

The Institution of the Mashriq'l-Adhkár

A Statement Prepared by the Research Department
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The Mashriq'l-Adhkár, “the Dawning-place of the Praise of God”,¹ is described by the Universal House of Justice, in its letter dated 18 December 2014 to the Bahá'ís in Iran, as “a unique concept in the annals of religion” that “symbolizes the teachings of the new Day of God”.² The House of Justice further states that the House of Worship is a “collective centre of society to promote cordial affection” and that it

stands as a universal place of worship open to all the inhabitants of a locality irrespective of their religious affiliation, background, ethnicity, or gender and a haven for the deepest contemplation on spiritual reality and foundational questions of life, including individual and collective responsibility for the betterment of society. Men and women, children and youth, are held in its embrace as equals.³

The extraordinary significance of this matchless institution for the unity and well-being of humanity is underscored throughout the writings of the Faith. Bahá'u'lláh, for instance, proclaims, “Blessed are they that occupy themselves in the House of Worship with the remembrance of Him Who is the Lord of the righteous!”⁴ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that while the House of Worship is “built upon earth, in reality it is an institution of the Concourse on high” and its “pinnacles shall soar to the apex of heaven”.⁵ In another Tablet He refers to it as “the dawning-place of lights and the gathering place of the righteous”, in which “noble souls ... offer supplications, intone divine verses, and chant prayers with wondrous melodies” such that “the inmates of the Concourse on high hearken and call out, crying, ‘Happy are we; let all the world rejoice!’”⁶ It is, the Master declares, “the first visible and manifest establishment of the Lord”,⁷ being so momentous a structure that even the act of “laying but one brick for [it] or one of its dependencies is like unto building a lofty edifice”.⁸ As Shoghi Effendi states, the Mashriq'l-Adhkár is a “symbol and harbinger of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh”.⁹ It is, in the words of the House of Justice, a beacon of light “against the gloom of hatred and inequity”.¹⁰ Eight continental Temples now illumine the world, while local and national ones are beginning to emerge, each one summoning “all comers to worship the One Who is their Creator, their sovereign Lord, the Giver of Light to the world”¹¹ and galvanizing “an entire people to reach for a more profound sense of unified purpose”.¹² Each reminds us of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's assurance that “a hundred thousand Mashriq'l-Adhkárs shall be reared in glory, dignity, and utmost majesty”.¹³

To assist in further understanding the nature of this divine institution and its profound implications for the spiritual regeneration of humanity, the attached compilation of extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá as well as from the letters written by, or on behalf of, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice is provided. Some of the concepts that may be gleaned from various passages in the compilation are discussed below.

1. The Influence of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh calls on the peoples of the world to build

houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions. Make them as perfect as is possible in the world of being, and adorn them with that which befitteth them, not with images and effigies. Then, with radiance and joy, celebrate therein the praise of your Lord, the Most Compassionate. Verily, by His remembrance the eye is cheered and the heart is filled with light.¹⁴

'Abdu'l-Bahá elaborates on the importance of this institution, referring to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as “the lodestone of divine confirmations” and “the mighty foundation of the Lord, the firm pillar of the Faith of God”. In the same Tablet, He states that the establishment of the House of Worship “is a means for the exaltation of the Word of God” and that the “praise and glorification emanating from it cheereth the heart of every righteous soul”. He thus exhorts the friends to “be occupied therein with prayer and the worship of God, the recitation of the verses and words of God, and the chanting of heavenly odes in glorification of the All-Merciful”.¹⁵

