with a dispassionate attitude and afterward you hear the unseen choir and you get up and leave with the feeling that nobody really cared whether you came or not. Only the most accepted [exceptional?] persons . . . can embrace a philosophy so appealing to the intellect, with no need for personal recognition. . . .²²

The Assembly suggested to the committee that “in view of the fact that others have commented on what appears to be overemphasis on the letter rather than the spirit of the readings, we hope that the workshops [for readers] will call for swifter reading but most of all interest in the subject by the readers themselves who should be affected by it, inspired by it and happy about it.”²³

In the same year, the National Spiritual Assembly appointed a study committee to look at the whole question of the House of Worship. Their report was mainly concerned with teaching, but they did have some comment on the devotions:

The worship service itself is somehow above the heads of most of the audience. Americans apparently cannot sit and listen to someone read, particularly something so metaphorical as most sacred writings are. Our cultural expectations insist that we be entertained visually more than auditorily. Neither Baha'is nor the public really support the service. This is a problem which will take a great deal more study.²⁴

In early 1964, the Assembly submitted a letter about increasing “the teaching efficiency of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*” to the Universal House of Justice. This letter—together with a list of questions that had been attached, the reply, and a list of references on the subject—was later duplicated in booklet form for the study of those concerned with the building. In the letter the Assembly stated:

An expanded use of the auditorium of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* is being examined as our first step, in the hope that, for the Bahá'ís of the national community and locally, as well as for the public which we hope to reach by the millions, we can develop a wider framework of activity and bring a higher luster to our "Taj Mahal of the West." For example, many Bahá'ís of great loyalty find the worship services lacking in diversity and interest, boring and tedious. We have in fact developed a rigidity of method all unsuspecting. New approaches which will bring diversity and attractiveness are probably essential.

It is our vision and dream that the first *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* of the West will become justly famous for its unique and beautiful vocal music, its stimulation to the jaded and materialistic, and its evocativeness to the true seekers who find their way through its portals into the religion of today and tomorrow.²⁵

In one of the appended questions we might take note of here, the Assembly asked whether there might be "occasional use of a 'voice choir,' where several readers in unison harmoniously and rhythmically bring out the music of certain passages? Since the singing chorus is possible, may we assume that the voice choir will be acceptable, if done with professional skill after intense rehearsal?" The House of Justice replied that "the use of several readers in unison" was permissible, provided it avoided theatricality.²⁶

Although this 1964 correspondence does show a greater degree of concern on the part of the Assembly, with the response of Bahá'ís to the use of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* than previously, their main concern is still with the "seeker." In the case of the voice choir, it does reintroduce the topic of unison devotional activity, but only in the context of professional skill being the criterion of suitability, as with the "singing chorus."

In 1968, a former member and Secretary of the Assembly sent a long memo on "Towards the Full Development of the

Bahá'í House of Worship" to the National Assembly. In it he remarked about devotions:

We must be alert to the need for the steady improvement of our services, our attitudes and our creativity as Bahá'ís who are developing an authentically new society. Our worship and Holy Day services should continuously be improved. Our music and literature should be upgraded and made always more unique and distinctive. We should not be the epitome of conservatism and traditionalism. We should be willing to consider, develop and experiment with new approaches.

Recommendation: That we keel-haul the Sunday afternoon worship services in an effort to make them intelligible, meaningful, and beautiful, in order better to express the Bahá'í idea of Progressive Revelation, presenting, as the services do, the Bibles of the world.

Recommendation: That we take strenuous steps, utilizing musicians of the Faith and others, to develop music which will be proper and fitting for the Bahá'í House of Worship and for the Faith, using such innovations as voice choirs, voice music such as the Swingle Singers, more Bahá'í compositions procured by commissioning and by invitation, etc.

The author of these remarks was principally concerned about the use of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* as "our greatest teaching instrument," but he did also show sensitivity toward the effect of the institution on Bahá'ís. In particular, he was concerned that for new Bahá'ís visiting the building for the first time it was too easy "to find us just old cool Calvinists with a Bahá'í veneer." The reference to the Swingle Singers in the comments specifically on the development of music for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* may be regarded as an epitome of the general attitude toward the development of such a music. The author supplied a footnote in which he expanded on the subject:

The Swingle Singers are well known as extraordinary innovators in vocal music. Their human voice renditions of orchestral music are phenomenal. Perhaps it is one of the Bahá'í answers to the required use of the human voice only in our houses of worship.

That there had never been a grasp by Western Bahá'ís of the distinction between music and devotional song inherent in the Bahá'í writings (and their cultural background) has led to the prohibition on the use of instruments in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* being seen as a handicap to the development of Bahá'í devotional music that must be overcome. It is seen as a limitation in technical possibilities rather than a different orientation. Indeed, it is not unusual for settings of Bahá'í texts by Bahá'ís to include parts without meaningful text where the use of vocables substitutes for instrumental accompaniment.

In the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh uses the terms for Qur'anic recitation, *tartíl* and *tiláwát*, in reference to delivering sacred text in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. *Tartíl* is the term usually used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The implication of these terms is that the text is rendered in a slow and distinct manner with absolute attention to accuracy of pronunciation. The point is that the manner of delivery should enhance both the reader's and the listener's comprehension of the text. Obviously, this is not the aim of Western musical setting of textual material. There the emphasis is on musical values and structure, and the basis of those derives largely from historical instrumental practice.²⁷

A common complaint of those attending devotions in the Wilmette building over the last three decades has been that the words of the singers are unintelligible. Indeed, in even moderately elaborate music, which language they are singing in is not always certain. I sat through one piece on a Sunday afternoon unable to determine whether the choir was singing the original German text or an English translation. This

problem is not simply the fault of the vocal production of the singers, as the acoustics of the building have an inordinately long reverberation time and succeeding notes often overlap. This not only destroys what little chance there is of textual intelligibility in four-part settings, but can also make the choir sound horrendously off-key.

I have attempted here to briefly point out the differences between the devotional environment of the languages that are used in Bahá'í scripture and the concepts brought to the understanding of that scripture by Western Bahá'ís. From this discussion, and that of the preceding chapters, I think it is evident that contemporary North American Bahá'í devotional practice as centered on the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette is rooted much more firmly in the socio-cultural background of the North American Bahá'í community and the dynamics of that community's history than it is in an elaborated theological understanding of Bahá'í scripture. Thus, insofar as Western society and culture may be characterized as, in a general sense, "Christian," North American Bahá'í devotional practice may also be characterized as "Christian," and we might expect to understand its development better by considering the development of Christian devotional practice in North America.

In the decades that preceded the introduction of the Bahá'í Faith to North America, there was an upsurge of organized Christian activity across the continent. A succinct account of the implications of this for communal devotional practice may be excerpted from White's excellent study of Protestant worship:

. . . it was mass evangelism of the revivalistic type which changed America from a nation with a Christian minority to a nation in which most of the population belongs to a Church. . . .

The keynote of revivalism was that of producing a conversion

. . . . Beside such an earnest concern for producing converts, worship as an offering to God seemed to be only a side issue. . . . It is not strange that in such a situation worship became a means to an end—producing conversions—rather than an end in itself. Worship was utilized primarily for inducing conversion experiences rather than the offering of a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving by God's people. . . .

The consequences are quite clear. One stresses all means available for bringing the individual to conversion. . . . The approach to the worshipper is emotional, subjective, and individualistic. . . .

The congregation was increasingly a passive audience for whom worship was something done for them and to them by experts. The mood-setting beauties of the building and the music conditioned the congregation for worship but they did less and less as active participants. . . .

It was not long, of course, before churches were built specifically under the influence of the revival system. They are often referred to, even today, as the "auditorium" and the term is expressive . . . they are largely used as a place where the congregation hears worship.²⁸

As well as revivalism, the other main strand in the development of Protestant worship in North America in the last century was the adoption of the cathedral service, in which the active roles were taken by the clergy and choir. In its original context, the cathedral service had been both choral and congregational, as on most occasions the active participants had also formed the congregation in and of themselves as the members of the religious community associated with a cathedral. With the introduction of the cathedral model into ordinary churches, "the choir often monopolize[d] worship almost as much as it would were no other congregation present."²⁹

The revival and cathedral service trends had rather different class associations. According to Stevenson, as early as 1850, "the American denominations had already so drawn

their social lines that some ministered to the wealthy and elite in big cities while others served the common folk on farms and frontiers.”³⁰ A major symptom of this split was a preference for the use of “elevated” music and a cathedral service model in the elite churches. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, most churches with any social pretensions made use of a paid “mixed quartette” of soloists as the minimum necessary to elevate their services. The split was not just between elite and populist churches, however. There was virtually as much distinction between the devotional practice of the high churches (in both a liturgical and social sense) of the urban elite and those of the merely comfortable and salaried middle class as there was between the churches of the middle class and those of the “common folk.”³¹

It can be seen that both of these trends in North American Protestant worship, however dissimilar the views and social positions of their supporters in other ways, tended toward a passive experience in which the worshiper was, at best, acted upon and, at worst, an irrelevant observer. The majority of North American Bahá’ís from the turn to the middle of the century came from a mainstream Protestant background.³² The distinction, as discussed previously, being that the power structure of the community came from a comparatively “higher” church background after the mid-teens.

It seems likely that a vital factor in the development of Bahá’í devotional practice for the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in Wilmette was an underlying tension between the “revivalist” conversion ideology that surrounded the use of the building and the “high-church,” “cathedral” sensibility of those in control. The unrestrained use of whatever would produce a conversion, however emotional or “vulgar” (in the strict sense of being associated with the common people), was not an acceptable possibility to those concerned first and foremost with suitably “elevated” music and devotional practices. The

Western cultural dichotomy between popular and elite, with its associated value connotations, entered fully into the conceptualization of Bahá'í devotions in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. As a result, there was a feeling of alienation from the practice on the part of the ordinary person, Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í.

Woodward remarks, "The twilight zone that lies between living memory and written history is one of the favorite breeding places of mythology."³³ The beginnings of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* project in North America are only now passing completely out of the realm of living memory. But that the American Bahá'í community constantly brought in new members and expanded its membership considerably from the 1930s on, and even more considerably from the 1960s to date, has diluted the depths of its communal memory. Even Horace Holley, who played a key role in the development of the community from the 1920s through the 1950s, was not a participant in the North American Bahá'í community before 1914 when the center of vigor and power was already shifting to the East Coast, which resulted in a vitally important foreshortening of that memory at the institutional level.

The constant infusion of acculturated North American Protestants (whether or not they were active church members) into the Bahá'í community over the decades without any active process of reacculturation to concepts of community devotional life derived from the Bahá'í writings led to the development of a devotional practice for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* on a largely, if selective, Christian basis. What was seen as Christian from an elite standpoint, the popular forms of devotional expression, was rooted out. What derived from the elite strata of Christian devotional expression, and was not ruled out by the anti-congregational stance, was defined as "non-sectarian" and constituted the standard by which any further attempt at developing Bahá'í devotional expression or forms was to be judged.

It has been the experience of many Bahá'ís that the Bahá'í Faith in the West is perceived by non-Bahá'ís as a middle-class movement. This seems also to be the impression of those non-Bahá'ís who have written about it. In actuality, there have been Bahá'ís of all social strata from the early days of the Faith in the West. However, in the case of North American Bahá'í devotional practice, there has been an evident adoption of an upper-middle-class ideological framework for its development. Investigation may show there to have been other areas in which unconscious ideological carryover from the backgrounds of those Bahá'ís who have constituted the power elite of the community has influenced developments in the socio-cultural expression of Bahá'í adherence in the West. It is perhaps the recognition of such carry overs that suggests to observers that the Bahá'í Faith is particularly cohesive with a middle-class identity.

In the case of *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* devotions, it may be that the adopted ideological framework that has structured response to the Bahá'í writings in their development is now outdated. We have seen that there has been no substantial change in ideology or practice since 1953. However, it would seem unlikely that one could substantiate a case that there has been no change in North American middle- to upper-middle-class cultural expectations and preferences since 1953, let alone since the 1930s, when the basis of the current practice was crystalizing. Indeed, I have found dissatisfaction with the use of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* to be as common among evidently middle-class Bahá'ís as among Bahá'ís of other social backgrounds.

The problem that has been created is that what are now dated North American socio-cultural values have been conceptualized as "Bahá'í" values legitimated by Bahá'í scriptural authority. To change the practice, whether on the basis of direct derivation from Bahá'í writings or of the substitution of a

more up-to-date set of North American socio-cultural values, there has first to be a recognition of the primacy of socio-historical rather than scriptural considerations behind the establishment of the current practice. Whether such a recognition will occur, either on the part of the institutional structure of the Faith or in the consciousness of the general membership of the Bahá'í community, remains to be seen. Whatever the case may be, the development of Bahá'í devotional practice for the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette will continue to be a fascinating contact node for the acculturation of the Bahá'í Faith to the West and of Westerners to the Bahá'í Faith.

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

"Sobanhaka ya Hu"

Original text and tune:

So - ban - ha - ka ya Hu, So - ban - ha - ka ya Hu. Ya man Ho - va Hu,

Ya man haz A - ha - don El - la Hu.

Original translation:

Glory be unto Thee, O Thou, O He!
O thou who art He.
O Thou who art Incomparable, O He!

Transliteration in the currently used system:

Subhánaka yá hú.
Yá man huva hú,
Yá man laýsa, aḥadun illá-hú.

EXAMPLE ONE
Original in the archives of the Spiritual Assembly of the
Bahá'ís of Chicago.

CHANT

Hal min mu-fa-ra jin, ghir Al-lah ?

Kul sub-han Al-lah- hu- Al-lah ! Kul-

un 'a - bad- un la- u, Wa kul-

un ba-im-ra- hi ka-'am-un. (9)

EXAMPLE TWO

The Remover of Difficulties (a prayer of the Báb).

The Greatest Name

Words & Music
by L.R. WAITE.

With joy - ful hearts we do pro - claim, The
Great Name that is a shin - ing light To

pow - er of the Great - est Name; To - day for ev - er -
lead us on - ward through the night; Di - spel - ling dark - ness

more the same:
by its might: AL - LAH - HO AB - - HA .

3
Let nations rise from shore to shore,
And sing it over o'er and o'er;
Then wars shall cease forevermore:
ALLAHO ABHA!

4
Great Name of joy, of peace, and rest;
That fills with harmony each breast;
Its glory shines from east to west:
ALLAHO ABHA!

5
Repeat it, and it reaches far;
From world to world and star to star;
Naught can its glorious radiance mar:
ALLAHO ABHA!

6
Great Name we love more every day,
To say it over is to pray,
And angels listen and obey:
ALLAHO ABHA!

7
Its rhythm swings from pole to pole;
Its music soon shall fill each soul;
And heavens scroll shall backward roll:
ALLAHO ABHA!

8
ALLAHO ABHA! Let it ring
Up to the throne of God, our King;
Let men and angels joyous sing:
ALLAHO ABHA!

Alleluia Song.

Words & Music by L. R. WAITE.

Moderato *cres*

1. Al-le-lu-ia! Lo the Shepherd Of Gods shee-pas come a-gain To fulfill the
 2. Once a-gain His voice is pleading As it did in days of old; I the Shep-herd
 3. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Let our song by men be heard, Lo our Shep-herd

mf

word of Prophets giv-enthrō the sa-cred pen. He has come with love to save us
 now am calling, Gent-ly call-ing to my fold. Glad are we who know our Shep-herd,
 now doth lead us By the pow-er of His word. He will ga-ther ev-ry nation

dim *f*

He has come to set us free From the wilds of su-per-sti-tion From the
 Glad are we who know our King, Let our voic es rise to heaven And the
 To one fold in bonds of Love And Gods king-dom here e-stab-lish As it

ff

paths of my-ster-y.
 echoes loud-ly ring. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
 is in heav'n a-bove.

ff *rit*

Let us sing Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! To our King!