Elsewhere, 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the House of Worship as “a centre wherein the spirits are gladdened and the hearts attracted to the Abhá Kingdom”¹⁶ and avers that it has “a powerful influence on every phase of life”,¹⁷ awakening the friends¹⁸ and promoting the oneness of humankind.¹⁹ By gathering together in this edifice to make mention of the Lord, “bonds of unity”²⁰ are forged while affection grows and flourishes “in the human heart”.²¹ Indeed, through the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which “causeth hearts to be illumined, souls to become spiritual, and the fragrances of the Kingdom of Glory to be inhaled”, the world of humanity is “transformed into another world, and the susceptibilities of the heart are heightened to such a degree that they encompass the entire creation”.²² According to Shoghi Effendi, the impact of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is “incalculable and mysterious”,²³ directly bolstering the faith of the individual, while also serving, in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as “the greatest means of diffusing the sweet savours of the Lord”.²⁴ “As a potent symbol and an integral element of the divine civilization towards which Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation ushers all peoples,” the House of Justice observes in a letter written on its behalf, “the House of Worship becomes the focal point of the community from which it emerges.”²⁵ “The people shall hasten to worship in that heavenly Temple,” the Master declares, “the fragrance of God will be diffused, the Divine Teachings will take root in the hearts like unto the establishment of the spirit in the souls of men, and the people will stand firm in the Cause of your Lord, the All-Merciful.”²⁶

2. A Place of Worship

'Abdu'l-Baha explains that “pure and radiant hearts are the dawning-places of the mention of God from which the melodies of supplication and prayer continually reach the Concourse on high”, and He states that should the hearts of the friends become divine temples through the bounty of God, “they would assuredly exert the utmost endeavour . . . to build the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, so that the outward frame may reveal the inward reality and the outer form give tidings of the inner meaning”.²⁷ Several themes are found in the writings associated with this place of worship and the inward reality it manifests, including the power of prayer, the effects of communal worship, and the nature of devotions within the central edifice itself.

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh calls attention to the potency of reciting the verses of God in Houses of Worship:

Teach your children the verses revealed from the heaven of majesty and power, so that, in most melodious tones, they may recite the Tablets of the All-Merciful in the alcoves within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs. Whoever hath been transported by the rapture born of adoration for My Name, the Most Compassionate, will recite the verses of God in such wise as to captivate the hearts of those yet wrapped in slumber. Well is it with him who hath quaffed the Mystic Wine of everlasting life from the utterance of his merciful Lord in My Name—a Name through which every lofty and majestic mountain hath been reduced to dust.²⁸

The House of Justice elucidates the theme of the power of prayer, explaining that the Twin Luminaries have taught us that prayer is “the essential spiritual conversation of the soul with its Maker, direct and without intermediation”, “the morning’s dew” that “brings freshness to the heart and cleanses it”, and “a fire that burns away the veils and a light that leads to the ocean of reunion with the Almighty”.²⁹ The quality of prayer is pivotal. Upon it “depend the development of the limitless capacities of the soul and the attraction of the bounties of God”. When it is “motivated by the love of God”, its powers are manifested. “It is to be expressed”, the House of Justice continues,

with a sincere and pure heart conducive to contemplation and meditation so that the rational faculty can be illumined by its effects. Such prayer will transcend the limitation of words and go well beyond mere sounds. The sweetness of its melodies must gladden and uplift the heart and reinforce the penetrating power of the Word, transmuting earthly inclinations into heavenly attributes and inspiring selfless service to humankind.³⁰

A second theme is that of communal worship, which Bahá'ís and their friends around the world understand to be fundamental to the pattern of collective endeavour aimed at the spiritual and material betterment of society. Essential to this pattern, the House of Justice maintains, “is the devotional meeting—a communal aspect of the godly life and a dimension of the concept of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár”.³¹ When “integrated into the core of community life”, such gatherings become “occasions where any soul may enter, inhale the heavenly fragrances, experience the sweetness of prayer, meditate upon the Creative Word, be transported on the wings of the spirit, and commune with the one Beloved”.³² The holding of such gatherings is “a further step in the implementation” of the law of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár,³³ one that evokes the spirit of the House of Worship in any locality.³⁴