EXAMPLE FOUR

Softly His Voice is Calling.

Espressivo.

Words & Music by L.R. WAITE.

Soft - ly His voice is call - ing now call - ing to you and
Soft - ly His voice is call - ing now call - ing to ev - 'ry

me Hark to those tones so sweet and low
heart Come lit - tle chil - dren un - to me

o - ver the dis - tant sea Chil - dren of mine a -
and from me ner de - part Oh be ye ten - der

bide in love e - ver he seems to say
kind and true e - ver he seems to say

Ab - dul Ba - ha we turn to thee Thou art the perfect way.
Ab - dul Ba - ha we turn to thee Thou art the perfect way.

His glorious Sun has Risen.

Words & Music
by L. R. WAITE.

His glo - rious Sun has ris - en, to set for us no
Go tell the joy - ous tid - ings: His King - dom now hath
He came and dwelt a - mong us, with all His won - drous

more; The ech - o of His prais - es now rings from shore to
come! Where - in all pain and sor - row, and ev - 'ry doubt suc -
pow'r's; His Love embraced all na - ture the birds, the trees, the

shore; He came to ban - ish dark - ness, to show the per - fect
cumb; Es - tablish'd here on earth it is, and "who - so - ev - er
flow'r's; King of a Roy - al King - dom, we praise Thy Ho - ly

way. This is the ra - diant morn - ing of the mill - en - nial day!
will" May en - ter in, and love di - vine and peace his heart'll fill.
Name; Thy glo - rious Sun has ris - en, its Light no more to wane!

EXAMPLE SIX

Great Day of God.

Words & Music by L. R. WAITE.

Allegro.

Great day of God, long looked for, Thy dawn we do pro-
Great day of Might and Pow-er, Of Know-ledge and of

claim. Great day when ev-ry na-tion Shall praise His ho-ly name, Great
Light, No clouds of su-per-sti-tion Can now be-dim our sight Great

day of re-sur-rec-tion, Of un-i-ty and love, Soon
Day, when God, the Fa-ther, is known o'er all the earth, And

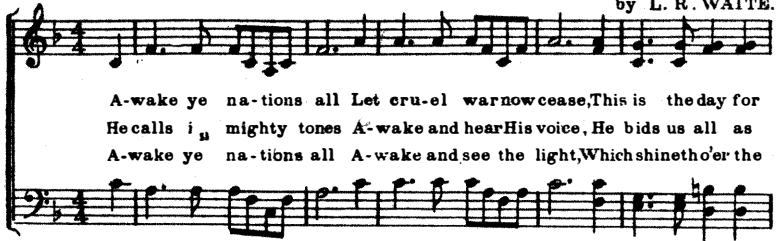
bright in all its splen-dor Thy Sun shall shine a-bove.
to His whole cre-a-tion Hath giv-en a new birth.

Great Day of the unveiling
Of Truth's Deep mysteries,
When every hidden secret
Of earth and sky and seas,
In all their wondrous beauty,
To man shall be revealed;
Nor can an act or motive
By man now be concealed.

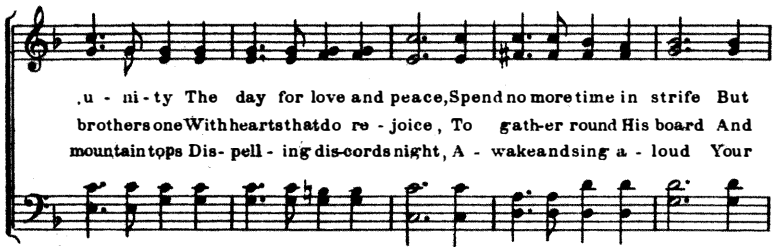
Great Day of God, All glorious;
Great Day of Peace, so blest;
The thought of Thee brings gladness,
And dilates every breast.
Great Day of one religion,
When all are understood;
One faith in Life Eternal,
One God, one Brotherhood.

Awake Ye Nations All.

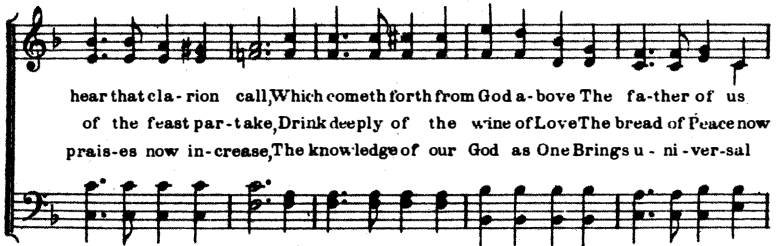
Words & Music
by L. R. WAITE.



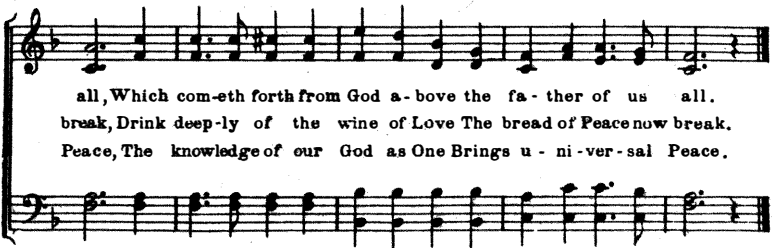
A-wake ye na-tions all Let cru-el warnow cease, This is the day for
He calls iu mighty tones A-wake and hear His voice, He bids us all as
A-wake ye na-tions all A-wake and see the light, Which shineth o'er the



u - ni - ty The day for love and peace, Spend no more time in strife But
brothers one With hearts that do re - joice, To gath - er round His board And
mountain tops Dis - pell - ing dis - cords night, A - wake and sing a - loud Your



hear that cla - rion call, Which cometh forth from God a - bove The fa - ther of us
of the feast par - take, Drink deeply of the wine of Love The bread of Peace now
prais - es now in - crease, The knowledge of our God as One Brings u - ni - ver - sal



all, Which com - eth forth from God a - bove the fa - ther of us all.
break, Drink deep - ly of the wine of Love The bread of Peace now break.
Peace, The knowledge of our God as One Brings u - ni - ver - sal Peace.

EXAMPLE EIGHT

The Day of Certainty.

Words & Music
by L. R. WAITE.

Re - joice, re-joyce be - lie - vers, The night of doubt is
 Re - joice, re-joyce be - lie - vers, As chil-dren of the
 Re - joice, re-joyce be - lie - vers, For Knowledge, Faith and
 Re - joice, re-joyce be - lie - vers, With ban-ners white un-

o'er The Sun of truth has ri - s - en Its
 King Give forth His Pro - clam - a - tion Let
 Love Falls o'er God's whole cre - a - tion Like
 furled Where - on sweet Peace is writ - ten. Yea

rays reach ev - ry shore. Doubts sha - dows now with
 ev - ry na - tion sing. Doubts sha - dows now with
 sweet dew's from a - bove. Doubts sha - dows now with
 peace to all the world. Doubts sha - dows now with

night must flee, This is the day of CER-TAIN-TY.
 night must flee This is the day of CER-TAIN-TY.
 night must flee This is the day of CER-TAIN-TY.
 night must flee This is the day of CER-TAIN-TY.

Tell the Wondrous Story

Words & Music by L. R. WAITE.

Tell the wondrous sto - ry, Tell it near and far
He has come as pro-mised He the Prince of Peace

Of the lov-ing Fa-ther. Of BA-HA-'UL - LAH Tell it e-ver
Come in might and pow-er And all strife must cease He has come in

tell it That all men may Know Now has come Gods Kingdom
glo-ry Dark nessnow must Ylee Fa - ther of all na-tions

On this earth be-low. Tell the wondrous sto-ry Tell it near and
We will tell of Thee

far Of the lov-ing Fa-ther Of-BA-HA 'UL LAH!