A third theme is the manner in which worship is conducted within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Houses of Worship, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts, “bestow firmness and constancy upon the friends” and “are places of supplication and invocation to the Threshold of His grandeur”.³⁵ Vital to such worship and the creation of what Shoghi Effendi describes as “a serenely spiritual atmosphere”³⁶ is the setting aside of rituals and rites. As the House of Justice observes, Shoghi Effendi

decries the trappings of elaborate and ostentatious ceremony and warns against any inference “that the interior of the central Edifice itself will be converted into a

conglomeration of religious services” offering “a spectacle of incoherent and confused sectarian observances and rites.”³⁷

Instead, devotional services are to be unhampered by uniformity or ritualistic forms of any kind,³⁸ and are, Shoghi Effendi advises in a letter written on his behalf, to be “simple, dignified, and designed to uplift the soul and educate it through hearing the creative word”.³⁹ In another letter written on his behalf he states, “The more universal and informal the character of Bahá’í worship in the Temple the better.”⁴⁰

Such worship may also include vocal music.⁴¹ In letters written on its behalf, the House of Justice clarifies that lyrics sung in the House of Worship should be “based upon Bahá’í or other sacred writings”, including the Writings and talks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, should “contain Bahá’í themes”,⁴² may involve “the repetition of verses from prayers or selections from the Writings”, and may allow for “slight alterations in the text ... to conform with musical requirements”.⁴³ “The musical style of the piece can be determined by the composer, provided that he or she bears in mind the spiritual obligation to treat the Sacred Texts with the propriety, dignity and reverence due them.”⁴⁴

Through such an unassuming but embracing approach, the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár embodies a distinguishing feature of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh—the principle of unity in diversity—and marks, according to Shoghi Effendi, the establishment “upon the face of the earth, in the most visible and tangible manner, a beauteous likeness and enduring expression of the vital and unbounded spirit of the Cause of Him Who is the Lord of all worlds”.⁴⁵ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself asserts:

The Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár is a divine edifice in this nether world and a means for attaining the oneness of humanity, inasmuch as all the peoples of the world shall gather in fellowship and harmony within the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár and, chanting the anthems of Divine Unity, engage in the praise and glorification of the Lord of Hosts.⁴⁶

3. Worship and Service

As potent and far-reaching as are the spiritual forces released by individual and collective devotions offered within the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár and as essential as is a vibrant devotional life to one’s spiritual development, worship must also result, the House of Justice notes, in “deeds that give outward expression to that inner transformation”.⁴⁷ Shoghi Effendi points out that the “very purpose” of the community—a community that is “divinely ordained, organically united, clear-visioned, vibrant with life”—is “regulated by the twin directing principles of the worship of God and of service to one’s fellow-men”.⁴⁸ Indeed, the indispensable connection between these directing principles is integral to the oneness of humankind, which, as the House of Justice notes, “is at once the operating principle and ultimate goal” of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation.⁴⁹

The inseparability of worship and service, which finds full expression in the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár, is progressively manifesting itself as the community implements the provisions of its framework for action with increasing effectiveness. The House of Justice observes that the friends “have not failed to appreciate the dynamic interaction between worship and endeavours

to uplift the spiritual, social, and material conditions of society”.⁵⁰ In its Ridván 2012 message to the Bahá'ís of the world, the House of Justice states:

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as “one of the most vital institutions of the world”, weds two essential, inseparable aspects of Bahá'í life: worship and service. The union of these two is also reflected in the coherence that exists among the community-building features of the Plan, particularly the burgeoning of a devotional spirit that finds expression in gatherings for prayer and an educational process that builds capacity for service to humanity. The correlation of worship and service is especially pronounced in those clusters around the world where Bahá'í communities have significantly grown in size and vitality, and where engagement in social action is apparent.⁵¹

4. Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

In the fullness of time, Shoghi Effendi states, the central edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be surrounded by “such institutions of social service as shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant”.⁵² The indispensability of “a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth”, the House of Justice writes, “is unmistakably illustrated” in Bahá'u'lláh's “ordination of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the spiritual centre of every Bahá'í community round which must flourish dependencies dedicated to the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific advancement of mankind”.⁵³ 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains in this regard that the House of Worship is “connected with a hospital, a drug dispensary, a traveler's hospice, a school for orphans, and a university for advanced studies”. As such, “The Temple is not only a place for worship; rather, in every respect is it complete and whole”.⁵⁴

Shoghi Effendi highlights the vital interplay between worship and service and offers the following vision of the corresponding interrelationship between the central edifice and its dependencies:

Divorced from the social, humanitarian, educational, and scientific pursuits centring around the Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, Bahá'í worship, however exalted in its conception, however passionate in fervour, can never hope to achieve beyond the meagre and often transitory results produced by the contemplations of the ascetic or the communion of the passive worshipper. It cannot afford lasting satisfaction and benefit to the worshipper himself, much less to humanity in general, unless and until translated and transfused into that dynamic and disinterested service to the cause of humanity which it is the supreme privilege of the Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to facilitate and promote. Nor will the exertions, no matter how disinterested and strenuous, of those who within the precincts of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be engaged in administering the affairs of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth fructify and prosper unless they are brought into close and daily communion with those spiritual agencies centring in and radiating from the central Shrine of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Nothing short of direct and constant interaction between the spiritual forces emanating from this House of Worship centring in the heart of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the energies consciously displayed by those who administer its affairs in their service to humanity can possibly provide the necessary agency capable of removing the ills

that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity. For it is assuredly upon the consciousness of the efficacy of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, reinforced on one hand by spiritual communion with His Spirit, and on the other by the intelligent application and the faithful execution of the principles and laws He revealed, that the salvation of a world in travail must ultimately depend. And of all the institutions that stand associated with His holy Name, surely none save the institution of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár can most adequately provide the essentials of Bahá'í worship and service, both so vital to the regeneration of the world. Therein lies the secret of the loftiness, of the potency, of the unique position of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár as one of the outstanding institutions conceived by Bahá'u'lláh.⁵⁵

The first stirrings of the relationship between the spiritual and the practical as embodied in a House of Worship can be found in the pioneering efforts of the believers in 'Ishqábád. In its letter dated 1 August 2014 to the Bahá'ís of the World, the House of Justice recounts:

On a befitting tract of land in the centre of the city that had been obtained some years before with the consent of the Blessed Beauty Himself, facilities were built for communal well-being—a meeting hall, schools for children, a hostel for visitors, and a small clinic, among others. A sign of the notable achievements of the Bahá'ís in 'Ishqábád, who in those productive years became distinguished for their prosperity, magnanimity, and intellectual and cultural attainments, was their attention to ensuring that all Bahá'í children and youth were literate in a society with rampant illiteracy, especially among girls.... For over twenty years, the friends experienced the heavenly joy of having realized their lofty aim: the establishment of a focal point of worship, a nerve centre of community life, a place where souls gathered at daybreak for humble invocation and communion before flowing out of its doors to engage in their daily pursuits.⁵⁶

In other words, the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár, the House of Justice relates in a subsequent letter, is concurrently “the place from which spiritual forces are to radiate”, “the focal point for dependencies to be raised up for the well-being of humanity”, and “the expression of a common will and eagerness to serve”.⁵⁷ “These dependencies”, the same letter continues, are “centres of education and scientific learning as well as cultural and humanitarian endeavour” that “embody the ideals of social and spiritual progress to be achieved through the application of knowledge, and demonstrate how, when religion and science are in harmony, they elevate the station of the human being and lead to the flourishing of civilization”.⁵⁸

5. Raising up a Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár

Since the revelation of the law of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, its implementation has followed a process of gradual, organic unfoldment commensurate with the capacity of the community. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that these “Dawning-Points of God's Remembrance ... must, at the direction of the Most Exalted Pen, be established in every hamlet and city”.⁵⁹ Their beginnings, the Master indicates, could assume even the humblest of forms:

As to the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár, it is of the utmost importance. The purpose is this: A spot should be designated, even if it is a small place beneath layers of earth and stone, and it should, out of prudence, be kept hidden and concealed lest it

arouse the hostility of the mischief-makers. At least once a week, it should become the gathering place of the chosen friends who have discovered the secrets and become the intimates of divine mysteries. It may assume any form, for even if it be an underground pit, that pit shall become a sheltering paradise, an exalted bower, and a garden of delight.⁶⁰

Opportunities first arose for the establishment of a Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád and in Wilmette during the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Subsequently, a continental House of Worship was established in seven other locations around the world, culminating in October 2016 with the inauguration of the Temple in Santiago, Chile. Yet, even as the continental stage was drawing to a close, a new horizon was opening up to the Bahá'í world owing to the growing momentum in community building—founded on collective worship and raising capacity for service—that had been stimulated by the series of global Plans beginning in 1996. In its Ridván message to the Bahá'ís of the world that year, the House of Justice emphasized that “the flourishing of the community, especially at the local level, demands a significant enhancement in patterns of behaviour” involving “the practice of collective worship of God”. It was, therefore, “essential to the spiritual life of the community that the friends hold regular devotional meetings in local Bahá'í centres, where available, or elsewhere, including the homes of believers”.⁶¹ In its Ridván message five years later, the House of Justice anticipated the building of national Mashriq'u'l-Adhkárs during the Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age, a development that would “unfold throughout successive stages of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan”.⁶² Specifically, it observed:

A feature of the Fifth Epoch will be the enrichment of the devotional life of the community through the raising up of national Houses of Worship, as circumstances in national communities permit. The scheduling of these projects will be determined by the Universal House of Justice in relation to the advancement of the process of entry by troops within countries.⁶³

By 2012, the requisite criteria were “demonstrably met”⁶⁴ in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Papua New Guinea. This was a highly significant development. “With the construction of the last of the continental temples in Santiago under way,” the House of Justice stated that year in its Ridván message, “the initiation of projects for building national Houses of Worship offers yet another gratifying evidence of the penetration of the Faith of God into the soil of society.”⁶⁵ The House of Justice also affirmed in a subsequent letter written on its behalf that the House of Worship is “an integral part of the process of community building, and its construction represents an important milestone in the development of a community”.⁶⁶

Equally encouraging was that by Ridván 2012 it had become clear that the emergence of a local House of Worship could be contemplated in clusters serving as sites for the dissemination of learning about the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme and where “the entire scheme of expansion and consolidation”⁶⁷ was being fortified—specifically, at that time, in Battambang, Cambodia; Bihar Sharif, India; Matunda Soy, Kenya; Norte del Cauca, Colombia; and Tanna, Vanuatu. Expounding on this vision, the following passage from the Ridván 2014 message directly correlated the evolution of the programme of growth in a cluster with the establishment of a local Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár:

In more and more clusters, the programme of growth is increasing in scope and complexity, commensurate with the rising capacity of the Plan's three protagonists—the individual, the community, and the institutions of the Faith—to

create a mutually supportive environment. And we are delighted that, as anticipated, there are a growing number of clusters where a hundred or more individuals are now facilitating the engagement of a thousand or more in weaving a pattern of life, spiritual, dynamic, transformative. Underlying the process even from the start is, of course, a collective movement towards the vision of material and spiritual prosperity set forth by Him Who is the Lifegiver of the World. But when such large numbers are involved, the movement of an entire population becomes discernible.