EXAMPLE TEN

At Eventide.

Words & Music by
Moderato.

LOUISE R. WAITE.

At e - ven - tide, when hearts are worn and weary, As tired children

seek their mothers' breast, We turn to Thee and feel Thy spir - it o'er us,

And in Thy love we find our home and rest. Ab - dul Ba - ha, We
we find our home and rest.

turn our hearts to Thee, For Thou art love di - vine e - ter - nal - ly.

At eventide when darkness falls
around us
Earth's sorrows dim and burdens
fall away
As we with dear ones, meet in
sweet communion
Loves holy presence doth all
fear allay
Abdul Baha
We turn our hearts to Thee
For Thou art love divine
Eternally.

At eventide when lifes short day
is ended
And deaths glad tidings fall upon
our ear
As into realms of bliss and joy
and rapture
Thy hand will guide us. Thou
wilt still be near
Abdul Baha
We turn our hearts to Thee
For Thou art love divine
Eternally.

EXAMPLE ELEVEN

Benediction

"Sing this melody in all gatherings of Love and
Harmony of the beloved of God."

Abdul-Baha Abbas.

LOUISE R. WAITE.

rall (Shahnaz)

p

May God's love now hov-er o'er us As a dove with out-streched wings

p *rall*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in G-flat major, 4/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are "May God's love now hov-er o'er us As a dove with out-streched wings". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment, also in G-flat major, 4/4 time, with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *rall* tempo marking.

a tempo

While His peace that flows a - round us To each heart sweet comfort brings

a tempo

Detailed description: This system contains the next two staves. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "While His peace that flows a - round us To each heart sweet comfort brings". The piano accompaniment features a *a tempo* marking.

May we now re-ceive His spi-rit And its rad-iance shed a - far

mf *p*

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves. The vocal line has the lyrics "May we now re-ceive His spi-rit And its rad-iance shed a - far". The piano accompaniment starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and then softens to piano (*p*) for the final measure.

allarg.

Now and here in Love a - hid-ing In the realms of EL-AB - HA.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two staves. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics "Now and here in Love a - hid-ing In the realms of EL-AB - HA." and is marked *allarg.* (allargando). The piano accompaniment also concludes with this tempo marking.

EXAMPLE TWELVE

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM

"Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country;
let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind!"

BAHA'O'LLAH

SAFFA KINNEY

Land of the south-land, Land of the north.—

Lands of the east and west— Brothers come forth! From out the nation..

From all the creeds Bro - thers ye are in fact Be Brothers in deeds.

2.
One loving Father, Lord of this earth.
Breathed forth the breath of life:
Gave us our birth.
His call goes out,
His mandate's decreed!
Why will ye listen not
Oh, ye of one seed!

3.
These laws are manmade, these ye obey:
Essence of cruelty—
O do not delay.
Write on your foreheads—
Write while tis day
Ye, who are sons of God
Write "Brother's alway!"

4.
Earth's surging armies fight in the field.
Army of Heaven—
Tis love's sword we wield!
Come join our ranks.
Come, sow Heavenly seed.
Brothers ye are in fact
Be Brothers indeed!

5.
God of our fathers, God of today
Grant us the pow'r to see—
The right way to pray!
Then will our song
Be well understood:
One common Father, God!
And one Brotherhood.

Copyright: 1916 by Edward B. Kinney

EXAMPLE THIRTEEN

Respectfully Dedicated to the President of the United States,
His Excellency Woodrow Wilson

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Words and Music
Composed March-April, 1917
by SAFFA KINNEY

O glo-ri-ous Moth-er-land Bor-der'd by o-cean strand Stretching with
lord-ly wealth On ev-'ry hand: Blood paid the price for thee Blood of the
great and free, Thy mar-tyr'd dead who died At Thy com-mand.

2.

As they have bled and died,
May we with lofty pride,
Do all they dared to do,
And move beside.
They gave us liberty;
Forth flung Democracy;
Shall we not with them stand
Whate'er betide?

3.

This fair United States
From East to Golden Gates,
From Gulf to Northernland
Now calmly waits:
Waits for a noble band
Drawn forth from every land,
Who'll live or die for thee
Beloved land!

4.

Live to maintain the right,
Justice in place of might
So, that as brothers, all
Stand hand in hand.
And if the need be real,
Face death with ardent zeal,
Die for the great Ideal,
For Freedom's land!

5.

Lord of the land and sea,
Father of liberty,
May this great nation's path
With glory shine.
In Thee we place our trust,
Do Thou our cause make just,
God of the nations, make
This nation Thine!

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EXAMPLE FOURTEEN

THO' WE HAVE WANDER'D FAR

SAFFA KINNEY

The musical score consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "Tho' we have wan-der'd far, And Thou so Ho-ly art, Thou hast not fail'd Thou prom-ised One To seek us, To save us. To heal the woun-ded, bro-ken heart." The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with block chords and moving lines.

2
All down the ages past
Great messengers have come —
How mighty was the trumpet call
 To warn men,
 To draw men,
To call God's chosen people home.

3
How in this glad new day,
The Voice rings out again,
The Centre of God's Covenant
 Is teaching,
 Beseeching,
And making all the Pathway plain.

4
O sad and lonely heart,
Can'st thou not hear the call?
Awake e'er thou hast gone thy way,
 To hear Him,
 To heed Him,
To love Him who would save us all.

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EXAMPLE FIFTEEN

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion*, p. 10.
2. Jones, "Paradigm Shifts," pp. 72–73.
3. Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion*, p. 10.
4. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, pp. 13–14.
5. Cohen, "Symbolic Action," pp. 120–121.

6. This passage is not intended as a full discussion of the various meanings of the term *mashriqu'l-adhkár* to be found in the Bahá'í scriptures, which is beyond the scope of this study. But the reader should be alert to the fact that only one such meaning is treated in this book. For references to the various ways the term is used, see: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha* (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1909–16), especially volume one; and three recent compilations by the Universal House of Justice titled "Bahá'í Meetings/The Nineteen-Day Feast," "Bahá'í Writings on Music," and "The Importance of Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude."

7. National Spiritual Assembly, *The Bahá'í Temple*, p. 15.

8. Hogden, *Anthropology, History, and Cultural Change*, p. 19.

9. The term "papers" always denotes materials that belonged to an individual, and "records" materials associated with an administrative or other institutional body.

10. Note that this example indicates a different source from (Music Committee: NSA to Committee, 18 February 1931), which would indicate the Committee's records and not a sub-series of the National Assembly's records.

PART ONE: The Devotional Heritage

Chapter 1: From the East

1. Gifford, "The Prehistory of Homo Sapiens," p. 83.
2. Ḥaydar-ʿAlí, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts*, p. 4.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
4. Remey, *Observations*, p. 74.
5. Browne, *Materials for Study*, p. 352.
6. See Browne, "The Babis of Persia," *A Traveller's Narrative, Materials for Study*; Cheyne, *The Reconciliation of Races*; Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*; Gobineau, *Les Religions*; and Young-husband, *The Gleam*.
7. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 309.
8. Browne, *Materials for Study*, p. 347.
9. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 314–315.
10. Browne, *Materials for Study*, pp. 343–347.
11. Browne, "The Babis of Persia," p. 934.
12. *Ibid.*, 935–936.
13. Root, *Ṭáhirih*.
14. *Ibid.*, 86–87.
15. *Ibid.*, 93–94.
16. *Ibid.*, 94.
17. For a recent discussion of Ṭáhirih's poetry, see Sandler, "The Poetic Artistry of Qurratu'l-Ayn."
18. Browne, "The Babis of Persia," 981.
19. See Kazemzadeh, "Varqá and Rúhu'lláh."
20. Balyuzi, *The Báb*, p. 235.
21. Recordings of poems by Ṭáhirih, Na'ím, and ʿAndalíb in the original have recently been made available to the Western Bahá'í community on Davis, *In Memory of the Martyrs*. Such recordings have long been available to and distributed among Persian-speaking Bahá'ís.
22. Momen, "Early Relations," p. 74.
23. Goodall Papers: Menshadi to Unidentified, n.d.
24. Remey, *Observations*, pp. 85–86.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–101.
26. Moody, *News Items of 1914–1915*, p. 3.