This movement is especially in evidence in those clusters where a local Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is to be established.⁶⁸

In the Ridván 2012 message, the House of Justice underscored the magnitude of this advance in community life and provided the following vision regarding the impending construction of both the two national and the five local Houses of Worship:

Beloved co-workers: The ground broken by the hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá a hundred years ago is to be broken again in seven more countries, this being but the prelude to the day when within every city and village, in obedience to the bidding of Bahá'u'lláh, a building is upraised for the worship of the Lord. From these Dawning-Points of the Remembrance of God will shine the rays of His light and peal out the anthems of His praise.⁶⁹

The House of Justice called attention to this same vision in its message of 1 September 2017 to those gathered for the dedication of the House of Worship in Battambang, Cambodia, announcing that “a new dawn is breaking in the development of the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár” and affirming that this historic occasion prefigured

the appearance of many more local as well as national Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, in obedience to Bahá'u'lláh's commandment revealed in His Most Holy Book: “Build ye houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions.”⁷⁰

The opening of this new stage of raising up national and local Temples also made it possible to learn more about what is entailed in building a House of Worship, including practical considerations such as choosing a suitable location and deciding how big the edifice should be, as well as about how a sense of ownership of the project should be fostered among the local population. The selection of architects was identified as a special concern, since they, according to the House of Justice,

are presented with the singular challenge of designing Temples “as perfect as is possible in the world of being” that harmonize naturally with the local culture and the daily lives of those who will gather to pray and meditate therein. The task calls for creativity and skill to combine beauty, grace, and dignity with modesty, functionality, and economy.⁷¹

Throughout this evolutionary process, the community has had increasing opportunities to explore how indispensable is the spirit of unity in which such efforts are undertaken. In this regard, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states the following concerning the development of plans for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád:

All matters must be made a means of unity and concord, so that fellowship and harmony among the beloved of God might increase as day followeth day.

Now, this matter of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár must itself be implemented in such a manner as to foster unity and concord among the friends. That is to say, ye should first consult together, and thereafter devise a plan. If ye follow these steps, divine confirmations shall continuously be vouchsafed unto you.⁷²

The Master also provides the following counsel:

The foundation of life and existence is cooperation and mutual aid, whereas the cause of annihilation and deterioration is the cessation of aid and assistance. The higher the realm of existence, the stronger and more vital this weighty matter of cooperation and assistance doth become. In the realm of humanity, therefore, cooperation and mutual aid are in a greater degree of completeness and perfection than that which prevaileth in the other realms of existence—so much so, that the life of humanity dependeth entirely upon this principle. Among the friends of God, in particular, this strong foundation must be fortified in such wise that each soul may help the other in all matters, whether pertaining to spiritual realities and inner truths or to the material and physical aspects of life. Such is especially the case with regard to the founding of public institutions that benefit all people, and, in particular, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which constituteth the greatest of divine foundations.⁷³

Expanding on the concept of collaboration, Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, stresses that laying the foundation of the House of Worship “requires ceaseless cooperation and mutual support, and is conditioned upon sacrifice”.⁷⁴ In another letter written on his behalf he cautions, “It is devotion, sincerity and genuine enthusiasm which in the long run can ensure the completion of our beloved Temple.” And he states, “Material considerations, though essential, are not the most vital by any means.”⁷⁵ Similarly, the House of Justice, in expressing how moved it was by the worldwide response to its call for seven new Houses of Worship, offers the following observation:

Particularly in the nations and localities recently designated for the construction of a House of Worship, we have witnessed the friends' spontaneous expressions of joy; their immediate and heartfelt commitment to lend their share in carrying out the critical work at hand and to increase the dynamism of those activities integral to the emergence of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár within a population; their sacrificial contributions of time, energy, and material resources, in a variety of forms; and their sustained efforts to awaken growing contingents to the vision of those edifices dedicated wholly to the remembrance of God that will be founded in their midst. Indeed, the ready response of the community of the Greatest Name augurs well for its ability to further these collective undertakings.⁷⁶

With this guidance in mind and in order to appreciate the spirit of true service required for the establishment of this lofty institution, it is helpful to reflect on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's longing to participate in the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád and on His earnest appeal that the friends carry it out in His stead.