27. This account is based primarily on Lee, “The Rise of the Bahá’í Community,” except as otherwise cited.
28. Chicago Records.
29. *The Bahai Bulletin*, vol. I, no. 6, pp. 6–8.
30. Remey, *Observations*.
31. Remey, *Mashrak-El-Azkar*.
32. Dreyfus, “Une Institution Behaie,” p. 526.
33. Remey, *Observations*, p. 61.
34. This book was written either by the cantor mentioned above or by his uncle, who had the same name and was a well-known Bahá’í teacher. It was translated into English in 1921 by Edith Sanderson.
35. Alkany [Qá’íní], *Lessons*, p. 31.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
38. See, for example, Chapter two of this book.
39. This figure derives from a list of names in National Spiritual Assembly, *The Bahá’í Centenary*, pp. 141–142. I have omitted the names of one non-Bahá’í, one non-North American, and five children from the count. Of these 101 people, 70 were women and 31 were men.
40. Cooper Papers: Anonymous pilgrim notes.
41. Maxwell, *An Early Pilgrimage*, p. 37.
42. Lucas, *A Brief Account*, pp. 14–15.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 16, 31.
44. Chicago Records: Allen to Chicago community, 28 May 1907.
45. Waite Papers: Diary, 1909.
46. Sometimes translations were made in the Holy Land or Egypt, where some early translation was made into French.
47. Chase Papers: Chase to Bryant, 17 May 1906.
48. *Ibid.*: Chase to Bryant, 24 May 1906.
49. Cooper Papers.
50. Archives of the Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.
51. On Lawḥ-i-Náqús, see Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’-u’lláh*, pp. 18ff.
52. See Musical Example One for this chant.
53. See Musical Example One.

54. Windust Papers.
55. Chase Papers: P. Hannen to five Chicago women, March 1910.
56. *Ibid.*: Moody to Russell, 27 November 1909.
57. Robarts Papers: Jones to Robarts, 6 February 1920.
58. *Ibid.*, Harrison to Robarts, 12 August 1922.
59. Convention Transcript, 1929, p. 333.
60. Kinney's personal papers are currently not available for research, being in the possession of his son and others, and their exact nature is undetermined. It is possible that materials related to his chants may be among them.
61. See Chapter Seven.

Chapter 2: Early Devotions and the Music of Louise Waite

1. Chicago Records: Minutes, 28 May 1901.
2. Chase Papers: Assad'Ullah to "Brothers and Sisters in Spirit," 16 January 1902.
3. Chicago Records: House to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 5 July 1902.
4. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 17 November, 24 November, 1 December 1901.
5. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 8 December 1901.
6. Chase Papers: Chase to Isabella Brittingham, 14 September 1902.
7. Chicago Records: Minutes, 17 January, 28 February 1903.
8. *Ibid.*: House to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, October 1904.
9. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 20 April, 4 May 1907.
10. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 11 January 1908.
11. *Ibid.*: Schmidt to House, 8 August 1908.
12. *Ibid.*: House to New York Board of Counsel, 19 February 1909.
13. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 19 October 1909.
14. *Ibid.*: Waite to House, 6 December 1909.
15. See Chapter Seven.
16. The following account of the life of Waite is based on materials in the Chicago Records, National Spiritual Assembly Records, Parsons Papers, Robarts Papers, Waite Papers, and Windust Papers.

17. See Chapter Seven.
18. Cowan Papers.
19. Windust Papers: Waite to Windust, 16 June, 12 July, 29 August 1927.
20. Ibid.: Waite to Windust, 16 June 1927.
21. Mary Lesch Papers: Publishing Society Account Book.
22. Waite Papers.
23. Chase Papers: Chase to Herrigel, 2 March 1911.
24. Ibid.: Chase to Waite, July 1911.
25. Parsons Papers: Waite to Haney, 5 February 1915.
26. Knobloch Family Papers: Waite to Hannen, 18 April 1916.
27. We may also note that the amounts paid into the Temple Fund from hymn book sales in 1910 and 1911 are divisible by 10 but not by 20, suggesting that the price was also 10¢. This might reflect the lower production cost of a second edition that was mainly printed from plates that had already been paid for, a reduced price to clear the first edition, or a combination of both.
28. *Unity*, 22 September 1910, pp. 51–52.
29. True Papers: Compilation of Extracts About Music.
30. Chase Papers.
31. Waite, *Bahai Hymns and Poems*, p. 27.
32. Ibid.: pp. 30–31.
33. Chase Papers.
34. Brewer, *Sacred Songs and Hymns*, p. 8.
35. Cooper Papers: Chase's copy of *Brewer's Edition of Sacred Songs and Hymns* with his handwritten emendations.
36. Waite Papers: Waite to Brittingham, 5 April 1909.
37. Ammer, *Unsung*, p. 96.

Chapter 3: Bahá'í Hymnody in Community Life

1. Chase Papers: Funeral Exercises, Mrs. Goodale, 15 February 1905.
2. Cooper Papers.
3. Chase Papers.
4. Spokane Minute Book, 1907–1910.
5. Ibid.
6. Kenosha Records: Minutes, 28 July 1908.

7. Portland Minute Book, 1906–1911.
8. “History of the Cause of God in Honolulu,” c. 1912.
9. *Star of the West*.
10. See Chapter Four and Chapter Seven.
11. Jersey City Minute Book, 1908–1942.
12. Wagner, *The Bahá’í Hymns and Music*, p. 2: Sohrab to Waite, 4 February 1910.
13. Baltimore Minute Book.
14. Waite Papers: Waite to Thompson, 17 March 1910.
15. Mary Lesch Papers: “Rough Estimate of Books on Hand, May 16, 1923.”
16. Robarts Papers: Yahn to Robarts, 17 May 1920.
17. Ibid.: Cadwallader to Robarts, n.d.
18. Ibid.: Mae Nelson to Robarts, 26 March 1921.
19. Ibid.: Mae Nelson to Robarts, 30 November 1921; 29 March 1922.
20. Ibid.: Hazel Tomlinson to Robarts, 10 January 1922.
21. Ibid.: Hazel Tomlinson to Robarts, 23 March 1922.
22. Ibid.: Hazel Tomlinson to Robarts, c. 1923.
23. Ibid.: Collins to Robarts, 15 December 1922; c. early January 1923.
24. *World Fellowship*, vol. I, nos. 9/10, August 1924, p. 3.
25. Robarts Papers: “Report of the Bahai Children’s Festival at Esslingen, March 27, 1921.”
26. *Bahá’í News*, vol. 48, February 1931, pp. 6–7.
27. Convention Transcript, 1926, p. 223.
28. Chicago Records: Benah to Chicago, translated by Ahmad Esphahani (Sohrab), 30 January 1907.
29. Cooper Papers: Moody to Cooper, 7 June 1916.
30. Wagner, *The Bahá’í Hymns and Music*, p. 2: excerpt from Root to Waite, 1920.
31. *Bahá’í News*, vol. 126, June 1939, p. 8, quoted from *Bahá’í Newsletter* of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, March 1939. After a lecture-recital of Waite’s work in Wilmette in 1985, a Bahá’í who had grown up in the Indian community during the 1940s and 1950s told me that he had known “Softly His Voice Is Calling” since childhood but he had had no idea that it was written by an American until that evening.

32. Robarts Papers: extract from Isabel Fraser to Juliet Thompson, 19 September 1913.
33. Wagner, *The Bahá'í Hymns and Music*, p. 2: Sohrab to Waite, July 1915.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 1: excerpts from E. C. Getsinger to a believer in Chicago, n.d.
35. Waite Papers: Lua Getsinger to Waite, 26 September 1915.
36. Waite Papers: Rouhani to Waite, 14 June 1925.
37. Lunt Papers: copy of Fazel to Waite, 12 August 1920.
38. Waite Papers: Blomfield to Waite, 9 June 1913.
39. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Temple Committee: Wilkins to Holley, 27 April 1926.
40. Waite Papers: Ransom Kehler to Waite, 24 September 1931.
41. *Ibid.*: Finch to Waite, 16 August 1920.
42. *Ibid.*: Alexander to Waite, 27 October 1920.
43. Finch Papers: Mashida to Finch, 7 October 1921.
44. Waite Papers: Brittingham to Waite, 10 June 1909.
45. *Ibid.*: MacNutt to Waite, 8 May 1909.
46. Wagner, *The Bahá'í Hymns and Music*, p. 5: Mears to *Star of the West*, n.d.
47. Windust Papers: copy to Sitkin to Waite, forwarded to Windust, 12 September 1913.
48. *Star of the West*, vol. XIV, no. 9, December 1923, p. 278.
49. Waite Papers: Rogers to Waite, 23 August 1929.
50. Windust Papers: Waite to Windust, 25 February 1930.
51. *Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, pp. 341–342; Bahá'í Historical Record Cards.
52. *Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, pp. 943–944.
53. Goodall Papers: Gillen to Goodall, n.d.
54. Tablets, trans: Hannen to Green, 8 February 1914.
55. Racine Records.
56. Chicago Records: Minutes, 15 July 1905.
57. Racine Records: Olsen to Nelson, 15 December 1907.
58. *Star of the West*, vol. II, no. 4, pp. 4–5.
59. *Ibid.*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 3.
60. Lesch and Lundberg Papers.
61. Parsons Papers.
62. *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 5, p. 2.

63. Fox, *English Hymns*, p. 17.
64. Chase Papers: Chase to Hoagg, 13 November 1907.

Chapter 4: Opposition to the Use of Hymns

1. Chase Papers: C. E. Sprague to Chase, 30 April 1904.
2. Ibid.: Waite to Officers of Woman's Assembly and House of Spirituality, n.d. (early 1905).
3. Chicago Records: Minutes, 18 February 1905.
4. Wagner, *The Bahá'í Hymns and Music*, pp. 2–3.
5. Waite Papers: Waite to Coles, 8 June 1924.
6. Windust Papers: Waite, "My visits with, and instructions from Abdul Baha while He was in Chicago from April 30th to May 6th, 1912."
7. Waite Papers: Waite to Coles, 8 June 1924.
8. Parsons Papers: Waite to Parsons, 25 May 1915.
9. Bahai Temple Unity Records: Minutes, 17 August 1916.
10. Knobloch Family Papers: Waite to "Bahai brother" (Hannen?), 10 June 1916.
11. Lunt Papers: Root to Bahai Temple Unity Board, 17 July 1921.
12. Robarts Papers: Waite to Robarts, 10 July 1921.
13. Windust Papers: MacNutt to True, 9 December 1920.
14. Ibid.: MacNutt to Scheffler, 14 January 1921.
15. Convention Transcript, 1929, pp. 329–330.
16. Ibid., pp. 331–332.
17. Ibid., pp. 332–333.
18. Scheffler Papers: Scheffler to Florence Morton, 3 July 1926.
19. National Spiritual Assembly Records: Scheffler to Holley, 12 July 1926.
20. *Chicago Bahá'í News*, January 1936, p. 7.
21. Los Angeles Archives: Waite to Spiritual Assembly, 28 October 1935.
22. Ibid.: Assembly to Waite, 13 November 1935.
23. *Bahá'í News*, Los Angeles, December 1935, p. 38.
24. National Spiritual Assembly Records: San Francisco Assembly to National Assembly, 17 January 1938.

25. Ibid.: National Assembly to San Francisco Assembly, 28 January 1938.
26. Schopflocher, *Sunburst*, pp. 13, 16-17.
27. Ibid.
28. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Publishing Committee: National Assembly to Committee, 25 February 1936.
29. Ibid.: National Assembly to Committee, 15 January 1937; 12 November 1937; 3 January 1938; 11 March 1938; Committee to National Assembly, 28 December 1936; 7 December 1937.
30. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Reviewing Committee: Committee to National Assembly, 17 July 1935.
31. Ibid.: National Assembly to Committee, 8 August 1935.
32. National Spiritual Assembly Records: National Assembly to Shoghi Effendi, 6 January 1938.
33. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to National Assembly, 30 January 1938.
34. Postscript to letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 22 December 1930.
35. Postscript to letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 22 July 1931.
36. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 5 January 1932.
37. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 59, February 1932, p. 6.
38. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 15 November 1932.
39. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 17 March 1935.
40. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Koch, 7 April 1935.
41. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Waite, 21 January 1938.
42. May Brown Recollections, p. 7.
43. Ibid., p. 17.
44. Africa Teaching Committee Records.
45. Convention Transcript, 1957, pp. 483-484.
46. Ibid., p. 485.
47. National Spiritual Assembly Records: National Assembly to Shoghi Effendi, 13 May 1957.
48. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Assembly, 21 September 1957.

PART TWO: The Building

Chapter 5: The Choice of a Site and the Development of National Organization

1. Except as otherwise cited, this chapter is based on Chicago Records: Minutes and Correspondence.
2. *Star of the West*, 13 July 1915, p. 56.
3. Congress Transcript, 1920, p. 20.
4. Chase Papers: "The Bahai Feast of the Master," 26 November 1902.
5. See, for example, *ibid.*: Chase to Bryant, 9 February 1903.
6. *Ibid.*: Assad'Ullah to Windust, 19 February 1903.
7. *Ibid.*: House to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, c. March 1903.
8. *Ibid.*: Assad'Ullah to House, 4 May 1903.
9. *Ibid.*: Circular letter from House, 1 January 1905.
10. For a more detailed discussion of the issue of gender-segregated and integrated institutions in the early North American Bahá'í community, see Armstrong-Ingram, "Recovering a Lost Horizon."
11. Chase Papers: Chase to Waite, 23 October 1905.
12. Chicago Records: Windust to Remy, 28 November 1906.
13. *Ibid.*: True to Windust, 26 November 1906.
14. *Ibid.*: House to Kenosha Board, 31 December 1906.
15. Chase Papers: House to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 26 January 1907.
16. Windust Papers: "An outline of the proceedings of the House . . . during the Summer of 1907 . . . concerning the erection of a Temple," 26 November 1907.
17. Chicago Records: True to Agnew, 25 October 1907.
18. It was a regular practice for True to offer to host community meetings that were called to discuss specific issues. Often those who disagreed with her and thus might not have been on the best personal terms with her felt disinclined to attend. The outcome of a number of important meetings over the years was skewed by this. That the House, although aware of the effects, seems to have felt unable to refuse True's public offers to host meetings is in itself an interesting indication of her position in the community.

19. At the time, the present town of Evanston consisted of three separate towns: South Evanston, Evanston, and North Evanston.

20. Hill Street is now called Maple Avenue. The site suggested by those gathered on 26 November 1907 is now part of the campus of the National College of Education.

21. Eventually, \$34,500 was paid for the site, not including interest. It should be noted that there was a falling land market between 1908 and 1909, when the final price was settled. There is a discrepancy in the site descriptions as the plat shows it to have been divided into sixteen lots but True's 1915 report of the early history of the project mentions only fourteen lots: the two purchased in 1908 and "twelve" negotiated for in 1909. True may have been confused and subtracted the first two lots bought from the total number twice.

22. Chicago Records: Chase to Windust, 22 May 1908.

23. Chase Papers: Chase to Harris, 27 November 1908.

24. Chicago Records: House to New York Board, 25 November 1908.

25. Chase Papers: Chase to Bryant, 2 October 1908.

26. *Ibid.*: Chase to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 5 November 1908.