Do thou on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá move the earth, carry the mortar, and haul the stones for the building of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár so that the rapture of this service may bring joy and gladness to the Centre of Servitude. That Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár is the first visible and manifest establishment of the Lord. Therefore, it is this servant's hope that each and every virtuous and righteous soul will sacrifice his all, evince great happiness and exultation, and rejoice in carrying the earth and mortar so that this Divine Edifice may be raised, the Cause of God may spread, and in every corner of the world the friends may arise with the utmost resolve to accomplish this great task. Were 'Abdu'l-Bahá not imprisoned and were there not obstacles in his path, he himself would assuredly hasten to 'Ishqábád and carry the earth for the building of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár with the utmost joy and gladness. It behoveth the friends now to arise with this intention in mind and serve in my place so that in a short time this Edifice may be revealed to all eyes, the loved ones of God may engage in making mention of the Abhá Beauty, the melodies of the Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár may rise at dawning to the Concourse on high, and the songs of the nightingales of God may bring joy and ecstasy to the denizens of the All-Glorious Realm. Thus will the hearts rejoice, the souls delight in joyful tidings, and the minds be illumined. This is the highest hope of the sincere ones; this is the dearest wish of them that are nigh unto God.⁷⁷

¹ *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1993, 2009 printing), note 53.

² Extract 67.

³ Extract 67.

⁴ Extract 6.

⁵ Extract 28.

⁶ Extract 9.

⁷ Extract 66.

⁸ Extract 28.

⁹ Extract 43.

¹⁰ Extract 67.

¹¹ From a letter dated 14 October 2016 written by the Universal House of Justice to the friends gathered in Santiago, Chile, for the dedication of the Mother Temple of South America.

¹² Extract 69.

¹³ Extract 29.

¹⁴ Extract 1.

¹⁵ Extract 31.

¹⁶ Extract 35.

¹⁷ Extract 16.

¹⁸ Extract 30.

¹⁹ Extract 25.

²⁰ Extract 16.

²¹ Extract 13.

²² Extract 30.

²³ Extract 57.

²⁴ Extract 28.

²⁵ Extract 69.

²⁶ Extract 10.

²⁷ Extract 21.

²⁸ Extract 3.

²⁹ Extract 67.

³⁰ Extract 67.

³¹ Extract 67.

³² Extract 68.

³³ Extract 62.

³⁴ Extract 68.

³⁵ Extract 28.

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- ³⁶ Extract 38.
³⁷ Extract 58.
³⁸ Extract 49.
³⁹ Extract 53.
⁴⁰ Extract 45.
⁴¹ Extract 53.
⁴² Extract 81.
⁴³ Extract 75.
⁴⁴ Extract 75.
⁴⁵ Extract 37.
⁴⁶ Extract 25.
⁴⁷ Extract 67.
⁴⁸ Extract 41.
⁴⁹ Extract 60.
⁵⁰ Extract 66.
⁵¹ Extract 64.
⁵² Extract 38.
⁵³ Extract 60.
⁵⁴ Extract 18.
⁵⁵ Extract 38.
⁵⁶ Extract 66.
⁵⁷ Extract 67.
⁵⁸ Extract 67.
⁵⁹ Extract 8.
⁶⁰ Extract 35.
⁶¹ Extract 61.
⁶² Extract 63.
⁶³ Extract 63.
⁶⁴ Extract 64.
⁶⁵ Extract 64.
⁶⁶ Extract 78.
⁶⁷ Extract 64.
⁶⁸ Extract 65.
⁶⁹ Extract 64.
⁷⁰ Extract 70.
⁷¹ Extract 66.
⁷² Extract 20.
⁷³ Extract 22.
⁷⁴ Extract 50.
⁷⁵ Extract 48.
⁷⁶ Extract 66.
⁷⁷ Extract 66.