27. Chicago Records: Carmichael to House, 9 July 1908.

28. *Ibid.*: Watson to House, 8 August 1908.

29. Chase Papers: Chase to Harris, 27 November 1908.

30. *Ibid.*: Chase to Ober, 13 December 1908.

31. Chicago Records: True to House, n.d. (late December 1908).

32. Convention Transcript, 1913: "Open Meeting . . . Sun. Apr. 27."

33. Chicago Records: House to Kenosha Board, 31 December 1906.

34. *Ibid.*: MacNutt to Codwise, 29 July 1907.

35. *Ibid.*: MacNutt to House, 28 July 1907.

36. *Ibid.*: Getsinger to House, 15 April, 27 April 1908.

37. *Ibid.*: True to House, 23 July 1907.

38. *Ibid.*: House to True, 29 July 1907.

39. *Ibid.*: House to New York Board, 26 November 1908.

40. *Ibid.*: True to House, 18 August 1908.

41. At the time of that meeting True may have been out of town at her summer home in Michigan.

42. Chicago Records: House to New York Board, 25 November 1908.

43. Chase Papers: Chase to Assad'Ullah, 1 December 1908.

44. *Ibid.*: Harris to Chase, 12 December 1908.

45. For an account of the devotional meeting of 21 March, see Chapter Seven.

46. Chase Papers: Chase to Remy, 19 January 1910.

47. *Ibid.*: Remy to Chase, 25 February 1910.

48. Chicago Records: Ober to Chase, 27 November 1908.

49. As he was supposedly a proxy for Wilhelm, a case could be made that Mills' appointment to the Board should really have been taken up by Wilhelm.

50. Bahai Temple Unity Records: Minutes, 23 March 1909.

51. It goes far beyond the scope of this discussion to evaluate the role that Corinne True played in the development of the American Baha'i community. The interested reader is referred to the minutes of the Chicago House of Spirituality for further information concerning her tensions with that body. On gender tensions, see Armstrong-Ingram, "Recovering a Lost Horizon."

52. Chicago Records: Woman's Assembly to House, 22 May 1909.

53. See Armstrong-Ingram, "Recovering a Lost Horizon."

54. We might note that True's religious search, which ended with her discovery of the Bahá'í Faith, was first occasioned through grief at the loss of her eldest daughter while still a child and reinforced by the later loss of a son. Shortly after becoming a Bahá'í, she lost another son. The deaths of these three children, coupled with the use of mother imagery that surrounded discussion of the implications of the building of the first *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in North America (the building would be the "mother" of many subsequent ones throughout the continent), may underlie her tenacious commitment to the building although she did not have any developed functional concept of the institution of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*.

Chapter 6: The Bourgeois Design

1. Convention Transcript, 1920, p. 89.
2. Remy, *Mashrak-El-Azkar* (1916); Remy, *Mashrak-El-Azkar* (1917).
3. Convention transcript, 1920, p. 217.
4. Pemberton, *A Modern Pilgrimage*, pp. 78–79.
5. Marie Watson Papers: Bourgeois to Watson, 9 August 1906. From the rest of this letter, and from other letters of around this date, it is probable that by “workers” Bourgeois is referring to those engaged in some form of mystical activity, rather than to the working class.
6. *Architecture*, vol. XIV, no. 1, 13 July 1906.
7. Bourgeois Papers: undated manuscript.
8. Convention Transcript, 1920, p. 69.
9. Chicago Records: Minutes, 8 February 1908.
10. *Bahá’í News*, vol. I, no. 4, 17 May 1910, p. 12.
11. Wilhelm Papers.
12. It may be noted here that Remy produced the Byzantine design that he submitted in 1909 in 1906, and that Woodward produced his 1909 submission around 1908, both before the architect’s circular or, indeed, the establishing of the Bahai Temple Unity.
13. Convention Transcript, 1920, pp. 67–71.
14. Bourgeois Papers: undated manuscript, pp. 1–5, 10–12.
15. McDaniel, *The Spell of the Temple*, pp. 22–26.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
17. Pemberton, *A Modern Pilgrimage*, p. 78.
18. Remy, *Architectural Exhibition*.
19. McDaniel, *The Building of the Temple*, p. 27.
20. *Star of the West*, vol. VII, no. 7, 13 July 1916.
21. Interestingly, both Gebhard, “One Hundred Years of Architecture,” p. 58, and Apostol, “The Painters and Sculptors,” p. 34, describe the design for this house as being popularly attributed to de Longpre himself. As his daughter eloped with Bourgeois in 1901, it would not be surprising if he did not later give due credit for Bourgeois’ contribution to the design, whatever may have been the actual ratio of each man’s input to the final product.
22. Convention Transcript, 1920, p. 125.

23. National Properties Committee Records: Gilfillen to Committee, 10 December, 29 December 1973.
24. Convention Transcript, 1925, p. 96.
25. Bourgeois Papers: Bourgeois to Shoghi Effendi, c. 1928.
26. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 11 April 1949.
27. Convention Transcript, 1930, p. 363.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
29. *Bahá'í World*, vol. IV, 1930–1932, p. 521.
30. Bourgeois Papers.
31. *Ibid.*: “This Is the Great Day of God,” c. 1919.
32. *The Bahai Temple*, p. 13.
33. Böswell in *New York American*, 23 May 1920; Reid in *The Architectural Record*, June 1920.
34. National Spiritual Assembly Records: McDaniel to National Assembly, 23 April 1934.
35. *Bahá'í News*, January 1935, p. 10.
36. National Spiritual Assembly Records: Wilhelm to National Assembly, 13 February 1950. It may be noted here that this contradicts a frequently repeated opinion that Wilhelm initiated Bourgeois' interest in attempting a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár design.
37. *National Teaching Committee Bulletin*, 19 July 1920, p. 9.
38. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 August 1920.
39. *The Outlook*, 1 December 1920.
40. *Everywoman*, October 1915, p. 10.
41. Scheffler Papers: Scheffler to Morton and Collins, 8 April 1925.
42. Engineering services were taken over by Research Services, Inc., of Washington, D.C., in 1930 and supervision was thereafter principally by Allen McDaniel, who had been among those who wished to see building plans on the basis of the Bourgeois design abandoned in the early 1920s but who had later undergone a “conversion.”
43. Lunt Papers: True to Lunt, 18 December 1921.
44. Scheffler Papers: Scheffler to Shoghi Effendi, 31 March 1929.
45. Convention Transcript, 1925, p. 108.

PART THREE: The Practice

Chapter 7: Choral Song and Sermonizing in Wilmette

1. Chicago Records: Minutes and attached copy of letter.
2. Ibid.: Jacobsen to House, 28 August 1908. The songs they wished to learn probably were those in Louise Waite's *Bahai Hymns of Peace and Praise*, published earlier that year.
3. Ibid.: Minutes, 26 January 1909.
4. *The Bahai Bulletin*, vol. I, no. 6, 1909.
5. *Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 38–40.
6. *The Bahai Bulletin*, vol. I, no. 6, 1909.
7. Ibid.
8. Kenosha Records: Minutes, 15 June 1909.
9. Waite Papers: "The Magic Wand"; Pilgrim Notes. For a more detailed discussion of the trip and Waite's songs, see Chapters Two and Three.
10. Buikema Papers.
11. *Bahai News*, 21 March 1910, p. 14.
12. Ibid., 17 May 1910, pp. 2–3.
13. Ibid., 17 May 1910, p. 4.
14. *Star of the West*, 17 May 1911, p. 4.
15. Ibid., 17 May 1911, pp. 3–5.
16. Robarts Papers: Diary notes, 1912.
17. *Star of the West*, 17 May 1912, pp. 3–5.
18. Ibid., 17 May 1912, p. 32. The account of the Vahid Choral Society is adapted from Armstrong-Ingram, *Singers to the King*.
19. *National Teaching Committee Bulletin*, 1 August 1922, pp. 3–4.
20. Robarts Papers: True to Robarts, 9 August 1922.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.: Olsen to Robarts, 20 November 1922.
23. Chicago Records: Vail to House of Spirituality, 25 May 1918.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.: Vail to House of Spirituality, 2 June 1918.
26. Ibid.: Minutes, 30 May 1918.

27. *Ibid.*: House of Spirituality to Vail, 31 May 1918.
28. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 21 September 1920.
29. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 28 September 1920; 24 May 1921; 7 June 1921; 1 October 1921.
30. Vail, *The Bahai Movement*, n.p.
31. M. Lesch Papers: Notes on 17 May 1925 meeting.
32. Robarts Papers: Olsen to Robarts, 13 July 1923.
33. Osenbaugh Papers.
34. Convention Transcript, 1925, p. 32.
35. *Ibid.*, 1926, p. 42.
36. Osenbaugh Papers.
37. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Music Committee: National Assembly to Committee, 18 February 1931.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*: Committee Report, n.d. (1931).
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*: National Assembly to Committee, 17 June 1931.
42. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly, 2 April 1931.
43. *Bahá'í News*, May 1932, p. 16.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Music Committee: National Assembly to Committee, 22 June 1932.
47. National Spiritual Assembly Records: National Spiritual Assembly to Shoghi Effendi, 4 April 1930.
48. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Temple Program Committee: National Assembly to Committee, 6 December 1933.
49. *Ibid.*: Committee to National Assembly, 13 December 1933.
50. *Ibid.*: National Assembly to Committee, 6 December 1933.
51. *Ibid.*: National Assembly to Committee, 22 December 1933.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Temple Program Committee Records: Minutes, 6 May 1934.
54. *Ibid.*: Minutes, 2 June 1934.
55. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly, 15 June 1935.

56. Temple Program Committee Records: Minutes, 11 August 1935.
57. *Bahá'í News*, February 1932, p. 6.
58. *Bahá'í World*, vols. IV, V, and VI.
59. This discussion of St. Mark's is based on Holley Papers: St. Mark's Records, except as otherwise cited.
60. Farmer Papers: Green Acre Programs.
61. Petersen Papers: Bahai brothers and sisters of St. Mark's to Bahai Friends, 27 February 1914.
62. Invitation card reproduced in *Star of the West*, vol. V, no. 2, 9 April 1914, p. 25.
63. *Travelling Fellowship*, 1 August 1919, n.p.
64. Gaudreaux Papers: Committee of Nine to Bahá'í Assemblies of the North Eastern States, 20 September 1919.
65. National Spiritual Assembly Records: New York Programs for Bahá'í Holy Days.
66. *Ibid.*: Guthrie to Ali Kuli Khan, 21 February 1928.
67. *Ibid.*: Programs.
68. *Ibid.*: Programs.
69. *Bergen Evening Record*, 27 June 1927; *Interboro Review*, 1 July 1927.
70. Racine Records.
71. Chicago Records.
72. *National Teaching Committee Bulletin*, 15 January 1923, p. 5.
73. Convention Transcript, 1927, pp. 20ff.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
75. National Spiritual Assembly Records: Coy to National Assembly, 24 July 1930.
76. Wright Papers.
77. "History of the Philadelphia Bahá'í Community," 1934–1939.

Chapter 8: The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Use

1. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 52, May 1931, p. 2.
2. *Annual Bahá'í Reports*, 1942–1943, p. 37.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

4. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly, 28 March 1943.
5. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 170, September 1944, pp. 9, 15-16.
6. National Spiritual Assembly Records.
7. *Ibid.*: Secretary to Shoghi Effendi, 13 January 1942.
8. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 217, March 1944, p. 11.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. 228, February 1950, pp. 7-8.
10. *Bahá'í World*, vol. XI, pp. 46-50.
11. Temple Guides Committee, 1942, p. 17; 1947, p. 16.
12. *Bahá'í Annual Reports*, 1952-1953, p. 16.
13. Holley Papers: Holley to Temple Dedication Committee, 5 March 1952.
14. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Temple Dedication Committee: National Assembly to Committee, 5 September 1952; Holley Papers: Notes, House of Worship Dedication.
15. *Ibid.*: "Summary of Consultation . . . Dec. 13, 1952."
16. National Spiritual Assembly Records, Temple Dedication Committee: Mussulman to Holley, 31 December 1952. On the multiplicity of services, see below.
17. *Ibid.*: Braun to Holley, 14 January 1953.
18. Holley Papers: Holley to Committee, 19 March 1953.
19. National Spiritual Assembly Records: Secretary to Shoghi Effendi, 19 March 1953.
20. Holley Papers: "Summary of Consultation . . . Dec. 13, 1952."
21. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to National Assembly, 6 March 1953; 6 April 1953.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 266, April 1953, p. 5.
24. National Spiritual Assembly, *Jubilee Celebration*, pp. 10-15.
25. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to National Assembly, 6 April 1953.
26. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 268, June 1953, p. 11.
27. Except as otherwise cited, this discussion draws on the minutes and correspondence in the Temple Worship Committee Records. Gaps in the documentation have been filled from copies of

this committee's records in the Somerhalder Papers. As this discussion covers events that occurred so recently, I have refrained from mentioning most of the names of the individuals involved. To maintain this anonymity, it is necessary to omit the detail given in citations elsewhere in this work and to rely on this general citation of the committee's records.

28. All Bahá'í holy days are now commemorated at the House of Worship, the devotions for them being in the same vein as the Sunday afternoon ones, although those held at times when there is not likely to be a public presence are less elaborate in program.

29. *Bahá'í Annual Reports*, 1967–1968, p. 23.

30. *Report on Temple Activities*, 1962, p. 4.

Chapter 9: Scripture and Culture in the Development of Western Bahá'í Devotional Practice

As well as the sources cited, the discussion of the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* in this chapter is based on *A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i Aqdas*, 1973 (Bahá'í World Center), typescript translations in English and French; and reference to the original Arabic with the kind assistance of Ghazzal Towfiq.

1. Berger, *From Sect to Church*, p. 139.

2. Inter-America Committee Records: Convention Agendas, 1951.

3. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'í Islam*, p. 181.

4. On Islamic *salat* generally, see Quasem, *Salvation of the Soul*, pp. 85–176.

5. Bahai Temple Unity Records.

6. True Papers: Notebook, copy by True of Mills' pilgrim notes, 1909.

7. *Ibid.*: 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mills, 12 August 1909.

8. Hatcher and Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith*, p. 170.

9. Chicago Records: House to Kenosha Board, 13 August 1906; note states copy sent to Union, New Jersey, 19 August 1906.

10. National Spiritual Assembly Records: National Assembly to Shoghi Effendi, 25 July 1933.

11. Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to National Assembly, 6 September 1933.
12. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 79, November 1933.
13. National Spiritual Assembly Records: Spiritual Assembly of Chicago to National Assembly, 23 February 1934.
14. *Ibid.*: National Assembly to Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, 14 March 1934.
15. Robarts Papers: Untitled study course, c. 1940s.
16. Chase Papers: S. M. Raffi, "Islam."
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21. Robarts Papers: Ruth Moffett Pilgrim Notes, 1927.
22. Temple Worship Committee Records: National Assembly to Committee, 16 March 1962.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Report on Temple Activities*, 14 June 1962, p. 13.
25. National Assembly to Universal House of Justice, 23 January 1964.
26. Universal House of Justice to National Assembly, 13 March 1964.
27. For an extended discussion of the implications of these points, see Armstrong-Ingram, *Considerations*.
28. White, *Protestant Worship*, pp. 121–122, 124–126.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 135–136.
30. Stevenson, 1974, p. 684.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 684–686.
32. See Berger, *From Sect to Church*, pp. 132–134; Hampson, *The Growth and Spread of the Bahá'í Faith*, pp. 338 ff; Smith, *The American Bahá'í Community*, pp. 119–120.
33. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Preface.

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